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Egoism and Ontological Approach to Belief

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This article investigates the problem of Egoism which is analysed through the prism of the ontological approach to belief. Individual, social, cultural and spiritual types of egoism are considered as possible scenarios of losing ontological belief. It is concluded here that belief realizing itself as self-identification, axiological attitude and succession of values and service, is the mechanism of getting over egoism. This article can be interesting not only for philosophers, teachers and psychologists, but also for those who are interested in studying problems of personality formation.

Keywords: philosophy, ontology of belief, personality, types of egoism, self-identification, heredity of values.

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Introduction

The peculiarity of the phenomenon of ontological belief is that a person may not lose belief totally because without belief there is no man. However, inadequacy can be defined as the situation of losing belief from the point of view of ceasing to pursue one's own integrity and nature, and choosing something completely different instead. There are reasons to consider that egoism manifested through false self-identification of personality substantiates various scenarios of losing belief. This way, M. Heidegger considers etymological connection between the notion of "false" and the Latin word "fallo" or "fall", which means "falling". Falling in this case means to become false or to fall into illusion. If the truth as the opposite of

falsity can be expressed through stability and constancy, then falsity can be either expressed through "becoming unstable" or "leading to a fall"¹. The ontology of falling is closely related to the phenomenon of egoism and is interesting from the point of view of presenting different scenarios of losing belief.

From the ontological model of personality which we have considered, it is clear that egoism takes role of a disorienting factor in personality formation. In addition to this, the appearance of such disorienting factor becomes possible only when looked at through the frame of wholeness. The basic levels on which egoism can reveal itself are: 1) individual 2) social 3) cultural 4) spiritual. Let's try to consider various manifestations of egoism in correlation with belief accompanying

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personality formation, proceeding from the following reasons:

- 1) on the individual level egoism is manifested through the excessive domination of corporeality, sensuality and intellectuality;
- 2) on the social level egoism is revealed through leaving family, society, tribe, nation or any other communion;
- 3) on the cultural level egoism reveals itself through rejection of values of their carriers;
- 4) on the spiritual level egoism manifests itself through the shortage of existential values.

The phenomenon of egoism on the individual level

The phenomenon of egoism on the individual level is quite an extensive topic which demands special exploration. However, it is worth noticing that different manifestations of such kind of egoism can be distinguished based on holistic personality. Let's proceed from the fact that integrated personality, as any other, includes the entire spiritual, psychical and corporal, well-balanced for providing the maximum of its self-actualization. So what is this self-actualization? If self-actualization as self-fulfillment² does not deny any transformation of personality, overcoming or transcendence, then self-actualization as self-organization and self-regulation³ cannot do it without an opportunity of false self-identification. So, M. Foucault suggests that knowing oneself is the basis for managing oneself, however he does not give any clear definition of the "self". Since the times of Socrates, the question of taking care of oneself (*epimeleia heautou*) remains open in a sense that taking care of oneself can be understood as taking care of one's body, or taking care of one's mind, or taking care of one's soul. In each case self-actualization means absolutely

different types of activity, which, however, are all directed by the belief in Being. It means that taking one's self as a body or mind at specific stages of personality formation, always enables one to go to some new levels of self-identification through self-transcendence. Self-transcendence in our opinion should be understood not as "going out of one's limits"⁴ but as going out of the limits of those who have lost their existential value of self-realization and self-identification.

However, inability or unwillingness of self-transcendence are either signs of full self-realization, or signs of egoism revealing in taking "self" for what it is not. It would be wrong for false, but fundamentally taking as true, self-identification to denote as crisis of identity. Instead, it would be appropriate to say that "self-identification came to its dead end" or that "there has been a stop in self-identification process". Thus the stop of self-identification on the level of corporeality can be defined as materialism, on the level of sensuality – as sentimentalism, and on the level of intellect – as rationalism. However, materialism, sentimentalism or rationalism would be more appropriate to understand not as philosophy, but as a plan of actions, the end goal of which is forming the holistic value of a person. In all these cases, it is possible to trace the loss of belief that accompanies the formation of personality, and, therefore some definite self-insularity, existential dead end. In our opinion, in such cases the belief functions converge only to functions of instinct (corporeality), intuition (sensitivity) and intelligence (rationalism) correspondingly, in each separate case asserting its undeniable authority and dominion, making everything else subordinate to it.

