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**INQUIRY ON MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CONTEMPORARY  
SOCIETY IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF ANTONIO ROSMINI**

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A Long Essay Written in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of  
the Baccalaureate Degree in Philosophy

**NAIROBI 2022**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this long essay is the original of my work achieved through my personal reading, use of scientific research methods, and critical reflection. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic purposes. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my Father, who is with me always.

“My son, if your heart is wise, my heart too will be glad”

Proverbs 23:15

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My first debt of gratitude goes to Almighty God for his special guidance and protection which has enabled me to do this work. I also extend my immense gratitude to the department of Philosophy at Tangaza College for their caring sense in making a friendly environment, for the success of this research work.

My gratitude also goes to Rev. Dr. Kenneth Makokha OFM Cap who accompanied me in this research work as my supervisor, for the intellectual guidance he offered throughout for the success of this research work.

Finally, I would also like to express my utmost appreciation to Rev. Fr. Enhart Mpete I.C and Rev. Fr. Sylvester Kioko I.C, together with my fellow brothers in the Rosminian community at Ngong hills for their support in making this research possible.

## **ABSTRACT**

The society that we live in now is fully associated with the issue of moral deterioration, whereby as a result we come across various forms of actions that are not worthy to the society that we live in now, among them being corruption, drugs, and substance use, child trafficking, sexual abuse, abortion, suicide, euthanasia, eugenic sterilization, murder, capital punishment and so forth. However, on the other way, people are not fully responsible for their duties, the findings show that majority of them are not committed to their responsibilities fully. The primary cause of the deterioration of moral and ethical values as well as what we call mental corruption are the impacts of mass media, science, and technology, modernization, globalization, etc. The present research, therefore, is an endeavor to highlight and communicate the issue over the decline of moral and ethical values in our today's society. Currently, in our societies we are witnessing a situation where moral norms have been abandoned to the depths of the ocean, moral standards are unquestionably declining, and everything is now materialistic. The research also tries to draw attention to the various factors that are thought to be behind the deterioration and fall of moral and ethical values in our societies, and finally, we will express our focus on the preventive measures to be taken. Following this, therefore, there is an urgent need to focus on and develop moral and ethical values among the people in our societies. However, as materialism is affecting and covering every sphere, attention should be shifted towards enhancing and developing ethical and moral values, especially among youths who identify the prospect of a society.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This thesis involves the discussion of moral responsibility to the contemporary society in the enlightenment of Antonio Rosmini. Our study is divided into four chapters.

The first chapter serves as the thesis design whereby it includes the following indications; background of the thesis, statement of the problem, literature review, relevance of the thesis, justification of the thesis, objectives, study questions, methodology, scope, and limitation, and finally the conclusion.

Chapter two serves as a broad general understanding of the general idea of morality in Rosmini's view. To be morally responsible one has to know broadly what morality is all about, in the same context morality should also be considered as a catalyst that will spread the motivation of how should we think, act and express our words. Therefore, through chapter two we are going to lay the foundation on the broad sense of the idea of morality in general.

Chapter three entails factors hindering the essence of moral responsibility, simply this is to say the causes that destroy the essence of being fully responsible to the society, following the lens of the moral law. The society that we live in now is fully associated with many causes and in one way or another makes people idle instead of being fully responsible to their duties. Therefore, this chapter attempts to examine the essence and gaps towards moral responsibility in the contemporary society.



Chapter four attempts to examine ways to enhance the essence of moral responsibility, simply the solutions or in other words the recommendations on what should be done so that we may retain back the sense of moral responsibility.

## **1.0 Background of the Thesis**

In the society that we live in now when we take an eye globally on moral standards, it's indeed undeniable that moral values are weakened. In the context of the current society, there has been what we call an eruption of unworthy actions such as war whereby human dignity is not there anymore, now day's people are killing each other without fear. We also live in a society of unworthy actions such as suicides, child trafficking, sexual abuse, corruption, cybercrime, and the use of drugs to mention a few of them.

Therefore, expressing an eye globally regarding moral standards we find that moral attitudes are declining globally, and this is due to the reason that actions that are taking place in the society that we live in now, the high possibility is that many of those actions are not friendly to the human being for they are performed without the light of reason.

Under the umbrella of the contemporary world, again we find that there are many sorts of unwanted or unpleasant behaviors whereby some of them have been there and others are still creeping slowly by slowly and funny enough is that all these behaviors are quite contrasting to our moral standards.

On the other view, looking at the issue of morality globally we find that nowadays what we call human dignity, respect for sovereignty under the umbrella of authorities especially the elders and the leaders, loyalty in marriages, upholding cultural practices, and other various forms of human dignity we find that, all these practices were highly esteemed and valued. The reason behind all these is that these practices reinforced what we call moral standards.

Therefore, setting an eye on the view of the contemporary world we see that regarding the good practices that we mentioned above, it's unfortunate that these values are nowadays dishonored, criticized, and opposed. As a result, then we experience sorts of actions that contrast with human dignity. However, the context of morality to the contemporary world in its side negative effect is also being influenced by the development of science and technology which has made the world change continuously hence this brings the world a new outlook with various styles and practices adopted from the development of science and technology. Therefore, regarding all these practices that are not rooted in the context of moral standards, the climate becomes unfriendly due to the reason that in the adaptation of these new styles and practices comes the eruption of actions that are not morally worthy.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Under the umbrella of the contemporary world we experience many dynamics of moral standards especially as the world goes on. However, it is in the same lane that we come across different dynamics of moral standards, of which when we compare the context of morality during the primitive time, it is more likely to say that during the primitive time people were more likely to obey and respect their ideals. Unfortunately, as time goes on these practices that reflect moral standards are diminished, simply they are not given honor again instead they are being criticized and even opposed.

Today's generation seems to have lost faith in traditional moral and cultural values, as a result, their minds are highly corrupted by the nature of the world which is influenced by the advancement of science and technology. The impact here is that as a result of all these changes we find that such essence of being morally responsible is not there anymore, instead the minds are fixed on other stuff that has nothing to do with moral values and practices.

The reason behind all these moral dynamics, in one way or another, might be due to the strong waves of modernization, industrialization, westernization, and even urbanization. Therefore, simply we say that all these moral values and practices are also diminished as the world proceeds to grow technologically.

In a nutshell, looking at the context of morality globally we also view various forms of moral dynamics in the context of codes of behavior, personal or cultural ideals as well as social morals. Therefore, morality as the special tool that connects people individually and even globally has then the potential to govern human actions.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

In this research work, we focus our attention on the contribution of different philosophers who emphasized much about the idea of morality. Together with other philosophers we will base our attention on Rosmini, as we are going to use much of his ideas as per morality is concerned. In Rosmini's view, the concept of morality has a suitable connection to the idea of being which it is a notion that stands as a principle by which people judge and know what is good and what is evil or what is suitable and what is harmful. Regarding what is good and what is evil, Rosmini claims that the will must cohere to what is good in response to the order of being, of which according to Rosmini this shows that, morality serves as the tool that brings us happiness.<sup>1</sup>

However, morality on the other perspective acts as a tool that gives direction to people and society at large, especially to those who are well aware that they cannot sustain or flourish without being morally formed. Again, when we examine the context of morality globally we also come across

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<sup>1</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of Ethics* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1988), 43.

the point that, morality is also sometimes referred to as the concept of social contract theory, which maintains the idea that people as a society agree to abide by certain moral rules and standards mainly for the sake of social order and peace. Therefore, the main purpose of examining the concept of the social contract by Jean Jacques Rousseau is to evaluate those principles suggested by him and see how we can apply them to address the issue of morality in terms of putting into practice those principles.

Rousseau through his theory of social contract we see that he intends to inquire to see whether in the civil order there could be some rules and principles of administration that can take people as they are and laws as they might be.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, by putting those principles into practice, we discover that each person has a role to play in the success of making those principles effective and so therefore with the help of a legitimate and sure rule of administration it becomes much easier in putting those practices into practice.

In line with the context of the social contract theory, Thomas Hobbes insists that a social contract is necessary if all societies are to avoid what he called the “state of nature”, which he describes as a war of all against all. Therefore, something very important to note here is that this type of society Hobbes wanted to avoid is exemplified in William Golding’s novel “Lord of the Flies” in which a social order without morality degenerates into a world that very few individuals or people would want to live.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Basic Political Writings*, trans. and ed. Donald A. Cress. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2011), 156.

<sup>3</sup> Scott B. Rae, *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics* (Zondervan Academic; Fourth Edition 2009), 12.

Rosmini however on the other side, insists that the outcome of the moral good or evil of action entails the moral value of actions.<sup>4</sup> Simply this means that an action has what we call value in proportion to its moral good, the same thing applies to a lack of value in proportion to its moral evil. Therefore, according to Rosmini, what we call moral good consists of the will's adhesion to the law or other words in willing good according to the objective order of beings. On the other hand, moral evil consists of disharmony between two things namely the will and the law. According to Rosmini therefore, we discover that for us to acquire moral values our actions have to reflect the proportionality of what is always morally good.

### **1.3.1 Plato's Conception of Morality**

The Socratic maxim "virtue is knowledge" serves as the cornerstone of Plato's ethical system. Plato claims that "the life of reason is the happiest and best"<sup>5</sup>, in an attempt to address the topic of what constitutes a happy existence. Plato asserts that a person's moral behavior is influenced by their three soul faculties; reason, spirit, and appetite but human morality is knowledge-dependent. According to Plato,

"Knowledge produces harmonious man, in a sense that when a reason governs desires and passions, an orderly and well-balanced personality results. Indeed, only knowledge can lead to virtue..... Hence it is the virtuous man, that is, the rational man who is truly happy"<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1991), 462.

<sup>5</sup> Albert, M. Ethel *Great traditions in ethics* (New York, Litton educational publishing Inc. 1967), 24.

<sup>6</sup>Ethel, *Great traditions in ethics*, 20.

When attempting to respond to the question, “What is the supreme knowledge upon which moral virtue is based?”<sup>7</sup>, Plato thought that knowledge of the greatest and ultimate Good is a prerequisite for moral integrity.

However, Plato created his ethical code on the notion that good is the form of forms after realizing that the world of the senses cannot inform us of what is good or bad because it is constantly changing. Plato claimed that the immaterial soul knew good in the realm of forms before joining with the physical body. As a result, the immaterial soul had this knowledge before joining with the physical body. The soul remembers the world of forms and all ethical concepts through remembrance, thus by reflecting on our lives, we can be moral<sup>8</sup>.

Plato acknowledges in *The Republic* that when the philosopher king seizes power, the harmony of the state is achieved, since they are lovers of the knowledge of the eternal and of all the truth<sup>9</sup>. In addition, Plato goes on to say that, they are haters of falsehood; their meaner desires are absorbed in the interests of the faculty of knowledge; and good enough they can guide people in the direction of good since they are knowledgeable about it. Similar to how the rational part of the soul is attained when the other elements of the soul are under its control. Following this, Plato prioritizes reason because he is aware that it is impossible to error in the presence of reason.

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<sup>7</sup> Ethel, *Great traditions in ethics*, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Dario Composta, *History of ancient philosophy* (Urbaniana University Press: D. Composta and Myroslow, 1990), 192.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Jowett, *The Republic by Plato* (Andrews UK Ltd, 2012), 55.

