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## **Happiness and morality in Christian moral ethics and in philosophical ethics**

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**Abstract.** Happiness is the ontological state of human nature by which it is defined as a being endowed with reason, will and feeling. Anthropological analysis, whether it is carried out from a theological perspective or from a philosophical perspective, places man in a continuous ascent towards happiness. Thus, the question can be asked: which of the two ethical systems can define the human person as the possessor of morality and happiness, and what are their limits?

**Keywords.** moral ethics, philosophical ethics, happiness, Kant, Aristotle

### **Introduction**

Happiness has been defined as the most intense state of contentment that man can experience. Whether we do an anthropological analysis from a theological perspective or from a philosophical perspective, we deduce the fact that man is expressed by both sciences as dedicated to happiness. The analysis of philosophical works in which man is highlighted as an exponent of happiness denotes valences of ethics in which "the reflective study of what is good or bad shows that part of human conduct for which man is, more or less, personally responsible"<sup>1</sup>.

Starting from the fact that "modern and contemporary ethical-philosophical theories are mainly interested in the problem of practical reason and duty"<sup>2</sup>, however, one cannot ignore the human tendency towards a form of happiness, which is not limited within the boundaries of rationality. The fundamental difference between the norms of philosophical ethics and those of Christian moral ethics is that philosophy defined a form of human happiness limited to the intellect, unlike Christian morality which positions man beyond what the intellect can define. By relating man to God, the happiness for which he was created exceeds the possibility of its philosophical expression.

### **I. Christian moral ethics and Kantian philosophical ethics**

Both Christian philosophy and morality define the person as the recipient of happiness. However, there are major differences in the perception of both man and what we define as

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<sup>1</sup> Vernon J. Bourke, *Histoire de la Morale*, traduit de l'anglais par J. Mignon, Ies Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1970, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Vernon J. Bourke, *Histoire de la Morale...*, p. 9.

happiness between these ethical norms. So, if philosophy defines the person as an individual capable of rational thought, morality defines man as a dichotomous being, made up of a material body and a spiritual soul, which tends through creation to the absolute happiness found only in the Absolute God. The norms of philosophical ethics, embellished in chosen words, express a form of happiness, but it is limited only to the intellect and implicitly to materiality. Happiness as an effect of philosophical ethics does not transcend to the absolute, it remains limited only to the sensory. Contrary to this, the happiness of moral ethics reveals its infinity by relating man, i.e., the subject dedicated to happiness, to the supreme source, i.e., to God.

From the perspective of moral ethics, experiencing happiness can only be achieved through love. Starting from the norms of moral ethics, man can be defined as a dichotomous being, capable of dialogue and love with the Absolute God. The ontological state that we define as happiness knows no limits in created materiality, it manifests itself through love towards fellow humans on the horizontal axis and towards God on the vertical axis<sup>3</sup>. Man is the creature capable of feeling the divine love that flows from God through His uncreated energies and to respond to this love, through a communion that exceeds the boundaries of materiality, intellect. Through love of God, often expressed in love of fellow human beings, the human person ontologically perceives the power to transcend time and space in the encounter with God. "Free action is always the transposition of the soul into action, its concrete, external expression. And her value does not spring from her external appearance, but from her soul, from her inner springs. Inside is the root, there is the life-giving sap from which the leaves, flowers, and fruits sprout"<sup>4</sup>. It is interesting that for philosophy the ethical approach from the Natural Moral Law has as its foundation, as Immanuel Kant points out, in the Critique of Practical Reason, the necessity of admitting the existence of God even in the absence of metaphysical connections. Thus, Kant points out: "two things fill the mind with an eternally renewed and increased admiration and veneration, the more often and more persistently the reflection turns on them: the starry sky above me and the moral law within me"<sup>5</sup>. From here we understand that the natural law planted by God in man through creation is also grasped by philosophy, which also expresses it outside of a metaphysical relationship. For Kant, the Moral Law "begins in my invisible Ego, from my personality, and presents me in a world which is truly limitless, but which only the intellect can penetrate, and to which I recognize myself bound by a universal and necessary connection"<sup>6</sup>.

