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**ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL LAW FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF MODERN LEGISLATION AND ITS
RELEVANCE FOR THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

(summary)

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(summary)

The law and the biblical commandments, together with other ancient collections of rules of conduct, constitute one of the resistance pieces of law, state of law and society in general, which through their observance confers balance, stability and harmony in relation to God and fellow human beings .

A nation cannot exist without the existence of law. According to the biblical law, the world is maintained only by the law: "Justice (righteousness) exalts a nation, but sin is the shame of nations." (Proverbs 14:34). Every state has the task of keeping the life of the nation centered on justice: "A king strengthens the country by justice, but he who takes bribe destroys it." (Proverbs 29:4).

By biblical law we understand the totality of the rules of conduct that God has regulated through special

revelation (Holy Scripture), which in an organized society (such as the nation of Israel which was called to be the light of the other people) govern the relationships between people and the relationship between man and God and which are imposed, if necessary, with the help of state coercion. In the case of violation of biblical norms, the perpetrator commits a misdemeanor or crime which, in biblical law, is called sin and therefore falls under the judgment of God and the state institutions God has left to enforce the law.

This research paper, entitled "Analysis of the biblical law and its relevance for the contemporary society" draws attention to the origins of the modern legal system and the indelible influence that the biblical law has had throughout history for the civilized nations of the entire world. Its influence is indisputable and unmatched by any other legal system of antiquity. Thus, the biblical law has a continuing and living influence in the world today and it is felt not only in the lives of modern Jews, but even throughout the world. Moreover, it reveals the way in which God through special revelation answers some questions related to the

ontological existence of the natural moral law, natural law that refers to the fact that moral precepts precede biblical commandments and that outside the revelation of Scripture there are objective moral values with which God endowed us through creation. It also identifies the biblical bases of current legislation and systematizes the norms of the Bible taking into account the main institutions of modern law (Civil and civil procedural law; Family law; Criminal and criminal procedural law and Labor law) and describes how God claims that His Church, as "light of the world" and "salt of the earth", get involved and participate in public life, bringing through its contribution, the values of good, beauty, stability, justice, well-being and harmony that the postmodern society need so much.

In the first chapter, it was clearly shown that by biblical law we refer to the totality of the commandments that God has regulated in the Holy Scripture and that govern the relationships between people and the relationship of man with God. In the situation of violation of biblical norms, the coercive force of the state was used, whose responsibility was to ensure order, well-

being and balance in society. In order to ensure peace and social order, in a situation of necessity, biblical law provided for specific sanctions for each offense or crime committed, so the following forms of punishment were regulated: reprimand; fine; damage repair; corporal punishment, imprisonment or even capital punishment. The offense or crime in biblical law is called sin and has as a consequence not only the application of the punishment by the state bodies empowered in this sense, but also the punishment of God.

The influence of biblical law on the modern legal system is vivid and profound, not only in the lives of modern Jews, but throughout the world. So, the structure of the working week, the idea of a day of rest in labor law, the term covenant or contract, the phrase "scapegoat", the defense and protection of the rights of employees and the categories of disadvantaged people, the fight against abuses, the administration of justice, the force of state coercion attributed to the politics and the conclusion of marriage between a man and a woman as an indissoluble and monogamous bond bear the imprint of the principles of biblical law. The current analysis of

biblical law from the perspective of modern law raises awareness about the origins of modern law and about the undeniable influence that biblical law has had throughout history for all the laws of the world and is a reminder of the fact that God, who is the Creator of all things and the absolute Lawgiver of the whole world, knows best how the individual, family and society can function in order to have welfare, peace, harmony, balance, good and happiness, both here on earth and in the afterlife beyond. In recent years, it seems that society has forgotten about God and His principles, or if they haven't, they consider them stale, outdated and irrelevant to contemporary society, which is why today we witness with great amazement and bitterness an unbalanced society, strongly affected by this moral and spiritual decline. This research work finds relevance even today in that it seeks to reaffirm the utility and efficacy of Judeo-Christian precepts. The application of the principles of biblical law have proven in the course of time (thousands of years of human history) efficiency, stability and progress. A civilized nation, which takes into account the ethical-

social paradigm of the Holy Scripture, has its share of well-being, balance, harmony, development and security.

