

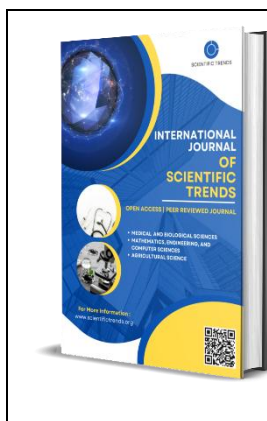
Hans Jonas' Concept of "Responsible Ethics" And the Mental Features of Traditional Ethical Theory

Samandarova Mukarram Borieva

Researcher at Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

b.jurakulov0202@gmail.com

Phone:+998939522533



Abstract

The article systematically examines the issues of traditional moral theory and its impact on social life, analyzes the concepts of the ethics of responsibility, and the specific aspects of Hans Jonas's concept of moral theory, as well as his fundamental work, "The Principle of Responsibility: The Experience of Morality in the Conditions of Technological Civilization."

Keywords: Ethics of responsibility, traditional, humanity, technological civilization, man, nature, social-ethical obligation, theory, future.

Introduction

One of the most important aspects of the development of moral philosophy and ethics in the 20th century is the significant, that is, noticeable increase in the conceptual significance of the concept of responsibility. The concept of responsibility began to become a central category of moral philosophy from the second half of the last century. This change is not accidental, but is directly related to the unprecedented expansion of the scale and scope of human activity, the rapid development of scientific and technological progress, the emergence of new, previously non-existent dangers and threats, as well as the negative, irreversible changes occurring in the biosphere and the Earth's ecological systems due to human activity.

It is in these complex historical conditions that, starting from the middle of the 20th century, it became increasingly clear that traditional moral norms and principles were inadequate, did not correspond to modern realities, new technological possibilities and the consequences they entail. Traditional morality mainly regulated the relationship of man to other people, but did not consider the issue of responsibility towards nature and future generations. At a time when the gap between the technological power of human civilization, its ability to influence nature, and the capabilities and theoretical foundations of existing moral systems were growing day by day, the need for a new moral theory and ethical paradigm that would cover the new problems and issues facing humanity arose sharply.

In this complex historical situation, in the process of searching for a new moral theory, Hans Jonas, in his fundamental work, "The Principle of Responsibility: The Experience of Morality in the Conditions of Technological Civilization," comprehensively developed the concept of the ethics of responsibility, its philosophical foundations, and put forward it as a response to the global problems facing humanity and the dangers that may arise in the future. In creating his concept, the philosopher primarily focused on the issue of ensuring the future existence of humanity.

The new ethical paradigm, the new approach proposed by Jonas, puts responsibility for the future existence of humanity at the forefront, at the center. In this, responsibility is interpreted not only at the individual level, but also at the collective, universal level. The concept of responsibility is considered in close connection with the issues of moral obligation and predicting the future. The process of transition from traditional ethics to the ethics of responsibility, this conceptual shift, is deeply analyzed by the philosopher as a situation that arose as a result of the loss of effectiveness and effectiveness of currently existing ethical systems in the conditions of new technological civilization.

According to the philosopher, as humanity's technological power and ability to change nature increase, its responsibility, scope of responsibility and obligations also increase proportionally, and this responsibility should be borne not only by the current generation, its contemporaries, but also by future generations, by people not yet born, by nature and by the future of our one planet in general. According to Jonas, by changing nature with our activities and decisions, we also determine the living conditions of future generations. Therefore, within the framework of the new ethical paradigm, responsibility should be understood as a continuous responsibility extending from the present to the future, towards certain prospects for humanity.

Jonas argues that no form of traditional morality can contain the standards of "good" and "bad" that arise from the new possibilities of man. Jonas sees his research as situated in a vacuum, which is also the vacuum of modern values. In such circumstances, the "guiding star" can be a foreseeable danger, a "flash of lightning from the future." Jonas calls this principle of prediction put into action the "heuristic of fear¹."

Jonas sees his main philosophical task as opposing the tendency to "abandon positivist-analytic judgments" and developing a new ethical system suitable for modern technogenic civilization. The philosopher has been researching this for many years and has sought to systematically substantiate his philosophical concept. As the core of his theory, Jonas chooses the concept of responsibility, expressed in German by the term "die Verantwortung", and closely connects it with the concept of duty. This concept occupies a central place in his moral doctrine and unites his entire concept into a single system. Of course, as Jonas emphasizes, the principle of responsibility is not a completely new, previously unknown ethical phenomenon, but in his interpretation this concept acquires its own new aspects, special properties, and is manifested in special, unconventional dimensions in terms of the object of moral action, the subject of responsibility, and the intentions of a responsible attitude. These dimensions allow us to understand the concept of responsibility in a broader sense.

