

VALUES AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

Good morning, colleagues! Aleksander Sergeyevich, you have indicated not only the place, from which the speaker should report, but also the theme to be needed to talk about. Our theme is designated as “Values as a Philosophical Problem”. You have already given some idea of this theme. Why not consider it philosophical?! This is one of the versions of the philosophical understanding of values. You have proposed, I would say, even a new interpretation of the word “values”, semantically correlating it with “centre”: values are the centre.

You also linked values to the ability to make choices in life. I agree with both. This is the centre, the main vector of our activity, and as a concept it is directly related to our ability to make choices. I would only add that this is not the choice itself, but the basis, relying on which we make the choice. This is not a direct choice between various tasks, paths, opportunities, but that starting point, a kind of absolute, if you will, beginning, pushing off from which we make the choice.

When I was preparing for today’s conversation and wondering what values are, Lermontov’s lines involuntarily occurred to me, “There are speeches with their meaning to be dark or almost negligible, but one cannot but listen to them without excitement”. Speeches about values are just like that. They are incomprehensible, mysterious and simultaneously passionate, causing excitement.

I

I suggest starting our conversation with the definition of values, which is given in the New Philosophical Encyclopedia and, in a certain sense, captures the mysterious appeal of the subject itself. I quote (with a slight abbreviation): “Value is one of the basic conceptual universals in philosophy, meaning in its most general form the non-verbalized, “atomic” components of the deepest layer of the entire intentional personality structure personality <...>, which constitute its inner world as

a “uniquely subjective being”. The historical and logical contamination of the philosophical concept of value and the main category of political economy – “value” (cf. Russ.: “tsena”), on the one hand, and its proximity to other concepts marking the individual’s intentionality – primarily “benefit” and “purpose”, on the other hand, makes it difficult to “detach” the concept of value in its historical development”¹.

This definition contains, one might say, compressed features that the public consciousness links to the concept “value”. We learn very important things from it. First of all, values exist in the plural, they are “atomic”, it is not a ray piercing the darkness, but a firework illuminating the sky.

Then we learn that this is a voice from the irrational, dark depths of the human soul. This is exactly what is meant when it is about intentional personality structures. They express the personality aspiration, and not just an aspiration, but the basic one (and in this sense, a really central, deep one) that expresses its unique subjective being. In values and through values, subjects express and assert themselves, reveal themselves to be who they really are or at least want to be.

And most importantly, we learn that the voice is waiting for its appropriate and rational formalization. He seeks for a conscious (primarily verbal) personification. As it is clear from the definition, values tend to be concepts of two kinds:

- a) they are apt to combine and mix with the economic concepts “value” and “price”, and
- b) they are close to the moral concepts “purpose” and “benefit”, which designate an individual’s intentions, his/her intentionality.

Let’s try to look at the “underground kingdom” of values and answer the question of what it is, starting from its rational “blowouts” in the field of economy and morality.

Indeed, the Russian etymology of the word “value” (Russ.: “tsennost’”) comes back to the word “price” (Russ.: “tsena”) and its derivatives: valuable (Russ.: “tsennyi”), to value (Russ.: “tsenit”). In V. Dal’s dictionary, “price” refers to

¹ Shokhin V. K. Value // New Philosophical Encyclopedia: in 4 volumes. Moscow: Mysl, 2010. Vol. IV. Pp. 320–321. (In Russ.)

“value”, “valuation”, which are relevant when selling and buying. It is defined as what a product is valued at when sold and bought. Numerous examples of the usage of this word associate it with the process of choosing, weighing, and preferring what is valued more. The purchase choice itself is denoted by the word “valuing” (Russ.: “tsenen’e”). In one case, the word “value” (Russ.: “tsennost’”) is allegedly formed at random, “Because of the value (Russ.: “tsennosti”) of books, I cannot stock up on them”, which means “too high a price”. Attention is drawn to the fact that in a number of examples of the word usage, there is a view of price seemingly trying to break out of its understanding as a factor inherent in the purchase and the sale, as if to throw off its squeezing mercantile shell, “I don’t want to buy fame with the price of my health” (Russ.: “Tsenoyu zdorovjya ne zhelayu kupit’ sebe slavy”), “need knows no price” (Russ.: “nuzhda tseny ne znaet”), “this person is not appreciated here” (Russ.: “etomu cheloveku zdes’ tseny ne znayut”), “to appreciate (Russ.: “tsenit’”) ... whom, to determine the dignity, disposition, merits of a person or his/her acts”².

