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MÜHTİM! notu var.

SAYIN
MEHMET KALPAKLı
MIMAR SİNAN UNIVERSİTESİ
FEN-EDEBİYAT FAKÜLTESİ
TÜRKLOJİ BÖLÜMÜ

80040 BESİKTAS/İSTANBUL

Lecture delivered before the students of the
AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS on 3d. Jan. 1915.

Dear Friends!

It is a great pleasure for me, to meet you here to night and have a talk about some interesting questions.

For this happy circumstance I am indebted and thankfull to the kind regards of (the Christian association). I must sincerely confess, that I consider this institution as one of the most usefull among others, for the education of the youth, in our country. So, I praise highly the moral value of it's aims; I am only sorry to say, that the actual sad circumstances have not been so much favorable to encourage the young generation of all communities residing here to unite their efforts in order to realise much more quickly and surely the moral ideal of the christian association by spreading it's good principles. But I hope this desideratum will be realised after a while. I had, some time ago, the honor and pleasure of having a talk with some of it's proeminent members, and I came to an agreement with them, on the most important and essential principles which started this educational, and moral movement.

Before beginning, I must congratulate you for the new year, and express on this good occasion, my best wishes for you all, and for our beloved Country.

The down-fall of this year, has marked out the horizon a terrible point of interrogation, which stands out before our alarmed imagination as a fearfull sphinx demanding an answer. It seems to say: What it will be the result of all this?... Are you pessimistic or optimistic on account of humanity?...

I should like to have the supernatural intuition of a prophet, or the mysterious science and the extraordinary skill

of an astrologer to be able to tell you surely what Future will bring forward, and what will be it's influence on human morality.

Of course I can't have such a claim!...

Well!... That is the only reason why I had yesterday a confidential interview with my own mind; something as a colloquium with my own self. I consulted my intimate sense on some leading *feafful evidence of the* questions; because some of my best friends, have found, my moral idealism~~s~~ altogether wrong, and even ridiculous before *feafful* the actual events. They explained to me the causes of the Bankruptcy of idealism.

I could not very much believe in it, and I made up my mind to hold still higher my own principles. But at the same time I found myself really, in the awfull situation, in the false position of a banker, just after a great financial crisis; who finds him~~s~~ self obliged to clear up his account in order to know surely how much solid gold will remain in his *case* when he will throw out of it the fiduciary paper-money which has no more value in the market.

I found myself really in such an extraordinary critical situation. Even I thought, it would be convenient to make up , a conventional philosophye a (philosophie de circonstance), because I believe it is much better to have such a philosophy, than to have none at all; just ^{as} an unhappy banker ruined by his proper speculations, is obliged to have something to do and to live.

So I tried to built up a creed, and secure the quietness of my mind, by rising it above the vicissitudes of the common course of the daily life.

I begun to examine first, as much as carefully possible, some abstract notions, I had acquired long ago, like civilisation, humanity, developement and so forth.I was keeping them in my mind, just like a man keeps some funds in his *case*.

After having made an analysis of this abstract notions and tried hard to harmonize my feelings with my ideas, I was led by such an investigation

on by such an investigations to some positive opinions again, but by a very discursive way.

It seemed to me before all, that one of the most striking features of human destiny is developement; an integral and full developement, following a line of activity and conduct which brings us near to the goal we call civilisation.

We suppose- and we rightly do so- that when rising to a higher form of civilisation, we shall have a nobler type of life both individual and social. We believe that it will be possible to realise some of the most fascinating aspirations after which we are yearning without any hope for an immediate satisfaction.

I do not know, if you all agree with me, and consider the same question from the same point of view! But this is actually my frank opinion on the matter.

Well!... Where this aspirations come from?.. It is worth while to think about it. Can we cast a glance even unconsciously on our capacity of evolution?.. Have we something as a mysterious intuition throwing a light on our future perfectibility? A power of foreshadowing to day what unconsciously we shall be able to accomplish or forcibly we shall be obliged to performe to morrow?....

If not, how then, we are anticipating--in such a sentimental way-- the future probabilities, which are certainly beyond the horizon of our actual life?...