### **1.3.2 Aristotle's Conception of Morality**

Aristotle developed his ethical idea of virtue, which is grounded on the notion of the excellence of things, in the same vein as Plato<sup>10</sup>. From the notion “The life of a good man is guided by reason”, Aristotle distinguished between moral and intellectual virtue, stating that although intellectual virtue is the study of moral qualities, moral virtue is concerned with our habitual choice of actions based on reasonable reasons. Aristotle acknowledges that everything is directed toward the end and it acts toward the end. He believed that happiness was the goal of life and that morality was the path to it. Happiness can be attained both in the state and in the lives of individuals through the virtue of justice. Additionally, he draws a connection between the concepts of virtue and morality by arguing that the most moral and happy person in society is the virtuous one.

According to Aristotle humans strive to live moral lives by pursuing happiness, which is the pinnacle of all good. Since happiness is the goal of all rational behavior and involves reason as a soul activity, moral virtue and intellectual virtue must also be subjected to the right application of reason. For this case, therefore, Aristotle emphasized the need for a reason as the basis of our moral actions in the same vein as Rosmini.

### **1.3.3 Kant's Understanding of Morality**

True morality, in Kant's view, is something that applies to all rational creatures and is universal and objective. Man's logical nature is what gives morality its universal applicability. The categorical imperative, which states that we should always act out of duty and not pursue our

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<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Jowett, *The Republic by Plato* (Andrews UK Ltd, 2012), 55.

enjoyment, is how Kant defines morality as being legitimate. He claims that morality is valid if it is sensible or if it operates without contradiction.

According to Kant, God is the presupposition of both pure and practical reason, making pure reason the source of obligation. More so, the categorical imperative is a manifestation of moral order, indicating that through performing our duties, we develop moral character. Therefore, following Kant's view, we must act only out of a sense of duty, putting feelings and consequences aside.

Since rational individuals are bound by the need to act by reason, Kant's categorical imperative assumes that everyone is capable of distinguishing between good and wrong behavior. We can rationally justify moral responsibility and law, whether or not we adhere to them. Hence in line with this view, Kant emphasizes the importance of responsibility, contending that only when an action is undertaken out of regard for duty does it acquire moral value.

#### **1.4 Relevance of the Thesis**

The essence of moral responsibility to contemporary society is something very crucial that needs clarification. Today's society is full of actions that are quite in contrast to human dignity, people have lost that essence of humanity whereby the actions, thoughts, and words have interfered with the moving waves of today's world. The society that we live in now is not the same society that reflects the branches of moral values, and this is due to the reason that majority nowadays are formed by the moving waves of today's world of science and technology.

The approach to this thesis is to prevent moral decay in the sense that, we need to create what we call awareness in the people to awaken their zeal toward the goal of moral responsibility. Through



motivation in embracing moral actions, we can rebuild a strong society rooted in the pillars of morality.

To create awareness of being morally responsible, the efforts should not just be theoretical instead there should be a witness in practicality towards embracing those practices that reflects the attitudes of morality. Therefore, there is a need that education should be provided to the people, for the current society needs moral liberation to comprehend the beauty and benefits of morality.

### **1.5 Justification of the Thesis**

Discussion on moral responsibility is like a catalyst that calls for awareness towards being morally responsible. When we talk of morality in today's society we find that moral decline is a global problem that affects the whole world, starting from the family level, educational institutions, and society at large. As a result of moral degeneration, we end up having social and educational issues such as peer pressure, diminishing self-discipline, bribery, early pregnancies, child abuse, sexual abuse, alcohol abuse, prostitution, abortions, cybercrime, and other results that reflect the impacts of moral decline.

This inquiry towards moral responsibility calls for methods that can be applied to retain the essence of being morally responsible in all areas of life, for in order the society to engage actively in different duties, people have to be grounded in a system that reflects moral attitudes. Therefore, the issue of moral responsibility is a crucial matter which touches our lives and so therefore there is a great need for us to examine it through the eye of morality coherently.

## **1.6 Objectives**

1. To analyze the broad understanding of the idea of morality.
2. To examine factors hindering the essence of moral responsibility in the context of the contemporary society today.
3. To identify ways that can be used to enhance the essence of moral responsibility in our societies today.

## **1.7 Study Questions**

1. What exactly morality is all about?
2. What are the factors hindering the essence of moral responsibility in our societies today?
3. What are the possible means which are helpful regarding the issue of moral decline in our societies?

## **1.8 Methodology**

This research uses the method of analysis, in the sense that we have extracted knowledge from previously collected data and so, therefore, this means that, nobody will be questioned or in another sense interviewed as part of our approach.

The fact that our research is analytical, simply it's a notion that we have extracted our information from different books, e-books, journals, articles, as well as previous philosophical studies, all to supplement the knowledge concerning morality. However, regarding being analytical, I will also share my philosophical thoughts as part of my objective reflection on the subject.

## **1.9 Research Hypothesis**

This study is going to reflect much more on the broad sense of the idea of morality, simply to show how the context of morality looks like in the context of the contemporary society today. The

findings show that now day's there is a big scarcity of moral values which is due to different dynamics of moral standards as a result of the moving waves of today's world which is based on the advancements of science and technology. Therefore, this study will investigate various causes as well as consequences of moral decline, and finally, find out the preventive measures that can be used to retain the essence of moral responsibility in our societies and the whole world collectively.

### **1.10 Scope and Limitation**

This research being purely analytical, it is a notion that is library-based, and so therefore it's limited to the library research sources. However, this research is limited in the sense that, Rosmini being an Italian philosopher, many of his books are written in the Italian language. Therefore, this work is limited in the sense that I used few books by Antonio Rosmini which are already translated into the English language.

However, this research is limited in its field of study in the sense that by the fact is analytical there is no room for collecting data publicly instead the work is limited to only previously collected information hence nobody will be questioned or interviewed about the subject matter. More so, the work is also limited to collecting only related material from libraries that reflect the current issues affecting the world due to the failures of moral responsibility.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

Morality is a special tool that helps us to know exactly what acts are appropriate and which ones are inappropriate, regardless of our gender, tribe, citizenship, level of education, and so forth. Basically, morality serves as the supreme principle to guide us always in the right path situated to good actions in the umbrella of positive thoughts. In line with Rosmini, the mode of the light of reason is what will make us to move coherently towards good actions.

Our commitment to what is always good, through the mode of the light of reason will make our actions, thoughts, and words to have meaning in respect to universal moral principles. Following this, we therefore continue to rest our believe on the supreme function of morality as the special faculty that holds what we call “way forward” towards the world of moral responsibility.

Through chapter one, we have realized that for us to be morally responsible, our actions have to conform to what is always good. Therefore, our inquiry on moral responsibility must serve as the spirit to awaken that zeal of being good always in all our doings, through practicing actions that reflect moral standards.

In the next chapter, we are going to discuss the broad understanding of the idea of morality in Rosmini’s view, as we look forward with great zeal to explicate deeply the understanding of morality.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **A BROAD UNDERSTANDING OF THE IDEA OF MORALITY IN ROSMINI'S VIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The burning zeal for being morally responsible paved the way towards being something that must be addressed with great awareness in order to awaken the spirit of moral responsibility. Thinking coherently, we realize that some of the immoral actions that are performed in the context of our today's society, many actions are performed out of ignorance of the failure to know well what morality is all about. Following this however, some of the immoral actions are now days forced to be defined as moral actions and to mention few of them we now days have what we call abortion and euthanasia. Regarding universal moral principles, these actions fall into the cup of immoral actions, but due to the pressure involved in some countries, these actions are forced to be moral actions although they are not. Therefore, having all these cases and many more others we can see that there is a great need to evaluate more on the issue of morality.

This chapter will, therefore, compare and contrast as well as approve the essence of what exactly morality is all about in its wide understanding without any sense of partiality, biasness, or subjectivism to any culture or group of people. Therefore, the basic purpose of this chapter is to investigate and come out with a broad and proper understanding of the idea of morality without forgetting the notion that the ideas that are going to be discussed in this chapter will base more on acceptable universal moral principles.

However, it's indeed undeniable that morality has to go with what we call values hence therefore regarding this notion in this chapter we will try to describe as well as explore the proper meaning of values as part of speeding up the burning zeal of moral responsibility. Through this chapter, we

will also try to explore different related ideas including ideas from the eye of religion, ideas from other philosophers, and finally to see how the world could dictate morality globally.

## **2.1 Misconception of the Idea of Morality**

Recalling the principle of non-contradiction, we find that “a thing cannot be and be at the same time”, this notion will therefore help us to capture a deep understanding of what morality is all about. Therefore, from the principle of non-contradiction we form the new principle of morality in the sense that “what is moral is and what is immoral is immoral”, and the best justification that we realize here is that an immoral act will never be a moral act, it is also likely to say a moral act will still be a moral act and not immoral.

However, regarding the difference between moral action and immoral action, there is a great misconception nowadays about the two. If an action is well known to be evil but is well defended then automatically its immoral sense outweighs or in other words balances the moral side. For example, the issue of euthanasia, as we know it is the painless killing of a sick person with no hope to attain any more recovery. Regarding the action of this kind by keeping in touch with universal moral principles there is no way out we can guarantee this action to be good or in other words to be a moral act. However, the act of euthanasia happens from the perspectives of two sides either the patients themselves who desire the suffering and pain to be removed or those who feel sympathy that instead of suffering it's better to rest eternally than experience those sufferings and pain. This action despite that it is an immoral act it's an acceptable act in some societies and countries, but despite its acceptance in some few areas of the world, following the universal principles of morality still, we refer to it as an immoral act due to the reason that termination of life is always an evil act, and there is no way this act will one day be moral.

Therefore, through the principle of non-contradiction, we find that it's a known truth that needs no clarification, and the best example we can offer here is that we all know that benevolence is a good moral act that is encouraged in every corner of the world, but when we turn our eye to suicide we find that this is a crime simply an immoral act which is not encouraged. Therefore, with this entire notion under the principle of non-contradiction, we can view morality on the screen of the common world phrase “what is, is what it is” to mean that whatever is good is good and whatever is evil is evil and there is no way out the two can relate.

## **2.2 Rosmini’s Analyzation of the Moral Concept**

Antonio Rosmini was born on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1797 at Rovereto, a prosperous town in northern Italy. He was an Italian Roman Catholic priest, philosopher, and theologian. In his childhood at the age of 17, Rosmini had already read 428 books. This shows how Rosmini, intellectually gifted he was. The great zeal of Rosmini in reading and writing books was to re-address the balance between reason and faith which had lost meaning due to enlightenment. In his writings, Rosmini emphasized his lovely principle of morality that for our actions to be valid under the universal principle of morality our actions must be guided “with the light of reason”.

