

Business, Ethics and Spirituality

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Abstract

Jackers in the lecture-presentation reworked here addresses the question of spirituality and Business Ethics taking off from contemporary world situation analysis to a deeper reflection on the foundations of spirituality and ethics as depending on the understanding of the 'other' following the Levinasian lead.

Keywords: Interiority, Exteriority, Other, Freedom, Responsibility

Introduction

We live in an age of instrumental rationality. Thinking, emotions, considerations, convictions are to be translated in "things" we can handle and operate within our world. We as human rational thinkers, and doers, do not like to be left in the dark or in the twilight. It is our prerogative to stand for our reasonable and, most of all, rational requests to understand, to manipulate, to organise and to finalize.

We "animal rationales" (quoting an age old formula) want to transform: nature into culture; world into home; sound into language, slavery into freedom. We are addicted to succeed as we are addicted never to fail or fall.

The historical changes in recent centuries give witness to these unconscious assumptions. We 'proved' ourselves to be of a special kind. A human kind. But there is more!

Faced with the contemporary context of globalisation and the processes of change, established management practices are no longer able to solve the problems with which we are confronted. Standard solutions no longer serve any purpose in a world of ever accelerating change, a world in which change is the only constant, and uncertainty, the only thing we can be certain about.

The contemporary context urges all those who are willing to think about these fundamental expediencies of human lives, not once, but, to think twice!

Secularisation, demythologisation, postmodernism and deconstruction gave us the uncertainty of the thinking dessert. Great stories no longer are valid for explanation of the whole universe. We need a new language. We need, first and foremost, a new

paradigm. We need a new spirit. We need another way of thinking in order to handle properly and more effectively. We need, indeed, a new spirituality. Especially in business!

Issues of company conduct and personal conduct in business seem now to be higher on the public agenda!? Is it because our behaviour is now worse than it used to be? Well, times have indeed changed, dramatically and drastically. The contemporary era is not, repeat, is not, the Dark Age. One of the cleansing and useful roles of historical inquiry is to make each generation remember the immense fallibility of the schemes of man and mice.

'Nihil novo sub soli', (there is not anything new under the sun) the Romans and others used to quote. The Greeks quoted differently and were convinced that nothing is ever the same ("I can never step twice in the same river"). This is true with all the gravity of its deeper meaning. Present times teach us the undeniable lessons of life that our lives can change forever to the point of no return. In any case, in the history of philosophy the ancient philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, would have been surprised at the idea that the study of ethics was not concerned with behaviour.

First of all, business has become more international and, by becoming more international, it is seen, some suspect, to be less accountable. Since it is spread across the world and no longer rooted in a single community, it is held to be responsible to no single jurisdiction.

A second reason why spirituality has risen up the agenda has been the occurrence of disasters.

Third, there is undoubtedly more interest shown by shareholder groups, and by governments themselves, in ethical and environmental issues.

I

Let us start with an essential 'common sense' observation.

We are able to "make" humans. We are able to buy and to sell human life. Time is business. Time is money. The new slogan, or promotional ad, is: life is business and so life is money. We need ethics in business as a *'Conditio sine qua non'* (a condition we cannot afford to forget or to obliterate). Business without ethics surely end in disastrous 'cheap-slogans' - about the most fundamental values in life. The worst thing a society can promote and spread among the members!

We need answers to fundamental questions, raised through fundamental experiences. We need a new paradigm of ethics...and beyond! We need a new spirit beyond imagination and beyond instrumental options, provided by a market economy in spiritual dealings with the matters concerned.

We need a new 'critique'. We do not need talking, speaking randomly, gossiping. We need the new habit, the knack, to re-think our business of thinking, and the thinking of the business.

Indeed, we need have no fear to go back to the basics. The basics of our human condition in this new configuration of business, values, philosophies, religions, and human first evidences are fundamentally at stake!

The organising of a lecture on business, ethics and spirituality is not only a good occasion to reflect upon these "existentialia" (fundamental conditions) of our human condition, but it will give us the opportunity to think and re-think, over and over again, about the most daunting achievements of humans since the origin of their species.