The phenomenon of social egoism

The phenomenon of social egoism occurs when a person becomes capable to enter some social groups contributing to the creation or

maintenance of their integrity, but still does not belong to any of them. Regardless the type of disbelonging (family, society, nation and so on), the cause of it has to do with unjustified expectations which, in their turn, are caused by unfulfilled promises and responsibilities. G. Marcel thinks that losing belief is due to habit or social pressure mechanically imposed on an individual, which can be masqueraded as truth. According to the French philosopher, the loss of belief is depreciation of allegiance: in this case allegiance is interpreted as a form of an attachment to oneself, to human self-esteem, to pride⁵. From this idea it is clear that on the social level belief is considered as an axiological relation, the change of which depreciates the allegiance. Let us analyze loss of belief as a relation of values in the development of social egoism idea.

The loss of belief is closely related to promise considered as an act of speech (performative) that changes the course of things. Since the one who promises and the one who takes the promise (in other words, “gives the belief”) are the subjects of relationships⁶, both of them take responsibility for honouring the promise. Generally we shall proceed from the point of view that promise can be given by impulse directed towards the environment (let us define such promise as an “extravert performative”) and to oneself (an “introvert performative”). In the first case the promise becomes performative because of the fact that one who made the promise, fulfilled it, and therefore he/she wants to motivate others to act, being an example for them. In the second case the promise becomes performative for the one who made it because he/she did it in the presence of people trying to encourage him/herself to fulfill the given promise. Despite the fact that extravert performative is connected directly to the past realization of the promise and introvert one, only with a hope for its future realization, in both cases belief is what gives an efficacious power to the

promise. Presence of belief is what determines whether the promise is performative or not.

However, let us have a look at two more scenarios. In case if a person who does not believe in their own promise, the one promising has to take full responsibility for losing belief and breaking the promise. Although such promise is not an introvertial performative, the others can believe this promise, relying on the previous realization (we shall define such promise as “passive extravert performative”). Moreover, it is generally known that if a person who deceived others many times before gives a promise, nobody trusts them (to put it in another way, the promise given by such a person is not an extravert performative). Paradoxically, in this case the listeners are responsible for losing belief, because the one giving the promise can be hoping to change and to fulfill the promise, contrary to the multiple previous deceptions. Again, belief is the basis for the performativity of the promise, and the betrayed trust is the base of belief loss. The cause of losing belief in this case is not just disappointment of unfulfilled expectations, but a partial destruction of personality. According to G. Marcel, all what has happened is a destruction of personality, the loss of its roots due to false identification with the betrayer of trust, and partial renunciation in their favour: “their incompetence has become mine”⁷. However, widening the search for possible causes of losing belief shows the opposite: my incompetence becomes incompetence of another, because it provokes them for deceit. Thus, we can suppose that social egoism is motivated to a certain degree by the improper relationships between the members of a social group.

Let us consider the situation of losing ontological belief in the example of revealing social egoism in an educational community.

First of all, it is necessary to remember that if we proceed from interpersonal subject-to-subject relations and overcoming impersonal nature of

subject-to-object relations, the ontology of belief is a constant dialogue of two subjects of belief connected with each other by relationships within the value system.

It is well-known that “education suggests the primacy of belief”⁸, whereas ontological belief is exactly such a value-relation which is always reduced to transmission of knowledge, but not values. On one hand, teacher believes in student, but on the other hand, student believes in teacher. What is important in this relationship? In essence, teacher helps to reveal hidden potential qualities in a student and student adopts the qualities acquired by the teacher. Etymological analysis of the Russian words “student”, “aspirant” (graduate student), “candidate” (defended post-graduate student or PhD) and “doctor” (Doctor of Science) shows definite qualitative hierarchy of the subject of belief. The etymological roots of corresponding Latin words speak for themselves: students are those who “study heartily”, aspirans (aspirantis) – “aspiring”, candidus (candidatus) – “dressed in white”, “worthy”, doctor – “teacher”, “educated”, “modest”. Obviously, the process of education suggests the development of student’s personal qualities which should be fully developed in the personality of the teacher.

Teacher is a bearer and an example of human qualities that have fully realized and fulfilled trusts in humanity of human, in possibility of having revealed their unique individuality, in their development of required qualities for their social competence. Using this belief teachers attract students, using this belief they become authority in students’ eyes, due to this belief they help students to choose the right way and by the same belief they encourage students to move in the direction of their own truth and fulfilment. The loss of such ontological belief negates the process of education and makes it impossible for the student to overcome the shortcomings that hide their unique personal qualities.

