

## MORALITY AND THE SUSTENANCE OF SOCIAL ORDER IN AFRICA

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**Abstract.** *A key basis of the recent problems in many social orders may appear to be a prevalence of ethical and/or moral decadence at all levels of social life: political, social and economic, etc. We need to answer the question what is morality and why we need it in the society. This is important given the need to understand the fundamental roles of intolerance, prejudice, unfair actions towards other and a lack of empathy and sympathy towards others as features of almost every kind of human, political or social behaviour that results in discrimination, conflicts, hate, terrorism, and corruption. In that context, this paper discusses the relationship between morality and social order. It examines how morality underwrites social order and it locates the key moral values through which social order can be established and sustained.*

**Key words:** *morality, ethical/moral decadence, moral values, social order, sustenance, Africa.*

### INTRODUCTION

It is easy to observe that most governments and their accompanying state agencies appear seriously unable to consistently and institutionally guarantee the adequate protection, peace and well being of the citizens by simply being unable and unwilling to do what is right as opposed to what is not right. This triggers a need for rectifying shortfalls in a country's Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) or core values, seen as corrupt leadership, warped state centric security, ethno-religious conflicts. Such core dominant social paradigms or values outlined above predispose a government not to be innovative in managing the possible issues

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of building harmony and fostering reconciliation that can allow a country of diverse ethnic and religious groups to co-exist socially as a community by living together in peace through mutual respect and cooperation for the personal and common good of all concerned.

This shortfall leads to a social division and a governmental inefficiency due to discriminatory, insensitive and alienating ethnic and parochial interests. There seems to be an established pattern of adverse dominant social paradigms (DSP) that trigger the quest for social justice, seen as fair and equal opportunities and access to social and material resources that can make life better for all members of the society. It is easy then to notice certain moral gaps and the challenge of ethical rectification in most human societies beset with marginalization, deprivation, armed robberies, vandalism, kidnapping and killing and bombing. Such are the evidence of violence, conflict, insecurity and militancy in a country where basic deficits in human personal and social morality are noticed.

#### THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS

There seems to exist some systematic disempowerment of groups arising from gaps in the development of an ethically or morally sensitive democratization process. It is easily seen in the concentration of morally irresponsible and socially unaccountable power in the hands of a few privileged egoistic minority and their violent institutional and private militarist agents in the patrimonial predatory state that operates purely through fear, conquest, might is right, domination and secrecy, and a lack of consensus. In this mode, a majority of citizens are disenfranchised due to the logic of estrangement, disregard for human dignity, conflict and corruption that erodes public trust, equity and dialogue through the manipulation of resources and ethnic biases.

As an example, the endemic political corruption involving government and public officials at the national, state, local government and private sector levels remains a serious problem, which generates bad consequences for all; it privatizes politics, boosts costs and diverts energies to the concealment of private gain. It leads to the abuse of power, deteriorating fiscal and economic management, arbitrary policy change, deficit financing and a chronic, unrecorded leakage of funds, blurs the line between private and state property, erodes public trust, invites incompetence and violates the very laws and rules that stabilize the state and society.

This leads to problems of upholding simple social and moral principles that spell out what is right from wrong in human behaviour. Mainly, there is a deficit in the upholding of the rule of law as the members of society will face varying forms of human rights violations and authoritarianism. At the economic level, the misappropriation and misapplication of state resources by incumbent state actors as well as local authorities and foreign business interests breed numerous aggrieved groups who clamour for installing elaborate procedures of fair treatment and negotiation which will counterbalance the reality of insecurity and marginalization.

The gaps in the realm of social justice can be easily seen. A socio-economic disempowerment and marginalization of a broad group of citizens often leads to the re-emergence of a regime of cowered social actors and voters, and notably vulnerable social groups such as: rural dwellers, the low income earners, politicians and business people disfavoured by the current government, medium and low level government workers,

pensioners or retired workers, rural peoples, uneducated people, unemployed and underemployed youth, physically challenged persons, destitute children. These groups are always under threat and are suppressed in a society devoid of fair principles of human dealings.

The fundamental problems of establishing viable dominant social paradigm (DSP) crystallizing into social justice and the conflicts which threaten most nation state projects have centered on shortfalls in unity, security and social justice at the personal, national and institutional levels within the dynamics of the state. Every state or society is known by the principles of social justice that it maintains. Social justice fundamentally focuses on the rules of fair treatment of the members of society, the equality of opportunity for progress available to the citizens, the level of social and physical infrastructure corresponding to the quality of life of the people and the upholding of humane and human democratic values of freedom, and responsibility for human dignity.

Then, the questions arise: what happens when we have the subversion of human dignity in the society which may be easily observed in the following: the rule of justice that is obstructed by the negative dominant social paradigm(s) of ethnicity as a rule of socioeconomic allocation; corruption among the rulers and the ruled; disdain for the rule of law by criminals and insurgents; a lack of accountability by public office holders; the disregard for the value of human life by law enforcers; and the frustration of the common good by some regional groups. How do we tackle concerns about disorder, public mistrust and corruption that arise from contradictions between democratic consolidation and intolerant power?

Given that human beings regardless of their age, training, wealth, achievement or status in life are merely 'human' and cannot be easily or definitely guaranteed to conduct themselves always according to fair and humane standards of living, it becomes necessary to look into the rules and norms that guide living together reasonably for peace and for a common purpose. This is where the study of proper human behaviour enters the picture. The study of ethics is crucial to human existence and security because it guides, in the most appropriate way, human behaviour and experience in the various domains and professions within the social order. Ethical behaviour basically involves exhibiting a moral sense that embellishes human behaviour and experience and provides for thinking and action to follow laid down actions and rules governing the basic separation of right from wrong, the conscious desire to consider the feelings and needs of others, and the urge to deter and prohibit certain actions that are inimical to the organization, group or society. These are the key elements of the concept of morality. The next issue is to find out what morality is. Why do we need it in the society? What happens when a society has shortfalls in morality?