Antonio Rosmini being an outstanding and intellectual figure faced several challenges due to his books which were not received well. This happened following the reason that during his time people were not able to understand his books and so they end up defining him as a very heretic man, which this leads to some of his books such as “The five wounds of the Church”, “The civil Constitution” to be placed on the index of forbidden books<sup>11</sup>. Rosmini in his very famous book known as the “Five wounds of the Church” which is currently taken as an outstanding and

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<sup>11</sup> Claude Leetham, *Rosmini: Priest, Philosopher, and Patriot* (Helicon, 1958), 397.

insightful book for it even predicted the outcomes of the Vatican II council, Rosmini in this book addressed five essential matters regarding the church namely, the division between people and clergy at public worship, the insufficient education of the clergy, disunion amongst the bishops, the nomination of bishops left in the hands of civil government, and finally, restrictions on the free use by the church of her possessions<sup>12</sup>. Rosmini faced great opposition regarding this book, and the great testimony is that, after its publication in the year 1832, Pope Pius IX under the influence of Cardinals and Bishops forced Rosmini to defend his book because they suspected heresies in the book, and as a result of this they referred to Rosmini as “a most formidable enemy and the evil genie of Pope Pius IX<sup>13</sup>. In his lifetime Rosmini however, wrote more than 97 books in the field of philosophy, politics, and theology, but the most famous books that are living mostly to date are; An essay concerning the origin of ideas; Theory of ethics; Anthropology as an aid to moral science; The five wounds of the church; Constitution according to social justice; Introduction to philosophy; The triune being as well as Theosophy to mention few.

Antonio Rosmini laid his principle of morality on the rock of reason or in other words the light of reason as the first moral law, on which all other ideas and principles are built on. Rosmini made this notion very clear in his famous book known as “An essay concerning the origin of ideas” that, the idea of being or in other words the first moral law falls in the cup of “innate ideas” to show that we possess it since conception, and the one who made this possible is God himself, the supreme being and owner of life. Therefore, regarding the idea of being or the first moral law, Rosmini brings us to the conclusion that all other ideas that are born are generated from the very first moral law or the idea of being.

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<sup>12</sup>AA Belsito, *Rosmini Today: The five wounds of Holy Church*, (Rosmini Publications, 2014), 10.

<sup>13</sup> Belsito, *The Five wounds of Holy Church*, 4.



However, with the burning zeal that Rosmini had in the field of academia, he emphasized also the issue of moral good. According to him, that which is good simply means it is desirable in the sense that such desire may be desirable in itself according to its place in the notion sense of “being” or in other words it may be desirable for someone due to the satisfaction it brings when somebody possesses it<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, according to Rosmini, we must acknowledge things not insofar as they are good for us or they portray the nature of the human subject, but insofar as they take their place in the order of beings hence no moral good of any sort can be found outside the rank of intelligent beings. To sum up, this is a brief introduction to Rosmini's life, and a bit we have realized with efficient evidence that, he was a great philosopher of the contemporary time who contributed much in shaping the field of academia, most especially in the field of ethics. As we proceed therefore, we will see in deep how Rosmini imposes his theories and arguments in responding loudly to what morality is all about.

### **2.3 Rosmini’s Conception of the Origin of the Idea of Being**

Antonio Rosmini in responding to the “idea of being” or in other words “the first moral law”, emphasized the point that, the idea of being comes to us “from without”<sup>15</sup> in the notion sense that, we had it since our conception, and so therefore since we received it from the very time of our conception, there is no sort of doubt in calling it “an innate idea” to mean something born with. Rosmini however, regarding the idea of being or the first moral law, he enlightened us again with the view that with the idea of being is where we became intelligent, and according to him “The idea of being is the most universal idea and remains after the last possible abstraction, of which

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<sup>14</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Introduction to His life and Teaching* (Durham: D, Cleary and T. Watson, 1992), 28.

<sup>15</sup> AA Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, (Rosmini Publications, 2015), 123.

without it all thinking ceases and all other ideas become impossible”<sup>16</sup>. Regarding this notion we can, however, ask ourselves the question; “where does this idea of being originated”? According to Rosmini, the response is that the idea of being comes from God<sup>17</sup>. Simply this is to say that it is in God’s mind from the essence of eternity, since God is in divine nature. Another inquiry however can rise, in the sense that how come God is divine, and we have something originated from divine nature and at the same time we possess human nature. Rosmini emphasized very clearly that this idea of being though it is acquired from the divine nature remains divine but without being God<sup>18</sup>. The best example we can compare with as per this notion is concerned it is the same way that the light of the sun is not the sun, and so therefore something to note here is that God is not an idea instead he is the absolute real being.

According to Rosmini however, “we cannot think of anything without the idea of being”. What does Rosmini meant per this statement? The response according to him is that “being” carries the notion of the last abstraction from any idea and so, therefore, every idea terminates from the essence of being. More so, Rosmini in stressing the point about the idea of being, says that “without being the idea cannot exist” and hence the outcome is nothing<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, the key point as the idea of being is concerned is that the idea of being is the first principle in understanding all other ideas, Rosmini granted favor to this idea and called it “the mother of all ideas” and it is in every idea as the great idea which gives it a universality, objectivity, mortality and even immutability.

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<sup>16</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: A New Essay concerning the Origin of Ideas, Vol II* (Durham, Rosmini house, 2001), 411.

<sup>17</sup> AA Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, (Rosmini Publications, 2015), 123.

<sup>18</sup>Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, 123.

<sup>19</sup>Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*,123.

Therefore, for us to acquire knowledge we must be guided by the light that originated from this first idea.

The idea of being by the very fact that is the first source of all other ideas, Rosmini brings another insightful argument that “the principles of logic and other important elementary concepts derive directly from the idea of being”<sup>20</sup>. For instance, we can use the idea of the universe in the sense that the universe carries the idea of being as it is form and so, therefore, the concept of matter is given by the objects of perception. In connecting the bridge between form and matter, Rosmini says that the joining of the form directly to matter to compose the idea is called “intellective perception”<sup>21</sup>. However, we can ask ourselves the question that how this intellective perception becomes possible. Rosmini tackled this inquiry very clearly with two responses; he asserts that human beings have since conception two innate faculties; “the intellect which is constituted by the constant vision of the idea of being”; in the second faculty Rosmini asserts the “fundamental feeling which is the constant perception of ourselves the basis of all other subsequent and fleeting sense-perceptions”<sup>22</sup>. For instance, the moment we see a dog or touch it, our intellect makes the so-called judgment by using the idea of being. Therefore, according to Rosmini, regarding the two innate faculties, we realize that intellective perception becomes valid.

Rosmini however, by the fact that he was a rationalist did not accept the views of other philosophers, instead, he came out with his principle in the sense that the idea of being is the very first idea and the mother of all ideas consumed since conception. In defending his principle, Rosmini asserts that the idea of being cannot come from other sources since it is an innate idea

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<sup>20</sup> AA Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, (Rosmini Publications, 2015), 77.

<sup>21</sup> Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, 77.

<sup>22</sup> Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, 78.

since conception<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, according to him, this idea cannot come even from other sources suggested by other major philosophers, for instance; sources from bodily sensations, feeling of myself, Locke's reflection on the attainment of knowledge through experiences, Reid's act of perception as well as Kant's emanation of categories from our spirit<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, Rosmini reaches this conclusion; This universal idea which is the mother of all ideas and the organizing principle of all knowledge is provided to us as a medium of knowledge acquisition in all its light. More so, this idea is innate in us and so, therefore, it stands as the "light of reason" that illuminates our mind, and since it is not the product of our spirit, our mind tends to contemplate this idea of being in its total objectivity.

The great difference that exists between Rosmini and other philosophers or in other words his predecessors is that Rosmini stood firm on one innate idea. Other philosophers like Plato, Leibniz, and Kant failed to solve the challenge, and instead, they admitted too many innate ideas. And this is seen, for instance, for Plato all ideas are innate, for Leibniz only "traces" of ideas are innate, and for Kant the 14 categories are innate<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, following all these notions we can realize the way Rosmini was different from his predecessors. By just admitting too many innate ideas, these philosophers failed to identify the mother of all ideas which is the idea of being and Rosmini termed this "as the fundamental idea which is at the basis of all ideas" and so, therefore, this is how Rosmini stood firm in defending the idea of being.

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<sup>23</sup> AA Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, (Rosmini Publications, 2015), 83.

<sup>24</sup> Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, 83.

<sup>25</sup>Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, 87.

However, Rosmini put forward another persuasive argument regarding the idea of being, and according to him, what he called the innate “idea of being” solves the challenges of how we can construct our very first judgment. Rosmini put this very clear that “every judgment requires as a predicate a universal idea, but all universal ideas are the product of a judgment”<sup>26</sup>. The question we can ask ourselves here is, how was this first judgment possible if at all we did not have a universal idea in innate form? The reply to this inquiry in Rosmini’s view is that as far as we possess the idea of being innate since conception then there is nothing difficult concerning the matter. Therefore, our first judgment becomes possible being accompanied by the help of the universal idea of being as well as other subsequent judgments.

To sum up, the idea of being or in other words the first moral law according to Rosmini, we now come to discover that, in the field of ideas there is nothing outside the idea of being hence everything originated from the idea of being. Therefore, through the concept of the idea of being, Rosmini paved the way by ensuring that all other ideas are born from the idea of being, hence the idea of being is regarded as the mother of all ideas.

## **2.4 Rosmini’s Conception of the Idea of Being and Good**

According to Rosmini, the notion “good” means “that which is desired”<sup>27</sup>. Rosmini wanted this to be understood as that which adheres to the first moral law. Simply, by saying “good” to mean that which is desired, he meant that such a thing must fervently catch up with the first moral law. Therefore, in connecting these two concepts (being and good), Rosmini finds a close relationship

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<sup>26</sup> AA Belsito, *Rosmini today: At the Springs of Knowledge*, (Rosmini Publications, 2015), 87.

<sup>27</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of ethics* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1988), 32.

between the two, and in that case, he commented that “good is the being considered in its order” to mean that, the idea of good is necessarily the outcome of the idea of being.

The Angelic Doctor St. Thomas Aquinas also contributed his views regarding being and good. According to him, the idea of being is to be prior to the idea of good, the reason being that the idea of being is conceived by the intellect and so other principles originated from it<sup>28</sup>. St Thomas was not very far from Rosmini in responding to the idea of being, it is only that Rosmini was very direct to his point that, conception gives birth to the idea of being and so it is innate. Otherwise, St Thomas was quite clear in valuing the essence of the idea of being as the prior idea to the idea of good.

Thus, the idea of being in Rosmini’s view stands as the supreme idea that makes justification as per what is good and what is evil. When we put our attention on the concept of the idea of being, in Rosmini’s view we mean that our actions must conform totally to the light of reason as the first moral law. So, whatever is adhered to by this first moral law automatically deserves to be a good thing, but those actions that diverge and fall into the darkness of reason reflect the essence of evilness. Therefore, in Rosmini’s understanding, regarding these two notions of “being and good”, we find that for a thing to be good it has to conform to the order of being or in other words to say the first moral law, more so there should be no confusion between the principle of the order of being and the principles of other made authorities such as state principles. To sum up, therefore, that which deserves to be termed as moral good has to conform fully to the order of being.

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<sup>28</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Vol. one (New York: Benzinger Brothers, Inc. 1946), 23.

## **2.5 Rosmini's View on Being and Moral Action**

In giving out his views, Rosmini bridged the gap from the notion of the idea of being to our moral actions. According to him the idea of being which he called the first moral law entails the supreme principle known as “the light of reason”, and Rosmini developed very well this notion in his famous book known as “The principles of ethics”, that the idea of being stands as the “supreme rule or criterion with which we judge the morality of human actions”. Therefore, from the very concept of the idea of being, we discover that we can describe, evaluate, and even classify different human actions through the light of reason. Once somebody perceived such an idea of being then automatically, he/she carries the potentiality of being good simply because is being guided by the light of reason, and according to Rosmini we continue to realize that, the idea of being judges what is good as well as the moral good in general.