Moreover, biblical law gives a clear picture of how God created man, endowing him with a natural moral law through the act of creation to cause man to seek God and follow the voice of consciousness that sensitizes attention to living in the will and commandments of God. Natural moral law refers to those general, objective and widespread moral values that God has made known to man through all sources outside of Holy Scripture. In the second chapter, entitled the relationship between natural law and positive law, we dealt extensively with the concept of natural law and showed that positive law refers to all the legal norms that regulate the life of a state, and natural law implies an ethics of transcendental nature, by no means a human construct. Natural law constitutes a criterion that allows the evaluation of positive law, measuring its inner justice, both from a rational and an emotional point of view. Some essential characteristics of natural law were highlighted, among which we mention the innate nature of natural rights (man has in an ontological and moral

sense certain rights), the obvious nature of natural rights, the inalienable nature of natural rights and the indestructible nature of natural rights, showing through this the fact that the natural rights of human beings cannot be canceled by other people, so the role of positive law is to prevent individuals from violating the natural rights of humans by promulgating legal norms. Looking at the historical evolution of law, it is easy to see that positive law has separated from moral norms and customs, so that morality precedes law. Since ancient times, in response to questions about the origin of law, Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras, Aristotle or Roman historians such as Cicero have come to the conclusion of the viability of conceptions of natural law. Holy Scripture contains enough arguments to support the proof of the existence of the concept of natural law since the first biblical narratives, so that God demands moral conduct from the created beings long before the Decalogue or other types of laws were promulgated: "It is not like that? If you do well, you will be well received; but if you do evil, sin lurks at the door; its desire is after you, but you shall rule over him" (Genesis 4:7). Sapient

literature discovers moral values placed in creation by God, so by analyzing the physical world and the environment it can be clearly observed that wisdom has two sources: the natural one, whose authority consists of empirical evidence outside the Bible, and the revealed one, whose foundation is the Holy Scripture.

The analysis and validation of the existence of the concept of natural law finds its relevance in our times by the fact that it invokes the existence of objective ethical values outside the Holy Scripture, and for the profane society, which does not want to accept the infallible truths of the Bible, a discussion on moral issues, which appeals to the validity of natural moral law, is always welcome. In other words, if the natural law is appreciated as being viable, then the Church has a legitimate social mission to sit at the table of debates on ethical and moral issues in parallel with the proclamation of the principles of Scripture.

In the third chapter, entitled "Biblical basis of law" we work with some essential concepts in a modern state of law: (1). The concept of law, which is divided into two categories: human law (ecclesiastical law -

canon law and positive law which refers to the set of legal norms in a society, developed and applied by the competent authorities, which guarantee, if necessary, through the force of state coercion) and divine law (which is the expression of God's will imposed by His sovereign power. God's law in the Old Testament includes civil, ceremonial and moral laws - the Decalogue. Civil law concerned those legal norms that referred either to rules of inter-human conduct, or to rules for the construction of buildings, houses or wells that the Jew had to observe and were applicable to social relations and institutions. The ceremonial law comprised the totality of the rules regulated by God regarding various rituals, sacrifices, feasts , the arrangement of the Tabernacle of Meeting (later, the arrangement of the Temple in Jerusalem), priestly clothing or various objects of worship, which were to be observed minutely, thereby showing the mastery, holiness and providence of a God who involves himself even in the smallest details of His work. The moral law mainly concerned the ten basic principles of the Decalogue, which encompass three dimensions of man's responsibility: a. Man's relationship

with God ("You shall have no other gods beside Me; "You shall not make a graven image "; "Don't take the Lord's Name in the desert"); b. Man's relationship with work ("Remember the day of rest, to sanctify it") and c. Man's relationship with his peers ("Honor your father and your mother"; "You shall not kill"; "You shall not commit adultery"; "You shall not steal"; "You shall not bear false witness"; "You shall not crave"). The moral law contained in the Ten Commandments is the foundation of the covenant relationship between God and the nation of Israel and the moral standard that God demands of His redeemed people, whose mission is to fully obey the divine will and to be "the vehicle" through which God will bring the light of His morality to other people.

The Decalogue represents the "fountain of all laws", the heart of the divine revelation given at Sinai, even if Maimonides, when he included these "Ten Words" in the list of the 613 commandments of the Law, seemed to minimize their uniqueness. Thus, all commandments were given by God and required obedience. The Ten Commandments state what kind of

people God wants us to be, show us what kind of life is truly natural and planned by God for us, and indicate how we are viewed by God (lawbreakers or obeyers and doers of His precepts).¹

(2). The concept of justice is a moral and legal principle that assumes impartiality and requires that everyone is given what is due to him, that his legal rights are respected, that moral norms and divine will are respected and that merits of any individual are recognized in a fair and equitable way. In order for a human society to be able to function within the optimal parameters of well-being, harmony and social order, it is imperative that it be able to relate in a responsible way to the demands of morality and justice, otherwise society disintegrates: „To do justice and judgment it is more pleasing to the Lord than sacrifices" (Proverbs 21:3). The concept of justice is essentially theological, so after describing the main forms of justice defined by Aristotle (distributive justice, whose principle is "to each

¹ Silviu Tatu, *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament. The Pentateuch and the Historical Books*, Oradea, ed. Casa Cartii, 2016, p.138,139.

