IMAGINE THERE'S A HEAVEN
REASONABLE RELIGION, RELIGIOUS REASON

Ramon Nadres

Abstract

Religious fundamentalism, on the one hand, as manifested in terrorist activity and extreme rationalism which leads to atheism on the other seem to be untenable choices for any honest man. Both put faith and reason at odds with one another. If neither is acceptable, then there must be a middle way. Thomas Aquinas has spoken about the *medium virtutis*, the golden mean, when it comes to virtuous acts, which avoid vicious extremes in any moral act. How do we find this *medium virtutis* between faith and reason? After looking at prudence as the *recta ratio agibilium* and seeing that the guide for the *recta ratio* is the truth, we then discover that, for moral truth, which is involved in the *medium virtutis* of faith and reason, the bridging criterion is human nature, and that reason spans not only the empirical realm, but the philosophical and supernatural realms as well.

Key words

Faith. Reason. Natural Law. Epistemology. Moral Philosophy.

Abstrak

Baik fundamentalisme-radikalisme agama maupun rasionalisme ekstrem bukanlah jalan menuju kebaikan dan kebijaksanaan. Dalam dua situasi ekstrem itu, iman dan akal budi saling berlawanan. Di tengah ketegangan antara iman dan akal budi, Thomas Aquino mengajarkan medium virtutis, yakni jalan tengah yang terbaik yang berada di antara dua ekstrem dari tindakan-tindakan yang dapat dinilai moral. Bagaimana kita bisa menemukan medium virtutis antara iman dan akal budi? Yakni dengan memeriksa arti recta ratio agibilium di dalam kebijaksanaan (prudentia) dan setelah melihat bahwa recta ratio adalah yang mengantar kita kepada apa yang benar. Iman dan rasio itu sudah terkandung di dalam kodrat

manusia sejak dari adanya dan dengan demikian perlu diperdamaikan, bukan dipertentangkan. Demikian kita lihat bahwa akal budi itu bisa menjangkau tiga tingkat pengetahuan manusia, yaitu pengetahuan yang bersifat empiris, filsafat, dan adikodrati.

Kata-kata kunci

Iman. Akal budi. Hukum kodrat manusia. Epistemologi. Filsafat Moral

1. Introduction

I recently watched the DVD of *There Be Dragons* directed by Roland Joffé, the same director who made the movie *The Mission* and *Killing Fields*, both of which have been quite popular in their time and still draw the interest of many people today. This recent movie is an adapted story based on the life of the priest Josemaría Escrivá, who was declared a saint by the Pope in 2002. In this film, Father Josemaría has a friend from his childhood and seminary days named Manolo who turns atheist because of his family and social circumstances at that time.

The scene after the death of Manolo's father is telling. Father Josemaría visits him to give condolences. Manolo says he does not need his brand of sympathy. Father Josemaría tries to make Manolo see the spiritual side of life, at which Manolo retorts, "The truth is we are born alone and we die alone. All we have in between is a battle that I intend to win." At the end of the conversation, Father Josemaría gives Manolo a rosary[1] and says, "It may help you find some meaning in your suffering, Manolo." Manolo angrily clutches in his hand and cries out, "Suffering has no meaning. It is meaningless! If you can show me otherwise, I'll kiss your ass. That's my promise." To which, Father Josemaría seriously replies, "I know what it is to be angry with life. Please be careful where that leads you, Manolo." Then the priest leaves.

Here we find a person who believes in God talking with someone who does not believe in God. As we can see, one's outlook to life completely changes depending on which side a person takes. For the believer, there is meaning in suffering, because he is convinced that everything will be put aright and

1 A rosary is a string of beads with a crucifix used by Catholics to pray through the intercession of Mary.

justice will be perfectly fulfilled after this life. For the non-believer, there is no meaning for suffering. So his life becomes an angry struggle against this meaningless monster in order to defend a life whose only worth can be found between the time that we are born and the time that we die. There is nothing before or after.

This paper was written for the National Symposium *Iman dan Akal Budi* [*Faith and Reason*] organized by the *Universitas Katolik Widya Mandala Surabaya* on the 26th of November 2011. It intends to explore and possibly find some common ground between faith and reason so that we can see the meaning of these two giant realities that certainly have an important impact on the lives of each and every one of us.

2. The Horns of the Dilemma

The terms of reference of the symposium reveals that, oftentimes, the world today pits faith against reason. There are those who think that, if you accept faith, you have to throw reason out of the window. This is the reason why terrorism has sometimes been justified. Defending the rights of God, according to those people, is so sublime and so much beyond the capacity of reason that one could go to the extreme of killing other people in order to ensure that God is given due honor. It does not matter if it seems illogical. It is not supposed to be logical.

On the other hand, there are those who have said that the problem is religion itself. It has clouded reason and has not allowed it to function independently as it should. The task of the modern-day man, therefore, is to free reason from the clutches of religion so that he can think clearly and freely. The rejection of religion ultimately means the rejection of God. Therefore, if we follow this line to its ultimate consequences, the good and wise man is actually the atheist.

People of the Enlightenment might argue: what is wrong with using your reason as a way of tempering religion? Or even exposing its falsehood so that people may stop believing and start living reasonable and rational lives? Shouldn't we always be guided by our head and not by our heart? Doesn't science today prove to us that the use of reason is absolutely needed for the progress of man?

It is true that reason is important. In fact, as we shall later see, reason has a key function in finding the harmony that should exist between faith and reason. But there is reason and there is reason. There is a reasonable use of reason and an unreasonable use of reason. The unreasonable use of reason can be found in the Enlightenment itself! Four years after the French Revolution (1789) which was carried out in the name of "Reason", the Reign of Terror by Maximilien Robespierre, the Jacobins and the Committee on Public Safety began. We tend to extol the achievements of the French Revolution without speaking about its dark side, which is the Reign of Terror. The Reign of Terror was nothing else but the act of bringing the principal motives of the French Revolution to its ultimate practical conclusions. In the name of Reason, innocent people were killed, there was bickering even among the proponents of the Revolution itself and chaos ensued, not public order and mutual love. One could not see the *egalité*, *liberté* and *fraternité* that were being constantly proclaimed at that time.

