

УДК 2–13

Concept of Sacral and System of Sacralization

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Received 15.01.2014, received in revised form 22.03.2014, accepted 12.05.2014

“Sacral” is defined in the article as participation to Absolute, and this notion is opposed to “profanum”. According to the authors, the system of sacralization in any society consists of the following components: 1) the sum of sacred ideals and ideas of the given society (ideology); 2) psychological ways and means which help to force people to believe in the unconditional validity of these ideals; 3) specific semiotic forms of an embodiment of relics, sacramental and hostile symbols; 4) the special organization (for example, church); 5) special practical actions and ceremonies (cult). The authors define “religion” as search and an establishment of the sacral communications, providing the necessary integrity to individuals and (or) to social groups.

Keywords: sacral, profane, types of sacral, system of sacralization, religion.

Sacral (from Latin *sacrum* – sacred) – all those things which are most concerned with human beings; refers to the cultivation of the Absolute; associated with the worship of especially valuable ideals. In theology “sacral” means: 1) subordinated to the God; 2) the basic symbols of all-penetrating holiness of the God – greatness, glory and unconditional love; 3) the essence of temple liturgies – the laudatory speech in honor of the God. Some authors believe, that the feeling of sacral is unconditional: or it is, or it is not present, it cannot be reduced or increased (J. Huxley); nevertheless, in religious practice there is an idea of different degrees of sacred (The Holy

Of Holies, a sanctuary, the high priest, the usual priest, etc.).

On the one hand, sacral is opposed to demonically-impure reality. On the other hand, it is contrasted with something profane, secular, and worldly. Their spatial ratio is expressed in Latin by a couple of the following terms: “fanum” and “profanum”. Fanum is a court yard of a temple; profanum is something that is outside of a temple (outside of a sacral space). “Profanum” literally means “before the doors”, “the removal of holy things out from a temple”. Sacral things are expressed by means of special symbols (a cross, a sign of the cross, the myth about the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and so forth)

which senses cannot be interpreted in terms of the natural properties inherent in these things.

Usually the idea of sacral is completely correlated with ideas of absolute and great: sacral is absolute and absolute is sacral (“the God is sacral”). Greatness is coherent with the limited, and the awareness of the great leads to the sacred. The absolute reality (the God, gods, spirits, etc.) is indirectly revealed in a great variety of objects – the conductors of the Absolute, which, like a mirror, reflect the absolute source of Holiness and point to the first beginning. Levy-Bruhl spoke about sacral as the mediator, which connects the opposites of heaven and earth, people and gods, visible and invisible, natural and supernatural.

So, sacral is that which takes part in the Absolute. Nevertheless sacred objects in themselves are not “semi-precious stones”. In this sense they are not sacred, but secular. Sacral does not exist without secular and it is expressed only through secular (water, fire, holy oil, bread, wine, meal, and so forth). Any proposition about sacred has a secular linguistic form.

If to believe that the God enters into human being by means of any conductor, then in principle, every thing can play the role of a sacramental symbol. When a believer confuses the original with a copy of the original, i.e. when someone worships not the Absolute, but his servants – “sacred objects” (a holy man, holy people, holy character, etc.), – he often demonizes them, replaces sacred objects with idols; then “sacral provokes idolatry” (P. Tillich).

There are two types of sacral: 1) the positive-opened sacral, tied with presence at ritual of the unconditional beginning; 2) the negative-hidden sacral, which imposes a veto on the entry into contact with the Absolute. G. Bataille has named the positive-pure and majestic sacral “the right pole sacral”, and the frightening and disgusting sacral – “the left pole sacral”. Bataille considered

the left type of sacral as historically primary (because the institute of taboo is the most ancient), and the right type – as secondary.

In our opinion, one should not completely exclude elements of demonic and evil nature from the general concept of sacral, because evil has the character of an unconditional beginning in a number of religions (polytheism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Satanism), and in monotheism confrontation between light and darkness is unthinkable without “unclean” (for example, in Christianity – the Holy war of Jesus Christ with Satan). Sometimes sacral is identified with something positive only, and then it is conceived as extremely clean and perfectly moral (for example, in the late Calvinism, puritanism). In this case the concept of sacral becomes shallow, and it is reduced to a flat moral preaching about ideal sinlessness.

The notion of sacral is linked not only with the concept of the God, but with the phenomenon of natural environment also. V.N. Toropov in his work “Sacral and saints in Russian culture” notes that the proto-Slavonic “svet” (light) etymologically closely associated with the Holy; in addition it has the following values: increase, swell, thrive, grow, bear fruit, rising (for example, the holy mountain). Nature (a space, the Earth) becomes of great value for us, if we believe that sacral is concluded in it. “The religious feeling of sublime, – W. James writes, – is that special shudder that what we test during a night-time in a forest or in a mountain gorge; only in this case it is generated by an idea of presence of supernatural. (James, 1993)

D. Hume drew attention to the fact, that the process of sacralization of the supreme reality and intermediaries between the God and people has a reciprocating, the cyclical character:

- sometimes national consciousness starts to allocate images of demigods and other intermediate essences (for example,

Maidens Maria or Saint Nicholas) not with smaller sanctity, than the God; and in this connection the monotheism, as a matter of fact, turns to polytheism;

- in process of vulgarization of idolatry the polytheism destroys itself, coming back to monotheism.