#### A THEORETICAL EXPLORATION: WHAT IS MORALITY?

Philosophers have identified three basic kinds of inquiry or forms of examining morality. According to William Frankena (Frankena, Granrose, 1974:1), inquiries concerning morality may be tackled by descriptive or explanatory, normative and meta-ethical approaches. The descriptive approach is usually employed by historians and social scientists, while the normative and meta-ethical issues in morality form the core of the moral philosophers' inquiry.

Frankena holds that the normative questions in morality centre on the principles, standards or methods for determining what is morally good or bad. While the meta-ethical issues in morality investigate the very meaning of morality itself and the justification of moral judgments.

Thus, we can infer that moral philosophy, properly understood, is concerned with the normative and meta-ethical questions about morality, and in this case, such questions are crucially related to social order. According to Mozia, man is a moral being who by virtue of his reason is able to discover a 'natural law' which directs him to do good and avoid evil (Mozia, 1990:1-2). This law guides his conduct in his relationship with others, usually in a social context. Therefore, Mozia holds that morality provides ethical principles that safeguard the rights of the individual in the society and points out to his reciprocal duties and responsibilities. Thus, justice, freedom and social order form the contents of morality.

As Kwasi Wiredu observes, morality is universal and essential to every human culture, and any society without a *modicum* of morality must collapse. For him, "morality is simply the observance of rules for the harmonious adjustment of the interests of the individual to those of others in society. It involves not merely the *de facto* conformity to the requirements of the harmony of interests but also the conformity to those requirements which is inspired by an imaginative and sympathetic identification with the interest of others even at the expense of a possible constraint to one's own interests" (Wiredu, 1992).

Given the above fact, Wiredu holds that morality is necessarily a social enterprise. Yet, even though all human beings have some concern for their personal interests, it is clear that everyone is not naturally inclined towards being concerned about the interests of others all the time. With such a problem at hand, Wiredu argues that morality cannot but be founded upon the principle of sympathetic impartiality. According to Wiredu, "a person may be said to manifest due concern for the interest of others if in contemplating the impact of his or her action on their interests, the person puts himself or herself imaginatively in their position and, having done so, is able to welcome that impact" (Wiredu, 1998:37).

Wiredu highlights the significance of his principle of sympathetic impartiality as a core feature of morality by stressing that "it takes little imagination to foresee that life in any society in which everyone openly avowed the contrary of this principle, and acted accordingly would inevitably be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and probably short" (Wiredu, 1998:37). Thus, to avoid the occurrence of conflicts and disharmony, morality construed as the motivated pursuit of sympathetic impartiality becomes essential to the harmonisation of human interests in the society. For Wiredu, values such as honesty, fairness, justice (etc.) are merely aspects of sympathetic impartiality and do not differentiate morality from one culture to another. He therefore concludes that, though morality is both a set of rules and a pattern of conduct in relation to these rules, yet sympathetic impartiality symbolises a merger or fusion of the two ideas such that, "the impartiality is what the moral rules embody, while the sympathy is what the moral motivation evinces" (Wiredu, 1998:38-39).

As a principle of social life which is centered primarily upon the harmonisation of interests, morality is a means of clarifying the relations between men and a medium of regulating human interpersonal behaviour. Morality is an emanation of man's overriding desire to preserve social harmony by ensuring that moral codes discourage aggression, injustice, deceit and anarchy in any social order. Given as it were, the social nature of human existence, morality becomes a very important and invaluable tool which could avert the condition of disharmony in society. As a critical factor in social order, morality retains a core or essence that spells out its true end and nature. Morality conceived as a

social phenomenon is a crucial and indispensable means of social control, regulation and prevention of harm in human society. Morality achieves this social regulation and control not only by ensuring the clarification of rules and laws differentiating between good and bad, or right from wrong in the society, but also by ensuring that specific traits of character or dispositions are instilled in people.

The essence of morality, according to R.B. Perry, is man's endeavour to harmonise conflicting interests, to prevent conflict when it threatens, to remove conflict when it occurs, and to advance from the negative harmony of non-conflict to the positive harmony of co-operation (Perry, 1974:373). For him, morality is the solution to the problem created by conflict among the interests of the same or of different organisations, so that the benefits of morality are in the ideal situation extended to all and sundry. Perry holds that morality as a progressive achievement requires the integration of interests. This integration of interests, which is the chief intention of morality, aims at rendering such interests harmonious without undermining their identity.

Bayles contends that morality essentially plays the role of an umpire or arbiter who tries to resolve conflicting interests between people (Bayles, Henley 1989:10). Philippa Foot also agrees that the morality is a device basically intended to ensure the harmonisation of ends or the securing of the greatest possible general good in addition to the safeguarding rights (Foot, 1985:208). The desire of morality to harmonise conflicting interests transforms it into a necessarily social activity, enterprise or institution.

The crucial question is: how is morality a social phenomenon? What is the significance of the social nature of morality? According to William Frankena, morality is a social enterprise in the sense that it is a system governing the relations of one individual to another (Frankena, 1973:6). It is also social by virtue of the social nature of its origins, sanctions and functions as what we may call a mediating influence upon human interpersonal activities. Frankena argues that morality is an instrument of society as a whole for the guidance of individuals and groups. He also perceptively observes that an individual, family or social class may have a morality that is different from that upheld by the society. But for him, the dominant morality in the society is the social morality. The view on the presence of a number of competing moralities is also upheld by Kekes, Ginsberg, Cooper and Kupperman (Kekes, 1988, Ginsberg, 1953, Cooper, 1973, Kupperman, 1983).

