

SOCIAL AND CULTUROLOGICAL ASPECT OF RELIGION

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Being the public phenomenon, the religion has quite certain social, gnoseological and psychological roots. The social reasons of its emergence are the objective factors of public life, connected with relation of people to the nature and among themselves (domination of nature forces, spontaneity of the public relations). The gnoseological reasons are connected with ability of a person to think in the abstract way, and, with aspiration to learn and explain surrounding phenomena. The psychological reasons are generated from negative emotions and experiences of a person, his dissatisfaction with a real situation and absence of opportunities to eliminate a source of the problems. Thereby, a person's desire and attempt to escape from solving the complex problems of life and search for means of rescue in religion and belief are considered to be natural and clear.

Key words: religion, culture, belief, spirituality, society, public consciousness, civilization, cultural heritage.

The religious culture of mankind represents the cumulative ideal material, which has the unique history and a number of differential peculiarities. The system of values, which is broadly determined by appropriate religious ideas, attaching moral values to certain cultural society elements, is appeared to be the important part as for religious, so for spiritual culture in whole[1]. The Christian understanding of religion is reflected in a number of cultural theories (for instance, Socrates, Plato, Augustine, Hegel). The treatment of religion as difficult phenomenon of individual consciousness defined the main features of its philosophical and rationalistic criticism in the XVIII-XIX centuries. Development of empirical and comparative cultural science from the middle of the XIX century (M. Müller, E. Taylor, J. Fraser) led to searches of religious culture primitive elements, which are considered to be available for supervision and the scientific analysis. G. Spencer and E. Taylor created the theory according to which these elements were in ideas of existence of the spirits and souls, connected with such cult phenomenon as animism. R. Marett attributed ability of natural and supernatural to primitive consciousness. The subjective and psychological theories of religion, reducing it to extraordinary conditions of human mentality, started developing since the end of the XIX century. This movement leads to consider religion as type of psychological experience of an individual (W. James). One of the directions of psychological approach was made by the theory of the German philosopher R. Otto about religion as a meeting phenomenon with mysterious, absolutely different. Here possibilities of science consist in registration, comparison and the analysis of factors of such meeting. This opinion had an impact on phenomenological schools development in cultural science (M. Eliade, R. Pettatsiona, G. van der Leeuw) which aspire to analyze separate elements of myths and ritual. Psychological theories (S. Freud, K. Jung, E. Fromm) discover a basis of religious consciousness of some primordial ideal structures on it (at K. Jung - archetypes) in which sacred experience of the previous generations of people is fixed.

Culturologists always emphasized that religions are the phenomenon of the world culture. K. Jaspers, considering axial time, paid considerable attention to a religion phenomenon. Concerning this boundary of human history, K. Jaspers wrote: "Mythological era with its quiet stability comes to an end. The Greek, Indian, Chinese philosophers and Buddha in the main ideas about God were far from the myth, the Deity immeasurably dominated by means of an ethical religion aspect strengthening" [2, p. 31]. The religion is deeply connected with culture. The culture was born from a cult. It is a conature of spirituality, therefore, of religion. Deep secret bases of culture root in religion. Therefore research of religion as phenomenon of culture is always actual. Some western culturologists (E. Durkheim, M. Weber) came to consideration of religious faiths system as social phenomenon, to research of a cult and belief, to correlation of individual and social. Rejection from formulation and of an abstract question about religion nature in favor of concrete consideration of its empirically available social manifestations is appeared to be specific for modern representatives of these directions (membership in the religious organizations, observance of ceremonial norms, social, economic and political connections of

religious institutes, elements of mass religious consciousness). The religion represented one of the main components of these or those cultures. Myths about emergence of life and twilight of the gods had huge impact on world civilizations that with a known share of probability allows speaking about religious causality of new cultures birth. Besides it is necessary to remember that a big quantity or even the majority of social institutes and their ideology are based on these or those concepts, modernized according to historical need. So important role of religion in the history of a civilization can be explained with a variety of reasons. Including the fact that they especially strongly influence on the character of nation, historically quickly changing it. Religions hypnotically affect the spiritual sphere of this or that society, giving to the church members rather steady condition of belief, hope, love, happiness which these or those progressive intellectual paradigms can't often give. Evolution of a civilization evokes more and more increasing desires in people, quite often without giving them means for their satisfaction that leads to total soulful discontent of the nation. Then these or those religions easier better and quicker find means for creation of a new basis of happy mind state of the exhausted and suffering people. Great religious figures before others understood that the true reason of human happiness lies in ourselves, in the moral sphere [3].