D. Hume writes, that “one can observe a natural tendency of people to rise at first from idolatry to theism and then from theism again to fall before idolatry. <...> They vary between these opposite views. All the same weakness brings them down from the omnipotence and spiritual deity to the limited and corporal and from limited and corporal deity to the statue or visible image of the latter. All the same aspiration to tower brings them up: from the statue or material image to the invisible force and from the invisible force to the infinitely perfect Deity, the Creator and ruler of the universe” (Hume, 1966).

What is recognized as sacral is a subject to unconditional and quivering reverence and it is protected with special carefulness by all possible means. There is a strict punishment for sacrilege (for example, in Pakistan even today the criminal code provides the death penalty as a punishment for blasphemy). Sacral is the identity of belief, hope and love, and human heart is the “body” of sacral. Preservation of the sacred attitude to an object of a cult first of all is provided with conscience of a believer who appreciates holy relics more than his own life. Therefore, under the threat of the desecration of a holy thing, true believer stands up to protect it, without much hesitation and external coercion; sometimes for the sake of this he can sacrifice his live.

Sacral in its socio-organized forms is inevitably associated with the phenomenon of extreme fanaticism – with aggressive and passionate conviction of a fanatic, that only his personal faith is certainly true and exclusively correct. Confessional sacredness in conditions

of its state-legal support is enhanced by the principle “the faith of all those dominates, who are in power”. On the one hand, such sacrality ensures the survival of a state religion, but on the other hand, it generates different kinds of counter reactions of dissidents: heresies, schisms, wars of religion, freedom of thought, secularization, ecumenism, and the requirements of tolerance and dialogue of religions.

Sacral is revealed through pious behavior of people. Piety is the determination of mood and acts of a person by his thought about the presence or action of almighty force. The symbol of sacralization is sanctification, i.e. such a ceremony, as a result of which an ordinary wordly procedure gets a transcendental meaning. Bestowal is erection of a person in this or that degree of spiritual service by means of the established sacrament or a church ceremony. The priest is a person who is employed in the temple and commits all the sacraments, except the sacrament of ordination in the status of the priesthood.

Saint Augustine explained that the effectiveness of the Christian sacraments is caused not by the quality of the priest himself, but it is determined by the transparency of his ministration and executed function. Sacrilege – property infringement, aimed at sacred and holy items and accessories of the temple, as well as insulting the religious feelings of believers. In a broader sense, it means an attempt at a relic.

The phenomenon of sacral has properties identified in the external experience of believers. Among those who had made in the XIX-XX centuries a significant contribution to the development of the idea and concept of sacral, it should be noted such thinkers as F. Schleiermacher, R. Otto, M. Scheler, E. Durkheim, G. Simmel, R. Guenon, M. Eliade, P. Berger, T. Luckmann, A. Schütz, J. Baudrillard, M. Blanchot, R. Girard, etc.

Two opposite answers are more often given to the question, whether “religious” and “sacred” are identical. So, E. Durkheim believed, that the essence of religion consists in sacralization of base social communications (Durkheim, 1960). On the contrary, S.M. Shalutin and A.V. Medvedev are assured, that sacral is an attribute of any culture and that the notion of sacral is much wider, than the notion of religious (Shalutin, 1998; Medvedev, 1999).

Today there are five equally strong alternative hypotheses in treatment of the general problem of a parity of such notions, as concepts of absolute, sacral, divine and religious:

- 1) absolute values are sacral due to their divine nature (monotheism, polytheism);
- 2) absolute values are sacral, but not necessarily divine; there are also absolute not divine-religious values (the original Buddhism, Taoism, etc.);
- 3) not every absolute sacral object is divine or religious (materialism, dualism, atheism);
- 4) not all sacral religious values are unconditional, some religious relics have historically passing and relative character; at the same time there are absolute not religious and pure secular values (historicism, comparativism);
- 5) all values are relative, but people, for especially subjective reasons, sacralize some of them; sometimes the noncritical-absolutized values can be sacralized – for example, illusory idolized objects (relativism, gnosiological anarchism).

The specified alternatives are embodied in those or other philosophical systems. They are based on strong proofs, and the choice between them, first of all, is predetermined by world outlook preferences.

The church and the state develop complex and skillful system of protection and translation of the sacred attitude of people to basic ideals of the developed culture.

This translation is carried out by the methods coordinated among themselves and by means of all forms of a public life. Among them – rigid rules of law and soft receptions of art. (Zhukovsky, Koptzeva, Pivovarov, 2006) The individual is immersed – from the cradle, to the grave – into the system of sacralization generated by his family, tribe, nation and state. He is involved in the ceremonies and ritual actions; performs prayers and rites; keeps fasting and many other religious orders. First of all, it is necessary to sacralize norms and rules of the relationship to the near and far human beings, to the family, the people, the state and the Absolute. The system of sacralization consists of the following components:

- 1) the amount of the ideals and ideas that are sacred for the society’s (ideology);
- 2) psychological techniques and means of persuading people in the unconditional truth of these ideals and ideas;
- 3) specific semiotic forms of embodiment of relics, sacramental and hostile symbols;
- 4) a special organization (for example, church);
- 5) special practical actions, ceremonies and rites (cult).