In other words: Spirituality is about our survival. Survival of ourselves. Survival of our brothers and sisters, survival of our planet and our universal human condition.

To start with. Do ethics need spirituality? Do business ethics need spirituality? Is spirituality not an illicit infringement into a scientific discipline which is not really her domain or her purpose? Why do philosophers or other thinkers mingle with business? Is it not appropriate to state: "mind your own business?" Most people agree that leaders should be ethical, but few have delved into what this means.

The question itself raises some meditative reflections on behalf of both the sciences involved. Let us take some examples, rather dramatic, but nevertheless striking for our purpose: 1) Bhopal, 2) Financial crash and 3) Outsourcing.

1.1. Bhopal

On December 3, 1984, a Union Carbide Corporation plant in Bhopal leaked 32 tons of toxic methyl isocyanine gas, leading to the Bhopal disaster. The official death toll of this disaster was about 5,000 initially. A more probable figure is that 18,000 died within two weeks, and it is estimated that an additional 8,000 have since died from gas-poisoning-related diseases. The Greenpeace organization cites a total casualty figure of 20,000 as its own conservative estimate. The Bhopal disaster is often cited as the world's worst industrial disaster. December 3 is observed as an annual day of mourning for this disaster, and each year, all of the government offices in Bhopal are closed on this day. We all know the tragedy and the aftermath of the disaster in Bhopal.

Politics as well as Big Business was at stake. Money was at stake. Employment, and in the aftermath unemployment was more strikingly at stake. National and international concern was at stake. Law enforcement and insurance, and once again, much money were at stake.

The big rhetoric question was and still is: could it have been prevented! Who is, and was, to blame? What is the cost of this human tsunami upon the lives of generations to come?!

Questions but no answers; at least no definite and lasting answers could and would be given.

One consideration remains above all the other. Is it worth to do such things? Not only in retrospect, but, especially, in prospective sight. The fundamental question is not a technical or instrumental question, but a question of what kind of human being do we want to support or to dignify and promote? This is a philosophical and a metaphysical consideration, but in the depths of the depths of a human world it is a simple, but essential, spiritual 'business', not simple a day to day business, but we are talking about the most fundamental issues on the planet : the promotion, safeguarding and preservation of humanity in ourselves.

Our second example, amplifies the call for a spiritual need in every society, especially in financial communities.

1.2. Financial Crash

The world's financial markets are going through a crisis that is rapidly developing into what seems to be the worst global economic crisis since the 1930s. Regulation enthusiasts have already stamped the crisis as ultimate proof that market deregulation is bad for humanity. Cleaning up after the crash will no doubt be accompanied by loud demands for more regulation. It will be claimed that the state must prevent excesses similar to those that led to this crisis from taking place again.

The source of the crisis is not only to be found in doing unsound business or in the market structure or in some distant past. The crisis is simply put, a human crisis, a human business. It has to do with the goal and purposes of the human dignity itself. It makes all of us reflect upon the very fundamentals of the human existence itself. The big question of all generations; past, present and future. The question of the human value in itself.

In spite of every effort to provide it with greater depth and intensity, management remains an instrumental activity with economic goals that are frequently detached from the fundamental goals of life. This is similar to what some analysts describe as teleopathy, the unbalanced pursuit of instrumental ends that are disconnected from their moral justification in the context of society.

The financial breakdown, some say the worst ever, shows us very clearly, the need of thinking, pondering and evaluating the most essential relationships we have in and outside ourselves. We need a new spirit of thinking about our interiority and about our exteriority: as human beings involved with all our dependencies unto the surrounding realities.

1.3. Outsourcing

One of the issues dealing with outsourcing, is the fact that the companies hiring staff abroad do not have to pay any kind of federal or state taxes for these employees. The outsourcing companies take care of it themselves. This is an essential advantage for the businesses, seeking to reduce the operational costs. Also, the outsourced employees do not ask for benefits or compensations. Such cost-reduction plans are great for any company, wanting to succeed. On the other hand, the tax institutes don't get the taxes they should be getting, which means that certain branches of national welfare will suffer from the loss of resources.

