

## Summary

It is often claimed that human being is a mystery for itself. Yet, the understanding of human being impinges on any attempt to solve problems arising in our life. The meaning of the notion "human being" can be revealed only by deep reflection on the structure of human being, the specificity of human action, and the goal and aim of human life. In order to explain human being one should first of all appeal to classical philosophy. For this is a philosophy that attempts to explain human being in an ultimate way, by separating being from non-being.

Throughout the course of history there were developed two great conceptions of human being as the being consisted of body and soul. The first was developed by Plato. In Plato's conception the human being was seen as the "spirit-reason" trapped in the body. The incarnation did not allow the spirit - soul - to live in accordance with truth. This is why it was necessary to liberate the soul from its bodily shackles. The soul as simple could possess no separate faculties of reason and will. Platonism considerably influenced Christian thinkers.

The second great conception of human being was developed by Aristotle. He claimed that Plato's dualistic conception is radically mistaken. For the human being experiences itself in action and cognition as one united being, in which the soul and body are related to each other as the act to potency. However, Aristotle's claim that the human being is a product of nature became an impediment to the development of an understanding of certain human activities, such as immaterial conceptual

cognition or reflective cognition. It was St Thomas Aquinas who made a revolution in the understanding of real beings, among them also human beings. Aquinas appealed to the experience of the existence of the subject called "I". The basic human experience of "I" reveals that "I" is a subject in the act of "subjectivization" of everything what emerges from "I" as "my". The human being experiences that it itself is one and the same subject who sensually feels and intellectually cognizes.

The starting point for considerations concerning human being is "the human fact" seen both from within and from outside. Whatever the human being does, it experiences itself as the subject of actions. Along with the immanence, i.e. the presence of "I" in acts that are "mine", the human being experiences also the transcendence of "I" over any of "my" act, as well as over the sum of "my" acts. The "I" experienced reveals itself from the existential side: I know that I exist, although I do not know who I am. The path leading to the discovery of my own nature is the analysis of acts that are "mine" and which in the concomitant reflection I notice as emerging from "I" - the subject of those acts. The experience of oneself - one's own "I" as the same subject that performs heterogenous acts of spiritual and sensual cognition in which "I" is immanent and which "I" nevertheless transcends - becomes consistent and acquires the ultimate explanation only when we recognize that there exists one element - the soul - that organizes heterogenous elements to become one subject: the human being. The soul, understood as the act-form-organizer of matter to become the human body, exists in itself as a subject thanks to the creative act of God. For no natural forces are suited to create human spirit which - although is the organizer of matter - cannot have its origin in matter, as it always transcends matter. The human soul is always present (immanent) in the body, and only through the body is able to act. "I" is permanently and directly experienced as immanent in all - even physiological - acts that are "mine", and at the same time "I" transcends those acts and thereby also itself. Both soul and body make one human being who refers to oneself as "I" being both body and soul. The body is also something of which we think "I". By "body" we understand the human being as it appears outside when acting in the material world, whereas by "soul" we understand something inner in that body-human whose higher activities



such as cognition, love, and creativity we connect with the subject of those activities - precisely with the soul.

The human being is a person who experiences its own personal way of existing. The concept of person is linked to a specifically Christian conception of human being. The debate over a proper understanding of personal being arose at the dawn of Christianity, and was connected to the recognition that Jesus Christ - both true man and true God - is one being whose existence is the existence of God-Logos. Person is the highest mode of being of the spiritual intellectual nature. In the tradition of classical philosophy one stresses the specifically personal character of cognition, love and freedom as those elements that mutually condition and integrate human action. Two basic manifestations of human actions: cognition and love disclose the structure of human being, who in acts of cognition interiorizes the reality encountered, and who is able to "go out" of oneself through will and love.

The fact of human cognition and action following it is revealed to us as possessing a double dimension: spiritual and material. For we cognize through our seeing, hearing, touching, imagining, recalling and reasoning. It is the thing itself that is the object of cognition, i.e. an object really existing, primary to acts of cognition. Acts of cognition - both intellectual and sensual - are the medium that makes possible the cognition of things. They reveal a cognized thing to us, and at the same time they can be registered in concomitant reflection. Only later the very way of cognizing becomes the object of cognition. By performing acts of cognition the human being assimilates and interiorizes the world encountered, and thereby becomes enriched with the content of reality grasped in cognitive acts.

The act of cognition is the first and basic act of culture. A proper environment for the human being is not only the world of nature but also to a great extent the world of culture. Culture is a sign reality created by human beings through their personal experiences and actions, both individual and social. The integrating elements of culture are: science (the domain of theoretical cognition), morality (the domain of practical cognition), and art-technology (the domain of creative cognition). These three are complemented by a fourth domain, which permeates them and which brings the human being with its personal actions to Transcendence.



This domain is religion understood as a personal bond with God recognized as the source, goal and exemplary cause of human life.

Personal human activities that create culture need some social context. Society is necessary for the personal development of human being. The human person is an open being who is the subject of law and in itself deserves love. The human person is an independently existing subject and therefore possesses the form of being fuller than society does. Society is a set of relations rooted in personal beings. This is why not the person to society but society is subordinated to the person and should serve the development of human being - one's cognition, love and creativity.

Through personal activities - constituting oneself as the determined source of action - the human being strives for its full development. In the act of decision the personal freedom is exercised. The human ability of deciding finds its ultimate fulfillment when the human being in one's personal active experience of death ultimately gives sense to one's existence and action by binding oneself in the act of love to "You" of the Absolute. Death so understood is not so much the separation of body and soul - where the human being is more "a thing" than "a person" - but the fulfillment of human being in one's personal acts emerging from within.

The outlined conception of the human being as person constitutes the core of Christian culture. The roots of this culture are common to all nations of Europe and are deeply settled in Christian religion that inspired and integrated rational, moral and artistic or aesthetic experiences of Europeans. An important element of Christian culture is the reception of Greek theory of rational action in a triple order of cognition: theoretical, practical and creative. In the order of theoretical cognition sciences, philosophies, and ideologies developed. Nowadays we are living in a specific atmosphere of scientific-technological culture that has brought - along with wonderful achievements - also dangers, among them the danger of turning away from truth, especially from the truth about human being. This is the reason why we now hear the call to come back to the so-called "civilization of love" in which the true hierarchy of human values is preserved. Also the domain of morality-creating practical cognition acquired in Christian culture some theoretical support. The value of human life was found in living with faith, hope and love of God and by exercis-

ing the cardinal virtues (theory of which was developed already in antiquity): prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. The domain of artistic creativity was also inspired by Christian religion. Any form of creativity enriches the human being as person by releasing some specific personal acts of cognition, love and freedom that transcend matter and subject it to the laws of soul.