

Summary

Religion accompanies human beings from the moment they appeared on the Earth. In the hitherto known history of mankind there has been no culture without religion and this fact is confirmed by countless traces of religious beliefs and activities. Nothing also indicates that religion whenever disappears from human life and human culture. The irremovable presence of religion in the world confirms the fact that religion – like other domains of culture – has firm and imperishable foundations. For religion is essentially connected with the way in which human being exists – with the fact that human being is a person.

The human being was given reason and will and as such one is a material-spiritual being, even if this is the soul that constitutes a fundamental element. The human person as a rational being possesses the ability to cognize the surrounding world of things and persons, as well as the ability to cognize oneself and his own way of existing. The human being experiences changeability of his existence, dangers threatening him, the existence of evil, and first of all he is worried about the perspective of death. Experiencing the insufficiency of his own existence, he also experiences the incompatibility of help which in that respect he acquires from the world of nature or even from the society of persons related to him. The human person possesses then the awareness of the contingency of his own personal fate. This makes as if an appeal of the human existence to look for entrenching in something or somebody beyond oneself and one's closest environment. The

existential situation of human being brings then the thought to turn for help to some "higher reality", the reality which he in various religions and in various ways imagined and determined, as means of culture he lived in allowed. Striving for that reality gives evidence that in human being there is inscribed a relation to Transcendence that in a certain way directs and entrenches one's existence, indicates a source of help that allows one to fulfill one's human task. The human being is able not only to recognize his own existential situation but also to make a decision in which he accepts God as the source and goal of his existence. All religions constitute concrete answers for the fundamental question concerning the goal-sense of human existence and they indicate paths to achieve it, i.e. to accomplish the fulness of life.

The history of religion shows that the role of truth about human being and about God is crucial for understanding and practicing a religion. At this point philosophy provides assistance and support. However, religion is a complex phenomenon, culturally and historically diverse, which may be described and interpreted in various ways. This is why it is important to which philosophy we turn. Only the realist philosophy of being in a rational way presents human being as a person and thanks to it the real existence of Personal Absolute (God) is justified. God is then indicated as the ultimate source of existence (efficient cause), exemplar (creates in accordance to His own ideas) and goal of all beings. For reality exists by virtue of participation in God, and human being's status is special, because of her rational, personal nature. God created human being in His image and likeness, i.e. as someone capable of spiritual, personal acts. Human being is able to cognize his personal relations connecting him with God, to become aware of God's presence in his life, and to make a conscious and free decision to bind the whole life with Him. The object of religious reference (God, deity) is not cognitively accessible directly, and therefore acquiring knowledge of God and accepting it as well as establishing a relation to Him (religious activities) are more difficult than those in other fields of life. One needs help from a society in which he lives and acts. This is why human being "learns" religious life in societies: in families and in those strictly religious ones.

Like religion, also culture is essentially connected to the way human exists. Human being as a dynamic entity, capable of knowing truth and doing good, of loving, and of creating things, develops and fulfills itself through conscious and free acts and thereby creates culture. Culture constitutes a system of values created and transferred to others in a society. The human person is a value in itself, and results of his actions are also values, through which he aims at realization of his cognitive, moral, and creative capacities, striving to cognize and to love the highest value – personal God, the Fullness of Truth, Good, and Beauty.

Values do not constitute a separate realm of reality. They are qualities of being as related to personal acts. When realized, they develop a person acting in accordance to his material-spiritual nature, and results of those acts constitute basic domains of culture. Thus, personal (spiritual) human activities include: (1) cognitive activities consisting in acquiring knowledge about the surrounding world and about oneself. The achieved value is truth as the accordance (adequacy) of cognition with reality. Those activities constitute a great domain of culture – science; (2) activities directed towards other human beings, which realized the value of good and constitute the domain of morality; (3) creative artistic activities that realize the value of beauty and constitute art as a domain of culture; (4) personal activities of human being towards God, the Fullness of Truth, Good, Beauty, and Holiness. Here the acquired value is sanctity, whose realization constitutes religion as a domain of culture.

Between those domains of culture and between values realized in them there obtain various relations. Values permeate one another, and ultimately they concentrate in the human being, perfecting him. They have a natural character – scientific and philosophical truths, morality, and art originate from sources acquired by human reason and will, so thanks to natural capacities of human being connected to one's natural dynamism. Sanctity is a specific value that implies and permeates all other values; it is a form enlivening them. Other values without sanctity are as if lifeless, for they are deprived of the ultimate horizon, of goal, of sense. They acquire full sense only through the human person's act of love towards God-Person, the eternal and infinite Fullness of Existence, Truth, Good- Love.

Mutual relations between religion and other domains of culture are different in different times, religions, and cultures. Yet, they always touch important and actual problems concerning human beings, their development, the sense of life. The contribution of Christianity is here especially valuable. Christianity make the foundation of Western culture and its relations to other domains of culture are well developed, rich, and vivid. With regard to culture, with science in the foreground, the Church, especially the Catholic Church, hold its great patronage, including the establishment of universities. Many encyclicals and other papal documents were devoted to the problem of human rights, wars, justice, and mercy.

Christianity indicates the proper, infinite and most important – for coming from God and in God and finding its fulfillment in accordance with God – dimension of human being. It enhances all human activities and effort to the fullness which just in the perspective indicated by Christ acquires the ultimate sense. The truth about human being and about Himself God revealed through the person of God-Man: Jesus Christ, who showed us the path to the fulfillment of human life. Christianity builds a culture of life and love. It possesses an eschatic dimension; it becomes the door to new life, to eternal life. Human being strives to God through culture (cultivating himself), i.e. through cognizing truth, doing good, and creating beauty. Thus, we may talk about the synthesis of Christianity and culture, for Christianity attempts to make human culture-creating activities the path to the fulfillment of human being: the path of sanctity. Any culture without that perspective becomes for the human person a threat.