Taking into account the pros and cons of outsourcing, certain states in the USA have already decided to impose restrictions or even put bans on the usage of offshore outsourcing. Whatever the decision, it should be made wisely, considering all the pros and cons of outsourcing practice.

The urgency of spirituality is probably most visible in these market opinions. It raises in itself and throughout the very practises, questions about human dignity and human resources. Is human labour, tradable? Is human work just work or more? Is work embedded in home and tradition? In culture and habits? In structures familiar with language and symbols?

These hidden questions must feature in the front-pages of our reflections. The answers to these questions enthrall so many as political and economical when undertaken, but most of all, we need thinkers to further these answers to provide the future with a liveable community, a human world, where humans recognise themselves as "home" and at "home".

Therefore, let us start with the fundamental question in our analysis: what is a human being all about? Why is a human being here, in this world? Being a human in as far as simply being 'there', just temporarily. Not forever, though living as if it would be forever?

A great deal of 'know-how' is available but precious little 'know-why'. Management expertise is necessary, of course, since production levels have to be maintained and sales optimised. There is even an intrinsically ethical significance involved in such processes, given the fact that the production of purposeful and useful goods and the establishment of a community of labour in which human persons can employ their creative talents in the service of the community represent valuable contributions to the well-being of enterprise and society.

But management is not sufficient. The world does not only need managers, it also needs leaders. Unfortunately leadership is frequently confused with senior management. While it goes without saying that some senior managers are also leaders, leadership is also to be found outside the arena of corporate management. Leadership

is an essential quality in every aspect of political and social existence, in parliaments and governments, the media, unions, academic institutions, education, the art world and in health care.

II

Human as Rational or Relational

As long as humans, or hominids, walked upon the earth, there was a need to explain and clarify the 'elements' surrounding his dwellings. Humans never ceased to grasp knowledge, insight and theorizing. It is known in every culture, in every era, in every society, that the paradigm to know and to explain is humanlike as it is human.

The Greeks showed us the path to knowledge. They were one of the first ever to construct a systematic, logical and reflective philosophy. It is amazing what the influence that kind of thinking produced throughout the world of analyzing and systematizing. No wonder that Heidegger, one of the greatest western philosophers, bluntly stated that 'All philosophy after Plato is just little footnotes of history'. Contemporary thinking in business matters emphasises this claim for all who are involved in promoting human dignity and human relations with all that it entails.

Faced with the contemporary context of globalisation and the processes of change, established management practices are no longer able to solve the problems with which they are confronted. Standard solutions no longer serve any purpose in a world of ever accelerating change, a world in which 'change is the only constant and uncertainty the only thing we can be certain about'.

Throughout the history of every kind of thinking about the fundamentals of human existence, always the same thing recurred: how is it possible that it is possible? Or impossible, for that matter. Why is there something rather than nothing?

Rationality was the main instrument. It was the vehicle to ride through the various events and scientific discoveries. To be human is to reason and that was reasonable, for centuries past! The present is announcing a future where things will change and display some other methods and insights to understand and to grasp. Reason and rationality blossomed in the heydays of the Enlightenment and reigned up to present times.

However, change is under way and this change in mentality resulting in a new spirituality is persistent.

Existential phenomenology with the transcendental Epoché (eidetical reduction), which deliberately puts reality between inverted comma's in order to be able to reach out for the essence) brought us back to basics. We could have chosen this quotation by Husserl to start this reflection. Back to the basic facts as they are, what they really are! Without bias or prejudice. A scientific approach to philosophy in its existential "bareness" (cfr. Heidegger's *Geworfenheit*).

In other words: existential phenomenology has shown us the way(s) leading to the collapse of traditional totalitarian systems; towards the way of new options in making new paradigms. Rationality has gone, and must (!) be transformed into relationality. (The term 'intersubjectivity' is also a very good notation for this fundamental relationship outside itself) A human being is not mere rational, but, first and foremost, relational.

That is the new spirituality at hand. Spirit as interiority must be overtaken by spirit as exteriority. Remember the main work by Levinas; 'Totality and infinity', (Subtitle: An Essay in Exteriority!!) (Starting with the sensibility, yielding for the other than myself, i.e. exteriority).