That is a question!... and, I believe, a very serious one, because it is intimately connected with our belief in a better life in the future; not in this world only, but in a more perfect one also!...

This question demands an answer.

I can only give a single and a simple one:

Our spirit, is the most certain reality; we can't deny it; it exists! The soul life is evidently proved, and manifested by it's own aspirations. So I say: We have such aspirations, just as a tree has a tendency to grow up seeking light of the sun. Our soul is constantly yearning after an ideal, just as a flower is seeking light. Our intelligence, is giving perhaps a form to

this ideal, after the conception we may actually get of it.

That is-- I suppose-- why, we can by and by realise our aspirations as much as their conditions can fall within the reach of our control and power. We can not concieve the impossible; and if our conceptions are sound, they are more or less realisable.

Humanity goes on step by step on that line, realising by and by it's legitimate conceptions; and this line of progress, in the past, is the history of human civilisation; in the future it is the orbit of it's possible evolution.

But let us examine furthermore what we understand by this well known word of (civilisation), which comprehends and ⁱ implies, in it's widest sens all the most important conditions of human perfectibility. The meaning of the word is not very clear indeed! I am sure, anybody is not responsible for it. But every man ought to be responsible for it's misinterpretation ; because his approbation or disapprobation of human conduct in general, depends strictly on the meaning he draws out of this word.

Yet It is not very easy to give a correct and satisfactory definition for it.

After my opinions expressed just now, civilisation means, the natural growth, and the spontaneous tendency of the human mind towards an indefinite perfection, which an integral progress can realise it's principal steps. This accomplishment is only possible by a mutual respect of all legitimate and sound aspirations, creeds, rights and interests of human beings; in order to live in a better understanding, in a greater happiness, and satisfy plainly not our material needs only, but also our spiritual aspirations.

That is precisely, what I can understand by civilisation. If really my interpretation is not wrong, then it is true that every counter-tendency, every force or factor capable of avoiding

or even attenuating the human progress towards this ideal goal, must be considered as a cause of retrogradation, as a calamity, as a sin.

Many people, would suppose, I am a platonician or at least a hegelian, and would say:

"We are before all living bodies, and neither independent spirits, nor ghosts; we have some material needs which come first. We must beforehand, satisfy them, more or less, in some way, for the conservation of our own self. If we neglect them altogether we die!... As there is always an essential antagonism between such capital and vital interests, competition is a fatal necessity, and "struggle for life", is the rule and principle; because our own world is quite limited, and there is no room for all ~~the~~ ~~the~~ *

This opinion sums up-as you all know- the teachings of Malthus and Darwin and contains their fundamental principles.

These well known principles are quite true; but quite unsufficient too. We are certainly living bodies, and not aerolites. We are living bodies but not just as a palm tree, or even as a crocodile. Surely we have some important material needs which ought to be satisfied first, unless we die. But we are men, not because we are growing up, or eating and digesting; we are men because we have some aspirations, and we are as much as superior as our aspirations are high and noble; if even our digestion is not satisfactory.

So in the consideration of our own dignity and destiny we must not confine our attention to the narrow limits of the common conditions of animal life; and above all to make illegitimate and wrong generalizations.

TDV İSAM
Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No: 428-2865

One of the greatest sins of our time was such an intellectual aberration. We considered as a universal truth, a biological principle which is only true within the realm of animal kingdom. We generalized it, as to make of a biological fact an + but a general fact Such a biological principle can not explain the genesis of sympathy and love in the human heart; though sympathy, is the essential condition of sympathy and love in the human heart; though sympathy, is the of social species and an ideal of moral superiority.

most important, and living factor of a social life. But it can't explain even the solidarity born from an evolutionary integration of social organism, and the equilibrium of interests which is the natural outcome of it. It does not explain in a rational manner, how the competition between the individuals becomes solidarity, and establishes ^{the} equilibrium which is the foundation stone of social life. Certainly there are hypothesis on that subject, but they are not very much convincing. It is still difficult to find the proper link which binds together the egotistic hypothesis, and the utilitarian hypothesis.

This later one, is undoubtedly higher than the other, because it is much more moral, and because --as a principle of conduct-- it may oblige us to unite our individual efforts, to reach an end, if we suppose it profitable for all. But ^{it} does not go farther. It may be reduced, to the well known formula condensed in this three words: (intérêt bien entendu)!...

