

level of self-control (S-Cn), movement toward bigger activity and self-recognition (S-Cfd).

The religious experiences transfigure, heal, enrich a religious and personal life, but one's subjectivity and unexpressiveness often complicate unanimous answer: which constitutes the correlation between such intensity and personality structure and which plays a significant role in a religious life of personality.

The tests results empirically proved and presented in this book throw another light on this problem. One can find answers for certain questions, but at the same time one can find more and more questions. The relation between religious experience and its intensity and the personality structure was confirmed. It would be good to accept that these empirical tests and their analyse allow us to confirm a positive role of religiosity, and in this case also of a religious experience seen as a process of development of mature personality.

Deepening this problem needs further search using psychological methods which reveal different aspects of personality structure and empirically proved tests made in different ambiance.

It would also be good to continue these tests in the future for appreciation of a personality's change dynamics during its development, paying attention to experiences of personality and influence of religious experience on it.

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Stanisław GŁAZ SJ, *Zagadnienie doświadczenia religijnego (Próba syntezy)* [The Problem of Religious Experience. Attempt of synthesis], Kraków 1995, Jesuit Faculty of Philosophy, A4, 282 pages. Summary, p. 278-282.

We are taught by history and our life experience that many people, of different denominations and various races, naturally and spontaneously seek for an ideal for their lives and an absolute value, which could provide meaning for their existence. This search is very often caused by a kind of longing for something mysterious. And man's aiming at an ideal and his identification with it to some extent is natural. Man, therefore, in his earthly journey can pause to look at some value in a special way, regard it as his ideal fulfilling his expectations, to live for this value in a way, organise his life around it and take advantages of this value.

Therefore man has often asked the question, what is that highest value and at the same time the meaning of human life? Is there such a value, which might satisfy human longing, fill man's heart with grace,

accompany his existence, make a milestone of his life and help him in carrying the burdens of everyday life?

It is a magnificent grace to become aware that there exists such a supreme value, which exceeds all existing ideas, fiducial points and analogies with which it is impossible to identify that value, but which finally imposes on man its obviousness and is able to satisfy the human heart's thirst and longing. This value gives man partial answers to his problems. There is Somebody on whom man depends. That Somebody, slowly, step by step, accompanies man's life and straightens it. That Person lets man meet him, encounters him, enters into his life. And man accepts that highest spiritual value, recognizes its presence in his life, receives it as the absolute value of his existence.

The aim of the presented book, concerning God meeting man and man meeting God in different religions, in societies of different orientations, is to show this relation in wider context and to point to the fact that the same spiritual reality can be experienced by man in various ways, depending on his culture, his upbringing, his denomination and the like.

The author's intention is to show that without accepting this relation man is not able to be happy and to develop. That natural human desire to be happy can be satisfied only by the source of life.

Man for ages was fascinated by spiritual Reality, which engaged a good deal of his attention and his time. Sometimes man experienced the presence of this reality in his life and sometimes not. There were people who founded the monasteries. Hermitages were set up where individuals led their lives in solitude, enriched by mystical and religious experiences. They were the homes for many hermits and it was there that one realized his basic end – to sanctify one's life and to try to make it perfect. Those were the towns – as Vandenbroncke said – of God's glory, the centers of contemplation and the places where God was sought. It is not surprising that various spiritualities were born by this flourishing religious life, such as the Augustine, Benedictine, Dominican, Franciscan, Carmelitan, Ignatian way and so on. They were accompanied by other spiritualities, having not much in common with Christian religion, such as Judaic spirituality, Muslim spirituality, Hindu spirituality, Greek spirituality and many others.

Religiousness and more specifically religious experience occurring both in Christian and non-Christian religions as well as the elements constituting the structure and dynamics of this experience are presented in this book.

The range of the subject is vast and the literature on this subject is enormous. There are many similarities in various ways of experiencing contact with God. The author, therefore, limited himself to those

elements of religious experience, which in spite of the features they have in common, also present some differences.

General assumptions concerning religious experience, defining its subject and object, its structure, its aim, its diversity and multiplicity are presented in the first chapter. The presentation of these assumptions often refers to contemporary philosophers and theologians.

The second chapter contains the author's attempt to describe various kinds of religious experience in non-Christian religions. Having presented only the Hindu way of understanding religious experience with its advantages and experiences of spiritual Reality in Buddhism, the author investigates monotheistic religions, Judaism and Muslim, and deals with their characteristic way of feeling the religious experience.

In the third chapter the reader can find several kinds of religious experience of some Christian mystics: the contemplative kind of Carmelitan mysticism of St. John of the Cross with all its richness and virtues; apostolic understanding of mysticism, with its Christological dimension, of St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, and the specific kind of mysticism of St. Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists.

The fourth and the last chapter contains descriptions of some important components of each religious experience such as: an idea of God, an idea of sacrifice and mystical experience (contemplation and union).

A question arises, „Why has the author undertaken the task of describing this subject of religious experience?“ First, because the author has always been fascinated by this subject. This experience makes up one of the positive elements of one's religion, the religious life of an individual. It also plays an important role in one's personal life. It is religious experience that supplies the religious life of an individual with vitality, authenticity and dynamics. It influences, in a positive way, the development of one's attitude towards God, towards others and towards the whole world. It furnishes one's personality with spiritual essence. It helps to better understand oneself, others and the world.