So which one is right? Which one should we choose?

The terms of reference of this symposium insinuates that neither is acceptable. Both of them are bad choices.

If both of them are bad choices, what should we do now? Do we have no choice left, seeing that both choices are unacceptable? At this point, we have to carefully consider that one and the other of the choices that have been described so far are extremes within a continuum. On one side you have the terrorist who advocates extreme fideism, and on the other side you have the atheist who believes in extreme rationalism. In between these two poles are many different ways and degrees of balancing faith and reason, which are attempts to incorporate both realities in our lives in a harmonious way. We thus have to find "the middle way", which is the right balance between faith and reason, a middle way that will lead to peace and harmony in world wherein both faith and reason have to coexist.

One *nota bene* before we proceed: the term "faith" has several meanings. The term could mean: (1) the interior feeling or conviction that something is right, for example, when a Protestant feels that he is already saved by his acceptance of Christ; (2) the collection of religious propositions that have to be believed by anyone who is a follower of that faith, i.e., the content of faith;

and (3) a term equivalent to the term "organized religion", which includes all the contents of its creed and the ritual practices of its followers. In this paper, we will primarily use the term "faith" in the third meaning. Thus, we will interchangeably use the terms "faith" and "religion" as referring to the same thing.

3. The Golden Mean

Find "the middle way" is tricky. Almost often, when we say "middle" people immediately think of a physical middle, i.e, the midpoint of a rod that is one meter long is 0.5 meters from either tip, the "middle" proportion of an orange juice mix is 50% orange extract and 50% water, etc.

When it comes of good actions or what we can also technically call "virtuous acts", the "middle" is not a mathematical mean. Take fasting, for example. Fasting is generally seen to be a good act by most religious persons, e.g., the Moslems, the Catholics, the Christians, the Buddhists, the Jews, etc. There may be some non-believers or atheists who would not accept that there could be anything good in fasting. From a biological point of view, the atheist may be right. Your biology dictates that you should have enough healthy food in order to keep your body functioning well. Therefore, you should eat regularly, and that is the general rule.

So why do a lot of people fast? There are some who fast because they have to lose weight. They are so overweight that their condition is no longer healthy. By fasting, they can bring their weight down to a healthy ideal. But those who fast to lose weight are just obeying the same biological need. They need to reach a physical mean, a physical or biological "middle" in order to be healthy.

What about the religious people: why do they fast? Fasting has traditionally been a means to achieve self-control, a self-control that indicates the dominion of the will over the body. This is generally seen as something good. One gives his body less food than what it needs in order to bring it under control. In this way, it is not the body that controls the spirit, but it is the spirit that controls the body. When the body controls the spirit, we find laziness, gluttony, all types of illnesses, sexual depravity, violent mood swings, lack of personality, poor anger management, etc. On the other hand, people who have

good or excellent self-control, like Gautama Buddha and the Buddhist monks, Jesus Christ, the Dalai Lama, etc. are much admired.

Here we have a case of a virtuous action which does not follow the physical or biological mean. It is called "virtuous" because it is supposed to be good. Anything that is considered "good" must be perfectly balanced and reasonable. Fasting, therefore, is considered something perfectly balanced and reasonable.

So there is a time when eating just the right amount is virtuous and there is a time when eating less than what is biologically required is virtuous. This just shows us that the "middle way" or what is also technically called "the golden mean" of a virtue in metaphysico-realist philosophy[2] is not a mathematical or physical or biological mean. This middle way or golden mean is determined by something else. That "something else" is the human spirit, which may have laws and principles that do not necessarily coincide with the laws and principles of the physical world but could work in harmony with it.

Aristotle (384 BC–322 BC) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) call this "middle way" or "golden mean" *medium virtutis*[3], which literally means "the middle of virtue" or "virtue's middle". It is not, again, a mathematically calculated middle but a certain fittingness or harmony with the dictates of human nature. Human nature drives us towards certain things that are fitting for us as human beings. These are built in natural inclinations that are givens, not artificial or human constructs. They call upon us to obey them. They are spiritual drives, not corporeal ones. They are acceptable to us because we naturally realize that the spirit is superior to and more excellent than the body, even though the spirit and the body together make the human being. In the end, these natural inclinations are based on human nature. These

2 "Metaphysico-realist philosophy" is what this author calls the line of philosophy that developed starting from Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, passing through the Church Fathers and the Medieval philosophers. The identifying features of this line of philosophy are: (a) the existence of the world exterior to the knower; (b) the acceptance that the human being is capable to knowing this external world; (c) the admission that reality is not only made up of physical realities but spiritual realities as well, that is, that there is a metaphysical realm which is just are real as the physical realm.

3 Cfr. Aristotle's *Ethics*, Book II and Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 153, a. 2, ad 2.

natural inclinations are the basis for the determination of the precepts of human natural law[4]. Human natural law, according to Thomas Aquinas, is the common measure of the goodness of human actions. We shall return to this concept later when we tackle the issue about Truth and Religion. Suffice it to say right now that the middle way, the golden mean or the *medium virtutis* is our guide for discovering the right balance between faith and reason, between extreme fideism and extreme rationalism.

4. Recta Ratio Agibilium

So how to we arrive at the *medium virtutis*? How do we get to know what the *medium virtutis* is? Surprise, surprise! The human faculty that we use in order to know the *medium virtutis* is...reason itself. In other words, we use our intellect to determine the *medium virtutis*. In the case of the middle way between faith and reason, we will have to use our reason in order to discern it.