In short, when interacting with the concept “price” (Russ.: “tsena”), the language itself designates such moves that lead beyond the shell of economic constraints. It is worth noting that the word “value” in other European languages – German, English, French – is the same word, which denotes the economic category “value”. For example, Marx’s Law of Value, if we were translating literally from the original German, would be the law of valuation in the Russian translation (by the way, some authors do this, creating confusion in the content)³. In the Russian language, these two concepts and words are happily separated, and thus the term “value” (Russ.: “tsennost’”) has been protected from confusion with the economic, consumer dimension, and rigid isolation within the field of economy, within consumerism. This internal confrontation between the concept “value” and its etymological base (“price”) is evidenced by their habitual correlation in our humanitarian lexicon. They are usually paired in the form of opposition: not “price and value”, but “price or value”.

² *Dal V. I. Tsena* // *Dal V. I. Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language: in 4 volumes.* Moscow: GIINS, 1955. Vol. 4. P. 578. (In Russ.)

³ *Vasina L. L. Returning to the Published: Once Again About the Terms “value” and “cost”.* (In Russ.) URL: <https://marksizm.ucoz.ru/publ/56-1-0-747>.

As an illustration – not even an illustration, but a proof, – I could refer to one indicative example. Some time ago, an attempt was made to force us to the public discussion on this issue: was the defense of Leningrad worth the sacrifices to be made for its sake? And I must say that it was rejected immediately and very amicably, both at the official level and at the grassroots one, as blasphemous, impossible and false. I think that this historical lesson (both the tragic feat of defense itself and the sanctity of its memory) is exceptional for understanding what value is.

Of course, the economic price, the value of benefits, and the natural desire for benefits are important aspects of human existence and its attitude to the world, no one denies this, and it is even impossible to deny. But this does not reveal to us the essence of the concept “value” itself and its real meaning in human life. And if it has to do with price, and we want to approach the concept “value” through our usual comparison with the concept “price”, then we can say: value is something that has no price (it is beyond its limits, something that is above the price).

Let this be our first answer to the question of what values are. You may immediately ask, but what about the fact that there are many of them, and if there are many, then their correlation, comparison, and choice are inevitable. In the context of this reasoning, one can answer: after all, there are many things to have no price, as well. Nevertheless, this is a rightful question, and let’s keep it in mind for further discussion, but for now we agree that the world of values is another world, another space, in which there is no comparison, weighing and valuation. Who is greater – Pushkin or Lermontov? Who do you love more – Dad or Mom? Which is more precious – life or honor? All values are equal to themselves. Let’s fix this idea for now, having designated its content as a space of objects that have no price, exceed any price.

In this regard, I would like to refer to the article that has been lost in one of numerous collections of abstracts, and I do this as a greeting to my colleagues present in the hall today, teachers of philosophy and cultural studies, as a sign of respect for their great, often overlooked work. This is a short article by Professor V. A. Lukov “The Concept “Value” in Terms of Etymology”. Here is the conclusion he comes to: “Nevertheless, we can identify a common meaning that connects the original

understanding of value in Russian culture, dating back many centuries, and all its scientific interpretations to have appeared in recent decades: value is everything that is more expensive than money. If it is a thing, then it's not a pity to give the money requested for it. If these are people (parents, relatives, friends, loved ones, heroes, idols, etc.) or concepts (Homeland, freedom, friendship, love, youth, health, art, science, etc.), they should also be attributed to values in case of their being comprehended as priceless, that is, more important than any money. At last, if money itself is perceived as value, it also becomes priceless and loses its quantitative component"⁴.

