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Religious and Philosophical Concept of Russian Culture of Ivan Ilyin: Value-Based Guidelines of Modern Russia

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Abstract

Introduction. The research focuses on the problem of growing of the centuries-old axiological confrontation between Western European values and traditional guidelines of Russia, as well as the need to set new goals for the state and social development of Russia. In this regard, the purpose of the scientific work is to consider the religious and philosophical concept of Russian culture, to identify its key provisions and basic concepts containing spiritual and value-based guidelines for modern Russia.

Materials and methods. The methodological basis of the study was cultural, philosophical and historical concepts of Russian philosophers, through the prism of which the theoretical provisions of the concept of Russian culture of I. A. Ilyin were considered. This work is based on the fundamental principles of knowledge and understanding social phenomena: consistency, complexity, unity of historical and logical. Comparative analysis, analogy methods reconstructing the philosophical views of thinkers based on a comparative analysis of their texts were used. The work implements an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on the study of Russian philosophy as a multidimensional phenomenon.

Results. The comparative analysis of key provisions of the religious and philosophical concept of Russian culture of I. A. Ilyin was carried out, its main meanings and concepts were identified. The main components of pedagogical theory focused on the return of education to the context of culture are presented. The relevance of the theory of resistance to evil by force is indicated, which is politically, morally relevant, since the problems raised by the thinker and the proposed approaches to solving them become serious and relevant in modern conditions of the need to develop a multipolar world, the validity of choosing means in protecting national interests of states. The philosopher's predictions regarding the future of the world order are considered and summarized.

Discussion and conclusion. The study of the concept of Russian culture of I. A. Ilyin was carried out on the basis of a systematic approach, involving interdisciplinary connections and an explication of the thinker's philosophical ideas. I. A. Ilyin's interpretation of the causes of the spiritual crisis of modern culture and possible ways of its overcoming is revealed. It has been proven that the religious and philosophical concept of Russian culture formulated by the thinker I. A. Ilyin is able to answer many questions facing the state, society and a single person today, as it contains value-based, personality-oriented, existential foundations for a diverse, objective assessment of current realities.

Keywords: Russian religious philosophy, religious and philosophical concept of philosophy of culture; education philosophy; theory of resistance to evil by force.

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Религиозно-философская концепция русской культуры Ивана Ильина: ценностные ориентиры современной России

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Аннотация

Введение. В центре исследования находится проблема обострения многовекового аксиологического противостояния между западноевропейскими ценностными установками и традиционными ориентирами России, а также необходимостью постановки новых целей государственного и общественного развития России. В этой связи целью научной работы является рассмотрение религиозно-философской концепции русской культуры, выявление ее ключевых положений и основных концептов, содержащих духовно-ценностные ориентиры для современной России.

Материалы и методы. Методологическую основу исследования составили культурологические, философские и исторические концепции русских философов, через призму которых рассматривались теоретические положения концепции русской культуры И. А. Ильина. В основе данной работы находятся основополагающие принципы познания и осмысления общественных явлений: системности, комплексности, единства исторического и логического. Использован сравнительный анализ, методы аналогии, реконструирующие философские взгляды мыслителей на основе сопоставительного анализа их текстов. В работе реализуется междисциплинарный подход, ориентирующий на изучение русской философии как многомерного явления.

Результаты исследования. Осуществлен сопоставительный анализ ключевых положений религиозно-философской концепции русской культуры И. А. Ильина, выявлены ее основные смыслы и концепты. Представлены основные компоненты педагогической теории, ориентированной на возвращение образования в контекст культуры. Обозначена актуальность теории о сопротивлении злу силой, которая является политически, морально, нравственно актуальной, так как поднимаемые мыслителем проблемы и предложенные подходы к их решению обретают новую остроту и актуальность в современных условиях необходимости развития многополярного мира, обоснованности выбора средств в защите национальных интересов государств. Рассмотрены и обобщены прогнозы философа относительного будущего мироустройства.