¹Jonas H. Das Prinzip Verantwortung: Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003. - S.8.

Knowledge as a power is not enough to accurately predict the future, and it is impossible to cast a "chain of cause and effect over the entire globe" and, especially, to extend it into the future, taking into account the following consequences: 1) long, 2) irreversible, 3) cumulative. Thus, responsibility must be considered within the limits of space-time, corresponding to the limits of human actions.

In his works, Jonas justifies the need to move from traditional moral views to the ethics of responsibility on the basis of a deep scientific and philosophical analysis and emphasizes the inevitability of this transition. According to the philosopher, in the conditions of modern technological civilization, the moral rules and norms formed in previous eras have ceased to be fully effective and it has become clear that they are not acceptable in new conditions. This creates the need to create new foundations for modern morality. Jonas substantiates these ideas through detailed analysis and comes to consistent conclusions. He argues that all existing forms of traditional morality, despite their diversity and differences, are conditionally based on three main principles.

First, they stem from the idea that the human condition, determined by the true nature of man and the nature of the world around him, is absolutely immutable, permanent, and unchangeable.

Secondly, the definition of goodness and virtue is assumed to be self-evident and clear for this very reason, namely, due to the immutability of human nature, and its criteria and standards do not change over time.

Thirdly, the "sphere of influence" of a person's practical activities, his actions and deeds, as well as responsibility for them, have always been considered local, narrow and very limited, that is, it was not taken into account that it could have consequences on a large scale, over a long period of time.

Jonas's view of the shortcomings of traditional morality has become very popular. This view is also supported by J. Habermas: "Believing that philosophy can encompass the entire complex of nature and society, it operated within the framework of seemingly rigid boundaries, embodied in the lives of individuals and communities. The structure of the universe and human nature, the stages of world and sacred history, provided facts shaped by norms, which in turn served to explain the right way of life ². "

The radical change in human activity and the new opportunities created by the development of modern technology, as well as the need to change human nature and the inevitability of this process, encourage the moral system to be changed and revised accordingly in new conditions. Under such conditions, it becomes clear that traditional moral values are not enough in themselves, and the need for a new moral system arises. Technique and technology have historically been a constant companion of man, and over the centuries they have gradually changed the behavior, lifestyle, and even the essence of his identity. Taking into account these important factors, Jonas in his philosophical views pays special attention to the fundamental and qualitative difference of modern technique and technology from the technical means of previous eras, and emphasizes the importance of this difference not only in quantity, but also in quality.

As a vivid example of the power of man in ancient times and his desire to dominate nature, Jonas cites the chorus from the play "Antigone" by the great Greek tragedian Sophocles - this quote

²Khabermas Yu. Budushchee human nature. Per. s wet. - M.: Izdatelstvo "Ves mir", 2002. - S. 12

serves as evidence of man's violent intervention in nature and attempts to change it since ancient times. Sophocles' chorus describes man as a "wonderful, terrible creature" (deinotaton, deimon), emphasizing his power and fearlessness.

According to Jonas's analysis, two parallel processes are observed here - on the one hand, violence and domination over nature, and on the other hand, its culturalization and adaptation to human needs. These processes are carried out by man as a defense against nature by building a separate enclave - a city, that is, man separates himself from nature, creates his own space and thus enters nature. By building a city, man not only creates the specific conditions of his life, but also transforms his existence into a human life, acquires his human existence necessity in exchange for natural necessity, and thus separates himself from nature³. However, Jonas emphasizes that ancient man could not completely get rid of his limitations and was dominated only by "death and time" - no matter how strong he was, man always remained a very small, weak being in relation to nature, and the general nature of things makes man's nature doomed to death immutable. Man has always felt the limitations of this power and realized his helplessness before nature.

It should be noted here that, from Jonas's point of view, Kantian ethics, which is traditional, includes the concept of "the right to a good name", which extends to a person even after his death. Along with the will, which guarantees the morality of an action, knowledge was not the knowledge of a scientist or a specialist. Jonas illustrates this⁴ with the example of Kant's words: "... the human mind can easily achieve a high degree of accuracy and detail in the field of morality, even in the simplest reasoning..."

