

# Main tendencies of religious consciousness development in modern society

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**Abstract - The article is devoted to the investigation of the tendencies of religious consciousness development in modern society.** At the present stage of development religious consciousness, like any other social and psychological phenomenon, is undergoing significant changes. The development of religious consciousness at the present stage of society evolution leads to the development of common moral norms and requirements. There is a tendency to reduce human ties with the religious community as a translator of religious consciousness. It is possible to speak about the transformation of religious consciousness but not about its disappearance.

**Keywords — God, religion, religious consciousness, religious culture, religious values, faith.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the article is to investigate the main features of religious consciousness, its formation and functioning; as well as to consider the influence of a particular religion on society.

Some questions raised and studied in the article have been considered in the works of researchers investigating issues and problems of communication (O.V. Issers, V.I. Karasik, G.G. Pocheptsov, V.V. Krasnykh), conducting cultural studies (A.I. Arnoldov, A.K. Bayburin, A.A. Gorelov, P.S. Gurevich, V.N. Toporov, A.L. Kroebel, C. Kluckhohn, L.A. White), sociologists (A.I. Kravchenko, P.A. Sorokin), philosophers (A.K. Adamov, S.F. Anisimov, M.S. Kagan, A.F. Losev, G. Rickert), linguists (N.D. Arutyunova, A. Wezsbitska, E.M. Vereschagin, V.I. Karasik, V.A. Maslova), scientists conducting religious studies (V.I. Garadzha, I.A. Ilyin, A. Donnini, K.G. Dowson, V.V. Kasevich, Y.A. Kimlev, R.L. Johnstone, R.R. Marrett).

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS (MODEL)

The following methods have been used to conduct research and to fulfill the set tasks: semantic analysis, discourse-analysis, informants survey, method of analysis of cultural meanings.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The term “religion” is of Latin origin. It was introduced to culture by Cicero who derived this term from the polysemantic verb *relegere* – “to go, to return, to think over, to read again, to behold, to be afraid”. His interpretation of religion boiled down to God-fearing, fear and overcoming fear with the help of a thoughtful system of honouring the higher powers. One of the recognized definitions of religion belongs to R. Johnstone who thought that religion is “a system of beliefs and rituals with the help of which a group of people explains and reacts on what they find supernatural and sacred” [14].

Italian researcher of religion A. Donini focuses on the fact that relations between a man and nature which had always had double character: reigning of mighty nature over a helpless person on the one hand and influence of a person on nature on the other hand [7].

But there is also a point of view according to which religion can't be drawn only from the helplessness of a man; according to Y.A. Levada “functions of religion must be presented in juxtaposition not with natural needs of a man but with the needs of historically particular social systems” [9].

Within the borders of the modern social institute of religion represents the most conservative social institute. But during the whole history of human society evolution religious systems and beliefs have been constantly changing and developing.

Magic, fetishism, totemism, animism, agricultural cult and shamanism belong to early forms of religion. Elements of magic are also preserved in many modern religions.

On the early stages of formation and development the distinctive features of religious consciousness were: polytheistic character (worship of several gods), functional limitation of gods (each god was responsible for the definite sphere of human life), absence of unity and exact

subordination between gods (gods were separate and not connected representatives of higher power).

Religious consciousness as a whole has a number of characteristic features, they are: animism and animatism (recognition that man and everything alive have soul as well as faith in the animate nature), availability of faith (special psychological condition of confidence in the righteousness of chosen aim and possibility to reach it), belief in supernatural (confidence in real existence of the higher powers, "mysterious beginning" which can either punish a person if he doesn't behave properly or encourage, reward him if he follows set rules), imagery and emotionality (in religious consciousness function black stone images, its important component comprise religious feelings which having arisen once become a human need; besides, it is typical of the religious discourse to relive various emotions, among them are "fear of God", "love to God", "sense of sinfulness and humility", "compassion for neighbour", "hope of reward"), symbolism and allegory (any religious system has its own system of symbols which lose their meaning outside the system; symbolism is didactic in character, through an image or combination of images it helps to convey ethical and moral concepts allegorically), combination of adequate and non-adequate (in any religious concept we can find provisions which correspond to the real world picture, and on the other hand some religious provisions can seem to be illegal and non-adequate, though the central component of any religious is faith and so a man mustn't try to explain anything); dialogue character (a word has a great power in religious consciousness, it concerns both semantic content and degree of influence on a man; belief in the existence of supernatural powers presumes faith and desire to interact with God and supernatural powers; in the religious space there unfolds a dialogue of a man with God and with another man), availability of moral and ethical norms and requirements (it is characteristic of religious consciousness to include absolute moral truths and particular ethical criteria for evaluation; religious morality is always connected with the dogmas of the definite creed and includes moral instruction which can't be find in the systems of non-religious morality), messianism (desire and readiness to spread your view and convictions among people who don't practice this religion and don't operate mechanisms of this religious consciousness) [4].

