

SOLOVYOV'S PHILOSOPHY AS RATIONALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR

LA FILOSOFÍA DE SOLOVYOV COMO RACIONALIZACIÓN DE LOS SENTIMIENTOS Y EL COMPORTAMIENTO RELIGIOSOS

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Resumen: El artículo está dedicado a Vladimir Solovyov (Vladimir Solovyov) (1853-1900), el filósofo religioso más grande de Rusia del siglo 19. La tesis fundamental es que las ideas principales de Solovyov se pueden interpretar como una reflexión filosófica sobre los sentimientos religiosos fundamentales y los aspectos de comportamiento religioso. En este sentido se analizan en detalle las enseñanzas de Solovyov sobre la unidad positiva (all-encompassing unity, всеединство), la catolicidad (sobornost, соборность) y la divinohumanidad (Godmanhood, Divine Humanity, богочеловечество). Se presta atención especial al proyecto teocrático de Solovyov de establecer una Iglesia Cristiana Universal (Christian Universal Church, Ecumenical Church) y restaurar la unidad (re-unification) de la cristiandad.

Palabras clave: unidad, divinohumanidad; catolicidad; ortodoxia rusa (Russian Orthodoxy); Iglesia Universal (Ecumenical Church; Universal Church).

Abstract: The article is dedicated to Vladimir Solovyov (1853 - 1900), the greatest Russian religious philosopher of the 19th Century. The main thesis is that the central ideas of Solovyov can be interpreted as philosophical reflections on fundamental religious feelings and aspects of religious behavior. With respect to this a detailed discussion of Solovyov's teachings of 'positive all-encompassing unity' (всеединство), sobornost (togetherness, соборность) and Godmanhood (Divine Humanity, Богочеловечество) are discussed. Special attention is paid to Solovyov's theocratic project of Christian Universal Church and the re-unification of the Christian world.

Key words: All-encompassing unity; Godmanhood, Sobornost; Russian Orthodoxy; Universal Church (Ecumenical Church)

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Vladimir Solovyov is the greatest figure of the Russian philosophy, publicism and poetry of the second half of the 19th century.

Aleksei Losev (Losev 1988: 5)

If we agree that the true *measure* of magnitude in philosophy is the *impact* of the thinker and his writings on his contemporaries and future generations, then we can safely say that the years elapsed since the death of Vladimir Solovyov (1853 - 1900) only testify to the lasting influence of his thought in Russia and abroad. He was not only a philosopher but also a theologian, a poet, a pamphleteer and literary critic; he was the true originator (Isak Pasi) of the so called ‘Silver Age’ of the Russian philosophy and culture, the religious-spiritual renaissance of the end of the 19th-early 20th Century in Russia. (Pasi 2006: 8) Today, exactly 115 years after his death, Solovyov is universally considered to be the greatest Russian religious philosopher of the 19th Century.

In the lines below I undertake an attempt to show how Solovyov’s philosophical and theologico-theosophical doctrines can well serve as a way to make sense of key religious feelings and behavior. According to me Solovyov’s philosophy was a result of his deep-rooted religiosity. From this source came the strongest impulses of all his philosophical and Church-religious works. Therefore it is only natural to conceive of Solovyov’s philosophy as some kind of rationalization of specific religious feelings and behavior. This is the basis which motivates our curiosity and at the same time constitutes the theoretical background of our philosophical endeavour.

Solovyov seems to be the best example of the powerful spirits in the Nineteenth-century Russia who were well aware of the need for changes - both spiritual and political – which the society impatiently expected but never witnessed under the severe Tsarist regime. Solovyov fully deserves to be called with the Western term ‘free thinker’ or ‘dissident’. His rebellious mind led him to develop his philosophy of all-encompassing unity which originated as a result of his fundamental critique of Western philosophical thought. In his theological writings Solovyov explicitly opposed the official Russian Orthodox Church to the extent of holding it responsible for becoming a mere ‘Department’ of the Russian Imperial Administration. Solovyov gave expression to the deeply-felt dissatisfaction of many Orthodox Christians who longed to see the Christian world united under a Universal Christian Church. This was in full compliance with the mainstream of his philosophy of all-encompassing unity.

