

Conspirological Theories of Origin Pandemic COVID-19 Ethical Issues in Dealing with the Pandemic

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Abstract

The biosphere is a passive factor in the dialogue between man and nature. Violation of the balance on the part of an active participant - human society, it is impossible to manage only legal acts. Requires socially reproducible skills in dealing with nature. To overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, medical (hygiene) measures, coupled with political measures, were not enough. Ethical standards of personal responsibility and self-discipline, widespread charity have played an essential role in this struggle. At the same time, conspiracy theories of the emergence of a pandemic contributed to the growth of xenophobia, fears of a digital dictatorship, which took the form of protests on social networks against applications of monitoring citizens' compliance with social isolation.

The analysis of the controversial ethical implications of the COVID-19 pandemic is based on data from academic and media publications. Despite the difference in positions, modern researchers are united by the idea: the pandemic arose suddenly, but not unexpectedly. They call the specific causes of the pandemic the overcrowding and urbanized lifestyle of modern civilization and the excess of industrial production over the reproduction of biological resources due to the consumption habits of the population. Further development of civilization is impossible without an active rethinking of the role of man in the preservation of the biosphere.

Keywords

Conspiracy, pandemic, COVID-19, social skills, social evil, natural evil, ethics, self-discipline, social distancing, xenophobia.

INTRODUCTION

Along with the pandemic, the concept of "social distancing" came into use. The problem with its use is that often the authors use the concept of social isolation instead of the correct

concept of social distance. The previous history of civilization, on the contrary, encouraged social community, despite cultural, religious, national differences. However, in modern conditions, it seems that newly emerged infections (HIV, COVID-19) produce disunity instead of unity, isolation instead of integration. In our opinion, this impression stems from the identification of the concept of "social isolation" and the concept of "social distancing", which became widespread during the COVID-19 pandemic. Humanitarian thought meant exclusion from the community by social isolation, which is the most difficult socio-ethical problem. Social isolation has been compared to an epidemic (1) that is killing us because man is a social being, communication with society is an innate reflex ability of a person.

Social distancing is actually physical distancing. This is how the ego interprets Wikipedia: "Social distancing (or physical distancing) is a complex of sanitary and epidemiological non-drug measures aimed at stopping or slowing the spread of an infectious disease by increasing the physical distance between people and reducing the number of close contacts" (2). Social distancing is not an intensification of the tendency towards disunity, but a physical measure to prevent infection. Although it should be assumed that long-term social distancing will contribute to an increased sense of social isolation, especially in those countries, the national way of life encourages close physical contact.

Avicenna pointed out the need for social distancing in an epidemic: "Once he deliberately came to a city where a terrible disease was raging with might and main. Arriving at the house of the famous scientist and thinker Biruni, Ibn Sid, first of all, asked him to give him clean clothes and a vessel with vinegar in order to wash his hands and face. According to the great physician, this should become the custom of the country where the "black death" (smallpox) is rampant. Since the "black death" is transmitted from person to person, settling on the hands, hair, face, even the wind can spread this infection, so people cannot get together. IbnSina said that mosques and bazaars should be closed for the time being. You can also pray at home, and merchants must carry their goods home. For those caring for the sick, IbnSina recommended plugging the nostrils with cotton soaked in vinegar, and keeping wormwood leaves in their mouths. Healthy people should stay at home, have fun, because the "black death" runs away from music and fun"(3).

The COVID-19 pandemic does not directly change the self-perception of society and the individual, but through the acquisition of new social skills (wearing masks, using sanitizers, distancing, self-isolation, etc.). They, in addition to hygienic goals, clearly express the golden rule of morality: do to others as you want to be treated to you. The importance of the moral responsibility of the individual to society has increased, when the physical survival of each person depends on the socially responsible behavior of each.

The development of the philosophy of morality and natural sciences convinced thinkers that the concept of the biosphere - the area of the living form of life around the Earth - should be supplemented by the concept of the noosphere. Matter, and even inanimate, has something similar to goal-setting, especially since it is inherent in living nature. The influence of the activity of the human mind is so great that it determines the development of the so-called wild nature. According to Vernadsky, the noosphere (or anthroposphere) does not arise as a result of human malice or good wishes, but as a natural stage in the evolution of the

biosphere, i.e. the noosphere "is the current state of the biosphere" (4, p. 363). According to him, at this stage, the human mind turns into a geological force on a cosmic scale.