Religious consciousness has two levels of realizations – everyday and conceptual. Everyday religious consciousness is presented in the form of images, impressions, stereotypes, mood and feelings, habits, traditions which reflect conditions of human life. Rational, emotional and volitional elements can be found on this level and the dominant role is played by emotions. Religious consciousness on a conceptual level presents a specially worked out, systematized aggregate of notions, ideas, principles and concepts. It includes: 1) teaching about God (gods), world, nature, society and man which is developed by specialists; 2) interpretation of different aspects of social life (economy, politics, legal sphere, morality, art) which is worked out in accordance with the principals of religious world outlook, i.e. religious-ethical, religious-political, religious-legal, religious-ethnic and religious-aesthetic concepts; 3) religious philosophy.

Religious consciousness doesn't exist autonomously, it interacts and intersects with other forms of public consciousness: morality, art, science, politics, law.

All elements of religion are closely connected with culture. Many modern philosophers and culture studies specialists share the opinion that culture is a wider notion and religious presents its important component [1, 4-6, 12, 17].

Religious culture presents a "set of methods and techniques of provision and implementation of human being which are realized during religious activity the center of which is a cult" [12]. With such an approach all cultural values are formed within religious consciousness.

Having arisen on a particular cultural basis religion and religious consciousness influence greatly both on the world culture in general and on the culture of particular people [5].

From the very start the main role of religion was to give human norms and values absolute and stable character. "A man is a religious creature in his nature and human soul can't stand any emptiness in religious sphere.... Only the superhuman principle constructs the very idea of a man" [2].

With time religion has become a spiritual power providing integrity of the culture. It created the hierarchy of values, on the top of which was put God and all the other values were derived from the value of divine – thereby religion united all spheres of culture around it.

Trying to explain world structure and a place of a man in it and also trying to find a meaning of life religion has gradually formed a system of views, convictions and principles of a man; being a spiritual support it gives people hope and spiritual satisfaction. Having some religious ideal, a man has an opportunity to change inside, sharing and transferring main dogmas of religions which he confesses.

Religion unites people contributing to the formation of the nations, formation and strengthening of states (though in some circumstances the same religion can lead to the division of the nation). Thus, religion plays a cultural and social role in the life of society.

Different religious systems produce different influence on the society in which they function. Christianity, for example, played a great role in the formation of European culture. Biblical images and plots have been used in literature, art and sculpture during many centuries. Biblical idioms, short and capacious concepts (a heavy cross, to carry the cross, Calvary, the road to Calvary, the traitor Judas, the kiss of Judas, etc.) have been put into the base of moral concepts and assessments. Dogmas and statements about obedience, patience, retribution in the other world form the idea of inevitability as well the idea that order that reigns in the world was sent down from above.

Unlike Christian Buddhist culture is associated with the preaching of social harmony, equality and nonviolent existence. Prudence, confidence and restraint are the main features of Buddhist ethics, which teaches: "the Decoration of a person is wisdom, the decoration of wisdom is calmness, the decoration of calmness is courage, the decoration of courage is softness". The basic principles of the Buddhist worldview are formulated as follows: to prevent and suppress evil, to do and maintain good.

Buddhism tries to find special psychic powers of a man which allow him to control physical forces and special spiritual practices, penetrating and trying to uncover the secrets of the universe.