In the history of society the periods when the religion gives to the nation such superforce, which is capable to unite all its interests, feelings and ideas are frequent, giving rise to the new religious spirit, which is quickly changing the developed temper of the people. A number of similar examples when religious ideas changed character of the nations that they made historical superefforts, which in future founded great world empires, is observed in the history. But as soon as an action of this religious ideal, subordinating a soul of the nation, started disappearing and weakening, also those cultures, which were based on it, gradually disappeared. Society started forgetting the former religious faiths, which inspired and directed people. In the following, the new civilization based on a new belief took their place. All this allows us to say that such universal property of a person as belief [4, p. 15-19], which is not only a heart of any including secular system of beliefs, but also one of the supreme human values, developed by our civilization for some tens of thousands of years of its development, lies at the root of religious consciousness. The belief constitutes the most important part of world view of people. It is the extremely important mental orientation, ethical standard according to which a person thinks, feels and works. Though a person is part of the nature, but, thanks to the consciousness, it is the separated, isolated part of the nature. The consciousness of a person is his knowledge, joint with other people, its general understanding of the world, laws and the place of a person in it.

Connection between generations in any culture doesn't interrupt if their younger part trusts last experience of compatriots. Therefore, the belief is a broadly collective, generalized concept about the world. Thanks to consciousness a person is capable to analyze, learn laws of development, find sense and the purpose of the existence, in other words the consciousness helps a person to create round him the world of human culture. Religion is one of the most ancient forms of mass consciousness. It finds the expression in ritual and mythological systems, activity of the cult organizations. The separate moments of reality are actually reproduced in religious representations and actions. A psychological overcoming of certain socially significant contradictions occurs in religious system and its separate elements [5]. Thanks to it the religion also acts as addition of the real relations, universal eschatological, the last sanction in relation to any kind of activity. Certain moments of people activity serve as a basis of emergence and constant reconstruction of the religious relations. In ancient forms of social consciousness man has not recovered from the social community (clan) yet, and the community – from the nature [6]. It also contributed to transfer properties of the individual on the natural phenomena of world around, to an explanation of unclear phenomena as supernatural for an individual. Certain relations of the real world or the whole groups of supernatural beings and forces, which as if express the real relations of people to each other, receive a sacred value in the consciousness of a person. Such mediacy is appeared to be inevitable and the religious sanction of public norms – universal at a certain level of development of culture [7].

Evolution of public consciousness, since the era of the expansion of the ancient societies [8], led to the isolation of the ethical, legal, aesthetic and other forms of civilizational development [9], as resisting to religion or filling it. At this time religion as a special form of culture and public work,

which acts as the special social body, collecting and developing in the concentrated form universal and absolute sanctions, estimates, incentives, is allocated. The religious consciousness, in the simplest forms, is expressed in allocation of a certain number of actions, norms, objects, having special, sacred value from the sphere of human activity (for instance, a taboo – an unmotivated ban). There are no special systems of religious representations at this level of evolution. Value of the sacred is attributed to the action (for instance, to war, hunting, holiday). Subsequently certain specific cults (system of beliefs) with the symbolical actions (rituals), their understanding (mythology) and social organization are formed. It is obvious that in borders of this cult each of its parts performs belief function, removing some valid public contradictions. If in the religious myth it can be carried to certain time (for example, “before Fall” or after “revival from the dead”) and to a special place, in ritual system there are corresponding analogies (“liturgical time”, “a liturgical place”), that is special situations in which it is possible to observe the imagined approach of the person to God, overcoming of terrestrial difficulties. At a sufficient variety of various systems of beliefs, developing at the different people, some main types of plots (creation of the world, culture, people, emergence of the evil, injustice, death), a number of constant acts (the demiurge, the cultural hero, the patron) can be allocated in their structure.