The idea (project) of the noosphere has been subjected to, and is being severely criticized. Two critical theses stand out: 1) "noosphere" is a utopia, and 2) noosphere deprives the biosphere of independence and integrity. "The very idea of the noosphere, the idea of a harmonious fusion of nature and society, is fundamentally deeply religious and today utopian" (5, pp. 9-12). "To give the biosphere to the power of reason (making it a noosphere) means to substitute the planet Earth for a mass of unforeseen negative environmental consequences" (6, p. 142). However, in our opinion, one should distinguish between the idea and the embodiment of the idea. The unbridled human character can bring many environmental disasters that are happening now. This is probably why the idea of the noosphere was replaced by the idea of the ethosphere. If in the noosphere much will be realized thanks to the principle of self-development, then, in the future, the noosphere should be transformed into an ethosphere according to some thinkers. "The ethosphere is an area of being, based on a moral attitude to nature, to all life on the planet. Its bearer should be an ethically reasonable person who acts not only in his own interests, but also in the interests of Life on Earth" (7, p. 127). The principle of the ethosphere is not love for nature, but respect for nature, recognition of its equal value and its right to independent development ("nature knows what is best").

What other socio-ethical debates have begun to unfold in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic? As an answer, we offer a brief overview of the problems that she highlighted.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the process of compiling the review, research was used by both philosophers (Avicenna, Thayer de Chardin, M. Foucault, P. Singer, Yuval Noah Harari) and ecologists and virologists (R. Preston, V. Boreiko, E. Kunin, A. Rzheshovsky) ... The review is compiled on a comparison of the statements of the authors of relevant publications with the classical provisions of ethics and bioethics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The article used publications and posts in the mass media of modern thinkers. Thus, the current statements of the German philosopher SvenyFlaspeler about the atomization of social relations in a pandemic are of scientific interest; the growth of totalitarian sentiments of J. Agamben and the epidemic of social isolation of KhullarKhruv; about the digital dictatorship of Yuval Noah Harari at this extreme period in the life of society. Of particular importance in revealing the topic of ethical problems of the COVID-19 pandemic is the famous monograph by Richard Preston ("Epidemic. The real and terrible story of the spread of the Ebola virus"), where the author not only reveals the causes of the latest epidemics of the 20th century, but gives their ethical assessment. The works of the eco-philosophers V. Vernadsky, P. Singer, V. Boreiko became relevant in connection with the topic. In justifying the need to reorient the ethical self-awareness of citizens, the Holy Scriptures were used: Avesta, the Bible, the Koran.

RESULTS

Based on a review of publications on the ethical problems of overcoming the pandemic, the concepts of “social isolation” and “social distancing” were differentiated, although the former concept is often used in the sense of the latter; the socio-psychological concept of “social isolation” is the exclusion of a person from diverse social relations; the reverse process of socialization; “Social distancing” refers to the requirement that individuals in physical space should be separated from each other.

Evaluation of cospirological theories of the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic; whose purpose is to find specific culprits (country, people, scientists), while the authors of the publications emphasize that the cause of the pandemic is in the imbalance between the biosphere and the man-made environment, and this is inherent in all countries, without exception: only one country due to climate and natural features become the cradle of infection, others do not yet; finding the culprit does not solve the problem; the problem is solved jointly.

In a pandemic, the value of ethical and moral standards manifests itself more clearly than in a period of stable development; for example, the golden rule of ethics.

Highlighted the main forecasts of post-pandemic development.

DISCUSSION

The debate over whether there is a special ethic for extraordinary periods of public life has escalated during the 2020 pandemic. Some argue that a bioethical compass was not developed during the pandemic. A pandemic is the growth of an epidemic to a planetary scale (“pan” is translated from ancient Greek as “all”, “universal”). This pandemic is associated with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which has the broader name of COVID-19 or COVID-19: “co” refers to a type of virus due to the “crown” or spikes on the envelope; 19 - year of discovery. The difficulty of fighting this virus is not only that it spreads easily, but also in its advanced antibody-dependent properties, i.e. in difficulties to develop antibodies against it: the human body does not have time to develop antibodies to the first variant of the virus, it has undergone a mutation, i.e. has changed. Now experts are talking about the Asian and European versions of COVID-19.