And what is above the price, beyond these limits? What is priceless, invaluable? This is the space of morality, the space of goals and benefits. And in this case we get to another area, which the very term "value" leads us again to. Being related to goals is another aspect of the etymology of the word "value", although not as obvious as the previous one. After all, a goal (Russ.: "tsel") is not only a target, it is also a whole (Russ.: "tseloe"), "Goal: the original meaning of the word is "target, mark", but already at the beginning of the 18th century, and the abstract, figurative meaning appear: the object of aspirations, what people strive for"⁵. Thus, we get into the field of targeted – conscious – human activity.

A person is a living, intelligent being. And human activity is conscious activity. A person stands out from Nature because, in order to do something, to exist, to be, just to live, (s)he must trigger the mechanism of conscious act. (S)he must first set a goal for himself/herself, which (s)he will strive for, and which will guide all his/her subsequent acts, leading to this goal. Without this, a person simply cannot exist as a living being.

The goal is always the good. It is the good because the person chooses it (the goal) and sets himself/herself as the best, optimal for himself/herself in the relevant field and situation of activity. If other, unintelligent living have instinctive

⁴ Lukov M. V. The Concept "Value" in Terms of Etymology. URL: <https://textarchive.ru/c-1846811-p6.html>.

⁵ Vinogradov V. V. Goal // Vinogradov V. V. The history of words. Moscow, 1999. P. 1044.

mechanisms that support their existence, then a person realizes his existence through the mechanism of expedient activity.

That's why the most general moral framework of human activity is designated as the choice between good and evil, because this activity itself, in its purposefulness, is always recognized by the actor as the good. A person never chooses evil. (S)he cannot do that, as they say, by default. The mechanism of expedient human activity is directly opposite to the natural mechanism of causality. In Nature, everything is connected and arranged in such a way that some objects and states generate other objects and states, the former are the causes of the latter and precede them, the latter are their consequences, and follow them. This causal nexus is objective.

In case of humans, the reverse mechanism works. Indeed, the goal that we set and which determines our subsequent actions is what we strive for, this is the result that we want to get. Here, if we think in the logic of causality, the effect precedes the cause and generates it. The mechanism of expedient activity is directly opposite to the natural mechanism of causal nexus.

But how is this possible? It's like a person walking upside down. This is possible because and to the extent that a person selects and creates the means that are appropriate to the goal and can lead to it. The means bind us to the earth, to facts, to real possibilities. The goal of an activity is its final destination, the means are the way to achieve it. The goal is ideal, the means are real. The goal is in the future, the means are in the present, they are available or you know how to create them.

The goal exists only in conjunction with the means. Herewith, surely, it can never completely coincide with the means, fit into them. If this were not the case, then there would be no point in the very mechanism of expedient activity. After all, the point of this mechanism is precisely breaking into a new reality, into the future, creating something different, more perfect than what nature has created, breaking through to a different point than the one you are in.

The key issue here is one about the unity of a goal and its means. The goal gets effective and becomes the beginning of a successful activity, combined with the means, through the means it becomes a reality. Thus, the fate of the goal as a goal is

in the hands of the means. In the dialectic of goals and means, Hegel considered the means to be the decisive link, and his aphorism “the plow is more respectable than the pleasures that are achieved with its help” is well known. In this case, the idealist Hegel reasoned quite materialistically: people’s goals turn out to be feasible insofar as they arise when conditions (means) for their fulfillment exist or can be created.

With this understanding, however, the very idea of goal-setting, its supernatural specificity, is lost. And in our goal-setting, we are like a magician pulling out a rabbit from his bosom, which he has hidden there in advance. If we have a different mechanism here, namely a supernatural one, and goals never coincide with means, then the key question may be as follows: how can goals generate means, while remaining goals, and not fantasies and dreams? How can we, through the mechanism of goal-setting (expedient activity), get something out of ourselves and the world, which is not there?

This is possible in two cases. If only a person’s practical possibilities were as limitless as his/her ability to formulate these goals is limitless. That is, if a person himself/herself were an omnipotent being and could re-create Nature itself with the same freedom, with which he can transform his/her desires into goals. If, for example, man were as omnipotent as, for example, God – a concept that a person just invented for such a being. And the second possibility would be only if we had goals that contain their own means, that is, they are sufficient in themselves and they do not need any other means, except the goodwill of the one who sets these goals. And here we get into the field of morality, and moral goals.