It is also worth emphasizing (though I do not discuss it) that Solovyov will be remembered as the fearless champion of Sophia, the Wis-

dom of God: in his poetry he constantly praised Sophia. She permeated all his writings.

1

Vladimir Solovyov was somehow predestined to become a philosopher and devote himself to spiritual issues. In his family he followed a well established tradition – his father, Professor Sergey Solovyov, became one of Russia’s greatest historians who served as Rector of the Moscow University, while his grandfather Michail Sergeevich Solovyov was an Orthodox priest who taught theology for forty years.

The family name *Solovyov* derives from the Russian word ‘соловей’ (solovey), which designates in Russian the beautifully singing bird nightingale. It was not for nothing that several months before the end of his short life (he died at the age of 47) Solovyov was made Honorary Academician of the Russian Academy, Division of Fine Literature (Losev 1990: 102). Solovyov’s writings of poetry, pamphlets and literary criticism, together with his philosophical, theological, theosophical text and literary prose were all styled in such a lucid and beautiful language that one can still admire them today not only reading them in Russian but also in translation.

Solovyov was a man of great talents and great erudition, which for the Tsarist Russia of the 19th Century was not always an advantage. He had to share the fate of many other intellectuals of that time – his writings on theological, theosophical and Church issues were officially put under a ban and he had to publish them abroad. One of his most important books for example *Russia and the Universal Church* he had to write in French and publish it in France in 1889. Only after his death and after his greatest opponent Konstantin Pobedonostsev was dismissed from office as the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod Solovyov’s banned works were translated and published in Russia.

Solovyov influenced two of the greatest writers of his time – Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky. Tolstoy he did not much like (Moss 2002: 98) but with Dostoevsky, who was closer in spirit to him, he developed a close relationship despite their different attitude towards Roman Catholicism. They both visited Optina Pusta Monastery at the time when Dostoevsky was writing his novel *The Brothers Karamazov* and there can be little doubt that the character of Alyosha Karamazov Dostoevsky developed under his immediate impressions of Vladimir Solovyov (Moss 2002: 99). Solovyov was also in contact with Leo Tolstoy who visited his open public lectures on Godmanhood. Tolstoy’s *The Creutzer Sonata* is considered to have been created under the impression of Solovyov’s work *The Meaning of Love*.

Solovyov's talent for philosophy burst out at an early age – he was only twenty when he wrote his first dissertation *The Crisis of Western Philosophy (Against the Positivists)*, and at the age of twenty seven he published his second dissertation *Critique of Abstract Principles*. These most cited works in fact contain the main ideas which he developed in his life time.

In March 1881, when he was twenty eight, there came a moment of decisive importance for Solovyov: he delivered two public speeches pleading in the second one to the new Tsar Alexander III to show Christian mercy and pardon the regicides of his father Alexander II. After this speech Solovyov had to leave University: he abandoned for some time philosophy and dedicated himself to theological, theosophical and Church issues.

It was during the eighties that he developed his teaching to establish a Christian Universal Church and to re-unite Christianity of the East and West under the authority of the Roman Pope. His enthusiasm and aspirations were so strong that it is believed (wrongly perhaps) that he even converted to Catholicism.

Then, in the nineties, there came the third period of his life when he again returned to 'theoretical philosophy' and published two of his most famous works – *The Justification of the Good* and *The Meaning of Love*. In the last two years of his life Solovyov gave expression to his disillusionment with his theocratic hopes: his *Short Story of Anti-Christ* (Solovyov 2012 c), his last work, gave signs that he was well aware of the forthcoming catastrophic events in Russia and in the world.

