

## EDITORIAL NOTE

### Dan Chițoiu & Corina Domnari

The Special Issue includes papers presented at the International Conference *Spiritual Values and the Challenges of Today World*, held in Iași, Romania, on June 22-23, 2023. The event was organized by the Institute for the Study of Values and Spirituality and the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, convenors being Dan Chițoiu and Corina Domnari.

The critical role of spiritual values in responding to the challenges of a shifting world is widely discussed in enquiries made by contributors from around the world.

Jānis Ozoliņš, in *Subjectivity and the Modern World*, sees that genesis of the contemporary estrangement from truth is the post-modern rejection of Modernity and the Enlightenment project in which the hope of humanity was taken to lie in reason and science alone. Religion was to henceforth be a private matter. Drawing on Plato's dialogues against the sophist, Jānis shows that the contemporary estrangement from truth is not new, and that the postmodern world is full of sophists too. It is suggested that the chaos of the modern world can only be corrected through a return to a metaphysics in which God, and hence truth, has a central role.

Tone Svetelj argues, in *Synthesis and Humility: Integrative Mindset and Values after Postmodernity*, that the framework for creating, integrating, and evaluating values needed for our time should be an integrative perspective that balances faith and reason, spiritual and material, relative and absolute, authority and freedom. Such synthesis requires a humble and open mind that does not pretend to know absolute answers but instead is willing to learn afresh from past experiences and present challenges.

Maxim Mikhalev, in *Shamanism in XXI Century China: Social Functions and Local Specifics*, elaborates on the phenomenon

of shamanism revival in modern China based on the fieldwork data gathered among Shenehen Buryats living in the north-eastern part of the country. Maxim discovers, in his field research, that shamanism, hidden and concealed, it remains an integral part of modern Chinese society as it helps people cope with the challenges of everyday life and pays attention to the needs of an individual that are often ignored by the other institutions.

Seema Bose discusses, in *Unity in Diversity: Hindu Perspective*, the problem of otherness in the context of Indian society. Discourse on the issues of otherness has always been associated with the relation between one religion and another. Significant contributions on these issues have been made by Indian thinkers. Hindu communities assimilated people, customs, and ideas despite having a hierarchy based on caste, age sex, and also despite having geographical diversity and thus bringing in unity without uniformity in diversity without fragmentation.

John Giordano, in his paper *The Merchants of Heavenly Grace: On Academic Journals and Cultural Difference*, points out that increasing standardization, specialization and monetarization of academic publishing is designed to foster quality in research and expression, but these tendencies also pose serious challenges to the expression of cultural difference, particularly regarding philosophy and religious studies. To approach this problem, we need to consider the conflict between culture and spirit on the one hand, with the flows of information and capital on the other. We need strategies to reach something outside of the cybernetic flows of information in the media age.

Tuğçe Şensöz, in *The Importance of Symbols in the Sufi Tradition*, analyzes the concept of justice in Islamic mysticism through symbols. Considering justice as a natural figure, its effect on the Sufis' perception of spirituality its examined based on the original definition that emerged in Islamic Sufism, the paper aiming to make this concept clear and understandable by showing the aspects of the concept of justice, which has a deep-rooted historical and cultural background.

Emel Sünter and Nisan Şaşal, in *The Act of Grieving in the Philosophy of Aşık Veysel*, analyze the meaning of the image/metaphor of the act of pouring trouble in one of Veysel poems

and determine how this image is effective in the healing process in spiritual support and guidance. The study was carried out in a tent city in Adiyaman, one of the provinces damaged by the earthquake that occurred in 11 provinces on 6 February 2023. Their paper discusses the effect of cultural codes on the healing process, as they are contributing greatly to the search for meaning in such extraordinary moments of crisis.

Amir Khan Ahmed paper, *A Philosophical Exploration of Spiritual Values and their Contribution to Shaping Humanity* delves into the core essence of spirituality, probing its origins, and its pivotal role in human development. Amir examines how spiritual values have guided and molded human behavior, ethics, and social structures, simultaneously fostering unity and division within societies. The study scrutinizes how modern philosophy and science intersect with spiritual values, contributing to a broader comprehension of human consciousness, purpose, and interconnectedness, and seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the significance of spiritual values in human existence and their enduring influence on our collective journey.