

Man Does Not Live on Bread Alone (Matthew 4: 4)

Dan Romulus Şerban

Dr., Bucharest Clinical Emergency Hospital, Romania PhD student in theology, Ecumene Doctoral School, "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, danserbanro@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: There are several understudied types of addictions. Whether it is an addiction to food or alcohol, smoking, drugs, or, more recently, technology, the brain's reaction is the same, consisting of the secretion of serotonin, the pleasure hormone. Combating these addictions can be achieved through integrative therapy, which includes both the contemplation of nature and the discovery of its secrets, the cultivation of the mind, a balanced diet, and occupational therapy. In addition to lifestyle changes, religion is a recommended solution because it replaces the addiction of the brain with a benevolent attitude that can inter-neuronally discharge the same pleasure hormone.

KEYWORDS: adrenaline, addiction, alcohol, food, cigarettes, drugs, technology, religion

An unfortunate traffic accident that happened last summer on the seaside in which a young man under the influence of psychotropic substances killed two other young men, who were returning home in the morning, inflamed Romanian society. The social issue brought into discussion the widespread phenomenon of drug use and acceptance of their use in society. Suddenly, drugs were divided into good drugs or bad drugs, recreational drugs (the name originated from the West) or aggressive drugs. And as usual, the discussion "melted" after triggering a national outcry focused more on the death of the two innocent young men than the depth of the drug phenomenon, of their promotion, of the "networks of death" that sell it. As usual, it was considered that keeping the subject on the agenda of the newsrooms until it is consumed by the general public is sufficient, although its continuity was increased by the tragedy of the families touched by these deaths and to the same extent by the tragedy of the family with 3 children (less than said publicly) from which came "the one responsible for the whole tragedy", "the child out of control", "the criminal", "the drug addict". This side of the phenomenon was cruelly exploited by the mass media, which sporadically and futilely focused on the depth of the phenomenon.

The usual understanding is that we are talking about drug addiction: a young man who uses the "dust of death" to get pleasure is to be pitied in this sense. Legally, if she consumes them at home then it is not punishable and cannot be subjected to public reproach through a judgment. Only in the situation where he is "caught" by the competent bodies can he be charged with anything (Law No 143/2000). The subtext therefore accepts the idea that obtaining personal pleasure is tolerable by society if its unanimously accepted values are not attacked. However, the phenomenon in question, which is motivated by obtaining pleasure, has several facets insufficiently commented on or understood by society.

Addiction to food has led to an increase in obesity in the world with direct consequences on the health status of the world population (WHO 2021). The WHO reports bear witness to this. Although it is still not considered nearly as harmful as the consumption of psychoactive substances, obesity behaves like a "plague". Between 1016 (the date of the last WHO reports), it was found that since 2010 the prevalence of obesity in adults has increased from 11.2% to 13.1% worldwide (Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO 2023). Improper diet, sedentary lifestyle, genetic and hereditary factors, socio-economic factors have all led to the explosion of obesity recorded in WHO statistics.

The situation is also relatively accepted regarding alcohol, although it is visible to anyone that an increase in the amount of alcohol to obtain a higher bacchanal pleasure,

possibly multiplied, keeps the addicted to it and does not help to free it from its power. While the primary response to achieving pleasure is to increase the amount of liquid ingested or to switch to a higher level of strength, the solution seems to have the opposite effect. Increasing the amount of alcohol, which appears in the eyes of consumers as a "substitution therapy" for obtaining pleasure (increases the consumer's pleasure and confidence), seems to be a solution, but precisely this delusion reduces the chance of redefining an assumed man (Proverbs 23: 29) and acts by aggravating mental problems (Rehm 2019, 1). Neurological (Rocco 2014, 14652-9), hepatic (Rocco 14652-9), cardiovascular (Ronksley 2011, 671), diabetes (Neuenschwander 2019, 12368) following ingestion. This drug, considered harmless for usual situations and moderate amounts of consumption, becomes dangerous when exceeding a certain threshold that develops in pathological cases. Although it comes with certain advantages (anxiolytic, antidepressant, relaxing and sedative effect) useful for anxious, depressed or insomniac patients, the long-term effects are unfortunate (Xuan 2019, 117-118).

