

Potential of The Idea of Collegiality in Intercultural Interaction



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Abstract: *The article's goal is to study the idea of collegiality in order to find out whether or not it can be used as a possible cultural principle for the dialogue of cultures. The culture of the dialogue of cultures as the main term of possible dialogue has many options. One of them can be the idea of collegiality, which was developed by Russian religious philosophers since the value of a theory does not depend on the time of its creation. This implies the possibility of reconstructing previous concepts in theory and actualizing them creatively in the modern social context.*

Index Terms: *collegiality, culture, dialogue of cultures, human freedom, unity and diversity.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Presently, in the conditions of globalization, the problem of cultural interaction, the interaction of systems with mismatching images of the world and various value reference points, as one of the major problems faced by the society, has deepened [1]. Calls made by some nations in order to demonstrate mutual understanding and mutual respect have in practice turned into attempts to impose certain ideas and values on representatives of other cultures. The purpose of these actions is the aspiration to social dominance. Few followers of homogeneous cultural spaces have ever thought about possible tragic consequences of this kind of militant cultivation, about the loss of culture itself and, consequently, the loss of a person judging by the scope of cultural confrontation.

Far more dangerous, even criminal, are attempts taken by some irresponsible politicians to break the internal space of a single culture while adding false senses, eliminating the internal connection between images and notions, thereby destroying the basics of human existence, pushing people towards the primeval chaos.

The emerging situation of the loss of culture, which poses a threat to the future of humanity, has made it essential to update in the modern philosophical and scientific ideas of the concept of the dialogue of cultures. The concept was developed by the Russian philosopher V.S. Bibler upon interpretation of M.M. Bakhtin's ideas that contemporary thinkers continued to develop.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The central idea of this concept is the idea of a dialogue. "Dialogic relations ... are a nearly universal phenomenon that runs through the entire human speech and all relations and displays of human life, generally, everything that has a sense and meaning... Where consciousness begins, there ... dialogue also does," as Bakhtin believed (italics by us) [2]. Consequently, dialogue starts where a person begins to live. For the philosopher, dialogue is a certain formal term, the content of which has strict logical boundaries. This includes "...confidence in someone's word, devout acceptance, ... search and forcing of the deep meaning, ... meanings put on other meanings, ... amplifying through the confluence (but not identification), a combination of many voices (a corridor of voices), which contribute to the understanding, the exit beyond understandable, etc. These special relations cannot be brought either to solely logical or subjective relations. Here there are integral positions, complete personalities" [3]. At issue is understanding of something new, not the impact on it, manipulation of it, but empathy, an attempt to put oneself in its shoes, the attitude to another not as a means, but as a purpose [4]. A person lives only through dialogue ("I for myself", "I for somebody", "Somebody for me"), as Bakhtin believed. Here is an internal connection between the idea of dialogue and the idea of consciousness and self-consciousness, the idea of personality that exists with regard to another (another I and another another) in non-segregation on the one hand, but in non-confluence, on the other hand. Dialogism becomes an underlying principle of human existence and as a consequence the basis of any culture.

Culture is dialogical; it lives through an internal and external dialogue. Bibler believed that "self-consciousness of culture is a form of its existence on the verge with another culture" [5]. Self-consciousness takes place in the process of comparison with something. This statement goes in line with Bakhtin's idea of sense: "...sense is potentially endless, but it can actualize itself only after touching with another (somebody's) sense...Actual sense does not belong to one (single) sense, but only to two senses, which met and touched each other" [3]. However, in the dialogue of cultures, Bibler sees an act of "mutual understanding of 'I - you' as ontologically different personalities", which contradicts the statement about culture as a dialogue of cultures. Various ontological grounds of any kind of formations can show not only incompatibility in principle, but also the lack of any possibility for comparison,

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and as a consequence, the possibility of cognition and self-cognition of both personalities in particular and cultures as a whole.

Maybe this is the reason why contemporary philosophers, when analyzing the problem related to the dialogue of cultures, focus their attention on the formulation of the problem and clarification of the meaning of the notion of culture of the dialogue of cultures. The core of it includes “two ideas: the idea of culture as a field of interaction and the idea of unity of a diversity of cultures” [6], [7]. The unity of cultures is determined, as we believe, by a single field of interaction both at the stage of infancy and at the stage of development. Such an approach goes in line with the understanding of culture as a special way “of organizing natural processes and formations that is defined by not natural, but extra-natural grounds” [8]. Understanding culture as a way of organizing the natural world, the primary feature of which is its unity (but not homogeneity), makes the dialogue of cultures as a dialogue of constructors and holders of various forms of sense organization possible. In this case, the dialogue of cultures, in our opinion, has good prospects. At the same time, this means that there cannot be any neutral field of interaction for cultures. As Bibler noted, the dialogue of cultures was conducted by Bakhtin within one culture – the culture of an emerging New Time (the culture of the novel word).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The culture of the dialogue of cultures as the main term of a possible dialogue has many options, and one of them can be the concept of collegiality, which was developed by Russian religious philosophers. Since the value of a theory does not depend on the time of its creation, this implies the possibility for theoretical reconstruction and creative actualization of previous concepts in the modern social context.