Isn't this tautological? Isn't this a type of circular argumentation that does not prove anything? Well, it isn't tautological and it isn't circular argumentation. It would be circular argumentation if the term "reason" is used univocally, that is, it means exactly the same thing each time that you use it in a sentence or in the statements of a syllogism. However, the term "reason" is not univocally used in this argumentation. The term "reason" can mean at least three things within the context of our present discussion: (1) reason as the *act of argumentation* or self-enlightenment in order to arrive at what is logical and true; (2) the *product* of this act of argumentation, as in the reign of reason that the French Enlightenment said they wanted to instill in French society at that time; and (3) the *spiritual knowing faculty* that is found in man that he uses in order to know and do logical argumentation. In English we can probably distinguish the three with the following words: (1) the act of argumentation could be called *reasoning*; (2) the product of reason could be called *thought* or *idea* (that is why it is said that ideas move the world); and (3) the human operative faculty is also called *mind* or *intellect*.

"Reason" in the section above entitled *The Horns of the Dilemma* refers to the product of reasoning, specifically to things like atheism and The Terror

4 Cfr. PINCAERS, Servais, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 1995, pp. 400-468.

that purportedly are the fruit of reasoning. The "reason" that we said man has to use in order to find the *medium virtutis* is the human operative faculty. So that the product (the thought or the idea) could influence society correctly, the human operative faculty (the mind or the intellect) should function properly.

Thomas Aquinas and those who subscribe to his line of metaphysico-realist philosophy see that the key to the correct functioning of the intellect or mind is found in the intellect or the mind itself. Within the mind or the intellect, as we said before in the previous section, there are natural inclinations that push us in the right direction. If we obey these natural inclinations, our mind will go along the right paths of reasoning. If we disobey them, we could come up with thoughts or ideas like the ones that move the terrorists or the extreme rationalists who were the protagonists of The Terror. (It is interesting to note that both extremes are labeled with the name "terror". The wrong use of faith leads to terror. The wrong use of "reason" also leads to terror, not to peace.)

What is it that could draw the mind away from the direction of the natural inclinations? Greed, hunger for power, lust and all the wayward things that a man's passions may desire. There are many things that attract the mind, and usually the things that attract the mind are more noble and just. There are also many things that attract the body. A man could get lost within all the attractions that he experiences as he grapples with this world. If he is not discerning and reflective, he could mistake a passion for a thought and a thought for a passion. He could confuse the good with the bad and the bad with the good. He could invert the objective natural hierarchy goods as they are found in the world and as they function in relation to him as a human being. This can all lead to a disorder in priorities within man's mind, thus obfuscating the truth that should be the one to insinuate itself in his heart, not the lower passions.

But the mind is naturally made to discover what is good. It remains free. It can still choose to do what is bad, even though it is not naturally inclined to do what is bad. It needs to be free. It needs to have the possibility to choose what is bad in order to be free. But choosing what is bad is not the essence of its freedom. Choosing what is bad is "a necessary evil" so that it can be free. But the essence of its freedom is to choose what is good.[5] For Thomas Aquinas,

5 Cfr. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae.*, I, q. 79, a. 12, c and q. 82, a. 4, c.

the ability to recognize what is good and to desire it naturally resides in man's intellect and will. However, the intellect can get distracted, the intellect can get lost. It is important for the intellect to reflect calmly on what it has to do and to free itself from the pull of any evil so that it can rightly choose what is good.

That is why, for Thomas Aquinas, the practical intellect is always correctly moved by the *recta ratio*, by "right reason". There is a practical intellect because the one intellect of man has two functions, both of them being functions of knowing: (1) the function of knowing something for the sake of knowing it without needing to do something after knowing it: this it the *speculative intellect*; and (2) the function of knowing something that necessarily moves man to do something: this is the *practical intellect*.[6]

The practical intellect in turn has two practical functions: (1) directing an action that is geared towards making something; and (2) directing an action that is geared towards doing what is morally good. The skillful direction by the intellect in a productive action is called *recta ratio factibilium*, the right reason in making something; while the skillful direction by the intellect in a moral action is called *recta ratio agibilium*, the right reason in things that have to be done.[7] The *recta ratio agibilium* is our guide for determining the *medium virtutis*. The *recta ratio* is an upright reason. It is enlightened by the right things.

5. Adaequatio Rei et Intellectus

But if the criterion for discerning the *medium virtutis* is the *recta ratio*, does this mean that our criterion for determining the "middle way" between faith and reason is an internal, subjective criterion? Is my interior self the basis of truth? If my internal, subjective self is the basis for truth then there can be as many truths as there are many subjective selves.

The plurality of truths, even those that contradict one another, is not acceptable to us. We have already said at the beginning that, in order to refute terrorism, we have to be able to say that it is incompatible to say that religion promotes peace and yet at the same time commands terrorist actions. In

6 Cfr. *Ibid*, q. 79, a. 11, c.

7 Cf.r *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 57, a.4, c.

principle, we have already agreed that that is a contradiction. When there are two choices that contradict one another, if one is true then the other should be false.

Faith and reason are not contradictory realities. They are contrary realities. They reside, as we already said above, at opposite poles within a continuum. In the middle of this continuum, there is a whole gamut of ways of combining faith and reason, some of which are valid and true. Faith and reason are contrary to one another, but they do not contradict one another, that is, one does not expel the other in the challenge of which one is true. Both can be true at the same time.