Unlike other prominent figures of philosophy, Immanuel Kant connects reason with Natural Law, concluding that from them can result a form of living that is defined beyond animality and the world of the senses. Through the Natural Law man can know a "view which endlessly elevates my value as intelligence, through my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of all the world of the senses"<sup>7</sup>.

## **II. Ancient philosophical ethics versus Christian moral ethics**

The two norms of ethics, although they seem to have different forms of manifestation, there are nevertheless points of convergence between them. The first point of convergence

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<sup>3</sup> Petrov, G. D. (2021). The apophatic knowledge in philosophy and theology. Emil Cioran Versus Dumitru Staniloae. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 21(1), 840–845. <https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v21i1.3702>

<sup>4</sup> Paul Evdokimov, *Orthodoxy*, translated by IPS Prof. Irineu Popa, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1996, p. 43

<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of practical reason*, translation, and introduction by Traian Brăileanu, Bucharest, Publishing House. Paideia, 2003, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of practical reason*..., p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of practical reason*..., p. 161.

results from the necessity of both norms to subject to analysis the manifestations of a moral character that the human person undertakes. Both philosophical and moral ethics define the human person as "consecrated to happiness"<sup>8</sup>.

The first difference that appears between the two norms refers to the way of understanding what we define as the happiness of the human person. Philosophical analysis places man in materiality, in what can be defined sensorially, rationally, and the resulting happiness can only be one limited to matter<sup>9</sup>. From the Aristotelian perspective, happiness is an end, to which man must reach by acquiring any form of its satisfaction. Thus, "happiness we desire for its own sake and never for anything else, while honor, pleasure, intelligence, and every virtue we desire both for its own sake and for the sake of the happiness which, by means of them, we think we might attain"<sup>10</sup>. We therefore see from here that Aristotle does not associate happiness with the human person's need to advance towards God, limiting man to elements that can be acquired in the world: honor, pleasure, intelligence. The happiness of the human person from the Aristotelian perspective refers only to the immanent human life, that is, related to the materiality of the person, related to the body. Although it also presents happiness in a metaphysical perspective, speaking of a Source of happiness, still the limitation to the sensory is obvious.

This materiality of happiness expresses, from the point of view of moral ethics, an ephemerality that can only bring a limited form of satisfaction. In contrast, Christian moral ethics brings to the fore the character of a person possessed by both man and God. From the perspective of Christian morality, God is a communion of Persons who have the same unique being the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. So, the idea of happiness resulting from the ethical norms of Christian morality does not emphasize anything material, but rather the correct relationship of the human person to the divine Persons, that is, to God, the Source of absolute love and happiness. Through this reporting, the happiness produced by materiality becomes null, moral ethics defining happiness as man's possibility to know God to a greater degree. In other words, the experience of happiness that moral ethics speaks of lies in the depth of man's knowledge of God. The deeper this form of knowledge, the more human happiness goes beyond the boundaries of materiality, often surpassing any strictly rational demonstration. "Three bearers of one boundless and unrepeated Being, as one God, are both the pattern and the goal of conscious created beings"<sup>11</sup>.

Another problem that needs to be elucidated is that of the duration of happiness. And here there are major differences between philosophical and moral ethics. If the first system of norms treats the human person in relation to the aspect of his materiality, which results in a form of happiness limited in time, the ethical norms of Christian morality place man, through his spiritual part, i.e., through his immortal soul, in the eternity of God. From this it follows that the happiness acquired by man through his right relation to God is eternal. The proof necessary for this demonstration lies precisely in the historical fact of Christ's resurrection, a resurrection that becomes the foundation of man's resurrection. The resurrection of Christ and the

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<sup>8</sup> Rev. Prof. Sorin Cosma, *Temperance in ancient philosophical ethics and Christian morality*, University Publishing House, Bucharest, 1997, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Petrov, G. D. (2021). The importance of the dialogue between theology and science from an anthropological analysis perspective. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 24(1), 785–790. Retrieved from <https://techniumscience.com/index.php/socialsciences/article/view/4872>

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 7, (1097 b 1-12), p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Holy Trinity or in the beginning was love*, Bucharest Ed. IBMBOR, 1993, p. 26.

appropriation by the human person of the fruits of objective salvation, represent the basis of the happiness that man can experience in the love of the Holy Trinity.