Still on the social nature of morality, Stephen Toulmin holds that "morality is a social institution or a system of rules actually accepted by a society" (Toulmin, Cooper, 1973). For such a system to be widely accepted or effective, it must be able to harmonise conflicting desires and aims, to some extent. According to Whiteley, morality is a social rule in a more fundamental sense, as an outline of norms of behaviour operative in a more fundamental sense, as an outline of norms of behaviour operative in a community (Whiteley, 1982: 138). For him, life in a human community is possible only if there exists a certain level of friendliness, mutual aid and rules for settling issues. Without these facilities, a community cannot survive or exist at all. Whiteley therefore maintains that morality in its social manifestation ensures mutual goodwill which helps people to pursue their aims in an atmosphere of friendly competition and assistance.

The fact that morality is mainly a social enterprise clearly reveals the significance of mutually accepted social rules for governing interpersonal interactions. Therefore, by ensuring mutual aid, trust and friendliness morality, it is essentially designed as a means of social control and regulation, as well as prevention of harm. Morality as a means of

social control and the prevention of harm forms the essence of its sociality because, according to Kupperman, “the core of morality must be injunctions against harming others” (Kupperman, 1983). Morality promotes our security by forbidding thefts, murder, torture, etc. For him, there is a very close conceptual link between morality and harm because morality tries to prevent harm to both the individual and the society. Viewed in this way, morality becomes a matter of social control, or what David Cox refers to as ‘defensive social behaviour adopted against a hazard’ (Cox, 1981). For Cox, the protection, safety and welfare of the society is the generating motive in the development of moral rules. Certain rules against murder, lying, callousness, faithlessness are made the object of morality because these constitute a threat to the wellbeing of society at large.

In order to guarantee the security, welfare and wellbeing of the people in society, morality is essentially conceived as a means of social control and regulation which employs two main approaches: firstly, it tries to differentiate between good and bad by positing rules, codes and laws; secondly, it tries to instil or cultivate in people certain acceptable traits of character or dispositions called virtues. The protection, security, welfare and wellbeing which morality provides for society through its power as a means of social regulation and control is an emanation of its capacity to distinguish right from wrong, good from bad. It emphasises the ability to discern opposing qualities or the nature of actions and entities.

In order to achieve its end as a means of harmonising interests and the guidance of life in the society through its rules and codes, morality cannot stop at the threshold of merely separating right from wrong via its enforced codes and rules. Morality must go on to ensure that people almost always try to choose and do what is right, good or proper. Therefore, morality manifests itself in its zenith as the cultivation of desired, good or favourable traits of character and dispositions. Without doubt, the cultivation of specifically desirable and good traits of character is the very essence or core of morality as many philosophers have noted. Morality as the cultivation of virtues has its origins in Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and it emphasises the non-negotiable imperative of morality to nurture good and favourable dispositions in and among people.

Frankena holds that “morality throughout its history has been concerned with the cultivation of certain traits such as character, honesty, justice, kindness” (Frankena, 1973: 63-65). According to him, morality demands that we attain and develop an ability to be aware of others as persons who possess an importance just as we do. Therefore, morality intimates us of the need to have a lively and sympathetic representation in the imagination of the interests of other people and of the effects of our actions on their lives (Frankena, 1973:63-65). This is exactly what Kwasi Wiredu implies when he holds that “the rationale of a moral rule is the harmonisation of the interests of others in the society. And the motivation of morality is the sympathetic appreciation of those interests via a frame of mind which facilitates the mind’s ability to contemplate with equanimity the possible abridgement of one’s own interest in deference to the interest of others” (Wiredu, 1996:64, Oladipo, 1995:36).

Morality is an indispensable condition of worthwhile human personal and social existence and the very foundation of social order. The value and power of morality lies in its ability to regulate, refine and perfect human life in view of peace, justice, dignity and love. Morality is crucial to social order in so far as it strives to ensure the harmonization of the diverse interests of people who cannot but live in a social context, in order to realise their true ends and the highest level of personal and social development. Morality aims at

the fullest development of human potentials by exercising its regulatory capacities through its codes. Such moral codes are aimed at fostering mutual respect, co-operation, justice, harmony and wellbeing. By providing such regulatory mechanisms morality tries to keep human life at a respectable level by instilling in people traits, character or dispositions known as virtues. The nature of morality directs its attempts to ensure the protection, progress and preservation of humanity by providing the best possible way of social interaction proper to enduring and viable social order.

Morality facilitates the establishment of a more perfect way of living for man in society by upholding social roles, rights, duties, burdens, benefits and responsibilities. By defining the roles and responsibilities of men, morality reveals the character of man as a responsible, free and dignified being capable of self-respect, self-determination and accountability in the things he does. The nature of morality depicts all that social order strives to provide for human beings in a society. Thus, the gains offered by morality and social order are those opportunities given to men to be able to live in a society with knowledge that they are protected. Man is also offered the opportunity to develop his talents, potentials and abilities along well-defined and productive lines. Morality offers men the chance to live in a society that consistently takes the views, needs and problems of all into consideration. The type of social order which morality underlies is one that seeks peace, order, justice and dignity for all and sundry.

#### THE NEED FOR AND THE PURPOSE OF MORALITY: WHY IS MORALITY IMPORTANT OR RELEVANT?

The need for morality arises out of conflicts of interest and desires among human beings. According to Wiredu, morality is necessary for the harmonisation of the warring interests through systematic adjustment and adaptation (Wiredu, 1992:197). John Dewey holds that morality originates from that situation whereby men are confronted with incompatible courses of action that seem to be equally justified morally (Dewey, 1974:14). In other words, morality arises out of a situation in which men have different desires which promise opposed goods. Morality, as we perceive, emerges to clarify claims to such goods and to protect these claims. Thus, Joel Kupperman argues that “morality arises out of a need for protection. But this protection is not usually absolute because there are still immoral persons who try to breach moral rules and expectations” (Kupperman, 1983:4). By ensuring that people keep within the boundaries delimited by morality as much as possible, human personal and social life becomes more bearable and productive. Morality thus aims at making life more bearable for men by harmonising their interests. G. J. Warnock holds that the object or purpose of morality is “the amelioration of the human predicament by countervailing man’s limited sympathies” (Warnock, 1972:260). For Warnock, morality comes into being because the satisfaction of human needs, wants and interests is frustrated by limited resources, limited information and limited intelligence, limited rationality and limited sympathies. The proper business of morality is to countervail these constraints and problems or to seek a way of reconciling these differences and dispute among men.

