

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REASON, FAITH AND RELIGIOUS IDEAS

Rev. PhD. Marin BUGIULESCU,

Professor, Associate Member of "Dumitru Stăniloae" Scientific and Interdisciplinary
Research Center, "Valahia" University of Târgoviște,
ROMANIA

Email: m_bugiulescu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The connection between reason, faith and religious ideas is a specific problem addressed by ancient philosophy centered on the structure of religion, mythology, history and the relations of the gods with the world, theogony. That is precisely why the Greek philosophers conceived the world as something self-evident, something belonging to the order of logically compelling evidence. They did not seek to see who its author is, or what His being and activity consist of. Philosophical theology, in fact, ancient philosophy rediscovered in the medieval period, strictly represents a power of reason directed towards the knowledge of divinity, towards the relationship with the gods.

Keywords: *faith; reason; mind; religious ideas.*

INTRODUCTION

Looking at religion only from its subjective aspect, many researchers have asked the question: What is the essence of religion? As a being bearing the divine image, man has both a transcendent and an immanent dimension in the context of the world. Spiritual qualities give it the power to manifest scientifically. This orientation acquires a real content supported by the logical knowledge of the cosmos and of one's own being, but above all by the revealed faith that does not abstract from the logical knowledge that it deepens through mystical or spiritual knowledge. From the rational-philosophical point of view, we can talk about a series of specific features of human nature, on which the material, cultural and psychological evolution of man was based. Plato speaks, in the Republic, about the three parts of the human soul: the rational part, the active part and the appetitive part.

The rational part is what distinguishes man from animals and is understood as the highest part of the soul. Reason has the quality of divine instinct and is eternal. The active part works together with the rational part, by itself, being also characteristic of some animals. The appetitive part refers to natural impulses and bodily desires and is on the lowest rung in the soul hierarchy. This brings man closer to animal instincts¹.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The origin of religion has been analyzed and conceptualized over time in three theories: 1. evolutionist (religion developed together with man), 2. rationalist (it is based on human reason that invented religion) and 3. nativist (religious ideas are innate in the human mind). According to Darwinian evolution, man is the result of a form of primates, extinct,

¹ PLATO, *Republica*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest 1986, p. 341

but still having evolved representatives in certain species of apes. There are also naturalists, who contradict this idea by supporting evolution in different species. Others talk about parallel evolutions, from which people emerged in different places and periods. Of course, all these assumptions cannot be called theories, because there is no evidence of any kind, but only speculations that are given the value of truth by some institutions and researchers, biologists, and anthropologists, deliberately ignoring the historical reality of man as a being religious that has always had the idea of a creative and protective deity or deities². Evolutionary theory is very often used as an argument for the emergence of the world and man. The idea of progress, of evolution, is also found in the biblical revelation preserved unchanged by Orthodox Christianity. Unlike Darwinian evolutionism, the development-evolution process is possible only within the same species, and not from one species to another, without excluding the possibility of regression.

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REASON, FAITH AND RELIGIOUS IDEAS

Researching the being of religion, under the inner or subjective aspect, from a scientific point of view answers were given that form three major types of theories: 1. intellectualist, 2. sentimentalist and 3. voluntarist.

1. Intellectualist theories. The basis of the human being is thought or contemplation. Man, since the beginning of his existence had the impulse to research. This is the cause of things and phenomena around him. On the chain of effects and causes, man discovered the ultimate, absolute, supreme, primary cause, which can only be God.

Rationalism represents the intellectualist theory that attributes to reason the role of source and theme of knowledge according to which man is the measure of all things. This orientation was promoted in antiquity by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and in the modern period it constituted a European school of thought through Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant. In the history of contemporary thought, phenomenological rationalism (Husserl) or critical rationalism (Karl Popper) can be considered representative.

The central idea of intellectualist theories is that divinity is the result of the thought process through which man came to know the world. This knowledge is causally teleologically related to a divine reality, identified by Max Muller, through the desire to acquire the absolute, personified and called by the concept of God. Modern rationalism, formulated by Rene Descartes, closely related to empiricism, is a meditation of the intellect, which tries to explain the being of the world, of things, of religion, only by means of the powers of human reason, abstracting from feelings, love, and revelation divine. In empirical theory, Nature or the World, seen as an object of contemplation, is researched thanks to the technological revolution in scientific laboratories, which want, on the one hand, the decryption of nature, and on the other hand, a recreation of the world, a reconstitution of it through the invention of the God particle. Of course, we are not talking about an eternal God, but one created by man in the laboratory. Therefore, as a theory, rationalism and scientific and technological empiricism are insufficient and one-sided because religion is not reduced to the intellectual and experimental element. God is not just an opinion or a principle as in ideology and philosophy, but a Tri-Personal Being, who pours out His love freely and consciously, a love that man perceives both at the intellectual, gnostic level, but especially in concrete way at the level of life, of faith practiced consciously and freely with piety and love.

² David HUME, *Research on the human intellect*, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1987

2. Sentimentalist theories emphasize human emotions and feelings that are the basis of individual and social life and especially of religion. The theoretician of this idea is Bro. Schleiermacher. In Schleiermacher's view, the feeling of absolute dependence on the unknown is defined by God. Schleiermacher, starting from Spinoza's pantheism, defines the infinite identified with God, in a logical confusion, because He remains unknown, but which at the level of feelings can be perceptible, perceived. The central idea of sentimentalist theories is the form of manifestation of divinity through aesthetics, universally expressed through art. Supporters of this theory are Lessing, Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Feuerbach, D.F. Strauss, W. Wundt. Standing at the opposite pole of intellectualist theories, the error of sentimentalists is that they reduce religion to emotion and happiness only and exclude the role of intellect and will in religious acts.

3. Voluntarist theories. Briefly defined, the will is the internal function specific to the soul through which man expresses himself externally and through which he acts. Will is related to freedom. "Freedom being the ability of the will to determine its own action, without any internal or external constraint". This whole process (will, freedom, actions) is conscious and directed towards a goal, which means that it involves the intellect as the source of ideas transposed concretely through feeling. Therefore, the will puts into practice what the intellect has planned, and the feeling has prepared, generating the impulse towards actions. The will represents the ability of man as a person to be a free being open to communion with God and his fellow men, but also to the whole creation. Within this manifestation, man commits morally good and morally bad deeds.

Taking these considerations into account, voluntarist theories claim that the essence of religion lies in morality, which is expressed either in acts of worship or in the moral deeds of people. That is why some thinkers and philosophers identify and reduce religion to morality. Moralistic theories support the replacement of religion with morality, as Immanuel Kant expresses very clearly in the Critique of practical reason, and in the Critique of pure reason, where from the very beginning he expresses the idea that science is the result of the collaboration between sensibility and reason, but especially of metaphysics. In the Kantian conception, metaphysics is the knowledge of the Absolute, respectively of the three traditional-fundamental problems: the World, God, the Soul. The questions regarding the knowledge of the truth were conceptualized by Kant from the perspective of didactic logic, where knowing means possessing judgments. They have a necessary and universal character (they are valid everywhere and always and logically compel us to accept their meanings). Thus, metaphysics generates judgments, only that it is somehow unable to issue such judgments related to God, to the immortality of the soul. That is why Kant analyzes the power, extent and limits of our thinking by deriving some concepts from others. Assembling the intellectual processes that start from the ascertainment of a fact to the research of its conditions of possibility, Kant defined the transcendental method, a research, an analysis of the pre-conditions of knowledge. The transcendental method is a pure research, because it represents the intimate examination of thought by itself, in other words, the research of the preconditions of thought, it is carried out independently of experience. Sensitivity is the one that makes it possible to understand the experience through the senses through the reason that perceives and conceptualizes the realities, but this knowledge cannot go beyond the limits of the phenomenal world, that is, the world in which we live. The senses offer a chaotic material, which, however, is processed and organized by our intellect through the a priori forms of sensitivity, space and time, and through the categories of reason. Here metaphysics intervenes and claims that it is not only a form of knowledge of the world, but a

super-knowledge since it investigates the Absolute. Its fundamental problems are the World, God, the Soul. For Kant, beyond the phenomenal world is the noumenal world, in which are the things themselves, which can be thought but not known, because there theoretical reason cannot operate alone, without the help of sensibility, but only practical reason.

The Critique of Pure Reason supports the analysis and foundation of knowledge that does not come from experience. This is the apothetic, noumenal form. Kant identifies two faculties of knowledge: sensitivity (the ability to be influenced by objects) and intellect or the spontaneity of concepts (the ability of the human mind to think). Knowledge is a synthesis between sensitivity and intellect. Immanuel Kant develops the theory of knowing consciousness. Thus, Judgments/knowledge are products of the human mind, and they synthesize the data of experience with cognitive structures. The unit of knowing consciousness, called by him the original-synthetic unit of apperception, has three faculties: sensitivity, intellect, and reason, which in turn have substructures that intervene in the process of knowledge. Sensibility has two substructures called pure a priori intuitions under the representation of space and time.

The intellect has its own structures, called concepts or categories, by means of which different experiences are connected. And Reason is not exactly a faculty of knowledge because it has a regulative function, in the sense that it indicates the path that knowledge must follow. Therefore, the intellect is not only the holder of the constitutive forms and categories through which it arranges the material offered by sensibility in the phenomenal world, but also possesses some regulative ideas, which have a fundamental value for life. The ideas of reason are the World, God, and the Soul. Human thinking is oriented towards them. Ideas are not knowable; they do not belong to the space of knowledge but of faith; they do not belong to the domain of theoretical reason but to the domain of practical reason - which Kant identifies with consciousness and will. Thus, the ideas of freedom, of the immortality of the soul, as well as that of God, are "postulated", that is, requirements of practical reason, of the will. According to this logic, the moral law in man is autonomous, springing from practical reason. It is the fundamental law of human being that we must obey. This is imposed on the conscience through that "categorical imperative": "You must do..." or "You are forbidden to do...". By postulating a reality of justice, we infer a world in which good must always be rewarded and evil punished, because in the world there is no fair relationship between virtue and happiness, between good and evil. In the same at the same time, this presupposes the existence of a just judge in the noumenal world, who can only be God. The fundamental ideas of religion: God, freedom of the will, immortality of the soul, future life, happiness – as a reward for virtue cannot be objects of knowledge, but only of faith, they being postulates of practical reason, therefore for Kant they are unknowable. Kant omitted the fact that religion is essentially affirmed by faith, by living and by contemplating the divine. Religion is the domain of faith and divine revelation and not only of rational thought and knowledge. Kant, instead of basing morality on religion, on the contrary, bases religion on morality, reducing the former to the latter, or even subordinating religion to morality.

The attempt to construct a human meaning regarding God is tributary to the limitation of human reason, but the fact of limitation, far from being a handicap for the openers of ontological horizons that were Anaximander, Parmenides, and Heraclitus, turned out to be a point starting point that considered the limitation as such, including at the level of the possibility of meaning and comprehension. For the Greeks from the beginning of ontology, there was a very clear awareness of the limit, and from here the first definitions of

the being as no-limit, as that completely different, and completely different for a space enslaved to the limited can only be unlimited, although in the Greek mentality, the limit was the positively valorized one. Even this conception was given to be overcome as one tributary to nature in contradiction with which the model of the supernatural was constituted, the model of the being that makes the world of nature to be as it is. Man can reflect through his intellect the existing rational relationships in the sphere in which he lives, but he cannot build an understanding of what makes his reality and himself, to be. In this sense, perhaps the first great challenge addressed to human thought took place: to capture what constitutes the source of the real, what by the very relationship with the real must be thought of as not belonging to the real. This was the very operation of building metaphysics. In this human effort, there was a continuation of the first Adamic action: that of giving names, through these names man manages to establish a space of intelligibility in the proximity of his life, but the names that will be given to solve this problem will they stand as signs rather than as names as long as the reality they designate is incomprehensible to reason.

Proper to our mind and reason is God, therefore it is proper to reason to organize and regulate the movement of the body towards the good that has been revealed to the understanding mind³. Father Dumitru Stăniloae says that: "Reason is a kind of engineer of movement, and not only of the movement of our nature but of the movement of the entire physical nature"⁴. And this is because the reason of man is in close connection with the whole fabric of the reasons of things, it has the purpose of defining and gathering them in itself consciously with the aim of directing the human subject to them according to their nature, in this way achieving closeness to God.

So that through creation man passes from the plane of thought to the ontological plane, and if God's act of creation produced a ramification of the reasons from their unity in the Divine Logos, their free and conscious movement produces their re-gathering in this unity, in the Logos Divine. This is the notion and meaning that Saint Maximus attributes to created reason, therefore drawing a more general conclusion, he says that "everything in the world is made by God rational and worthy of the understanding Spirit"⁵.

Reason as the organ of thinking things indicates the world of intelligence or intelligent knowledge. It is either intelligence (with its intuitive-intellectual and discursive-rational valence), or the object of intellect (the concept, judgment or reasoning), or the expression of the object of understanding (the word or term, sentence, argumentation and, in general, speech). In the Greek language, the reason is expressed by the term "logos", which means both reason and word. In this sense, the Greeks defined man as the animal that has the logos. "The word, says Father Dumitru Popescu, is the expression of reason and through its purpose of maintaining communion and love, it is the expression of the relationship between an I and a you"⁶. In Greek philosophy, the concept of "logos" in addition to the usual term of reason includes both the meaning and the cause of what exists, or better said, everything finds its justification and motivation if it has a logos, a reason for being. Logos, therefore, designates not only the ordinary word, but also the deep reason of those who are (God) and those who exist. Reason therefore also involves the word, and the word is always the word of a person directed to another person as stated by Father Dumitru Stăniloae. In this sense we say that reason is a function of the person who is in a relationship with another person.

³ Maxim Mărturisitorul, *Ambigua*, PG. 91, col. 1108A

⁴ D. Stăniloae, *The Immortal Image of God*, Metropolis of Oltenia, Craiova 1987, p. 37

⁵ Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, PG. 91, col. 1404C

⁶ Dumitru Popescu, *Jesus Christ Pantocrator*, Ed. IBM al BOR, Bucharest 2005, p. 430

The Logos, the personal Reason, at the fullness of time hypostasizes human nature in Himself, resulting in a culminating personal human achievement. God "accommodates" the law of nature in a way above nature, guarding both it and Himself unchanged, so that creation is maintained in the ambiance of God which strengthens both spirit and reason. Divine reason strengthens and enlightens human reason, making it master over the sensible rationality of matter, His human will being deified by the divine. The Word through His Incarnation did not alter the nature that God and the Word made, says Father Dumitru Stăniloae, but He deified nature. Because nothing natural, like nature, is opposed to Him who is the cause of nature. And if the Word had the natural will as a man, he certainly willed those that He as God planted in nature when He established it through creation⁷.

Between Divine Reason and created reason, says Saint Maximus the Confessor, there is a supreme personal affinity or love, the world being rational and related to God. God endowed man with reason after the pattern of His Reason, or more properly He endowed him with His image as Supreme Reason. "God created man incorruptibly and made him in the image of his being" (Wisdom of Solomon 2,23). The image of God refers to reason, will, and feeling as attributes of the soul in man. Man is thus endowed with a soul that has a mind, reason, and feeling. Mind, reason and feeling have a double cognitive function in man: one understanding and one sensitive.

That is why Saint Gregory of Nyssa talks about the "feeling of the mind" this being nothing more than a feeling of God's presence or of spiritual realities. That is why reason on the one hand defines a thing and on the other hand, expresses it. The expressed product of reason is words made external and the unexpressed product is inner words. In this sense, Greek philosophy uses the same term "logos" for both reason and word, both meanings of logos uniting things and persons between them. "The following comparison, says Basile Tatakis, clearly shows the mystical attitude of Saint Maximus the Confessor. You pray, in the atrium when you abandon yourself against nature, and sensible knowledge; Sacrifice in the temple if you go to the truth, as it is according to our nature, through the soul, the reason, and the mind. Finally, you bring glory to the altar if you only perform the supernatural work of the mind"⁸.

Besides, mysticism is not a subjective state of mind, linked to the psychological state of man, but it has an objective character; it involves coming out of oneself and entering a relationship with the Supreme Person, a spiritual encounter.

CONCLUSION

With the passage of time, in the spirit of modern thinking, the description of human nature in terms of knowledge, focused only on the powers of the human mind due to the autonomy of science and technology, which claim to explain everything that exists. Thus, the truth does not come from God, nor from a public authority, imposed by tradition, but from the authority of individual reasoning, and the individual self is defined by the capacity for autonomous judgment, by individual reason. If the ancient thought spoke of a human nature full of transcendental capacities, of the knowledge of the transcendent infinity, modern thought focuses on the autonomy of the man dominated by instincts who leads a permanent struggle for survival and the acquisition of material goods. The only generally valid explanation is given by technique, empirical research and science. If the thinking of the

⁷ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, Second Edition, vol III, Ed. IBM of BOR, Bucharest, 1997, p. 203

⁸ Basile Tatakis, *Byzantine Philosophy*, Nemira Publishing House, Bucharest 2013, p. 127

ancient philosophers also implied some religious experience, together with modern rationalism and empiricism, religion is excluded from the systems of knowledge of man and the world, although in the recent period certain steps have been taken to establish a dialogue between science and faith. By replacing God with the man of science, the Renaissance contributed to the intellectual desacralization and dehumanization of man.

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