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PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SPIRITUALITY

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У статті запропоновано розуміння людської духовності з антропологічної і педагогічної точок зору на розвиток і виховання, а також представлено дискурс цілісної освіти в сучасних педагогічних концепціях. Духовність представлено як антропологічний термін, який вживається на позначення однієї з особливих рис особистості – трансцендентності.

Ключові слова: духовність, педагогічне розуміння духовності, цілісна освіта, трансцендентність особистості.

1. Spirituality as an immanent human quality

The terms such as «spirituality» and «spiritual» are the words which are often used nowadays in different contexts, sometimes without any efforts to determine their definitions and real meanings or expanding the meaning in a way it becomes unclear. In colloquial speech, spirituality is most often understood as a synonym for religiosity or human faith or also as a specific quality which makes it possible to have some «mystic» experiences. This word has its connotations almost in every field of life because «the term «spirituality» – unlike the word «religiosity» – is not associated with negative connotations, it is less exclusive, unlimited. Spirituality becomes more common, it becomes something more individualised than religiosity» [14, c. 23]. This notion has also become a part of interest in case of many fields of science, depriving theology and philosophy of «the right to exclusiveness» for its analysis in religious, ontological or axiological contexts. A spiritual dimension of human functioning has become interesting especially for social and humanistic sciences, including psychology, sociology and pedagogy. Each of them, applying their own point of view, language and methodology, tries to include spirituality in the entirety of their knowledge on a man and the ways of its practical usage in individual and social dimensions of human life.

The presently accepted concept of human being defines the human nature in categories of a person as an integrated physical-psychological-spiritual entirety with all their personal qualities, such as substantial form and unity, freedom, sovereignty and autonomy, rationality, self-determination and dignity. Every dimension of human existence as a person is related to special value, and their meanings are equally important to constitute a human being. However, a spiritual dimension seems to fulfill an exceptional and integrative role which constitutes all other aspects of life, because «the reason that makes life functional is the soul, understood as an act-form organising the matter for a human body, functioning through the body in a way that «I» is directly experienced as immanent in all, even physiological acts of «mine» and at the same time transcending these acts, and through the acts also itself. (...) That is why a human existence structure is something absolutely exceptional in the whole nature and that is why it cannot be reduced to one aspect of the existence – either only a psychological-spiritual one (as Cartesius and some others wanted to perceive a man), or only a material, animal one, or even worse – to a pure infinite



structure, acting ultimately (and existing) on the basis of a chance» [12, c. 22].

A human is a dynamic and developing being who achieves perfection by updating their potentiality in the field of both vegetative and sense-sensual life, but first of all, spiritual and personal life. Dynamics – potentiality of human life, covering all real aspects of human existence, is a crucial dimension of this life. So a person is an individual of actions which present them outside, an individual of rational nature, able to think in a creative and cognitive way, to take rational and autonomic actions [12, c. 81–83]. «A man is a being of intensified existence complication, and a spiritual factor plays the central part. It is not something additional, it is not an accelerator of existence, but it is its essential characteristic. Bio-psychological is an initial base, spiritual – is a constitutive principle of existence. The latter makes it possible to say about a human being: A man is a person, becoming he/she becomes, being the one» [21, c. 80–81]. So from an anthropological perspective, spirituality is defined as a phenomenon which is quite natural for a man.

«Spirituality – as C. ve Beck states – is a combination of human qualities that can be presented both by religious and irreligious people. He says that spiritual people are characterised by: (1) insight and understanding skill; (2) sense of context and perspective; (3) awareness of mutual connection of things, unity of multiplicity, order in the entirety; (4) integration of body, soul and spirit, and also different dimensions and complications of their lives; (5) ability to sense rareness, a mystery and reverence; (6) feeling of gratitude, satisfaction and humility with reference to valuable sides of life; (7) hope and optimism; (8) brave, «spiritual» attitude towards life; (9) energy; (10) distance; (11) they accept inevitable; (12) love – «par excellence quality of a spiritual person»; (13) good manners – sensitive and sensible attitude towards other people, themselves and the cosmos as a whole. A similar humanistic opinion is expressed by Roff when he writes that spirituality is an expression of existence which is inside of us, it has a lot in common with feelings, with strength that comes from inside, with awareness of our deepest 'I' and the things that are saint to us» [26, c. 2].

Spirituality as an anthropological term indicates one of specific qualities of human nature – an experience of transcendence of a person. Everything that is a part of a person's transcendence, that determines it, is a disclosure of spirituality. A conviction about a man's spirituality in its authentic symptoms is not only a result of some abstraction, but it has its viewing shape. Spirituality is open to viewing and also to insight. All the symptoms of a man's spirituality must correspond with real immanence spirit, a spiritual quality of a man. So spirituality, referring to immanence of human existence, is expressed in such human virtues as: work, thought, symbols, speech, art, fun, culture, science etc. However, it is best expressed in something that is generally called a religious-cult acts [6, c. 223–224].