This formula, can explain only the economic side, and physiological nature of our social life, but not our affectional life, our moral activity, our sympathy which plays the greater role in the genesis of true civilisation. We appreciate always the degree of civilisation, by the standard of sympathetic feelings manifested either by individuals or by societies. We know that whenever and wherever civilisation existed, sympathetic feelings existed. For instance:

(We find traces-- says the late professor Gompertz, speaking of an old confessional (book of the dead), an egyptian book-- We find traces of a refinement of moral feeling in an uncommon and partly in a surprising degree. The following quotations will illustrate this point:

I have not oppressed the widow.

I have not withdrawn the milk from the mouth of the suckling.

I have not made the poor more ^opoorer.

I have not made the journeyman work beyond his contracted

time.

I was not negligent; I was not idle.

I have not traduced the slave to his employer.

I have not made any man's tears to flow.

Moreover the ethical teaching which ~~shines~~ shines between the lines of this confessional, enjoined acts of positive benevolence, as much as the avoidance of wrong-doing. Like these for instance:

I have spread the canopy of joy everywhere.

I have fed the hungry; given drink to the thirsty; clothed the naked; I have provided a boat for the retarded voyager.) and so forth.

We all admire, -I am sure- these confession of far-reaching moral significance.

Well!... Don't you see in these noble sentiments and deeds, the fundamental principles (both theoretical and practical) of this humane philosophy called by Adam Smith, (Philosophy of sympathy?)?

Don't you acknowledge -at the same time- that even thousands and thousands years ago, sympathy was considered as the essential principle of moral civilisation?... Have we another standard now?... Can we appreciate the real moral value of human acts by the standard of utilitarianism only?...

This sympathy or love - Call it whatever you like!- is a moral factor indispensable to stand up for a civilisation worthy of the name; because sympathy is the (primum mobile) of every moral act; it exerce^s an extraordinary influence over human soul by rendering it capable for sacrifice.

Now, can we explain ~~real~~ in a plausible manner the genesis and evolution, the birth and the growth of this important moral factor by the principle of (Struggle for life) only?...

I tried hard, but I could n't!... I could n't simply because this principle in its most comprehensive explantation can't go beyond egotistic facts of self-conservation. Even utilitarianism can't go beyond solidarity and equilibrium. Equilib-

rium is life; but sympathy is far more than that: it is love! Even as a thought or sentiment. Every true religion is founded on this principle, which constitutes it's main power. In my opinion, there is no religion without love; there is no love without sympathy. If you see a man who has a great amount of sympathy for human beings, and is at the same time, an atheist, believe me, he is only an unconscious believer; he is easily convertible!...

Well, when I reached just this point in my reasoning peregrinations, I stopped for a little while, and looked, once more again, at the horizon of the civilised world. I remembered (the book of the dead); I was ashamed; but I understood quite well what really the divine ^{Pl} ~~Plato~~ meant by (*μεγίστη μονάχη*) the greatest harmony. I understood quite well, that modern civilisation, uncomparably superior to the antiquity by its wonderfull ^{yet} industrial developpement, could not ~~realise~~ ^{yet} realise this greatest harmony! I acknowledged, that nations are living bodies much better organized than before, but ~~be~~ having still now, just like those fearfull megatheriums, of the carbonic ages, to destroy each other.

Then pessimism filled my heart, like a fog darkening the light of hope, within my self. I heard at the same time, the voice of my reason, saying to me, in ^a very sarcastic tone:

"Oh you!... poor stupide philosopher!... Do you still believe in books?... What is the use of making quotations, from this very old and obsolete confessional (book of the dead)?... Don't you see the holy gospels beneath your feet, before your eyes?... Don't you know that modern civilisation has written the decalogues of Moses, in golden letters on the tablets of his moral code?... Do open, please, any educational book you like, and you will see these moral principles in the first pages of all them. Yet, there is a fearfull and shamefull incongruity between the creeds and ^{the} deeds of modern civilised nations; because the creeds represent the ideal felicity, and the deeds are the result of the actual, real, and vital necessity. So, by quoting some good instances, from an old egyptian book, you are the victim of a var...

everything combustible
and then to eat up ~~each other~~

victim of a very ordinary and common delusion; the intellectual delusion produced by the historic perspective of facts. Dont you remember, the reigning and the rule of Pharaos?... Dont you know that this majestic pyramids were build up by innumerable serfs, and that more than two hundreds thousands of them died miserably, under terrible conditions of hard work, and under a killing sun?...