Cigarettes are part of the same category of socially accepted drugs. Despite the numerous studies that consider smoking guilty, it is appreciated as a habit that brings mental relaxation. It has a benefit!!! Serious analysis questioning the phenomenon appeared and began to be undertaken by the WHO since the beginning of the century (Samet 2001, report of WHO). In Romania, for example, the report "Smoking and Public Health in Romania" (Center for Health Policy and Services 2004) was edited at the governmental level. And yet, to maintain the phenomenon, to deceive itself, society invented a new tactic in the fight against smoking by putting electronic cigarettes on the market, in synthetic products with varying doses of nicotine. Although addictive and here it remains certain, it is still lower than that determined by cigarettes (Shiffman and Sembower 2020, 1924-1931), and as such, there is a minimal benefit that is far from bringing peace.

There is also a much more subtle addiction that wastes time, health, imprisoning individuals within their own boundaries: the movie. Living in an unreal world cannot prepare you for normal reactions to a real encounter. Whether indulging in pornography or sitcoms, this addiction weakens human connections, diminishes empathy, and erodes perseverance and inspiration. Things that in themselves would not be bad or sinful, can monopolize life and movie addiction can trigger the same mental patterns of pleasure in the same pattern as in the cases presented above. The inability to establish control over one's life, neglecting all obligations, physical health problems and ignoring risk factors, mental health problems (depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, panic attacks) also appear here and are clear evidence that the human body has the same pattern of reaction to aggression. It accesses the pleasure hormone—dopamine, (serotonin) (Behav 2015, 164-75) or the stress hormone—adrenaline.

The problem of addiction to movies (serials, soap operas, pornographic) (The influence of films on the personality of young people 2023) was not considered to have an impact on society, although it really exists. Society preferred to appreciate it as an innocent pleasure, although the social effects are similar (Gheorghe 2005, 25-40) to those of other addictions. The capture of the human psyche in an unreal (Ekman 2001, 33-34) realm where phantasms or fears produce the same chemically mediated discharge ends in the annihilation of one's own will (Memon et al. 2003, 48-73). The technological development of the last 30 years has also developed another form of addiction. Today's generation is no longer dependent on television, instead, they are addicted to the internet—a purchase with many advantages but also numerous disadvantages, which comes "as a package" together with the benefits and the development of the necessary devices. Two concurrent developments and two huge challenges—a much more treacherous discovery and to which society is filled with a deep thrill, not finding the right attitude to respond. Artificial intelligence and technology addiction.

In previous years, this was manifested by the shift from classic roulette casino gambling to modern casino gambling, where slot machines cause the same need for reward by

triggering the same psychic mechanism. Modern casinos in America allow individuals to try their luck any day, without the need to wait for a specific drawing. Tailcoats are no longer required. It is a form of vulgarization of the gain, and after the "level" was relatively consumed, the one of technology dependence was passed. New and new skills are discovered by computer, an ever-growing blanket of people is dependent on this technology and willing to give up basic social security measures (TechCafe.ro 2022) to satisfy their pleasure and position themselves socially. Growing technology is guaranteed, exposure to an ever-increasing amount of information is assured, the vendors' offer of high-performance devices is certain in store windows, and advertisements inevitably lead to the maintenance of this addiction.

At Bethesda (John 5: 1-18) it was a primitive form of roulette using the same psychological mechanism. Under the tacit protection of the high Jewish religious authorities, a more discreet game of social "roulette" was played out. While waiting for the "turbulence of the waters," someone, a sick bastard, experiences the mental state following a disappointment or, on the contrary, the same release of dopamine for the winner of the moment. A more refined form of desperate running (John 5: 7) after the chemical discharge from the human brain. Like in the Roman arenas or in the Spanish bullfight. Although 2000 years have passed, the mechanism has not changed. It is the same and generated by the same spring.

