

## MORAL RESPONSABILITY ON BODY, NOWDAYS. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

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**ABSTRACT.** The purpose of this study is to present the principles on which the moral responsibility for the body is based from an Eastern theological perspective. The idea that the man is responsible for the redeeming works of each divine Person on his life and especially on his body is highlighted. Afterwards, there are several ways in which the responsibility can be fulfilled. The moral principles that guide man's responsibility in relation to his body are the following: moral purity, the attainment of holiness and the possibility of being deified. These are the principles the text tries to highlight in order to counterbalance the permissive and, unilaterally, hedonist principles that distort the contemporary responsibility towards the body. Even if the moral theological principles do not refer directly to it, are also applicable in the Bioethics area as it states that the purpose of the body is not to undergo any alteration by all means of its biological form, but it aims its spiritual transfiguration, through the action of the divine grace.

**Key words:** *responsibility, body, individual, post-duty society, postmodernity, Holy Trinity, Divine Persons, spiritual life, holiness, deification*

**REZUMAT. Responsabilitatea morală a trupului, în zilele noastre. Reflecții teologice.** Scopul acestui studiu este să prezinte principiile pe care se fundamentează responsabilitatea morală față de trup din perspectivă teologică răsăriteană. Este subliniată ideea că omul este responsabil față de lucrările mântuitoare ale fiecărei Persoane divine manifestate asupra vieții acestuia și în special asupra trupului acestuia. Sunt trecute apoi în revistă mai multe modalități în care această responsabilitate poate fi împlinită. Principiile morale care ghidează responsabilitatea omului în raport cu trupul său sunt: puritatea morală, dobândirea sfințeniei și posibilitatea acestuia de a fi îndumnezeit. Aceste principii textul încearcă să le scoată în evidență în scopul de a contrabalansa principiile permisive și, unilateral, hedoniste, ce denaturează responsabilitatea contemporană față de trup. Chiar dacă nu fac referire în mod direct, principiile teologice morale au aplicabilitate și în sfera Bioeticii, întrucât

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sugerează că menirea trupului nu este aceea de a fi supus unor alterări cu orice preț a formei sale biologice, ci menirea vizează transfigurarea spirituală a lui, prin acțiunea harului divin.

*Cuvinte cheie: responsabilitate, trup, individ, post-duty society, postmodernitate, Sfânta Treime, Persoane Treimice, viața spirituală, sfințenie, îndumnezeire*

## 1. Some contemporary understandings on body responsibility

Nowadays, there is the tendency for man to claim an exclusive concern or responsibility for the governance of his body, which culminates with the individualistic right to control the body at its own will. This fact has, we consider, some explanations. Once, in the European societies' case where the Christian spirituality and culture were predominant, the relationship of the man and his body, the attitudes he has to adopt towards his own body were, mainly, regulated and legitimated through a moral and social code from a transcendental religious instance, a revealed God. Today, the declared failure of the greatest political and religious transcendences<sup>2</sup>, that led to a meaningless of life, and the context of the emergence of a new post-moralist order that glorifies the body, will, individual and its own wellbeing<sup>3</sup>, leads the contemporary individual to assume more frequently its freedom to dictate one's own duty regarding its corporality. In other words, while the man's behavior towards body was once prescribed or guided by a transcendental moral law, nowadays it represents the option of an autonomous, religious uprooted human will. Surprisingly, although these new moral duties for the body reflect the patterns of a secular thinking, the man still tends to perceive the responsibility toward body in religious, even quasi-soteriological, terms, as a nowadays observer states that the man of our days feels "called to answer for his body, just as he once did for its own soul"<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> See this idea in ISABELLE QUEVAL, "Le corps et la performance", in: *Actualité et dossier en santé publique*, n° 67, juin 2009, p. 43; and also, DAVID LE BRETON, *Antropologia corpului și modernitatea*, coll. *Cartier istoric*, translation from French by Liliana Rusu, Cartier, Chișinău, 2009, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup> See more broadly the features of this post-moral order at GILLES LIPOVESTKY, *Amurgul datoriei. Etica nedureoasă a noilor timpuri democratice*, coll. *Sophia*, translation and preface by Victor-Dinu Vlăduțescu, Editura Babel, București, 1996, pp. 61-67.