Viruses (from the Latin “poison”) are the most ancient, even precellular formations, microorganisms that have pursued human evolution since the formation of mankind. The most famous of them are smallpox, measles, influenza, hepatitis C, HIV, Ebola, SARS or SARS - severe acute respiratory syndrome, and COVID-19. Infections provoked by viruses should not be confused with infections, the causative agent of which (anthrax, plague, cholera) is bacteria (bacilli), therefore they are treated with antibiotics. Each virus requires a different vaccine to produce antibodies.

Not all viruses are absolutely harmful to humans, pathogenic (from the ancient Greek “pat” - “suffering.” “Gene” - “origin”; that is, “pathogen” - causing suffering). They can be conditionally pathogenic (non-pathogenic or weakly pathogenic), pathogenic, highly pathogenic (“spiteful”). COVID-19 is a highly pathogenic virus. Lung infections are difficult to control; the airborne route of infection is the easiest to spread. Compare it with HIV, the

main route of transmission of which is sexual or anthrax spores, transmitted from infected pets to humans through contact.

The second characteristic of viruses - the first is poison - is that they are parasites, live off the host organism, into which they have entered. Virologists see cautious optimism in the fact that COVID-19 is a parasite: the gluttonous virus will destroy the host, it will be able to multiply if it only has time to settle in the new host. This parasitic nature of viruses contains the bitter and imaginative ethical lesson of the pandemic. Nature is the first teacher of ethics; gluttony is destructive, and moderation is another golden rule of morality. Ethologists (ethology is the science of the behavior of animals, including humans) often compare the moral rules of human society with the prudence of the animal world. Morality is common sense in the wild animal world. Why do lions allow zebras from the reservoir to get drunk, because they are antagonists? Mercy? The desire to gain strength by yourself? Are the lions well fed, do they feel sorry for water? Or care about the future food supply? There is a friendship between a predator and its prey, a cat and a mouse, Amur's tiger and Timur's goat from the Far East safari park. The tiger did not attack the goat, he was fed regularly, he had no reason to eat the goat. A person is insatiable with regard to wealth, popularity, pleasure. Animal behavior is often an example of intelligent consumption.

A person is not very concerned about what kind of biosphere his heirs will get in the future. The main parasite of the biosphere is man. Distinguish between social and natural evil, the latter is not a moral evil. Spontaneous natural disasters (floods, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes) are not social, which means they are moral evil. Natural elements do not depend on man; some researchers consider them to be a manifestation of the geological form of the movement of matter. Man-made disasters are a social evil and they are immoral. It has been proven that the cause of the Chernobyl accident (Belarus, 1986) was the design omissions of the reactor, which were discovered before the accident, but hidden. The breakthrough of the Sardoba dam (May 2020, Uzbekistan) is a similar example of a man-made disaster in origin, i.e. social evil: “according to open sources, the facility was not even commissioned due to“ the absence of filtration monitoring and emergency warning systems ”(8), which indirectly indicates the possibility of concealing more global violations committed during its construction.

Technology, structures do not solve human problems, they are only a means in solving them. Not the second nature - technogenic - falls under the rules of human morality and ethics, but the people who create it. The norms of ethics are created neither for a living or technogenic environment, but for a person who affects the first and second nature. The need to increase the responsibility of scientists and technologists involved in the complex of life sciences has led to the birth of a special branch - bioethics. It is not by chance that bioethics spun off in the bosom of the philosophy of morality in the last quarter of the twentieth century: man remains the main object of attention of thinkers and scientists. Man barbarously, like an insidious virus, consumes nature, which leads to the destruction of the environment: “In a sense, the earth strengthens the immune response against the human species. It begins to react to a human parasite, to the spread of human infection, to dead spots of concrete all over the planet, to cancer rot in Europe, Japan and the United States, infested with breeding primates,

colonies expanding and spreading, threatening to shake the biosphere with mass extinction”(9).