The forms of addictions—a dependence that exceeds the limit (not clearly defined of the normal) can continue. Probably everyone knows or has a neighbor for whom animal husbandry (an otherwise honorable occupation) becomes the main object of pleasure, and then their house really becomes a menagerie, or heard of people who collect things from the street and turn their home into a huge garbage dump. Although the reaction seems pathological it is based on the same discharge of serotonin. Their reaction involves the same psychic mechanism. And if such an attitude is reprehensible even though the psychic mechanism is similar, why would we consider that the accumulation of sexual, technological, alimentary, olfactory information, of some shopping experiences would be less harmful, less criticizability or should be socially acceptable since they all lead to the same interneuronal chemical discharge and an excess accumulation of mediators that can become harmful (the hoarding case is relevant)? Just because the last one was diagnosed as compulsive hoarding disordre?

There is a famous experiment (Olds and Milner 1954, 419–27) with a mouse with some electrodes implanted in the brain that presses until exhaustion a pedal that discharges electrical impulses in the brain when the electrodes are implanted in the "pleasure" areas. Similar to the mouse in Olds and Millner's experiments, mankind runs obsessively to get its pleasure. Without electrical implants, individuals continuously stimulate their alimentary, visual, olfactory, and sensory receptors with prohibited or intellectual substances (such as technological addictions, cars, electronic devices). A shift towards explanations that impose pleasure as the one that dictates conduct has been observed. "If I like it" has become a leitmotif for a world without clear, objective but multicentric rules. There are too many unknowns, and such an equation leads to chaos. Too many subjective and continuously shaping factors cannot guarantee the existence of a valid solution but rather trigger the feeling of disaggregation. It has thus moved to a postmodern philosophy that condones any behavioral deviation in the name of reconciliation and understanding at any cost. It is the crisis that humanity is experiencing in recent years.

Elevating personal pleasure to the rank of obligatory accepted conduct, justifying it through the "inalienable" right of the person leads to the appearance of another right, the personal right which, tending to generalize, overshadows community law. It started subtly, innocently: "It's nice what I like," and it can end by establishing millions of "little dictators" whoa are hardly willing to negotiate.

Faced with all these changes, humanity has not been able to identify the meaning of evolution. Allowing the introduction of a subjective element into the discussion, the pleasure of each person has generated the multipolar society unable to know its limits, powerless to identify a grid to ensure the measurement of its efficiency. Unfortunately, the situation is reproduced with the same limits of variation also at the individual level because the authorization of the increase in the importance of personal law at the expense of collective law generates the appearance of an unsystematized world, with an increased degree of instability and chaos. The collective right is dislocated to the extent of the subjective wishes of the component individuals. It is predictable that it will prevail to the extent that the issue will be more socially or economically important and the decline will increase.

Postmodernism motivated this multipolarity and explained its necessity even though it pushes human society outside conventional norms; and all starting from some addictions that had to be justified in front of their own consciences. It's not bad if one indulges in overeating and becomes obese because that is the pleasure of the individual (it is understood that we are not discussing cases with medical motivation here). And you are not even allowed to pay attention to this direction, because everything can end up in court as an attack on the person. You can express yourself "in rem". It is not bad that he smokes if this is the desire of the consumer (and in the end it is good not to care that he destroys his health if he consciously assumes this passion). The disappearance of the social "frame" of resistance that warned led to the "flabby" society unfolding under one's own eyes. But also, to the increase of addictions, because there is a direct proportional correspondence between them. It is not bad that the individual drinks, the important thing is not to become antisocial, it is not bad that he constantly watches movies (pornographic or not) and that he becomes dysfunctional living in an imaginary world, what is important is the pleasure of the person concerned, in privacy to be satisfied. Carpe diem! It is also not bad if soft drugs are used in an organized setting. It can relax! It's a bohemian attitude! You can stimulate a state of well-being, there may be medical benefits! And if man runs after technology, it can become beneficial for personal development, by learning new skills or opportunities that technology makes available to man to increase his quality of life.

However, the identification of a new, unknown element that arouses fear, artificial intelligence, raises questions for humanity. One cannot expect masterful solutions in this field. Man is the same and built in the same way. A legal limitation, a definition of the terms will probably be tried, and everything will remain at the level of the first articles of the legislations of the various countries. No solutions, however, in the medium or long term.