This cannot be so with these two statements: (1) we must use our freedom to love God; and (2) if you do not love God you deserve to die. To say that man has to use his freedom to love God and at the same time to think that he should be coerced to love Him is a contradiction. Since these are contradictory statements, one must be true and the other false. We must therefore determine what is true to continue keeping it as a guiding principle for our actions, and the other we must reject as false. This is the dialectical dynamic of man's constant search for the truth. The truth is important to man. Man's science and knowledge should grow along the line of truth. The underlying principle in man's mind that propels the mind's search for truth and is the most basic axiom for critical thinking and analysis is the *principle of non-contradiction*, which more or less says: nothing can be this and not be this at the same time and in the same context. Mathematically, that would look like $A \neq \sim A$, that is A is not equal to not-A. Of course, something could be this now and not be this later, which is why the principle specifies that the two conditions cannot coexist at the same time. Also, something could be this from one point of view and not be this from another point of view—like someone could be a father from the point of view of his son but would be a son from the point of view of his own father, which means that he is "father" and "not father" at the same time but not in the same context—, that is why the principle clarifies that it should be in the same context.

With the principle of non-contradiction, we can expel what is false on the basis of knowing what is true, but what will tell us what is true?

Thomas Aquinas defines truth as the *adaequatio rei et intellectus* the agreement between the thing (reality, which means a reality external to the knower) and the concept that is found in the intellect. If the thought is the same as the thing, then there is truth. If the thought is not the same as the thing, then the thought that is in the mind is false. What does this principle tell us? It tells us that the measure of truth is reality. This reality is external to one's mind. The external reality is your basis for the truth. There is an internal truthfulness of your knowledge when it agrees with what exists in external reality. In the attempt to establish internal truthfulness, man can make a mistake. When this happens, there is falsehood in his mind because his thought does not coincide what really is in reality. On the other hand, external reality is always true in itself. It always is what it is. This is why it becomes the basis for the truth in the mind.

It is important to point out that the relationship between the reality external to the knower and the knower's intellect is the essence of what is true, according to Thomas Aquinas, because modern philosophers have adopted different criteria for truth. Descartes, for example, thinks that what is true is what we can clearly and distinctly see in our mind. This is an internal, subjective criterion, which somehow frees the person from any obligation to be submitted to reality. A step further we find Kant, whose criterion for truth is the orderliness with which the mind arranges the empirical phenomena, thus making this empirical data intelligible. But this, too, is an internal criterion. Kant denies our ability to know the *noumena*, i.e., "the things in themselves", which we suppose refers to external reality. The phenomena are already sensations that are inside the mind, which may have some link with the *noumena*, but that link is obscure and beyond our capacity to know.

Now this *adaequatio rei et intellectus* of Thomas Aquinas works immediately well for knowing the truth about external material reality, but what about spiritual and moral realities? What is the "*res*"[8] when it comes

8 In the Latin language, nouns are declined, which means that they change their form according to their use in the sentence. Thus, in the phrase *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, the word "thing" appears as *rei* because it means "of the thing". The whole phrase would be translated literally into "the conformity of the thing and of the intellect", which means "the conformity between the thing and the intellect". When the Latin word for "thing" is used as a subject or as a direct object, it takes the form *res*.

to moral realities? The correct balance between faith and reason is actually a spiritual moral reality, not a physical one. Where could we find the *res* of spiritual and moral realities?

There is a *res* that we can find within man himself. It is *res* even though it is in man because it is a given. It is not something that is left to the free choice of man or subject to his intellectual creativity. This internal *res* is his human nature[9]. This human nature is full of drives, appetites and faculties that reach out to other persons and external reality, for man was made in order to interact with other persons and the world. His human nature also sets some basic rules regarding the correct way in which man could relate to others and the world, for his relating with other people and external reality is governed by freedom. Human creativity can build up or destroy. Man could hate and man could love. This range of possibilities of human action falls under the scope of his freedom. This is the reality of morality.

When it comes to the external physical world, the mind grasps what *is*, i.e, what is there and what has being. The being of things external to man is the basis for the truth of our knowledge of the external reality, which is the *adaequatio rei et intellectus*. On the other hand, moral realities do not refer to what *is*, strictly speaking, although moral realities need a foundation of physical realities such as the body of the person and the other people and the physical things he relates with. Moral realities refer to *what should be*, not immediately *what is*. Therefore, moral realities refer to an *ought*.[10]

A moral object is not merely a physical thing. It is the *manner* in which the person relates with other persons and/or with his environment. There are correct ways of relating or interacting with other persons and the environment and there are incorrect ways of relating or interacting with them. Even though it is a way of acting and not a physical thing, still it is a *res* and could enter into the dynamics of truth as embodied in the *adaequatio rei et intellectus*.

We can, therefore, now see that there is a speculative truth or a truth which is the conformity of the speculative mind with a being, and there is a

9 We have returned to human nature as we promised at the end of the section entitled *The Golden Mean*.

10 RHONHIEMER, Martin, *Ley Natural y Razón Práctica: una Visión Tomista de la Autonomía Moral*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2006, p. 31.

moral truth, which is the conformity of the practical mind with the natural inclinations or ends of man. Man becomes good when his practical mind or practical intellect leads him to achieve the ends dictated by his nature, and he becomes bad when he veers away willingly from the ends which were set by his nature. This is so because reaching one's end or achieving one's goal is equal to perfection. If you are able to accomplish what you are supposed to do, then you can be considered perfect. If a bowman is able to hit a bull's-eye with his arrow, then he can be called a perfect bowman. If a bird is able to sing the song that belongs to its nature, then it has reached its perfection as a member of its species. Man becomes perfect when he is able to achieve the goals set by his nature, which in the end are the goals set for him by his Creator.

But moral goals are more complex than physical goals. Physical goals a more concrete: e.g., for a bird to build a certain type of nest, for an animal to be able to eat the type of food for which it was made, etc. When it comes to the moral activity of man, the actions can be very varied, even though all of them may be called "good". Thus, a man does not necessarily become better than somebody else just because he has quantitatively achieved more than his fellowman. Some achieve more, some achieve less. Some achieve this and some achieve that. But goodness embraces a great variety of good actions. Thus, you can have many men with very varied achievements and all of them can be good, all of them can sufficiently achieve their perfection even though their activities may have been varied. Goodness is a qualitative feature of man, not a quantitative one.