<sup>4</sup> ANNE MARIE MOULIN, "Corpul în fața medicinei", in: ALAIN CORBIN, JEAN-JACQUES COURTINE, GEORGES VIGARELLO (coord.), *Istoria corpului. III. Mutațiile privirii. Secolul XX* (volum coordonat de Jean-Jacques Courtine), coll. *Cărți cardinale*, translation from French by Simona Manolache, Mihael Arnat, Muguraș Constantinescu, Giuliano Sfichi, Editura Art, București, 2009, p. 18.

Through the continuous impropriation of the contemporary society, the man has lost the sense of existence the Christian revelation conferred, but this process has not succeeded to remove also the idea of salvation inscribed in the human nature. Thus, the void left by the disappearance of a universe of Christian meanings and values had to be somehow filled or revalued. In this context, the nowadays individual has replaced the concern for his soul's salvation with the concern and excessive attention for the "salvation", here and now, on earth, of his body.

From a Christian perspective, the responsibility the contemporary individual tents to assume towards his body is based on the principles and values of a permissive and relativizing morality, promoted by the globalizing ethos. French sociologist Gilles Lipovestky highlights in his analysis how perennial moral values and principles, how the body's moral purity, chastity, virginity, body integrity, natural beauty are seen now – in what he calls the post-duty society – old-fashioned or irrelevant. Instead, these became imperative, especially through their inoculation by the consumerist rhetoric, bodily desire, sensuality, eroticized body, alteration or modification of the body, absolute liberty in choosing and manifesting the sexual identity etc.<sup>5</sup> What happened differently so clearly in terms of morality was a sharp decline of the virtue and virtuous life understood as a way of disciplining or mastering the body and senses.

A hedonistic morality specific to the post-modernity states, therefore, the twilight of Puritanism and rigorous norms and proclaims the right of each individual to pleasure and comfort<sup>6</sup>. The Christian principles and values that concern the human body are cleared in post-modernity, and other subjective, ephemeral, related to immediate satisfaction of carnal desires are brought into light and considered today as the ones that really matter<sup>7</sup>. From this perspective, the decline or loss of the meaning of values mentioned above leads to the desecration of the body's purpose and of the moral responsibility towards it. In fact, this desecration of the body explains many of today's people behaviors

<sup>5</sup> GILLES LIPOVESTKY, *Amurgul datoriei...*, pp. 46-52, 70-92. See also GILLES LIPOVESTKY, *Fericirea paradoxală. Eseu asupra societății de hiperconsum*, coll. *Plural M*, from French by Mihai Ungurean, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2007, pp. 213-214.

<sup>6</sup> According to an Orthodox thinker, we have witnessed in the last century "to the unilateral exaltation of the principle of pleasure" – see OLIVIER CLÉMENT, *Viitorul Bisericii*, translation by Vasile Manea, Ciprian Vidican, Editura Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> "The classical «meanings» [including religion] less and less effect on the contemporary subject. Other values take over: the individual, the pleasure, the body, the sex, the money... The perverse society would be this ultra-liberal, libertine and permissive society, which leaves the subject at the impulses' will under the poor supervision of a permissive superego" – ZYGMUNT BAUMANN, TIM MAY, *Gândirea sociologică*, translation in Romanian by Mihai C. Udma, Editura Humanitas, București, 2008, pp. 31-33.

towards their bodies, a body that is no longer seen as a part of the man that must be sanctified and deified, but, generally, as a source par excellence of pleasures. A body that, in the society of consumption, craves and that must be lusted for, according to a contemporary American sociologist<sup>8</sup>.

In another registry, the human rights, highly invoked in everyday rhetoric, became for some contemporary the philosophical-legal shield of various personal uses or responsibilities of the body. For example, in the name of a right to freely master its own body, the phenomena of the human body marketing (the prostitution phenomenon, the case of surrogate mothers, illegal trafficking of organs) or parts of it (the sale of sperm or ovum) it's spreading in various countries, a situation that raises the ethical problem of the way in which the man of the post-modern society understands the responsibility for his body, he decides to rent or sell for a certain sum of money.

The biomedical intervention the body can be subjected at, nowadays, also raises the question of the responsibility the man has related to its corporality. Through a diversified range of options and body medical procedures (cosmetic surgery, blepharoplasty, liposuction, rhinoplasty, prosthesis, cloning, in vitro fertilization, vulvas rejuvenation, liposculpture, brain chip implants etc.) it's aiming the amplification of the body's functions, the increase of its capabilities and endurances, the desire to make it conform to the best body standards dictated by the current society, the requirement to be more reliable and flexible or to respond optimally to the "user" requirements<sup>9</sup>. The ethical question is how far it can go following the path of such medical procedures that alter, in one way or another, the human body. If the human body is more than a simple biological material that – today, thanks to these technical and medical possibilities- can be corrected, modified, improved.

