

Gurdjieff's anthropology: the concept of conscious human evolution

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Abstract. The main purpose of the article is the disclosure of the ideas of Gurdzhiyev's anthropological doctrine in which the possibility of spiritual transformation of the person and his conscious evolution are emphasized. The author claims that in the conditions of dissociation of approaches and positions in the anthropological thought there is a need of appeal to the anthroposophic systems designed to fill onesidedness of such directions as psychoanalysis (in many respects absolutizing a role of unconscious processes), the behaviorism (concentrating on behavioral aspect of human existence), the existentialism (emphasizing hopelessness "abandonment of life in the world"). According to the author one of such systems is Gurdzhiyev's system of conscious evolution of the person, the so-called "The Fourth Way" which is eligible for the status of the translator of the experience of Gnostic tradition in the 20th century.

1 Introduction

Nowadays those scientific areas which operate with the universal values implanted in various world outlook systems gain the strength and find the general importance (about challenges for modern socio-humanistic sciences: Zhuravleva, 2018; about the relevant moments of the humanitarian vector: Lektorsky, Avtonomova, Dubrovsky, Zagidullin, Ivanov, Kasavin, Katunin, Kuznetsova, Levin, Pirozhkova, Porus, Pruzhinin, Smirnova, Trufanova, Chertkova, Filatov, 2018; about humanism: Subbotina, 2018). It is caused by the situation which developed at a turn of two Millennium when the civilization appeared in the face of the problems called global, posing the threat of physical extermination of the person as a species. In this regard the requirement of consideration of the human nature is updated.

2 Results and discussion. Ways of conscious evolution of the person

The way of conscious evolution titled as "The Fourth" was designed to open for the western culture the spiritual knowledge and traditions of mankind kept and transferred directly from

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the teacher to the pupil within the closed esoteric schools. This is a way which the person follows and following this way, he gets a chance of knowledge of the truth, a chance of finding of such properties which he does not possess birthright, but can transform in himself only thanks to the conscious efforts. P.D. Uspensky opens this title (*The Fourth Way*) in his work "In search of wonderful" (Uspensky, 2010) where he writes that all well-known ways to immortality can be divided into three: the way of the fakir, the way of the monk, the way of the yogi. Each of which (one is longer, another is shorter, one is more difficult, another is easier) leads or seeks to lead in one direction.

The longest and the most "unreliable" of them is a way of the fakir which consists of difficult exercises, sufferings, tortures of the body, development of physical will, achievement of the power over the body. The fakir can stand for years in one and the same position, he tortures himself by fire, cold, but as soon as he develops physical will in himself, he starts to develop other functions, emotional and intellectual. As a rule, by that time he is already too old to begin new work at school of yoga. In the East the person becomes the fakir because of religious feeling or because in the childhood the poor parents give him on the upbringing as a pupil imitating the teacher and often not realizing the sense of his actions. He gains will over his body, but loses everything what this will can be put to and he is not able to use this will for acquisition of knowledge about his emotional and intellectual sphere.

The way of the monk is the second way. It is followed by the person with strong religious emotions who spends years and decades for fight against himself and his feelings to subordinate all the emotions to one – belief. But the physical body and intellect can remain undeveloped. A part of work on the way of the monk consists in full obedience to the teacher, but the main thing is a faith in God, love for God and service of God.

The third way, the way of the yogi, the way of knowledge, is the way on which the person develops his intellect, understanding his condition and realizing the need of development of his physical body and emotions.

There is a common feature which unites these three ways: the movement on these ways begins with full renunciation by the person of everything "worldly", he has to "die" for the world, having gone to the desert, to the monastery, to school of yoga. These are the ways for those who wishing the development of the hidden abilities, tries to avoid manifestation of the general laws existing in everyday life. However, in living conditions of human society, in ordinary and practical life, even sated with philosophical, religious and scientific ideas, these ways become inaccessible. At the same time, it is difficult for the modern person to accept a thought that his abilities can remain undeveloped, and his opportunities can remain unrealized and "this condition would be really hopeless if *the fourth way* had not existed yet" (Uspensky, 2010, 67 p.).

