

THE PHENOMENON OF BELIEF IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SØREN KIERKEGAARD

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ФЕНОМЕН ВІРИ В ФІЛОСОФІЇ СЬОРЕНА К'ЄРКЕГОРА

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Шевченко С.Л. Феномен віри в філософії Сьорена К'єркегора.

Стаття розкриває проблему інтерпретації С. Кіркєгором поняття віри як парадоксу всупереч канонічному християнству. Автор зосереджує увагу на концепції "нового християнства" в філософії датського мислителя, зокрема на феномені віри в його поглядах. Доводиться, що саме християнство К'єркегор інтерпретував не як доктрину, а екзистенціальну комунікацію. Розглядається проблема співвідношення «бог – людина, індивід – суспільство, всезагальне – одиничне», яку Кіркєгор зводив до проблеми «думка – дія». Аналізується також постать "лицаря віри" – Авраама в творчості С.Кіркєгора.

Ключові слова: екзистенція, віра, християнство, духовність, вибір, пристрасть, непряма комунікація, парадокс.

ФЕНОМЕН ВЕРЫ В ФИЛОСОФИИ СЕРЕНА КЬЕРКЕГОРА

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Шевченко С.Л. Феномен веры в философии Серена Кьеркегора.

Статья раскрывает проблему интерпретации С. Кьеркегором понятия веры как парадокса вопреки каноническому христианству. Автор концентрирует внимание на концепции "нового христианства" в философии датского мыслителя, в частности на феномене веры в его взглядах. Доказывается, что само христианство Кьеркегор интерпретировал не как доктрину, а экзистенциальную коммуникацию. Рассматривается проблема соотношения «бог – человек, индивид – общество, всеобщее – единичное», которую Кьеркегор сводил к проблеме «мысль – действие». Анализируется также фигура "рыцаря веры" – Авраама в творчестве С.Кьеркегора.

Ключевые слова: экзистенция, вера, христианство, духовность, выбор, страсть, косвенная коммуникация, парадокс.

ФЕНОМЕНЪТ НА ВЯРАТА ВЪВ ФИЛОСОФИЯТА НА СЪОРЕН КИРКЕГОР

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Сергей Шевченко Феноменът на вярата във философията на Съорен Киркегор

В статията се излага проблема за тълкуването от С. Киркегор на концепцията за вярата като парадокс, противно на каноничното християнство. Авторът акцентира върху идеята за "новото християнство" във философията на датския мислител, по-специално на феномена на вярата в неговите възгледи. Доказва, че самото християнство Киркегор тълкува не като доктрина, но като екзистенциална комуникация. Проблемът за отношението "Бог – човек, човек – общество, всички – индивид", което от Киркегор е сведено до проблема за отношението "мисъл – действие". Също така се анализира фигурата на "рицаря на вярата" в делата на Авраам – според С. Киркегор.

Ключови думи: екзистенциален, вяра, християнство, духовност, избор, страст, непряка комуникация, парадокс.

In conditions of the crisis of modern Christian culture many thinkers see the combination between existentialism and theology as some kind of an adaptation of Christianity not only to the real situation of modern man, but also as the transformation of its value doctrine for the spiritual reanimation of the Western society. Modern age of "reevaluation of values", the collapse "of the discourse of Jesus Christ" came into the situation of disagreements between the sense of spiritual self-realization of the person in the modern epoch and the values of the society.

This problem as far back as the second half of the nineteenth century was outlined by Danish thinker S. Kierkegaard, who was considered the "first postmodernist" by many researchers, all the time referring to his philosophical works. However, the significant obstacle in understanding the philosophical legacy of S. Kierkegaard still remains the problem of interpreting the sense of his works (the so called "indirect expression").

In the context of this question, the philosophical understanding of the phenomenon of faith is no less important, considering the ideological function performed by faith in man's spiritual life. But in search of faith and God the whole "intrigue" of Kierkegaard's intellectual searches unfolds.

First of all, Kierkegaard appeals to the religious, or, to be more exact, biblical range of problems. However, "Kierkegaard's efforts, that J. Golomb observes, are directed at how to become a Christian, but not how to be the one. His personal life and works were a constant search for the true solitude" [1, 22]. In the biblical heroes who became the subject matter of his impartial reflection, complete indifference to everything outside, deep focus on yourself, immersion in self-reflection to find the meaning of true, authentic existence are attracted the most to him. In other words, that is not actually existence of vital, everyday, business, but the existence of, the truth which is revealed only in very crucial, decisive the moments. And that is why Kierkegaard chose Job and Abraham, who were put in such sharp conflict situations that even death could not settle them or at least weaken them.