Обсуждение и заключение. Проведено исследование концепции русской культуры И. А. Ильина на основе системного подхода, предполагающего междисциплинарные связи и экспликацию философских идей мыслителя. Раскрыта интерпретация И. А. Ильиным причин духовного кризиса современной культуры и возможных путей его преодоления. Доказано, что сформулированная мыслителем религиозно-философская концепция русской культуры способна дать ответы на многие вопросы, стоящие сегодня перед государством, обществом и отдельно взятым человеком, так как содержит в себе ценностные, личностно-ориентированные, бытийственные основания для разносторонней, объективной оценки реалий сегодняшнего дня.

Ключевые слова: русская религиозная философия, религиозно-философская концепция философия культуры; философия образования; теория сопротивления злу силой.

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Introduction. The relevance of the research topic is related to the fact that the Russian philosopher Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin (1883–1954) compared to other representatives of the Russian abroad, was quite late able to “return” to Russia in the form of self-published publications, individual articles in collections. And only in the early 90s of the 20th century the publication of the complete works was started, which, in addition to famous works, included little-known, previously unpublished works of special interest right now, in the conditions of extraordinary civilizational challenges: the abolition of Russian culture, literature, art, language. Thus, the appeal to Ilyin’s work is due to several reasons. First, on the

one hand, the thinker is certainly a representative of Russian philosophical thought, his name is on a worthy list of philosophers of the Silver Age, on the other hand, agreeing with the opinion of many researchers, Ilyin's philosophy is different, original, unique and requires more detailed analysis and understanding [1, p. 920]. Secondly, as already noted, unlike the representatives of his colleagues, Ilyin's works became available quite late to review, study, analysis [2].

In this regard, it seems relevant to address the key provisions of the religious and philosophical concept of I. A. Ilyin, aimed at understanding the historical and cultural appearance of Russia and containing spiritual and value-based guidelines of modern Russia. The concept of Russian culture formulated by the thinker allows not only to understand him as a thinker, but also largely contributes to the disclosure of the worldview and metrological potential of Russian philosophy, allows you to look in a new way at the modern processes of social and state development of Russia.

It should be noted that the creative heritage of the philosopher is addressed in difficult periods for Russia: the collapse of the Soviet Union in the nineties of the last century, a decrease in state sovereignty in the twenties. Another reason to turn to the works of I. A. Ilyin was the aggravation of the centuries-old axiological confrontation between Western European value-based and traditional orientations of Russia, as well as the updating of the "West-Russia-East" triad. The works of I. A. Ilyin are quoted by the President of Russia V. V. Putin, the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, politicians, representatives of public organizations. The events of recent years, the beginning of a special military operation once again marked the relevance of Ilyin's philosophical heritage, since the deep analysis of historical, cultural, political layers of the formation of Russian statehood undertaken by him makes it possible to formulate the main goals, determine priorities, and outline the guidelines for the development of Russian society in modern conditions of global and systemic confrontation. In this regard, the purpose of the scientific work is to consider the religious and philosophical concept of Russian culture, to identify its key provisions and basic concepts containing spiritual and value-based guidelines for modern Russia.

Materials and methods. We believe that Ilyin's culturological concept is a complete framed system, the main ideas of which are concentrated in the diverse works of the philosopher, in the main concepts and ideas expressing the understanding of individual and national being, soul and mentality, culture, religion and morality. In this regard, to identify the key provisions of the concept of Russian culture of I. A. Ilyin, it is considered necessary to apply the methods used in the study of the history of Russian philosophy — the method of "explication" of the context (historical, biographical, social, cultural) [3, pp. 285–296], as well as a research and interdisciplinary method of "prosopography" emphasizing the biographical status of the concept's author [4].

Being one of the brightest representatives of Russian philosophical thought, having brilliantly completed his dissertation "Hegel's philosophy as a doctrine of the specificity of God and man", the thinker devoted the bulk of his life (most of it is emigration) to Russia. As a specialist in the field of law, he wrote works in the field of legal awareness, theology, anthropology, literary studies, and philosophy of culture. ("Axioms of Religious Experience", "On Resistance to Evil by Force", the unique trilogy "I Peer into Life. Book of Thought", "Singing Heart. Book of Quiet Contemplations", "The Way to the Obviousness").

