

Behavioural Rules of Officials According to Yeznik Koghbatsi



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The behaviour formation of officials has obtained immediate legal and moral significance in the current reality of Armenia. Numerous rules, called to provide the natural process of joint human life, have been piled up in world culture. Those are, undoubtedly, beneficial rules, however, they are efficient, when implemented, taking into consideration the peculiarities of national culture. Thus, without denying other nations' theoretical heritage, rich and desired experience we should first of all lean on our own spiritual cultural traits.

Let's first of all clarify, that the essence of managerial behaviour is the way authority is exercised. It does not matter whether the official is a civil worker, a state worker, president of a republic, a minister, a company manager, a school principal or head of a family, his social role does not change its quality. How is authority exercised? (According to an established concept by means of the possibility of realizing one's will through imposing it on others' behaviour). How does an official arrange his relationship with those subordinate to him? Which personal qualities are especially important? Which guiding principals should be helpful for him to realize his main functions effectively, etc.? We suppose that the frame of similar questions forms the essence of officials' behaviour.

Hence the theoretical heritage of the famous Armenian philosopher, Yeznik Koghbatsi (380-450) is of exceptional value. A small, if more exact, almost no paraphrased part of it is his judgments about officials, the role of leaders, behaviour and conclusions about interrelationship of his followers with subordinates. Koghbatsi's complete work about behavioural judgments, "Exhortation of Inspiration and Usefulness", even though is incomparably small than his main work, "Yeghts Aghandots" however, is no less remarkable and valuable in terms of either its content or composition.

In fact, "Exhortation" is the pioneer of aphorism style in Armenian reality, a style which a few people, in world literature, have succeeded in mastering. Briefly, Koghbatsi's ideas about human god-pleasing life, moral duty, behaviour in society, leader's bearing and relationship with others, are written in brief impressive fable style. Let's not forget the fact, that this famous Armenian writer had also a big governmental experience as Bishop of Bagrevand. These, we repeat, are highly actual both for finding out the Armenian administrative source of mind and estimating the scholars of the past in this sense, and for enriching the modern governmental theory, for planning and

governing our social and personal life, particularly for the effective development of the Armenian official's behaviour.

The demands of an official's behaviour, according to Koghbatsi's philosophical understanding is the concept of human will-freedom protection. That concept is thoroughly stimulated in "Eghts Aghandots". Koghbatsi was persuasively arguing his position with those religious supporters who stood up for the directions of human natural predetermination that evil acts willingly, not by nature. "Thou, who do evil, do it willingly not unwillingly" (Koghbatsi, 1994:50). This is a 'free-willingness' or 'self-willingness' concept, a conscious selection of possibilities in predetermining man's behaviour.

Otherwise, he explains, public order regulations disappear, nobody can be punished or commended as one's good or bad behaviour is not conditioned by his will. In that situation the Legislator should not define laws, and the administrator should not punish the guilty ones "neither should the legislator define laws, not the administrator punish the guilty" (Ibid.:48). Only the possibility of personal option makes it possible for both the regulations of public life and those gifted with power such as kings, authorities, leaders, officials of different ranks, as well as the fair assessment of its success or failure.

Thus, in general, people's deeds and especially the starting point of officials' behavioural assessment is Koghbatsi's directions that one has double rights either to obey or disobey the dictation of the situation.

A number of Koghbatsi's exhortations are directed toward the formation of the leader's desirable traits and qualities, if not perfect than at least worthy. Among these are, of course, exhortations, pieces of advice, behavioural norms of general nature which are usually beneficial in any public natural existence and activity as of those who have particularly powerful sources of influence, official decision makers referring to as man's joint activity regulators. For example, on the whole, modesty, is a desirable trait, however, it is taken for granted that in official's behaviour it obtains no less significance than his professional knowledge. The following are main demands of an official's behaviour according to Koghbatsi.

Equilibrium

Any person can easily remember the leader's quick and unjust decision which is recorded both in governmental theory and in real life. One of the reasons of making quick decision is the leader's emotional state. Sometimes it is simply necessary to cancel, to put off solving this or that problem, especially those concerning personal matters, of discussing them later calmly and quietly to come to a final decision.