If the happiness presented by the systems of philosophical ethics cannot exceed the sphere of rationality, the happiness proposed by moral ethics depends on the human person's ability to know the truth because of his ever-closer proximity to God. This closeness brings with it the virtues, which raise man to a new way of experiencing happiness by tending to deification through grace.

A point of convergence between the two forms of ethics results from the fact that both emphasize the human person and his desire to constantly strive towards the state of happiness. Although they start from a common idea, the two systems of anthropological analysis nevertheless reach different conclusions, conclusions based on different understandings of the human person. Thus, if philosophical ethics puts the rationality of the person in the first place, morality also subjects to the analysis the deeds of man, which can be good or bad. To correctly decide which deeds are good, it is imperative to relate man to God, He is being the Standard of ethics. The simple analysis of the human person, without researching the choices he makes, does not lead to a defining result of him. And to know the value of a person's deeds, they must be related to an absolute model, in which there can be no form of contradiction, and this can only be God. Without relating facts to God, man can consider them good or bad at will, through a purely rational analysis, which is often subjective.

Man's relation to God brings with it a moral standard towards which man naturally tends, a standard which, once fulfilled, leads to the experience of true happiness. If man were limited to the rational and sensory, the Creator would have contradicted Himself, but man, as the crown of all creation, has within himself the freedom to will and choose the good to be in communion with the Persons Holy Trinity. This communion is the state of happiness towards which the human person tends according to the precepts of moral ethics. From here results another objective of man, the premise of happiness, namely "that of living permanently in God's love"<sup>12</sup>.

The analysis of philosophical ethics in turn denotes many good principles, which have the role of shaping the character of the human person. But the problem arises when these principles focus only on the world of the senses. Even with this form of limitation of philosophical ethics, however, we cannot point out the direct opposition between it and Christian moral ethics. The parallelism between them denotes the fact that moral ethics does not contradict the philosophical one, but complements it, completes it. In other words, the limitation of philosophical ethics is complemented by moral ethics that leads man to perfection.

Philosophical ethics cannot be examined as opposed to moral ethics; it can be analyzed through the prism of divine providence. That's why Clement of Alexandria defended philosophical ethics by presenting it as being, through divine providence, still the work of God, when he says: "And I will show, in all my stromata, that philosophy is in some way the work of divine providence, that it is not a bad thing"<sup>13</sup>. The same idea is also supported by Saint Justin the Martyr, a great lover of the beauty that springs from philosophy, who highlighted that "indeed philosophy is the greatest thing and most worthy of God. It alone can lift us up to God and bring us closer to Him, and the saints, truly, are only those who train their minds with

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<sup>12</sup> Metropolitan Nicolae Mladin, Prof. Disc. Dr. Orest Bucevschi, Prof. Dr. Constantin Pavel, Prof. Diac. Dr. Ioan Zăgrean, *Orthodox Moral Theology*, for theological institutes, vol. I, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> Clement Alexandrin, *Stromatele*, I, 18, 4, in the P.S.B. collection. no. 5, *Stromatele*, translation, foreword, notes, and indexes by Fr. D. Fecioru, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1982, p. 20.

philosophy"<sup>14</sup>. Of course, the two beloved fathers of the Church of Christ refer to ancient philosophical ethics, which in formulating the truth naturally expressed what theology defines as natural revelation working in the souls of all: "For when the heathen who have no law, by nature make of the law, these, not having the law, are their own law" (Romans 2, 14). Seen from this perspective, ancient philosophy, understood as a unitary whole, demonstrates in its wisdom the presence of God, a fact for which certain elements of ancient philosophical ethics can be defined as a pedagogue towards the perfect knowledge brought by the incarnate Logos.

Ancient philosophy defined both reason and word by the Greek λογός. Man's participation in this absolute, defined by the term λογός, meant participation somewhat in what the ancient philosophers called divine<sup>15</sup>. The fact that the ethics of ancient philosophy carried within itself Christian moral norms originating from natural revelation is also proven by philosophers such as Saint Justin the Martyr and Heraclitus, the latter being the same as Socrates, they carried within themselves a form of knowledge of God in which of course they arrived starting from the natural revelatory act, a component of ancient philosophical ethics.