1.1

Like any important philosopher he [Solovyov] had his primary intuition. This is the intuition of all-encompassing unity.

Nikolai Berdyaev (Berdyaev 2007: 404)

What happens if you are an open-minded person and find yourself by chance, or intentionally, in an Orthodox Church? You are immediately taken by the specific feeling of God's all-mightiness: the mystic silence and darkness, the smell of burning candles and the atmosphere of all-pervading awe is telling you that He is everywhere, He persists in everything. If you look up to the inside picture of the dome where God is usually depicted with his arms wide open as if to embrace the world and everything in it, you are ready to feel God's ability and willingness to encompass and hold everything in Himself and endow everything with His benevolence.

Solovyov's philosophy can be seen as having originated out of the attempt to understand philosophically this fundamental religious feeling. God in Christianity is the main and central all-encompassing entity. All-encompassing unity is the main and central idea in Solovyov's philosophy giving birth to all his various teachings. This philosophy can rightly be called 'the philosophy of all-encompassing unity' and it was under this name that Solovyov's successors institutionalized a philosophical school in Russia that was active even in the USSR until the thirties of the 20th century (Akulinin 1990).

Solovyov set the basis of his philosophy in both his dissertations – *The Crisis of Western Philosophy: Against the Positivists*, 1874, and *Critique of Abstract Principles*, 1880, together with his unfinished work *Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*, 1877. Though somewhat 'negative', critical, in character, these works display a youthful enthusiasm, an optimism that there is a universal harmony which the author is revealing. While writing these works Solovyov was under the strong influence of the Slavophiles and in fact was philosophically extending or rather showing what philosophical results the main Slavophile ideas would produce.

In the *Crisis* (Solovyov 2006 a) he took up a theoretical and strictly schematic approach aiming to expose how narrow-sided the main philosophical trends of the Western philosophy are. Rationalism and empiricism for example are in confrontation with each other; they are both one-sided in their obsessed fixation on either the logical or the sense element in cognition. Therefore they cannot claim to have attained the truth, all they have is only partial truth. Solovyov's dissatisfaction with this situation led him to claim that reality, and consequently the knowledge of it, has another 'dimension' which we cannot know using the ordinary methods. Knowledge of this dimension is provided through 'mysticism' which makes this third element no less important than the first two.

The overall conclusion is that truth is attained by synthesizing or encompassing the empirical and logical knowledge with the mystical knowledge to form what he considers "integral knowledge". In *Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge* (Solovyov 2006 b) he calls his epistemological system 'free theosophy' to emphasize the importance he attributes to the mystic element of knowledge. *Critique of Abstract Knowledge* reaffirms the importance of this third element of knowledge. In fact according to Solovyov it is the return to the pure and unaffected authority of faith by which the one-sidedness of the competing Western-philosophical trends is superseded. (Losev 1988: 14)

While in his *Crisis* and *Critique* the approach is theoretical, in his *Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge* Solovyov takes up a histor-

ical approach to reveal the meaning of the Church. He again uses a triad to make sense of the historical development of humankind. At first there was the struggle for survival. This Solovyov calls it the economic phase; then came the political or governmental phase when people communicated and were connected not only on the basis of their economic needs and interests. In the end, there came the time of spiritual relations and communication among people. This phase Solovyov calls 'Church'. So from the primitive level of survival humankind undergoes a development to the religious-Church communion.

Here again, as with the term 'free theosophy', we can see how Solovyov fills in a familiar word with specific content making it sound in a different way from its everyday usage. By 'Church' Solovyov means one all-encompassing unity which embraces life but only in its ideal state when all imperfections and bad sides of life are overcome and man is incorporated into this entity or at least is striving to reach this ideal state of life. (Solovyov 2006 b: 308)

All in all, the epistemology of Vladimir Solovyov is based on his main intuition of all-encompassing unity. Perhaps we have to agree with Berdyaev's assessment that behind this universalism lies; firstly, the typical Russian religious philosophy emphasis on the knowledge 'attained through the general spirit in which reason is united with will and feeling and there is no rationalism' (Berdyaev 2007: 394), and secondly, that Solovyov's intuition was in fact a vision of the Divine Cosmos, in which no parts are detached from the whole, there are no conflicts and contradictions, nothing is abstract, nothing asserts itself on its own. This is the vision of Beauty (Berdyaev 2007: 404).