For Stephen Toulmin, the purpose of morality is to correlate human feelings and behaviour in such a way as to make the fulfilment of everyone’s aims and desires, to a large extent, compatible (Toulmin, Cooper, 1973:230). A major way by which morality successfully

correlates human conduct is by ensuring that human affairs are directed by the power of reason (Stevens, 1981:3). This human reason which motivates morality ensures that morality is based on human intelligence, freedom and social nature (Ginsbert, 1953:66). These three interpenetrating qualities combine to give morality a pre-eminent place in social life.

The central purpose of morality is the reconciliation of human desires, needs, interests and goals into a mutually beneficial and socially defined system of human interaction. When human interaction is moderated by morality, then social order is made possible as the clarification and protection of specific rights and duties, expectations and obligations. As a product of human reflection and activity, morality is a means of ensuring that social roles are functional and effective, by dictating what the responsibility of each person is to himself as well as to others. Thus, morality makes it possible for each of the resources of society to be shared among all amicably. It ensures the protection of each man's rights, properties and the execution of duties and responsibilities which are mutually beneficial to everyone in the society.

The question of the need for morality continues to dominate the controversy between the exponents of egoism and altruism. Egoism holds that morality should serve the interest of the self and that the goal of a person's action should be his own self interest (Hospers, 1973:600, Omoregbe, 1993:79). In effect, egoism holds that man should not only seek his own interest in everything he does but that he should act morally only if he may benefit from such an arrangement. However, some important questions arise from the attempt to justify morality on the basis of egoism. Can self-interest be a genuine basis for enduring morality? How can the presence of altruism be explained in social life?

It seems that a strictly egoistic moral life will not be conducive to personal and social morality. It may in fact be antithetical to the demands of morality because the promotion of self-interest as the moral rule will ensure that the goal of harmonising conflicting interests is largely defeated. Any society founded strictly on egoistic principles of morality can only result in confusion. According to Bayles and Henley, if moral concepts are used to categorise actions, persons and institutions, and moral judgements concern themselves with the social and interpersonal, then the viewpoint of morality seems to rule out normative egoism (Bayles, Henley, 1989).

Kwasi Wiredu asserts that a certain minimum of altruism is absolutely essential to the moral motivation (Wiredu, 1992:191). Altruism is the consideration for the interest of others, and only when we consider others can the talk about harmonisation of conflicting interests be meaningful. According to David Cox, altruism acknowledges correctly that the form of moral behaviour appears generally to be other-regarding (Cox, 1981). However, altruism fails to acknowledge the individual, social and practical ends and served by moral systems. On the other hand, egoism achieves a correct recognition of the function of morality as supportive of human self-realisation but it ignores the social role in self-actualisation. Therefore, Cox argues that "both theories express a portion of the truth but neither by itself is sufficient" (Cox, 1981).

Sharing a similar view with Cox, Christopher McMahon holds that some connection exists between acting as morality requires and promoting the interest of others (McMahon, 1991:250). This connection is such that morality can come into conflict with self-interest. If to promote the interest of others is to behave altruistically, then to say that there is a link between acting as morality demands and promoting the interest of others implies that morality has an altruistic aspect. However, he is quick to point out that affirming a link between morality and altruism does not mean that both cannot diverge.



McMahon holds that morality is linked to but different from altruism because moral requirements can be distinguished from private projects. Our private projects are those private ends which we pursue in order to make life meaningful for us. On the other hand, the moral requirements are a finite set of constraints on the projects that we may pursue and the way we may pursue them (McMahon, 1991:251). Therefore, in so far as we heed the stated requirements of morality, then we may pursue any ends or projects that we desire. McMahon points out that regardless of the projects that people pursue their respect for the requirements or morality can be seen as introducing into all lives a basic level of altruism. This is because our efforts at respecting such moral requirements sometimes entail that we refrain from those actions which would interfere with the projects of others. And by so doing, we are promoting the interests of others in a way.

From the above, McMahon concludes that morality is essentially the middle point between two extremes: self-interest and altruism. For him, "morality is therefore a mixture of self-interest and altruism actions typical of many people in ordinary moral life" (McMahon, 1991:251). The blend of egoism and altruism which forms morality has the basic goal of ensuring social peace, security, separation of rights and duties, burdens, benefits and responsibilities in a social atmosphere of justice and harmony.

Therefore, we agree with Whiteley who holds that moral rules receive their justification in the context of how they serve the purpose of the community. For him, life in a human community is possible only if there is among its members a certain amount of friendliness, mutual help in times of distress, integrated activities demanding shared efforts, risks and rewards as well as general harmony and cordiality (Whiteley, 1982: 438). All these, we can say, are the purposes to which morality is geared or intended. Morality therefore, as the proper demarcation of personal and collective interests, is the basis of true community in which social order is operative as the basis of role allocation.

#### CONCEPTUAL INTERFACES: CONNECTING MORALITY AND SOCIAL ORDER

In order to see how morality underwrites social order and thus becomes its foundation, we must recall the very essence of social order and then go on to outline the role of morality in establishing and sustaining this order. Social order refers to the social systems and schemes of social relations that define the political, economic and social roles, rights and duties of people in a society (Messner, 1991:250, Bierstedt, 1963, Zanden, 1977). It refers to that form of social organisation established by man to facilitate the attainment of specific goals. It is indispensable for human survival and self-realisation. It is in fact the sum of human arrangements, values, rules, norms, regulations and institutions that enhance the proper functioning of various parts of the society.