## 2. The responsibility for body in front of God-Trinity

The Eastern Christian tradition and theology have always highlighted the truth that living *in the body*, being a *spiritual being in the body*, or a *living being* is a great responsibility for the man. In the order of priorities, the first moral instance the man has to answer for his body and for the way he cared for it in

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<sup>8</sup> MIKE FEATHERSTONE, „The body in Consumer Culture”, in: *Theory, Culture and Society*, I (1982), pp. 21-22.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. PETRUȚA TEAMPĂU, „Corp trăit, corp gândit. Ipostaze teoretice în științele socio-umane”, in: LAURA GRÜNBERG (coord.), *Corp – artă – societate: reflecții întrupate*, Editura UNARTE, Bucharest, 2010, p. 15

his earthly life is the Trinity God. Although, generally, man's responsibility to God for his bodily existence is unique, we could say, however, that the responsibility is expressed differently from each Trinity Person, due to the role these divine Persons had during the entire history of man's salvation.

a. Man's responsibility to *God-The Father* is based on that He is the One who proved, regarding the creation and shaping of the human body from earth (clay), much appreciation and love to create an adequate organ to manifest the spiritual life of man<sup>10</sup>. It results that, by its material nature, the human body created by God is a good in itself and receives the ability to support the dynamism of the spiritual life of the human being. Given that the man has by the act of his creation a dichotomous composition, in the command "Grow" (Fac 1, 28), God gave to the first people immediately after bringing them to life, we could see – through extrapolation – a first responsibility of man from God-Father regarding the physical, bodily growth, *in good*, so that the body remains permanently able for the moral and spiritual perfection of the man. Therefore, the responsibility for the growth of the body involves or implicitly sends to the idea of protection or guarding of the body given to man by God to remain alive and subject to man's soul.

In an interpretation of Psalm XIV, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle and who shall dwell in thy holly hill?", St. Basil the Great highlights the moral responsibility the man, by creation, has towards his body consisting of. He says that as the men lease the land and work the field according to the landlord's will, also God gave us the care for the body and we need to care for it according to God's will and to give the body back to the Lord as a place in which Lord could dwell<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> The theologian Constantin CALLINICOS mentions: "The dust of the earth was kneaded and shaped, according to the anthropomorphic scriptural expressions, by God's hands. It lifts the man above any other body in which life exists" – *The Foundations of Faith. An in-depth explanation of the Eastern Orthodox Creed*, translation and revision by Rev. George Dimopoulos, Scraton, Christian Orthodox Edition, 1975, p. 66. The fact that in the creation of the human body, God involves personally and with a special care – in contrast to the other things brought to life by the divine word "to be" – shows that He prepares the body even from its creation to be adequate to the spiritual principle that it will ensoul. God gives the body a sublime purpose when it prepares it to be supporter of carrier of the spiritual life. See Dumitru RADU (coord.), *Îndrumări misionare*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1986, p. 180, 186.

<sup>11</sup> SAINT BASIL THE GREAT, "Homily I to Psalm XIV", 1, in: *Omilii și cuvântări*, in coll. *Părinți și Scriitori bisericești 1*, New series, translation from Greek and introduction by Dumirru Fecioru, text revised and note on edition by Constantin Georgescu, notes by Dumitru Fecioru, Constantin Georgescu and Alexandru Mihăilă, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, Bucharest, 2009, p. 398

On the other hand, starting from the words of St. Macarius the Great: “as God created the heaven and the earth for man to dwell in, so He created man’s body and soul for a dwelling for Himself, to inhabit and take His rest in the body as in His own house”<sup>12</sup>, we see that the man’s responsibility for his body towards God-Father is also detached from the great destiny inherited by the body through the act of creation, but it will be ushered only in the eschatological plan<sup>13</sup>.