2

The word 'sobornost' is untranslatable into foreign languages.

Nikolai Berdyaev (Berdyaev 2007: 398)

When you stand in an Orthodox Church what impresses you is the behavior of the people. They are all humbled, all calmed down, all quietly concentrated onto something serious and important, perhaps the most important, something that transforms them – even if for a while – as active (and may be passionate and wild in outer life) living creatures into obedient, peaceful Christian *brothers* standing shoulder to shoulder with prayers on their lips and focused inside on their souls and hearts. What is the *spirit* which unites them all? What is the *force* which calms them down binding them together, and transforming their independent individualities into a dedicated whole?

The key explanation word here is the Russian word ‘sobornost’ (togetherness, **соборность**) considered by Berdyaev to be un-translatable. Sobornost does not simply depict a behavior of some kind; it is rather a wider concept which, according to the Slavophiles, constitutes the heart of the Orthodox Church teaching.

Solovyov’s philosophy very much contributes to understanding the phenomenon of sobornost. In his unfinished book *Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*, which can be considered as a work in philosophy of history, Solovyov characterizes the Church as ‘collectively organized piety’, while the state is viewed as ‘collectively organized pity or compassion’. Collectivity is found in the basis of individual’s aspiration to attain moral perfection: the individual can attain the moral ideal only in and through society. It was implied that the tendency of history leads to the Kingdom of God promised by Christianity. These youthful ideas obviously bear the mark of the Slavophiles ideas and their teaching of sobornost.

With respect to Christianity and the religious faith, Solovyov’s way had never been easy and was undeviating. It is well known that he engaged himself with philosophy at a very early age through reading the Slavophiles and the great German idealists. In his adolescence, however, Solovyov underwent an acute materialistic turn of thought, rejecting faith in favour of science, which drove him to refrain from going to Church and one day he even threw all his icons in his room out of the window (Losev 2009: 34). According to Nemeth, he very much resembled the fictional character of Bazarov in Turgenev’s novel *Fathers and Sons* and the actual historical figure of Pisarev (Nemeth 2015). By 1872, however, the Orthodox faith regained strength in his soul and it is interesting to note that unlike the typical case his abandoned scientism was in a special way combined with his restored religious faith.

The philosophy of positive all-encompassing unity which he was elaborating in the 1870-s seemed to reinforce the teaching of sobornost, the central religious-Church teaching of the Slavophiles. Solovyov was in full agreement with Homyakov and his insistence that the sobornost is the organic unity of love and freedom, that it is communitarian spirit which does not know external authority, nor internal isolation. Together with Dostoevsky Solovyov shared the vision that sobornost is immanent to the Russian Orthodox Christianity and that such a phenomenon is unlikely for the West.

Homyakov’s theological writings have been banned by the censorship in Russia. This, as Berdyaev points out, is very characteristic for many intellectuals, Solovyov included. Solovyov fully accepted Homyakov’s emphasis on the uniqueness and truly Russian character of sobornost.

He was overtaken with Homyakov's sublime vision of sobornost as expression of spiritual freedom. It is a phenomenon based not on authority but on freedom and love viewed by Homyakov as the very opposites of authority. In fact, in Homyakov's teaching of sobornost Solovyov had probably seen a comprehensive interpretation of Orthodox Christianity from the point of view of 'community', i.e. the organic unity of freedom and love. Young Solovyov fully embraced the two principles and obviously shared Berdyaev's assessment of Homyakov: "Such understanding of Christianity as a religion of freedom, such a radical rejection of authority in religious life no one before him, I think, had ever expressed." (Berdyaev 2007: 400) Unfortunately, the overwhelming pathos of freedom did not escape notice of the Tsarist censorship.