according to his work and value"; corrective justice, which refers to the repair of an injustice by executing some reparative measures and procedural justice, which refers to concrete ways of elaborating some decisions by which the act of justice is carried out and imposes the sanctioning of those incriminated according to the gravity of the committed acts), we have presented justice as manifested by God (based on His holy and righteous character, God established a moral leadership in the world, imposed righteous laws on people and applies sanctions in case of violation of His order) justice as God claims it (God calls his people to fulfill the act of justice in a responsible way towards all people and especially towards the poor, widows or orphans and towards the oppressed) and justice as God will fulfill it at the end of time by creating a perfect kingdom in which it will be achieved what kings and rulers in human history have failed to do: "He will cause His reign to increase and he will give the throne of David and his kingdom a peace without end..." (Isaiah 9:7).

and (3) the concept of judgment which refers to God's sovereign right to punish the rebellion and

disobedience of humans and evil angelic beings (evil angels), but also the individual's personal right to testify before the divine court. Ontologically speaking, man is created a free being, so that when he is at the age of responsibility, he has the freedom to choose his conduct, but also to answer for his own actions. In the situation of breaking the law, man will be successively subjected to the judgment of three courts: the personal conscience (which generates a strong sense of guilt), the institutionalized human judgment, and the absolute and perfect judgment of God. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, the concept of judgment is often reiterated, so that the institution of the human judgment panel appears for the first time in the book of Exodus on the occasion of the visit of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. He, after glorifying God for the exalting way in which he worked to deliver the nation of Israel from Egyptian slavery, suggests to Moses, the leader of the people of Israel, that for the sake of efficiency in resolving disputes and avoiding overwork, he should form a specialized panel of judges for the execution of the act of justice. These judges had the duty to solve the problems within

the Jewish community, and in the situation where the disputes exceeded their ability to resolve, they turned to the man of God, Moses. Not everyone could acquire such an honorable position in Israel, but only those people who demonstrated competence, integrity and impartiality, who had reverence for God and who were "enemies of covetousness", precisely so as not to get involved in the act of doing justice (Exodus 18:21). Since ancient times, corruption and injustice have represented great challenges to humanity, which is why God has always warned through His servants about the slippages of those who were supposed to judge with justice and impartiality. Holy Scripture describes to us significant situations when God intervened in history and punished and judged certain people because of their reprehensible moral conduct: the case of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19); Amos 2:2,3; Isaiah 30:18 etc. The New Testament describes God as an absolute judge, who at the end of time will judge the world according to justice through the Lord Jesus Christ, so that not only deeds will be judged, but also the words, thoughts and hidden motivations of man (Acts of the Apostles 17:31; Apocalypse 20:11, 12).

These truths find their relevance even today precisely because they demonstrate God's concern for man, so that He gives him clear laws to guide him in this life, watches over the correct observance of the laws and demands that man not violate the requirements of morality and righteousness, as it would then conflict with His holy and righteous nature and character. Moreover, it draws attention to the fact that those who deal with the execution of the act of justice must do it with a lot of responsibility and seriousness, as some who are aware of the fact that one day, along with all other people, they will be called to the final judgment by the great judge of the universe, God. This biblical basis of law reinforces the truth that God is the first and greatest Lawgiver of mankind, who made clear laws to the nation of Israel to serve the common good and order in society. Careful analysis of the historical and prophetic biblical narratives reveals God's final triumph over human history and spiritually adversary powers.

In the fourth chapter, entitled "Analysis of the main branches of law from a biblical perspective", the branches of law in the contemporary legal system were

delimited, observing the way in which God thought of the constitution of human society and the values and the holy principles that the Bible promotes were highlighted and that the legislator of our times must take into account when drafting legislative projects in the public sphere. The Old Testament presents the nation of Israel as a theocracy, a nation where God's law was automatically the law of the country. The Old Testament laws were not conceived as an ethical system in itself, but rather encompass paradigms of moral thought, which is why deontology or the appeal to moral precepts carries great significance in the narratives of Holy Scripture. Within the first branch of law, civil law and civil procedural law, its essential notions were defined and certain particularities of civil law were treated, as they are highlighted in the biblical texts. So, it was observed that the right of ownership was instituted by God, from the first narrations of the book of Genesis: "God blessed them... and said to them... have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28). Later, the eighth commandment of the Decalogue, "You shall not

steal" (Exodus 20:15) comes to support and protect the right to property. The teaching of Holy Scripture regulates the fact that every man must have access to material goods, recognizes and defends the property right of every individual in society, and commands all men not to cause embarrassment in any way to the property right of another subject of law, as long as it was justly and legitimately acquired. Inheritance (succession) in biblical law involves a moral-spiritual dimension (when the father, based on his authority, offered blessings to his descendants, priority being the newborns, if they were not disinherited) and a patrimonial dimension (when the father even during his lifetime ruled on to the goods in his patrimony). Civil contracts were an essential means of negotiation and understanding of the contracting parties, which concerned the goods in the socio-economic sphere of Israel and not only, and in the case of litigation situations, they appealed to the central court, where the priests legislated in matters of ceremonial law, and the judges legislated in matters of civil and criminal law. Family law covers all the norms and principles established by God regarding family life, both regarding