This is one of the meanings of Koghbatsi's pieces of advice. If you are tired or unhealthy do not put power into use (as you can make an unforgettable mistake) "If you are ill or overwhelmed, do not employ power" (Koghbatsi, 1994:254).

On the contrary it's desirable to stay calm, have balanced relationship with people, not to upset anyone and not to be offended by anyone. "Do not be crestfallen from anyone" (Ibid.:248).

Meanwhile, equilibrium should be both in man's inner and outer world. According

to Koghbatsi, the one whose soul is clean looks calm and happy. “The one is good who looks happy” (Ibid.:254).

Benevolence

An official is not a benefactor. A leader while fulfilling a subordinate’s this or that request often expects a sign of gratitude. And as it is known sycophants are always near officials, they praise even unrealized deeds, unrealized benevolence.

Thus, Koghbatsi calls for those who expect for real or unreal gratitude, if we support those in need, we must be grateful to God as helping them we, ourselves, gain, “If thou help those in need, thou content God, as thou art won more than thought” (Ibid.:250).

The Responsibility of an Official

In public life everyone has his own social roles, which characterize the very person’s rights, and circle of responsibility. Regarding man’s natural cohabitation in society, first of all the role of those at power is important.

It is apparent from the statement why Yeznik Koghbatsi finds resemblance between an official and a mighty column. The whole weight is on the base and when collapsing the whole building goes down with it. “Thou who are a column, and base of a whole, when collapsing, thou collapse the whole” (Ibid.:258).

This type of perception is not an overestimation of an official’s role, at all. The history of Armenia has completely given a base for such kind of conclusion and once again history is the evidence of how Armenians, under the leadership of a clever, talented and prudent official, have experienced spiritual and economical upraise. Unfortunately, there is an evidence of the opposite as well, when an imbecile, illiterate official, under circumstances, taking control of public life has damaged and turned back the natural order of things.

Indeed, among valiant people in history of Armenia there have also been recorded mediocre, malicious, greedy traitor kings, officials, ministers, big or small, leaders of different ranks who have disordered public life, as well as set an example of evil, promoting its victory. That kind of a leader is illiterate both in his soul and mind, unable to distinguish people, to differentiate the valuable from the invaluable, that is why he does not heal but wound, shows hatred instead of love, instead of hatred shows love, destroys people in harmony, turns the honored into the dishonored: this reality Koghbatsi formulated as theoretical preposition.

The Personal Example of an Official

Public mischief lies not only in the leader, be it head of a family or a state. A greater mischief is the imitation of his behaviour by other members of the society. A king or a father can even say true things, preach, exhort, point out apparent inspiring objectives, however in reality they do not only do others good, but harm them again. The reason for this is that the leader’s own example convinces the surrounding people more than his sermons or demands.

To put it in other words, this means not the leader's bad qualities, but his etiquette, mode of action, way of living, are the biggest mischief, a threat for human's natural symbiosis. Koghbatsi records and formulates that regularity (which many foreign philosophers touched upon centuries later). "Such leadership is a wounded and unmendable mischief; an example is official's imitation rather than reality" (Ibid.:258). And the opposite, honest, intelligent, virtuous, holy leader is a real divine fire, spreads nobleness around himself, burns and destroys any kind of corruption, concords his followers.

The Distinction Between Ruling and Governing

First of all a decent official does not rule over his people but governs them, he himself serves them, serves his subordinates loyally, "Doth who serves faithfully is a true king" (Ibid.:258).

"Loyal to serve as a king", is a Yeznikian solution which further stopped many philosophers, sociologists, moralists, politicians' ideas about this problem. Power is not a mere right of ruling, not only voluntary behaviour, but also obligation of governing.

Of course, it is possible to rule without governing: this is artificial power, as it is in the case of the English Queen. However, this belongs to the shelf of exceptions, if the subjects of the English Queen have got used to this and it completely corresponds to the constitutional monarchy, then the regular phenomenon is expectation of the official's certain governing.

Legal is the power which is accepted by rulers and which they are ready to submit voluntarily. Useful is that legal ruling to which rulers go for voluntarily, as they see in that ruling also their gains and realizations of their demands and in a ruler - their faithful servant.

Power as a Governing Skill

The ability of ruling must be efficiently displayed; a ruler must prove with facts that he is able to govern, that is to say, direct the public under his ruling towards reaching general purposes.