2.1

Yet the common view on the teaching of sobornost could not preserve the unity between Solovyov and the Slavophiles. At the end of the 1870-s, and especially in the early 1880-s, the internal logic of the philosophy of positive all-encompassing unity led Solovyov to a huge Weltanschauung gap with the Slavophiles and finally he parted company with them.

There were two main reasons for this. First, in the hands of the Slavophiles sobornost was 'radicalized' and used as a means to oppose Catholic authoritarianism and Protestant individualism. Vladimir Solovyov disagreed with this radicalism of the old Slavophiles. His discussion of sobornost went more in the direction of criticizing Russian Orthodoxy itself and in this he relied much on the writings of Ivan Kireevski.

Second, and more significant, the Slavophiles' attack on Western Christianity was accompanied by a strong tendency of nationalism. This went directly against the very spirit of Solovyov's philosophy of all-encompassing unity. Solovyov would undoubtedly praise the virtues of the Russian people but he would never overstep the limits which his philosophy put in this respect.

In the 1880-s Solovyov's criticism of the Slavophiles and the Eastern Orthodoxy in general became so fierce that his theological-church writings quickly received a ban from the Russian official censorship. In the writings of this period Solovyov, referring to Ivan Kireevski, accused the Russian Church, calling it Byzantine-Moscow Orthodoxy, of being totally dependent on the state: the national Russian Church had expelled the spirit of Truth and Love and Freedom – it was not the true and real Church of God. Instead, it was overwhelmingly taken under state control and managed as a Department of the Russian Empire. The Church had been 'nationalized' and used for political reasons. With this she lost all

that was invested in it as the leader of the souls and spiritual life of the Russian people.

The Tsar himself referred to Solovyov in the manner in which his father, Tsar Nikolai the Second, once referred to Chaadaev: he thought of him as ‘crazy’ (sumashedshii) (Losev 2009: 77). Luckily, Solovyov was spared the fate of Chaadaev – he was never forced to regularly visit the doctor to inspect his mental condition. The teaching of sobornost by Solovyov is still held in high esteem but the conclusions and the tendency of thought led him to a fundamentally different direction in comparison to the Slavophiles.

2.2

The break with the Slavophiles firmly imposed the theological and theosophical theme in the work of Solovyov: during the eighties he was totally absorbed with these issues. After the events of 1881 Solovyov became increasingly critical and soon was prohibited to publish on religious and Church issues. He strongly disagreed with the Russian Orthodoxy on many issues and believed that the truth lies elsewhere. His philosophy and the universal inclination of his mentality pointed to the direction of re-uniting Eastern and Western Christian Churches. Solovyov hoped that this idea was in full compliance with what ordinary Christians from the East and West thought and wanted to see. He was clear, however, that under the current conditions, when the Orthodox Church is heavily permeated with radical national spirit, carrying out this ‘re-unification project’ would be extremely difficult. He felt that in comparison to Eastern Orthodoxy Catholicism is far less nationalistic. In opposition to the Orthodoxy of his day Solovyov began to praise the Western Roman Catholicism.

Solovyov wrote his most important book of this second period in his life *Russia and the Universal Church*, 1889, and published it in Paris. In it, and in his *Russian Idea*, 1888, he gave detailed expression of his views about the ‘mission’ of the Russian people as a God-carrying people. Solovyov firmly believed in the idea of re-unification of the Christian Churches under the authority of the Pope in Rome. This was what the logic of the all-encompassing unity implied; in fact, this was the specific manifestation or display of his philosophy in the sphere of religious and Church affairs.