Secondly, the religious experience is not always properly understood and suitably read. The ways to deepen one's religious life, proposed by pastoral leaders or chosen by an individual himself are not always adequate and they do not always really do this. Very often too much attention is paid to secondary elements (exterior religiousness, *i.e.* morality, law, orders, fulfilling duties implied by the cult) while commitment to inner experience is disregarded.

Thirdly, there arises great interest in the religions of the East among many people, also among believers, especially among young people who are often lost and spiritually broken. This is frequently caused by an inappropriate understanding of belonging to one's own religion and with

hope that the religions of the East will allow one to find the meaning of one's life and both physical and spiritual balance.

H. Urs von Balthasar mentions in one of his articles that a Christian is tired of reality, of facts and words of hopelessness and lives in hope of liberation of this state one day. Buddhism therefore, and specifically its radical negation, makes a prospect of this liberation, seems to meet one's needs and carries unforeseen fascination.

An example of such attitude can be the recently fashionable New Age movement, which proclaims new life and new thinking. An attempt to reach new things expresses discontent of old things. New Age concentrates only on man's interior and development of consciousness, which leads to unity with the cosmos and oneself. This development of consciousness aims at one's surrender to the forces of nature. Having found harmony with cosmos thanks to meditation, man achieves a higher degree of selfconsciousness. This state opens the gate to the natural power of man's being, and these energies serve man's development.

An attempt at description of the dynamic process of religious experience and an interpretation of one's inner life was made by the author. The aim was to understand the process of religious experience which comprises the following stages: purification, ascetism, experiencing of sacrum, religious crisis, and union with sacrum. These problems were investigated by many theologians, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and clergy in the span of many centuries.

Each specific method of investigation concerning some domain of knowledge is determined by the subject and the available sources. It is the religious experience that is the subject of investigation and interest for mystical-ascetical theology and spirituality. The structure of religious experience can be described by specific sources like letters and diaries with descriptions of one's inner life which are the testimony of spiritual and religious life of an individual. In these documents descriptions of religious experiences of mystics can be found. As Baumann put it, „mystical writings show the drama of love”. There is nothing more beautiful, nothing more marvellous than this mysterious phenomenon when the soul of a tiny creature – man falls in love with the Infinite. It is the very way of purification for love, described by mystics, that can help to understand not only God's love towards man, but also our own journey towards God. It is not sufficient to use just one method to describe and investigate these sources. Studying religious phenomena ought to be worked out on three parallel levels: empirical, ontological and supernatural. It is not sufficient to use exclusively deductive methods or only phenomenological ones. It is necessary to apply an integral method *i.e.* the method comprising both the elements of phenomenological description and deductive reasoning.

To describe the phenomenon of religious experience, the author used the integral method. The historical context of the actual experience, as well as the historical context of the individual were taken into account.

Various aspects of religious and mystical experience in particular religions were described on the basis of available literature. Those texts are genuine mystical treatises of various authors and works concerning these phenomena. Because of deficiency of professional literature on this subject in Polish, the author had to do research, to a great extent, in Italian, English, and French.

Dominik WIDER OCD

Sławomir SZCZYRBA, *Afirmacja Boga i życie moralne w ujęciu Jerzego Mirewicza SJ* [Anerkennung der Existenz Gottes und moralisches Verhalten – nach Meinung von Jerzy Mirewicz SJ], Łódź, 1994, Archidiecezjalne Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 240 Seiten.

Jerzy Mirewicz SJ, in seiner Heimat Polen unterschätzt und doch ein Mann von Verdienst, der sich um die Pflege und die Verbreitung der christlich-polnischen Kultur unter den Emigranten bemühte, wurde kürzlich, noch zu seinen Lebzeiten, mit einer Monographie geehrt.

Das Buch über J. Mirewicz wurde von Sławomir Szczyrba, einem Lehrbeauftragten des Priesterseminars in Łódź, als Doktorarbeit unter der Leitung von Professor Bischof B. Bejze verfaßt. Szczyrba rechnet seine Arbeit der religionsphilosophischen Werken zu. Er will die These nachweisen, daß die Stellung des Menschen gegenüber Gott einen bedeutenden Einfluß auf sein Wertesystem und, in weiterer Folge, auf sein moralisches Benehmen hat. Derselben Meinung war auch Mirewicz. In Hinsicht auf die ethische Implikationen der Bejahung Gottes gehört das Hauptthema der vielartigen Tätigkeiten Mirewicz's zu der immerwährend aktuellen und offenstehenden Frage nach der Selbständigkeit der Ethik.

Warum aber waren ausgerechnet die Ansichten eines Schriftstellers, Essayisten und Publizisten geeignet zu einem Versuch, das ethische Problem zu lösen? Szczyrba antwortet darauf in der Einführung: Mirewicz habe immer die These vertreten, „die Mensch-Gott Beziehung, bewußt anerkannt und konsequent in die Tat umgesetzt, hat entscheidende Bedeutung für die moralische Entwicklung jeder Person und der ganzen Gesellschaft“.

Das Buch von S. Szczyrba besteht aus drei Teilen. Der erste Teil beschreibt das Leben von Mirewicz und stellt eine allgemeine Charakteristik seiner Werke dar. Der zweite präsentiert die Ansichten „des