In Kierkegaard's philosophy man has no innate instincts of faith. Faith for him is primarily emotional and volitional attitude toward God, owing to his fear of nothing. Sin and despair are the so-called guardians of human morality and religiosity. Morality, without faith, does not exist for man. According to the Danish philosopher: "In relation to the Absolute there is only the one time:

the present, for those who are not contemporary with the Absolute does not exist at all. As Christ is the Absolute, it is easy to see that in relation to him is there only one position to be taken – that of his contemporary. Three, seven, fifteen or nineteen centuries are all to nothing, they can not change him, and can not explain who he was, because that is open neither to experience, nor to knowledge, but only to faith" [2, 321].

Kierkegaard opposed against the totalization of the ordinariness and the marginalization of human existence, insisting on true being (authentic), which, in his opinion, is possible only in the spiritual dimension, and directly in the acts of faith. Christianity he considered the highest value in the love toward God, which is based on pure, unshakable faith. As such it entered in Christian culture through the story of Abraham's life. Incidentally, "Fear and trembling" begins with "praising word in honor of Abraham." Faith, in Kierkegaard, is a paradox that can not be mediated. Therefore, faith, in his opinion, is not a common spontaneity, as G. Hegel thought. In this paradox "a solitary¹ alone faces the Absolute". However, for Kierkegaard, as F. Koplston says: "The highest self-actualization of the individual is based on the correlation of himself with God, but not as with universal, absolute thinking, but as with the absolute You" [3, 384].

In faith man is above the general, because faith can not be mediated through the general. It is here that the individual's "self" gets opportunity to be spiritual in faith with the greatest strength that is, to achieve the authenticity of existence.

According to the Bible, Abraham, leaving his mind takes the faith with him, and everything happens according to his beliefs. As pointed out by S. Kierkegaard, the main feature of this belief was that it was truly authentic, valid, that is, it belonged to life at the present time. In this point he opposed the traditional Christian doctrine considering that nowadays Christianity has transformed the faith into the way of obtaining future, and, thus, spoiled having made it only the manifestation of mind. Kierkegaard's understanding of the "authenticity" of faith is not to save the man, but rather to make his life an exclusively spiritual and devout phenomenon.

The Danish philosopher was one of the first who revealed the crisis of religion at that time. The main events of the modern era that we see in our social environment are antagonistic to Christianity. Due to it, the only possibility to turn to Christianity is to become a Christian first and foremost; it is a step back from our usual way of thinking about our actions and thoughts of our way of thinking. On doing so, we will be able to get rid of spiritual alienation which keeps us in bondage. Exactly this thinking about our way of thinking S. Kierkegaard tried to revive in the reader, and to push man to the path "through himself." It is in this way that his works serve to the Christian therapy against our social environment. They encourage us to understand that our relations (particularly, the Christian ones) are also qualitatively different and acceptable for us. This "thinking about thinking" contributes directly to this kind of self-consciousness, without which our Christian development will reach a deadlock.

It is extremely important that Kierkegaard does not produce a new theology, because the goal of his concept is therapeutic rather than informative. The philosopher tries to persuade us that we do not need any additional information about God besides the inf. that is available in Holy Scripture, we need, to grow faster spiritually so that in our minds the only place for this information lives is already available in our opened. Kierkegaard has no intention tell us something new in his works, but only reminds us about the things we already know. He called himself a poet at the service of Christianity. Throughout his doctrine, and in various forms, he developed his concept of an individual, who has the right to grow spiritually in Christian love, hope, joy and peace, because he or she is not a spiritual slave of the social context.

The concept of "existence" is in some sense the question of practice that S. Kierkegaard understands, as he says, in "the Greek manner", that is not as a production but as an act the

¹ den Enkelte (of Danish)

whose purpose of which is agent. For someone who exists, according to the philosopher, existence is the highest interest [4, 192]. In harmony with his epoch that stated about "material interests" when ethics was increasingly acquiring the economic character, S. Kierkegaard reminded that the most important thing is the ability to recognize one's own good.

We get the answers neither from ethics, which only determines the measure of the good and the evil, nor from the world of any guides which is better (faith or the lack of faith, freedom or unfreedom, etc.). The both can turn out to be equally good, while in the "Philosophical crumbs" Kierkegaard expects from Christianity clarity that could release. Such clarity releases from errors and uncertainty (whether or I have chosen the right thing), and only such clarity ("truth", in the terminology) can be a solid foundation for faith. The Philosopher describes faith as "a paradox that is internally higher than objective reality".