Solovyov envisioned the establishment of a *world theocracy* – a union of the state, the re-organized Christian Church and the society – which would mark the new stage of the evolution of humankind. It was a dream, a utopian dream, both religious and socio-political. (Dimitrova 1995: 156) In the end of his life Solovyov came to a state of deep disillusionment with his views that led him to write his last eschatological works in which ‘Pan-mongolism’ was depicted as something that will shatter the whole Chris-

tian world. In his *Short Story of the Anti-Christ* his pessimism grew even stronger due to the inability of the Christians to discern good from evil.

2.3

The years of pathetic belief in the Universal Christian Church under Papal leadership have left a personal imprint on Solovyov's life. This period in his biography is somewhat obscure: many investigators of the all-encompassing philosophy claim that he converted to Catholicism, while others deny this episode pointing to the fact that on his deathbed he received the Holy Communion by an Orthodox priest.

However it may be, what is of interest here is that Solovyov established and maintained close ties with a number of prominent Catholic figures who were sympathetic to his ecumenical hopes. It is well known that in 1886 Solovyov visited the Catholic bishop Strosmeier the 1st, in Zagreb, and developed a close friendship with him. (There is a street in Zagreb named after his name 'Vladimir Solovyov' which is an argument for his strong *infatuation* (Losev) with the Catholic Church.) Solovyov was even invited to visit the Vatican but for some unknown reason the visit never took place.

Solovyov believed in the possibility of renewing the Christian religion. He was taken by the messianic idea directed to the future. Berdyaev said that the Russian religious thought in the beginning of the 20th Century would take forward this prophetic line of Solovyov (Berdyaev 2007: 403).

Berdyaev commented on the question of Solovyov's Catholicism noting that it is incorrectly put and incorrectly discussed by both – his Catholic supporters abroad and his Orthodox critics at home. According to him, Solovyov never confessed the Catholic creed – it would be too simple for him to do so; it would not correspond to the significance of the issue he raised. He wanted to be simultaneously an Orthodox and a Catholic, he wanted – and in his mind and with all his conscience he did! – belong to the Ecumenical Universal Church. In this Church he saw complete-ness, full-ness, thorough-ness which he never found in Orthodoxy, nor in Catholicism, taken both in their isolation and self-assertiveness. He allowed the possibility of inter-communion in Church. Solovyov was somehow 'beyond-confession', 'super-confessional'; he believed in the possibility of a new epoch in the history of Christianity.

Berdyaev also points out that in his *Short Story of the Anti-Christ* it is the Orthodox old man John (Yoan, Йоан) who first identifies the Anti-Christ which can be taken as a sign that Solovyov recognized the mystic calling of Orthodox Christianity. Like Dostoevsky Solovyov goes beyond

the limits of historical Christianity and in this we have to see his significance as a religious thinker. He was influential both to his contemporaries and to his future followers even with the fact that his theocratic and theosophical schemes led him in the end to disappointment and to realizing how strong evil still is and how too optimistic and too un-realistic he had been on the issue of re-uniting Christianity of the East and the West.

3

The moment we step in an Orthodox Church there is another fundamental religious feeling which strongly takes hold on us. This is the feeling of belonging to something greater than we are, something higher which transforms our nature and brings us closer to God. We are taken by the feeling of a specific 'growth', of going beyond ourselves and elevating higher and higher. We feel as if we are becoming God-men!

This religious feeling is philosophically echoed in the early years of Solovyov's development. During 1878 – 81 he gave a dozen of successful and very well attended lectures on the topic of *Godmanhood*. (In English the lectures are published under the title of *Lectures on Divine Humanity*, 1881, though in Russian they sound as 'readings' – Чтения о Богочеловечестве). Both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky attended some of them. In these lectures Solovyov explained his views on Divine Humanity outlining the main objective of humanity – to realize what is potentially a possibility to become like Jesus Christ. This idea is also consonant with his philosophy of all-encompassing unity: this is the unity of God, man and the Cosmos. Man is the link between God and the world. Godmanhood is in fact a display of the evolution of mankind.