The human being is, therefore, responsible for its body towards God-Father, as Creator, He has endowed our body with all necessary to be a collaborator to the soul. In this sense, the man fulfills this responsibility through his actions by which he strives to maintain his bodily integrity, to avoid those privileges or life situations that harm the body and place it in the impossibility to be a worthy servant of the soul.

b. To *God-Son*, man’s full responsibility for his body arises from that the embodied Son of God, from love and mercy towards the fallen humanity and overthrown by sin, took the human condition by Himself with all its affections, apart from sin, in order to achieve in His body, whipped, crucified, passed through death, raised and lifted to heaven, our reconciliation with God placing in His body the premises of the resurrection of all people with their bodies at the end of centuries. Therefore, we are responsible before Jesus Christ, Son of God made man, because, as St. Athanasius the Great shows, “prin înrudirea Lui cu noi după trup, am devenit și noi temple ale lui Dumnezeu și ne-am făcut fii ai lui Dumnezeu”<sup>14</sup>. Through all He has done *in His body*, Son of God, who has come in close proximity to man in the historical person of Jesus Christ, has redeemed us from the bondage of corruption and death. Therefore the word of Scripture that presents Jesus as the one “who gave Himself for our sins, to rescue us from this present evil age” (“Cel ce S-a dat pe Sine pentru păcatele noastre, ca să ne scoată pe noi din acest veac rău de acum”) (Gal 1, 4) represents for each of us an awareness of a great responsibility towards the fruits of Christ’s sacrifice gained through His crucifixion with the body for humans.

On the other hand, Christ is the One who restored the human nature, with whom through incarnation He fully identified Himself, thus offering the

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<sup>12</sup> See SAINT MACARIUS THE GREAT, „Cele cincizeci de omilii duhovnicești”, 49, 4, in: *Omilii duhovnicești*, coll. *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești*, Vol. 34, translation from Greek by Constatin Cornișescu, introduction, indexes and notes by Nicolae Chițescu, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1992, p. 280.

<sup>13</sup> CĂTĂLIN PĂLIMARU, *Teologia experienței în Corpusul macarian*, coll. *Monografii 4*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2014, p. 118.

<sup>14</sup> SAINT ATHANASIUS THE GREAT, *Cuvântul întâi împotriva arienilor*, XLIII, in: *Scrieri. Partea I*, coll. *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești*, Vol. 15, translation, introduction and notes by Dumitru Stăniloae, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucharest, 1987, pp. 207-208.

man the possibility to rise with his whole being – body and soul – to the richness of the perfect life that comes from God – Holy Trinity. Thus, Christ gave the human being the possibility of deification in body, which is why Apostle Pavel draws our attention to the responsibility we have for conforming our lives to the Christian lives: “Viața lui Iisus să se arate în trupul nostru cel muritor” (2 Co 4, 11). On the other hand, we have a moral responsibility towards Christ, Son of God, because He at the Last Supper, before His Passions, He instituted the Holy Eucharist so that through His Blood and Body for us to have fellowship to His eternal life. Therefore, since through the Mystery of Baptism we have been incorporated in the Church – God’s mystical body – we become responsible in relation to Christ for the way we develop in our body His life or for the way we decide or not to receive in our flesh body His body deified, resurrected and spiritualized<sup>15</sup>.

We are responsible, thus, to Christ, embodied Son of God, whenever we are not answering to the Holy Liturgy’ call to communion uttered by priest – “with fear of God, faith and love, draw near” – to feed us with and to assimilate in our bodies the body of Christ<sup>16</sup>, just as so does the cause of our precarious moral and spiritual nature we find ourselves unworthy to receive His Body and Blood (cf. 1 Co 11, 28-29).

However, beyond all of the above, we are responsible to Christ whenever we do not update in our own existence, both soul and body, the effects or gifts of the saving work God made for us in His earthly life. Or, from this point of view, the refusal or indifference to place in our personal work the gifts acquired through the saving work of the Son is a disregard of the role of His Incarnation in our lives as Christians and are, after all, attitudes stemming from not assuming responsibility.

c. Man’s responsibility for his body is also shown in relation to the third Trinity Person, *God-Holy Spirit*, since after the Pentecost, in the life of Church, He is creator of the sanctification of our life, of our body. Through the grace of Christ he pours above us in the Holy Sacraments, the Holy Spirit transforms our souls and bodies by renewing and deifying more and more as we share in the grace of Mysteries<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, we also have a responsibility to the Spirit of God

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. ȘTEFAN ILOAIE, *Responsabilitatea morală personală și comunitară. O perspectivă teologică*, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, pp. 181-182.