But the development of all these addictions, over time was done to increase the pleasure of the addicted individual after discharging the pleasure hormone. But they all involve the same response mechanism in the brain, the discharge of dopamine in increasing amounts. The pleasure hormone cannot be secreted indefinitely and cannot produce infinite pleasure because such a state involves exhaustion. Though it may seem beneficial initially, in the first moments it mobilizes the body, it acts like coffee that keeps one awake by exciting nerve endings and creating a feeling of well-being, but subconsciously the body is depleted by real resources that do not have the necessary recovery time.

Until now, society has not identified a solution for these addictions. It was thought that if a punitive mechanism is considered alongside one to reduce acuity, the situation is as if solved. The force mechanism that tries to suppress the instinctual attitude, to subdue it, seems to be bankrupt. Instinct usually dominates intellect. It is a solution that the body knows. We fast not to attract the attention of the people around us to the quality of our spiritual life, but to subdue the instinct of the intellect. It is good if more distilled drinks are made, if cigarettes become more refined, if movies are more "broken" from reality, if new devices have additional technological advantages, but it is negative to improve the quality of drugs. Sometimes, for certain types of addictions, improving the quality of the "drug"—regardless of

its nature—seems to be an easy option. However, it is increasingly clear that the solution to reducing/stopping addiction does not lie in these specific improvements. Neutralizing dopamine or keeping it at a constant level did not find a solution either, or maybe humanity refrained here thinking it was triggering some biological misfortune (restraint that would be a testament to wisdom).

To reduce obesity, medicine has invented therapeutic procedures to eliminate excess adipose tissue, but its solutions are ultimately palliative Surgical removal of fat deposits or reducing the amount of food ingested by surgically reducing the size of the stomach or using external means (balloons in the stomach) they are solutions that do not always prove salutary. palliation. Do not we know how to solve the smoking situation? We invented VEM - electronic smoking or nicotine patches. Humanity has the same standard answers here, either we reduce the intake of the substance that created addiction, or we replace it (we fool ourselves). Shaping the subconscious mind by introducing information that it is hoped will act on it in the long term on the principle of "at least keeping something in the head", was another direction of development. We no longer make films like in 1930 and the films must be as truthful as possible so that the viewer becomes more socially involved, poses some problems, looks for answers and gives up this sinful enslavement.

For the time being, humanity responds to addiction through symposia, working groups, meetings of responsible factors from ministries or even CSAT (2023), in Romania, (which recently on October 12, 2023 declared that drugs "harm national security values") and insufficiently coordinated attitudes.

Some of the proposed solutions for reducing addiction have been listed above although they cannot solve the problem. An absolute first rule is to involve the addicted subject in their own detoxification program. Achieving the desired result is achieved, in addition to the involvement of the subject in question, and through the involvement of society, of its specialized bodies vested by legislation (the police force) doubled by justice (Law No 143/2000 on preventing and combating illicit drug trafficking and consumption 2014), "the armed arm of the law." On the other hand, there are the well-known proposals that have in mind general indications such as reducing consumption or total abstinence, drug treatment carried out with the aim of mitigating the withdrawal syndrome, hepatic metabolism and neurometabolic therapy, neutralization of harmful substances, physical therapy, lifestyle change and of course treatment psychological. If those listed above obviously refer to patients addicted to psychoactive substances, considering that the mental reaction of the human body is unitary, regardless of the type of addiction developed - they all boil down to the discharge of serotonin - we appreciate that it is necessary to identify a unitary solution even if multipolar.

Returning to the present, can we ask the population to give up, for example, technology (the sophisticated form of addiction, developed in recent years) while also burying the positive aspects of development? Will we be willing to give up the vacuum cleaner or the washing machine and propose as a threshold of acceptance only robotization so as not to be enslaved? Robotization is good but computerization is bad?