If the teacher to some extent exemplifies the truth, the student exemplifies belief. As we have mentioned many times in the terminology of tractate “Being and Time”, belief is “discovering existence or discovering” and truth is “discovered existence or discovery”⁹. According to M. Heidegger, the essence of human being can be defined as “listening”. According to coeval P. Ricker, the term “obedience” is in many languages semantically close to “listening”: “to listen (germ. Horchen) means ability to obey (Gehorchen)”¹⁰. In our opinion, this idea should be developed as follows: the formation of belief directly connected with person’s becoming veritable passes such stages of co-existence with truth as: confidential listening, obedience and service involving deeper and deeper levels of personality into the process of education. Interconnectedness of such terms as “belief”, “listening” and “relation” has already been considered above. Belief as a personal value-relation suggests remote or close relations between student and teacher. Thus, neutrality (listening) and service (obedience) suppose remote relations, whereas friendship (listening attentively), care (attention) and love (acceptance, agreement) are typical for close relations.

So, to measure how student trusts teacher becomes possible through the analysis of capability and student’s desire to listen to the teacher. Students show their true value-relation to the teacher and themselves exactly in the process of listening. The absence of desire to listen to the teacher causes an entire array of problems reflecting the incorrect understanding of teacher’s role in the creation of one’s own future and demonstrating scenario of losing belief. From our point of view, the main problems can be formulated through the following features: 1) egoism growing into asociality; 2) the absence of authorities growing into unpredictability and uncontrollability; 3) inability to finish what has been started growing into wasting the potential;

4) lie becoming a standard of existence and standard of thinking; 5) consumerism growing into reluctance to live up to expectations of the family, society, nation. Generally, such a situation is highly unfavourable for the formation of personality (becoming) because of the reluctance to accept any values other than the ones that have already been formed by egoism.

Considering these problems not from the ethical but from the ontological point of view, it can be said that losing belief is identical to a suicide that destroys not only the results of past efforts, but also all the possible future perspectives.

Absolutely different degree of losing belief in the situation of social egoism is revealed through the analysis of essence of the social group as integrity. Let us proceed from the definition of community as a “social connection”, as a “way to live and die together”, as a “cohesion between people which exists not according to their traditions or their blood, but due to their relation to a symbol”¹¹. In this case belief reveals itself through allegiance and devotion to those values and ideals borne by a symbol. Joining a social group automatically means acceptance of the symbol as true, but this joining does not mean that value-relation to the symbol is of stable nature. As a rule, at the moment of acceptance in community the axiological relation does not correspond to any requirements, and is to undergo some gradual evolution. However, before joining this entity an individual could have belonged to some other entity, any other social group with a definite symbol of belief. If remote relations to different symbols of belief are accepted, close relations reveal themselves in love, allegiance and devotion in most complete way. In this case close relations to the symbols of different social groups can pass into the phase of remote relations or break completely. We may conclude, that social egoism is revealed not just through deceit and lie but through defection and treachery.

The phenomenon of cultural egoism

The phenomenon of cultural egoism is connected with the loss of belief as a mechanism of values succession. In this case the investigation is directed largely to reveal the irrational laws which have their own cycle of realization, much longer than human life; not to mention a time-limit for creating distinctive causal relationships necessary for science. H. Bergson reflected the functioning of this mechanism through the notion of “creative evolution”¹², M. Heidegger – through the notion of “translation”¹³, K. Jaspers – through the notion of upbringing¹⁴. As the law of time hides everything imperceptibly under the sand of oblivion, these laws are hardly recognizable, while their activity brings positive result: the personality that embodies the existential values of tradition in its own life. “As a biological being, human has no memory but in the consciousness of a man who went through the lashes of a whip and mystery appear thoughts that are bringing memory, the succession, the relations”¹⁵. It is possible to suppose that on the cultural level the loss of belief turns into the loss of values succession, which results as the problem of self-identification on the individual level. In our opinion, explanation of the phenomenon of cultural egoism goes before the explanation of close relations of belief and self-identification.