Centuries down the centuries stressed and repeated endlessly the same valuable tune: "Spirituality is a well flowing from inside towards the outside world." First interior tidying up and then, quiet in that order, towards the exterior. It was considered impossible to handle the outside world, if not first the inside tune was set.

The spirituality was starting 'in', before we could go 'out'.

Business was an outside business, and had nothing to do with the inner level of our meditative reflections. In business things were made and then things were evaluated or pondered, not the other way round. First the result and then the evaluating! What we can make and sell, becomes worth the effort, is what the scientists, managers, analysts, firms and the like said and thought.

As our first three examples demonstrated, the failure of some businesses shows clearly the need to reflect upon the outside 'business' before we start to make things. We are not allowed the luxury of ignorance. We relate with the outside world before we interiorize the 'outside' inside.

So, if a human being is a relational being before s/he is a rational being, what does it mean for the relations we mentioned? Where are these relations to be found? How can we possibly describe them in a way that brings us back to the basics of a human existence?

We will do this in three stages, in a gradual, integral, personal, and absorbing way.

2.1. 'I' as my freedom.

One of the first words a child is eager to pronounce, a word that expresses his entanglement with the world, a word that indicates his or her own personality and dignity is the monosyllable 'I'.

In the 'I' a human being recognises himself or herself. In the 'I' humans construct their personal intimacy and unicity or individuality. In the 'I' s/he understands the difference between the 'I' and the 'non'-I' (the others). This freedom is so fundamentally

rooted in the human condition that without freedom, there is no human state or condition at all.

Based on a description of the incapacity to enter into direct contact with the deepest layers of one's interior existence, we will, on a small scale, demonstrate how an individual focused exclusively on work and success can be exposed to an exceptional degree to the manipulation of his or her most profound longings and desires. The manipulation in question is interpreted from the perspective of the emergence of a relationship of dependence between the 'I' in search of confirmation and the other (put into business-terms: the company or organisation for which the 'I' works). Instances in which men and women become over dependent and begin to develop copycat behaviour leave little room for the emergence of genuine human dignity.

The desire for freedom, with dignity, contains my exquisite urge to be human. The layers of my further development are all built upon this original freedom. To be free is to be human, to be human is to be free.

This conviction was for centuries on end upheld in western philosophy and other sciences as well. It still governs many a philosophical undertaking.

The first relation with myself as a human being is not with my reason, but my relation with and in myself. It is 'my' 'sensibility'. Efforts in other words, to define and to delineate humanness fail and will always fail, if these analyses do not take into account this primordial relationship with myself.

Translating this fundamental condition, into the level of business, the claim to be free remains as urgent as any other. In business, taken as a simply profitable arrangement, there is the requirement for essential freedom. It may be defined in terms of money, independence from suppliers, self-management,

actualization of human resources. In any case and in any domain and any level of business there is always the claim for freedom.

Expressed in economical terms: one cannot do business without making money. Money makes free. Money is able to redouble itself and so to enhance the possibilities of the market and the organisations as free markets.

The manager's or executive's radius of action is too limited. He or she functions efficiently within a pre-given context that limits his or her thinking. The problem is that the 'executive is required to treat certain goals as given and, within certain very broad constraints, he or she is set to consider how he or she may most economically and efficiently use present resources to reach these goals... and the framework of such executive reasoning is socially defined so that certain limits are placed upon what questions may and may not be raised about it'.

In other words, money and profit making is a very highly value added determinant to operate within a marketing system. Although meant to free human beings, the danger of addiction is real and very important in marketing and business ethics. The main observation still recurs: what is the ultimate goal of money in the hands of the powerful. Amartya Sen remarked some years ago that the problem of food shortage, on a global scale, was not the shortage of food, but the lack of courage among the powerful. The powerful misusing their power.

A quick analysis of the obstacles to the development of power and leadership, given the incapacity of contemporary men and women to make sense of their life or to interpret the world in a meaningful way, could reveal the fundamental helplessness with many managers. The explanation of the latter could be based for the most part on the degeneration of the relationship with oneself, in spite of their characterisation as unique individual.