“The idea of collegiality reflects understanding not only of the basics of the complete unity of the Russian nation but also those initial relations that make the existence of the society possible in general, as Russian thinkers believe. Collegiality does not limit itself to the interests of a nation, there is no narrowing its actuality to the problems faced in a specific epoch as it is determined not by the reality of any historical periods or certain group interests, but by values that are important for the entire humanity. This idea is universal” [9]. The idea of collegiality is an idea of unity in diversity, the actualization of its sense in the Russian religious philosophical thought leads to the understanding that it is in harmony with the idea of dialogue and can be the basis (field of interaction), i.e. the culture of the dialogue of cultures.

A.S. Khomyakov, the first thinker who tried to understand philosophically the idea of collegiality, spoke about the key feature of collegiality – freedom, “freedom of self-realization in truth”, as S.S. Khoruzhiy noted shrewdly [8]. To a large extent, Khomyakov brings the idea of freedom to “free consent” – it not only does not destroy unity but also brings it to life. Personal freedom is the very extra-natural ground that not only determines a special way(s) of organizing natural processes – culture(s) but also enables a person to understand it (them). Understanding becomes possible on the ground that consciousness is collegial. “Only by recognizing ...

fundamental collectivity ... the organic collegiality of human consciousness, we can understand how people understand one another and all things psychologically and logically,” as S.N. Trubetskoy assumed [10]. Russian thinkers understand collegiality not as a given, but as something defined, a certain target for development, an ideal, something that will become the fundament, the underlying principle of the future perfect society, spiritual basics of which were described by S.L. Frank. The philosopher noted that the public ideal, for its justification, demands not only that its being a correct ideal, but also its being feasible. The public knowledge of the ideal should not be limited to the knowledge of its internal content but should spread to its attitude towards real forces that create public existence. In this conviction, Frank sympathised with Hegel who wrote that “philosophy is concerned with an idea, which is not as weak so as only to be supposed to exist rather than to actually exist” [11].

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Frank was convinced that society, as a certain field of existence, is not simple, absolute unity of a subject, but a multi-unity, existing and acting only in concordance and unification of many individual perceptions. As a collegial unity, society, as opposed to a single living being, is not a certain “I”, but “We”. This unity exists, being and acting as the consciousness of a community, as “the idea of ‘We’ in separate members of it”. The philosopher noted that “in the course of any communication we have not only a simple crossing of two beams of light in different directions, towards each other; there is some kind of circulation of single life, some kind of certain general spiritual circulation of blood even in a fleeting glance of two pairs of eyes. In other words, not two independent and self-contained beings meet here on the side and become ‘I’ and ‘you’ for each other; their meeting, on the contrary, is just the awakening of a certain outgoing initial unity in both of them, and once this unity awakens they can become ‘I’ and ‘you’ for each other”.

The understanding of somebody’s “I” and especially a live meeting with it are possible only because a person’s “I”, so to say, has sought this meeting from time immemorial. Although it ideally concerns “you” prior to any external meeting with separate real “you”, this is an ideal attitude towards “you”, the very being “I” speaks about this initial unity with it. “I” never exists and is impossible other than in regard to “you” like unthinkable “left” without “right”, “upper” without “lower”, etc., as Frank wrote [12]. It is the meeting of “I” and “you”, as the philosopher thought, that leads to self-disclosure of two existing holders of existence, which are closed in themselves and only in themselves. Meanwhile, it looks as though the self-existence of the self meets and recognizes its own being outside itself. Speaking about the recognition of the self in somebody, Frank made a curious remark: hangmen and professional killers avoid eye contact with a victim and generally another being, as they are afraid of losing their physical and material attitude towards another person because they can recognize themselves in a counter glance.

In the eyes of a killer, a victim should remain a thing. Frank wrote that "...any, even a fleeting meeting with a live human glance, being the secret revelation of 'you' – a being like me, 'the second I', immediately and completely destroys this purely subjective setting" [12]. According to Frank, "you" is another "I" (both "another I" of God and "another I" of a person). For this reason, "I" and "you" can exist only when they rely on each other. Their meeting constitutes the Urphanomen of their personal being that is a "unique original self-disclosure of life and existence". Simultaneously "you" is born here as an identification "in the known sense of the self – outside of the self". A personality is neither a thing nor even a process, it is the meeting between "I" and "you", i.e. personality does not exist and does not go, does not emerge and is not created, but comes true. This process of coming true constitutes collegiality of a personality as the only way of providing its existence [13].

Collegiality as a method of existence does not simply belong to a personality as his/her characteristic feature, collegiality turns out to be the very being of a personality that precedes with regard to all its characteristics and signs, and with regard to all possible conceptualizations of it.

Certainly, the meeting of "I" and "you", and their dialogue are decisive for the culture as an endless process of actualization (the process of coming true) of the content of public life and, consequently, of existence. Culture fills and shapes itself through this dialogue.

One cannot but agree with I.M. Melikov who said that "not the dialogue itself is important in the dialogue of cultures, but the culture of the dialogue. Because dialogue – interaction – always takes place" [6].

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