Rosmini however, emphasizes that the relationship between the idea of being and our moral actions carries two elements namely, “good and being”, and according to him being and good possess the same sense because what is known as the knowledge of being must also be the knowledge of good. Therefore, according to Rosmini, “being and good” are like two wings related to each other, and there is no way the two can be separated.

Through the concept of the light of reason in Rosmini's view, we also realize that, for our actions to be valid before the universal principles of morality, our actions must be illumined by the first moral law which Rosmini called the idea of being or the light of reason. Therefore, according to Rosmini, an action deserves to be good if it adheres to the first moral law as the supreme principle.

## 2.6 Rosmini's Concept of Moral Responsibility

Our inquiry on what morality is all about concerns beliefs about right and wrong actions, good and bad persons, more so even what we call character. Therefore, concerning morality, to make your way in the realm of life, there is no way out you must cross the dense thorny realm of morality. The aspect of morality is part and parcel of our life since there is no way, we can avoid thinking about right and wrong or in other words judging people to be good or bad. The main concern of morality is, therefore, not to describe how things are but in a very proper way to prescribe how things should be. Rosmini's great zeal in the field of morality lies fully on the rock of the light of reason as the objective basis of our moral actions. Therefore, for us to bring back the essence of moral responsibility we must be guided by Rosmini's principle laid on the light of reason as the objective basis of our good actions. Rosmini however, goes on to say that "the subjective foundation of such action is the act of will by which we accept what the light of reason places before us"<sup>29</sup>. More so, Rosmini's essence of morality depends entirely on what we call, a thorough examination of the objective nature of knowledge as well as a careful analysis of human volition and freedom. Therefore, regarding Rosmini's essence of morality, we realize that when we acknowledge willingly what we know concerning the illumination of reason it is where then the essence of morality lies.

However, Rosmini articulates that "person as a person" is the supreme principle of moral activity. This notion comes when Rosmini declares that "the human being is a knowing and feeling subject whose will as the supreme principle of activity provides the basis of the incommunicable individuality that constitutes each real human nature as a person". According to Rosmini, the sense of moral activity has to be distinguished from all those habits and acts that concerns human beings

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<sup>29</sup> Mathew Carlin- 2021- *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 53 (5): 436.



with no intervention of the person; for instance, a good musician is not necessarily a good person and so, therefore, morality deals necessarily with what people engage themselves as persons simply to mean what affects themselves as subjects whereby, they cannot step aside from the truth that reflects the persona sense<sup>30</sup>.

Morality, however, carries the essence termed as a “package element”. This is because, morality as an item in a moral sense entails our moral judgment, principles, values, and theories, and the philosophical examination of all these is the medium of ethics through a careful philosophical examination. With respect to the eye of the philosophical view it is where now we can examine the heart of moral issues, judge the worthiness of moral judgments as well as principles, more so to ensure that our moral beliefs lie totally on the rock of good reason<sup>31</sup>. Lewis Vaughn in his famous book of moral arguments asserts that “to do moral reasoning is to ensure that our moral judgment is not wrought out of thin air or concocted from prejudice or blind emotion instead are supported by good reason”<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, regarding all these, an ethical philosophical examination must aim at searching for a moral understanding which can only be attained through a careful reflection founded on reason.

Furthermore, Rosmini paved the way for the faculty of the moral act and according to him, “the human act is the genus, while the intellectual act and the volitive act are the species”<sup>33</sup>. On the same note, Rosmini asserts that there is a third specie that contains what he called eminently human

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<sup>30</sup> <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/Antonio-Rosmini/>. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

<sup>31</sup> Lewis Vaughn, *Contemporary Moral Arguments: Reading in Ethical Issues* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Vaughn, *Contemporary Moral Arguments: Reading in Ethical Issues*, 3.

<sup>33</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1991), 310.

acts. With respect for the intellective act and the volitive act, Rosmini asserts that they are not sufficient to make an act to be moral. For instance, the earlier intellections and volitions of children deserve not to be called moral because the faculty of law is not yet promulgated in these children who are unaware of the objective order of beings, simply the order to which duty is directed.

According to Rosmini, acts of the will or volitions are divided into two classes namely; affective and evaluative volitions. Rosmini gives a great reminder here that, whatever concept is formed by the intellect must precede both classes of volitions due to the reason that they will carry the essence of power by which human beings pave the way to a known good. Concerning affective volitions, Rosmini asserts that these volitions require less intellectual development than evaluative volitions, whereby evaluative volitions require much more intellectual capacity and something to note about both volitions is that all are highly activated in human development.

On the same stand, Rosmini goes on to say that something credible to perception is highly needed to desire something as a result of it is evaluation in other words this is to say that something must be judged, and upon this notion, Rosmini asserts that “this judgment on the value of the things needs a rule which is always an abstract idea, thus abstraction must precede the evaluative volition”<sup>34</sup>. Therefore, according to Rosmini, even pure affective volitions deserve not to be called moral due to the reason that they don’t possess what he termed as a value judgment. More so he argues that nor are all evaluative volitions are moral, what is commonly required according to him is that for the essence of morality to be valid “the evaluative judgment must be regulated not by

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<sup>34</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1991), 310.

any rule, but by a moral rule” and so, therefore, the objective goal of our actions must reflect what is the moral rule or in other words in Rosmini’s understanding we call it the order of being.

Rosmini articulates also three kinds of rules by which human beings in the earlier development judge the value of things; the first rule he termed “that which satisfies our animal sense is good”, for this case we realize that the rule falls in the abstract idea of animal good; the second rule is “that which pleases us”, again here we realize good manifested to us by a human instinct and so whatever comes as an animal or spiritual is good<sup>35</sup>. According to Rosmini, the main purpose of the first two rules is to measure and evaluate the subjective good. In the third rule, Rosmini asserts that this rule becomes activated when we only become aware of the other intelligent beings in the world besides ourselves. Regarding this notion Rosmini however asserts that “when we have discovered the existence of other beings like ourselves, we quickly arrive at the mental conception of the first intelligence by the faculty of integration”<sup>36</sup>, simply the mental conception that is owed to God himself the supreme intelligence. When we reach this stage, we attain what we call full possession of the abstract idea simply of the objective good. Therefore, the moral act begins when this idea sounds to us for the very first time.

The relationship that exists between the concept of law and the attitude of objective good is simply what links the connection and brings us to a clear definition of the moral action or in other words the act of the will in its relationship with the law. Therefore, in Rosmini’s view of morality we do distinguish three elements concerning moral acts; the first that reflects the intellect, “is the perception and conception of anything towards which duty is exercised; the second is “evaluative

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<sup>35</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science*, (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1991), 311.

<sup>36</sup> Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science*, 311.

volition, appertains to the will”; and finally, the third element is “the law or idea of objective good”<sup>37</sup>, which according to Rosmini sounds superior to both the intellect and the will.

## **2.7 Rosmini’s Articulation of Moral action’s link with the Law**

Our inquiry regarding this context is to see how Rosmini articulates the relationship between the first moral law and our moral actions. According to Rosmini, the first moral law is an idea of the mind applied to determine the morality of human deeds. However, Rosmini goes on to say that, the idea of being or the first moral law stands as the “supreme rule or criterion with which we make a judgment about good in general”<sup>38</sup>. More so, Rosmini articulates these two notions “being and good” with the same meaning in the sense that without being there is no good, and without good, there is no being, and so therefore being and good are like two wings that drive us to the truth. On the other hand, Rosmini articulates that “every nature is good insofar as it is and evil insofar as it lacks any part of being belonging to it”. Therefore, regarding this view, we realize that when we bring our attention to the analysis of the good, we find that, every nature entails an intrinsic order in knowing the necessity of certain parts and qualities which resulted in what is perfect for nature.

How do we know the good? According to Rosmini, we realize the essence of what is good when we come across its being and the many grades it involves of the existence proper to it. However, on the same note, Rosmini puts it in another form that we also identify the essence of good when “we know the order possessed by its being and expressed in its essences”<sup>39</sup>. According to Rosmini,

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<sup>37</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Anthropology as an Aid to Moral Science*, (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1991), 311.

<sup>38</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of ethics* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1988), 31.

<sup>39</sup> Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of ethics*, 31.

the mode of knowledge regarding a thing being is quite equivalent to the knowledge of its goodness and so, therefore, the notion of the idea of being or the first moral law is very sufficient in making a judgment regarding what is good and what is evil and Rosmini was very clear to his point that, the idea of being stand also as the rule and principle used to measure and identify the good of all natures.

Consequently, Rosmini gives three conditions that are very necessary for judging our actions; the first condition is that the notion has to be received in the mind of the person judging; the second condition, the notion must be aware of its suitability as a principle for moral judgment. Regarding the second condition, Rosmini emphasizes that this awareness has to promulgate the notion in the subject; and finally, in the third condition, the notion must be applied by the subject to the actions to be judged<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, according to Rosmini the validity of our moral actions brings sense if at all the law exists in us under these three conditions simply say, the law must be known, promulgated, and finally must be applied.

However, if all these moral laws in our minds are simply notions, there is a great need must come in a series of these notions and laws to a destination called “final law”. According to Rosmini, what is termed the final law can also be called first due to the reason that the essence of “last” and “first” expresses two relationships of a single term<sup>41</sup>. This simply means that whatever is last in the series is first if at all the series is reversed and all these procedures prepare us for the idea of the first moral law as the influencer of our actions.

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<sup>40</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of ethics* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1988), 5

<sup>41</sup> Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of ethics*, 5.

The first moral law according to Rosmini stands as the first idea with which we form moral judgments. Rosmini goes on and articulates that, there is a unique idea in the human being preceding all others of which all judgments are formed. Having seen the formation of this idea, Rosmini asserts that, this first idea which is the principle and source of all judgments is equivalent also to the principle and source of all moral judgments hence the birth of the “first moral law” the rule and principle of all our actions.

Furthermore, according to Rosmini, all our judgments become valid under the strict condition that, the human mind forms them with the idea of a universal being which is innate in the form of the human spirit as the great mode form of intelligence<sup>42</sup>. Rosmini called this “form of intelligence” because an examination of human thoughts reveals them to be informed by it in such a way that thought will be impossible without it and so therefore any spirit in contrast to it lacks the essence of intelligence, and so the means we can use to produce moral judgments is the first moral law under the essence of universal being.

Rosmini in expressing the idea of the universal being, argues that in whatever you do, follow the light of reason. This notion came as the result that, the idea of the universal being constitutes what he called the light of reason, and so therefore according to him the essence of the moral law is well expressed fairly in the formula “follow reason”. Therefore, according to Rosmini, the capacity of reason is the tool the human spirit uses to apply the concept of being, so simply what we realize here is that, for the application of an idea to be valid coherently, the essence of reasoning must be active enough since it’s the power of a limited fallible spirit. However, something crucial to note is that there is no way the mode of the light of reason can be an error due to the reason that, the

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<sup>42</sup> Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of ethics* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1988), 6.

essence of reason does not depend on the mode of the human spirit, nor does the spirit acquire it by its efforts instead its innate to mean that we received it since conception by the creator.