More specifically, the following phenomena and processes can be called the causes of the pandemic:

- • overcrowding and urbanized lifestyle of modern civilization;
- • excess of industrial production over the reproduction of biological resources;
- • consumer habits of the population, the cult of consumption;
- • the rate of global migration of the world's population.

“Why is it suddenly such a situation that literally every year new, more and more dangerous forms of viruses appear? According to scientists, the main reasons are the closeness of the population, when there is close contact of people with a large number of them, and a decrease in immunity due to pollution of the environment and stress. Scientific and technical progress has created such opportunities and means of transportation that a carrier of a dangerous infection can get from one continent to another within a few days, having covered thousands of kilometers”(10). And R. Preston adds that “The emergence of the AIDS virus, Ebola and any other viruses from tropical forests seems to be a natural consequence of the destruction of the tropical biosphere. Emerging viruses come to the surface from places where the ecological situation is damaged. Many of them come from the torn borders of tropical rainforests or from the tropical savannah, which is quickly populated by humans”(9).

As a philosophical reflection of the realities of the second millennium, the hypertrophied growth of andropocentrism, when a person settles in the core of the biosphere, has become. The very emergence of biethics was prepared by a tectonic shift from andropocentrism to biocentrism, from a paradigm that placed man at the center to a paradigm centered on life as a biological form of the existence of matter: to revere not only human life, but also any form of life. In the last quarter of the twentieth century started talking about animal rights, on which the eco-philosopher P. Singer (11) extended the utopian demand for universal equality (with man). Subsequently, the term "law of nature" was born. Nature has a right to justice, and its viral response to the imbalance in the biosphere, which is painful for humanity, looks logical. Man is not a direct, but an indirect cause of a pandemic through his predatory effect on nature.

Conspiracy (from the English "conspiracy" - "conspiracy") theory of a pandemic, any, according to the virologist Eug.Kunina - "pathological delirium". Prior to COVID-19, many conspiracy theories were associated with the human immunodeficiency virus. Allegedly, it was created in secret laboratories for the creation of biological weapons, tested on prisoners in prisons. The thesis that prisoners might be among the first carriers of HIV had a reason to exist. In places of deprivation of freedom, promiscuous sex is common, drug use with a shared syringe are channels of HIV infection, but this does not mean that it was created intentionally and released into the world, freeing infected prisoners. As for COVID-19, Eug.Kunin admits the possibility that the virus "escaped" from the Wuhan laboratory as a result of a safety violation, but categorically denies its artificial origin, i.e. that it was created deliberately. There was a similar example in the history of cotton growing: one of the diseases of cotton "escaped" from the laboratory in Tashkent through the sewer: the test tubes with the test samples were washed in the sink. For all its malignity, COVID-19 is not a type

of biological (bacteriological) weapon created artificially. There is no vaccine against it, therefore, its "creators" in the first place can die from COVID-19. By the way, this is exactly what happened: the scientist who first discovered the virus at the Institute of Virology in Wuhan (PRC) died of coronavirus.

In response to the accusations of the American authorities and the media, China, if not created, then at least is the ancestral home of the virus, the Chinese authorities repeat that American laboratories on bacteriological weapons are scattered around the world, and they are working intensively, and what they are researching there. The world community is not known for certain. Without going into the jungle of conspiracy theories, one thing is clear - in both cases, the principle of openness of information, which bioethics calls for, was violated. It was the openness that allowed the sequencing of the human genome, when geneticists laid out in the public domain the decoding of which DNA sections they carried out. It is hard to deny now that "the Chinese authorities did not show proper openness from the very beginning: in the early days of the new pandemic, they sought to lower the risk of the virus spreading from person to person, and at the same time silenced scientists who were trying to declare the unprecedented danger of a new infection" (12). According to the Associated Press, the Chinese authorities were silent about the coronavirus epidemic for six days. During this time, three thousand people were infected in the country.

