“IS “WHISTLEBLOWING” MORALLY PERMISSIBLE?”

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Morals have always been one of the main values of human’s society. The observance of generally accepted principles of morals concerned the conscience of each person in particular. However, sometimes people face disputable questions, both in history and in their own lifes.Whistleblowing is one of them. Community regarded whistleblowing as actual treachery, yet now understanding of this term has changed. Eventually, in XXIst century many people treat whistleblowers as national heroes and as the only ones whose acts are morally right. Nevertheless, to speak about whistleblowing and its sides, we should clearly see what it is in fact. In the following context will be given the definition of the notion, veridical daily and world-known examples of the concept, two sides of whistleblowing based on cited examples: affirmative and negative, author’s point of view and the logical inference.

As “Investopedia” (2015) argues, ‘‘whistleblower’ -anyone who has and reports insider knowledge of illegal activities occurring in an organization. It can be employees, suppliers, contractors, clients or any individual who somehow becomes aware of illegal activities taking place in a business either through witnessing the behavior or being told about it’. Certainly, to grasp exactly what does the term ‘whistleblowing’ hold, we have to delve deeper. The term appeared not long time ago, but the cases of ‘whistleblowing’ used to happen quite often even before Christ. First whistleblowers may be regarded as historically famous traitors, for instance Judas. Now, the Kiss of Judas is a well-known synonym for the definition of the word “betrayer”. It also symbolizes the act “appearing to be an act of friendship, which is in fact harmful to the recipient”, which sounds common to the modern meaning of the word ‘whistleblowing’. Brutus’ perfidy may be related to such behavior. Caesar assigned him to be his senator as he relied on Brutus; unfortunately, he joined the conspiracy against dictator. He supplied Caesar’s enemies with all vital information, what finished with Caesar’s murder. In ancient Rome, there also even used to be post boxes in a lion shape, especially for getting anonymous letters from whistleblowers concerning nonpayment of the taxes. At the far later time, in the beginning of twentieth, Yevno Azef, a socialist revolutionary sought fame for being a double agent. He has been working for the government as a spy, and has been preparing terrorist acts simultaneously. Yevno Azef furnished supporters of the revolution with confidential information received from the authorities. Finally, he had to escape to Germany, where he was caught by police and delivered to prison.

These three examples are showing the negative side of ‘whistleblowing’, what was spread in those times. If we connect similar actions in the past to present, we may get the evolutional process of ‘whistleblowing’ phenomena. In reality, it has never actually been a phenomenon, but an obvious matter. For some simple example, school. There is always one person in a class who whistleblows, telling the teacher who from his classmates cheats, who extends gossips, etc. Noticeable historical illustrations and memorable daily stories of ‘whistleblowing’ have lead us to an accurate perception of the given concept. Even though, scholastic cases are slightly comparable to ones that happen in politics and business. Whistleblowing is largely common in big financial business-companies. Investors, obviously, want to find out about every pitfall related to their future contributions and often pay huge sums of money for vital secret data. Sometimes workers might take risks and provide false information just to get money. This happens because egoism is laid in human’s nature and people mostly care about their own interest and avails. Contrariwise, authority’s move composes of making a whistleblower to think that his behavior is right and the delations are good for company. In such way, an employee who accumulate information share it with great joy. Employers occupying high positions are creating the motivations for whistleblowers. It often belongs to special bonuses, as the additional payments to the salary. For the maintenance of discipline, for the stories of observing the behavior of colleagues for the head, employee’s salary may be raised in times. Collectors of data affirm that if there is a gossip, it was a real reason for it. They are ready to interrogate every college of the gossip hero in order to get to the roots. This job is very dodgy and people who pay attention on it are quite rational. They do know that the main thing is to use such information wisely. In each of the individual cases of complaints department conducts thorough investigation. A recent discovery was the existence of risk-managers- specially hired staff, which is responsible for the settlement of intercompany conflicts. Only large corporations practice such staff, mostly firms prefer just to have an ad hoc e-mail address. The root of evil in all of the stories with complaints is that people are not ready to talk directly to each other. They are used to hide their faces and anonymously write the offensive reports about their colleagues and employers, instead of trying to solve the problem with an immediate direct contact. Risk-managers are complaining they would never apply for a job in a company, where whistleblowing is encouraged. For them there are too much dirt and unfounded accusations in similar organizational systems. It turns out, that the one who whistleblows first is right. People begin to play a race; that distracts them from the actual activities. However, the advance of successful companies is in friendly confidence atmosphere. The literate bosses understand that it is better have a good relationship with an employee, than to make him work in fear and hatred. For instance, “Google” provides an opportunity for the worker to create his own dream-office. That’s why many people eager to work there, as “Google” gives the space for imagination usage. Returning to the topic of whistleblowers can be said that from the positive side people are denouncing to improve the work quality and the system’s organization.