Social order originates out of fundamental concerns about justice between men and it is realised in the idea of partnership between men in rights, duties and responsibilities. Social order arises out of that need to balance the conflicts of interest among individuals and between individuals and society (Neuner, Dupuis, 1990:676). In order to facilitate its operations, social order is founded on four key principles. The first is the principle of the common good which affirms the state's duty to ensure common justice and fairness in relationship between individuals. The second principle underlying social order is that of personality, which affirms the dignity of man expressed through his personal freedom and self-responsibility. The third principle is solidarity which affirms that society and its members are

mutually inter-linked and responsible for one another in such a way that all can contribute their quota to the common good of the society in any capacity. Finally, the fourth principle of social order is subsidiarity which ensures that neither the state nor any society should ever substitute for the initiative and responsibility of individuals and intermediate communities (Neuner, 1981:68, Wernhahn, 1990:28, John Paul II, 1991:32, Pope XI, 1991:38).

Consequently, social order as expressed in its central principles decree that man is a social being who develops in the context of human society. It thrives upon the unshakeable belief that all men are created by God and are therefore members of one human race possessing the same rights, living in universal brotherhood and having the same opportunities to develop their humanity and attain their divine destiny (Pope John XXII, 1963:9, Neuner, 1981:675). In this way, every man is appreciated as a person endowed with dignity, intelligence and freewill.

The fundamental goals of social order are to provide fair and favourable conditions for the protection, peace and security of lives and property, the enjoyment of rights and fulfilment of duties by all, and the sharing of benefits and burdens in socially equitable ways. Social order strives for the good of all and the active participation of as many as possible in the administration of social life. It seeks to co-ordinate the voluntary initiatives and gifts of individuals and groups in their attempt to make some contributions to the society. The society can benefit from the inputs of people only if it administers social life on the basis of justice. Justice is in fact a core means to and end of social order. Justice demands the articulation of the best and harmonious system of allocating and protecting rights, duties, responsibilities, burdens and benefits in the society in accordance with humane, cordial and mutually supportive practices and intentions (Oustra, 1990:72, Hoffner, 1990:24).

Morality equally aims at the harmonisation of conflicting interests and desires among people in a society. Social order is actually enhanced when morality is able to integrate such interests and harmonise their ends into what may be called the general good. Morality as we noted earlier is inclined toward striking a balance between contending interests and is thus in this sense geared toward the general good. In recalling the social nature of morality, we see that it shares this character in common with social order in so far as it is concerned with human interpersonal existence in a well organised social system or organisation of communal life.

Morality and social order also share the social nature in so far as they both seek to provide rules and institutions guiding human personal and social behaviour in the context of society. Both structures are thus systems of regulating the activities of men for achieving certain desired ends such as peace, justice, security and harmony. In other words, the regulatory capacities of morality and social order strive to guarantee harmonious, peaceful coexistence among men through the assurance of co-operation, goodwill and role designation as critical factors in any worthwhile human social interaction.

The importance of morality for social order is also seen in the fact that they share a common target: human conduct. Though human conduct is both personal and social, morality aims at legislating moral codes that define the boundaries of rights, duties and roles for those in the society. By so doing, morality conforms to the basic goal of social order which is to articulate a properly regulated system of interrelated social activities in view of the common good and dignity of man. Social order and morality strive to uphold the dignity and respect of man by relating to him a responsible, free, voluntary and rational agent. Man's freedom or the power to choose between good and evil makes him a free and responsible agent. As a free agent, man is by his actions capable of determining the outcome of most things for or against his needs.

This freedom possessed by man ensures that he is considered responsible or accountable for whatever he does or does not do. As a responsible being, man is given the dignity and respect befitting a creature of high rationality and intelligence of his kind. Therefore, morality and social order strive to guarantee harmonious, peaceful coexistence among men through the assurance of co-operation, goodwill and role designation as critical factors in any worthwhile human social interaction.

By allowing man to be responsible and offering him a chance to be self-determining, the rules of morality and social order instil in man the capacity to live according to the higher values of life. In order for man to make some meaningful contributions to society, it is not enough to merely spell out rules and regulations that he must follow. Rather, by the rules and institutions which they uphold, morality and social order seek to strike at a more fundamental core of human nature. They try to create and disseminate among men certain favourable traits and dispositions which would guarantee the continued security, peace, co-operation and friendliness indispensable for the attainment of a truly worthwhile human existence.

The most important contribution of morality to social order is its ability to instil and promote good and beneficial values among men in society. Morality makes its own contribution to social order by striving for justice, balancing of interests, equality, establishment of rules and institutions in view of social control and the prevention of harm to persons and society. Morality commits itself irrevocably to the protection, peace, progress and survival of lives and properties at the personal and social levels of life. As it is, no form of social order is possible outside of morality. Morality is a veritable instrument or agency for sustaining human life through the clarification of roles, benefits and burdens on the basis of fundamental imperative of justice.

Morality is fundamental to social order because it ensures human dignity and responsibility through the separation of good and evil, the prevention of harm, the harmonisation of interests and the cultivation of favourable traits or character. By making such demands on man, morality strives to create an atmosphere of equality and justice necessary for the realisation of man's personal and social development. Morality instils in man the awareness that social order is attainable only if peace, justice and good character form the basis of human actions.

Morality contributes to the sustenance of social order by offering enduring ways of guaranteeing mutual respect, harmony, and co-operation in society. Morality contributes to the establishment of social order by helping to ensure that the human mind or person is properly educated and cultivated to show good productive and humane attitudes and ways of life. Therefore, morality facilitates the awareness that man should possess sympathy for his fellowmen and his ability to view others as equally important and worthy of respect as himself.