Despite the dangerous consequences, COVID-19 has also caused positive consequences: the load on the environment has decreased, countries are planning to switch to domestic tourism; decreased smog emissions due to limited mobility; increased investment in research; a volunteer movement has developed, the population has acquired the useful hygiene skill of wearing masks and using disinfectants during a pandemic. States intend to reform national health systems to increase the availability of health services for all segments of the population.

The problem of equal access to health care has suddenly taken on an unexpected shade. US President Trump has attempted to buy the rights to the COVID-19 vaccine from the German company CureVac. If Germany agreed, the drug would only be available to US citizens (13). The pursuit of national interests to the detriment of common human interests is an example of immorality. Thus, there are incomparably more negative or morally ambiguous consequences, and they are deeper in terms of influence on public opinion. Phenomena that are difficult to assess as absolutely positive or negative have appeared. First of all, it should be noted such an ambiguous sign as the growth of discipline. The requirement to observe self-isolation, social distance, wear masks - these prohibitive measures were partly controlled by the supervisory authorities, partly respected by the population voluntarily. French historian and philosopher of the twentieth century. M. Foucault on the example of the plague, which raged in Europe in the 17th century. wrote that the fight against the spread of infection is more than an "exclusively" medical measure. In his opinion, these are, rather, the first steps towards disciplining society, because "we are isolated from each other, atomizing social life, we are being watched, we are controlled" (14).

At the time of M. Foucault, there was no digitalization of private and social life. Modern philosopher Yuval Noah Harari speaks passionately about the seizure of freedom by technology. Indeed, in some countries, during the pandemic, electronic passes for moving

around the city, electronic health codes, non-contact thermal imagers for measuring body temperature, etc., were developed, which are powerful forms of control, and this is a restriction of civil rights and freedoms, according to and J. Agamben. He suspected that the authorities are deliberately promoting self-isolation in order to increase control and pressure on the population: when the people are easier to rule, this is a symptom of the growth of totalitarian moods in society, according to the philosopher.

Can the restriction of the rights and freedoms of citizens caused by medical necessity be considered morally acceptable restrictions? Does ethics in an extreme situation have the right to justify the restriction of freedoms? If we follow this logic of “extreme situation”, then we should recognize the relativity of moral values and achievements. Then what about the universal moral values that the philosophy of morality has defended throughout its history? The pandemic exacerbates the spiritual and moral search for answers to difficult questions. For example, an increase in xenophobia (rejection, fear of someone, or of something alien, foreign; in a pandemic, xenophobia has transformed into dislike for the Chinese - sinophobia). Some states are initiating a program of sanctions against China, if not as the main culprit in the pandemic, then at least in concealing alarming facts.

Indeed, SOVID-19 was originally “imported” from China: “outbreaks of new infectious diseases, the focus of which was this country in the 21st century. (SARS, swine flu) in Western public opinion also fit into this convenient paradigm of perception of the developing world. Terrible, bad, but fatalistically predetermined. And the main thing is far from us ”(15). The population of some countries attacked people of Chinese nationality. After overcoming the epidemic in Wuhan, the Chinese began to treat foreigners with disdain, not to let them into public places, in particular, because the foreigners in the vision of the Chinese posed a threat of the second wave of coronavirus.

Thinkers who dare to predict what a civilization will be like can be grouped into the following categories:

- humanity will not become more moral, it will become worse (M. Uelbek).
- will return to communism (S. Jejik)
- previous shortcomings will return (D. De Mazi)

Despite the difference in positions, these thinkers are united by a common idea that the pandemic arose suddenly, but not unexpectedly. It was anticipated by an imbalance in the biosphere. Previous epidemics of the viruses of avian, swine flu, Ebola were pre-preparations for the COVID-19 pandemic, and confirm the pattern of its outbreak. In any case, despite the difference in forecasts, the era of biologists and greens is coming. Rethinking the role of man in the preservation of the biosphere is a long-term process, therefore, to some thinkers, it seems impracticable. However, a person as a rational being has a reflective ability - “the ability, acquired by consciousness, to focus on himself and master himself as an object. Of course, the animal knows. But, of course, it does not know about its knowledge ”(16, p. 189-190). Man lives in an organized situation: “He was not created from the beginning, he creates himself, choosing morality; and the pressure of circumstances is such that he cannot but choose some kind of morality ”(17, p. 339).

