

COMPARATO, Fabio Konder .Ethics: law, morality and religion in the modern world. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2006. 716p.

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Is there something more valuable than reaching happiness? Happiness is the reward for constant and directed efforts, and so it is the focus of ethics' attention. The meaning given to ethics in this compendium has been based on its understanding as to its embracement as a system of duty being, wide and contradictory, many times of religion, morality and law. Emphasizes the nowadays' convergence of thinking to a "*vision that integrates societies and civilizations*". This is a historical and structural study, heavily subsidized with reflections, critiques and perspectives for human duty being, not only in the context of ideas, but expressing the ways of life and ideas of some thinkers that have influenced society in general till today. Detaches that to understand historical facts it is necessary they be interconnected with knowledge from economics, sociology, anthropology, law, geography, linguistics from certain periods and, because we are in a global era that requires an intercommunication between all peoples of the world. It presents the various meanings and treatments obtained by ethics and morality throughout human history, which are discussed and presented in three parts: the first sets the passage from the ancient world to the modern world in which there is the ideological hegemony, originated in Europe (16th century) prevailing until the 20th century, it has set the foundations of modern thought; the second detaches the reasons why the era of contradictions; and, the third one locates ethics in a world where it is required the prevail of the solidary duty being - with technique and ethics complementing each other to push the union of peoples and civilizations, with the perspective of theoretical and institutional building of the new ethics. The fulcrum of the understanding of the nowadays society, is located at the historical period that COMPARATO, based on Karl Jaspers, calls axial (the historical axis of humankind), it is between the 8th and 2nd century BC, which have given the basic principles and were established the guidelines of life, which rules till today. Emphasizes that is necessary to reconsider all of the three major systems that regulates the human conduct - religion, morality and law, which at ancient civilizations formed only one; at the modern world they are distinguished and are opposed to each other. Freedom at the ancient world was only an individual's participation at political life. Therefore, only citizens, it means, those who were entitled to participate in public decisions, they consider themselves free, and socially were absorbed by the social group - clan, family, tribe, city, although subordinated to the customs of their ancestors in regulating their private lives. Contrary to the contemporary period, in which predominates having on being, with the mentality and institutions governed by capital, at the ancient era, it becomes clear the rejection to the mechanical tasks and to commercialization. The rupture on the understanding of freedom in the ancient world is at the axial period with the advent of monotheistic faith and philosophical knowledge, based on right. The local or national religions began to disappear, giving rise to the universal religion of one and true God. The Jewish monotheism which has inaugurated the new phase had presented a revolutionary feature, showing the link between religion and ethics, which we can observe at the Decalogue more than 50% cultural and moral precepts. At modernity, it becomes clear that the mentality under the individualistic ideology of capitalism, with private freedoms emphasizing the right to resist to the state interference. Within religious scope, you can observe the ethical consequences of the differences between St. Francis of Assisi and St. Thomas of Aquinas. St. Francis of Assisi had presented as basis the paradox prescribed by Jesus on the Gospel: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it" (Luk, 9:24). On St. Thomas, on the contrary, the supreme criterion of ethic life is the right medium-term, advocated by Aristotle: nothing of excessive.

Saint Thomas of Aquinas is great promoter of philosophical reason when analyzing religious precepts. In Brazil, the notion of ethics remains interconnected with the fruition of private franchises, because the condemnation of a public figure who steals, does not differ, substantially, of the individual act of who also practices it. However, there is a huge difficulty in accepting the understanding that a policy of privatization of the State, or the public debt, is infinitely more harmful for today's society and the future of the country, than the practice of embezzlement. The reason for this is the lack of a republican spirit, denounced by Monk Vincent of Savior (1627) "No man on earth is republican, nor supervises and deals with the common good, but each of the particularly property". It is conjectured that the humanist globalization must design technology associated with ethics to prevent any disruption of humanity, because "the ignorant ethics of technological knowledge, is inefficient and empty." Thus, science and technology should be recognized as patrimony of the humanity, regarding the great project of humane world. In conclusion, the author underlines the ethical meaning of life, pointing the lessons of mythological wisdom and its interpretations; the purpose of human life, and the ethical sense of history. The real meaning of life is the peaceful and harmonious coexistence of all human beings, as it is preferable to disappear rather than the unreasonable search for immortality, connecting everything and everyone. Living is not existing in biological terms, it is existing in the world with all contrasts and conflicts, harmony and building history.