

Science, Technology and Ethics

Until recent years, the world of science and technology appeared to be perfect and needless of anything, simply because it was presumed that science can provide us with everything that is needed. Philosophers and scholars have been concerned about ethics since the outset of the modernity history. Yet scientists and politicians were sure that they will have access to truth and authority with science and technology, and that they can do whatever they wish under their umbrella. Philosophers and thinkers' concerns have now extended to the domain of science and politics. I am not going to state that philosophers were worried about ethics but people ignored it. People and scientists have always been concerned about ethical behavior but what ethics is and the status it has and where it comes from are philosophers' problems.

In this respect, man's condition looks like a fish that has fallen out of water and is looking for it. The world of science and technology had its own ethics even at the time that it did not think about it. This world considers itself more ethical than other worlds. The world of modernity should bring about the means of man's dominance of the world and give him the authority of it, and take his natural rights from the past and history. This was apparently a bright and very difficult route ahead of man who should have courage and find his own wisdom and apply it in order to have authority on the affairs of the world and life.

Since the 18th century, Europe had found such a way. The guideline to this route was the principle of progress: progress in science, technique, ethics and action. Initially, this way appears to be easy to go through, but gradually problems appeared. In the second half of the 19th century, Marx set forth man's alienation and pointed out that the bourgeoisies' world traditions were obstacles for the fulfillment of the paradise of technique. In Romantics view, the future of the new civilization looked dark, and Freud wrote *Inconvenience in Civilization*. In the 19th century, in Europe and particularly in Germany, an astonishing picture of the Greek culture was presented in which the new European culture looked trivial in comparison with it. This was a kind of doubt in the principle of progress. But Nietzsche praised the Greeks like Thucydides, and considered the teachings of Socrates and Plato as the initial chapter of the history of weakness and destruction. He used to say that the Greek-Christian ethics was a haven in which the weak could continue their life. Yet neither he nor anyone else has said anything so far that man is not in need of ethics. Being unethical (of course not having a bad temper) may be impossible in one's life. To be unethical, one should either ignore the place of man or descend to the mere status of animals. Nietzsche also knew that the world of

science and technology was needless of ethics, yet he had recognized that science and technology are incapable of eradicating the myths from the world. He had termed the history of the future two hundred years, the history of Nihilism. Now after one hundred years of Nietzsche's death, it is easier to realize the invaluable-ness of values, as if there is an injury in man's body for which an ointment should be found. How it is possible to find such an ointment, how it should be made and what its effect is, are other matters. People like Freud think that man is suffering from a disease that destructs him from within. It is a disease for which there is no treatment with pain killers. However when there exists a malady in civilization, one can't avoid taking action. Secondly, it is possible to find the treatment for a disease in the same place that it has resulted. It is a good sign to see the demand for ethics in the circles of scientists and politicians. At the beginning of the modernity history, the ambition of man was to establish a unique and majestic world with science and technology. Now it has been realized that between the path to science and technology, and the dream of an earthy paradise, is a big gap, and difficulties, wars, sufferings, and violence are found everywhere. Should we diversify the relation between man and science and technology, and can a new relation come to existence? The advent of a new existence is impossible without the intervention of ethics. However, is there such an authority in ethics in the present world to enable it to judge about the relation between man and science and technology, and isn't the center of authority of the contemporary man in science and technology? If such an authority is to judge about man, it will judge in favor of the dominance of technique. Of course, one can hope that a great ethical power will be created and save man from the dangerous abyss which becomes wider and deeper and comes closer to man everyday. Yet this ethical power will not be created by the repetition of well-known ethical terms. Empathy and company with teachers of ethics may signify the creation of such a power. However, the worst ambition is to strive to treat the chronic and painful diseases with the repetition of certain famous instructions. The present world is not misled by a couple of unethical people. One cannot put the blame on the thoughts and deeds of any group of people and think of them as the cause of the world's destructions and corruptions and evils. If the world's wheel does not roll the way we want it to roll, then it must be lubricated. Such lubrication may facilitate the rolling of the wheel but not in a way that we would like it to roll.

No doubt, the present world is in need of ethics, but where should we look for ethics? The world of science and technology does not move with every rule and law, neither does it take any order. As a result, one cannot bring any rule or law from outside and govern it with them. Is it not the case that the world of science and technique has had the claim that it is needless of discipline, law and ethics, and that it itself claims the responsibility of everything. Then when we say that the contemporary world is in need of ethics, where should we look for it? Philosophers, who are the founders of the modern world, have always been looking for ethics.

To them, ethics is still missing. Even when they say that it is the weakness and destruction that have disguised themselves, and wrongly call themselves ethics, they cannot ignore it. I stated this since we should not be satisfied with the repetition of the famous statements and the instructions of the great religions and ethics personalities, who are of prime significance in their own place. We should not think of the universality of ethics as an easy matter. Doubtless, thinkers will bring with them the future ethics. But now that we are of the opinion that the current world requires a little bit of ethics, it is not necessary to wait for philosophers to think and find a way and show it to us.

One cannot wait for such a matter. First of all, what we can and must do is to open our eyes and cleanse our ears once again, and if possible, go out of the virtual world that sciences and technique have presented to us, and look around ourselves, touch the objects and break the alienation wall which is between us and nature. We should be peaceful to the world and honest to ourselves; forget about enmity, and experience kindness and friendship. It is true that the world of technique is the world of dominance, but how far does this dominance will proceed and what will it ultimately do? In the way they are spreading, enmity and violence have endangered the existence of man. The first plain ethical lesson may be the fact that we should put aside enmity and violence.