The contributions of morality to social order rest mainly in the effort to ensure that rules sustaining proper social life are adhered to by all in the society. Morality facilitates the functioning of other areas of social life (such as: politics, economy, etc.), so that they are properly regulated using human, dignifying and productive rules or patterns of action. Therefore, morality emerges as the foundation of social order, without which a viable social order cannot possibly be established and sustained.

The effective attainment of the goals of morality in any social order depends significantly upon a number of critical conditions. According to Joel Kupperman, the first condition that morality must meet if it is to function efficiently as a foundation of social order is that it must be capable of being taught to, remembered by and applied to a great majority of

the population (Kupperman, 1981:13-15). For him, a second condition for the efficient operation of morality within the social order is that it must not ask too much and the correct moral choices must be within the power of the great majority of the population. The third condition is that moral transgressions must be readily identifiable and describable. Kupperman points out that morality must have a nucleus that is not too complicated or subtle, if it is to be shared by everyone in the society. In order to be capable of being shared, it must possess highly general moral rules without explicit qualifications. For him, morality should not set too high a standard. It has to remain manageable for a great majority of people so that it leaves most of life free for the pursuit of whatever personal goals one has (Kupperman, 1981:13-15).

Kupperman insists that, to achieve these ends, morality should focus on single acts seen as discrete and fairly disconnected from the rest of life (for instance, issues concerning the choice of whether to steal or not). He therefore argues that morality as a social mechanism requires the normal possibility of a shared vision of what is being condemned. In this way, we can normally agree when stealing or murder has taken place. These are the conditions offered by Kupperman for an affective morality that can form the basis of social order.

The implications of Kupperman's requirements on the regulatory power of morality within a social order are as follows. The fact that morality can be taught to, remembered by and applied by a great majority of the population ensures that it rules and impacts are accessible to the bulk of people instrumental to creating social order. Social order is easier to establish if all concerned can easily imbibe and practice the moral rules basic to its smooth and efficient operation. Thus, for social order to be established, the rules of morality must be easy to learn and apply by those concerned.

Also, for social order to succeed, morality must not ask too much of the people, so that its demands can be comprehensible and realisable. The demands of morality would be concerned with the adherence of people to basic codes, rules that ensure a harmonious, just and peaceful social life. People would need to be aware that adherence to these codes is indispensable for individual and collective progress and preservation. The achievable nature of moral claims or demands is crucial to the establishment and success of any social order. It would be counter-productive for any moral system to make unrealistic or impracticable demands upon its adherents. We must recall that social order is based on the assumption that its fundamental principles can be attained by man with some degree of effort. Moreover, the advantage of having easily identifiable moral transgressions or a common vision of what is being condemned is that the moral rules underlying social order are thereby made explicit, normative and universal for all in the society. This ensures a standardisation of moral and social expectations, obligations and responsibilities.

#### THE IMPERATIVE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIVE CONDUCT: MORALITY, MODES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND SOCIAL ORDER

Recent accounts of morality discuss it in terms of modes of responsibility or certain frameworks that should exist if morality is to have meaning for individuals and society. In other words, in recent moral discourse, morality has been more closely linked to responsibility. This nexus serves to reiterate morality's commitment to the voluntary, free and rational capacities of human conduct. According to Brugger, responsibility is a necessary consequence of human freewill and the demand for accountability based on it.

Given this demand for accountability, the moral person as the decisive cause of his good and evil deeds must answer for them (Brugger, 1974, 352-353). Thus, the bearer of responsibility is the person who is capable of a moral act. The dignity of a human being is clearly revealed in his personal responsibility. The dignity of man is the affirmation of his incomparable worth arising from his nature as a free and responsible being.

The link between morality and responsibility shows the increasingly important value that is attached to the nature and consequences of actions and the connection between different actions as they affect human activities in contemporary societies. Morality therefore makes a strong demand on people to operate or conduct their activities within some modes of responsibility. According to Grisez and Shaw, the first mode of responsibility which morality demands is that people should consistently commit to a harmonious set of purposes or values and perform their actions within the pattern(s) created by this organisation. For them, the second mode of responsibility upheld by morality is that a person should not see himself as a special case or candidate requiring special treatment or concessions. Therefore, a person operating in this mode of responsibility will regularly ask himself questions such as: 'how would I feel if another person did this to me'. The third mode of responsibility implies one's willingness to help others and the desire to see them develop and perfect themselves by realising their capacities to the fullest. Thus, people should be willing to accept responsibility for the needs of others even where there are no structured relationships that compel such a disposition. The fourth mode of responsibility is characterised by a sense of detachment which ensures that someone with a morally good attitude and openness to all human goods will not be destroyed by the loss of any of these goods, no matter how genuinely painful the loss may be. According to Grisez and Shaw, the fifth mode of responsibility demands that a person should remain committed to his ideals. This practice of fidelity or commitment ensures that a person will persist in seeking the realisation of his purposes. The sixth mode of responsibility demands that a person should seek specific ends which contribute to the realisation of the broader, deeper purpose to which he has dedicated his life (Grisez, Shaw, 1989:36). The seventh mode of responsibility demands that the members of a community, by virtue of living up to their roles and fulfilling their duties, should be engaged in a joint action seeking the realisation of a fundamental purpose. Finally, the eighth mode of responsibility affirms the existence of ethical absolutes or actions that should never be done regardless of circumstances and consequences. Thus, it is never right or proper to act directly against one of the fundamental human goods (Grisez, Shaw, 1989:35).