An association could be established between the fragmentation of the personality in general and the reduction of integrity to role integrity. Based on a description of the incapacity to enter into direct contact with the deepest layers of one's interior existence, such analysis will demonstrate how an individual focused exclusively on work and success or money can be exposed to an exceptional degree to the manipulation of his or her most profound longings and desires. The manipulation in question is interpreted from the perspective of the emergence of a relationship of dependence between the 'I' in search of confirmation and the company or organisation for which the 'I' works. Instances in which men and women become over dependent and begin to develop copycat behaviour leave little room for the emergence of human freedom.

In totalitarian systems there is no individual freedom, neither in economics nor in the finance business. This state of affairs presupposes dependency on central authority, which is never a good argument in human relations and is never prone to implement itself as freedom with human conditions.

Freedom is thus a relational condition and not a rational condition. At least not in the first place! This fundamental relationship with oneself is express and in the attachment to the world labour. I have to transform the world into a human world. Nature has to be transformed into culture.

With the relationship that colours my whole existence as a human being. Being free is freeing 'myself' from the bonds of dependency on nature. Of course, this labour will never take a definitive end. The dynamics of the process is that of a constant evolution through science and discoveries to free human being from the slavery of attachment.

It goes without saying that freedom is not the ultimate goal in itself. Absolute freedom does not exist. Some western philosophers are trying to prove this, though every effort invariably turned out to be in vain.

There is but one valid conception of freedom: freedom within limits. Absolute freedom results finally in slavery and the whole human reasonable effort to free oneself ends in enslaving himself.

The same goes for economics and business. Considered as a goal in itself, consumerism will eat everyone. If economics has no insight, no spirit, no thinking, and no meditation on the fundamental values involved, such spirituality will ultimately turn in suicide of the mind. And this is the end of it all.

Therefore, we need to go beyond ourselves! We need a spirituality based upon our limits and our possibilities. Freedom is not the ultimate relationship. Reason urges us to admit, that reason itself takes us further than our senses will admit. A in depth analysis of our limited freedom, shows us, in all rationality, the need for 'irrationality' or to step further towards the establishment of human dignity.

Rationally we are bound to broaden ourselves in taking up human dignity beyond the limitations of freedom. In order to do so, we need an extension of our freedom.

Rationality urges human beings to broaden humanity (my 'I') in relationships with the 'you'.

2.2. 'You' as my responsibility

Plato gives a good account of the opposite, wherein human beings see themselves as not related or belonging to one another: The story tells of a group of cave dwellers who find themselves in a dark and cavernous space. They are chained hand and foot in such a way that they are only able to look forward (they are literally forward looking). They are unable to look to one side or to the rear - in other words, they are lonely creatures without history. The perspective that governs their lives is narrow and confined. The essentially closed horizon within which they find themselves limits their experience of reality with others. They cannot even imagine the possibility that their experience could be much richer, deeper, and more meaningful. The one who has seen more is rejected by them. Intersubjectivity is caved in and locked away forever.

The enrichment of my human freedom is expressed in my responsibility. To fully grasp this fundamental relationship we try to follow E. Levinas in his beautiful analysis of the face of the other anything attempts to cut a long philosophical story very short.

The face of the other is a metaphysical (and even 'meta'- 'meta') concept to indicate the most fundamental relationship in a human being. The other appears to me. The other did not ask my approval. The other is simply there, whether I like it or not. The other breaks into my existence and disrupts my whole existence. The final call of my existence and through my existence is the call emanating from the other. The other places me, and in me, every human being, before (literal) my responsibility. The other does not ask me anything. He is simply there, by being there. In the other I must go and do something.

The face of the other is characterised by Levinas as the 'naked' face. This face is so deprived from every labelling or categorising that it is impossible not to see this nakedness. The face of the other breaks down all my biases and prejudices. The face of the other is so adamant I never can forget this face.

Levinas uses the biblical words such as 'beggar', 'orphan' and 'widow' to indicate the complete dependency on my non-interference with this face. This face is there. I did not ask for. I did not want this face. Separated from my wishes, the face is questioning me.