In 2013 scandalous non-profit organization “WikiLeaks” has published incriminating evidence apropos global surveillance conducted by CIA and NSA. Tones of hidden data were rebuked. The name “Edward Snowden” was on everyone’s lips. With the help of WikiLeaks founder, Julian Assange, Snowden opened public's eyes to the reality of work of special services. “As a former employee of System Administration, he downloaded 1.7 billion of secret files”, announces in the enclosed report Pentagon. Society is still discussing huge conflict and its consequences. Thus, when awful truth came out, one of the most famous whistleblowers in history found himself in a contradictory situation. Snowden helped society, thereby incurred anger of authorities. With this in mind, comes the question of morality: was what he did absolutely right or absolutely wrong? There are norms and rules of behavior, requiring a man to minister the society. The main task of the man is to make himself useful for another, starting with neighbors, ending with the city or country, with the help of his activities. Here Snowden’s deed played a favorable role for citizens, and harmful enough for the governments. However, serving the public good to make everyone happy might sound unrealistic, because there are always disaffected ones in society. For some reasons, government used to hide vital information from the world, and probably it was better not to figure it out ever. From the regulatory moral point of view, Edward Snowden has violated his work codex, giving the national secrets away and stealing data right under government’s nose. He behaved incorrectly concerning the state.

On the other hand, relying on the basic functions of morality, Snowden’s act contains absolute moral permissibility. Without his whistleblowing, the society would never have any proofs of the facts of total wiretapping and substantial aggressive actions of American military in combat situations. His humanistic potential was so great that he could not help trying to stop unfair actions, or at least warn the people. In terms of estimator, Snowden has chosen the position of justice. To emphasize, former system administrator jeopardized his career, family and his life. Morality impart the color of the correct social orientation through moral ideals and objectives, providing a harmonious combination of personal and public interests. As can be seen, educational function also presented in Snowden’s movement. The deed characterizes Snowden as a person with established spiritual personality. When he looked at everything from the outside, he came up with the conclusion that what he was doing had been harming society more than helping. Being morally well mannered, he was aware of what is happening in the right colors. Edward Snowden also behaved like the one with the acute conscious sense. A self-sufficient value has every one of the people, thus expression of the will of one person should not fall at the same time will of others. Former security agent clued secrecy in front of society, basing on the personal opinion. He behaved right in the relation to the people in a whole world, what made from him a hero and U.S.A.’s number one wanted person at the same time.

As shown below on the example of Edward Snowden, whistleblowing now can be called a kind of human’s duty. To my opinion, present comprehension of the ‘whistleblowing’ term is benign. The motive of whistleblowing is not actually moral because of the fear of being declassified, yet because of the person’s assurance that the actions of his or her surroundings are immoral. Some governments support whistleblowers providing special protection programs for them. For instance, OSHA’s whistleblower statutes protects from retaliation. “An employer cannot retaliate by taking "adverse action" against workers who report injuries, safety concerns, or other protected activity”, claims the program official web page. If the norm is to save lives and views, not complying with it is immoral. People need to instruct each other on the right path and, paying attention on Snowden’s case, whistleblowing truly holds a beneficial effect on the enlightenment of human society.

To conclude, everybody tend to build his own moral frames. In the majority people behave compassionately, and realize equally if what they do is good or bad. Humans in most cases are trying not to overstep the bounds of permitted actions, following the rules of generally accepted moral standards. Thus, whistleblowing cannot be treated as morally impermissible, because it implies a respect for civic duty and service for the good of society. If whistleblowing contains facilitation quietude and people’s well-being, as there is now, then it is obviously an auspicious phenomenon.

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