So, if the ontological belief is not only aspiration to understand the nature of Being but also the process of becoming veritable, then self-identification is not the only correlation between a person and its Self, but also it is the search and restoration of the Self. All in all, self-identification can be defined as a personal projection of chosen values and their state of Being. Belief and self-identification assume whether subjective-subjective or subjective-objective transmission of life goals, values, meaning and ideology and all this shows togetherness of mechanisms of belief and self-identification.

Speaking about the connection between belief and self-identification, it is necessary to point out the statement that belief is the condition for self-identification¹⁶. From our point of view, the inter-connectedness between belief and self-identification is so tight that taking one or another ideal as valuable and veritable, person takes corresponding life direction automatically and it means they take themselves in this quality (i.e. having the same verity and value). Through the process of identification with any ideal a person “a priori” becomes veritable and valuable only with the only provision that these verity and value are revealed in some concrete experience of the person’s life. So, in the opinion of A.F. Losev, “personality is such a phenomenon of uniqueness and originality and which is not only the vessel of consciousness, intellect and feeling and so on, but is also a subject which correlates (personality) with itself and correlates itself with everything around it”¹⁷. In general, the Russian thinker relied on the Plato doctrine which combines the principle of self-care and the idea of multilevel revelation of truth and the theory of memorizing. Thereby, self-care assumes several ontological alternatives as in understanding oneself, in understanding the truth in memory. The following remains unchangeable: on the level of values, a person corresponds to those ideals that they take as the truth.

In his cave myth, Plato demonstrates how a person chooses a concrete ideal depending on the level of self-realization, though it completely loses its rationale at the moment when the person substitutes the standards of identity with some other ones. In the conditions of constantly changing society where there is no clearly defined goal, possibility of one taking as a truth which is not a truth on the absolute level, increases. Hunger for glory, power and wealth, taken as ranks of socially significant existential meaning to which people are out for, can have, by their existential

status, the rank as significant as belief in God has¹⁸. Therefore, “uncovered” truth is not removed; it is dissolved or lost in the mind of person perplexed by variety of endless number of relative truths. Essentially, it is possible to speak of the number identity types (and ontological belief types) that corresponds to the number of relative truths perceived in every separate case as absolute. This is how individual, social and cultural egoism occur. Herewith, as we have already mentioned, individual egoism can be revealed through the dominant of corporality (materialism), sensitiveness (sentimentalism) or rationality (rationalism) and social egoism; through the dominant of individuality (individualism), family (household centrism), collective (careerism), nation (nationalism), idea (fanaticism¹⁹). All the manifestations of egoism condition person with their relative truths and values, making the person get attached to them and neutralizing and devaluating other truths and values. The point is that valid truths and values are rationally justified unlike other ones, and therefore, belief remains unclaimed. Such scenario of losing belief leads to the crisis of formation which needs more thorough review.

If a person takes or denies any truth as the absolute one on the rational level, on the irrational level the presence of the former and the latter is simultaneously revealed in the nature of belief. From the irrational point of view, any change during the formation period is quite natural, so from the rational point of view it is understood as a failure, collapse and crisis. It can be said that belief always aiming for the absolute fullness and verity performs a coordinating and a guiding function, which does not allow a person to mistake something for the truth, choose it as an option. Belief as an individual personal aspiration does not impose to a person from outside or from within, but “it can repeat in the same form, it can convert itself into a reaction

that is taken as a rule autonomously, and acting for as long as the reaction satisfies a person but there can be a moment when I deny the pattern of action and creatively substitute the old pattern with new aspirations, and accept a new one, respectively²⁰. The consequent formation of personality, characteristically of belief, suggests that previous stage serves as the foundation for the following one. Thereby, heredity of values is possible only on the level much lower than the level in which a person experiences the crisis of formation: cultural crisis of formation makes it impossible to accept spiritual values, social crisis of formation makes it impossible to accept cultural and spiritual values, and individual crisis of formation makes it impossible to accept any values from anyone.