Governing is actual display of power. In personal terms it is not mere knowledge or abstract assumption, but above all practical skill. If anyone, writes Koghbatsi, has a talent, let's say, is a skilful doctor or carpenter, however, does not display it efficiently and practically, his skill is useless, neither he gains from it, nor others do, "if you do not show skill, then that skill is useless, thus neither you gain, nor do others" (Koghbatsi, 1994:193).

Expectations of Officials

Power is a heavy burden to bear. Authority assumes also dissatisfaction of power from subordinates, that is, those being ruled. What is more preferable to love or to fear the officials?

Many thinkers have touched upon this problem in further centuries after Koghbatsi, particularly Niccolò Machiavelli. In terms of taking into consideration personal

comprehension of certain means of power interaction namely this query is indeed very eloquent, that is what is more efficient as governing lever to fear the leader or willingly to obey this kind of alternative (if their compatibility is not possible). Machiavelli resolves it for fear. He, as an example, refers to the famous Carthaginian general Hannibal and explains that the latter would not celebrate great victories possessing a number of characteristic merits, if it were not for the latter's "inhuman strictness" which made his huge armies, consisting of various tribes, unite and obey him without protest. According to Machiavelli, fear (if possible without provoking hatred) is a more powerful method of ruling and governing than love.

Koghbatsi's solution is as follows, if an official is loved, he should be satisfied, but if he is not loved, he should not complain, and should not treat others the same way, just the contrary, he should show patience and self-control. "If thou art given love thou should thank God for it, and if thou art not given love, grumble not, and mutter not here and there, but show patience and silence" (Koghbatsi, 1994:255). This, we think, not only derives from Koghbatsi's general Christian ideology, but shows his perception of how to use power.

Indeed, when people are satisfied and love you as a leader, then you should thank God for being able to win the love of people. If people do not love you, then you should not be dissatisfied with them, you should not hurry to respond the same way. The latter is not beneficent for governing at all, but later on patient expectation makes it possible to win the love of subordinates.

An Official as a Just Leader

An official-leader's position is to supervise the work of his subordinates (and he, in his turn, is subordinate to those higher than him by rank). Thus, remarks, persuasions, observations, and all other methods of influencing workers (commending and reproaching) should have an objective to provide the efficient activity of the company (society). That is, the official with his role of a ruler in society, apart from other activities and perhaps prior to other actions, should be a just judge. This means that the leader as the one using and implementing power should be able to commend those worthy and reproach, scold those guilty. False charity in that judicial-governing function is as harmful as unjust strictness.

Hence Koghbatsi's advice-demand is undeniable: the leader should reproach the guilty properly. "If thou cannot upbraid those worthy, do not be a king" (Ibid.:261).

The Basis of Remarks

The reasons of making remarks can be regarded differently. There are remarks which are favorable versus those strictly harmful and first of all harmful not because they refer to a person's deeds, because they touch upon his dignity, offend, humiliate him.

This double choice to reproach or not to reproach is solved according to the guilt range of the subordinate, but may be his guilt is unintentional and the mistake is not the result of intent or negligence. Koghbatsi warns very picturesquely. "Do not be angry at

the guiltiness of a pupil, thou art not willingly ill" (Ibid.:249).

The Reasons and Nature of Punishment

There is a deeper query. The problem of determining personal responsibility is an integral part of the possibility of its presence or absence in one's choice. Did a person have the ability of choosing in that particular situation? Knowing the answer to this would give us a base and right to await and demand responsibility from him.

To say in other words, did one do this or that deed, for what we wish to blame him, willingly? Koghbatsi's opinion has a distinct and undeniable definition. If a person has not willingly done that, what he has done, he should not be punished for it. "Whoever without his will has done a deed, thus should punished be not" (Koghbatsi, 1994:43).

Another exhortation refers to this, to reproach the guilty one apart. "Worshipping is blaming apart" (Koghbatsi, 1994:249). This is fully consonant with modern theorists's pieces of advice and wholly justifies governmental experience.

The Implementation of Commendation Power

The remark of an official is important and an appropriate remark, a reproach and punishment are the powerful levers of governing. The problem is not to abuse them, which not only means to use them appropriately, but not to ignore levers of the opposite nature, means of praising. According to Koghbatsi, mild treatment, praising can be more influential in the sense of the behaviour of the opposite, especially in such circumstances when straightforward, frontal remarks, strict reproaching cannot be implemented.

