

Moral Thought in the Wise Speaker of Qohelet King of Jerusalem

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ABSTRACT: As a form of social consciousness, Greek thought around 175-135, not only influenced the trends of cultural and ethical thought in the East, but those lines of thought also blended with the indigenous cultural colors that made Greek thought in this period develop brilliantly. Especially consolidating and developing religious beliefs. In particular, in Palestine, many Jews scattered everywhere established overseas communities (called Diaspora) and approached different forms of Greek religion such as belief in different gods and mascots worshiped in cities or belief in fate, astrology, magic, charms, Stoicism and Epicureanism. Faced with the real context of social history, the Pharisees were established, gradually grew and became known as “the separated ones”, they focused on strengthening faith through God’s plan expressed through covenants, promises, and blessings of God with mankind. Qohelet was a typical representative of that group.

KEYWORDS: Thinking, pondering about the meaning of life; how to live wisely; justice, human solidarity.

INTRODUCTION

Qohelet was the wise son of King David, who was also the king of Jerusalem around 150 BC. His thoughts were presented without a certain structure, but like an autobiography. The content of his thoughts was generalized through his teachings to the people, presented differently on a single topic, bearing the color and frivolity of human affairs. His perspective showed the general trend in the typical extroverted thinking that was popular in the ancient Western period. Along with his belief in God, he explained human understanding, wealth, love, life, death and especially the happiness of real people.

First of all, *the thought of thinking, worrying about the meaning of life in real life, joy, love and enjoying life*. Those are the core needs of every human being, and those values cannot be weighed or measured. In life, each person not only feels for himself, but also feels through each different stage in his life journey. With a natural perspective, in general, joy comes to people, bringing you happiness and along with the need for natural activities such as eating and drinking, helping us satisfy our needs in life is also happiness. However, for Qohelet, it is not that simple, natural, but that joy, that happiness is the discovery, the search for understanding, the wise action in each person, and that wisdom is enlightened by the creator "God". Be wise, He explains that all human activities are vanity, very vanity, and exposes the reality of human life, both the wise and the foolish, ending in death. Qohelet says: “Vanity, very vanity; all is vanity! What profit is man in all the toil he takes under the sun? One generation goes, another generation comes, but the earth remains. The sun rises, the sun sets, it rages to its place, and from there it rises again. The wind goes to the south, it turns to the north, it turns, it turns, it goes; the wind turns, and returns. All the brooks go out to the sea, and the sea is not full. The place where the brooks go out is where they go out again. All things are wearisome, and no one can tell. Does not the eye tire of seeing, and the ear not tired of hearing?”.

Qohelet exposed the greed for wealth, material things and selfishness in humans, which are the causes of cruelty and suffering for themselves and their fellow humans. However, to him, all of those things are just flashy. and advises people to live in sharing, because wealth is also vanity: "He who loves silver no matter how much he has, he will never be satisfied. He who loves wealth no matter how much he has, he will never be satisfied. All that is vanity." [Bible. Ibid. p.1573]. To highlight the wise point of view, he criticized the ignorance of the ultimate greed for wealth and material things of people. They are not wise to the point of not knowing where that wealth comes from, what that wealth is for, and then it all returns to vanity: "There is a person who is alone, without two: no children, no brothers, yet he continues to work endlessly; his eyes are never satisfied with wealth." [Bible. Ibid. p.1573].

Besides, *Qohelet emphasizes the humanity of human beings*. Humanity is the progressive cognitive values of human beings, reaching the perfection of the quintessence that only exists in humans. In which, happiness is also the core content of human humanity, it is the value that exists in humans and humans always seek factors that influence to satisfy that happiness. With Qohelet, he mentioned happiness in reality, very realistically, that happiness appears in family relationships, through maintaining the race and sharing joys and sorrows in life. Thus, happiness in him is the satisfaction of human needs in life. However, through entertainment activities that are inherently very popular, they take place through the form of life-and-death battles with other gladiators or wild animals such as tigers, leopards, and bears. The winning gladiator will receive money, gold, silver, and most importantly, fame. Those barbaric

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matches entertain the wealthy aristocracy. In fact, this is also the need for satisfaction, and if it is satisfied, there will be happiness, but happiness is only for a group of people, not universal, and moreover, this happiness is formed from the blood, tears, and even from the lives of others.

Faced with such barbarism, Qohelet criticized that injustice and suffering, he asked himself, why do we have to compete and cause physical suffering for ourselves and for our opponents, or is it just for glory, praise... . From there, he criticized, condemned, and opposed the barbarism that exists in human life and considered it vain: "Again, I see oppression in action. See the tears of those who are oppressed but not comforted; and the power in the hands of those who oppress but not comforted! And I, I am happier for the dead, those who are dead, than for the living, those who are living. And better than both of these is the one who does not exist, because he does not have to see the evil deeds in action" [Bible. Ibid. p.1571]. Therefore, he always seeks happiness in justice and love between people.

However, there are problems in real life that Qohelet finds difficult to explain, even impossible to explain. However, with his wisdom, he places his faith and affirms that it is God's plan and God does not need to answer what he is wavering about, even doubting. With the faith and wisdom that God places in Qohelet, he affirms: "Man must accept from His hand trials as well as joys, must keep His commandments and fear God" [Bible. Ibid. p.1566]. And that is, it is God who bestows happiness as well as joy in happiness that exists in man. However, that true happiness must be universal in the lives of all men. And nothing else has that true happiness that man must live according to the laws that God has given.