In the recent pandemic, it has been demonstrated that humanity has lost the battle with the virus's ability to transform. It has become part of our lives, we have learned (Rotaru 2020, 71-82) to coexist with it and its mutations have hindered the speed of creating an effective vaccine. The declarations of war of 3 years ago now seem like forms of self-encouragement that we wish to forget. It has moved to the next more balanced stage in the attitude towards the unknown virus. We think that from these approaches ... we have to learn, to look for the optimal solutions? Could we find against an addiction, the unknowns that lack a proper analysis as well as enthusiastic solutions? Symposia will continue, medical studies will continue without interruption, lectures on the malignancy of addictions will be given in various more sophisticated or simpler symposia, the search for the identification of a molecule

that will curb addictions will continue steadily in all the great laboratories of the world, but they are at the disposition of all mankind some primary advice that is good to remember. The mechanism is relatively simple and fasting requires the control of the instinctive part of man by the intellect, the subjugation of the material, the immaterial. Fasting therefore teaches us a lot because man does not live by bread alone... and his addictions are inferior to dependence on an idea, a relationship, on divinity.

The proposal made is in fact to give up the claim that one's own conscience is infallible and can guide life without mistakes and permanently. An implicit and necessary tolerance is welcome because these attitudes ultimately affect the patient, his family (Rotaru 2010, 7), and the social support group in his various phases of involvement. That is why the solution must be integral and include all participants in the unpleasant experience of addiction even if the participation is in different degrees. Social aggression would thus be eliminated and the proposed solution, to stop the uncontrolled and compulsive use of illegal substances, or addictive attitudes, must be integrative. She finds herself in another, less kinesthetic but equally real plane.

It has been observed that pleasurable experiences are also associated with religious activity which is also accompanied by the activation of circuits that use dopamine. This common element with addictions leads to the idea, as already stated, that there is a pleasure control system in the mammalian brain that may be responsible for various attitudes. Religion (Rotaru 2017, 57-76) responds to these challenges through education. God is the source of knowledge, and steadfastness, perseverance, honor to yourself and to those around you, discipline and self-discipline are qualities that must be constantly cultivated. Contemplation of nature, learning from its secrets (Job 12: 7, 8), cultivation of the mind (Rotaru 2021a, 87-92), balanced nutrition, an adequate recreation program, appropriate but not strenuous physical exercises, occupational therapy, a thoughtful life and work regimen, activity for peers with problems alongside less "tangible" aspects such as the elimination of selfishness, decent attitude, spiritual education (Rotaru 2021b, 190-196) are all elements that together lead to a recapture of the confused meanderings of one's own mind.

Some of these solutions are already known and practiced in large clinics, but probably the simultaneous approach remains the solution to getting rid of addictions of various kinds so that the addictive cortical focus is moved to less dangerous areas or even annihilated. However, religion promises a solution to addictions and with the help of an external power that can be permanently accessed, and even for the most pragmatic, in the desire to remove acutum this solution is worth trying (White 2012).

References

Center for Health Policy and Services. 2004. "Smoking and public health in Romania." https://stopfumat.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Studiu_CPSS_04.pdf. Accessed on November 29, 2023.

Ekman, Paul. 2001. Telling Lies Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace. Politics and Marriage. New York, London: W.W. Norton.

Food and Agriculture Organization of UN (FAO). 2023. "Europe and Central Asiaregional Overview Of Food Security And Nutrition 2022: Statistics And Trends." Accessed on November 29, 2023. https://www.fao.org/3/cc2571en/online/sofi-statistics-reu-2022/adult-obesity.html.

Holy Bible – New International Version. The single Column Reference Bible. New International Version. Copyright 1987 by the Zondervan Corporation

Influența filmelor asupra personalității tinerilor (The influence of films on the personality of young people). file:///C:/Users/Dada/Downloads/111106396-Inflenta-Filmelor-Asupra-Personalitatii-Tinerilor-1.pdf. Accessed on November 27, 2023.

Law No 143/2000 on preventing and combating illicit drug trafficking and consumption. *Monitorul Oficial*. Part I No 163 of 06 March 2014. https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gm4tcnrzg4/legea-nr-143-2000-privind-prevenirea-si-combaterea-traficului-si-consumului-ilicit-de-droguri. Accessed on November 29, 2023.

Memon, Amina, Aldert Vrij, and Bull Ray. 2003. *Psychology and Law: Veracity, Accuracy, and Credibility* second edition. England: John Wiley, 48-73. Accessed on November 29, 2023.

