

Victoria Lodge of Education and Research

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VALUES

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Value is the measure of the usefulness or the significance of persons, places and things, both temporal or spiritual. The meaning of value defines in the same time, the price which each of us attributes to this or to the other thing, as well as that which must and or be able (in accordance with certain theories) to support the evaluated judgements. With this connotation the meaning of value is strictly personal, subjective and varies according to judgement and evaluation. Thus derives the need for a study on the hierarchy of values and therefore, the need to determine a highest value (το ὑψιστον αγαθόν- of the ancients) to be used for the measurement of all other values. The study on this matter brought up the value issue to the level of metaphysics and today the meaning of value is very wide and is used in the economic and ethical disciplines as well as into the theoretical philosophy.

The contemporary use of the term 'value' and the discipline now known as the theory of value are relatively recent developments in philosophy, being largely results of certain 19th and 20th century movements.

'Value' is used as a noun and as a verb. As a noun it is sometimes abstract, sometimes concrete. As an abstract noun it designates the property of value or of being valuable. In this sense 'value' is used as equivalent to 'worth' or 'goodness'. In which case evil is usually viewed with disfavour. As a concrete noun, singular or plural, our term refers either to things which have this property of value or to things which are valued. When used as a verb ('to value') our term denotes a certain mental act or attitude of valuing or valuation.

Now value- theory is concerned both with the property of value and with the process of valuing. About the former it asks various questions:

- What is its nature?
- Is it a quality or a relation?
- Is it objective or subjective?
- Is it a single property, or is it several properties?

About the latter it also has various questions:

- Is it a mere feeling or desire?
- Or does it involve judgement and cognition?

And if so, is this a cognition of a value already there independently of the act of valuing or of knowing?

It seems that the metaphysic problem of value could be summarized in the dilemma of the Neo-Platonic Plotinus : ‘Good is good because we desire it, or we desire it because it is good’?

Let us examine this issue, with a few of the questions that have to be answered:

- A What is value and how it is conceived in to our conscience ?
- B Are values self-existent and absolute or is the result of achievement, creation, production of the historic evolution of mankind ?
- C How they are divided and what is their hierarchy ?

It is obvious that there are many definitions or descriptions of the meaning of value. We could state that values are the farther aims of human, the inner incentives of behaviour with which humans can draw upon when desire and interest exists. This relation does not exist with the lack of desire and personal concern. Humans conceive values with the evaluation experience, a complex psychical act, which appears to those cases in which we see things with interest by choosing this other than the other.

Values are perceived through the objects or persons being their carriers and we have to emphasize here, that neither ‘value’ can exist without the realization of ‘good’ nor, ‘good’ without a certain value. Naturally, methodological reasons separate ‘good’ from ‘value’, since in real life one cannot exist without the other.

The essence of values, their criteria, their evaluation and the human understanding of their psychical act are examined by Axiology which is a branch of Philosophy.

Axiology is an Hellenic compound word from ‘áxios’, of like value, worthy, and ‘lógos’, account, ratio, reason, theory, speech. It had its rise in Pláton’s (Plato’s) theory of Forms or Ideas (Idea of the Good); was developed in Aristotélis’ (Aristotle’s) ‘Órganon’ , ‘Ethics’, ‘Poetics’, and ‘Metaphysics’ (Book Lamda). Stoics and Epicureans investigated the ‘supreme excellence’, while Christian Philosophy (St. Thomas Aquinas) built on Aristotélis’ identification of highest value with final cause in God as ‘a living being, eternal, most good.’

The problems of Axiology fall into four main groups:

- A The nature of value experience. Is valuation fulfilment of desire (voluntarism: Spinoza), pleasure (hedonism: Epícuro, Bentham), interest, preference (Martineau) and other.
- B The types of value. Most axiologists distinguish between intrinsic values and instrumental values. Commonly recognized as intrinsic values are the (morally) good, the true, the beautiful, and the holy. Some instrumental values are neutral or even non-valuable intrinsically. There is disagreement about whether the holy (religious value) is a unique type, or an attitude toward other values. (Kant), or a combination of the two.
- C The criterion of value. The standard for testing is influenced by both psychological and logical theory. Hedonists find the standard in the quantity of pleasure derived by the

individual (Aristippos) or society (Bentham). Some idealists recognize an objective system of rational forms or ideals as criterion (Pláton). Despite differences, there is much in common in the results of the application of these criteria.

D The metaphysical status of value. What is the relation of value to the facts investigated by natural science?

And now, we have reached the last part of the problem which is the formulation of the hierarchy of values. Philosopher Scheler proposes a valuation on the basis of the following criteria:

A value is considered much higher when:

- A Has longer duration.
- B Is less subject to division.
- C Is less founded by other values.
- D The contentment we feel when we live it is deeper.

As for the first, we note that the lowest values are the elusive, the short-lived, while the most high are the eternal.

As far as the criteria of division, we can give an example. The material goods are distributed to as many as those who can enjoy them. On the contrary the spiritual goods, which unite people, can be enjoyed by all as they are not decreased, not apportioned out.

As for the third criterion, the value which supports is higher than the one which is supported.

As for the last one, it is obvious. Higher value is the one which gives deeper satisfaction, greater inner contentment.

With the above criteria Scheler proposes the following evaluation and hierarchy:

- 1 Religious. (sacred - non sacred)
- 2 Spiritual. (justice- injustice)
- 3 Vital. (noble- perversity)
- 4 Sensual. (pleasant- unpleasant)

Of course, there are many other evaluations proposed by various axiologists. But how about Values and Free Masonry?

In Free Masonry's Craft, Royal Arch, and all the Appendant Orders the Rituals, Degrees and Lectures include a superabundance of Values. It is known that each value depicted implicates the strive of its members to attain a higher moral standard.

Worshipful Master, Brethren all:

Following I give a number of values which we come across as Masons, and I would suggest that each of us evaluate them in accordance with his personal knowledge and beliefs:

VALUES

Freedom	Truth	Justice	Benevolence
Love	Purity	Integrity	Solidarity
Mutual help	Altruism	Protection	Patriotism
Dignity	Honour	Progress	Discipline
Bravery	Manhood	Sincerity	Tolerance
Piety	Morality	Compassion	Humanism
Unselfishness	Generosity	Subordination	Credibility
Friendship	Studiosness	Obedience	Dedication
Knowledge	Ethics	Charity	Heroism
Ideal	Wisdom	Morality	Ideology
Kindness	Mercy	Uprightness	Virtue
Faith-loyalty	Self-esteem	Consistency	