<sup>16</sup> DUMITRU STĂNILAOE, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu. Vol. 1*, coll. *Oikoumene. Mari autori creștini*, edited by Camil Marius Dădârlat, Editura Cristal, București, 1995, p. 204.

<sup>17</sup> Details on the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit through the Holy Sacraments are found in SAINT CHRIL OF JERUSALEM, *Cateheze*, translation and notes by Teodor Bodogae, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucharest, 2003, pp. 271-292. See also JEAN-CLAUDE LARCHET, *Viața sacramentală*, translation by Marinela Bojin, Editura Basilica, Bucharest, 2015, pp. 77-94.

because through the grace of Baptism He expands, dwells in our body, imprinting in our soul and senses God's power to reborn to the spiritual life. It is the Holy Spirit that imprints Christ in our being. Thus, the renewal of our moral forces at Baptism represents an act of our direct responsibility and demands from us a work of these spiritual forces in order to work the salvation Christ brought to us.

Also, the responsibility comes from that at the Mystery of the Chrismation by sealing with the grace of the Holy Spirit, all the limbs and senses of our body are fortified by grace, they spiritualize, receiving the ability to participate with the soul to the life of Christ. This sealing of grace means, in fact, conferring a new sublime purpose of our body, a purpose originating from the identity and quality of the new Christian human condition (*cf.* 2 Co 5, 17; Gal 6, 15), namely being "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Co 6, 19), so we, Christians, can no longer relate in any way to our body, being dedicated through Baptism to God, His presence and dwelling in our being. Therefore, the question and warning from the Apostle Pavel: "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Co 3, 16) has the precisely purpose to remind Christians of Corinth, and indirectly to all Christians, the high spiritual status of the new human body (Ef 4, 24), and to make them plenary aware of the responsibility arising from this status.

Redeemed with the price of the blood of Christ, the Christians – Apostle Pavel highlights – no longer belong to themselves, but become wholly "owned" by God, as it also proves the act of bringing into existence. Thus, for the Christian the consciousness of this redemption and of that it belongs to God with all his body become two well-founded reasons for which he has to use also his body in the service for the Creator's honor "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit" (1 Co 6, 20), and not to defile it through dishonest behavior or deeds. We can understand from here the moral responsibility the Christian has for his body in front of God-Holy Trinity.

### **3. Means of fulfilling the moral responsibility towards the body**

Man's moral responsibility for his body is also established *in relation to himself*. This responsibility is based on the very consciousness of the man, based on the scriptural revelation and on the patristic testimonies, has on the purpose for which God brought the man to life as an *embodied* spiritual being. In other words, in Christianity there is a responsibility of the man for the body in relation to himself, a responsibility that comes from the way he chooses to or not to fulfill



the creaturely vocation of his body, that is to be, morally and spiritually, servant or faithful collaborator of the soul and together worker of human's salvation.

From this perspective, the court of judgement before which the man must respond is his own consciousness, presence of the divine voice in man, which warns him whenever, through various ways or contexts, the man disregards the purpose of the body, resorting to acts that do not conform to the standard of the human's life set by God.

For father Dumitru Stăniloae man's responsibility towards his body derives from "the quality of the human body" of becoming a partaker to the "character of subject man". The body as an object participates in all the experiences and acts of the soul, and these are printed in the human body, so that the body becomes subjective. Based on this relationship between soul and body, the man becomes responsible not only for his soul, but also for his body due to his participation in the lie of the soul<sup>18</sup>. But the Romanian theologian also vice-versa argues, namely that the man is responsible for soul through his own body<sup>19</sup>, the concern for body God has given to the human being should not be limited or reduced only to the action of maintaining the body so that the life of the spirit manifest, but, more than that, the man must take care of the body to be an "even more apt tool" of the soul<sup>20</sup>.

From the aforementioned, we could talk about a responsibility of the man to permanently maintain the quality of the body as participant to the subjectivity of the man, to the soul. Therefore, each human being must relate to its body in such a way that it is always ready to support the spiritual work of the soul.

In the opinion of Father Stăniloae, from the moment the concern for the biological existence of the body becomes a concern of itself, the human being in not fulfilling the responsibility for his body. In other words, the man fails in the genuine assumption of responsibility, when the duties towards the body, arising from the instinct of the conservation of nature, prevails over the spiritual ones. Or, moreover end up considered as the only ones that really matter. In this case, the moral consequence of such attitude of the man towards his body consists in canceling the spiritual character of the body. By not participating to soul's dynamism, the body loses its subjective character.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. DUMITRU STĂNILOAE, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Vol. 1, p. 44, 94.