For the knowledge of truth, both philosophical and Christian moral ethics lead the lover of wisdom to the realization of the importance of freedom. The difference that appears between them is that Christian moral ethics emphasizes the actions of man in relation to God's justice, in contrast to philosophical ethics that relates freedom to society's norms. From the first report results a more correct understanding of freedom, which expresses its apogee in the greatness of the Creator. In other words, being of divine origin, the gift of man's freedom is the most important tool for knowing the truth, by relating man to God's justice. Without this reporting, no system of ethics, no matter what it may be called, can lead man to the real understanding of freedom and the facts resulting from it. The principles of philosophical ethics are defined "by their optional character"<sup>16</sup>, while the principles of Christian moral ethics express an absolute character, having their origin in God. The latter have the role of leading man to his only goal: experiencing life in God's love.

A point of convergence between the two models of ethics results from their purpose, which is to do good by avoiding evil. Any moral law, to be defined in accordance with human nature, must formulate principles according to which human freedom desires the accomplishment of good. Any system of ethics aims to do good, but the differences between the forms of ethics arise due to the different understanding of the idea of good. If philosophy boils down to the good of the person in society, Christian morality defines good by relating it to God. Hence the height of the ethics of Christian morality. It does not limit man to society and its factors that can influence the idea of good, but positions man in relation to God, the Source of good. Only through this relationship can man be defined as a dichotomous being, created by God to participate freely and consciously in the love and life of the Creator. This is the genuine knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher expressed this idea with the words: "Those who are truly pious and philosophers, reason dictates them to honor and love only the truth and to give up following opinions. The wisest reason dictates to the lover

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<sup>14</sup> Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon, II, in Greek Apologists, in the collection P.S.B. no. 2, translation, notes and index by Rev. Prof. Teodor Bodogae, Rev. Prof. Olimp Căciula, Rev. Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Bucharest, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1980, p. 92

<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, Politics I, 9, in Aristotle, Politics, Bilingual Edition, Translation, comments and index by Alexander Baumgarten, with an introductory study by Vasile Muscă, Iri Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 235.

<sup>16</sup> Antonio Sandu, Ethics and professional deontology, Ed. Lumen, Iasi, p. 96.

of truth, not to follow those who commit or teach any injustice, even if death threatens him"<sup>17</sup>. The same idea is expressed by the great Plato who defines the knowledge of truth as having as its premise the experience of good<sup>18</sup>.

A new point of convergence between the two forms of ethics results from the analysis of the notion of symmetry of beauty. For the ethics of ancient philosophy, elements such as beauty and goodness are often defined as attributes "of higher beings, of the gods, belonging to the world of principles"<sup>19</sup>.

If philosophy attributed the symmetry of beauty to divinity, i.e., to the multitude of gods from antiquity, for Christian moral ethics the symmetry of beauty is defined as an attribute of God. Theologians such as Dionysius the Areopagite highlight this symmetry as proper to the name of God: "From this beauty all things derive their existence, each being beautiful in its own way. Because of beauty are the harmonies and attractions of things. The beautiful is the beginning of all things, being the creative cause, which moves them all, and gathers them together through the love of its own beauty. He is the target of all and what they love as their final goal, because for the sake of beauty everything was made"<sup>20</sup>. The same idea is also supported by Blessed Augustine who highlights attributes such as goodness, justice, beauty, as belonging in the absolute sense only to God<sup>21</sup>.

The symmetry of the Creator's beauty radiates in the crown of his creation, that is, in the man reached by grace to the state of holiness. In creation, the uncreated Image of the Logos gives the true radiance of the images of the created. From this it follows that the symmetry of beauty is an ontological characteristic of human nature, nature that freely and consciously collaborates with uncreated divine grace.

Although when speaking of the symmetry of the beautiful the two forms of ethics express congruence, yet Christian moral ethics is not limited to the perfection produced by symmetry. Christian moral ethics raises the symmetry of the beautiful to the teaching revealed to the world through the divine Logos, thus becoming for the man who lives in grace, an intimate, real, living, personal closeness to God, this being the only goal of the human person<sup>22</sup>.