The comparative analysis of the above-mentioned works made it possible to distinguish the meanings and structural components of the religious and philosophical concept of Russian culture of I. A. Ilyin, in which the key concepts are the recognizable "Ilyin" terms: "evidence", "heart contemplation", "objectivity", "spirituality". The author's interpretation of these concepts is both original and simple. According to the philosopher, it is the doctrine of evidence that will allow a person to get away from misconception of events surrounding him, from possible "blinding" and "surface visibility". In addition, I. A. Ilyin believed that the doctrine about the evidence which he developed: the willingness to contemplate, "feel", "creatively doubt", "inquire", "understand the circumstances and recognize the main thing as truth" can help a person withstand the challenges of a religious and spiritual crisis [5, V. 2, B. 1, p. 63].

Ilyin builds his philosophical concept taking into account the experience of the traditions of hesychasm, suggesting the possibility of God's knowledge based on the rooting of the power of mind in the heart ("the cordiality of prayer", "the purification of the heart", "the combination of mind and heart"). In this regard, he proposes to consider and analyze human life problems at the level of "quiet contemplation", which allows us to comprehend both simple topics and more complex life issues of spiritual realities: immortality and the super-earth way of life. Therefore, in Ilyin's interpretation, contemplation is a spiritual observation and vision that can cleanse, deepen and strengthen a person, as well as responsibly and with concentration get used to images of the world and objects [5, V. 3, p. 543].

Results. Based on the analysis of the works of I. A. Ilyin, we determined the conceptual framework of the religious and philosophical concept of the Russian culture of the thinker, where the key concepts are: “state”, “culture”, “religion”, “education”, “man”. The designation and semantic content of the listed concepts of I. A. Ilyin’s concept is commented as follows: the term “culture” is a spiritual and moral phenomenon; the definition of “Russian idea” as an idea of religious in origin and national in meaning; identification of the essence of the philosophy of law in close connection with the legal and spiritual culture of the people, which permeates all spheres of Russian life; designation of the principle of artistry as the deep property of the human soul, bearing the seal of the highest grace, giving man and human culture the highest value.

Considering the spirituality of the person’s inner world and the way of their life, he emphasizes that there are eternal foundations of spiritual being that should be comprehended by people and feasible in real life, names and concretizes them. Faith, love, freedom, conscience, homeland, nation according to Ilyin serve as sources of spiritual life, on the basis of which the moral values of a person’s highest purpose, their spiritual and moral improvement are comprehended. In the works of the philosopher “The Way of Spiritual Renewal”, “Looking Far. Book of Hope and Reflection”, “The Way to the Obviousness”, “On Courtesy. Socio-psychological experience” we find a kind of synthesis of the approaches that have developed in Russian philosophical and psychological thought, inextricably linked with each other by the concepts of Orthodoxy, formed in the context of paternal culture and its spiritual and religious tradition. At the end of the 19th–beginning of the 20th centuries, the most striking thinkers of this time identified the main directions in the study of the problem of determining the place of a person in the world and their destiny; comprehension of the meaning of life; the relationship of the concepts of “spirit”, “soul” and “body”, “faith” and “belief”; the topic of spirituality of communication (S. L. Frank [6, p. 224], V. V. Zenkovsky [7, p. 13], N. O. Lossky [8], etc.), [5, V. 3, p. 543].

Considering material (territory, climate, land) and spiritual (faith, national character) prerequisites in inextricable unity and in real interaction, Ilyin formulates his understanding of the “Russian idea”, which allows to see the connection between the national special and the universal in the life of the Russian people against the background of the development of Russian culture, primarily its religious and moral foundations. The thinker contributes his original assessments and definitions to the analysis of the discussion directions of the “Russian idea”: identity, predestination of a special historical path, “dissimilarity” of Russia and the West, the development of national identity, the religious-Orthodox basis of Russian culture.

Ilyin’s views on the Orthodox worldview are dominated by a constant focus on the phenomenology of human inner life. In this regard, in the work “Axioms of Religious Experience”, which has been written for almost 30 years, the thinker, based on the method he developed, considers the concept of “spiritual autonomy” in the context of the subjectivity of religious experiences. Analyzing the history of religious culture, he managed not only to capture the innermost process of spiritual experience and comprehension of the highest essence, but also to present an unusual approach to the presentation of material that is difficult to define (this is neither traditional dogmatic theology nor the history of religion).