Rosmini however, articulates some features regarding the essence of the light of reason. Since this faculty can illuminate the spirit as well as make it intelligence deserves to be unique beyond the normal sense and so, therefore, according to Rosmini the essence of reason in the form of illumination is completely eternal, unchangeable hence necessary. Therefore, what we need to know here is that the objective goal of reason is not the essence of moral law instead it is the idea of being whose light is used by reason, and on the same note Rosmini puts this clearly “when reason adheres to the light, it is accurate when it abandons the light, it errs”<sup>43</sup>.

Therefore, regarding all these notions we realize how Rosmini articulates clearly the power of the light of reason as the main basis of our actions. Therefore, our moral judgments become valid before the lens of the moral law if at all are highly illumined with the light of reason. The idea of being in the background of the first moral law becomes a catalyst that speed up our actions to attain the essence of moral performance.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Inquiry on moral responsibility stands as an attitude that calls for awareness in keeping the essence of moral performance based on our daily actions. In this chapter, we have seen the outstanding philosophical position of morality according to Rosmini, as well as the views and contributions through the lens of some other philosophers. Antonio Rosmini who is the captain of this study has helped us to get to know in detail the issues concerning morality simply to say what morality is all about, how to keep and maintain the essence of morality, and how should we behave so that our

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<sup>43</sup>Denis Cleary, *Antonio Rosmini: Principles of ethics* (Durham: D. Cleary and T. Watson, 1988), 8

actions may conform to the basis of the moral law and so forth. Therefore, Rosmini's great invitation to all of us is to ensure that all our doings are always illumined with the light of reason, so that they may be worthy before the lens of the moral law.

The idea of the first moral law proposed by Rosmini in his book known as "The principles of ethics" gives us the confidence and awareness to always think before we make any performance regarding of our daily duties, of which this is now the responsibility that is needed to bring to date the essence of moral responsibility. Once we perceive that whatever we do must be guided by the light of reason it is a good indication that the outcome will be good.

Therefore, the discussion we had in this chapter is simply the continuation of what we are going to discuss in the next chapter as we look forward to describe the factors hindering the essence of moral responsibility. Having done with what morality is all about, it is now a moment to inquire about the causes that destroy the essence of being moral since our aim in this study is to find means that can be used to retain back the essence of moral responsibility.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE ESSENCE AND GAPS TOWARD MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The decline of moral and ethical values is at present a blazing issue that really affects the world globally. Following this, we find that in our today's society, responsible and very rational behavior is expected from everyone, though it's unfortunate that immoral and antisocial behavior is increasing every single day. Having this awareness, we come to the agreement that several factors are responsible for the fall of moral and ethical values. Now a day's the essence of moral responsibility lacks its meaning when actions are performed in contrast to the order of being. For this case, therefore, we continue to realize that the main goal of morality is not just to describe how things are but more so to prescribe how things should be. Regarding this condition, we won't be able to prescribe how things should be if there is no flaw in actions that reflects the order of being, and Rosmini asserts very clearly that, whatever is done must be illumined with the idea of being so that such actions may be worthy in accordance to universal moral principles. Our inquiry in this chapter is therefore to describe profoundly those factors that contribute to the decline of moral and ethical values in the contemporary society.

#### **3.1 Peer group and the Influence of Companion**

The influence of the companion or group consequently plays a vital role in forming moral and ethical values among the people in society. In this view people tend to scrutinize their matters or endeavors relating to morality practiced by their companion in their surroundings or their home places hence the outcome of behavior portrays directly the figure of the companionship or in other

words, a group somebody was related to<sup>44</sup>. For instance, let's view the context of the peer group as a group that is associated with drugs, in respect to this we realize that if somebody was good before joining the group, it's unfortunate that the person will not be the same due to the great temptation he/she will face regarding the companionship. We have used the image of drugs to show how companionship can affect people's behavior, but there are several factors in the mode of the peer group that will consequently affect people's behavior. What is needed here is only awareness in selecting groups or even companionship to be always on the safe side through performing morally worthwhile actions.

However, the concern of peer group or the influence of companionship affects greatly the young generation since it's funny for them to spend more time discussing and playing together, and sometimes have an open conversation with them as well as seeking their advice and so it becomes very easy to be scrutinized with their fellows.

The mode of socialization however portrays a significant impact on an individual's personality since the findings show that, if someone since his childhood has been properly socialized, consequently it reflects also his behavior. Therefore, when good moral and ethical values among the youth are well inculcated by the elders, especially the parents there is a great possibility of having good actions that reflect the moral sense, though this remains just an idea with no practicality in it, for it's unfortunate that parents in today's culture are not taking active and required measures in socializing ethical and moral values among people most especially the young generation<sup>45</sup>. Therefore, the mode of a peer group has a great influence in forming an individual's

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<sup>44</sup> Shoiab, A. Bhat, *Declining Ethical and Moral Values Among Youth* (The communications, vol 27 no 01, 2020), 171.

<sup>45</sup> Bonnie A. Nelson, *Juvenile Delinquency Causes, Control, and Consequences* (Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers. 2016), 3.

personality and so to put ourselves on the safe side awareness must be given priority to avoid all these circumstances leading to immoral actions.

### **3.2 Science and Technology**

The development of science and technology portrays both negative and positive impacts on developing the individual's personality. The findings show that the mode of mobile, as well as internet influence, affects greatly the deterioration of moral and ethical values. However, based on observation it seems that these are having the most negative impact on individual's behavior most especially in the young generation<sup>46</sup>. However, people's lives have been significantly impacted by the quick advancement of science and technology around the world in terms of how they live and interact with one another. Therefore, with such a brief observation the findings show that the outcome of science and technology is just a mainstay in the sense of how people communicate with one another as the influence of technology.

There are two things to keep regarding scientific technology; in the first sense if it's well utilized we will end up having positive impacts, for instance, direct communication towards one another globally; in the second sense we portray scientific technology with the negative side and it's in that side we find the decline in the context of moral and ethical values<sup>47</sup>. For instance, watching pornographic videos is regarded as a negative impact that resulted from this mode of technology and so, therefore, this negative incidence and many more others deteriorate greatly the moral and ethical values of our today's society.

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<sup>46</sup> Shoiab, A. Bhat, *Declining Ethical and Moral Values Among Youth* (The communications, vol 27 no 01, 2020), 171.

<sup>47</sup> Downs Edward, "*The Dark Side of Media and Technology: A 21st Century Guide to Media and Technological Literacy*", 2019), 65-69.

Furthermore, the issue of mass media has become pervasive in the lives of people whereby this comes mostly as a result of unfriendly usage of social networking sites, online gaming, and video-sharing sites which all contribute to the decline of moral and ethical since they are current features of today's world. The findings show that these behaviors have so permeated people's lives to the extent of making them busy instead of doing other beneficiary businesses.

People in society should get it well that, the role of media's position is not meant to destroy moral values instead is to persuade, educate as well as to entertain and so, therefore, for us to acquire benefits from media sources, there must be a good utilization of all things concerns media, in contrast, we will end up having the deterioration of moral and ethical values. To sum up, upon this inquiry of mass media, there is then an urgent need for the world at large to protect and empower people in shaping their media environments.

### **3.3 Parental Influences**

The capacity to discover what is acceptable in society simply to know what is good and to avoid what is evil, such a capacity is originated from the family set up and this is the reason why the family is considered the foremost educational institution for a child since the parents or the caregivers have the potentiality to actively or unconsciously communicate their beliefs, desires, and values to their offspring. As a result, therefore, a child will be in a good position to judge what is good and bad and to identify life goals or in other words the purpose of their existence here on earth. Having this sort of realization, it's a sign that we will have someone in the future who is determined and who can live worthily the attitudes of moral and ethical values.

Regarding the fact that the youth generation most especially the children are not so good in decision-making capacity as compared to adults, the role played by parents or caregivers can

consequently affect the way these teens behave and make choices<sup>48</sup>. However, we should keep in mind that the way parents behave plays an important role in how this young generation (teenagers) makes decisions. For instance, if a teenager sees his parents acting immorally like just neglecting household responsibilities or drinking too much, it, therefore, happens that the teen might take it seriously, assuming that he's entitled to make similar actions. Therefore, the unfriendly images portrayed by parents to their children become a great obstacle to this young generation since they will develop those bad habits which are immoral or in other words impulsive behaviors<sup>49</sup>.

### **3.4 Drugs and Substance Use**

The findings show that the use of drugs and other substances related to drugs could be a catalyst for potential violence and addiction. The issue of being addicted becomes a result of a brain condition that induces people to greatly wish to consume more drugs despite the significant negative effects. Therefore, once one reaches the stage of being addicted this will lower their mental development, and on some occasions, it leads to serious psychiatric illnesses. Therefore, having all these illnesses result from drugs and substance misuse it becomes quite very difficult for one to remain morally stable. However, his thoughts, words, and actions will not resemble someone who is mentally fit and so, therefore, once someone has fallen into this river of drugs he/she will not be able to perform moral actions instead they will be actions performed without the light of reason as the way Rosmini commented once that, whatever is done has to conform to the light of the reason for it to be regarded as a morally worthy action.

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<sup>48</sup>Shoiab, A. Bhat, *Declining Ethical and Moral Values Among Youth* (The communications, vol 27 no 01, 2020), 172.

<sup>49</sup> Catholic Church, and Raymond B. Fullam. *The Popes on Youth: Principles for Forming and Guiding Youth from Popes Leo XIII to Pius XII*. New York: David McKay, 1956, 6.

Consequently, drug and substance misuse contribute to several long-term issues; for instance, academic issues will propagate a negative impact most especially in the faculty of memory, whereby it will be very difficult for the one addicted to drug use to recollect materials or form different arguments concerning the field of academia hence, therefore, the outcome of what is good as a moral and ethical value will not be there as the influence of drugs and substance misuse.

However, drugs and substance misuse lead to the eruption of criminal activities which hinder the spirit of development in our societies. More so, the eruption of criminal activities irritates the authorities as well as the judicial systems. Another impact as a result of drug and substance misuse is what we call problems with friends as well as families. Regarding such a scenario, there is no way we can have a peaceful and determined family, simply if one or some members are drug and substance takers it will be a family of conflicts always since peace cannot prevail in such an environment. Therefore, there is a great need for children as well as adolescents to be informed of great awareness that drugs and substance use are the things that should be avoided with all efforts and it will be good if the prescription and the analysis will be provided. Doing so we may make some steps ahead in building the upcoming determined generation, and finally, the parents and caregivers need to establish a close relationship with their children, by guiding them in everything they do with the light of reason which will consequently help in building up a strong upbringing of their formation.

### **3.5 Abortion**

The argument regarding the issue of abortion seems to be very strong and persuasive on its terms since it's an act that is legally accepted in some countries and is also legally prohibited in some countries. Therefore, abortion is simply an act with no one acceptance of argument in the ordinary sense but before the eye of the universal moral principles, an act of abortion is being termed as an

immoral act since it contrasts with the order of being. The act of terminating life is countable as an evil act and by any means, it cannot be a moral act.