Aristotle, who for the first time distinguished practical philosophy along with and in contrast to the knowledge of nature, gave it the name “ethics” and proposed its first (which remains the most complete to this day) classification, placed it in the space of expedient human activity.

He stated that human goals are the essence of the good. They are a synthesis of feelings (desires) and reason – those feelings that seek a conscious way out, and the instructions of reason to follow them, just as an obedient son follows the advice of his father, the mind that is reasonable and has knowledge of what is related to actions,

with the right choice, and is similar to the mind of the father, who would never wish harm to his son. “The destiny [of a person] is fulfilled through prudence and moral virtue; after all, virtue makes the goal rightful, and prudence [makes proper] the means to achieve it”⁶.

The world of human acts, since they are conscious voluntary acts, exists in the form of expedient actions. As diverse the world of human needs is, so is the world of human goals. The interconnectedness of the world of needs is ensured by the unity of the world of goals, which are interconnected in such a way, that what is a goal in one respect turns out to be a means in relation to another, more important goal.

Aristotle gives the following example: a man has set the goal of mastering the art of controlling horses, for which he has learned the means to make bridles; this goal, in turn, becomes a means to another goal – to successfully wage war; and the goal, for which the war is being waged, is victory...

The question arises: where in this chain of internally connected transitions from goals to means, in this complex web that envelops the individual, is a certain final point, which would be the last, ultimate goal? The need for such a final point is indisputable, because without it, the very mechanism of human goal-setting cannot be launched. Just as the logic of the law of causality inevitably, when thought through sequentially, rests on the question of the first cause, the logic of expediency leads to the question of the last goal in the same way.

And since every goal is the good, the last goal is the supreme good. This is a goal that can no longer become a means. This is the good, above and better than which nothing can be, and in relation to which the question “what is this for?” becomes meaningless. Aristotle says that people consider happiness to be such a supreme good.

It is pointless and stupid to ask the question: why does a person want to be happy? Yes, it seems that not only in the time of Aristotle, but even today, no one poses such a question. Having formulated this very idea that there must necessarily

⁶Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics* // Aristotle. *Essays* : in 4 volumes. Moscow: Mysl, 1984. Vol. 4. P. 187.

be a final goal that can never be reduced to the level of a means, he asks the question: what about this final goal, which is present in all expedient human activity, because without this, it could not have taken place, as it indirectly takes part in all previous stages? Aristotle gives the following answer. The ultimate goal, which inspires all purposeful human activity, or, what is the same thing, the supreme good, is present in the form of moral virtues, about which everyone agrees that they represent something complete, and self-sufficient.

The four cardinal virtues of Antiquity sanctioned by philosophy have come down to us and retain their vitality: moderation, courage, justice, and wisdom. Aristotle gives his list of ten individual ethical virtues, adding to them the policy virtues of justice and friendship. In terms of our theme, the general identifying features of ethical virtues are more important:

- a) they manifest themselves in the form of specific individual acts, and
- b) they contain their value in themselves, which cannot be either recognized nor reduced to their previous motives or to subsequent consequences. Every ethical virtue is unique and valuable.

For example, Aristotle begins his list of individual virtues with courage, calling it the ability to fearlessly face a dignified death and everything that directly threatens death. Detecting the signs that make it possible to identify the virtue of courage, he emphasizes that it cannot be reduced to courage, which is also fearlessness, but is caused by certain external motives – thirst for revenge, arrogance, inexperience, desire for honors, etc. A courageous act is an act, which is an expression of moral fortitude, committed because being courageous is worthy and nice. Other ethical virtues are equally nice in their own way: moderation – in relation to bodily pleasures and, first of all, to those that are common to humans and other animals; generosity – moral perfection in acts related to money, etc.

The supreme good reveals itself, participates in all conscious human activity through the virtue of individual acts performed by each individual. Closedness of the supreme good, this final point, or, to use another metaphor, this core of the entire

system of expedient human activity, onto specific individual virtuous acts is extremely important for understanding the phenomenon of value.