This was the traditional attitude towards morality until the advent of modern technology. Of course, the traditional norms of justice, love, compassion retain their importance in everyday life, but above them - in the sphere of collective action - new dimensions of responsibility arise. In this regard, Jonas highlights some new phenomena in the changed world landscape.

1. The vulnerability of nature to technology (die Verletzlichkeit) gave rise to the science of ecology. A new concept of responsibility must encompass the biosphere as its object. It is time to think not simply about "don't cut off the branch you are sitting on", but, as Jonas puts it, "whoever is sitting on it is falling into the void".

2. Knowledge now appears as a duty and a necessity, and Jonas calls this "the new role of knowledge in morality." The complexity of consequences raises new ethical problems and the need for constant checks on the growing power.

3. The damage to nature requires the introduction of the concept of "moral rights of nature". This changes the foundations of traditional morality, because now not only human well-being is important, but also the preservation of existence. In modern morality, man must fulfill the role of "trustee of nature".

4. Technology is now seen not as a means to an end, but as a goal that humanity aspires to, which demands new responsibilities and imperatives, and which also changes the nature of politics.

5. In ancient times, the city (polis) was an enclave within nature. Nowadays, human power has destroyed borders and spread the "city" across the entire earth. The disappearance of artificial and natural borders has created a "new nature" that is at odds with human nature.

³ Jonas H. Das Prinzip Verantwortung: Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003. P. 15-17.

⁴ Kant I. Sobranie sochineniy v 8 t. Yubileynoe izdanie 1794 - 1994/ Pod obshch. ed. A.V. Gulygi. - M.: Izd-vo "Choro", 1994. - T. 4, S. 159

Of course, one can object to Jonas's ideas about traditional morality and its rules. Contrary to his definition, traditional moral systems also had a vector of universal values, and moral rules had a "farsightedness" feature. This was characteristic of many moral systems considered traditional. For example, the Russian scientist PA Gadzhikurbanova notes: "Jonas's idea that traditional moral views are limited in space and time is surprising. Because in most moral traditions, moral requirements are general "from the point of view of eternity" and "for all intelligent beings", and are formed and based on this basis ⁵." That is, Gadzhikurbanova emphasizes that traditional moral systems also had norms that were not limited by time and space, expressed universal values, and also took into account the future.

As the most important and distinctive feature of previous ethical theories, Jonas emphasizes the emotional, sensual side of morality, which is a significant difference from the same aspect in his concept of the ethics of responsibility. In his works, the philosopher analyzes these differences in detail, comparing traditional and his proposed ethical systems. Jonas notes that although Immanuel Kant agreed that in morality, feelings and emotions must necessarily be added to thought and rational reasoning, this emotional component has actually been present in most existing ethical systems, either explicitly or implicitly. To confirm this, the philosopher lists the emotional components in various ethical systems. For example, the feeling of "fear of God" in religious ethics, "eros" in ancient philosophy, that is, the desire for beauty, "eudaimonia" in Aristotle's ethics - the feeling of striving for happiness ⁶, "intellectual love" in Spinoza's teachings, "respect for the law" in Kant's ethics, ⁷and other similar feelings - these are all feelings inspired by, derived from, and grounded in the love of the "supreme good" (Latin: summ bonum), which has an eternal ontological status, beyond time.

But Jonas paid special attention to the fact that among the traditional emotional aspects and feelings listed above, the feeling of responsibility was not present. This feeling was not singled out as a separate category in traditional moral systems, regardless of whether they were religious, philosophical or secular, and was not given sufficient attention. Jonas emphasized that responsibility is a unique, special feeling that directly arises from a person's inner ability to it, from the deep human nature of a person, and with its characteristics it significantly differs from other moral feelings. This feeling manifests itself as a result of a person's conscious choice and should occupy a central place in his moral decisions.

In the philosopher's analysis, the important thing common to both types, that is, traditional morality and the moral systems he theoretically proposes and bases, is that feeling in any case appears as a "fact of experience", its source, point of origin, begins and is formed by an eternal or transient thing-object. According to Jonas, this feature constitutes a common, common aspect of both systems, connecting them, but at the same time there are also fundamental differences between them, which must be distinguished and distinguished.

In his philosophical reflections and theoretical research, Jonas pays special attention to the philosophical direction of existentialism, its moral principles, evaluates and comparatively

⁵Gadjikurbanova P. A. Fear and responsibility: ethics of technological civilization Hansa Jonasa. *Eticheskaya mysl/Ethical Thought*. 2019. No. 4. P. 161–178.