With the above explanation, we just wanted to show that several types of actions and achievements can actually fit into the natural ends of man. This is why men can achieve perfection in different ways. Still the *res*, which is the moral object or goal, remains the same and still has to be fulfilled. To be morally good, man has to choose to fulfill the moral dictates of his nature.

The natural moral goals set for man so that he can achieve his personal perfection are embedded in his human nature. These goals are spiritual and, therefore, they are not constraining, because they are open to a wide variety of possible achievable goods both material and spiritual. The achievement of these goals makes a man good. Their non-achievement makes him bad. When one of the natural human goals is not achieved then there is a yawning gap

in his being, and he is imperfect. His imperfection can be felt and this causes unhappiness.

The collection of all the natural human goals from the moral point of view makes up the human natural law. It is universal for all men regardless of sex, race, creed or social status. It is required of everyone. Their achievement makes everyone and anyone happy. Thus if we are to ask what is the basis for the *medium virtutis*, for the *recta ratio agibilium* and for the *adaequatio rei et intellectus* in man, we can readily say that it is human natural law. Human natural law is very basic and is true for all. With this we can now answer the very first question that we asked: How do we achieve harmony between faith and reason? Answer: By identifying the *medium virtutis*, the *recta ratio* and the moral *res* as it is dictated by human natural law.

The importance of the universality of human nature and human natural law can be seen in the worldwide concern for the universal declaration and th respect for human rights. After the Second World War, the world saw the need to establish and agree upon what each and every man, regardless of sex, race or creed, has a right to have or do. The Second World War saw the horrors of the holocaust. According to the laws of their own nation, justice could not be served to the perpetrators of this horrible project because the laws of the nation to which they belong would not convict them. The question then arises: Are these people not responsible just because the laws of their country do not condemn them? Are they not answerable to the victims of their doings? To almost all men on earth, the reply to that question is “yes”, they are responsible and they have to make up for these crimes. Since these are not crimes in their own nation, where can they become crimes? Can someone who has committed a horrendous act that is not a crime in his own country be lawfully judged in another country where that specific act is a crime? Would that fulfill all justice?

It is at this point that the world suddenly realized that there such things as “crimes against humanity”. These are crimes no matter where the perpetrator does it. These are the infringement of rights no matter what nationality or other circumstances a person may have. These are an indication that there indeed is a universal human natural law, that all human beings on earth are indeed equal because they have one and the same nature which is the basis for all their universal human rights.

6. Truth and Religion

For faith or religion to be imbued with reason—for faith to be reasonable—, it has to be true. It has to be true in relation to the external world of being, which is the *is*, and it has to be true in relation to the internal truth of human natural law, which is the *ought*. If we set ontological and moral truth as conditions for faith to harmonize with reason, we might get into a lot of trouble. What is true about those things that we do not have empirical data of? I was once reading a textbook of basic philosophy required for all students in a university in the Philippines, and in one of the lessons it said that God is a fictitious concept. This they said because there is no empirical data of God. No empirical data that could be scientifically tested, a principle which Karl Popper (1902-1994) has popularized as the criterion of falsifiability.[11] The criterion of falsifiability is supposed to determine which is scientific and which is not.

Of course, the criterion for falsifiability is fine. But there is one problem. In this day and age, when we say that something is "scientific", that is taken to be the equivalent of saying that that thing is true. As a corollary, anything that is non-scientific is not true. Now take God. Since he does not have empirical data and cannot be falsifiable, then he is not scientific. Does it therefore mean that God is not true since He is non-scientific? This is the gist of the controversy on the theory of Intelligent Design which some people in the United States, among the many scientists, are trying to propose as an alternative to the Darwinist evolutionary theory of the origin of life that is the standard required science education fare in American schools.[12] Darwinist evolution has always been considered scientific, apparently because it is falsifiable. But the main cause of life proposed by the theory of Intelligent Design, that is, the Supreme Universal Being, Creator of all life, is not falsifiable and, therefore, not scientific. If God is non-scientific, then God is probably not true.

The lack of empirical data about God is also the reason why Kant does not consider the idea of God scientific. For Kant, what is scientific is

11 THORTON, Stephen, "Karl Popper", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/popper/>.

12 There is a lot of literature on Intelligent Design that the reader can easily access. This author recommends *Chance or Purpose? Creation, Evolution and a Rational Faith* by Schonborn, published by Ignatius Press.

the intelligent ordering and structuring of chaotic phenomena by our mental categories, especially in the realm of man's pure reason. Empirical data plus intelligent order is the formula for science. For Kant, these are the synthetic *a posteriori* judgments: "The truth of empirical judgments is the bottom-level sort of truth for Kant, in that all of the other kinds of truth presuppose it".[13] God, therefore, can come into the cognitive picture when we move into the realm of practical reason, where He is a postulate together with the world and the soul so that the mind can make a synthesis of all the external and the internal experiences of human knowledge.[14] But He has no role in the pure reason.

So, is God only a postulate? Is God non-scientific? Is He only an abstract guide for our moral behavior or does He really exist? Is He true?

The question of the existence of God is related to the question of the validity of Metaphysics[15] as a body of true knowledge. In Medieval philosophy, the metaphysical world was accepted as part of the real world: spirits existed; immaterial principles compose and move the material realities that we find in this world. Starting from Descartes, a dividing line was drawn between the empirical world and the world of thought. Kant eliminated the empirical world and reduced it to phenomena in the mind, but he also reduced the once considered metaphysical realities into mental categories, and God the world and the soul into postulates. After that the allergic reaction to metaphysics as knowledge grew and became widespread. Nowadays, Metaphysics is considered as imagination, fantasy, abstraction, myth but never as truth. Metaphysics is non-scientific.