"The Fourth Way" is not a simple combination of ways of the fakir, the monk and the yogi. It does not demand from the person of refusal of the "worldly" life, of family, profession, friends and relatives, as all the work (efforts on conscious transformation of himself) has internal character. According to P.D. Uspensky, "living conditions in which the person exists at the beginning of his work in which he is found by the work are *the best of all possible* for him, in any case, at the beginning of the work" (Uspensky, 2010, 68 p.). Any artificially created conditions will not be able to concern all aspects of his life at once, to make him the owner of all functions: intellectual, emotional and corporal. Working in parallel on three aspects of the being (intelligence, emotions and the body), the person following the fourth way can exclude from three ways everything that is not necessary in them: full ataraxy of the yogi, fasting and multiple repetition of a prayer of the monk for a

long time, physical pain and self-torture of the fakir. Therefore, the fourth way is called the most "direct", "the shortest", "the way of the cunning person". "The Fourth Way" is a spiritual direction of conscious evolution of the person according to which the disclosure of human essence begins with understanding of "the imperfect nature" and also the present possibility to eliminate this "imperfection", to carry out individual evolution in the course of knowledge of oneself, to reach the change of level of life and consciousness by means of elimination in oneself negative intellectual, emotional, instinctive and motional manifestations.

The founder of "The Fourth Way" was G.I. Gurdzhiyev (Gurdzhiyev, 2010) whose ideas about the person and the Universe were distributed among his pupils and followers as a result of their direct interaction with the teacher and were transferred as an oral tradition. Philosophical creativity of G.I. Gurdzhiyev is notable for originality, complexity for perception in view of unusual form of presentation which, according to M.A. de Zaltzman, serves the purpose "to make unusual impressions or to go in defiance of automatism of the reader" (Zaltzman, 2010, 7 p.).

Initial position on the issue of existence of the general regularities of development of the Universe, of the person, of phenomena and processes is the statement that behind all things in the world there are two primary laws called respectively the Law of Three and the Law of Seven. These laws are common both for the world, and for the person. Having understood the principles of one of the laws, manifestation in the world, at the same time it is possible to observe the action of the law in the person too. The second, but not less significant, idea of this doctrine is the following: The Universe and everything that exists in it are created and well-ordered.

3 Gurdzhiyev's anthropology

Ideologists of "The Fourth Way" are not eligible for the status of discoverers of the ideas about the created world existing and developing according to the laws of Three and of Seven. G.I. Gurdzhiyev and his followers refer to the existence of the "original, exact or objective" (Gnostic) knowledge about the Universe and about the person based on the ancient methods and principles of observation: knowledge of "things in oneself", accompanying "objective condition of consciousness" (Uspensky, 2011; Nicol, 2007; Collin, 2011; Burton, 2011). B. Nikolesku notes that Gurdzhiyev's doctrine about the law of Three belongs to new logic (not binary). According to Gurdzhiyev, "the law of Three" is the fundamental law creating all phenomena in all their variety. This situation, according to B. Nikolesku, is confirmed by quantum physics: "We can use an expression "antagonistic complementarity" because qualities of waves and corpuscles are mutually excluded. Now, from the appropriate level of reality of the quantum world as the third concept a quantum particle appears, not a wave and not a corpuscle, but which, from the point of view of the macrophysical world, can approve itself as a wave and as a corpuscle. In this sense the quantum is a reconciling force between the wave and the corpuscle. But at the same time, being neither a wave, nor a corpuscle and being shown at the other level of reality, the quantum certainly contradicts a wave or a corpuscle" (Nikolesku). The person being a product of space need also submits to this law ("the law of Three"). Nikolesku pays attention to the "anthropical principle" which is widely discussed within modern science which idea, according to him, is easily recognizable: the idea of existence of interrelation

between appearance of the person, of "reasonable" life in space and of physical conditions regulating evolution of the Universe.

According to Gurdzhiyev's cosmology organic life represents a necessary link in the chain of the worlds, it appears as a "transmission" link to fill, according to "the law of Seven", one of the intervals of the space octave.

The person is considered as a being of the dual nature. On the one hand, the person is a part of organic life on the Earth along with plants and animals (the lowest nature). In this context the person is a "perfect" and "finished" being, fully answering the mission of the Nature. For the Earth the mankind acts as the conductor of space influences and, developing certain vibrations, provides transfer of forces, energy to the growing Moon. On the other hand, the person is an "imperfect" and "incomplete" being, created as *an experiment* in spiritual self-development (of the highest nature), in possible transformation of consciousness for the purpose of achievement of new level of life, of intellect corresponding to the mission of evolution of the Universe.

Manifestation of the highest nature in the person is his *essence* defined as congenital, own internal structure of the person, basis of his physical and intellectual building, in distinction from the *personality* acquired in the course of upbringing, education, professional activity, etc. The *personality* is characterized as the qualities of the person borrowed "consciously or unconsciously" in the course of his interaction with other people.