the conclusion of a marriage (the freely-consented union between a man and a woman, so the biblical family is monogamous, heterosexual and indissoluble), and regarding the relationship with the life partner (Holy Scripture regulates a relationship based on mutual love and integrity) and the parent-child relationship, which involves not only raising, but also educating and covering the child's needs, whether biological, emotional, intellectual and moral or spiritual, and the duty of the child is to obey, respect and honor the parents. Criminal law and criminal procedure refer to all the biblical norms regulated by God that concern life, bodily integrity, sexual freedom and integrity, patrimonial assets, the correct administration of justice, the freedom of the person, the institutional and spiritual authority established by God. Violation of God's protected social and spiritual values brought with it punishment of various forms, from corporal punishment and fines to capital punishment. Labor law concerned the legal rules applicable to the individual and collective relations that arose between the employer and his employees, who worked under their authority. Thus, it has been very

clearly observed that work is an integral part of God's plan and will since the Garden of Eden to give meaning, significance and satisfaction to man. Moreover, work is essential, both as a responsibility towards the Creator, and as a means of earning a living and relating correctly to our fellows, and "he who does not want to work should not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3: 10). The Christian has the duty to be wise and to keep the balance between work activity and rest, precisely to give time and importance to the other segments of his life, the family and the worship before God.

Biblical law outlines the story of God's relationship with Israel, and therefore with humanity. This reveals that biblical law is intensely dynamic, stemming from God's call to Abraham to be blessed and to be a blessing to all other nations. Biblical law reveals a vocation over Israel. The purpose of biblical law is to shape the identity and personality of biblical Israel so that the Jewish nation will reflect God's character and give the rest of the world the knowledge of God: „...Therefore, I make you to be the Light of the nations, to bring salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6).

In the last chapter, entitled "The Vision of Holy Scripture regarding the involvement of the Church in the public space of the legislative system", the way in which God describes the role and contribution of Christianity in society was highlighted. The relevance and involvement of the Church in the public sphere is by no means a peripheral topic in the biblical texts, but rather reinforces the principle according to which the Church must not neglect its mandate to be the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth: "...A city set on a mountain cannot remain hidden...In the same way let your light shine before men..." (Matthew 5:14, 16).

By public space is meant a social space in which members of a society discuss issues of common interest and public opinions are affirmed in relation to these issues. The Church has a clear mission to make its voice heard in society, regardless of the price it will have to pay, thus contributing to the common good, peace and social order precisely because of Its moral-spiritual principles and values that define it.

Jonathan Fox, Habermas or Vasile Boari note very well the fact that the religious domain cannot be

eliminated from the public arena, since both religion and politics assume constitutive elements of human identity and social life. The relationship between the Church and the State must be one of cooperation, not competition, each of them assuming the role and the contribution they must fulfill for the good and the balance of human society. The state has the duty to guarantee the constitution, the laws, the fundamental rights and freedoms of man, and the Church is called to respect, along with all other citizens, the laws of the nation in which it is located. Moreover, the Church must show incorruptibility and integrity, by paying its dues and taxes to the State, pray for those who are elevated to positions of authority, get involved in social projects to help the disadvantaged categories of people and proclaim justice and the truths of Scripture, regardless of the price it will have to pay. Biblical law unequivocally reveals that the State is subordinate to the law and is created for its benefit, since the State is not the creator of the law, but the law exists independently of the State, as an emanation of the justice, holiness and authority of God, the absolute Lawgiver. Therefore, the role of the State in the field of

law is to express the law, to apply the law and to defend the law, not to be above the law. So that, taking into account the true source of the emergence of the law, the State will comply with God's justice and will for the good, harmony, prosperity and balance of human society. The Church will have to have a more meaningful social message in the public space and continue its mission of being the preacher and defender of the sacred precepts and values of the Holy Scripture. Christians must influence the legislation of morality in the public space and even, using their moral-spiritual convictions and ethics, reform the morality in contemporary society when needed, in a language accessible to the profane and pluralistic context in which they find themselves.

In an increasingly secular society, which lives in a moral and spiritual twilight, there is an increasingly acute need for God's absolutes. The Decalogue represents God's solution to the cry for help of a world that is drifting, and biblical law finds its relevance even today, in a pluralistic and confused society, by the fact that it reveals through its socio-ethical paradigm guiding

principles that provide balance, stability, harmony and order in society.

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