Unlike Christianity and Buddhism, the peculiarity of Muslim culture is the unity of basic religious values and strict regulations of everyday human behaviour. It is interesting to note that the distinctive feature of Islamic culture is almost complete absence of fine art in it. This is a consequence of the ban that this religion imposes on the image of a man, animals and everything divine. For the same reason the Muslim world is almost devoid of theater, and instead of paintings or statues Islamic artists have long developed the ornamental art of arabesques, artistic calligraphy, as well as Muslim religious or Palace architecture (famous Taj Mahal).

Currently, almost in all languages we can find lexical units that have a religious basis (belonging and taken from the religion professed by a particular people). In addition, world status religions have had and continue to have an impact on many world languages. To a greater extent this applies to Christianity.

Lexical units that are derived from the Holy Bible function in the Russian language. Many of them completely lost their religious connotation and are not associated directly with the language of religion: iniquity, silence, a disgrace, reverence, thanksgiving, favorable, middle, magnify, groaning, exclamation, angry, memories, take, revival, hand, pompous, verb, power, bold, kindness (beauty), longitude, nature, evil, fair, surprise, warm, castle, abomination, wisdom, population, to dwell, convict, industry, feathered, true, wrangling, treasure, strange, Saturday, patience, crowd, asylum, generous, etc.: "Bind up the testimony, seal the revelation of My disciples" [3].

Other lexical units retain a connection with the religious sphere to this day, their functioning in the language and speech inevitably entails the recreation in mind of certain biblical paintings and subjects: Hallelujah, altar, greedy, anathema, angel, godlessness, disembodied, evangelism, goodwill, piety, to push, verb, to render, to love, ascend, rebirth, burnt offering, demon, right hand, virtue, Covenant, commandment, sign, idol, Exodus, repent, ark, meek, idol, Messiah, mercy, image, finger, stream, cover, parable, Satan, Cathedral, creature, darkness, meal, hope, mouth, womb, etc.: "Sacrifices and offerings You did not praise; You opened my ears; burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You did not demand" [3].

A measure of the impact of Bible on the Russian language and culture is the fact that a lot of personal names from the Old Testament function in the language: Ivan (John), Maria, Anna, Gabriel, Zachary, Elizabeth, Elijah, Joseph, Michael, Simon, Thomas, James etc. Names of some Old Testament characters have been re-interpreted several times and are currently functioning in the language and speech as common nouns: Adam (primeval), Belshazzar (Belshazzar's feast - carefree pastime in anticipation of approaching troubles); Balaam (Balaam's ass – silent person who suddenly began to speak); Elijah (Elijah the prophet, the long-suffering man); Gog and Magog (something fierce and terrible); Solomon (Solomon's court — the bloody court; Solomonic decision - wise but very tough decision);

Judas (Judah's kiss — the preservation of external decency with treason); Noah (Noah's Ark - crowded room), etc.

The names of some biblical characters have become common nouns: Judas, Herod, Mary Magdalene, etc. A number of geographical names mentioned in the Bible have come into the Russian language as speaking ones: Sodom and Gomorrah – a hotbed of debauchery; Babylon – overpopulated and sinful city; Babylonian pandemonium – a huge (dangerous) gathering of people; the trumpet of Jericho – not moderately loud voice, etc. The Bible has become the source of origin of many phraseological units: each creature on pair, to put at the forefront, the promised land, tree of life, forbidden fruit, root of evil, manna from heaven, flesh from flesh, parable in tongues, fig leaf, behave (do) with others as you want them to behave with you, a drop in the bucket (drop in the sea), go through fire and water, a forbidden fruit, etc.

In the modern Russian language there function a lot of personal names, set expressions and situations that have come to the language from the religious sphere. These names, expressions, situations are easily related to a particular religious context and are easily recognized in the process of communication. To the category of precedent can be referred common names (angel, Satan, God, goddess, Pope), and personal names (Jesus, Elijah, Moses, Nicholas the Wonderworker, St. Peter, Magdalene, Judas), as well as personal names which, because of their frequent use, partly (and in a number of contexts fully) passed into the category of common nouns (Adam, Eve, Lord, Supreme, etc.).

