GOD AND HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

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"Consciousness! Consciousness! Divine instinct, immortal and celestial voice; assured guide of an ignorant and narrow-minded being, but intelligent and free. Infallible judge of good and evil, which makes man like God".

J.J.Rousseau

Abstract: Our research work aims to bring a new and somehow necessary clarification on the relationship between philosophy and God, to highlight the role of human consciousness within this connection, pointing out explicitly and argumentatively the following idea: the philosophical way towards God is self-knowledge. From this perspective, our text comes to support the idea that this anthropological way is somehow the deepest and the only way of getting to know the universe because the divine mysteries are hidden only in the self-consciousness. Consciousness is nothing but the voice of God in man. There are several stages of revelation that correspond to the levels of consciousness. But philosophical inquiry raises man to the level of transcendence consciousness, leading him thereby to the understanding of the sense of existence. From here, the grandeur, uniqueness and importance of philosophy for man.

Keywords: God, consciousness, self-knowledge, philosophy, metaphysics, sense of existence, transcendence.

Nobody can claim he knows how to respond comprehensively to the question "What is God?" because our limited reason cannot embrace the Endless, the Boundless. But we all feel that it exists, because human reason is universal, and through it man is the only being able to

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acceed to transcendence, divinity, the Absolute. We have chosen to write about God and human consciousness because, in our opinion, conscience is not a mere concept; it is a state of enlightenment that requires no demonstration of God's existence. Not incidentally, N. Berdyaev highlighted *"Man's consciousness itself as the center of the world, hiding in itself the world secret and rising above all things in the world is the prerequisite of any philosophy, without which one cannot philosophise"*.[1]And God can be heard only in the silence of the consciousness Voice.

The debate on God's destiny has marked the Western world's destiny decisively. Moreover, the culture in which we find ourselves in Europe was born and will continue to be a culture marked in its depth by people's relation to God. The whole history of philosophy is an evolution of the relationship between God and human consciousness; philosophy itself arose in the European cultural area as an assertion of man's individual human consciousness as a human being confronted with the universe. Man penetrates cognitively the meaning of the universe and the latter penetrates man, surrenders to his creative effort as to a little world, the microcosm. Thus, we concur with Berdyaev's assessment according to which "the anthropological way is the only way of getting to know the universe and this way requires an exceptional self-consciousness of man ... .. this exceptional human self-consciousness is one of the truths acquired as a result of philosophizing, it is the truth underlying any creative act of philosophical knowledge"[2]. The development of human thought has generated the birth of existential interrogations related to the basis and meaning of existence. Through this, man came to the idea of God as an absolute benchmark, the identification of man in and through God being the essence of human existence. In the relationship God-man, only the second term is a relative one, the first being absolute – it is the reality of that ideal with which the man of relativity measures the shape, degree and sense of his being. Therefore, we appreciate that **human life is meaningless without transcendence.**

The title of this text could be perhaps too haphazard or overwhelming for someone who can only wonder without claiming definitive answers to a problem that many thinkers have conceptualized but failed to elucidate, despite the extraordinary intellectual efforts and authentic spiritual experiences. God cannot be defined, because it is not something specific but, on the contrary, it is an undefined "whole". From the philosophical debate on divinity it

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[1]N.Berdyaev, *The Meaning of the Creative Act,* Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1992, p.68.
[2]Ibidem, p. 69.

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can be inferred that there is no metaphysical knowledge of God; however, we can talk about the philosophical search for God. In fact, we consider that **this need for search is the most important thing in philosophy**, because it maintains us in a creative state, with our consciousness awake and lucid.[3]

"I can understand myself well only through my image about Him. Only in this way does self-knowledge have a result and a meaning. He who does not think of Him, remains a stranger to himself. As God is the only way to self-knowledge, and Universal History – a rewriting of his forms" (Cioran, 1995, p. 129).

Ever since antiquity philosophy has meant the search for Truth, teaching us how to think and guiding us towards the Truth. To the question: how does philosophy carry on this approach? there is only one answer: through the possibilities of human knowledge, more precisely, through self-knowledge. If science means knowledge, philosophy means self-knowledge.[4] Philosophy addresses the individual. We can claim that we can communicate with each other only when we learn to be really alone. In the solitude of the critical moment man appeals to what he never loses, that is to himself. In other words, philosophy means the activity of consciousness. *Human consciousness is the guarantor of communication between man and divinity.* When human consciousness is manifested we can appreciate that man has reached a higher level of communication, self-knowledge meaning *the osmosis between man and God*. By means of consciusness, God tells us what we need to be and what we are. By consciousness, we can see our true face, because we can see it in God's light.