13 HANNA, Robert, "Kant's Theory of Judgment", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), 1.3, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/kant-judgment/>.

14 ROSSI, Philip, "Kant's Philosophy of Religion", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), 3.5, Edward N. Zalta (ed.),<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/kant-religion/>.

15 The world "metaphysics" comes from the two Greek worlds *meta*, which means "beyond" and *physis*, which points to Nature, meaning physical nature. Anything metaphysical would be something that is beyond physical nature. If you believe that only physical nature exists, then what is metaphysical does not exists. It would only exist as a creation of our mind. If you believe that not only the physical order but the spiritual order also exists, then metaphysical things will be real to you, and this includes God and the soul.

But did it ever to occur to you that God is a metaphysical reality? There many other metaphysical realities that many people commonly accept as real and part of everyday life: the soul, thought, life, Beauty itself, Goodness itself, perfect justice, happiness, love, freedom, etc. There could never be perfect justice here on earth, and yet we yearn for and believe in perfect justice. That was what the Communists thought they could achieve here on earth. But no Communist nowadays is openly preaching about this promised early heaven. If you look closely at freedom, you will find that it is not only a matter of the absence of obstacles to doing whatever you want. Even with freedom, you cannot do anything that you want. The concept of freedom is much more than the absence of obstacles to the decisions of the will. It involves making the right choices, and man often chooses not because of empirical reasons but because of spiritual ones.

Of course, the empiricists and materialists might argue that even these things which we call "metaphysical" or "spiritual" can be explained away by empirical, physical, chemical or biological processes. But this is claim is only a promise that in the future it might be like that. There is no proof yet that everything metaphysical or spiritual can be completely reduced to the physical, chemical or biological. In fact, for many people, it is rather the contrary: the metaphysical cannot be reduced to the physical, chemical or biological. The metaphysical is another type of reality, even though it relates perfectly with and not separated from the physical reality.

If we are right about the existence of the metaphysical world vis-à-vis the physical world, then reality is composed of two realms that mutually require each other: the empirical world which is true and the spiritual world which is also true. This is inconceivable for a materialist scientist. But for once perhaps we should rethink their insistence on the point that only the empiricists and the materialists have a right to determine what is true. Our spiritual experience as human beings dealing everyday with love, beauty, justice and freedom seems to say that empiricism and materialism are not enough to explain the world. There's more to this world than meets the eye.

The realities of religion dwell within the metaphysical realm: God, love, salvation, mercy, sin, etc. Many of the metaphysical realities can also be known through philosophy, and not by faith alone, as for example, beauty,

forgiveness, goodness, being, etc. Our reason can travel into the metaphysical world. Our reason does not only know the empirical but also the metaphysical and spiritual. Our reason can do this because both the empirical and the metaphysical are true, and the object of reason is the truth. Both empirical reality and metaphysical or spiritual reality are valid objects for our knowing because they are true, they are real.

If we accept the existence of the mystical and the sublime, within the metaphysical or spiritual world, there are also two realms: (1) the philosophical realm that is within the reach of human reason as it goes with its human power alone and (2) the supernatural realm which, as it name implies, is beyond the reach of the natural power of the human reason alone. This is another idea that each and every man will have to sift carefully in his mind in order to see its logic and the fittingness of its existence. If man is not the creator of the world and does not define the world, then the world is bigger than man. If man cannot explain himself and does not originate from himself, there has to be a field of reality that is greater than man. If man cannot acquire existence by himself, then he will have to be given existence by Another. And the one that should give him existence must be greater than man. If the Creator of man is greater than man, then there must be aspects of the Creator and all things related to him that are beyond the human capacity to grasp. If man can fully understand everything about his Creator, then this will give us the impression that the Creator is not that powerful and wonderful after all. It might make us think that the Creator is just a little step away in perfection in relation to our species, *homo sapiens*. Would Creator be like that? Would everything about a Creator fit perfectly into man's capacity to understand? Could a real Creator be completely embraced by the investigative arms of science?

It does not seem so. The religions of the world attest to this. Man constantly admits his limitedness because his limitedness is a constant and well-apparent experience for him. Those who reject religion reject it because they could not understand why anything could escape the piercing scrutiny of man's intellect. But the believers of this world think otherwise.

If the believers of this world are right then, aside from the philosophical realm, there is a supernatural realm that is a place[16] that is more exclusively

16 We are using the word "place" here, but we do not mean a physical place. For pure metaphysical realities are immaterial and do not need a place to reside in.

God's. It is a place that is obscure to man that still lives in this world. But it is a place which can be known by man if he is allowed by God, that is, if God reveals this "place" to him, if God tells man what this "place" contains.

This is what Revelation is all about, and most world religions tell of some revelation of the Divine. God goes out from "His place" and enters "man's place" so that man could "see" Him. Man then receives new knowledge that he would never have achieved if God did not take the initiative.

Now the content of Revelation could not be used in philosophy, for that is knowledge that we would not normally have if we are not given the opportunity by God, but the idea that there is a "cognitive place" that is beyond the ability of the human mind can enter into philosophical investigation. Recall the fact that the very name "philosophy" indicates the existence of a realm of knowledge that is beyond man's ordinary ability to know. Instead of calling philosophy *sophia* which means "wisdom", it is called *philosophia*, which means "love for wisdom". Why should it be "love for wisdom" and not "wisdom" itself? Why could we only aim to love wisdom and not achieve wisdom itself? It must be because the real wisdom is beyond this world. The fullness of wisdom can only be achieved if we are to reach the place of God. This is what Socrates and Plato thought and believed. This was why Socrates was look forward to death, as we are told in the dialogue *Phaedo*, because after death he was expecting to see the Ideas that constituted the perfection of knowledge, Wisdom, the achievement of which mean the most perfect happiness.