The religious argument seems to be strong enough against the issue of abortion, this argument expresses life as sanctity to mean that every human life is valuable in itself even if it is fetuses<sup>50</sup>. However, when we turn to the Bible, we find that both the old and new testaments reflect the notion of unequivocal. From Genesis 2:7 we find that “Human life is given and taken back to the creator”, Genesis 9:5-6 shows that Man is made “in the image of God”, and Mathew 25:14-30 shows the essence of life as a precious gift. All these biblical passages show clear about the sanctity of life as something very precious of which we are not worthy to take it out, instead it’s only the creator who made it can also take it away. Therefore, following the universal principles of morality, the act of abortion doesn't fit at all to be termed as a moral act instead its countable as an immoral act. However, the scientific argument shows that “a fetus is definitely a person”<sup>51</sup>. The difficult inquiry posed by the scientific argument is when does human life begin? The response as per scientific essence is concerned is that “human life begins immediately from the moment of conception, that genetic speck is already who we will be”. Therefore, what is present in the fertilized egg, includes the 46 chromosomes that determine each person’s unique genetic identity, hence the evolution of the fetus into what we identify as a real human being is swift and very definitive<sup>52</sup>.

In line with the scientific argument, we also find that, just from the moment of conception, after 25 days the heart starts breathing; after 30 days simply to say two weeks past the mother’s first

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<sup>50</sup> Edward Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day* (Touchstone Ed edition, 1996), 20.

<sup>51</sup> Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day*, 21.

<sup>52</sup> Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day*, 21.

missed period, the fetus develops eyes, ears, a mouth, a kidney, a liver, and a brain, and by the time it reaches 45 days is making waves that can be recorded on an electroencephalogram (EEG). More so, in the process, the milk teeth are already building, and at the same stage the fetus is already moving slightly<sup>53</sup>. To sum up, all these scientific facts help us to discover that the fertilized egg is something different from the person it eventually will become and so, therefore, the fetus stands as a “potential person” just like the way teenagers are potentially middle-aged future beings. Therefore, since abortion stands as an act of killing a being with a potentiality to life, by the virtue of killing that which possesses the potentiality of life qualities, directly it makes an act be termed as an immoral act and there is no way any act that involves life's termination to remain in the side of moral acts.

### **3.6 Suicide**

The ups and downs of life make people nowadays to commit suicide. The findings show that those who lack support and guidance in strange and difficult moments in life, they end up committing suicide. One thing that we need to consider as long as the context of morality is concerned is that our duty to preserve and protect life is based on moral values and so therefore whatever is contrasted is an indication of that which is not moral. The French writer and Nobel Prize winner Albert Camus once wrote that suicide “is the only truly serious philosophical problem”<sup>54</sup>. This notion came after the realization of what is more serious than the choice between living and dying. Camus goes on to think that if life is not worthy of living or in other words if it’s meaningless or

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<sup>53</sup> Edward Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day* (Touchstone Ed edition, 1996), 21.

<sup>54</sup> Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day*, 63.



absurd then why bother going on? However, if life is truly sacred whose life is more sacred than your own?

In his view, Camus considered suicide as a personal moral problem, and according to him instead of performing every instance of immorality, for instance, lying, cheating, breaking promises, stealing money, hurting other people and all other sorts of immorality its better if someone decides to commit suicide because he has become a burden to himself, to others and even to the society and to add up if no dependent family that your suicide will not plunge your family into economic ruin.

Consequently, Camus's views reflect what is happening today in our societies as they believed that suicide is a good thing to do, of which this notion doesn't mean that these people viewed life as less worthwhile than we do, no; for them, they believed that life of endless pain or an absurd life is not a life worth-living and so, therefore, their standards on what they view as "good" are different from our perspective. Therefore, in the society that we live in now, the majority commit suicides due to the hardships of life as well as many other challenges that made them draw what we call immediate conclusions.

In defending the point that suicide deserves not to be termed as a moral act, Plato echoes the Pythagorean opposition to suicide and declares that suicide as suicide ought to be buried in solitary or in other words nameless graves, to prove that suicide is not worthy act to perform. Plato's stand against suicide also attracted his most famous student Aristotle who also opposed suicide<sup>55</sup>. In Aristotle's theory of morality, we realize that virtues are considered to be central, and according

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<sup>55</sup> Edward Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day* (Touchstone Ed edition, 1996), 65.

to Aristotle the central virtue is “courage”. Having such a notion, Aristotle asserts that, the main test of courage should be observed by not fearing death, simply death should not bother us in any way<sup>56</sup>.

However, St Augustine also stood firm against the issue of suicide. He used the sixth commandment “Thou shalt not kill” to mean that life is a precious gift from God and so to reject it, simply means to reject God himself. Above all, St Augustine asserts that to kill yourself is to kill a man and so, therefore, suicide is considered murder and it is against the sixth commandment. St Augustine goes on to say that the sixth commandment “thou shalt not kill” extends to all forms of self-destruction, simply all sorts of reasons being included within<sup>57</sup>.

Furthermore, St Thomas Aquinas presents three reasons why suicide is unlawful; the first reason is that everything which naturally bares the essence of self-love and tries to keep itself in existence, and so therefore according to St Thomas, self-destruction is contrary to this natural law of self-love or in other words self-preservation. The second reason is that every part bares the essence of belonging to the whole; according to St Thomas, every man is part of a community and so, therefore, belongs to it, and so therefore once destroyed it means the destruction of the whole. St Thomas presents the third reason based on the biblical stand from Deuteronomy 32:39 “I will kill and I will make live” to mean that life must be considered a precious gift to man since God is in charge of that life and so whoever kills himself sins against God<sup>58</sup>. Therefore, in St Thomas’s view, suicide should be treated as a sin against God, the community, and the self, more so a sin which is

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<sup>56</sup> Edward Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day* (Touchstone Ed edition, 1996), 73

<sup>57</sup> Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day*, 74

<sup>58</sup> Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day*, 75

against love and justice although man is considered as a master of himself in respect to the virtue of his free will.

### **3.7 Euthanasia**

Euthanasia simply means an act done intentionally to end the life of a patient to limit the patient's suffering or pain. In other words, euthanasia stands as an act or practice of painlessly involving putting to death or terminating the life of a person suffering from a marked deformity or a very difficult distressing disease. When we trace back the history of euthanasia starting from ancient's times we find that the ancients themselves possessed few qualms regarding the issue of committing suicide, and consequently, it's the same thing they held for euthanasia. The Athenian magistrates in ancient Greece, "kept on hand a supply of hemlock, the poison of choice for any citizen who had obtained the permission of the senate to abandon life"<sup>59</sup>. Regarding this, we have Socrates who willingly, out of his own free will accepted the lethal dose of hemlock the action which goes viral that he committed suicide<sup>60</sup>.

Therefore, euthanasia as an act contrary to natural law by the fact that it intends to terminate life or in other words putting to death a person suffering from a great problem qualifies to be an act which is contrary to natural law and hence regarded as an act which is intrinsically wrong although, within the act of euthanasia, physicians don't intend to kill such patient just for the sake of killing instead they are prompted to such act of killing by "a sentiment of mercy"<sup>61</sup>. They directly intend the killing of an innocent patient to achieve a good end of which they consequently assume that the end justifies the means.

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<sup>59</sup> Edward Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day* (Touchstone Ed edition, 1996), 97.

<sup>60</sup> Tivnan, *The Moral Imagination: Confronting the Ethical Issues of our Day*, 72.

<sup>61</sup> Celestine N. Bittle, *Man and Morals* (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011), 370.

Despite all arguments that defend the act of euthanasia, through the eye of universal moral principles, this act remains to be pernicious and immoral since we cannot do evil to promote a good thing<sup>62</sup>. Therefore, since God is the owner of life and death no single human being possesses the authority to take an innocent person's life otherwise when we do so we commit what we call murder.

However, when we look at the issue of murder we also realize that “murder is contrary to the natural law and intrinsically evil”, likewise euthanasia or mercy killing remains to be an act that is contrary to the natural law hence an invasion of the rights of God and intrinsically evil<sup>63</sup>. We do illustrate it as an invasion of the rights of God because life as a precious gift is not a thing that belongs to a patient as his property and so, therefore, lying on this fact, nobody has the right to grant permission to anyone to terminate his life. To sum up, physicians must try their level best to avoid such an act of euthanasia even if the public laws allow it or the public official has ordered or authorized mercy killing because neither private nor public authority possesses the power to take an innocent person's life in whatever way since it's well known that such an act is an intrinsically immoral act.

### **3.8 Eugenic Sterilization**

In simple language, sterilization means the mutilation of sexual power in a man or woman purposely for the sake of rendering conception impossible. In other words, sterilization involves the mutilation of the sexual power performed for the sake of hindering the conception of undesirable as well as physically or mentally unfit offspring<sup>64</sup>. Sterilization involves two faculties

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<sup>62</sup> Celestine N. Bittle, *Man and Morals* (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011), 370.

<sup>63</sup> Bittle, *Man and Morals*, 371.

<sup>64</sup> Bittle, *Man and Morals*, 387.

namely; voluntary sterilization and involuntary sterilization. Voluntary sterilization means when a person wills and requests it of his own free will, whereas Involuntary or compulsory sterilization is when it is performed by order of the state.

### **3.8.1 Voluntary Eugenic Sterilization**

This is the type of sterilization that involves the notion of free will, simply a person wills and asks for himself. Therefore, regarding this we realize that it is an agreement out of the free will, not to produce children whereby the reason behind this is to avoid the impact of undesirable or mentally unfit children. Placing the camera of universal moral principles on this issue, we realize that it is an action that is intrinsically wrong since it is an action which is contrary to the natural law<sup>65</sup>.

Whatever action of sterilization is done, it's simply intended for the serious mutilation of what we call a natural power and in anyhow it frustrates a natural function. As intended by the creator God, we all know that the intrinsic purpose of the sexual function is the propagation of the human race, and this to be valid conception must be activated. Following this, whoever hinders conception by a positive means, such as surgical operation consequently such person frustrates what we call the intrinsic purpose of sexual power as something intended by the creator God, hence acts contrary to the natural law in respect to human nature and its natural functions<sup>66</sup>. Therefore, whatever is contrary to natural law is intrinsically immoral, and in line with this, likewise, voluntary sterilization even when performed for an apparently good intention is intrinsically wrong.

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<sup>65</sup>Celestine N. Bittle, *Man and Morals* (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011), 387.

<sup>66</sup> Bittle, *Man and Morals*, 388.

### 3.8.2 Involuntary or Compulsory Sterilization

This is another type of sterilization performed by order of the state authority. Following the universal principles of morality, we also realize that it is intrinsically wrong when this sort of sterilization is done, most especially in the case of innocent persons. Since it is an order it doesn't mind the health condition of the person, and so therefore even when these persons are afflicted with incurable diseases or defects for them is right and just since its already ordered and to add up, under this circumstance the state as a tool responsible to protect the natural rights of a citizen may not deprive them of natural rights anymore<sup>67</sup>. Therefore, since it's well known that, the individual's right to life is a natural right, it would be morally wrong if the state as a tool responsible for protecting human rights initiated the issue of eugenic sterilization of which there would be no difference like to put an innocent person to death.

The gift of life is a precious moment that needs to be valued and protected with great care. Consequently, the "right to bodily integrity must be taken as a natural right always". Regarding this, therefore, if the essence of natural right within the body integrity will not be respected, it would be murder on the side of public authority to invade this natural right by ordering the issue of sterilization since it is an act that is regarded as a serious mutilation or in other words as an act which is contrary to the natural law.