He who says that philosophy removes man from God commits a serious error due to some confusions or biases that may persist. Therefore, we intend to clarify this relationship with a view to a correct understanding of philosophy as a form of specific knowledge distinct from science, art, religion, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to emphasize that philosophy does not harm the human being, on the contrary, it prepares his soul for what is going to happen. "Philosophy is a prayer that one murmers all his life."[5] The purpose of

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[3]G.Pohoață, *Discovering the Consciousness*, Cogito. Multidisciplinary Research Journal, vol. VI, no. 2/june, 2014, "DimitrieCantemir" Christian University, Pro Universitaria, Bucharest, 2014, p.45-51.
[4]N.Berdyaev, *cited works,* p. 42-43.
[5]G.Liiceanu, *Declaration of Love, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 2001, p.62.*

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philosophical knowledge is that man, by properly using his reason, may achieve a higher level of consciousness, thus being able to accede to the knowledge of the human being's essence, updating what is divine in him. Philosophy as a sheer spiritual activity leads man towards true contemplation, making him acquire the consciousness of transcendence. At this level, philosophy appears as the supreme form of self-consciousness.

In philosophy God is a paramount concept with metaphysical, epistemological and moral meaning, approached either as a principle of existence or knowledge, or as a judge of consciousness, as an "absolute monarch".

"The object of philosophy itself is transcendence, divinity".[6]

"There is no completely achieved philosophical system that fails to reach, sooner or later, a limit point that is God - whether this God is matter, or the universe, as for the pantheists, whether it is a supreme idea of Good as for the Platonists etc., but all reach a limit point, source of the whole life and reality and, at the same time, foundation of all reality. .... In philosophy, this limit point, God, is the result of a whole series of quests of our reason."[7] In the European modernity, based on "reason", God was searched in nature by philosophers such as Cusa, Bruno, Bohme, Spinoza, Schelling. Similarly, God was then sought in the sphere of organization of the world itself, that is through a rigorously logical approach of the world: Descartes, Pascal, Bayle, Leibniz represent this second search, to which the skeptics Hume and Voltaire put an end, and Kant saved it on the the realm of practical reason, while Hegel made the synthesis of "reasons" and "Christian tradition". God continued to be searched, later on, also based on "reason", starting from the inner feeling: Pascal, Rousseau, Schleirmacher, Kierkegaard are the representatives of this search. But beyond these quests of God in nature, in the rational organization of the world, in the inner self, we can say: "The power of autonomous reason to question the uncritical authority has righteously shaken the naive immediacy of faith in revelation - but the incompetence of empty reason to substantiate the knowledge of God instead of tradition, and to promote it comprehensively and deeply, did not manage to make anyone completely happy. Honesty in the discussion about God is truly a real

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[6]Nae Ionescu, *Treaty of Metaphysics*, Bucharest, Roza Vânurilor Publishing House, 1999.
[7]Nae Ionescu, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Cluj, Apostrophe Library Publishing House, 1993, p.116.

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progress. This meant not only undermining illusions, but also what is essential, dismantling the absolute fanaticism with its instruments of power".[8]

God's conceptualization in philosophy has brought along not only a deepening of the project of reason, but also a critical elucidation of the traditional statements about God.

The philosophers' God was delineated by the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob by Pascal. On the famous night of November 23, 1654 - as it is written in his Memorial - Pascal came back from the God of philosophers to the biblical God of Jesus Christ, full of joy and tears of retrieving joy. He describes the feeling of awakening and rediscovering the true God like a "fire". "Feu << Dieu d'Abraham, Dieu d'Isaac, Dieu de Jacob et des philosophes >> non des philosophes et des savants. Certitude. Certitude. Sentiment. Joie. Paix. Dieu de Jesus-Christ...[9] We speak about that God, after the clues from Pensées, who is felt, and even more than felt, lived with the whole being by humans, unlike the philosophers' God whose existence is proved by means of "natural inferences". The philosophers' God is not different because God is unique, but he is God insofar its existence and its qualities must be proven by natural inferences. The problem of belief or unbelief in God does not concern philosophy. We can pretend that we place ourselves in the realm of philosophy when we conceptualize God. From this need was born the natural theology based on reason, unlike revealed theology based on revealed belief. Natural theology is a science about God, as far as God can be recognized without belief. **Recognizing God without faith means reaching the knowledge of God's existence and essence by the mere use of human reason power, by natural light - lumen natural** – so that one can cope with the atheist's skeptical assertions, in contrast with the attitude gained only by faith in God's revealed word[10]. The natural theology developed by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas seeks to formulate rational proofs of God's existence and depends on finding them.