The material or empirical world is intelligible. The philosophical world is intelligible. The supernatural world is intelligible. Here we find the compatibility between faith and reason. Faith resides in the supernatural world and reaches out to man in the empirical and the philosophical world. Man meets faith through revelation and finds out that his intellect can grasp a greater part of the message that is revealed to him. His mind enters the supernatural realm and then his heart yearns to live there for he realizes that there is Someone there who loves him and cares for him.

Metaphysics is the bridge between the empirical world and the supernatural world, which is the world of religion. If metaphysics is rejected,

---

We are just using the word "place" to signify that God is unreachable for the knowing faculties of a man who is still in this world.

then only the empirical can be real. If metaphysics is rejected, religion will become a mere product of the human mind or of human feeling. Metaphysics falls within the realm of philosophy and reaches out into the supernatural realm. Philosophy is not theology. Theology takes Revelation as its premise, but philosophy can only argue logically from man's ordinary experience. But man's experience is not only empirical but spiritual and metaphysical as well. The supernatural, which is realm of religion and faith, is also spiritual, but it is beyond the scope of philosophy. Metaphysics is used in both philosophy and theology, so here we find the bridge between the upper limits of our reason and the lower limits of the reality of God.

7. Imagine There's a Heaven

There's as song made famous by John Lennon whose title is *Imagine*. Its melody is soothing and captivating, the cadence of its lyrics has a pleasing effect on the soul, and its words talk about peace and brotherhood, which makes it exceedingly attractive to those who drink up its music. But it is a song against religion. Pay attention to its lyrics: *Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try. No hell below us. Above the earth just sky. Imagine all the people living day to day.*

The invitation to "imagine all the people living for to day" implies that we should not worry about what's going to happen to us after this life because nothing is going to happen to us. There is no heaven to look forward to. There is no hell to punish you. There is no heaven. That's just the sky. The denial of the relevance of the after life and the nonchalant attitude towards reward and punishment for the good or evil we have done is an echo of what we find in the lyrics of the song *I Got Plenty o' Nuttin* from the musical *Porgy and Bess*: "I ain't a'frettin bout hell till the time arrive. Never worry long as I'm well. Never one to strive to be good, to be bad. What the hell? I'm so glad I'm alive!" The "now" is what is relevant. There is nothing waiting for you in the afterlife.

Imagine there are no countries. It isn't hard to do. Nothing to kill or die for. And no religion, too. Imagine all the people living life in peace. Lennon leads you to think that the establishment of countries and religion is the cause of killing because country and religion are things one has to die for. The implication is that nationalism and religion are the cause of war and

strife. If only there were no nations and religion, we would all live in peace. Of course, the song presents no proof that nations and religion incite war and drive people to kill. There is no argumentation. The beauty of the music and the speciousness of the words lull you into believing the message.

The song *Imagine* is a plug for Communism. Just look at its third stanza: *Imagine no possessions. I wonder if you can. No need for greed or hunger, a brotherhood of man. Imagine all the people sharing all the world.* Communism during that time was thought to be the solution to the world's woes. But later revelations of the horrors that were happening inside Russia, China, Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany proved otherwise. This was the result of imagining that there's no heaven.

Now imagine that there really is a heaven. Imagine that there is a God whom we should know, love, worship and glorify. Wouldn't that also lead to love and peace? Or rather, isn't the religious scenario a more logical framework for peace and harmony than the Communist scenario? Just look at how Poland survived the Communist intrusion: it was through religion. According also to a survey made by this author for a international conference at the Atma Jaya Univeristy in Yogyakarta just this September 2011, the successful and peaceful outcome of the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution in the Philippines was made possible thanks to religious leadership.[17] Does religion destroy or does it build? Does it weaken or does it strengthen? Is it reasonable or unreasonable?

Thomas Aquinas says that there are two aspects of man that form part of his essence, that are part of human natural law. These are: (1) his social nature and (2) his religiosity. By nature, man is supposed to live in society. He cannot easily achieve his proper perfection without the help of other human beings. Man is supposed to grow in an environment where other people live with him and provide him with institutions that nurture his body and develop his spirit: schools, churches, art, music, business, industry, etc. Without society, man cannot be man.

17 NADRES, Ramon, *Leaderless Change? : a Comparison Between the Arab Spring and the 1986 EDSA People Power Revolution in the Philippines*, a paper presented at the International Conference on Social Media Cultures, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Atma Jaya, Yogyakarta, 22 September 2011.

But Thomas Aquinas also says that man is naturally called to establish a relationship with God, with his Creator. Man is religious by nature. An atheist is a queer bird. There is a part of his nature that is not fulfilled. By this we see that human natural law is really the basis for the harmonization of faith and reason. By knowing the ins and outs of our nature, we can discover our calling to faith. By knowing our human nature, we can have the criteria to judge whether the way we live our faith right now is compatible with both speculative and practical truth. Reason looks at and understands our human nature and then turns around and judges all that we believe and practice on the basis of the knowledge of the truth about human nature.

How can the terrorist turn away from the violence he advocates in the name of religion? By using his intellect and realizing that violence is incompatible with faith because it is incompatible with the very nature of God and the very nature of the soul. This is what Pope Benedict the XVI wrote in his Regensburg Lecture in 2006: "The Emperor [Manuel II], after having expressed himself so forcefully, goes on to explain in detail the reason why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable. Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. 'God,' he says, 'is not pleased by blood—and not acting reasonably is contrary to God's nature. [...] [The Emperor] continues: 'Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats.... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death.'"[18]

How can the violent atheist turn away from his path? What could have stopped Robespierre, the Jacobins and the Committee on Public Safety from carrying out The Terror? If only they realized that religion is very reasonable. With the same coin, we can bring before the atheist the words of Emperor Manuel II above: "Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats.... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not

18 BENEDICT XVI, *Regensburg Lecture*, 12 September 2006, no. 13 (as translated and quoted in SCHALL, James V., *The Regensburg Lecture*, St. Augustine's Press, Indiana, 2007, p. 41.

need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death."