A difference that emerges from the two models of ethics is that Christian moral ethics expresses a unique, unitary teaching with real applicability between human persons and the Triune God in Persons, while the ethics of ancient philosophy proposes systems that are not defined in a unitary way, here primitive Greek eudaemonism<sup>23</sup> and teleological eudaemonism (Aristotle)<sup>24</sup> can be given as examples. In the same idea and Hellenistic ethics proposes several

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<sup>17</sup> Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, First Apology, II in Apologists of the Greek language, in the P.S.B. collection, translation, notes and index by Rev. Prof. Teodor Bodogae, Rev. Prof. Olimp Căciula, Rev. Prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Bucharest, Publishing House Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1980 p. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Donald M. Borchert (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Second Edition, Vol. 7, Thomson Gale, 2005, p. 590.

<sup>19</sup> Conf. Rev. N. Corneanu, Beauty as an attribute of the Godhead, in Theological Studies, XI (1959), no. 5-6, p. 299.

<sup>20</sup> About the divine names, in Saint Dionysius the Areopagite, Complete works and schools of Saint Maximus the Witness, Translation, introduction and notes by Prof. Dumitru Stăniloae, Bucharest, Paideia Publishing House, 1996, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Confessions, X, 34 in Augustin's Confessions, Confessiones (Confessions), translation and indexes by Prof. docent Nicolae Barbu, Introduction and notes by Priest Prof. Dr. Ioan Rămureanu, Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest, 1985, p. 234

<sup>22</sup> Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, vol. 2, second edition, Bucharest, Publisher of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1997, p. 115-116

<sup>23</sup> Among its representatives we mention: the Pythagoreans, Heraclitus, Democritus, Anaxagoras, the Sophists (especially Protagoras), Socrates, Plato. With Democritus of Abdera, one of the key themes of Greek ethics appears for the first time: eudaemonia that depends on man; he places the soul above the body (see Diac. prof. dr. Nicolae Balca, Istoria filozofiei antice, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1988, p. 77)

<sup>24</sup> In ethics, Aristotle leaves the conceptions of Socrates and Plato. His ethics is eudemonist-individualist directed towards the realization of the good that can be done by people in this world, who differ according to sex, social status, profession, people

types of non-unitary systems, of which we can remember: Stoicism, Epicureanism, Neoplatonism, skepticism, moral idealism.

An obvious difference between philosophical ethics and Christian moral ethics refers to their foundation. In the case of Christian morality, the uncreated divine grace intervenes through which God Himself works and illuminates reason for the correct understanding of the relationship between the Divine and the human<sup>25</sup>. Philosophical ethics, on the other hand, envisages reason as the only authority present in human relations. Starting from the idea that the truth of the world is relative, inter-human relations that are based only on reason, without its relation to God, the Supreme Authority, can also be marked by different forms of egocentrism, by different interests that can bring satisfaction only to an individual or only to a group of individuals. Hence the superiority of moral ethics, which, having its foundation in God, is not relativized and does not change as a result of the intervention of the disturbing factors of justice present in society. No formula from the ethics of ancient philosophy could encompass the vastness of the moral phenomenon, because only through rational means, philosophy is limited only to what seems important to a certain system of thought. In antithesis, Christian moral ethics, by relating the moral phenomenon to the Creator, holds an exact standard of what morality means.

### **III. Christian moral ethics, foundation of man's progress towards the Absolute**

Compliance with the norms proposed by Christian moral ethics leads man beyond the materiality of the world, to the transcendence of God, to living in the love of the Creator. The norms proposed by the systems of philosophical ethics imply a form of man's morality, which can bring interpersonal relationships marked by honesty, but no philosophy has succeeded in directing man to his goal, that is, to union by grace with God.

The superiority of Christian moral ethics is highlighted by Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher when he says: "our teaching is not a reprehensible teaching, but is superior to any human philosophy"<sup>26</sup>, the norms of Christian morality surpassing "any other human teaching, in that we have in Christ the whole The Word, who appeared for us body, Word and soul"<sup>27</sup>.