The crisis of formation is the loss of belief and all the possibilities connected to it caused by egoistic attachment. From the point of view of G. Marcel, such egoistic concentration on oneself resembles of concentration on a sick organ²¹. In this case an adequate solution for the problem is to treat a part of body for the sake of health of whole, and an inadequate solution is concentration on the sick part and, therefore, forgetting the whole. Crisis of formation considered in this perspective is the principal attachment to the part, inevitably leading to the destruction of the whole. So, for example, in the case of individual egoism, the crisis of formation reveals itself as the death of body, the psychic death (madness) or the death of intellect (senility). In the case of social egoism, individualism leads to the loss of all possibilities to be confident in one's self (fear), household centrism – to the loss of all the possibilities of having the confidence a social unit (greed), careerism – to the loss of all the possibilities to live truthfully (lie), nationalism – to the loss of all the possibilities to serve the society (pride), fanaticism – to the loss of all the possibilities to serve the truth (hatred). Concrete examples

of cultural egoism lead to the growth of above faltering contributing in general the rejection of values from their carriers. Let us consider some of them.

Belief as self-identification assumes the presence of the matter of belief, acting as ideal for the subject. It is necessary to recognize the matter of belief which is the object of the intellect and the matter of belief which is the subject of belief. If we consider the matter of belief through the prism of subjective-objective relations, it serves as a means to achieve the position by the subject which corresponds to the object. As a rule, the object of belief is perceived by the subject of belief in an one-sided manner, changing in a certain quality; it is possible only theoretically, but practically it can only be possible when the consciousness of the subject changes in the fundamental way. As a result, such one-sidedness leads the subject to sentimentalism, practicality, fanaticism, dogmatism and any other deformations of the consciousness; however, belief remains blinded because the essence of ideal is still inaccessible to the subject. If you consider the matter in a subjective-subjective way, it is perceived differently: not just as a means, and not even as a reference point or as an example, but as a personality which has various qualities. Belief in this case is not only a set of relations which contribute the forming of personality; it is also a kind of communication, the essence of which leads to the exchange of values.

Traditionally, the ideal was some authority which was accepted voluntarily and the role of which was usually played by the seniors or those who had superior position or status. For example, in a family, parents performed this function for their children, as seniors – for juniors, husband – for wife; at a University it is a teacher, at the government – a supervisor; at the church – a priest or a monk. The value proceeding from the Other can be expressed

in various forms: as an order, advice, as a law, standard, as a commandment, insight; however, in any case the value is presented as an invaluable gift. The important thing is that the authority of the Other forming in the process of upbringing, education and the relations, was based on trust and belief regulated by the experience accumulated by cultural tradition. From here it becomes clear that minimal condition of belief as relation and communication is the realization of the value as well as the necessity of keeping both the realization and the value. Value acceptance starts from the moment when this minimal condition is fulfilled, and this acceptance is expressed as a consequently implemented listening, obedience, attention and agreement (complete agreement).

On the contrary, deafness, disparagement, indifference and abhorrence (complete rejection) are sequential phases of revealing cultural egoism. Egoistic relation can be expressed as in conscious active contradiction as well as in silent and inactive indifference. In both cases the other personality is perceived as a thing, as a means for achieving a goal, as an object for satisfaction. "Love relates to a person, but lust relates to a thing", wrote P.A. Florensky²². According to the Russian philosopher, the ontological value understanding of the abyss between love and lust which indicates the borders of the relation "to a person" and a relation "to a thing" is unavailable for an intellect which objectifies everything. The impersonalism, as we understand, is an extreme form of egoism reducing the relation of belief to the rational scheme, the essence of which is ritual and calculation. The only thing that remains unchanged in the centre of this scheme, is the hypertrophied "pseudo-I" directed only to the following expansion of the spheres of one's own comfort and one's own influence through using and exploitation of the others. It is important to note, that "unlike moralist, altruist

or humanist, egoist knows what he/she is doing and does nothing about the things in which he/she is not interested²³: the action pattern of egoist depends directly on the knowledge of benefit. However, Personality is always a matter of value-relation, not an exhibit for egoistic intellectual experiments.

Justification of conscious egoism is possible only together along with blind and ingenuous belief, however, ontological approach to belief clearly distinguishes ego and egoism. Ontological belief, the essence of which characterizes the personality (ego), has nothing in common with deformations of the intellect caused by egoism. Thinking process is applicable most effectively to the thing, however on the interpersonal and socio-cultural levels person is guided by the ontological belief as a value-relation, not by the rational calculation. It is clear that "to think things and to vest one's own "I" in those things which becomes their own I²⁴ is not only subjective view but also possessive, consumptive, and exploitative". If even one and the same matter can be imagined by different people in different ways according to their personal subjectivity, it inevitably causes contradictions; therefore, such a view is completely unacceptable in relation to another person. N.O. Lossky noticed that "as we, people, belong to the kingdom of psychomaterial existence with its decaying and impoverishment the range of vision of consciousness and realization, so we tear out from another's speech its sensitive side touching our body (ear, eye) understanding its meaning imperfectly, incompletely"²⁵.