Ilyin’s position on the eternal problem seems relevant — the relationship between the concepts of “good” and “evil”, the justification of the need to resist evil by force, interpreted by him from the point of view of Orthodox traditions, in which morality, religion and Christian teaching are not divided. The justification of methods of fighting against evil in the context of polemics with L. N. Tolstoy allowed Ilyin to change some of the already established provisions of moral philosophy. Unlike the “nonresistant” of L. N. Tolstoy, I. A. Ilyin was absolutely convinced that responding to evil is not only permissible, but also necessary. The fight against evil begins with non-violent methods such as love, religious, moral improvement, spiritual and moral education and only after the lack of result, in his opinion, it is legitimate to turn to the use of force, to coercion.

Written by I. A. Ilyin about 100 years ago unique work “On resistance to evil by force” (1925) still gives rise to discussions and is politically and morally relevant, since the problems raised in the work and the approaches proposed by the author to solve them become relevant in modern conditions of the need to develop a multipolar world, the validity of the choice of means in protecting the national interests of states. The tough actions taken by the United States regarding the supply and use of weapons on the territory of various states (Yugoslavia, Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, etc.) influenced not only the change in world architectonics, but also outlined specific geopolitical challenges. In this regard, the provisions justifying the need to resist evil by force at the level of personality and state, formulated by Ilyin, seem to be relevant:

- the state and all its institutions must curb social, moral evil;
- attitude to evil is the problem of a person's choice, their moral duty;
- use of force is not justified, but fully applicable under certain conditions and circumstances;
- force opposing evil is used when other means are exhausted;
- the use of violence is unrighteous, it is an extreme form and tragedy of human being;
- a person who is forced to use violent means must have a high level of spiritual development, be aware of the unrighteousness of these means and the associated need for self-purification and redemption.

Russian philosophical thought in determining the goals of education never “left” the anthropogenic and axiological understanding of the world, since it is the attitudes on values, moral foundations of the meaning of life and the purpose of man that form the basis of Russian philosophism. N. O. Lossky [8], V. V. Zenkovsky [7], V. V. Rozanov [9], N. A. Berdyaev [10], B. P. Vysheslavtsev [11], determining the value-based principles of human being, designated the priority of divine spirituality over the cognizing mind, and in determining the content of education they believed that the educational system should be based on education, reinforced by history, culture, tradition. In the works of these philosophers, we find such definitions as “Russian education”, “Russian school”, “Russian traditions”, since, in their opinion, a unique system has developed in Russia, based on a centuries-old tradition, involving education, approaching the image of God, the embodiment of spiritual essence into the body and mind of man, formation, creation of personality. The idea of God-likeness and God-kinship of man is substantiated and associated by Russian philosophers with the need to form spirituality, the ability to create, serve society, and bear high responsibility to themselves, family, and the world. The principles of pedagogical theory formulated by I. A. Ilyin are of particular interest. Briefly, they can be formulated as follows: the return of education to the context of culture; the revival of self-esteem; forming religious experience and the foundations of spirituality; full acceptance of the values of family education; opposition to the secularization of society. Ilyin's educational paradigm is formulated by clear and constructive theses: education determines the goals and content of education (and not vice versa); holistic and harmonious personal development (rather than preparation for narrow functions); creating conditions for spiritual and moral activity (and not enriching consciousness with the volume of unnecessary information); primary understanding of the terms “internal” and “external” freedom should be formed only in the family (and not by the street, separate groups).

In our opinion, in the context of the aggravation of contradictions between Western and domestic models of education, in the context of transformation of meanings, technologies, ideas, the principles of building an educational system proposed by Ilyin help to find answers to requests for the development of a new, national educational system in Russia.

The topic of studying the inner world of a person in the context of the problem of interpersonal communication, presented by the philosopher in the little-known work “On Courtesy. Socio-psychological experience” requires a separate consideration. In modern conditions of the development of information technologies, the substitution of the concepts of “communication” and “interaction”, when subjects begin to communicate not with people, but with virtual technical systems, the problem of communication seems to be relevant. In the modern world, where the preservation of their cultural identity often depends on the ability to understand and be understood by others, asserting their own and their right to identity and independence, there have been alarming trends of rapid withdrawal from the process of interpersonal interaction of empathy, understanding, sympathy. Russian philosophers wrote about this. They designated communication as a set of value-based, cognitive, strong-willed, emotional rational components: L. P. Karsavin (non-verbal communication as “characteristic detections of personality”) [12]; S. L. Frank [6] (phenomenon of self-knowledge and knowledge “I–You”); Losev A. F. [13] (“interested communication”). Russian philosophers saw the main problem of a person in the middle of the 20th century in their internal “split”, in the contradiction of soul, heart, reason and feelings, when any creative actions are assessed financially, formally and technically. They, anticipating the modern trend of depreciating of communication (communication processes), stated the situation of the crisis of modern civilization and culture.

