

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

by Marco Senatore

In Issue 80 of *Philosophy for Business*, Umaru Zubairu's article 'Corporate Philanthropy amongst SMEs: A Divine Command Theory Perspective' discusses corporate philanthropy of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) from an Islamic perspective. The author provides an interesting answer to each of the following questions: why give? what to give? how to give? and who to give to? He does so on the basis of the Koran and the practices of the Noble Prophet Muhammad recorded in the Ahadith. By taking into account such principles, in my view also businesses of the Western world have an opportunity to widen the approach to their activities.

While our economies are basically value-neutral, because they do not endorse officially any particular religious, spiritual or cultural vision of the world, I find that the motivations behind charity activities are, for instance, extremely important. As we know, philanthropy is often used as a sort of marketing strategy, so that the mere act of helping, per se, is not considered relevant. This is a significant departure from that feeling of sympathy which, according to Adam Smith, characterises relations among human beings. So, while the liberal State is for sure based on the separation between civil institutions and religions, it should always allow individuals to be inspired by their own moral and spiritual ideals, and to share them through an open and active dialogue. From this point of view, the Islamic perspective on corporate philanthropy provides a rich and useful contribution.

Nuria Garrido and Crispen Karanda's article 'The Relations Between Ethics and Economics: A Comparative Analysis between Ayres' and Weber's Perspectives' discusses the relation between ethics and economics according to the perspectives of the American thinker Clarence Edwin Ayres (1891-1972) and the German sociologist, philosopher and political economist Max Weber (1864-1920). Such relation has always been very important for humanity, but it is even more in the current juncture. In a world where the eight richest people are as wealthy as poorest half of the planet, in a world where corruption is widespread and economic growth has been pursued in a way that is destructive for the environment, an economy without a greater role of ethics is simply unsustainable. Aristotle's and Adam Smith's

contribution has been forgotten by policymakers and by most theorists, due to what Amartya Sen has called an engineering approach to economics.

In the article, the author highlights that, while according to Ayres the existence of economic rules born from scientific deliberations and doctrines does not guarantee their social efficiency in the practice, for Max Weber economic issues and economic rules cannot be understood as isolated systems, because they form part of a bigger system, which is the cultural one. Moreover, while Ayres highlights the influence that the Ricardian economics had in the reconstruction of the legal system of England, in particular through the definition of rules to be applied directly to the human conduct, for Max Weber human behavior is regulated by informal ways, which represent specific set of ethics and values accepted by a society.

Marlon Jesspher B. De Vera's article 'Plato as a Philosophy Salesman in the *Phaedo*' is aimed at highlighting that the Plato's main intent, in his dialogue *Phaedo*, was not to assert the immortality of the soul, but rather to "sell" philosophy as the highest human pursuit.

Phaedo is a dialogue that is usually placed at the beginning of Plato's middle period, and deals with the search for the true cause. It is a work that can be considered together with *Meno*, because also here Plato analyses the *anamnesis*, or reminiscence. In this work Plato introduces the world of Forms, i.e. the true world, that of the true being. Someone has highlighted that, given the problem of existential ineffability, selling philosophy might seem a fruitless Sisyphean task, but that this is not the case, as "the love of wisdom begins with the love of beauty". Plato was indeed a philosopher who could provide images of the superiority of the philosophical life, through beauty, that awakens the love of wisdom.

I find that the idea of selling philosophy would be applicable also to our days, where the commodification of almost everything has not improved the possibilities to search for truth. And, in many instances, we would still need to rely on an image of beauty to undertake such search.

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Email: marco.senatore@tesoro.it