The relevance of these modes of responsibility to the achievement of social order is as follows. By demanding that people should be committed to a harmonious set of purposes or values, morality depicts social order as a purposive, goal-oriented arrangement which emphasizes the importance of co-operation and mutual responsibility for the realisation of worthwhile human personal and social development. By this first mode of responsibility, morality shows that social order requires the joint contributions and collective participation of people if it is to succeed. Morality demands that people should show the spirit of tolerance and consideration, as well as justice and co-operation in order for social order to be established and sustained. Morality therefore defines those values, ideals or images of life which form the nucleus around which people can build their social activities. By stressing co-operative action in a social order, morality reveals that peace, order, equality and unity are values indispensable for the progress and preservation of society, man and all that he has endeavoured to achieve over the ages.

The second mode of responsibility is relevant to social order because by discouraging people from demanding special concessions, morality seeks to establish a sense of equity, fairness, desert and social balance. Morality produces this equality and social balance by demanding of people to think of how they would feel if others were to treat them in a similar way. As such, morality elicits man's rational ability to give consideration to others, as a way of ensuring his own personal safety. Social order is thus guaranteed by this moral rule of uniformity, in so far as everyone realises the consequences of doing or not doing what he ought to do. In social order, men realise that it would be infinitely better if all were to adhere conscientiously to their respective social responsibilities and duties as a non-negotiable condition for their claim to any rights and benefits in the society.

The third mode of responsibility, which demands that people express a willingness to help others, helps to guarantee social order as an organisation founded upon mutual aid and communal support. By asking that people should be responsible for others, morality ensures that social order is guided by a spirit of co-operation, kindness, compassion and respect for the dignity of men. By adhering to these values, the lives of men in the society are made more humane and stable. As such, morality helps man to draw nearer to the ideal image of life expressive of his status as a being of dignity, responsibility and freedom. Morality teaches that helping others in need, compassion and mutual support are the hallmarks of the positive human nature. Thus, social order is best promoted and preserved when men in their interactions in society strive to show respect, sympathy and kindness towards one another.

By showing commitment to the ideals of social life, morality helps to ensure that social order is not diminished or undermined. Thus, our commitment to the ideals upheld by morality ensures that the goals of human social interaction are kept in proper perspective and that man is continually motivated to strive towards attaining such ideals of a truly moral and social life. The ideals of freedom, compassion and responsibility that morality upholds are important for social order because they serve as guides towards the attainment of viable social order and the norms or standards of proper human conduct in society. With these ideals as its focus, society will continue to regulate the actions of its members on the basis of justice, peace, love, security and the common good.

By living up to their duties and fulfilling their roles, morality facilitate people's efforts to achieve the common good as a central end of social order. Morality as an instrument of role definition ensures that the members of society recognise the importance of social order by their conscious and determined efforts to uphold the rights, duties, burdens and benefits accruing to each person in the social system. Morality underscores the fact that it is only through the clarification of social roles, commitments and entitlements that social order retains its unique meaning and importance. By affirming the existence of ethical absolutes, morality prescribes for social order a standard of action set as a means of determining the proper boundaries of right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice. Therefore, morality affirms the irrevocable freedom and responsibility of man as a social being existing in a social system.

#### KEY MORAL VALUES IN THE SUSTENANCE OF SOCIETY

The concept of value is very important to morality and when conceived as moral values it becomes the dispensable bedrock of genuine and enduring social order. According to R.B. Perry, something has value or is valuable in the original and generic sense when it is the

object of an interest or any interest. For him, interest can be defined as a train of events determined by the expectation of its outcome (Perry, 1968:366). For Marcus Singer, a person's values are what that person considers to be important, whereas a society's values are what that society considers to be important. According to him, a society's values are expressed in laws and legislatively enacted policies, in its mores, social habits and positive morality (Singer, 1989:145). Godwin Sogolo affirms that value may be taken on a general plane to mean the aggregate or set of institutional ideas desired or cherished either by an individual or a group of people (Sogolo, 1993:119).

The immense importance of values in morality and social order is discerned in the views of Brunner and Raemers, who hold that the basis of all cultural life is to be found in values. Values are the foundation or basis of all cognition and therefore constitute the category structure of human consciousness (Brunner, Raemers, 1937:87-88). In addition, Ayn Rand holds that the idea of value presupposes a response to the question: value to whom and for what purpose? Value presupposes that there is an entity or being which is capable of acting to achieve a goal in the face of an option or alternative (Rand, 1968:366). Therefore, values and goals cannot exist in the absence of alternatives. On this basis, Sogolo affirms that every individual (society) sets for himself (itself) an ideal form of life, that is, an image which is constantly referred to in the process of going through life (Sogolo, 1993:119).

According to Harold Titus, the issue of nature of values is one of the central and most persistent or recurrent problems of human existence since a sense of values is experienced by every person. Thus, the enormous task before man today is to discover afresh the authentic values of life and to enjoy and share them with his fellowmen (Titus, 1970). Lous Raeymaeker identifies different kinds of values, such as: material values, spiritual values, biological values, aesthetic values, religious values and moral values. For him, values can be ranked according to preference and priority, and it is not possible to speak of values without discussing actions, ends, perfection and 'good'. This, he says, is an indication that 'being' and 'value' are intimately connected (Raeymaeker, 1957). In his relation with others, man ought to strive for values like justice, friendship and benevolence. Of particular concern to us in this study is the nature and kinds of moral values crucial to the establishment of social order.

According to M. Agrawal, "a value is not a moral value unless in principle it can be upheld by all mankind. Moral values mediate between particular actions and an ultimate human value." (Agrawal, 1988:151). The total sum of moral values of a society is its image of humanity. William Frankena holds that "moral values are things that are morally good" (Frankena, 1973:62-63); such things include persons, groups of persons, traits of character, dispositions, emotions, motives and intentions. For him, justice is the basic pivot of all moral exercise, and is therefore the key moral value. According to T.U. Nwala, moral values can be negative or positive. The negative moral values are those whose performance militates against the realisation of the ideal life. These are usually definitive prohibitions against acts like murder and stealing (Nwala, 1985:148). On the other hand, the positive moral values are those actions which emphasise communal values and pre-eminence of the community, as well as trying to determine proper social and human relations. Such values include peace, justice, harmony, co-operation, honesty and transparency. According to Nwala, the positive moral values are important because they concern themselves with the individual and those values that he requires to attain the ideal life (Nwala, 1985:149).