To the extent that values show similarities with the world of goals and the good, we can liken them to the ultimate and final goal, beyond which there is nothing and cannot be anything, which is no longer a goal to be achieved, not a beginning that requires means for new actions, but their final outcome, making meaningless (unnecessary) all kinds of actions. And then we can say that values are the supreme goals of a person's activity, which, while remaining goals, are at the same time his/her shrines. And they discover themselves in virtuous acts that are valuable in themselves, shining their own light.

But are such virtuous acts possible? Indeed, the moral purity of an act does not exist without its sensual, subjectively limiting, and in this sense always mercantile content. The habit of not touching the sacred with hands appeared not by chance. Besides, the intrinsic value of moral acts presupposes that they are the same for all people, since a person is intelligent not just as a living being, but also as a social being.

Reason is not only the most important organizing element of a person's natural constitution, but also a means of ensuring his/her social existence. This means that social forms of humans' existence also become limitations of their moral acts, as well as their natural desires. In this case, an analogy with shrines is appropriate too: shrines for some people are common objects for others. The intrinsic value of moral acts defies rational generalization because of their uniqueness. This called into question the very idea of the supreme good as a practically working principle.

I. Kant proposed a way out of this difficulty within the framework of his Copernican revolution in philosophy. In contrast to the prevailing view that cognition is consistent with objects, he proposed a view that considers cognition as an a priori activity independent of experience. Human consciousness, of course, always begins with experience and is limited by it, but we gain general and objective knowledge due to a priori concepts of the reason. It is only through this combination of the

primordial categories of reason with direct experience that we know the world, separating truth from error.

But where does reason get its categories from and what does it represent in those pure unconditional origins when it shrines on itself? Climbing the ladder of theoretical reason in an effort to reveal the unity of a priori concepts, reason finds itself at a point where it transcends the realm of experience in general, including the possible one. It falls into the realm of such questions, from which, as Kant says, it cannot free itself, since they follow from its nature, and which it cannot answer, since they exceed its capabilities.

What kind of questions are these? These are the ultimate questions that plunge us into unresolvable contradictions, antinomies, and affirmative answers to which are as well-founded as negative ones (the world is finite – the world is infinite; there is freedom in the world – causality prevails in the world; there is a root cause – there is no root cause; everything consists of simple parts – there is nothing simple). I will not delve into their logical “wilds”, I will only say that Kant’s antinomies are related to questions that encode the live problems of the existence of God, the immortality of the soul and free will that arise in the consciousness of every human being. We cannot get to the very foundations of reason, the truth or falsity of antinomies.

Nevertheless, the rational human experience turns out to have the need for unconditional absolute truths. This is his/her need for finding something absolute. This is evidenced by the fact of morality. What theoretical reason could not reach is revealed as a fact of practical reason and is present in conscious human life as duty.

And Kant formulates the unconditional law of reason, which precedes and underlies all rational actions, and is the final starting point of the rational view of the world. This is his famous moral law, which has the form of a categorical imperative in the human mind. It prescribes a person to act according to such maxims (rules, motives) that might be the requirements of universal legislation, that is, which all people could follow. And in the case when they can do this, and combine one with the other, they act morally.

The categorical imperative acts as duty, as the formula of duty, the last foundation, from which an acting individual must start and adapt to, for the purpose of finding himself/herself in the space of conscious rational activity. The moral law is also the law of humanism, and one of its formulas prescribes always treating a person a goal, and never only as a means. Understood in this way, the moral law binds the acting individual into a whole with all other people, affirming his/her dignity.

Here the question arises: how does it show up in acts? After all, this is a moral law, not a call, not a promise, not a declaration, but a law, it must be included in the real process of human life, embodied in his actions. And it is included as a law, that is, absolutely. In general, morality is about a person's acts, not about intentions, promises, oaths, etc. Kant's categorical imperative is directly related to what and how a person does, with his/her individual actions. It is a condition that restricts a person's actions, designates that limit, a kind of red line that the person cannot (should not) cross without losing self-respect and his/her dignity.

If we look at real people and their acts, perhaps we won't find a single case where an act was committed for the sake of this law alone, for the sake of duty. People cannot be guided solely by moral motives. The world of human motives is very, I would even say, immensely rich and diverse, it is shaped by human nature, psychology, social environment, coincidences of biography, specificity of situations, etc.