The cult philosophy, connecting the past, the present and the future of this society takes the main place in a number of systems of beliefs. The special organization of individual and mass feelings system comprises the important element of the cult: ritual ecstasy, depression, catharsis and other methods, creating and adjusting psychological crises condition [10, p. 67-73]. Each religion develops its special, cultural and certain system of experiences, which a person feels towards sacred objects, at which the emotional saturation and specific sanctity of this relation exclude its rational assessment. Ancient cults directly mass (group ritual, a sacralization of norms of collective life), an individual prayer or a religious feeling are appeared to be the products of this initial collective separation. The group of believers can directly merge with referential social group (in a clan of ancient society, the theocratic state), or can be absolutely different from it (in secular society). Different types of groups of believers can act in the same society. A number of sects, representing itself as comparatively inconsiderable, strictly secluded groups, which rigidly winnow its candidates and often standing against dominant religions, government, official norms of society, exist in a row of modern societies along with relatively extensive church organizations, the membership of which is defined by acting symbolic and formal acts.

The history of mankind represents to some extent history of attempts of religious truth searching. The religion and religious rituals originated in all cultures as religious and spiritual structures are considered to be a part of human life [11]. Alternative religious faiths and ways of life give us the chance to be different and to adapt for other lifestyles. The very important role belongs to globalization processes [12], transforming consciousness of a person [13]. As a matter of fact, the main world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism are appeared to be alternative ways of religious truth searching. Judaism – is the earliest monotheistic religion which arose in the first millennium B.C. in Palestine. It is generally widespread among Jews. Adherents of Judaism believe in Yahweh (one God – the creator and the lord of the Universe), in immortality of soul, afterlife and the future arrival of the Messiah, in God's favoured Jewish people. The canon of sacred books of Judaism includes the Torah (“Taurat”), books of prophets and the Scripture. Various interpretations and comments of a canon are collected in the Talmud. Christianity – is a world religion in the heart of which there is belief in life, the doctrine, death and Jesus Christ's resurrection (from Nazareth) as Godman and Messiah. Holy Tradition, where the main is Scripture (Bible) – is a source of the beliefs of the Christian Church. Such dogmata as Trinity according to which God is single in itself, but exists in three persons (forms): God Father, God the son and Holy Spirit is extremely important in Christianity.

Actually Christianity arose as heresy in Judaism in the first century of our era in Palestine. The first learners of Jesus Christ (apostles) and other his followers recognized him as “Christ”, or “Anointed One”. He came to our world to execute promise given by God to Abraham, Isaak and Jacob. Inclusion of church members to God's grace is realized through their participation in sacred sacraments (baptism, housel, confession, religious marriage). Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire by the IV century. By the XIII century all Europe was a christianized. In Russia the Christianity

spread under the influence of Byzantium since the end of the X century. Christianity was divided into Catholicism and Orthodoxy in 1054 as a result of division of Churches (schism). During the reformation Protestantism was segregated from Catholicism in the XVI century.

Catholicism – is one of the main cultural movements in Christianity Besides, the different church organizations (centre – papacy, the head – sovereign pontiff, with the residence in Vatican), in comparison with Orthodoxy, it is necessary to refer addition to Christian “Symbol of the Faith” (in dogmata of Trinity), received the name “Filioque” (“and from the son”) – confirmation that the Holy Spirit originates not only from God the Father, but also from God the Son; presence of existence of doctrines about immaculate conception of Virgin Mary and her corporal ascension; about impeccability of the Pope; sharp differentiation between the world and seculars; celibacy (obligation of singleness of Catholic clergy). The Orthodox Church didn't accept “Filioque” that later served as one of the reasons for the subsequent division of churches.