Throughout the history of mankind, myths, scriptures and philosophical treatises have warned that respect for nature is not a whim, not a whim, it is an urgent need. Thus, a person interpreted his attitude to nature, especially to living nature, initially in animism. Animism is recognition of every object of the soul. Each nation had its own totem (siginadiganhaivon): “In ancient times, the Türks revered such animals as storms (wolf), thuya (camel), from (horse), arslon (lion), coplon (bars), kaldirgoch (swallow), burgut (eagle), musicha (gorlinka)” (18, pp. 118-119), each of them was assigned human qualities, or vice versa, the qualities of animals were attributed to man: the courage of a lion, the industriousness of a camel, the tenderness of a turtle.

The experience of Zoroastrianism can play a special place in the education of a civilized attitude to nature, in its burial rituals, the observance of cleanliness - white clothes and masks from Zoroastrian priests have passed from Zoroastrianism to modern medicine - not to touch some insects and animals, reverence for the natural elements: water, fire, air and care for their cleanliness. In Zoroastrianism, the worship of nature is clearly expressed: “The methods used to cleanse and disinfect the environment can be divided into the following groups: 1) mechanical (burying or filling the unclean with stones, sand, dense and dry soil); 2) physical: fire, sun, cold. In the Avesta, fire is recognized as a sacred and powerful cleanser against decay. With the help of physical factors, not only living quarters were disinfected, but also clothes and household items. Cold was used to preserve food; 3) chemical (ash, vinegar, Haoma drink); 4) vegetable (Isfand - summer adonis, ephedra, sandalwood, garlic, camel thorn, onion, aloe). These plants were used in the form of a powder, which was used to process impurities” (19, p. 162).

In animism and myths - the first forms of understanding nature - man and nature, at least the animal world, are merged into one. Humanity is gradually losing this integrity with the world of living nature. In ancient Greek myths, real or fictional animals were identified with people: a centaur, a siren, a nereid (mermaid). Among them were evil and good images. In animism and myths, man and nature, at least the animal world, are fused together. Humanity is gradually losing this integrity with the world of living nature. From Aristotle, there is a strict distinction between the world of wild nature and the world of the king of nature - man. Nevertheless, as a thinker, observing the similarity of man with animals, Aristotle defines man as a social animal, which does not mean that he equates two natures, biological and social, but recognizes that there is much in common between them, there is no chasm. "Public" primarily means that it is from the sociality of a person that his peculiarity (consciousness) stems from, which predetermine the power of a person over nature.

According to Avicenna, man naturally fits into nature. “Naturalness is one of the developed categories of Avicenna and Al Farabi. Avicenna makes a valuable remark: “matter - we can mean nature by matter - is not ontologically subordinate” (20), that is, matter by origin itself is, exists, and this matter-nature in its origin is not subordinate to either the absolute or the small deity, the Almighty and man. This statement contradicted the sacred texts, which write about the subordination of nature to man. “And he subdued to you everything that is in heaven and everything that is on earth” (Quran. Sura 45, ayah 14). In Christianity, the thesis

is substantiated that man is the king of nature: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over every animal that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:28). The Bible traces a clear dualism between man and the animal world, and emphasizes harmony in living nature, in contrast to the sinful nature of the human soul: “And God saw everything that He created, and that's very good” (Genesis 1: 31). Both the Bible and the Qur'an contain the myth of Noah - Nuh, who saved each animal in pairs and thereby saved himself. This is an example of man's appeal to the environment, although man is "the greatest killer on earth" (Herder).

CONCLUSIONS.

- Reconsideration of human attitude to the biosphere is more urgent than ever.
- Moral regulators are not enough; a set of legal frameworks are needed, sometimes strengthening of supervisory functions that control research and medical practice.
- The emergence and spread of SOVID-19 is a natural process, although it was the disturbance of the balance in the biosphere by mankind that contributed to the pandemic.
- The growth of xenophobia is one of the tangible negative social consequences of the pandemic.
- Biotechnologies do not solve human problems, they are only a means in solving them; not technogenic nature or the biosphere falls under the rules of human morality and ethics, but the people who use it.

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