This is a culminating point in western spirituality. The face of the other is primordial. As illogical as it sounds, the face of the other is indeed (literally indeed!) first. As irrational as it looks: my responsibility precedes (or proceeds from) my freedom.

Every notion to get a hold on the other is doomed to fail. To Levinas the whole of the western philosophy should be turned upside down. The first quest for freedom is 'irrational', because the relational 'rationality' is the first and evident philosophy.

Much could be said about this topic in itself. The main affirmation is this: to stress the paramount importance of the human relationship with the other, Levinas opts to get rid of the philosophical biases.

The first relationship, my reason tells me, is the relationship with the other; expressed as the naked face of the other. Philosophy turned topsy turvy! And this fundamental 'turn' is exactly what is at stake in every human relationship. The other comes first, indeed, always and everywhere. Philosophy turns into a meta-ethical understanding of the reality as it appears in its fundamental layers. Philosophy comes of age in meta-philosophy. Responsibility is the predecessor of freedom.

The internal quest of humans to be free drowns itself in the urge to take up one's responsibility. The face of the other does not wait for the moment humans are free and or freed. The naked face of the other summons me to come forward, and not to delay until we will be, or till the moment we will be freed.

The only, and this is rationally stated, way to become a real free human being, is to look at the face of the other. Owing up responsibility is the only way to make oneself a free human being.

We asked in the beginning, by a pun of words, whether spirituality is none of y/our business.!!??

In business, this will prove to be an immense business! What is there to say about the face of the other in terms of business? Answer: the only valid spirituality in ethical thinking about business is revising the whole economical and organizational business in terms of ethics.

Therefore, spirituality is needed. The face of the other is helpful to fill this gap in business. Let us not close our eyes! The face of the other will not repair, or for that matter, change the market or the stock markets or the investments of capital or capitalism in itself.

Business will not alter their business because some philosophers or theologians tell them they are in wrongdoing. The philosophy, or spirituality, of the face of the other will never change anything...UNLESS: We use a new thinking and a new language about that thinking. We use a new spirituality about our fundamental relationships with one another. We are willing to listen to exteriority and not only to interiority; and to start with the exteriority and not interiority.

Societies down the centuries, thought to have the possibilities to change the realities at hand, on the condition they changed the reality they were themselves. Start changing the world, by changing yourself.

The plea was always to transform oneself, in order to be able to transform the surrounding, or outside world. Make sure you as humans are inwardly proper, to alter the conditions outside. Interiority came in the first place; exteriority second. Phenomenological analysis proved the other way round. Spirituality is first and foremost exteriority. Our sensibility, the vehicle to be aware of the world and human beings, leads us from start to finish to the exteriority.

Spirituality is an outward bound business. Spirit has to be put in to that which is 'other than myself'! Spirituality is from start to finish, directed towards the face of the other. I as a free human being am not the first one at stake, the other and my responsibility towards the other is primordial. Spirituality is not a religiously devout 'navel staring' but rather it is being summoned by the naked face of the other.

This leads us automatically to the new spirituality in our fundamental relationship with others. This new spirituality expresses itself, in business terms, in the reconsidering and re-thinking of the profit-category. In other words and bluntly, profit turns into sharing. Or to implement the new spirituality in full, sharing precedes (proceeds) profit.

Is this feasible in business? Is this the new ethics in business? As far as human beings and welfare and trade are concerned, this is true. Although not yet realised or materialised. One day, it will come true. For real thinkers, to cite now famous Amartya Sen, it already happens to become reality (i.e. his insistence on poverty, it is a question of will to change!)(A question of power....and thus a question of exterior spirituality)

To realise this we need, lastly, a new language. In her book "Upheavals of thought" Martha Nussbaum is taking up this challenge to transform our traditional language structures into language where the symbolic functions are stressed ...afresh....!!

One of these symbolic transformational structures in our languages could be the analysis of the face of the other.

Top of the bill shall be our common willingness to adhere ourselves in business to a thinking that introduces the other as sharing of our wealth and possessions and properties. This is not a commune thinking in a slogan where we share all with all. That kind of theories has proven its inability in practice. This is not the quest for a new religion, but the reasonable demands of every human being to share the responsibilities in the goods of the earth or the planet.