And if it is about moral requirements, when appearing as unconditional and absolute ones, they obtain (can obtain) effectiveness only in the form of restrictive conditions, prohibitions. And the only thing that a person can certainly and assuredly do is to refuse any actions in case of their contradiction to the moral law. Thus, the categorical imperative of morality acts in human life as the ultimate absolute line, marking a person's reasonableness, dignity and humanity, as the criterion that allows making a choice between the Good and the Evil. It exists in the status of moral duty: this means that when applied to it, questions about why and where it comes from get pointless, it itself tells us where and how to go. What in Aristotle's ethics was called the ultimate, final goal, in Kant's ethics is called duty.

This is how we come to another feature of values: values exist as duty, they denote what an acting individual would have to be if this depended only on his/her good will.

After Kant, values become a special philosophical problem. It arises in relation to the need for finding a place for them within the framework of a holistic view of the world, and reconciling with the scientific approach to it. The problem is as follows: is there, along with the scientific view that considers the existing world objectively, as it is in itself, another – value-based – view showing what its significance is for a person and what it should be like if the person looks at it intelligently and is worthy of it?

Philosophy has a special section with its own subject field and methods, which studies values and is called axiology. If science deals with the objective world of facts and laws, then axiology deals with the spiritual human world of the good, goals, and ideals.

Here are some examples of this approach. V. Windelband defined philosophy as the doctrine of universally valid values; he was the first to start distincting between the methods of natural sciences and historical disciplines, believing that the latter deal not with laws, but with unique phenomena. G. Rickert continued this division of methods of cognition, calling the methods of natural sciences generalizing, and the historical method – individualizing; he believed that the philosophy of culture is the science of values.

And here is the opinion of N. O. Lossky, who wrote the book “Value and Being. God and the Kingdom of God as the Basis of Values” (1931), “Value is something all-pervading, determining the meaning of the whole world, and of every person, and of every event, and of every act. Every slightest change introduced into the world by any actor is value-based and is undertaken only because of some value points and for the sake of them. Everything that exists or can exist, and indeed belong in any way to the composition of the world, is such that it not only exists, but also contains justification or condemnation of its existence: everything can be said to be

good or bad, must or must not be, should or should not be, that it exists by right or against right (not in the legal sense of the word)”⁷.

II

After this general designation of values as a philosophical problem, I want to return to the specificity of discussing the problem of values, which has given it special relevance today, even made it a topical issue, as Aleksander Sergeyevich spoke about in his opening speech today. The problem of values is included in the current agenda of the ideological life of the Russian state and society by the Edict issued by the President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin on November 9, 2022, No. 809 “On Approval of the Foundations of the State Policy for Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Spiritual and Moral Values”.

I leave aside the legal aspect of this Edict, one of the statutory foundations of which is the updated Constitution. I would like to note that Taliya Yarullova Khabrieva, Academician, Honorary Doctor at our University, actively took part in preparing the Constitution, a document that is particularly important for the country, and her works are being thoroughly studied within these walls. Without pretending to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Edict in its political, pedagogical and other aspects, and without being able to carry out such an analysis, I would like, while remaining within the framework of the general philosophical approach, to consider the following issues:

- 1) Why traditional values?
- 2) What does it mean?
- 3) What is the moral status of the distinguished values?
- 4) How complete is their list and how strict is their order?

1. The first association related to the concept of tradition, traditionality, draws us back to the past. Traditional values are ones that have come to us from the past. We, who received this Edict as a document, do not know the specificity (the people

⁷ Lossky N. O. Value and Being. God and the Kingdom of God as the Basis of Values. Paris, 1931. P. 5.

and departments to prepare it; scientific reports, disputes, drafts, etc., preceding it), in which it was born.

But if we consider it in terms of general trends and features characterizing the modern development and historical situation of Russian society, this Edict objectively, in its real impact on public consciousness, is a reaction and a response to what can be called “looking ahead” and “excessive reliance on the future”.