<sup>19</sup> „Dacă trupul n-ar fi și obiect și părtaș la calitatea de subiect, omul n-ar putea fi răspunzător de sine. Dar omul trăiește și participarea trupului la răspunderea față de sufletul său, în calitatea trupului de participant la însușirea lui de subiect. Căci un trup fără această calitate n-ar putea accepta de bună voie trăirea unei responsabilități pentru suflet. Și răspunderea aceasta a omului de amândouă componentele sale, prin amândouă e unită cu răspunderea pentru alții în fața lui Dumnezeu” – cf. DUMITRU STĂNILOAE, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Vol. 1, pp. 94-95.

<sup>20</sup> DUMITRU STĂNILOAE, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Vol. 1, p. 44.

The Romanian theologian writes that “pe măsură ce ne ocupăm mai mult de trup ca realitate exclusivă, el devine mai opac, mai puțin transparent și cuprinzător a tuturor, inclusiv al lui Dumnezeu, devine mai puțin omenesc și mai animalic”<sup>21</sup>. Of course, to give the body all necessary for the optimal maintenance of its biological condition is a natural moral duty of the man on earth, because, on the contrary, a shabby, sick body would often be unable to sustain the spiritual life in the most efficient way. But the attention of the human body for his body must be constantly focused on the tendency “de a nu-l socoti sigura realitate. El [omul, n.n.] trebuie să-l facă tot mai slujitor al spiritului, să-l pregătească pentru a fi, după înviere, deplin supus spiritului și transparent spiritului și, prin spirit, lui Dumnezeu”<sup>22</sup>.

In another register, completing the above statements, the spiritual responsibility of man towards body also results from the fact that, by the nature of its composition it is a dichotomous being – his ontological unity and uniqueness were given by this intimate connection between the two components, soul and body – the man is never saved outside his body, but always through his human body. The body is good by nature, able of deification. Primarily, but not exclusively, the man must care for the salvation of his soul, since it is the engine of the spiritual life, but, on the other hand, the entirely scaffolding of this life depends on the pure guarding of the soul. Father Ștefan Iloaie states that “persoana este responsabilă, de asemenea, și de *păzirea trupului* întrucât în el sălășluiește sufletul, iar cele două sunt legate intim și se constituie într-o unitate de trăire a vieții pământești, în care, împreună amândouă lucrează mântuirea, iar de aceasta nu va beneficia doar sufletul ci și trupul, făcut și el pentru înviere și răsplată”<sup>23</sup>.

Moreover, the man is responsible for his body and for that the final destiny, vocation of the body is its resurrection at the second coming of Christ (1 Co 15, 23). But what is really important, morally speaking, is the state in which our body will be resurrected. Thus, a filocalic priest, Isaiah the Solitary, urges us to care for our body as a Temple of God, because the body will have to resurrect and to give answer to Lord. He continues saying that as we are used to heal the body when it is in pain or suffering, also we need to care for the body because it has to be found pure at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>24</sup>.

In the earthy life stage, any action or work of the soul in the spiritual area involved the human body or is performed also in the body, since it is the

<sup>21</sup> DUMITRU STĂNILOAE, *Chipul nemuritor al lui Dumnezeu*, Vol. 1, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> DUMITRU STĂNILOAE, *Iisus Hristos, Lumina lumi și îndumnezeitorul omului*, seria *Opere complete* 6, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, București, 2014, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> ȘTEFAN ILOAIE, *Responsabilitatea morală...*, p. 226.

<sup>24</sup> CUVIOSUL ISAIA PUSTNICUL, „Cuvântul XV. Despre lepădare”, 1, în: *Filocalia*, Vol. 12, traducere din grecește, introducere și note de Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Harisma, București, 1991, p. 113.

expressing organ of the spiritual life in relation to the world and the fellows. Since the spiritual efficiency of the soul's work depends also of the moral status of the body, of his ability to allow the soul to work through it, it follows that the man becomes responsible for the moral and physical purity of his body. This moral and physical status of the body can be obtained through ascetic effort sustained also through the work of the virtues, striving to remove the impulses and sinful thoughts of the body, that are a barrier in the manifestation of the spiritual life. The body that acquires purity gradually becomes translucent, pellucid. Only through such a body the soul makes its presence felt and can work in person and through it in the world as much as possible.