In respect to the law of nature, the findings show that the frustration upon this function employing compulsory sterilization most especially in an innocent person qualifies completely to be an act that is contrary to natural law or in other words an intrinsically evil act or an immoral act.

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<sup>67</sup> Celestine N. Bittle, *Man and Morals* (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011), 387.

<sup>67</sup> Bittle, *Man and Morals*, 388.

Therefore, to sum up, the state assumes a right that it does not have by allowing forced eugenic sterilization, a thing that is completely contrary to natural law.

### **3.9 Murder**

Murder as an evil act simply is the deliberate and unlawful killing of a person. When a killing is purposefully intended then it's intentional either as an end or as a means to an end. Looking at the issue of the murder case in reverence to our today's society, we realize that nowadays people are being killed intentionally for many reasons behind, however people are nowadays poisoned each other, intended fighting ends with death, and bombs explosions especially those performed by army groups such as al caeda, book haram and so forth, whereby all these are death resulted from intended means such as shooting or stabbing.

Concerning murder, however, we have what we call direct killing which is achieved into two categories either positively or negatively. In the category of positivity, it is when the death of a person is caused as the result of an action, for instance, shooting or slabbing. Whereas the side of negativity is when the death of the person is brought about through withholding an action that ought to be set<sup>68</sup>. For instance, death through starvation of a person. Therefore, for an action to deserve murder, the killing must be "unlawful", and the findings show that killing becomes unlawful in respect to two ways; first, killing of an innocent person, who never committed any crime, is simply a just and honest person; secondly, he's a criminal deserving death, here the criminal deserves death under the influence of public authority whereby this killing is lawful as per the public authority but unlawful in respect to the natural law.

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<sup>68</sup> Celestine N. Bittle, *Man and Morals* (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011), 368.

According to natural law, murder is intrinsically wrong. Consequently, it's the same argument concerning the discussion of suicide, because life is a precious gift from God, and its only God alone who has dominion over man's life<sup>69</sup>. Therefore, to sum up, the deliberate murder of a defenseless person, whether by a private or public authority in opposition to the natural law is intrinsically evil.

### **3.10 Capital Punishment**

Execution of a person who has been condemned to death after being found guilty by a court of law of a crime is what we call capital punishment or in other words, commonly known as the death penalty. The argument in favor of the death sentence is that people who kill have violated their right to life by taking another person's life. More so, they consider the death penalty to be a fair form of vengeance that amplifies the moral outrage felt by both the victim's family and law-abiding society in general<sup>70</sup>.

Contrarily, opponents of the death penalty contend that it sends the wrong moral message since it legitimizes the very behavior that the law aims to prevent. However, they argue that the application of the death penalty for less serious offenses is morally wrong since its utterly excessive in comparison to the harm caused. Abolitionists contend that the death penalty is fundamentally unjust, inhumane, and demeaning since it violates the convicted person's right to life<sup>71</sup>. Therefore, concerning the natural law, capital punishment is intrinsically wrong hence an evil act.

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<sup>69</sup> Celestine N. Bittle, *Man and Morals* (Literary Licensing, LLC, 2011), 368.

<sup>70</sup> Hood, R. "Capital Punishment". Encyclopedia Britannica, August 17, 2022.

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/capital-punishment>.



### **3.11 Conclusion**

This chapter was an unpretentious attempt to prescribe various factors hindering the essence of moral responsibility to the contemporary society. The study findings revealed that peer group and influence of companions; parental involvement and impact on youth generation; a decline in the socialization process; the impact of scientific technology as well as social media; drugs and substance use; abortion; suicide; euthanasia; eugenic sterilization, and other related factors contribute highly in destroying the essence of moral responsibility. Therefore, to retain the essence of moral responsibility in our today's society, determining resolutions must be applied to enhance the birth of the new essence of morality in our societies. Rosmini once said, "whatever is done with the light of reason, such an act deserves to be good". Moving with this saying to chapter four, we are going now to describe and prescribe the good means or resolutions that can be applied to bring back the strong essence of moral responsibility in the context of our today's society.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **WAYS TO ENHANCE THE ESSENCE OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

When the essence of moral responsibility is destroyed we end up having what we call the decline of moral and ethical values simply the actions that are in contrast to the moral orders. Speaking of moral responsibility in the view of our today's society we realize that we are surrounded by many actions that are completely in contrast to the moral standards as the impact of moral deterioration. Now day's we see people killing each other as a very normal activity without any sort of conscious, majority nowadays commit abortion, euthanasia, suicide, murder, eugenic sterilization, and other evil acts confidently without being conscious that they are actions that are in contrast to the moral order. With all these circumstances, therefore, there is a great need to enhance the new means to society so that step by step we may bring back the lost essence of being morally responsible.

To be responsible for the moral order it's not a matter of choice, everyone is called to participate actively towards what is good always and so therefore to maintain the essence of moral and ethical values much effort is required. Moral responsibility as a universal role concerns everyone's behavior as well as its purposes and effects inclusively hence in that case, people will be counted as morally accountable if all their free choices will result in moral significant consequences. Therefore, everyone in society especially the elders have the role to guide, correcting, and giving instructions on how to attain moral significant consequences to the upcoming generation.

This chapter will, therefore, seeks to improve educational approaches to society's moral rehabilitation while also identifying practical answers, and the recommendations we will discuss will focus on the efforts to build a well-functioning society including educational means through

instilling excellent practical values in both households, schools as well as different communities at large, all these being to enhance the essence of moral responsibility to our societies.

#### **4.1 The role of Parents and Caregivers in Promoting Moral Values**

The part played by parents and caregivers is of great impact on the determination of moral and ethical values, it's indeed the parents and caregivers who decide the moral responsibility of their children. During the process of formation, parents must be aware of what children are supposed to do as well as what is suppose not to be done. However, on the same note, the findings show that moral renewal and reformation must start at home whereby as a result this young generation will get to know well the values of education, give less thought to monetary gains as well as make more of an effort to respect and value others as well as themselves<sup>72</sup>. Therefore, if parents and guardians will be well responsible by instilling positive values in their children, it won't come as a surprise to have a society that is well formed with what we call moral values.

However, home is regarded as the first and most effective school to teach morality. In other words, we can say that child's family is the first and most important group in which to learn how to interact with others as well as to love, share and have faith. Therefore, no longer should parents give schools or other organizations the responsibility of imparting values to their children, and besides that, the school and other social institutions are mostly a fault although their influence cannot be disregarded. On the other hand, parents as the owner of the first school of ethical values should ensure that they play their role well so as to avoid negative circumstances for their children most especially during the adolescent stage because at this stage its where some teenagers will inevitably

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<sup>72</sup> Kristel Campaert, Annalaura Nocentini, and Ersilia Menesini. "The Role of Poor Parenting and Parental Approval for Children's Moral Disengagement." *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. 2018. 212-220

try with sex and drugs at some point. Therefore, the parents as well as the guardians have the responsibility to inform, counsel, and forewarn their children concerning the dangers of unprotected sex as well as drug misuse<sup>73</sup>. Consequently, parents are frequently compelled to work in towns instead of home villages, leaving their kids to fend for themselves, as a result then there might not always be someone to chastise, encourage, or in other words motivate them. In the end, therefore, we discover that the majority of young people's time simply to mean those who are living without the guidance of parents or guardians is spent watching movies or engaging in online gaming, misuse of medial platforms as they listen to music that exalts drug use, sex and violence and all these is because the number of time families spends interacting in quality has decreased or it's not there completely. Therefore, to eliminate all these problems, parents must understand that they are their children's primary teachers and that exposing their children to excessive media might have negative effects on them, so parents and guardians must bridge the gap between their children and the corrupt post-modern culture.

Furthermore, in the context of many societies, the findings show that many homes lack what we call adult supervision hence within such a scenario it happens that nobody monitors whether or not children perform their duties accordingly. While some children live alone, others continue to live with their elderly grandparents and this mostly happens when parents are employed, living away from their original houses, and only occasionally meet their beloved children. On the same note, another view of reality is that the majority of children, especially in African households are abandoned in the care of their grandmothers and grandfathers, who are responsible for guiding

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<sup>73</sup> Helen Cothran. *Teen Pregnancy and Parenting*. San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2001. 31-32.

them as their guardians. The fundamental problem behind this is that the majority of these grandmothers and fathers are either too old or too ill to look after the youngsters.

However, due to some unavoidable circumstances, some kids lose their parents, grandparents, or other family members, leaving them orphaned though in the real sense for the sake of moral maturity children need guidance, emotional support as well as discipline. Therefore, if there are no guardians to look after children, certainly the community, schools or even religion can make it happen, though family formation remains to be crucial and very essential.

Parents are responsible for fulfilling the basic needs of children as primary educators and caretakers, on the same note however the degree to which these needs are met and a child's behavior are related hence therefore if children feel that their needs are being met, consequently they will behave differently as the impact of good formation<sup>74</sup>.

#### **4.2 The Critical Significance of Education in Moral Development**

The importance of the school in instilling educational values without no doubt is very significant, especially in societies with various cultures and so therefore regardless of a learner's background, the school must bring the concepts of life. Therefore, helping people both young and adults develop a set of views and values about what is right and wrong might be characterized as moral education, and their goals, attitudes, and behaviors towards other people and their surroundings are governed by this set of beliefs, so simply those who receive moral education become more inclined to behave following these attitudes and ideals. More so, on the same note moral education helps people

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<sup>74</sup> H.P. Muller 2004. "Values of Parents: Interpreting Social Change and Educational Policy Directions." *African Journal of Education*. 24(2): 159-169.

especially the young generation to consider what kind of individuals they ought to be and how they ought to act<sup>75</sup>.

However, moral education enhances all of the knowledge, abilities as well as values from other training areas by connecting them to an interdisciplinary mode called life orientation which influences a wholistic approach to student development in emphasizing the social, psychological, intellectual, cultural ethical, and cultural components of learning<sup>76</sup>. To improve the attitude of moral and ethical values, all guiders in education centers simply teachers or trainers are expected to encourage the virtues of integrity, accountability, and diligence in their students regardless of the subject matter they deal with, and on the same note, they should emphasize why they are important. Therefore, to put good deeds into practice teachers must always conduct themselves ethically and honestly. However, there are extra values that must be upheld in addition to those that are reflected in the writings, and teachers need to be aware of them. Educational institutions must give their recipients the skills, values, and knowledge they need to solve problems, and freely execute their fundamental rights and obligations without any hindrances.

### **4.3 Integrated School Administration**

The role of the school in moral instruction is closely related to effective school administration. Regarding this, we, therefore, realize that students that attend effective schools learn moral principles, including how to be honest, not to steal, and have compassion for others. The mission statement in educational institutions must serve as the foundation for the principles that the institution aspires to, of which both parents and students should be aware of its values. Therefore,

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<sup>75</sup> Halstead, J.M. *Moral Education*. In: Clauss-Ehlers, C.S. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Cross-Cultural School*. 2010, 260.

<sup>76</sup> M. Bottery. *The Morality of the School: The Theory and Practice of Values in Education*. London: Cassell Educational Limited. 1990, 62.

if the students will be led by values like accountability, civility, and integrity many issues can be eliminated including absenteeism and drug abuse.

Consequently, a code of conduct is intended to establish a constrained and purposeful learning environment simply that which is committed to raising and regulating the learning course standard, and for this case, regular reviews of school policies are required to see whether there is any particular deficiency. The policies of the school, as well as the school's vision and mission, should be made known to students and their guardians and finally, there should be consistency in how rules are applied and how people are disciplined<sup>77</sup>.