Orthodoxy – is one of the three cultural religious movements in Christianity. The orthodox church follows resolutions of the first seven orthodox cathedrals. It recognizes domination of the Patriarch Constantinople and all traditional Christian sacraments. According to the doctrine the main differential peculiarity of Orthodoxy is considered to be (during the dogmata Trinity explanation) that the Holy Spirit originates only from God the Father (exclusion of “Filioque” from “Symbol of the Faith”) mainly for this Orthodoxy was accused in heresy by west christian church. Another characteristic feature of Orthodoxy consists in beauty and magnificence of ceremonial. In church service the important place is given to icons – traditional images of Christ, Mother of God and Sacred. Monks play a large role in orthodox practice. All orthodox bishops are monks (give a vow of chastity), but priests can have the wife and children. A peculiar cultural religious movement Hesychasm, as specific form of orthodox mysticism (esotericism), appeared in monastic environment. Nowadays the Orthodox Church in general still strives to keep the understanding of great initial Christian tradition in purity and inviolability.

Islam – appeared in Arabia in the VII century. The founder – Muhammad, followers – Muslims. Islam developed under considerable influence of Judaism and Christianity. The basic principles of Islam are stated in the Koran – the sacred book of Muslims. The main dogmata – cult to a great Almighty God – Allah and veneration of Mohammed as the prophet and rasul Allah. Muslims have to believe in immortality of soul and afterlife. There are five main pillars (duties) of Islam, prescribed to his adherents: belief that there is no other God, except Allah, and Muhammad is rasul Allah; fivefold daily fulfillment of a prayer; charity for the poor people; a post in a Ramadan month; the pilgrimage to Mecca made at least once in life. The sacred legend in Islam – is Sunnah, and the main directions (movements) – are Sunni Islam and Shia Islam. The system of theoretical divinity – kalam was created in the X century by Muslims. The legal system of Islam was developed in Shariat. Islam is the state religion in almost all countries with the prevailing Muslim population.

Buddhism – is the world religion which appeared in India, approximately in the V century B.C. It is based on the doctrine of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha), who tells that any material life is suffering. The subsequent death of a person doesn't give him final release from sufferings. Sometime later after death the human soul regenerates in a new body for new sufferings. And this cycle will proceed until the soul finds enlightenment and reaches a condition of a nirvana (dissolution in Divine). Besides Buddha added the important statement to the traditional doctrine of Hinduism that all terrestrial, material life is illusion, a mirage. Sufferings are caused not so much by the life, how by human ignorance about its illusoriness and the passions, arising in consequence of ignorance.

All listed world religions, embodying at institute of church, play an important role in the live of society and perform peculiar to it social functions, the main of which are irenic and world view functions. The last forms a certain frame of reference on the world which satisfies informative needs of people in an unscientific form and forms religious world view. Illusory and compensatory function of religion by means of which a person tries to overcome the real forces, dominating over him, supply the limitation of the knowledge, practice, social communication, not in the real world, but in imagination, in hope for the other world, is closely connected with world view function. Internal reconciliation of a person with the existing order of things appears to be a real consequence of religious compensation.

Organizational, regulatory, educational and communicative functions are also peculiar for religion. In general all these functions allow us to speak about an ideological function performance by religion.

Some irreligious functions, relating to the sphere of economy, policy, culture can be realized by religious organizations. However, these functions don't result from essence of religion and aren't identical to its main functions, though strengthen influence of a religious complex on public life in general. Besides, at certain stages of the existence (Ancient Egypt, the European Middle Ages) the religion actively concentrated in itself scientific and practical experience and knowledge as in the field of special (astronomy, medicine), so the humanities (literature, history), acting to the present day as the important historical and cultural phenomenon. From the culturological point of view, the religion is obviously a necessary phenomenon of human life. "If God is the Reason Operating universe, – writes B. Chicherin, – and the person as a reasonable being itself is a communicant of this Reason and carries in himself consciousness of its being, he, by his nature, has to seek to communication with God. The essence of Reason consists in communication. Corporal limitation separates: reasonable beings, in virtue of internal law, aspire to communication with each other. And if it is fair for separate beings, it should have place in the relation to that Being, which makes the center and connection of all inner world. As soon as a person gets concept about God, so he immediately aspires to unification with him [14, p. 190-191]. Religion – is the carrier of human values and moral imperatives. It defines its place in culture, society and in human life. World religions are natural result of cultural development, its necessary component at all stages of evolution of society. They accumulated in themselves achievements of the world culture and considerably promote to preservation of people cultural heritage and the states.

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