In the daily life plan, concretely, the responsibility for the bodily purity is realized through the cultivating and preserving of the virtue of virginity of the young before marriage and of the chastity virtues within the marriage by spouses. The two virtues – virginity and chastity – must be realized not only at the level of the body, case in which will be imperfect, but also of the conscience, of soul, of spirit, thus being the proof of a plenary moral integrity of the man. Also, from this last perspective, these become essential conditions for a moral and spiritual life – individual or familial – healthy and improved. If the energy is wrongly channeled to the satisfaction of the sexual desires, this thing creates not only a disorder in the human body, but also in his spiritual life, by the fact that psychologically and spiritually speaking the disordered sexuality outside and also during marriage distorts the normal way of relating to the other, it transforms him in a satisfaction object of the sexual desires and impulses. In this case, the human sexuality is thus distorted and diverted from its saving purpose in the man's life, that is, the union and fulfillment of the spouses' love, by reducing it to the status of a simple physiologic act, in which each seeks just pleasure. Thus, the chastity and virginity virtue have the role to strengthen man's will of not allowing man's spiritual powers to be directed to the way of a disordered sexuality. Through virginity and chastity, in fact, we fight for the spiritualization or transfiguration of the sensual through the energies of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in both situations, of the unmarried young and the married ones, the main purpose of the cultivation of these virtues is to sanctify the soul and the body of those who strive to achieve them. From the Eastern thinking point of view, the cultivation of these virtues is not possible for man without the collaboration with the divine grace received in the Holy Sacraments, which renews, strengthens and helps him to grow in his life in Christ<sup>25</sup>.

On the other hand, the man fulfils his responsibility towards his body and through an adequate reference, morally speaking, to those needed for his

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<sup>25</sup> Regarding the importance of the virginity virtue for the young preparing for marriage see ILIE MOLDOVAN, *În Hristos și în Biserică. Adevărul și frumusețea căsătoriei. Teologia iubirii II*, Editura Reîntregirea, <sup>2</sup>2014, pp. 113-122.

biological care and maintenance of his physical integrity, but the fulfillment of all these duties must be subsumed or must serve to the special purpose of the body as an environment of manifesting the spiritual life. The man concerns of food, cloth, rest etc., but all these needs that belong to the body the Christian sees them and must look at them in and through the perspective of his salvation (*cf.* Mt 6, 25-33)<sup>26</sup>. In this regard, writing to the young people of his time, as those who need advices on the concern and care for the body, St. Basil the Great said: „să slujim trupului numai în cele necesare. [...] și în toate celelalte nu trebuie să ne îngrijim mai mult decât e necesar și nici să purtăm grijă de trup mai mult decât e bine pentru suflet. [...] A-ți da toată silința ca trupul să fie *mult prea îngrijit*, înseamnă a nu te cunoaște pe ține însuși și a nu înțelege porunca înțeleaptă, care spune că nu ceea ce se vede este omul (subl.n.)”<sup>27</sup>. The moral principle that emerges and that we keep in mind from the urging of the bishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia is the one of the man’s necessity to cultivate an axiological balance regarding the attention given to the bodily needs<sup>28</sup>. In this perspective, St. Basil the Great warns that neglecting this principle damages not only the biological health of the body, but also threatens the welfare of the spiritual life of man, so what is required in this case is to avoid the overestimation of the body needs: „deci când grija prea mare de trup este vătămătoare chiar pentru trup și este o piedică pentru suflet, e curată nebunie să te lași subjugat de trup și să-i slujești”<sup>29</sup>.

The moral duties towards his body are brought to the knowledge of man also through the catechetical-pastoral mission and liturgical-sacramental activity of the Holy Church. In all liturgical periods of the ecclesiastical year, but especially in the one of the Great Lent, through liturgical hymns and biblical

<sup>26</sup> For more details see NICOLAE MLADIN, OREST BUCEVSCHI, CONSTANTIN PAVEL, IOAN ZĂGREAN, *Teologia Morală Ortodoxă. Vol. 2 Morala specială*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba-Iulia, 2003, p. 112.

<sup>27</sup> SFÂNTUL VASILE CEL MARE, „Omilia a XXII-a. Către tineri”, 9, pp. 335-336.