Analyzing the ontological aspect of belief, E.A. Evstifeeva distinguishes wholeness and stability of belief, which hardly allow correction and furthermore radical changes even while touching the contradictive conceptions and ideologies²⁶. Considering this fact, we characterized individual egoism as inadequacy of one's self towards the true self, and social

egoism as a betrayal based on change of attachment. It seems to us that a scenario of losing belief as a succession of values due to cultural egoism can be analysed at the introduction of the notion “offence” which develops the problem of betrayed trust that is connected with social egoism. The content of the matter of belief has always had value-meaning for the subject and is connected with its interests, needs, hopes and ideals. When speaking about belief as a basis of personal formation, we mean significance and originality of the value of something to what a believing person aspires. Thus, the offence does not involve any “violation”: violation is directed in large degree to the external, to the misconduct in behaviour dictated by attachment, while the offence is a cardinal change of relation.

The essence of the offence may be defined as a rebellion of a man against those who are higher in status. Perhaps, the main criteria of superior status should be the value-relation which every person possesses, mature enough to be a parent, a leader, a ruler, a teacher. Receiving care and love from those who are older, such a person neglects them as personalities and carriers of those values which they have. In this way, the offence becomes the offence of love. If belief represents itself as an adequate reply to the manifestations of love, truth and good, then offence is an inadequate reply to these manifestations. Disheartedness, ingratitude and lack of mutuality as a reaction to the values being transmitted are the main signs showing the offence against parents, educators, teachers, seniors, those who have superior positions or experience etc. Largely the phenomenon of the offence is confirmed by analytics of M. Heidegger: “«Dasein» as a co-existence happens only when it is directed to the others”, but indifference, insularity, secrecy and affectation are “defect modus” at which the self-realization loses itself”²⁷.

Egoism on the spiritual level

On the spiritual level egoism is expressed through abusing freedom that manifests itself in unwillingness to accept predominant value of the World, Truth and Another and one’s own Self as a person who is capable of being happy with only one unique value-relation. Individual qualities of unique personality can be revealed only towards World, Truth, Another: it is the nature by which a personality can be happy with in the absolute way. Spiritual integrity in Russian philosophy is denoted as unity and supposes harmonious unity of personalities that take their own unique position in it. To denote this position, it is more appropriate to use the term “topos” (greek: “place”) found in philosophy of M. Heidegger. The destruction of the spiritual integrity by egoism, in our opinion, is conditioned by the lack of existential qualities, without which the personality does not realize the imperishable value of the possibilities provided by the place.

Ontologically, the place is not space, but a range of opportunities to reveal particular personal qualities towards the World, Truth, Another. Such place is simultaneously “mine” and “everyone’s” because the place provides the personality with an opportunity of active value-relation directed to the World, Truth, Another. However, the World represents a certain Unity of multiple things, just as the Truth represents Unity of various and therefore mismatched relative truths, just as Another represents not just the place, but the environment. The environment is understood as integrity of unique personalities harmoniously complementing each other and united by value-relation to Another. Thus, egoism on the spiritual level is not so much connected with the unwillingness to accept Another, but as with the unwillingness to accept the environment of Another. The inconstancy of the environment which sometimes is accepted and sometimes is not, inevitably serves as a consequence of it.

The disorienting function of egoism in this case encourages changing the environment without changing oneself and one's own relation. The rejection of one's own place in this case means losing the possibility to reveal value-relation most widely, which is identical not for loss of existential possibilities but for rejection of one's own happiness.

Deficit of existential qualities is the lack of humanity and, therefore, departure from the social, cultural and spiritual to animal qualities. A human always believes in something, this is what distinguishes them from an animal; nevertheless, when the subject of their dreams is entirely determined by egoism, a change of human to an animal, change of good qualities to drawbacks occur. Greed, anger, lust, fear can be all defined as animal qualities because these drawbacks are revealed as a consequence of ignorance caused by egoism. As to envy, pride, lust, vanity it is more appropriate to use the definition "demonic" because they are manifested as a consequence of the illusion of false dominance caused by egoism. Though ignorance as absence of knowledge and intellect is a menace for humanity, the illusion as a false knowledge and immoral intellect is a menace for humanity and humankind in general. "Let us clear the sky of our spirit from Bear of rudeness, Archer of envy, Stallion of light-mindedness, Dog of backbiting, Dog of flattery; let us banish from them Hercules of violence, insidious Lyra... callous Cepheus", – such direction for making efforts offered Giordano Bruno²⁸.