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[8] Ulrich Neuenschwander, *GottimneuyeitlichenDenken*, GerdMahn, Gutersloh, 1977,BandI, p.16.
[9] Bl.Pascal, Pensées, Paris, Booking International, 1995, p.9.
[10] Konrad Cramer*, Der Gott der biblischenOffenbarung und der Gott der Philosophen*, în-Hans Michael Baumgartner und HanssWaldenfels. Hrgs, *Die philosophischeGottesfrage am Ende des 20*. Jahrhunderts, Karl AlberVerlag, Freiburg, Munchen, 1999, p.15.

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It is certain that finding rational proofs of God's existence was not always an approach inspired by philosophy as a discipline, and by the philosophers' needs to complete their systems. [11]

In his "Epistle to the Romans", the Apostle Paul had already launched such a search in Christianity itself, when he said that "ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made".[12] But the search for rational evidence of God's existence was kept inside the representation of God based on biblical revelation and came about as a confirmation of it. What for the Apostle Paul prevailed - namely God revealed and expressed in the Bible – had subordinated God's representation resulted from natural inferences, based on the observation of "creatures". Later on, however, a tension between God of the natural theology and God of revealed theology arose, which was in fact a tension between natural reason and faith. But there were attempts to harmonize reason and faith. Augustine enunciated a Christian philosophy proposing to combine faith and reason. He said: "Understanding is the reward of faith. So do not seek to understand in order that you may believe, but believe in order that you may understand"[13] . So, for him faith was foremost, as he saw it as the essential prerequisite of a Christian philosophy. On the other hand, he argued that mere faith is just a blind nod. It must be strengthened and made intelligible through reason. Thomas Aquinas[14] wanted to establish a harmonious coexistence between reason and faith, pointing out first that the basic principles of faith do not contradict the conclusions of philosophy and, secondly, that they do not start from the grounds of philosophical arguments, nor do they make them up. Thomas Aquinas claimed the argumentative evidence of the existence of deity, but he admitted that what is obtained by the inferences of reason is not faith, but a prerequisite of faith: *non articuli fidei, sed preambula ad articulos*. His motto was ***intelligo ut credam***: what I know is to believe. The philosophers' God is the preparation of God revealed.

[11] Andrei Marga, *Religion in the Era of Globalization*, Bucharest, The Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2014, p.172.
[12]*Epistle to the Romans*, in the *Bible* or the *Holy Scripture, I* , 20, p.1624, apud. *ibidem,* p.173.
[13] Augustin din Hippona, (354-430), in *Iohannis Evangeliumtractatus,* XXIX,6., apud. Diane Collinson, *Glossary of Western Philosophy*, Bucharest, Nemira Publishng House, 1995, p.39.
[14]Thomas Aquinas, (1225-1274), his philosophy is closely intertwined with his theology, his fundamental work: *Summa Theologiae*, (Summary of Theology), apud. Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of the Middle Ages*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1st Part, 1995.

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Descartes relaunched the search of arguments for God's existence and highlighted the famous ontological argument.[15] Pascal would accept that theology based on arguments of reason and, thus, the philosophers' God kept their legitimacy but, at the same time, he realized that God revealed had to be the first choice. His profound observation was that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not the one certified by the philosophers' inferences. The philosophers' God satisfies man's need for knowledge, but does not satisfy what satisfies the God of the Bible: a deeper, lived relationship, a fundamental relationship with the world and with God, which cannot be reduced to knowledge.[16] Leibniz replaced the Cartesian doubt with faith, pleading for the "compliance of faith with reason".[17] Kant, with his *Critique of Pure Reason[18],* submitted the theological arguments for God's existence to criticism" - ontologically, cosmologically and teleologically - showing that they make, in fact, an illegitimate derivation from the concept to reality. The natural theology recorded thus a heavy blow.

We do not intend to present the way in which philosophers theorized the issue of deity, because this is not what we proposed to do in our study. The examples above are meant to clarify somehow the relationship of philosophy with God, or rather, to highlight, paraphrasing Hegel, that the philosopher is the closest to God because he reads His commands in original. Moreover, Hegel argued that "The subject of philosophy is God, as a single object. Philosophy is not the profane wisdom of the world, as it was called in opposition to faith. It is not worldly wisdom, but unworldly knowledge, it is not the knowledge of external masses, of the empirical existence and life, but it is the knowledge of what is eternal, of what God is and what derives from His nature; and this nature must act and develop"[19]. Thus, the German philosopher uniquely defines philosophy as the "Science about Absolute"[20].

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[15]R.Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode, Les Passions de l'âme, Maxi-Poche, Classiques Français,* Paris, Booking International,1995.