The *Lectures* belong to the first period of Solovyov's development as a thinker when he was under the influence of the Slavophiles. Their end was in fact the end of his University career and the start of his theological and theocratic writings. Solovyov was then very young (he was hardly twenty five when he gave the first lecture), and very optimistic. Yet the *Lectures* are important since they contain what Berdyaev called Solovyov's 'main idea'. This was the *idea of Godmanhood* which, in Solovyov's view, is the essence of Christianity as a religion. This idea reflects the fundamental religious feeling of specific 'growth' experienced by the Christians. Godmanhood in a way answers the most important question of the purpose of our lives, it 'defines' the direction of our existence.

Solovyov's understanding of Christianity as a religion of Godmanhood implied not only faith in God but also, and perhaps more importantly, faith in Man. Solovyov rejects the sharp distinction between natural and supernatural which is so characteristic for Catholicism. Humankind, he points out, is rooted in the Divine world and every single man is rooted

in the Universal, Heavenly Man. The essence of Christianity, as emphasized in the *Lectures*, is the free integration, or fusion, in Godmanhood of both natures – the human and the Divine one. This fusion of both natures should happen collectively just as it happened individually in the Godman Jesus Christ. Solovyov brought in Christianity the principle of development and progress: the coming of Jesus Christ for him was like the opening of a new Day of Creation or the coming of a new Adam. It was the greatest anthropological and cosmogonic process (Berdyayev 1925).

The grand scale of this process poses important issues and Solovyov is quick in putting them forward. First is the issue of the active involvement of humankind in realizing Godmanhood. Man is the linking component between God's world and the natural world. However, in order for God's kingdom to be built on earth humankind should not take God's Grace and Truth as something granted and given by Christ but actively implement them in its own historical life. Christianity, as Solovyov understands it, is not something given, but should be seen as a specific 'task', it is a specific 'challenge' to man's free will and activity. In the *Lectures* Solovyov claims that the essential and fundamental difference of Christianity, as compared to the other Eastern religions and especially to Islam, is that it is a religion of Godmanhood which presupposes God's action but requires no less human activity too. It is clear that if humankind is moving in the direction of tremendous transformation (Godmanhood), the latter cannot come only from the outside, it cannot be based only on external events: 'it is a deed, an achievement assigned to us, it is a task we have to resolve'. (Solovyov 2012 a:359)

This point of Solovyov's view of Godmanhood sheds additional light on why he sympathized with Catholicism: he thought that organized human activity is much stronger in Catholicism, while the Orthodox Christianity according to him exhibited excesses of passivity and submission (Berdyayev 1925).

Solovyov's idea of Godmanhood is often related to the idea of Mangodhood. Nietzsche's idea of Uebermensch (over-man, super-man) was criticized by Solovyov in a separate work (*The Idea of Super-man*, Solovyov 2012 b) but both thinkers equally demanded much of humankind: Nietzsche insisted that everyone should strive to overcome himself individually, his Uebermensch had nothing to do with religion and in fact was the embodiment of the rejection of Christianity. Solovyov viewed Godmanhood as the essence of Christianity; for him the transformation of the human nature is a process which will be realized collectively.

This is the second issue strongly put forward by Solovyov: Godmanhood involved the guiding role of the Christian Church itself. Aspiring

to attain moral perfection of the Christians, the Church should implement God's spirit in everyday life. She should spread the Christian culture of realizing God's Truth not only in individual life but also in social life.

Solovyov never considered Christianity as a religion exclusively for individual salvation. He thought of it as a religion of social and cosmic transformation, transformation of the world (Berdyayev 1925). In the light of this the Church should be seen as the path of individual salvation as well as the Godman's home for the salvation of the whole world.

3.1

Many of the youthful ideas defended in the *Lectures on Divine Humanity* Solovyov shared throughout his whole life. They guided his philosophic and theocratic doctrines. They underlie his achievements not only as a thinker, as an intellectual figure, but also as one of the great European humanists of the second half of the 19th Century.

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