Above quote of the Italian philosopher is not accidental: according to fair remark of K. Jaspers "Giordano Bruno believed, Galileo knew"²⁹. Besides all, the German philosopher contrasts belief not only with disbelief, but also demonism. If he denotes disbelief as an "every position which is in expected absolute immanence with denying the transcendence", then demonism "as a stubborn will which is directed to one's

own ego is a desperate wish to be oneself"³⁰. Demonic is "closed and hard to open"³¹. However, belief can be demonic: in this case person has common materially-mindedness, while being acquainted with transcendental and spiritual. It becomes clear that losing belief is a consequence of impersonalism: indifference to personality revealed in a form of its denying. Philosophically, impersonalism itself is the consequence of extreme egoism, and therefore it contradicts the culture of relations and the idea of succession of values.

On the social scale, competence of a holistic personality which embodies the ideals of individual qualities and socio-cultural values is realized through effectiveness of institutes of family, education and authorities. Interpersonal relations with carriers of qualities form new generation of personalities, however, such relations from the beginning and till the end are regulated by ontological belief and, therefore, do not allow the scenarios of belief loss. In the light of existential philosophy of the XX century, belief is understood as a gift by which happens the seducing and tempting, involving the person from the "beyond-existence" (the oblivion) to the existence. Usually the gift is brought by the inferior one to the superior one or by younger to elder, and the gift of belief here is not an exception: the gift of belief of one generation is the answer to the gift of love of the other generation. The target of the gift of belief is to raise a person to the existence compensating fully his falling to the "beyond-existence" (oblivion). The peculiarity of this gift is that belief is an aspiration to embody the plan but the aspiration to the goal. The gift of belief keeps the secret enthralling to the obscurity, and at the same time destructing all the conceivable and rational expectations. Belief as a gift is revealed as a free and unselfish value-relation; therefore, it is a gift rejected by indifference leading to the

offence and respectively to the loss of belief, the loss of succession of values.

Despite the qualitative distinction, the negotiation of both the animal ignorance and demoniac illusions involve an activity which could mean taming of passion and, simultaneously, actualization of personal qualities. “Only there (in the act of belief as a love – com. by R.O.) another superior consciousness appears here in comparison with which my previous essence concluded in a small I seems to be wrong and false”³². Listening, obedience, attention and receiving (full agreement) in this connection are essentially nothing like service. Listening, obeying, attending and receiving, the subject of belief serves the truth which he voluntarily takes as its representative and through this process reveals himself as a holistic personality which has its own unique qualities.

In the early twentieth century, S.L. Frank, I.A. Ilyin, N.A. Berdyaev, P.A. Florensky and other philosophical thinkers close to existentialism developed and justified the idea of service. Ontological approach to belief considers this idea in an ontological value-related way: service is an action driven by belief which is committed in relation to the object of admiration. It is clear that a simple action cannot be called a service, because a service must be a value-relation, actually containing in itself the gift of belief, and potentially the gift of love. Traditionally, the objects of service were father and mother, motherland and fatherland, God and the king. The object of service in general is a person maintaining the unity in its sphere of influence in order to preserve the possibility of formation of each individual until it reaches the maximum self-realization. In contrast to the object of service, individual seeks for unity to reach the selfish personal fullness of life³³. The idea of service in this context looks like a solution to the problem of egoism and impersonalism.