However, all parties involved and other organizations must work together for effective school management and the creation of a positive learning environment. On the other hand, Non-governmental organizations, teachers' unions, and other industries like sports, music, the arts, social welfare and development, and health care should work with educational institutions and schools since the objectives and goals shared by these partners are the same. Police officers, for instance, might talk to children about crime and how it affects the neighborhood as well as many other discussions meant for the acquisition of moral values.

Furthermore, school systems should have an open-door policy to let parents and everyone else feel at ease while visiting schools. Parental involvement in schools should always be encouraged by educational institutions, of which the reason behind this is because teachers will gain from being aware of the values upheld in a child's home where also they will get to know well the living conditions of their students. Likewise, on the same note, motivational speakers who have firsthand experience with the effects of living without a strong moral code ought to be encouraged to speak

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<sup>77</sup> J. Rens 2003. "The Role of Values in School Discipline." *Koers*. 68(4): 353-371.

out in public. In relevance to our today's societies, rehabbed drug addicts, ex-convicts, and people who engaged in sexually licentious behavior in the past can also offer advice to others to avoid encountering the same circumstances, which will help to improve the essence of moral and ethical values or in other words the new birth of being morally responsible to our societies.

#### **4.4 Reorganizing the Teacher's Preparation System**

Placing our eye in the view of today's society, it is undeniable that in the educational system, tertiary institutions are very essential since here is where teachers learn how to instruct students. Regarding this case, therefore, it would be crucial for educational institutions to continue keeping up with the shifting needs and educational issues since we know that teachers and educators are essential to the transformation process. However, the application of these rules necessitates the acquisition of new skills, which many instructors might not have and regarding this, the findings show that teachers commonly lament about not receiving enough training for classroom instruction. Therefore, with all these instances there is a need to reorganize and see where to improve, to give a new outlook to this essential ministry that necessitates the whole process of transformation.

Teachers on the other hand, occasionally complain that postsecondary institutions do not adequately prepare them for the realities of teaching in rapidly modernizing societies since there are many obstacles behind such as low pay, poorly behaved students who use drugs, slim possibilities for career advancement as well as overcrowded lectures. In the end, these problems



commonly cause professional stress and demotivation in teachers, which raises the absence rate among students and causes teachers to leave the profession to pursue other careers<sup>78</sup>.

These problems worsen the moral crisis in schools, thus future teachers should be provided with all the information, and however, they need to make an informed decision about whether or not to pursue teaching as a vocation. More so, to acquaint and acclimate them to more real-life classroom circumstances, tertiary universities should offer more opportunities for aspiring teachers to complete their didactic and practical teaching. The fact that our schools are multiethnic, the teacher's training program should provide aspiring and working teachers with the skills necessary to manage diversity during the process of lecturing.

Furthermore, multiculturalism and pluralism are realities that educators must acknowledge since they are essential to achieving objectives like social justice, fairness, and peace. Regarding these instances, teachers must be properly trained on how to deal with drug use among pupils and individuals who are HIV/AIDS positive. Therefore, teachers must help adolescents navigate this difficult path since they are going through a phase where they are trying to experience and use the world, and it is indeed inevitable that barriers will develop in the course of their quests. The government and all other sectors concerned must therefore be aware of and take action to address the problems teachers confront to improve the moral standards among the people in our schools and society at large.

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<sup>78</sup> David Court. 2001. "Financing Higher Education in Africa: Makerere, the Quiet Revolution". *Perspectives in Education*. 19, no. 2: 3-22.

#### **4.5 Community and Social structures**

Everyone in society has to make an effort to prevent what we call widespread moral decay. The government as well as other organizations, and departments should all contribute to the development of positive change. If everyone values positive principles, it could be possible to live in a society free of crime and drugs, though getting to that point is not very simple. However, as was previously mentioned, there are certain children as well as adults who are orphans and do not have guardians or somebody to care for them. Regarding these instances, therefore, communities, Non- governmental organizations (NGOs), and churches can create community-based projects to help with the care of these children as well as those with special needs whereby funds can be raised to help them with their financial requirements<sup>79</sup>.

However, Church pastors or ministers can be invited to speak to children at schools as well as other educational institutions about the value of spirituality, religion, and ideals in society since they do have more requirements than just a place to live and nourish. Along with love, rules, and order, they also need our attention, approval, and affection. If these children are not watched over by adults, which is crucial for their education and ethical, social, and personal development, they will not be able to acquire the skills needed to become responsible members of society.

#### **4.6 Provision of Employment Opportunities**

Youth participation and development also include employment as a key component. Young people must still find a job to support themselves until they reach adulthood, regardless of whether they have been empowered or have had access to education and training. The zeal of being busy looking for jobs as well as other opportunities is what will prevent them also from engaging themselves in

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<sup>79</sup> J. Broodryk. *Ubuntu Management Philosophy*. Randburg: Knowres Publishing. 2005, 13.

peer groups where they will be tempted to use drugs and other sorts of crime. In the societies that we live in now we realize that the unemployment rate is a major problem and so therefore to solve this issue, the government must implement several initiatives to give way forward especially to the youth generation towards achieving better life which is morally worthy.

However, the public sectors have a responsibility to create and produce an environment that encourages small or private sectors to grow to the level of commercial sectors. More so, authorities in the public sector have a responsibility to create, to the best of their ability and under the rule of law, an environment that warrants political security and stability. This environment must also have the necessary infrastructure and a sound macroeconomic master plan, such as more favorable regulatory and tax conditions for businesses which will allow people to run out their activities well.

#### **4.7 Youth Empowerment**

Empowerment refers to the process of establishing and maintaining the conditions for the youth by allowing them to do what they can account for through providing them with opportunities as well as what we call a positive environment without conditioning them. However, it's a psychological, cultural, and structural process by which teenagers discover new approaches and an inner belief of exercising their judgment in making decisions that will impact both themselves and society. Therefore, the fact is that youths' empowerment can only be realized and fully achieved if they understand that they are capable of making focused personal decisions and choices, understanding the repercussions of those actions, making free and informed judgments, and acting on those judgments<sup>80</sup>.

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<sup>80</sup> Commonwealth Youth Programme. *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment: 2007-2015*. London: Commonwealth Youth Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat. 2000, 26.

Youth empowerment, however, improves and awakens young people's ability to meet personal life necessities as well as the ability to bravely face challenges to live better, and more exemplary life. Young people need to feel empowered because these traits contribute to competence and self-confidence, which are related to self-worth and self-actualization. More so, youth empowerment requires a friendly, safe social environment where young people feel valued, respected, supported, and helped. Such a setting allows young people to express their original thoughts, have their voices heard when making judgments, and deliberate those decisions, as well as provides them with excellent potential prospects for genuine success.

Consequently, youth empowerment needs what we call active participation, especially in activities that are meaningful to people. As a result, therefore, people who engage in meaningful activities can engage in longer-lasting and sustained involvement, which is essential for, among other things, analyzing issues that are crucial to their well-being, developing skills, and generally having a positive personality, sense of self-worth, and consciousness<sup>81</sup>.

Youths must be given the chance to demonstrate and highlight their skills as a sign of maturation and growth in exercising their freedom and choices through empowerment. But if the following aspects; numerous structures, procedures, societal values, institutions, and behaviors—are not addressed, this empowerment will not be fully realized.

Therefore, to promote fairness and justice in living standards, youth empowerment must be implemented well so that people may achieve skills, knowledge, and power over the common factors of social, economic, and political variables that affect people's life general.

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<sup>81</sup> Parissa J. Ballard, 2019. "Impacts of Adolescent and Young Adult Civic Engagement on Health and Socioeconomic Status in Adulthood". *Child Development*. 90, no. 4: 1138-1154.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

To sum up, the essence of moral responsibility can be well achieved if all the mentioned ways will base more on the context of practicality than the theoretical sense. The ways discussed above such as; the role of parents or caregivers in developing moral values, community and social structures, the critical significance of education in moral development, determining school's administrations, restructuring what we call teacher's preparatory system, creation of job opportunities as well as the issue of youth's empowerment and many other ways must be implemented coherently in order to give out the new birth of moral awareness in our societies through performing moral actions.

Therefore, there is no doubt that in the context of our today's society we are surrounded by several actions that are quite unfriendly such as criminality, drug and substances misuse, early pregnancies, corruption, violent tendencies, child trafficking, lack of respect, and all forms of the immoral actions which they destroy completely, the essence of moral responsibility.

Chapter four of our study has come up with these ways or means by which we can shape again the structure of our moral sense and to bring back the essence of moral responsibility. Therefore, through the mode of the light of reason, there is no doubt that we can create a new society that is well-focused and determined to moral values.

## **4.9 GENERAL CONCLUSION**

This thesis has been organized systematically into four chapters. In the first chapter, we discussed the thesis design, which is just a brief introduction that explains the purpose of this research as to why we conducted it. In the second chapter, we have explained Rosmini's broad understanding of the idea of morality, which is laid in the principle of the idea of being or in other words the principle of the light of reason of which is the basis of our moral actions. In the third chapter, we introduced factors impeding the essence of moral responsibility (the essence and gaps towards moral responsibility), and finally, in the fourth chapter, we provided strategies for enhancing the essence of moral responsibility.

Through Rosmini as well as the influence of other philosophers we have come to realize the necessity of relying on the light of reason as the only basis for our moral actions. Following this therefore, it's a call to everyone to always place our actions, thoughts and words to the faculty of reason so that they may be actions that reflect the essence of moral worthiness performance.

In the context of our today's society, we face many challenges as the result of immoral actions whereby the main deal behind these instances is that some individuals in the societies in which we live have given up using their critical faculties of reason and are instead acting on their emotions, hence the outbreak of actions that are not friendly to the society. Therefore, the only way we can maintain social harmony in our societies is to perform all our actions with the help of the light of reason.

However, the light of reason as the essential principle enlightens and guides the will in its operations, since the will is the cause of all human acts, whether they are done directly or indirectly.

Following this, Rosmini emphasized that a will that is illumined by reason will only seek what is good since good is the object of the will.

Therefore, submission of our actions to this principle it is a sign that the outcome must be moral based, and its indeed a practice that will help in abolishing immoral actions which are not illumined by the faculty of reason. With this attitude, we can build up the strong essence of moral responsibility.

As the study attempted to inquire about the essence of moral responsibility, the main objective was to know the status of morality in the context of our societies, simply to know how to regulate our actions, thoughts, and words with respect to moral values. Since morals can be applied to the beliefs of an individual or the entire society, moral standards will help us to be aware of the behaviors that are appropriate as well as those which are inappropriate. For this case, therefore, moral education is important since it fosters the development of individuals to act in a mature way or in other words in the right direction of moral values.

consequently, if pioneers or experts in educational institutions, along with parents and caregivers, collaborate to strengthen moral values among individuals in our societies, the essence of moral responsibility can be well achieved. However, in educational institutions teachers need to serve as moral and professional role models for their students in many facets of life, to equip them with what we call outstanding formation.

Finally, there must also be a nice bond between religious policy-makers and religious studies educators in order to facilitate the spiritual teachings to the people, which will help much since they will have that fear of God within themselves.

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