On how to live to have wisdom in each person's life. Wisdom is understood as the ability to perceive and judge aspects of a problem that, according to knowledge, are correct, sustainable and applicable to life. Wisdom is also deeper, recognizing the meaning or cause of the problem that arises; and knowing why a problem is and its meaning in life. Qohelet exalted that wisdom: "Better to hear the rebuke of a wise man than to hear the singing of fools"; And that is also: "Do not let your temper be quick to anger, for anger is latent in the belly of fools". However, while exalting that wisdom, he also focused on the negative side of wisdom, too much wisdom also makes people arrogant. Perhaps, here Qohelet understood that the pride of the Patriarchs had lost the original holiness and righteousness that they had received from God, especially through the Sinai Covenant, the commitment between God and the people of Israel. Even looking further back in history, we can see the pride of the Patriarchs. It was the wavering, doubting and pride in exalting themselves that made Eve and Adam believe the words of the cunning serpent: "You will be like God, knowing good and evil".

Thereby, Qohelet believes that wisdom must also be expressed in moderation, in the law. Here we see that the idea of harmony in him is expressed more clearly. Qohelet preached: "Too much wisdom is too much trouble, to know more is more pain" [Bible. Ibid. p.1568]. And the source of wisdom is also the work that God created for humans: "I have realized that in mortals, there is no happiness, except to enjoy and create joy in life. And that a person can eat and enjoy happiness in all his labors, that is also a gift from God" [Bible. Ibid. p.1570]. In Qohelet, he attached the view of wisdom to the real life of humans in particular, from the very reality to the truth of God in general.

Faced with the joy and happiness in people through material and spiritual wealth, he believes that we all should enjoy it. Because it is joy, happiness and those simple joys exist in daily life, because they are gifts from God. We should not be too proud of those material things, because they are not created by ourselves but are gifts from God. People should not blindly desire wealth and disregard actions that affect the common happiness of humanity. Although he was the king of Israel, Qohelet had power and abundant material wealth in his hands. However, he was always wisely aware of that wealth: "I have bought male and female servants. I have a family, and I also have more cattle and sheep than anyone else. "However, he did not boast of his divine mandate as the "son of heaven" like the emperors of the nations of his time, and relied on that authority as a means to force the world to obey and submit unconditionally. With that humility and wisdom, he recognized that wealth was a blessing from God to him. Qohelet preached: What has been is what will be, what has happened is what will happen: There is nothing new under the sun. But what people say: "Look at this! It's new!" It has been there for generations before us! But there is no memory of the ancestors, and the same is true of the descendants who will come: Of them, there will be no memory of those who will come after them!" [Bible. Ibid. p.1567].

In life, we often let anger, frustration, jealousy, and bitterness trap us in an endless cycle of suffering. Many people complain about their daily lives without realizing how lucky they are to be alive. Many people even complain, attack each other, and do not hesitate to trample on each other to achieve their goals, without realizing that life is always changing. Faced with that common pain, Qohelet taught his people to understand that: "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to destroy and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones, a time to embrace and a time to separate, a time to seek and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to sew, a time to keep silence and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace." [Bible. Ibid. P.1567].

He pointed out the movement of all things, that existence is not eternal, but they are always changing, at first glance we feel according to the natural state. With that thinking, we reflect outwardly to explain the natural world. However, standing on his own wisdom, Qohelet looked at the perspective of feeling, the change has the invisible hand of God. This can only be seen by feeling in the soul.

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Through that, each person perceives the rotation of life and behaves appropriately in human relationships, which is also wisdom and is in accordance with God's morality.

The idea of fairness and love: Besides the idea of real life, Qohelet also emphasizes fairness and solidarity. He pointed out the movement and change of all things, material wealth, happiness...: "Property is kept to become a disaster for its owner. Wealth is lost, because of misfortune. It has given birth to a child. But there is nothing left in its hands. How it came from its mother's womb, naked - it will go away, just as it came" [Bible. Ibid. p.1573]. He exposed the worldly dark side of the wealthy. From there, he advocated that human relationships in society must be aware of responsibility and share wealth with each other. Besides, Qohelet criticized the appropriation of wealth and material things in other people. Solidarity between people is also a happiness that people must cherish and preserve, and it is solidarity that will be the basis for people to recognize themselves and that sharing with others will be universal in human social life. He preached: "Two are better than one, because their labor is worth it. For if one falls, the other will help him up. But woe to him who is alone! If he falls, there will be no one to help him up. Likewise, if two lie down, both will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?" [Bible. Ibid, p.1572].

In short, Qohelet's thought reflects the reality of social life, where people are inherently full of inequality, arrogance and disobedience to God. His purpose is to restore, strengthen faith and bring the belief and practice of "Christian" religion in the temple to the outside to transmit into the daily life of the people. At the same time, to protect the values of "Christian" laws, beliefs and ethics as well as to strengthen the belief in the covenant of love between God and humans in the book of Genesis, which begins the creation with the marriage of Adam and Eve, and will be completed by the new creation with the wedding feast of the Lamb and the Bride in the book of Revelation.

Through the values in his thoughts in general, and his moral thoughts in particular, he not only contributed to strengthening the belief in the world through the *Creation theory* of ancient Christianity and the following stages. Qohelet's thoughts not only have profound significance in strengthening, transmitting and developing the "*New Testament*" inheritance stage marking the time of salvation of Jesus Christ associated with the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ, but also strengthening the faith of Christians in the present stage.

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