The fact that philosophical ethics has not experienced the truth and wisdom of the Logos has as its main consequence the exclusion of man from the personal relationship with God. "The purpose of creation is fulfilled by bringing into existence the human creature with body and soul, the conscious created person, because the Creator is also a Person and because it contributes to the realization of a dialogue between the Supreme Person and the created persons"<sup>28</sup>. From this it follows that the living, dialogic relationship of man with God is achieved by observing the norms of Christian moral ethics, hence the immeasurable value of man, unlike philosophy that proposes a dialogue of man limited to his peers. This idea is also expressed by Saint Gregory Palamas when he says: "Not only knowing God truly surpasses the philosophy of the Hellenes, but also just knowing what place man has before God surpasses all their wisdom. For man alone among all earthly and heavenly things was built in the image of

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and therefore the good is one for man and another for woman, otherwise for free or for the slave. The eudemonism of Aristotle's ethics is also theological: he emphasizes intentionality, the faculty of wanting. (Diac. prof. dr. Nicolae Balca, op. cit., p. 221).

<sup>25</sup> Liviu Damian, Faith between word and number in the thought of Thomas F. Torrance, University of Bucharest Ed., 2021, p. 39

<sup>26</sup> Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, Second Apology, XV in Greek Apologists, trans. quote p. 86

<sup>27</sup> Saint Justin the Martyr and the Philosopher, Second Apology..., p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, vol. 1, p. 155

the Creator, to look towards Him and to love Him and to be the only knower of Him, and through faith, through inclination and love towards Him, to keep its beauty"<sup>29</sup>.

Starting from the knowledge of the Absolute Truth revealed through the Logos, Christian moral ethics positions the human person in a dialogic relationship with the Divine Persons, in communion with God, and this positioning of human reason is unknown to philosophical ethics, which realizes rational relationships only between individuals from different given groups. Man being by creation the image of the Image, i.e. of the Logos, naturally tends towards the Absolute, for only in God the Absolute can he find his perfection. Apart from the Absolute, man can know neither happiness nor the real meaning of morality. This also emerges from Father Stăniloae's theology, which highlights: "A God who did not have the attribute of absolute, could not be the satisfactory source of man, would not ensure his existence in perfect communion"<sup>30</sup>. Human nature's longing for God's majesty is evident in its free and conscious reaching out to Him. That is why Saint Maximus the Confessor points out: "Any thought, as it has its basis in a being, being a quality of it, so it has its movement directed towards a being, loves God, values His knowledge more than all things made of Him and lingers by her side unceasingly with great longing"<sup>31</sup>. The infinity of the Holy Trinity is the foundation of our longing for the infinite, a fact for which no strictly rational, sensory satisfaction can bring complete peace to man. Only through moral ethics is the cognitive function of reason defined as how man tends to God without being forced by an external factor. This is highlighted by Saint Maximus the Confessor when he says: "Being in the Image of God, the cognitive reason in man gives him the desire for progress, for perfection, constantly striving towards the Logos"<sup>32</sup>.

Many of the philosophical systems are based on elements from Stoic philosophy that reduce human existence and implicitly morality to the state of natural existence, this ethics excluding any transcendence of the rational, or the knowledge of God often transcends the rational. Other systems of philosophical ethics, while admitting the existence of the divine, position it in absolute transcendence and implicitly in the inability to manifest a personal communication between the divine and the human.

### **Conclusions**

From the brief analysis of the two ethical systems, it follows that both are necessary from an anthropological perspective. Man cannot define himself as a person without his fully conscious manifestation between the benchmarks proposed by the ethical systems. However, the principles of philosophical ethics, although fully capable of achieving honest relations between individuals or groups of individuals, cannot raise itself to the true necessity of the human person, namely that of experiencing happiness in its full sense. This experience can only be achieved by following the norms of Christian moral ethics, which often cannot be described by the intellect, but through which man transcends time to meet God.

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<sup>29</sup> Saint Grigore Palama, 150 Chapters on natural knowledge, on the knowledge of God, in PHILOCALIA, Vol. VII, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1977, p. 438

<sup>30</sup> Rev. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, vol. 1, p. 125.

<sup>31</sup> Saint Maxim the Confessor, The two hundred chapters on the knowledge of God, in FILOCALIA, Vol. II, Translation, Ed., Bucharest, 1977, p. 133.

<sup>32</sup> Saint Maximus the Confessor, Ambigua, in col. P.S.B. no. 80, Ed. IBMBOR, Bucharest, 1983, p. 106-107.

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