According to S.L. Frank³⁴, the service of truth, which is a consequence of belief, is the only purpose of man, and which opens to him (man) the fullness of life. According to the law formulated by I.A. Ilyin “man is gradually becoming what he believes in”³⁵, is interpreted the following way: man is what or whom he serves. The service here is not just external activities, such as bodily activity, but in the first place, it is attitude or inner aspiration. In this regard, it should be noted that the aspiration to Another is an inherent characteristic of personality, and the attitude of this aspiration largely determines the outcome. So, learning the truth through Another implies mutual understanding, interdependence and mutual exchange, and therefore, the subject of belief will inevitably have to, firstly, unfold Another, and, secondly, has to reveal himself to Another. Complete openness of Another is actually determined not only by the degree of commitment, but also a genuine interest in him as a person, a desire to be helpful and inspiring. In our opinion, these three things are most important to characterize the internal attitude of service. Indifference to others, unnatural to a conscious person, as well as focus only on one’s Self, according to N.A. Berdyaev, is spiritual death³⁶. And on the contrary, according to Russian philosophers, a service is the essence, sign of spiritual health and personal completeness.

However, the need for a deeper and at the same time a clear justification arises when belief becomes a study on the socio-cultural level. Identification and analysis of very specific reasons of personal inadequacy, as well as search for and study of methods to eliminate both the personal and the social level, are, in our opinion, some of the most pressing priorities of the progressive humanitarian sciences. In particular, the research can be directed to the analysis of interpersonal relationships: within the family, in education institutions, collaboration in professional teams,

socialization in the community, as well as the culture of these relations. Culture of relations in this context is seen as the most important factor in ensuring the effective and efficient mechanism for the continuity of values.

In general, the link between belief and culture may be traced through such concepts as *Dharma* (Sanskrit), *Jen* (Chinese), *Paideia* (Greek), *Humanus* (Latin), which in the existential-ontological way suggest a kind of retrospective understanding of the “model of existence” or truth of human existence. Insight into each of these categories reveals quite natural understanding of belief as stability and support of personal aspirations, belief as an integral part of human nature, belief, as elevating the formation and formation of identity, belief as a valuable attitude to Another. Philosophical understanding of belief as a socio-cultural mechanism always reduces to the idea of a cultural tradition: it is a tradition of providing continuity of values from one generation to another, from one person to another. Existence of belief, of course inherent in the personality in an atmosphere of tradition, is distorted and presented as fanaticism in the atmosphere of the revolution. All sorts of surrogates of belief exist in ideas of solipsism and selfishness until nationalism and altruism.

So, heroism, which at first sight is based on belief, is “not what unites but what divides, it creates not co-workers, but competitors”³⁷. Pride, often presented as a positive contrast to pride, or vanity, issued for the dignity, condescension instead of compassion and love... These are based on pseudo-belief shortcomings typical for a society that has lost contact with carriers of the true qualities. In the early twentieth century Russian philosopher S.N. Bulgakov warned of the dangers of “spiritual paedocracy” in which the values and opinions of students are the guidelines for the oldest³⁸. Of course, the spiritual relationship between the generations is natural, but its direction must be understood clearly: as hereditary continuity.

Conclusion

All in all, we may conclude that the nature of egoism lies in false self-identity, based on a principled attachment, perceived as true. The action of succession mechanism of ontological belief leads to the fact that regardless of the objective significance of the values taken by the individual for the absolute, he becomes them (values). Inadequacy, betrayal, abuse as a situation of loss of belief in this case are very promising direction for further research.

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⁸ Markov B. V. The signs of existence. Saint-Petersburg, Science, 2001. P. 68.

⁹ Heidegger M. Being and Time. Saint-Petersburg, Nauka, 2006. P. 218-219.

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¹¹ Mamardashvili M. K. The lectures on the antique philosophy. Moscow, Agraf, 1997. P. 107.

¹² Bergson H. Creative evolution. Matter and memory. Minsk, Harvest, 1999. 1408 p.

¹³ Heidegger M. Parmenides. Saint-Petersburg, Vladimir Dal, 2009. P. 36.

¹⁴ Jaspers K. The Origin and Goal of History. Moscow, Respublika, 1994. P. 353.

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Эгоизм и онтологический подход к вере

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Исследуется проблема эгоизма, которая бытийно-ценностно осмысливается через призму онтологического подхода к вере. Рассматриваются индивидуальный, социальный, культурный и духовные типы эгоизма, понимаемые как ситуации потери бытийной веры. Обосновывается, что вера, реализуясь как самоидентификация, ценностное отношение, преемственность ценностей и служение, является механизмом преодоления эгоизма. Данная статья будет интересна не только философам, педагогам и психологам, но и всем интересующимся проблемами личностного становления.

Ключевые слова: философия, онтология веры, становление личности, типы эгоизма, самоидентификация, преемственность ценностей.

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