We, as a country, people, society and state, have experienced two deep spiritual crises over the past 35–40 years, related to the collapse of our ideals and the disappointment in our future. First, the collapse of the communist ideal, which, instead of universal abundance and brotherhood of nations, turned into the disintegration of the great state. Secondly, the collapse of the liberal ideal, when instead of freedom and living comfort in the “blissful” spaces of the democratic West, we found ourselves on the verge of permissiveness and begging. These two successive and deeply traumatizing social downfalls became a warning not to break away from the earth, history, past, tradition, and our own shrines. In this sense, the Edict in question fits into the strategy of Russian realism. It is a warning against a new utopia.

It can also be considered a reaction to the new geopolitical map of the world. Today, this map is described by the transition from the unipolar westernized world to the multipolar one, from globalism in thinking to interconnection and dialogue between different cultures. And if this is the case, it means that culture and values, which are the core of culture, have their own unique appearance each time. Emphasizing the traditional nature of values is the recognition of their national and historical cultural specificity.

2. The concept of traditionality emphasizes the connection of values with the past. But is this equivalent to the call “Back to the past”? Does this mean that we should cherish the past itself because it is the past? Should we consider as our values everything to be thought as such in the past? As sometimes, exaggerating the concept of tradition, some people ask: should we return to “Domostroy”, patriarchal despotism? In the past, there were epochs of different value-based focuses: which of them should be attributed to binding traditions? If we have traditions and the past on

our agenda, then what about innovations and the future? These, although abstract, but naturally arising and quite legitimate questions within the framework of the discussion lead us to the problem of the historicity of human existence, the uniqueness of time as a fundamental measurement of human life.

Being and time are the most difficult problem of philosophy, its most difficult depth to reach. Time is connected with movement, expresses its direction and is revealed in a person through consciousness, which records (imprints) own being as it exists (as the present, “now”, according to Aristotle), and divides it into “before” and “after”, stretches it into a solid line resembling a flying arrow. Human life, as well as the realized by a person world as a whole, considered in terms of time, is divided into three parts: past – present – future (before – now – after; was – is – will be). The dividing line is the present (now, is): the past is everything that was before; the future is everything that will be after. The present is precisely the point of convergence of the past with the future, the transition of the past into the future, it does not divide time, but connects it, ensures continuity, roots a person in existence in such a way that time passes through him/her, and his/her very existence is the lasting one. This division of time into three parts is important not only for counting, and describing the way of existence in the time mode, but also for this way of existence itself.

Objective knowledge as scientific knowledge is knowing what is, that is, knowledge of the present. And the present in life is not a particle of time, but a moment separating the past from the future, as one popular song says. This moment itself is not a special, albeit neutral, buffer zone, it does not have its own objective sensory embodiment, being a way of connecting the past and the future, which are its real parts. It does not exist in itself as a measurable fact. For any time “after”, no matter how minimal it may be, is already the beginning of the future. And any time “before”, no matter how small it may be, already belongs to the past, and is its end.

The present becomes real and gains scientific validity only as a synthesis of the past with the future, as a combination of the former with the latter, and in this sense, a person’s past and future are parts of the present, the two ends of this flying arrow. It turns out (and for understanding traditionality as the subject of our interest, this is the

most important thing!) that the way a person integrates into the time scale differs from the way (s)he understands its parts: namely, a person remembers the past and can know it, but (s)he does not remember the future, has no experience of the future and is drawn to it by his/her desires and aspirations. That's why, unlike other living beings, whose mode of existence is basically instinctively fixed, the nature of human activity is freely programmable, expedient.

From the above, it follows: the concept of traditional values as values coming from the past, our history, and our ancestors' experience can be understood as the need for relying on the scientific approach to studying and understanding values, as the basis for developing a morally adequate human strategy for the future, a future that would be the continuation of our own, precisely our past, opportunities and ideals, based on our strengths and abilities, not on an American uncle or a heavenly miracle.

As Aleksander Aleksandrovich Zinoviev said, we do not need to seek our happiness in the West, not because it is bad, it may even be very good, but because this place has already been occupied. This is not the moving away from modernity, but, on the contrary, its sober, realistic reading. A person, whether they are individuals or collective entities, cannot escape from his/her past, carries it within himself/herself, (s)he, being alive, can only continue it, remaining faithful to it: respecting, elevating, improving, learning lessons, purifying, or, on the contrary, being unfaithful to it: betraying, breaking, distorting, destroying.