Knowledge of what human nature truly is, of what it requires of us, is the key to harmony between faith and reason. Our faith has to become reasonable and our reason has to become faithful and religious. Man is naturally reasonable and man is also naturally religious. The unreasonable man and the irreligious man is an aberration.

8. Conclusion

We started our investigation with the observation that extreme fideism and extreme rationalism are both unacceptable. They are stances that do not hold water and cannot stand up to the truth. That said, we proceeded in trying to find out where the truth lies and realized that, since faith and reason are not contradictories but contraries, there must be some way by which the two would harmonize.

Through the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, we found out that there is such a thing as a golden mean, a *medium virtutis*, between two moral extremes. We then asked ourselves how we could arrive at that *medium virtutis*. The definition of prudence, the virtue by which we could correctly determine the *medium virtutis*, led us to the *recta ratio agibilium*. The very words of this definition tell us that secret to achieving the balance between faith and reason is in reason itself.

But if reason depends on itself only, we know that we could very well fall into subjectivism and have no firm reference point on which we could anchor our decisions on what is right or wrong, on what is correct or not, on how the harmony between faith and reason could be achieved. We then realized that that firm reference point is the human nature of man, which later expresses itself as human natural law.

Human natural law, according to Thomas Aquinas, tells us that man is a social being and that man is religious by nature. This leads us to conclude that man cannot be naturally and atheist, his very nature spurs him on towards the search for his Creator. At the same time, he is reasonable by the mere fact that his Creator had given him an autonomous reason with which he could analyze the truth of this world and arrive at the existence of his God.

The knowledge that bridges empirical knowledge in man with the knowledge that we could get on the faith is metaphysical knowledge. We therefore conclude that the acceptance of a metaphysical philosophy is the key to the harmonization of faith and reason. Without it, faith and reason remains isolated from other. Faith and reason would not be able to understand each other and conflict would ensue. In this day and age, therefore, when we want to achieve peace between faith and reason, we need to take up metaphysical philosophy again to achieve this goal.

Ramon Nadres

Born in Quezon City, Philippines, in 1998 Ramon finished his studies in the licentiate program in Ecclesiastical Philosophy at the University of Navarre in Navarre, Spain. His doctorate was finished in 2009 with the dissertation *La Memoria en Santo Tomàs de Aquino: Fuentes y Originalidad* at the University of Navarra, Spain with a *Summa Cum Laude*. At present, Ramon is the philosophy lecturer at the Faculty of Philosophy, Unika Widya Mandala Surabaya.

His e-mail is Doktor.Ramon@gmail.com.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALVIRA, Rafael, *La Razón de Ser Hombre: Ensayo acerca de la Justificación del Ser Humano*, Ediciones Rialp S.A., Madrid, 1998, pp. 180-194.

ARTIGAS, Mariano, *Ciencia, Razón y Fe*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2004, pp. 157-172.

_____, *Filosofía de la Ciencia*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2009, pp. 250-275.

COPLESTON, Frederick, *A History of Philosophy, Volume II: Medieval Philosophy, From Augustine to Duns Scotus*, Doubleday, New York, 1993, pp. 302-434.

CORAZÓN GONZÁLEZ, Rafael, *Filosofía del Conocimiento*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2002, pp. 139-185.

FERNÁNDEZ, J. Luís and SOTO, María Jesús, *Historia de la Filosofía Moderna*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2006.

GARCÍA CUADRADO, José Ángel, *Antropología Filosófica: Una Introducción a la Filosofía del Hombre*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2008, pp 231-243.

GARCÍA LÓPEZ, Jesús, *Metafísica Tomista: Ontología, Gnoseología y Teología Natural*, EUNSA, Pamplona 2001, pp. 97-159, 311-428

GILSON, Étienne, *God and Philosophy*, Yale University Press, London, 1941.

_____, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1937.

HANNA, Robert, "Kant's Theory of Judgment", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), 1.3, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/kant-judgment/>.

MARITAIN, Jacques, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1995, pp.

_____, *Natural Law: Reflections on Theory & Practice*, St. Augustine's Press, South Bend, Indiana, 2001.

MORALES, José, *Filosofía de la Religión*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2007.

PIEPER, Josef, *Guide to Thomas Aquinas*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1962, pp. 133-161.

PINCKAERS, Servais, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, 1995, pp. 400-468.

RATZINGER, Joseph, *Truth and Tolerance: Christian Belief and World Religions*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2004.

RHONHEIMER, Martin, *Ley Natural y Razón Práctica: una Visión Tomista de la Autonomía Moral*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2006.

_____, "Sulla Fondazione di Norme Morali a Partire dall Natura", *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica*, 4 anno LXXXIX, Ottobre-Diciembre 1997, pp. 515-535.

ROSSI, Philip, "Kant's Philosophy of Religion", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), 3.5, Edward N. Zalta (ed.),<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/kant-religion/>.

SCHALL, James V., *The Regensburg Lecture*, St. Augustine's Press, Indiana, 2007.

SARANYANA, Josep-Ignasi, *La Filosofía Medieval*, EUNSA, Pamplona, 2007, pp. 271-304.

THOMAS AQUINAS, *De Veritate*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

_____, *De Virtutibus*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

_____, *Sententia de Sensu et Sensato*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

_____,*Sententia Ethicorum*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

_____, *Sententia Metaphysicae*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.com.

_____, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

_____, *Summa Theologiae*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

_____, *Super Sententiae*, version found at www.corpusthomisticum.org.

THORTON, Stephen, "Karl Popper", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/popper/>.

YEPES STORK, Ricardo, *Fundamentos de Antropologá: un Ideal de la Excelencia Humana*, EUNSA, 1977, pp.125-182, 467-500.