The language proper to delineate this new paradigm could be the language of the face of the other. Properly considered this new language might find its way through many a business where spirituality addresses itself towards the other in sharing.

2.3. 'We' as Substitution or Solidarity

Seamlessly, we arrived at the third and most difficult level or layer of our analysis.

Spirituality as substitution or solidarity means not only a step further and farther but it means a complete reconstruction or revision in our thinking. This is the most difficult part. Logically we build up a system that we try to reverse by asking the same (rejected) implementation of rationality. In other words and simply put, we try to convince one another by telling one another that conviction as rationality is not the way to convince each other. We try to say that spirituality starts from the exteriority by establishing a new interiority directed towards the naked face of the other. Spirituality was doomed as an inward process, by instituting a new process of learning to 'think twice'.

If so, we missed the point. The face of the other in the final analysis is not thinking or a spiritual reflection or a meditation about the poor, the widow, and the orphan. The philosophy of the new spirituality is not thinking, but in the first place, it is a doing!

Substitution is at the end of the day: to do! Philosophy thus becomes meta-philosophy.

Last and not the least, the new paradigm is beyond every thinking and thinkable philosophy or religion. In his famous essay, *'autrement q'être, ou au delà de l'essence'*, Levinas tries to explain what is meant by 'beyond'. This is not the place to explain in full the difficult meanings of this 'beyond', we limit ourselves to memorise his central affirmation. The face of the other summons me to go beyond myself. To substitute myself.

The new spirituality speaks about an exteriority to myself. I have to do something. I have to go out and find out what there is to do. Philosophy turns primarily into ethics.

In business it begins with doing something with a spirit. Business nowadays talks abundantly about this new found ethical thinking. Organisations spent billions of dollars to the developing countries. Funds and thrusts, cartels and holdings compete with one another to be the benefactors of the poor and the abandoned. The tsunami disaster made Europe willingly to collect more than 12 billion euro. Not a single bad word about this magnanimity.

There is more. It is all about money and beyond. It is about substitution as solidarity. We do not fall in the ditch of randomly criticising the magnificent contributions. Probably with the help of justice understood as fairness (put forward by John Rawls and taken up by Sen), we come a bit closer to the notion of substitution (although Levinas would not agree!).

Justice as fairness is conceived by Rawls as a veil of ignorance. Let us consider, (says Rawls) that all humans on the planet earth are equal before every thinkable status, descendency, race, position, property, tribe, country, religion. That would be a starting point to think about the original and fundamental justice.

If that concept help us to illuminate the substitution notion by Levinas, then it would be a kind of help. Because, substitution requires the naked face of the other. In the naked face there is no prerogative, no prejudice, no race, no politics, no position, nothing, therefore naked.

This 'nakedness' is simply put into the two words: "help me!"

The nakedness of the other is so helpless, so urging, so dramatically filled with awe, that the other is not even able to put this in words! The other is indeed mute and has no words to relate with the other human being. S/he is literally naked and lost on every account.

Translated in economical or business terms, it would lead us to affirm the simple affirmation that the new symbolic language in economics should be a language of spirituality. In other words, especially in business, we would begin from profit to share and donate without asking back anything. To be true, some countries reshuffled the original debt so that poorer countries could breathe again in the end. Let us be honest and, from the outside as sympathetic onlookers, this is true and this is human. If we could allot that space of interpretation, then it is quite a good start to begin with.

But this is not yet in full the meaning of the requirements of the face of the other and the need to go beyond. The statement goes not only for economics and business, but reaches out to all layers of human undertaking.

We need a new language to express and sustain this "newness" as symbolic language for the centuries to come. The paradigm of postmodernism, of deconstruction has shown their usefulness and inbuilt limits, time has come to overcome the fear to

speak out about the new birth of something really new. That is probably the task ahead for spirituality, conceived as a new conception of exteriority.