Furthermore, John Mbiti argues that the moral values operative at the personal and social levels of human life offer some key benefits to man. Such values help to keep society alive and in harmony (Mbiti, 1975:175). For him, the absence of morals or moral values can only imply confusion and chaos for society. Therefore, moral values exist because society appreciates and endeavours to preserve such virtues. For Mbiti, another advantage of moral values is that they create in people a dislike for and the avoidance of vices. Consequently, the essence of moral values is to keep the society from disintegrating. For him, even though the ideals of such values are not always attained, people are still challenged to aspire to them.

The three moral values crucial to the establishment of social order are the respect for human dignity, compassion and justice. The value of respect for human dignity is of particular importance as the foundation and aim of morality. It is one of the key principles of social order, which is facilitated by the power of morality to elicit the recognition of the rights, humanity and equal importance of others within the social context. Morality ensures that the dignity of a human being is maintained by imposing freedom, choice and responsibility upon him. Morality uses rights to ensure human dignity and respect. Through its various principles, codes, values and rules, morality affirms the rights of man, some of which are inalienable (such as: the right to life and protection of property, the right to be free, self-determining and responsible). Thus, by its nature and purpose, morality reaffirms the faith in these fundamental rights of man, which affirm man's dignity and worth and guarantee the equality of all human beings under the law.

According to the principle of personality, the dignity of man is a central goal of social order. It holds that man, who lives in a social context, reveals his worth, respect and dignity through his personal freedom and responsibility to himself and others. According to Brugger, freedom is the state of not being forced or determined by something external in so far as it is joined to a definite internal faculty of self-determination. Freedom covers the physical, moral and psychological aspects of human life. Freedom allows one to determine oneself; it allows one to choose as he wishes (Brugger, 1974, 147-148). Without freedom or freewill, a man cannot be held responsible for his willed actions. Such a man cannot be praised or blamed. Once freedom is abandoned, then the moral dignity of the human person is also renounced.

Freedom goes hand in hand with responsibility. The moral dignity of man is only assured through responsibility. Brugger holds that responsibility is a necessary consequence of human freewill and accountability based on it. Due to this accountability, the moral person must answer for his good and evil deeds; he must accept the inevitable consequences of his actions. Therefore, the bearer of responsibility is that person who is capable of the moral act. Hence, the dignity of the human person is clearly revealed in his personal responsibility (Brugger, 1974, 352-353).

Morality by its nature seeks to direct man toward the path of good, compassion, trust, self respect and dignity. It does this by instilling in men the power and ability to do good, live harmoniously in society, to respect the right of others, to do his duties to others, to be sympathetic in treating the interests of others, and to see others as equally important and thus deserving of respect as himself. Therefore, morality becomes a central and indispensable instrument in the affirmation and enhancement of human dignity.

Through morality, men can live freely and responsibly in society. Their social life can be mutually rewarding, fraternal, humane, harmonious and progressive. Morality helps to ensure that traits like compassion or kindness are practiced among men in society. According to



M. W. Hughes, “compassion is an emotional dislike for the harm of others quite irrespective of any harm to oneself. It is naturally associated with the ability to rejoice in the good fortune of others even when one has no such good fortune oneself” (Brooks, Hughes 1973). Morality is valuable to social order in so far as it instructs men in society to be honest, kind, just and sympathetic. Morality underscores the basic goal of social order which is to seek a better way of realising human well-being and progress through positive rules of social interaction. Morality contributes to this goal by ensuring that the respect, integrity and dignity of the human person are not compromised.

### CONCLUSION

We have shown that morality is indispensable to social order because it retains certain core values outside of which social order is impossible. Such features of morality are its ability to harmonise the conflicting interests of persons and the prevention of harm by regulating social activities. The regulating power of morality rests in its separation of good from bad, justice from injustice, through its moral codes and sanctions. We have observed that morality remains a very important core which implies the cultivation of good traits of character and virtues in persons, in order to guarantee a humane, co-operative and beneficial social existence among men. Finally, morality affirms the importance of human life, integrity and dignity by ensuring that people develop a sense of responsibility, sympathy, fraternity and compassion in their dealings with others.

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## MORAL I ODRŽIVOST DRUŠTVENOG PORETKA U AFRICI

*Osnovni problemi sa kojima se u novije vreme suočavaju mnogi savremeni društveni sistemi mogu biti rezultat prevalentne etičke i/ili moralne dekadencije na svim nivoima društvenog života: političkom, socijalnom, ekonomskom, itd. Zato je neophodno odgovoriti na pitanje šta je moral i zašto su nam moralne vrednosti potrebne u društvu. Ovo pitanje je naročito važno u pogledu razumevanja osnovne uloge netolerancije, predrasuda, nepravednih postupaka, nedovoljne empatije i saosećanja prema drugima u savremenom društvu, kao karakterističnih oblika ponašanja koji prožimaju sve oblasti ljudskog, političkog i društvenog života, i dovode do diskriminacije, sukoba, mržnje, terorizma i korupcije. U ovom radu se razmatra odnos između morala i društvenog poretka. U tom kontekstu, autori analiziraju na koji način moral doprinosi održivosti društvenog poretka i identifikuju ključne moralne vrednosti koje su od vitalnog značaja za uspostavljanje i održivost društvenog poretka.*

**Ključne reči:** moral, etička/moralna dekadencija, moralne vrednosti, društveni poredak, održivost, Afrika.