Ilyin's understanding of communication, directly opposite to manipulative strategies, aimed at maintaining the myth of personal success, imaginary superiority over others and designed for a person capable of much for the sake of achieving a personal goal. The philosopher denotes the problem of communication somewhat wider than its usual understanding not only in terms of determining specific results and the consequences of mutual influence of people on each other in the process of interpersonal communication, but also in its more important aspect that is cultural (the problem of transforming

traditions of culture, preserving and reproducing them in the system of education and upbringing). Ilyin's conclusions about the foundations of the culture of interpersonal communication are formulated on the basis of the value-based concepts of Russian culture (spirituality, love, mutual respect, recognition, etc.) and imply the complex work of the person to transform the internal foundations and external living conditions aimed at self-improvement and spirituality.

Discussion and conclusion. Nowadays, many thoughts of I. A. Ilyin have become prophetic. Obviously, he was the first to feel the deep trends that determine the further development of European civilization, the crisis of culture; loss of valuable and spiritual in people's life. Ilyin believed that civilizational processes are not only unable to fill the process of cultural, social life with concrete content, but also capable of destroying the value-based foundations of culture of entire peoples. Lack of faith, devaluation of traditional spiritual values, spiritual break with its historical past, the deficit of decency, self-esteem, erasure of the criteria of good and evil, all this is a statement of the properties of a modern consumer society.

Considering the ways of Russian culture development in the context of a spiritual crisis, I. A. Ilyin insists that modern humanity, plunging into the streams of conformism and sensual pleasures, destroys important principles of its own existence. The thinker notes that the phenomena of global order, imprinting on the general appearance of culture, in the 21st century will determine trends that deepen the polarization of cultural values. Determining the levels of relations between culture and civilization, recognizing their inconsistency, he believed that only culture, as a combination of the spiritual possibilities of mankind, sets the meanings, goals of social and personal being.

I. A. Ilyin knew and understood Western European political culture too well and, fearing for the fate of Russia, warned against attempts of our country's enslavement by "the global backstage elites". It was Ilyin who introduced this expression, denoting ill-wishers and "enemies of Russia", who, in his opinion, will not calm down until they manage to master the Russian people through the "barely-noticeable infiltration of its soul and will" in order to instill in it under the guise of tolerance — godlessness, under the guise of a republic — submission to behind-the-scenes rule, under the guise of a federation — national depersonalization. The thinker is convinced that the West will fight against the imaginary "reactionary spirit" of Russia, with its "low level of civilization", "aggressiveness", to the last because the West needs another Russia, Russia with a declining population, submissive, weak-willed and dismembered [14, pp. 429–433].

Ilyin's recommendations and position are quite clear: if Russia allows it, it will turn from a large and significant state into many small "republics", in the territories of which irrepressible propaganda of freedom from everything (religion, norms of decency, duties) will reign, where all high national ideas and meanings will be captured "insidiously". Many of the thinker's theses set out in "Our Tasks" echo the principles laid down in the "Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation", in which Russia is designated as an authentic country-civilization, a vast Eurasian and Euro-Pacific Power, a stronghold of the Russian world, which plays a special role in maintaining the global balance of power and ensuring the peaceful development of mankind [15].

Thus, in the conditions of "abolition of Russia" and all Russian: language, culture, literature, art, in the works of I. A. Ilyin, there are calls far from the European rationalist tradition to preserve the basic constants inherent in our country: the spirit of heart contemplation and substantive freedom. The religious and philosophical concept of Russian culture formulated by the thinker I. A. Ilyin is able to answer many questions facing the state, society and a single person today, as it contains value-based, personality-oriented, existential foundations for a diverse, objective assessment of current realities.

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