This new conception takes into account the whole planet. Globalisation at the most urgent helm of the ship. It is impossible for the future to solve the global challenges with some hands here and there. We need all hands on deck to try to survive in the rudest sense imaginable. Religions, philosophies, ideologies, politics and economics must shake hands to go beyond the realities ahead. Internationalisation, globalisation, outsourcing, profit, money, stock exchanges, they will be forced to cooperate with one another. This requires indeed a new fundamental “starting point”. In fact a new starting point in our relationship with humankind as such.

This donation of ourselves at all levels in all layers of our societies and communities on earth is daring, because it has never been started and never been tried out. We need in the immediate future not more money, not more business, but we need ideas, reflections which further human beings to go beyond every thinkable possibility and capability.

We need, indeed, a new spirit to implement what the naked face of the other urges us to do. At the end we only know that we just started.

Conclusion

This lecture asked to highlight the relationship between business, ethics and spirituality.

Thanks to the insights of the people behind this lecture, this event comes not only in the appropriate time, but is of the utmost importance in a college teaching business and related topics. My heartfelt congratulations and high praise may please all of the organising members of this memorial lecture.

Many an approach would have served the purpose. One of them has been attempted here: the stress on spirituality as exteriority paradigm to think about a new relationship with the other. Especially the emphasis on the naked face of the other, gives us a valid platform to expose these simple thoughts about business and spirituality.

It goes without saying this new spirituality requires, new leadership and new motivations. But before long, we will need the will to think and to re-think about the fundamentals in life. The Greek word *'krinein'* is probably a good expression to rely upon. Critique in the most demanding and most common sense, means to judge, to see, to evaluate, to discern, to scrutinise, to ponder, to meditate, to re-think. This kind of critique requires, and will require in the immanent future, many a spiritual skill. Gossip does not require any skill at all, because there is no authenticity inside the thinking that surrounds it.

Spirituality will not solve a single ethical or business problem. But rejecting the effort to revise our fundamental relationships with oneself, with others, and with the whole planet (some will rightly add, our relationship with the transcendent dimension) is affirming the initial need of 'beyond'.

Beyond does not mean: more of the same, or reviving the old schemes, or implementing the forgotten ideas from centuries down in history. Beyond means, do! Think!, see!, and do!!!. Or, do! Just that!

Rationality will be transformed into relationality and this will be the decisive factor in the new spirituality, directed towards the exteriority. This is henceforth, the first evidence of newness in a human life, thenceforth. There is no way back, because the simple survival as human beings is the paradigm of our fundamental reflection. We must not be concerned with the preservation, the promotion or the safeguarding of the humanity. Humanity will be saved by the naked face of the other. This is not only a hope, or prayer, this is an existential analysis which no phenomenology can ever deny. Some philosophers showed clearly the way to adopt a new vision which is shaking all traditional values and convictions. Not to destroy, but to see and think afresh. Leaders, managers, seers, Time's front-page people, especially in business, in the immediate future cannot afford themselves a little ignorance! It is unforgivable not to think!

The face of the other does not ask my approval or consent to begin. His or her appearance on to my horizon is the start of the new spirituality.

This new spirituality will endeavour to gauge the extent to which spirituality can contribute to the humanisation of the world. Our point of departure in this regard is, finally, a critique of the excessively acute division between conviction and responsibility. Max Weber's solution for the tension between the two is subject to criticism, more specifically his hypothesis that a courageous deed that has the capacity to change the world has its roots in the loneliness of the heroic individual. While it goes without saying that everything begins with a personal choice, the human person is and remains a creature of community that is incapable of world changing deeds without inspiring communities. The successful establishment of a bridge between conviction and responsibility must also extend beyond one's own limited circles, since the touchstone of 'integral spirituality' lies in its capacity to influence broad social processes of change.

The ultimate touchstone, according to Levinas, is the face of the other because there begins change and commitment; conviction as a rational concept, leading upto commitment. We need therefore an ever more radical, deeper, and fundamental thinking. A constant search beyond every conceivable point...indeed...to the point Beyond! Beyond being, is thus not the same as being beyond!

Spirituality in business!?"None of (y)our business!?"

Spirituality with business is business with spirituality!

To be a spirit or not to be, that will be the question. Indeed! In-deed!