⁶Shichalin Yu. A. "Pir" // *Novaya filosofskaya entsiklopediya / In-t filosofii RAN; Nats. obshchestv.-nauch. fund; 2-e izd., ispr. i dopol.* — M.: Mysl, 2010.

⁷ Kant I. *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. Comment by Christoph Horn, Corinna Mieth and Nico Scarano. - Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp 2007 .

analyzes it as a unique, special moral system. In his works, he imagines and understands the philosophy of existentialism as a unique form of morality in which the main leitmotif, the driving force of behavior is not any specific goal, but only "action for the sake of action", that is, the action itself, in which the goal is reduced to the level of a mere excuse, a reason, and interprets this concept from the perspective of his philosophical system and expresses a critical attitude. In his opinion, such an approach to existentialism can serve as a basis for justifying actions that pose a threat to the future of humanity in the conditions of modern technological civilization.

Jonas concludes in his philosophical reflections that the sense of responsibility, as an emotional component of the moral will, has not been sufficiently manifested and expressed in traditional moral systems. Also, the concept of responsibility has not played a significant, leading role in the historically formed moral theories and their analytical approaches that have come down to us from the past, and has not been of decisive importance in the process of making moral decisions. The philosopher tries to explain this in detail in his works and reveals the reasons for this situation.

Jonas justifies the concept of responsibility as follows: "The sense and concept of responsibility depend on power and knowledge. They are in a complex relationship with each other, and the level of responsibility is directly related to a person's knowledge and power. When we study the history of morality, in earlier times both knowledge and power were very limited. Therefore, matters of the future were referred to the natural order and fate, and all people's attention and moral efforts were directed only to acting correctly in the present moment, in this situation. Since a person's capabilities are limited and the sphere of influence is narrow, concern for the future was not among his moral obligations ⁸."

According to the scientist's analysis, the new historical changes that humanity is currently witnessing are the beginning of the reign of unprecedented technologies, never before observed in the history of mankind. This process is fundamentally changing the world as we know it. Modern technologies are penetrating and being mastered in all aspects of our daily lives. This process is fundamentally changing human life, activity, and relationships with nature, and is increasing humanity's power to influence the environment to an incomparable extent.

Jonas analyzes this process in depth and in detail, highlighting two dangerous aspects. First, the current course of technological development, if it is not critically assessed and monitored, appropriate mechanisms are not taken, and its consequences are not seriously considered, may end in a global tragedy, catastrophe, universal catastrophe in the future, because the power and technological capabilities accumulated in the hands of humanity have become capable of completely destroying the biosphere. This is a real danger that cannot be underestimated.

Secondly, the pace of technological change is accelerating exponentially, that is, at an ever-increasing pace, and is getting out of human control every day, and this process is constantly, relentlessly intensifying. Each new technological breakthrough paves the way for the next, more powerful discoveries. Therefore, there can be no hope or confidence in the immanent historical intelligence that is supposedly present in history, that is, the intelligence hidden in history itself and its ability to control itself. History does not guide humanity on its own. The historical process,

⁸ Jonas H. Das Prinzip Verantwortung: Versuch einer Ethik für die technologische Zivilisation. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003. P. 220.

as Jonas notes, develops spontaneously, without the possibility of self-control, without the conscious intervention of people, the scientist argues.

According to Jonas, in such complex and dangerous conditions, the concept of responsibility acquires a completely new, unprecedented, more important, fundamental significance. The concept of responsibility should become the central category of modern morality. Responsibility is no longer posed by issues of an ideological nature, that is, political, religious or ideological orientation, but by urgent tasks that cannot be postponed and must be solved, determined by the purely physical need for the survival of humanity and the biosphere. The survival and future of the entire human civilization depend on responsible, far-sighted decisions that fully understand the consequences.

In this regard, in the conditions of the new era, Jonas Immanuel Kant proposes to reconsider and modify the famous moral rule of Kant. Kant's traditional moral imperative, namely, "you must do this because you can do it because it is necessary" (in German "du kannst, denn du sollst"), changes radically, fundamentally in the new technological conditions to "you must do it because you can, and you are responsible for what you do." In other words, you must do what you are capable of, this is your responsibility. This emphasizes the need for a person to deeply feel responsibility for his actions in advance, before committing these actions, because in the current era of powerful, large-scale technological opportunities, any human action or decision can have long-term and large-scale, sometimes irreversible consequences. Therefore, any decision must be made with deep thought and a sense of responsibility.