Dont believe in words, in books, in the history. This terrible abyss between creeds and deeds, will always exist; because the fundamental interest of life, does not consist in philosophical speculations, and romantic sentimentality. (To be or not to be; that is the question!) In a critical moment set aside, your book, and chose at once between the two. There is no way for a third possibility!"".

After this teachings of my reason, my soul was really in a very painfull situation; I thought it was emprisoned!... Moreover, this teachings threw a light upon my conscience, and I understood quite clearly what Leo Tolstoi meant by (La grande hypocrisie).

I was cured from my desease of pessimism but, I lost my faith also; I became skeptic. But, still, I could n't help it, I was reasoning:

""An Ideal, -Isaid- what is it good for?... if really every thing will be at last destroyed by our proper hands, or vanished by the time, there is a fatality; there is a force against which our will is miserable, powerless. Philosophy is useless, even dangerous, because it feeds our soul by impossible lies, and systematic wrong ideas. Let us set aside also all activity and struggling. The greatest truth is death. We can not escape it by any means. We can not command the unknowable power, whiche makes and destroys every thing, at the same time. ^(what) Will become of our civilisation, and our humanity then?... So the best and truest philosophy is (*μνήμη θαράτον*) memento mori. The best thing to do is contemplation.

And here I heard the voice of the ecclesiaste: [Vanitas, vanitatem omnia vanitas.]

But again the imperative voice of my reason said to me: "Lo! you are in a wrong way! take care of you; you will at once loose yourself in the unbounded desert of nihilism; which waist and paralyse altogether your vital energies; and kill your soul, with its fascinating mirage-like philosophy. Dont approach to your thirsty lipps this terrible cup of mysticism; you will never more awaken. Read if you are too much tired, some beautifull quatrains of Omar Khayyam; but dont try to find in them any practical principle for life guidance. Do until your duty regularly; go on your right way/ death comes to stop your activity; and if you have still a sparkle of belief to throw light on your conscience, you will certainly find in yourself the ever twinkling star of hope which will guide your paths all along the right way or salvation, the way of life and activity.

You are looking at the attitude of the civilised world engaged in a terrible war of extermination, and you are becoming much more skeptic and faithless than you were before, on account of human morality and civilisation; but do not be neither alarmed, nor hopeless for that. Be sure, that humanity is, just now destroying by guns, what she had build up obstinately but wrongly since so many centuries. Human society, is still now, a paganist, she believes in the (god of might), and worships it. She had build up a gigantic temple for this (Moloch), and she is destroying it now. Look at the history of her life and growth, and you will see that she had allways spend such a greate energie and power^{to} correct her wrongdoings. This is not, as you suppose perhaps, an extraordinary event, but an ordinary fact in the biography of humanity. When evil, becomes an institution, and grows so much as to be an allmighty factor in social and political life, it can not stand up

it destroys itself; because evil, is not normal. That is what they call(immanent justice).

Do not be alarmed!... Be sure that Humanity is begining a (new era). Remember the words of (Gothe) before the terrible bloodshade of the (French Revolution); and think eagerly that such a difficult change for progress requires a great sacrifice of blood, money and time.

If you believe in this very principle that: (evil is not a normal factor in Nature), you can not be any thing else but an optimist. Go on your right way; do your duty! Fight, if fighting is the rule of life, but fight against evil, and barbarism; be sure that your destiny, is to progress, and to realise the legitimate and humane aspirations of your soul, who is yearning after moral, and mental perfection.

TDV İSAM
Kütüphanesi Arşivi
No KTB-286-41

Dr. Rizalowitsch

سَمِعَ كَلَمَنَةَ نَبِيِّنَمْ كَلَمَنَةَ نَبِيِّنَمْ

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