[16]Bl.Pascal, *cited works*, p.9-10.

[17]G.W.Leibniz,   Theodicy. Essays on the goodness of God, the freedom of man and the origin of evil, translated by Diana Morărașu and Ingrid Ilinca, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, 1997, p.45-89.

[18]Imm.Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason,* Bucharest, The Scientific Publishing House,1972.

[19]G.W.Fr.Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Bucharest, Humanitas Publishing House, 1995, p.18.

[20]*Ibidem,* p.19-20.

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How can God's existence be proved today?

"If someone affirms God, he knows why he can trust reality"[21].

Despite the the intellective evolution of the human being, the need for certainty in relation to the entire existence, and especially the need to transcend the too volatile and confusing world of empirically given events have always led to the invocation of God and religion.

Today, when man has conquered the outer space, when by means of advanced technologies he has reached the pinnacle of creativity and expansion of intelligence, does a multivalent knowledge society still need God?

Nowadays people appeal to God due to their individual needs of finding support and due to their social needs of finding a unifying principle.

The principle of transcendence considers that the purpose of human fulfillment consists in the reflective integration of people's disparate experiences and their results regarding the cognitive, moral expectation, in terms of the social and utopian balance. Such integration is possible as far as the self and the community interests transcend their own isolated interests and seek fulfillment in relation to larger wholes that include the self together with the others' selves, and the community with other communities. The unification of one's own self with others is religiously given and interpreted theologically within the idea of God[22].

According to the existing experiences, there is no a purely rational demonstration of God's existence that would aspire to persuade by and large[23].

In *Existiert Gott*?, Hans Kung considered the possibility that the arguments of God's existence submitted by tradition may no longer have the previous argumentative force of reaching a consensus. He concedes that the arguments outlined by Plato and Aristotle - then taken over into Christianity by Augustine, systematized by Thomas Aquinas, resumed in

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[21] Hans Kung, *Existiert Gott?, Antwort auf die Gottesfrage der Neuzeit,* Piper Verlag, Zurich, Munchen, 1978, p.608, apud. Andrei Marga, cited works, 179.
[22]Victor Anderson, *Pragmatic Theology. Negotiating the Intersections of an American Philosophy of Religion and PublicTheology*, State University of New YorkPress,1998,p.2-3.
[23]Hans Kung, *cited works,* p.587. Hans Kung's research was appreciated by Andrei Marga (cited works, p.179) as the most exhaustive research on God's existence carried out during the last centuries.

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Anselm of Canterbury's formula and re-established by Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz, Wolf, replaced by Kant with a "moral postulate", speculatively reinterpreted by Fichte and Hegel and more recently resumed by Neo-Scholasticism – might not be convincing enough. The argument of the Supreme Good, in which all good things participate (Plato), the argument of the first drive and the argument of the ultimate goal (Aristotle), the argument of the Supreme Creator (Augustine), the ontological argument (Anselm), the cosmological, theological, ontological, moral arguments (Thomas, Descartes, Leibniz, Wolf), the moral "postulate" (Kant) are still worthy of interest, but now have a low probative efficacy. Therefore, these arguments move too little today even the faithful man. The natural theology seems to be, thus, at a loss, because the effectiveness of traditional arguments does not condition the existence of God. Hans Kung changes the strategy of arguing God's existence, appreciates Andrei Marga[24], considering as a starting point of his arguments the "existentially considered existence of man". In fact, it is about resuming Imm. Kant's path from the *Critique of Practical Reason* [25] in which Kung assumes " the whole man "in his undivided and unsimplified existence through reductionist approach strategies. The new path lies on the premise according to which the ethical questions remain crucial for human life, and ethics implies the question of finding the meaning, the scale of values, the guiding images and their foundation on religion. In Werner Heisenberg's formulation, "there, where no guiding image shows the way, the sense of action and of our suffering also disappears along with the scale of values and, in the end, only negation and despair remain. Religion is thus the basis of ethics, and ethics is the presupposition of life"[26].

The need for conscience and morality, rationality and wisdom, love and genuine faith, today, in such a confused and unstable world, shows us that *man without God has lost the essential freedom that exists in each of us, being prone to unfair and irrational acts, which affect our humanity and divine spark within us.*

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[24]*Ibidem*, p. 178.
[25]Imm. Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason**, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals,* Bucharest, Iri Publishing House, 1999.
[26]Apud. Hans kung, *cited works,* p.608, apud. Andrei Marga, cited works, p.179.

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17.Pohoață, G., 2014, *Discovering the Consciousness*, Cogito. Multidisciplinary Research Journal, vol. VI, no. 2/june, 2014, "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University, Bucharest, Pro Universitaria.