<sup>28</sup> In the Cappadocian Parents, and especially in the writings of St. Basil the Great, we identify many principles and advices regarding the educability of the human body. This educability of the human body is subsumed generally to the educability of the human body in the holistic sense, soul and body. If for the Cappadocian Parents the educability of the man in general is seen as a remediation action of the consequences of the sin, the more the educability of the body is an action by which the body is controlled and disciplined to collaborate as effectively as possible with the spiritual part of the man, with his soul. Therefore, if in the works of St. Basil the Great we find advices regarding nutrition, clothing, sleep, gymnastics, bodily disease etc., all these means of educating the body are aimed at making the body a good collaborator of the soul. For more details see IOAN G. COMAN, „Concepția despre educație a Sfinților Părinți Capadocieni și a Sf. Ioan Gură de Aur”, în: *Frumusețile iubirii de oameni în spiritualitatea patristică*, Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, Timișoara, 1988, pp. 41-44.

<sup>29</sup> SFÂNTUL VASILE CEL MARE, „Omilia a XXII-a. Către tineri”, 9, p. 335.

readings read during the ceremonies, liturgical rituals that are performed in this period, through the constant calls for the increase of the lent, of the watching, prayer or mercy, the Church makes the Christian aware of the moral value of the body and of the importance of maintaining his physical, but especially spiritual purity for the encounter and communing with God. This is, actually, one of the messages of the biblical passage from the first epistle of St. Apostle Pavel to Corinthians, the Holy Church established to be read during the Holy Liturgy from the Sunday of the Prodigal Son, the second Sunday of the period before the Great Lent. By extrapolating a little the idea of the text, the human being is urged to much discernment on the way he uses his body, since not everything the society he lives in claims to be allowed is, in reality, spiritually useful, as well as the man has to maintain towards the declared premises an attitude of moral reserve so that he will not end under the control of the things he considered to be precisely the expression of freedom (1 Co 6, 12). In this sense, the Apostle to the Gentiles warns: “for you, brethren have been called for liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh” (Gal. 5, 13). Therefore, the actual danger, morally speaking, is idolatry of our own body by transforming its irrational pleasures into life’s desires.

The moral responsibility of man towards his body also implies the concern for the maintenance and valuing of the physical health of the body. The natural, paradisiacal state of the body was by excellence the state of health, of lack of diseases and of the body’s weaknesses. Therefore, the man is responsible for any willful or necessary action that directly affects the health of his body. Ultimately, the unhealthiness of the body affects or imbalances the whole human person, as any suffering of the body is felt spiritually too, which can strengthen the spiritual work, but most often to compromise it when the bodily suffering is not fully assumed by the man. Actually, any lack of concern for the health of our body is, on short or long term, an unconscious suicidal attempt of one’s own life. With regard to this aspect, and also others, father Ștefan Iloaie writes: „Suntem răspunzători înaintea lui Dumnezeu pentru modul în care nu percepem sau percepem distorsionat sensul vieții noastre, pentru acceptarea tentațiilor care ne acoperă ținta și ne poartă către falsitatea unui țel iluzoriu al viețuirii, pentru acțiunile de indiferență față de păstrarea sănătății duhovnicești și trupești, acte de natură să slăbească unitatea de simțire a sufletului și a trupului – și cu atât mai mult – pentru acțiunile voite și conștiente îndreptate împotriva propriei vieți”<sup>30</sup>. From this perspective, the supreme deresponsibilization of the man towards his body is the suicide, namely the cancelation or negation of one’s own life by suppressing the biologic fundament that does little to manifest this life – the body.

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<sup>30</sup> ȘTEFAN ILOAIE, *Responsabilitatea morală...*, p. 209.

#### 4. Conclusions

Eastern theology emphasizes man's responsibility of the body before God. There is a responsibility towards the body in relation to God-Father, who as Creator of the man has created the body good in itself and adequate to express the spiritual life of the man. Then towards God-Son, as the Savior of man, the responsibility is based on the possibility of man's salvation and deification in the entirety of his person, soul and body. Least, the moral responsibility of the human body regarding its corporality is also shown in connection with the Holy Spirit, which offers the man the grace of sanctification of the body through the Holy Sacraments and the liturgical and sacramental life.

As regards to the fulfillment of the responsibility towards the body, the man is conscious of the importance of the moral purity of the body for the completion of his spiritual life, of the fact that his body is called to sanctification and deification.

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