According to the ideologists of "The Fourth Way", the first variant of influences surrounding the person are influences of the type "A". These influences are generated by the Law of the Case, by external circumstances in fight against which the person can live all his life. This type of influences operates the so-called "external", ordinary person who, according to B. Muravyev, "wanders in a circle of his life from the birth to the death along the broken trajectory with an unexpected and dangerous direction". The biography of one of such people (whom everyone can be) more or less is like the biography of other people: they were born on a certain day, passed a certain education system, worked, started a family, brought up the children, watched TV, etc. Mechanicalism of "life in circles" is shown by Pyotr Demyanovich Uspensky in the story "The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin".

Influences "B" are generated according to B. Muravyev (Muravyev, 1998) "out of the sphere of terrestrial life" and feed its intrinsic, but not personal beginning. If it is transferred by means of the book, record or the person who is not belonging to the internal esoteric circle, this is the influence of the type "B". The doctrine which is transferred directly from the spiritual mentor to the pupil, contains influences "C". This is the concentrated knowledge collected at school (religious schools, schools of "The Fourth Way"). Influences of the types "D", "E" are influences of higher (Divine) order which the people who reached the level of person No. 6, No. 7 (according to Gurdzhiyev's classification of the person) are capable to perceive.

4 Mental centers of the person

Followers of Gurdzhiyev's direction (for example Nicol, 2007, 2006; Bennett, 2000) consider that the main mental centers of the person are: intellectual, emotional and motional and instinctive (*the lowest*), the highest emotional and the highest intellectual centers (*the highest*). Depending on the dominance of the mental centers, different levels of consciousness of the person are allocated: the first level of consciousness is unconsciousness (conditions of unconsciousness are dream, coma), the second is vigilant

consciousness of "ordinary person", the third level of consciousness is consciousness of unified "I" and the fourth level is objective consciousness. Correlating knowledge about the levels of consciousness, about the mental centers of the person which found their justification in anthroposophy of "The Fourth Way" it is possible to present the classification of people as follows: the person No. 1 is a physical person with the prevailing instinctive and motional center, being at the first or at the second level of consciousness; the person No. 2 is an emotional person with the prevailing emotional center (the first or the second level of consciousness); the person No. 3 is an intellectual person whose intellectual center prevails over emotional, motional and instinctive (the second level of consciousness); the person No. 4 is a person being "in work on himself" which is capable to reach harmonization of work of three psychological centers (the second level of consciousness, the moments of sensibleness of his true "I"); the person No. 5 is a person reached unity and consciousness, understanding of his constant true "I" (the third level of consciousness); the person No. 6 is a person with the prevailing highest emotional center, who reached objective consciousness lying outside understanding of the ordinary person (the fourth level of consciousness); the person No. 7 is a person with the prevailing highest intellectual center which finds true will and reaches everything what the person can reach as a result of his individual evolution in general (the fourth level of consciousness). The person who is constantly "working on himself" is capable to pass all the way of transformation (Bennett, 2001). Evolution of the person in the context of Gurdzhiyev's ideas is considered as the opportunity given to everyone for the purpose of transformation of consciousness, achievement of new level of life, of intellect corresponding to the mission of evolution of the Universe.

5 Research methods

The methodological and theoretical basis of the research was made of the works of scientists thanks to which G.I. Gurdzhiyev's philosophy represents not simply "the metaphysical fairy tale", but the complete theoretical phenomenon, the parts of which were coordinated by his devotees and pupils. Among them, first of all, it is necessary to note Pyotr Demyanovich Uspensky, Maurice Nicol, John Godolfin Bennett, Charles Stanley Nott, Rodney Collin, Robert Earl Burton.

In the course of work, the hermeneutic method which gave the chance of understanding and specification of sense of human nature in the context of studying of works of G.I. Gurdzhiyev was used.

During the research the dialectic method which allowed to reveal the contradictions in individual development of the person characterized by the followers of "The Fourth Way" as contradictions between the personality and essence was used.

6 Conclusions

Thus, according to Gurdzhiyev, there are two types of evolution of the person. The first type is an evolution of masses or in the mass, in which the person like the reflection of circumstances, lives by influences of usual life (by influences A) and submits to the Law of the Case. However, there is other possibility of individual evolution, which allows the person to be interested in something, being outside the usual life, to be sensitive to the influences of higher order. The ability to perceive not only information widespread in

ordinary and practical life, but knowledge of special type about the essence of the person and about the Universe is the first step of conscious individual evolution of the person.

It is possible to carry out the transition of the ordinary person (any of three types, intellectual, emotional and physical) to the highest orders of life in the course of work on himself, crystallization and adjustment of the natural beginning – essence, making constant and invariable "I" in fight between the essence and the personality. In the course of this fight the essence gains strength and maturity. Both the essence, and the personality are necessary for this fight. The essence needs the personality who provides the person with material for studying of himself and who provides the personality with obstacles, temptations, illusions to give the chance to resist to them, to make them ineffective.

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