A large number of precedent utterances that have religious basis are used in the modern language: hungry and thirsty, to beat your chest, to make your contribution, forever and ever, to return to their circles, hair stood on end, all the time, drink the Cup to the bottom, voice crying in the desert, sins of youth, the gift of God, forbidden fruit, a hot spot, evil day, stumbling block, do not leave a stone unturned, seven seals, root of evil, dig a hole to another, flesh of flesh, cornerstone, crumbs from the lordly table, who seeks he will always find, who is not with us he against us, who does not work he does not eat, face to face, between heaven and earth, in the seventh heaven, bear your cross, nothing is eternal under the moon/sun, salt of the earth, wash your hands, limp on both legs, daily bread, the golden calf, kill the fatted calf, to bear (carry) one's cross, a crown of thorns, the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, eat the fat of the land, go through fire and water, all flesh is grass, be one's flesh, a forbidden fruit, garden of Eden, serve God and Mammon, clean hands, not to let one's left hand know what one's right hand does, the Holy of Holies.

All mentioned lexical units and utterances which came from the religious sphere and function in modern language, have become precedent.

Currently, a large number of religious precedent situations function in the language. Precedent situation belongs to the cognitive consciousness and is brought to the language level through various means of verbal communication, "...a speaker or a writer producing a new text recalls a situation an expression from the previous text and in one form or another includes it into the new text" [11]. Some precedent situations have a particular name, such as "Babylon", "Calvary", etc.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the influence of religious consciousness on world culture and language is enormous. Religion enriched culture with moral principles, gave human norms and values an absolute character, building a hierarchy of values led by the divine. At a certain stage of society's and culture development religion began to play the role of spiritual support. Together with the influence of religion and religious consciousness on culture, religious consciousness also influences language as a part and tool of culture, enriching language with new units and concepts.

At the present stage of social development religious consciousness, like any other social and psychological phenomenon, is undergoing significant changes. The most stable are such characteristics of religious consciousness as faith, emotionality, moral and ethical basis. A number of characteristics fade onto the background (for example, symbolism and allegory). All this can be explained by the progressive movement of society. However, there is also a tendency according to which religious consciousness influences various (far from religion) spheres and processes of social life.

A number of social and political conflicts have religious colouring, thus, there is mutual influence and merging of social, political and religious spheres. Religion becomes a component of the society's formation. Depending on the goals, religious consciousness and religious feelings can become both the cause of inciting nationalist sentiments and the basis for settlement of political and social differences.

Modern religion is very different from the one that existed many centuries and millennia ago. Any modern religion is transformed and developed together with the development of society. Religious consciousness is formed gradually and developing it forms certain attitudes towards representatives of various religions and religious beliefs. In addition, the development of religious consciousness at the present stage of society's functioning leads to the development of common moral norms and requirements.

The historical development of human society as a whole shows that religion and, in particular, religious consciousness, can occupy the following positions in society: a) religious consciousness dominates in the society (religious relations are "imposed" on other social institutions and connections, thus, religious and secular principles are united), b) religious consciousness is not dominant (religious activity is tied to a certain place and time), c) influence of religious consciousness is weak. It's possible to say that at present there is a situation in society in which, despite the consolidation of the positions of the church, religious consciousness is not dominant, and religious activity is limited to certain spatial and temporal limits.

Speaking about the development of religion in modern society, we should mention the process of secularization. Secularization is understood as "the process by which beliefs in the supernatural are questioned and the associated rituals and institutions of religion lose their social influence" [8].

The following factors contribute to the emergence of the secularization process: a. general development of society -

in some countries church is separated from the state; b. general commercialization of society: emphasis on material values in the modern world as a whole has led to the fact that even church holidays lose their importance, becoming days of rest and shopping; c. search for compromises on controversial issues of religion (desire to "not offend" a certain religion forces to revise a number of provisions of religious norms and morality); d. loss of human connection with the community (due to human mobility); d. the competition of church with other institutions (interest in religion and the need for faith is replaced by other worldly interests).

Along with continuing to remain quite high interest in the institution of religion in modern society in general, there is a tendency to reduce human ties with the religious community as a carrier and translator of religious consciousness.

All considered processes allow us to speak about the transformation of religious consciousness but not about its leveling or disappearance.

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