Especially persuading is the author's following example (which in modern language refers to the implementation of the opposite power by subordinates toward the leader). We can not openly remark a strict official, but praising him as kind and beneficial, we can influence his behaviour more efficiently, turn him into such a leader who will bend and do just. "It is possible to soften the strictness of an official by the subordinates through their soft treatment" (Koghbatsi, 1994:51).

The Moral Reasoning of Exhortations

We like to exhort each other: child-parent, leader-subordinate, senior-junior, professional –beginner relationship exhortation is a natural and useful phenomenon. However, is the desire of exhorting always kind and pure? Does the one exhorting always think about the welfare of the one receiving it, or does he give satiation to his secret motives? Without reverse, Koghbatsi touches the weakest points in many people, that is, do you exhort (as a leader, senior, etc.) or with the pretence of exhorting use your inner bile, poison the one whom you are exhorting? "Be not poisonous with the pretence of exhorting" (Koghbatsi, 1994:248).

This and other exhortations, of course, are definitely directed toward us all and not only to different rank leader-officials. Nevertheless, an ordinary citizen, for example, does not have the possibility (thus is devoid of temptation) to pour poison of exhortation onto his subordinates: followers, party-members, relatives. So, if the wisdom of elderly people is desirable for all of us, for today's officials of Armenia it is obligatory by

command. It leaves for them not to turn their backs on it, because really “exhortation is as useful as wisdom, but if it is done in proper circumstances” (Ibid.:260).

There have been officials in Armenian history who have embodied this behaviour, it is thanks to them that Armenia as a Republic has bloomed and gained strength. If we want to have such leaders today and tomorrow, then we should first of all investigate our own past, listen to the pieces of advice from our ancestors and not only cram and imitate foreign “leadership”, and others’ mode of living. We should initially have our own experience, but at the same time not reject foreigners’ rich and instructive, experience. Then we will value them properly.

References:

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Իշխանավորի վարքականոնը ըստ Եզնիկ Կողբացու

Հայ մեծ փիլիսոփա Եզնիկ Կողբացու (380-450) վարքաբանական դատողությունները կգարդարեն «կառավարչական աֆորիստիկայի» ամեն մի ժողովածու: Ձևակերպված են ինչպես բոլորին, այնպես էլ իշխանական լծակներ ունեցողին վերաբերող խորհուրդներ, պատվիրաններ, վարվելակերպի նորմեր: Կողբացու վարքականոնը ամփոփենք հետևյալ դրույթներով:

- Իշխանությունը ոչ թե լոկ իշխելու կամք է, այլև կառավարելու պարտականություն:
- Շիտակ իշխանավորը ոչ միայն կամքն է պարտադրում ենթականերին, այլև «թագավորում է հավատարիմ ծառայի պես»՝ հոգում նրանց մասին:
- Իշխել՝ նշանակում է դրսևորել կառավարելու հմտություն, այն է՝ ենթականերին ուղղորդել դեպի ընդհանուր նպատակների կատարում:
- Եթե իշխանավորին սիրում են, ապա պիտի գոհ լինի, բայց եթե ոչ, ապա նա պետք է համբերություն և տոկունություն դրսևորի:
- Իշխանավորը պետք է խուսափի կեղծ բարեհոգությունից, կարողանա պատժել մեղավորին:
- Դիտողությունը կամ հանդիմանանքը պիտի հիմնավորված լինեն. եթե ենթական իր կամքով չի մեղանչել, պետք է համոզուրժող լինել:
- Հարկավոր է ենթակային հանդիմանել առանձին, մեկուսի:
- Այլոց խրատելիս իշխանավորը պետք է ոչ թե դիրքը օգտագործի, «թունաթափ լինի խրատելու պատրվակով», այլ բարոյական հիմք ունենա խրատելու:

- Կառավարման ամենագործող լծակը իշխանավորի դրական օրինակն է, իսկ ամենամեծ վնասը հասցնում է նրա հոռի վարքագիծը:
- Ամեն ոք, լինի իշխանավոր թե ենթակա, պիտի պատրաստ լինի օգտակար խորհուրդ լսելու: