

NATURE AS EXPERIENCED - A THEOLOGICAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Cristina GELAN¹

Abstract. *The first stage of becoming human beings as a species on Earth is a direct reference to the existence, the concrete forms of the surrounding reality, which become objects to this practice and also of consciousness. Once with the reporting human nature, the thought begins his own religious experience. At this level, man proposes between him and the world of nature another world, mediator, through which to act on its possibilities of existence. Religious thought in consciousness becomes a reflection of reality and a projection of thought into reality. As a medium, it is an invention by not being in the objective existence, but with excellent exercise as mediator in ontological form, in that he always took refuge in a concrete object.*

Keywords: experienced, anthropomorphism, the phenomenological interpretation, contemplation, transcendence.

In the Christian teo-gnosia, when we refer to the possibility of knowing God, the problem is not being or existence of divine knowledge, but knowledge that the divine presence in the world created, the perception of God as existing for us in our existence. The divine presence in the world God created or perception may be brought only by experienced, as it considers theology, God can not be known intellectually, but can be experienced or He can communicate to us through revelation.

On Byzantine space philosophy is based on theology as experienced, as a way of living of dogma and theology is seen as a hermeneutics of the experience of this, which the Byzantines called „philosophical thinking”. We speak about this „philosophical” expression, that is, a hermeneutics of content that transcends any conceptual apparatus (because they are theological in nature).

In Orthodox theology, the term *experienced* refers to that God we can not experience, and we can experience other forms of knowledge, because it does not

¹PhD, Assistant Professor „Andrei Şaguna” University

comply with human experiment. Experience of experienced means to know God so when God revealed himself and just as He decides. He is allowing us access and the extent to be experienced. By experienced we know God exists, we can know His divine attributes, but limited.

Access and extent of divine testing involves two types of knowledge: the revelation and the contemplation. However, is experiencing a human subject, which by default sends that experimentation becomes necessary knowledge, while knowledge is always linked to intellectual thought, which, because of its ideology makes the subject of thinking. This ideology is expressed in that God can be known by thinking when He is revealed and as much as He wants to be revealed. More over, the notion of communication with the divine, hence the necessity of sacred literature, storage and ultimate truths needed to understand their symbols.

The need to knowledge of God is an intellectual necessity. Norman Geisler highlight four prerequisites of intellectual knowledge of God². The first is that God is revealed in an anthropomorphic language; the second premise means that God is known by similarity, whereas that created man *in His image and His likeness*; the third premise is that God is made known through His Spirit who alone knows the reality of God and telling people, and the fourth premise is that God is known through incarnation in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of man and representative God's divine plan that reveals dimensions on humanity.

The first two assumptions outlined by Geisler have an important role in understanding the knowledge of God through experienced. That God revealed himself in an anthropomorphic language, based on creation, that people can understand, refers to the idea that action could be brought experienced both human nature and the physical nature, the latter also became able the possibility of understanding the divine, which is transcendent. Therefore, a phenomenological interpretation, the nature becomes experienced in close connection with the idea of divine contemplation. In the writings of mystics theologians we meet reporting to the order physical nature as a means of contemplation of divine creation and appropriation of the idea of divinity.

Regarding the second of the premises knowing God, it means that since God created man in correspondence with His thinking, His image and likeness, there is a correlation between the regularities of nature and human thought, which is also a psychological and biological science basement. From this perspective, it can know something in me that God is up to resemble him, „His image and likeness”.

²Norman L. Geisler, *Filosofia religiei*, Editura Cartea Creștină, Oradea, 1999.

Such knowledge is seen as being far from a phenomenological approach, since it is based on its similarity to nature and yet different.

To inquire into the knowledge of God is to send intellect in office, even if this knowledge is based on contemplation or revelation. For, beyond the act itself, of contemplation and revelation, the intellect remains not indifferent or petrified, but seeks to structure the experience that had access to appropriate of being they represent. In this respect, the alleged departure from the phenomenological approach, the alleged rationality and cognoscibility away from the plane, it appears to describe a phenomenological vicious circle, where the only exit is the center point and radius come to describe any possible phenomenology.

Thus, the phenomenological interpretation inevitable, the man as the crowning of divine creation and at the same time as part of nature, we can conclude that the man's own knowledge test is one that is closest to the nature, i.e.: a given the fact that he is part of the physical nature and once he is in that intellect. By reference to relationship between the divine and the creation, I. M. Andreev note: „The human body was formed by God from a previously created element of nature-the dust of the earth. But human enthusiasm-to create the spirit and reason -was a specific act of divine creation. The presence of deeply pious men who respect the Bible, among scholars of world renowned naturalists testifies that the biblical teaching about creation, which occurred before the birth of science, the test of time”³.

While knowledge of the intellect, the logos, send us the conceptualization and description of access to an ontological level, as a necessity of the human mind, knowing from experience places us in the perception⁴ and the attempt to theorize such knowledge is can find only a theological phenomenology.

A religious approach is an approach completely immersed in the characteristics of a religion, because religious thinker remains somewhat above, trying to look in general and not inside. Assuming an informed position, this will always be subjective shades. Thus the divine consciousness, or if the Divine is an impersonal or considered fully accessible to humans-as in Buddhism, the need to progress through personal discipline occur in humans resulting in particular ways of relating to the transcendental.

Religion is an organized worship which recognizes the existence of the divine (personal or impersonal) and the need to ensure a link with the divine, so that the human condition or situation can improve, to ameliorate, to approach the

⁴ Ivan Mihailovici Andreev, *Teologia apologetică ortodoxă*, Editura Sophia, București, 2003, pp. 152 – 153.

ideal by defining participating in a culture. The existence of religion affirms a problematic situation of man in order to continue its existence and to progress. To a point religion originated in man: he builds problem, but the difference, he takes the initiative worship that can solve this problem. Thus, religion is building a complex system of values by which man can recognize progress, its progress as a permanent reference to transcendence.

By permanent reporting to transcendence, the human being overcomes than actual dimension, than the present world experience that is knowable by the senses. Closely with the dimensions of religious experience, Norman Geisler in *Philosophy of Religion*, is a distributive approach to transcendence, as follows: *transcendence to the top* (origin), *transcendence upwards* (higher) than transcendence (going beyond the desire), *transcendence to end* (step eschatological), *transcendence toward the center* (retrieval approach bases there); *transcendence in depth* (it is a process of reassessment of paradigms) and *transcendence in circle* (ellipse, which recognizes that to seek God is an experience that we always return to top).

Transcendence to the top (origin) is a transcendence of the retrospective nature to talk about recovering the original in the search of God, it is access to the basics. Elements that are involved in the knowledge of God by returning to its origins are sacred (life is sacred), symbols (overcoming this is through symbolic language), myth and logos (theory). The myth is a really caught the symbols can have a historical, but which currently operates in a continuous, life things or permanently identified. Mircea Eliade⁵ argued that reactivation forgetting myth is seen as sin. Through ritual and myth man connects with the transcendent, myth or ritual repetition ensuring religious life, the tied up of God. History starts from the origin of creation, its elements are finalized then became a symbol. Adam and Eve experience at first is history, eventually becoming a symbol, as all other elements of Genesis, which operates in both directions, history and symbolism. The myth of human creation itself we find the idea of knowledge through experience, as a measure of distancing that wants to take human beings to their Creator, by the expression of free will. For, though Adam and Eve had the opportunity to learn directly from God, not from experience, they have chosen, accepting the temptation to know by experience.

Transcendence up is knowledge of God seeking a road traversing the physical world (senses) to the spiritual world (the world seen from above). Thus, knowledge of God go from senses to the intellect (reason) and then intuition

⁵Mircea Eliade, *Imagini și simboluri. Eseu despre simbolismul magico-religios*, Editura Humanitas, București, 1994, pp. 33 – 70.

(spirit), and then reach the top peak, where is God. In this way gradually from the world of the senses (the sensible world) to the spiritual world (which transcends the senses) Plato trying to find him God.

Transcendence in addition to or beyond the presumed search for God by trying to understand what is beyond its existence. In this respect, there are two actions that are in balance: recognize that God can not get out of that in it, because his surrounded him, and secondly I want to get to where I am in Him. Trying to explain God, often describe God and His world through contemplation of nature is natural or cultural terms.

Transcendence to end or to „eschaton” is to attempt to understand Him, God on the future or the end of history. The eschaton thinking makes sense in a Jewish, Christian or Muslim, other religions are not linear perspective on history. For example, Hinduism and Buddhism have a cyclical thinking (incarnation-spiral development).

Transcendence into the center means to find God in the middle of everything, as the center of existence, which is deeper, more intimate, the foundation of all things is God. God is in everything around us and we can understand nature through contemplation of the deity. Is expressed by saying that Spinoza: *Deus sive Natura (God or Nature)*.

Transcendence in depth shows that to him find God, we need not limits, but to look inside, deep, God does not want to look for outside our size but in our midst, among us, ourselves. God comes towards us in the world and His transcendence. He is one who transcends, that goes over boundaries and reach our world. Evangelicals claim transcendence in all its forms and more, transcendence within ourselves. All forms of transcendence involves an attempt to close the godhead, and hence communication with the divine. Is feasible using symbols (putting together the metaphor and reality), the ritual (used by the Church), or myth.

Myth is a story, is a conglomerate of symbols. Myth is a symbolic story in itself untrue, but by its symbol, it means that events are always happening around us, and we consider essential and mysterious. M. Eliade argues that myth tells a story that is a communication and logos, but whose interpretation differs from that of the Logos⁶.

Three types of languages are considered in terms of theological thought, as possible in terms of our communication about God, namely: analog language, apofatic language and catafatic language.⁷

⁶ Mircea Eliade, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁷ Norman Geisler, *op. cit.*, pp. 300 – 301.

Analog language requires us to maintain the scope of metaphors about God. So God is not addressed in my speech, but the word is God. Apofatic language is a language with negation knowledge through negative language by saying that God can not be known. In this sense, God is more than we know and denial of what we know. Catafatic language is knowing the positive statements about God. This knowledge is a positive understanding and communication is possible because God uses who is saying about him and so we can know.

There is an image communication, a language but also by a mystic. About the latter, saying that theological thinking is a statement by the Holy Spirit. Thus, God was integrating the subjectivity of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinteni 2:10-16: „*discovered to us by the Holy Spirit*”). Knowing the Holy Spirit requires contemplation, so have access to God through his subjectivity, we have access to the mind of God through His presence in us or in nature around us. Explaining how the merger in God through contemplation, P. Florenski note: „... the ego identity which restores itself contemplates hypostases contemplated: the first ego, that loves me and is loved, to the second ego like what ego loved and loves, as you. Thus, placing it at the half, crackle shell closure itself, why the third ego is adept of half-being in her God and the half becomes third”⁸.

Communication by Holy Spirit is an intuitive communication and communication (very fast, not very clear), which is why human beings feel the need to exercise reason. Such an exercise send in phenomenology and in this sense, a theological phenomenology.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ivan Mihailovici Andreev, 2003, *Teologia apologetică ortodoxă* [*The Orthodox apologetics theology*], Editura Sophia, București
- [2] Mircea Eliade, 1994, *Imagini și simboluri. Eseu despre simbolismul magico-religios* [*Images and symbols. An Essay on magycal-religious symbolism*], Editura Humanitas, București;
- [3] Pavel Florenski, 1999, *Stâlpul și Temelia Adevărului. Încercare de teodicee ortodoxă în douăsprezece scrisori* [*The Pillar and Ground of Truth: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters*], Editura Polirom, Iași;
- [4] Norman L. Geisler, 1999, *Filosofia religiei* [*Philosophy of Religion*], Editura Cartea Creștină, Oradea;
- [5] Alexandru Suci, 2003, *Filosofia și istoria religiilor* [*Philosophy and History of Religions*], Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, București.
- [6] Bryan Wilson, 2000. *Religia din Perspectivă Sociologică* [*Religion in Sociological Perspective*], Editura Trei, București.

⁸Pavel Florenski, *Stâlpul și Temelia Adevărului. Încercare de teodicee ortodoxă în douăsprezece scrisori*, Editura Polirom, Iași, 1999, pp. 65.