Alas, there is no other way for a person. (S)he can give up his/her past, but this refusal will also be a way (moreover, the worst and most disgusting one) of expressing his/her attitude towards it. I hurt my leg when I was a kid. The scar left on my body has always been with me ever since. My past life has also been imprinted (in a wide variety of forms: openly, loudly, secretly, quietly, hiding, forgetting, and so on, but inextricably) in my mentality.

3. The philosophical status of traditional values highlighted in the Edict is determined by the fact that they are designated as "moral guidelines that shape the worldview of Russian citizens". All three components are important here: moral

guidelines, worldview, and Russian citizens. These three components and concepts precede the list of 17 specific spiritual and moral values formulated in the next paragraph.

These values do not contain anything unexpected, they fully fit into the prevailing general tone of humanistically focused ideas of modern societies: everyday moral norms, international law, philosophical ideals. All people in their normal sound mind, if they are not infected with some kind of misanthropic sectarian ideology, accept and even willingly declare them. There is not a single value there, which would not be acceptable to all reasonable people who have formed their general ideas about the world within and on the basis of the cultural wealth to be developed by humanity in the past. And then what is the point of us specifically singling them out and issuing them in the form of a special edict?

I think the real point lies in perceiving them as moral duties, reading them, trying them on ourselves and perceiving them as real goals for ourselves. What we emphasized in the concept of values, namely, the combination of their extremely abstract meaning with the same ultimate, but already specific meaning of specific acts, can be considered as the methodological approach to traditional values. They are traditional to the extent that each of us, every citizen of Russia, cultivates them in his/her acts. If they are moral principles, then only personal acts can be a response to them. Namely acts, because morality begins where deeds, not words, are spoken.

As for the public authorities, their task is to facilitate and help this. Aleksander Sergeyevich says that he cannot issue an order to comply with these values. Of course not: that, to put it mildly, would be unnecessary. Moreover, such an order has already been issued, it is called Edict No. 809. Nevertheless, all the rector's orders and resolutions, other public events, team relationships, in short, the University's entire atmosphere could well be considered in terms of following traditional values.

4. Finally, the last question is: how complete is the list of traditional values and how strict is their order? As for the completeness of the list, they probably could have been more or less. I don't know if it is possible or advisable to set the task of comprehensively embracing traditional values. It is important that the proposed set of

seventeen traditional values has its rich and vivid examples of embodiment in Russian culture and covers various and undoubtedly important aspects of human life and society.

Values are an open system, and even the top values among them, such as good, truth, beauty, freedom, equality, fraternity, are permanently changing and being specified. Even the fact that some of them are not represented here does not spoil the overall picture. We understand that they could well be. The general spirit and focus of the Edict on traditional values are important here.

The above is also applicable to the question about their order. It is hardly worth building a rigid structure and a hierarchical system here, as individual philosophers did. I would even admit that different systems are possible here, depending on the subjects, forms of activity, and specific circumstances.

The Edict has also been generated by the current historical situation, which obliges us to consider traditional values from the perspective of national security, to see them as moral guidelines that shape the worldview of Russian citizens, strengthen the country's unity and the solidarity of the people.

Speaking about the possible order of values, I would draw attention to the fact that it begins with life and ends with the solidarity of the peoples of Russia. Values are the highest expression of reasonableness, a reasonable way of life, and reason is inherent in man as a living being, it is secondary to life. Hence the value of life has an absolute character and is basic in relation to all other values. I would like to think that it is not by chance attributed to traditional values and is put in the first place.

The list of traditional values is completed by the solidarity of the peoples of Russia: this is how the thread stretches from life, a living individual to multinational Russia.

The presence of values, the strive for following them, is the basis of passionarity, which is more or less inherent in every person. Values represent the genuine truth of life. They are the manifestation of a person's inner passion, the call of his/her soul, on the one hand. And, on the other hand, they are the manifestation of a rational, meaningful principle, a product of the human mind, the result of his/her

self-awareness. And when one thing turns into another, the strive becomes meaningful, and reason becomes aspiring, life gains human fullness, it is filled with lofty meaning: the individual unites with the general, the life of an individual – with the life of the country and the people.