
Ethics of the Middle Ages

Aigul Adibayeva

KIMEP

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Christian ethics

- Birth of Christianity - I century A.D.
 - Jesus Christ
 - written in the works of St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, etc.
 - “among other religions only Christianity state perfectness of God together with human beings”
 - Blessing – the main moral principle of Christian morality
 - Christianity:
 - *Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodoxy*
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Medieval period

- Theo centrism
 - Creationism
 - Instead of dialectics – dualism;
 - God – infinite, independent and eternal
 - How can we know the truth? Belief and religion
 - Struggle of good and evil
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Medieval period

- Absolute person is God
 - Anthropomorphism
 - A future life;
 - Present life is transitional
 - Christians belong to the future life;
 - Body and pleasures are he chains for soul
 - Not apathy, grief, pessimism – but peace
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Medieval period

- Divine sadness: death for pleasures and hope for Heavens;
 - Sufferings;
 - * “poverty of souls”
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Christian ethics:

- Makes emphasis on:
 - Moral problems and human values
 - Accuse lies, theft, infidelity and other human sins.
 - Praying to God and following the words of God

 - *“Pursuit of God is at the same time pursuit of yourself, your humanity.”*
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Saint Augustine: 354 – 430 A. C.



Saint Augustine

- **Born in North Africa 354 A.C.**
 - **Converted: he became a Christian when he was 33**
 - **He was a bishop**
 - **Major writings: “The Confessions” and “The City of God”**
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Moral experience of the Middle Age

- The major question of ethics:
 - The question of criteria for Good and Evil, about appearance of difference and valuation of these terms
 - St. Augustine:
 - Treaty: “City of God”
 - Soul and Body
 - soul controls body
 - Human being has to follow God’s word
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Saint Augustine

A new authority: Revelation

The relationship between faith and reason

From “Credo quia absurdum” - I believe because it is absurd (human logic cannot understand the Divine reason)

To “Credo ut intelligam” I believe because I want to understand

Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)



Moral experience of the Middle Age

- Thomas Aquinas:
 - “the highest human blessing that can ever exist is union with God.”
 - Human virtues are separated on the following categories:
 - Spiritual
 - Moral
 - Theological
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Moral experience of the Middle Age

- Meister Eckhart:
 - Famous German theologian
 - Main idea:
 - Human being must give up himself for the love to God
 - Suffering
 - Two types of poverty:
 - Outside
 - Inside
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