S. Kierkegaard has the original way of interpretation of the possible dialogue not only among people, but also with God, only through the "indirect passionate" communication. "Christianity, the Philosopher says, is not a doctrine, but an existential communication" [5, 339]. In his turn, another researcher of the Danish thinker's philosophy, M. Weston, notes that for S. Kierkegaard "... all moral, ethical and religious relations could be only indirect" [6, 175].

His own settlement of this conflict was an attempt to restore or recover the neglected religious "Self". So he persistently sought a reliable way to the true faith and appealed to his readers to help them return to the origins of Christianity. In the posthumously published book, he stated: "I am a religious author ... all my work as the author concentrates on to Christianity, the problem of how to become a Christian, in a direct or indirect polemic against the monstrous Illusion, which we call Christendom" [7, 331]. Thus Kierkegaard defines the central task of his work which is to encourage his readers to "jump" into a passionate embrace of the real "religious sphere" of being where it is possible to become Christians and live intensely, fulfilling all the requirements of faith which can change the whole life.

Kierkegaard considers that action requires passion that is lost when man is immersed in a deep abyss of thought. Such passions do not mean the absence of any emotions that affect us, but rather the emotions that arose in the early days of Christianity, or rather, the sufferings of Jesus Christ on the cross. It means that Christ should not be portrayed as the epitome of "elevation" or "victory", and the Church is called to follow Christ in time, and therefore the suffering of Christ in time. Christ should become a model of the struggle of modern church for the true Christianity through indirect rather than "direct, intuitive, cultural and speculative" knowledge of God. S. Kierkegaard sought to dispel the illusion that we are true Christians. The Philosopher paves the way for the genuine religious faith, but it is not seen as a specific appropriation or the "absolute truth" by him, but rather a passionate personal kindness.

Kierkegaard reduces the problem of "God – a man, an individual – society, the universal – the solitary" to the problem of "a thought – an action". An individual must leave thoughts as both the universal and necessary and move to action, the ideality of which is revealed only in a certain individual; who in his self is subjectivity. As emphasizes the Danish philosopher, the thought is qualitatively different from the action. Thus, about Christianity we can reflect on a lot, sitting at home in our housecoat and home slippers. Those who do can smoke a pipe with pleasure, and a listener can stretch out his legs. But Abraham acted than rather thought. He acted when he left the country of his parents and became a stranger in the Promised Land. He acted when he came to the Mount Moriah and took out the knife to kill his son. Abraham, says Kierkegaard, acted but not thought, and, therefore, became the father of faith.

Indisputable is the fact is that S. Kierkegaard dramatizes the inner, because it can not be adequately expressed through the concept. Like God being hidden in the inner "self", the essence of Kierkegaard's work is hidden even when he shows himself, partially raising one of his masks-alises, and his words are repeated for every new reader.

Offering the “polemic against the truth as knowledge” instead of the traditionally established forms of thought, Kierkegaard presents a kind of reconstruction of the Christian consciousness, which showed, firstly, that the ability for the actualization lies in the personality, so it is synonymous with intra-existing man or soul (freedom), and, secondly, that this ability takes its origins from God (transcendence). These reassessment and reconstruction provide the movement from the idea to existence (action), from philosophy to faith.

Thus, the crisis of faith that accompanied the twentieth century will probably end by new appeal of human being to the higher powers (as the embodiment of completeness of information) in more individual variant than ever before. The weakening of social ties, the possibility actively to live, to work, to engage in creative work without the support of family, clan, kin, friends, will inevitably promote feelings of loneliness and searching a way out of it. The solution would be either global information network that connects the intelligence of individuals, or transcendent spiritual landmark that connects the over-rational levels of consciousness. It should be noted that the dynamics of modern changes, which tends to incredible speeds probably will not form a stable system of values and orientations.

That situation was predicted by C. Kierkegaard, showing a difference of sense of spiritual self-realization of person in the modern era with the values of society. However, his anthropology primarily is not rooted in Christology as in the classical era to Christianity, but in psychology. But psychology according to him is not became a way of unreasonable indulgence to the little stupid person, but a way to show anybody what he/she did not know about himself/herself. Contrary to natural-scientific psychology of that time, his method does not set limits to man, because it comes from the fact that the horizon of expectations in principle is infinite, and the purpose of each person – be in the same level with it. In modern conditions ideas of Danish thinker have been transformed in existential theology by famous representatives as John Macquarrie, Howard Alexander Slaatte, Merold Westphal and others.

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