It requires a lot of time to create this kind of system. Such system absorbs in itself new and old norms, customs, traditions and rituals. Sacralization of the basic ideals, first of all, is based on subjective acts of faith, the object of faith and religious authorities. The society achieves the reproduction of a particular religion in its entire horizontal (social groups, classes) and vertical (generation) dimensions thanks to its sacral traditions and relevant existing system of sacralization of ideals.

If the selected object is already sacralized, then the adherents, worshipping to this object-idol, trust in its reality more strongly, rather than in empirically given things. People carry an ideal

of the sacral hero in the heart. Sacral feeling has the quality of integrity, and poison of doubt is fatally dangerous for it. Nonetheless, it is difficult to draw clear boundaries between faith, half-faith and unbelief. The adherent of other faith brings the believer less worry than his coreligionist-dissident, the revisionist, the apostate, the heretic. Probably, it is tied with the fear of the believer begin to doubt in his faith, like a brother-heretic. Moreover, the texts of the sacred books sometimes give rise to serious doubts and confusion.

The maximum degree of the sacral attitude – sanctity, i.e. righteousness, piety, obedience to the God, the ability to active love the Absolute and release yourself from the impulses of self-love. Any religiousness is interfaced with sacralization, but not each believer in practice is capable to become a saint. There is a little bit of the saints, and their sample of holiness serves as a reference point for usual people. Degrees of the sacral attitude: fanaticism, moderation, indifference.

The stability of the sacralized system of values is not absolute. For some time, relativity and secularization of the sacral ideals can be amplified. When the percentage of dissidents and oath breakers inside of the certain faith is insignificant (for example, no more than five percent), in struggle against them religion is growing stronger and finds new sophisticated ways of self-defense.

In this sense, the dissident movement and the inquisition directed against it is a kind of benefit to religion and the churches. When the quantity of dissidents sharply increases inside of any denomination or the state religion, then the system of sacralization begins to fail: religion can break up into sects, to become something profane (ordinary, earthly, low), to lose contact with the souls of the mass of believers or disappear altogether in its previous form.

In conditions when the volume of the profane in the religion is increasing and profane becomes

the highest value, there is a sharp longing for the sacral in the society. There is some kind of the tendency to preserve the sacredness by its transformation into other forms: sacral turns into profane and profane – into sacral. So, under the slogan of religious renewal of the society in the era of the Reformation old Church sacraments became profane, and independence of the world from the Church was proclaimed.

At the same time, everyday people's labor, which served as a proof of their loyalty to the God, was sacralized. Another example: the progress of democratization and modernization, taking place in today's Russia, has caused the parallel activation of the carriers of archaic pagan consciousness and marginal culture of occultism. The sacral archetype of Lenin-the leader is replaced implicitly by the prayerful veneration of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II. And icons of Joseph Stalin, with a sword in his right hand and the Bible in the left, appear in Internet. The love of man to man is sacralized through the sacred sense of attraction to the Absolute.

If you do not ascribe necessarily social content to the concept of sacral, then, in its widest sense, this concept is quite suitable for disclosing the essence of any religion – egocentric, sociocentric (civil), cosmocentric. Our empirical «I» is looking for and finds the transcendental holy connection with the absolute and true «I»; ideologists sacralize people's ties with their leader, state and people; individual and mass communication with the God is sacral. And all these relations are the different types of religious attitude to the world.

Starting from the idea of sacral as the attribute of every religion, it is comparatively easy and reliably to distinguish the phenomenon of religion from all other forms of public spirit, which in their own way consolidate the people and give the individual a feeling of inner integrity.

Apparently, this procedure of sacralization of the basic values essentially distinguishes religion from the morality, mythology, philosophy, arts, and sciences. In our opinion, religion can be

defined as the search for and the establishment of the sacred ties, providing individual and (or) social groups the required integrity. (Pivovarov, 2013)

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Понятие сакрального и система сакрализации

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«Сакральное» определено в статье как причастность к абсолютному, и это понятие противопоставлено «профанному». По мнению авторов, систему сакрализации в обществе составляют: 1) сумма священных для данного общества идеалов и идей (идеология); 2) психологические приемы и средства убеждения людей в безусловной истинности этих идей; 3) специфические знаковые формы воплощения святынь, сакраментальных и враждебных символов; 4) особая организация (например, церковь); 5) специальные практические действия, обряды и церемонии (культ). Религия определяется в данном тексте как поиск и установление сакральных связей, обеспечивающих индивиду и (или) социальным группам потребную целостность.

Ключевые слова: сакральное, профанное, типы сакрального, система сакрализации, религия.