- Neuenschwander, Manuela et al. 2019. "Role of diet in type 2 diabetes incidence: umbrella review of metaanalyses of prospective observational studies." *BMJ* 366: 12368. Accessed on November 28, 2023.
- Olds, James, and Milner Paul 1954. "Positive reinforcement produced by electrical stimulation of septal area and other regions of rat brain." *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology* 47:419–27.
- Rehm, J., O.S.M. Hasan, S.E. Black et al. 2019. "Alcohol use and dementia: a systematic scoping review." Alz Res Therapy 11, 1 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13195-018-0453-0.
- Rocco, A., D. Compare, D. Angrisani, M. Sanduzzi Zamparelli, & G. Nardone. 2014. "Alcoholic disease: liver and beyond." *World Journal of Gastroenterology* 20(40): 14652–14659. https://doi.org/10.3748/wjg.v20.i40.14652.
- Ronksley Paul E. et al. 2011. "Association of alcohol consumption with selected cardiovascular disease outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis." *BMJ*, 342: 671. doi: https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.d671.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2010. "Familia, o gradină a Domnului" ("The family, a garden of God"). In *Argeșul Ortodox* IX, 468: 7.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2016a. "The name "Immanuel" = "God with us", a proof of God's immanence, according to the religious vision of the American author Ellen G. White". *Dialogo* 2, 2: 34-44.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2016b. "Plea for Human Dignity". Scientia Moralitas. Human Dignity A Contemporary Perspectives 1: 29-43.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2017. "Misiunea Bisericii în societate" ("The mission of the Church in society"). Timotheus – Incursiuni Teologice Tematice 4 (2): 57-76.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2020. "Spiritual lessons observed through the Coronavirus Crisis." In *Dialogo. Issue of Modern Man* 6(2): 71-82.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2021a. "Current Values of Education and Culture." In *Proceedings of the 24th International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*, edited by Nicoleta Elena Heghes, 87-92. Princeton, NJ, United States of America.
- Rotaru, Ioan-Gheorghe. 2021b. "Valences of Education." In *Proceedings of the 24th International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities*, edited by Nicoleta Elena Heghes, 190-96. Princeton, NJ, United States of America.
- Samet Jonathan, Yoon Soon-Young. 2001. "Women and the tobacco epidemic Challenges for the 21st Century", report published by the World Health Organization, Institute for Global Tobacco Control, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. Accessed on November 29, 2023.
- Shiffman Saul, and Sembower Mark A. 2020. "Dependence on e-cigarettes and cigarettes in a cross-sectional study of US adults." *Addiction* 115(10):1924-1931, doi: 10.1111/add.15060. Epub 2020 Apr 20.
- Supreme Council of National Defence of Romania (CSAT). 2023. Meeting of the Supreme Council of Defense of the Country." https://csat.presidency.ro/ro/comuni/sedinta-consiliului-suprem-de-aparare-a-tarii1697117415. Accessed on November 28, 2023.
- TechCafe.ro. 2022. "Maslow's Pyramid: What is it? How is it used?" https://techcafe.ro/noutati/piramida-lui-maslow-ce-este-cum-se-utilizeaza/. Accessed on November 29, 2023.
- Virgiliu, Gheorghe. 2005. Efectele televiziunii asupra minții umane (The effects of television on the human mind). Bucharest: Evanghelismos Publishing. Accessed on November 29, 2023.
- White, E. G. 2012. *Education*. E. G. White Estate. https://liceulintegritas.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Educatie.pdf. Accessed on November 28, 2023.
- World Health Organization (WHO). 2021. "Obesity and overweight." Accessed on November 29, 2023. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight.
- Xuan, Ziming. 2019. "Consuming 100 g/week or less of alcohol was associated with the lowest risk of all-cause mortality." *BMJ Evid Based Med* 24 (3): 117-118.
- Yamamoto K, Fontaine R, Pasqualini C, Vernier P. 2015. "Classification of Dopamine Receptor Genes in Vertebrates: Nine Subtypes in Osteichthyes." Brain, Behavior and Evolution 86 (3-4): 164–175. https://doi.org/10.1159/000441550.