2. Pedagogy in the presence of spiritual development of a man

Pedagogy, as science growing from traditions related to humanistic sciences, demonstrating strong connections with philosophy and taking care of a man in a holistic way in the process of development and education, provides extensive analyses and references to a man's spirituality in an individual perspective. At the base of every pedagogical system there is always «some» concept of a man, indicating anthropological, ontological, epistemological and axiological determinants of the way we can understand human nature. It directs – through a prism of its own assumptions – a scientific reflection of pedagogy towards a man, indicating the



essence, dimensions and ways of human functioning in the world, at the same time becoming the basic for finding the right ways to construct the goals, principles, ways and the educational process itself.

Pedagogy pays attention to the fact that a man is a person who develops all the time. In present it is assumed that this development refers to the spaces in all dimensions of life, which are mutually conditioned and strongly connected and must be integrated into one personal construction by a factor constituting personality. In the light of scientific analyses, it seems that this factor is in fact a spiritual dimension of human existence, so we cannot talk about holistic development of a man ignoring the sphere of spiritual aspect of such existence. It is because the spiritual development is «a part of life space of people, letting them realise their humanity (...). A man, existing as a spiritual human being, cannot neglect their spiritual dimension, and quite the contrary, they should focus their attention on it» [4, c. 40].

The special character of spirituality is that it gives a possibility to develop for the whole life. However, development of a spiritual dimension does not mean systematic growth regardless of external circumstances. «Development and shaping a man consist in building a spiritual and cultural structure of personality which plays an integral role. They aim at introducing individual psyche in the context of a spiritual structure which becomes the foundation for personality. It can be done through educational contact with spiritual structures of specific cultural products and thanks to their acquisition which means internalisation in the spiritual structure of personality»[16, c. 88].

The identity of an individual that is developing is ranged between a possibility of what he/she can be and he/she really is. A pedagogical impulse considered in the entirety of its determinants consists in this double dialectics and its dynamics. It is about a stimulus which drives people to go from the state of possibility of life to the state of real life, and also understanding the essence of their life and the ways of its realisation. A pupil is seen not as the one who receives education but as a real person with his/her interests and goals, interacting with the surroundings and an educationalist. It is not the educationalist's goal to adapt the pupil to the world but it is to arouse the desire for really human existence [9, c. 270–278]. So «upbringing of a man is human awakening. In this way, the most important thing for educationalists is to respect a child's soul and body. Knowing his/her internal resources and the depth of his/her essence and a kind of loving and great care in relation to his/her secret identity which is something hidden and cannot be reached by any technology» [18, c. 264–268; 9, c. 270–278].

Pedagogy belongs to the sciences that cover the entirety of human existence. As «the art of the arts», it defines its material and formal subjects of the research. The material subject is a man's broad development during his/her whole life, and the formal subject is a man's developmental good, not actual, but realised in future, thanks to which a man can improve to the full extent and achieve the limits of the developmental process. Pedagogy is not only science on education but it is also thinking about this process so it studies human upbringing and education as a historical, psychological and social process, and also as a cultural process. In this way its goal is to present philosophic premises of pedagogical theory and practice, and to become aware of the conditions generating knowledge and experience that create the subject identity. It favours participation of a person in his/her development, in discovering the subjective I, in growing and existing in the society and in the changes



that take place there. «The development of a man's potentiality is a goal of a pedagogue who takes advantage of results of pedagogical studies in his/her educational work. Upbringing, which is a marvel of human existence, makes people start systematic reflections about it, with methodological respect for the whole complicity of their own nature and life, as a biological-psyche-spiritual being [13, c. 11–12; 23, c. 80–86; 1, c. 43–45]. «The goal of education is not, of course, shaping the Platonic abstraction, which is a man himself, but shaping the specific child belonging to a given nation, to a given social environment, to a given historic moment. (...) In this way the basic meaning of upbringing is, first of all, help in a dynamic development which shapes a man in order to be a human, in other words, it is preparation of a child or a growing person to Lifelong Learning» [15, c. 61].

3. Upbringing as support for integral development

If upbringing means helping a person in his/her development and growth, its sense covers realisation of the goals which express the way of understanding the world and life, the way of valuing the reality and its evaluation. It is the reality which is typically human, included in complexity and multiplicity of human existence, both the physical and spiritual ones, from the past, the present and projected in the future. In this meaning, every moment for an educationalist is different, distinct just as every person is distinct and every moment and situation in their lives. An educationalist, who educates a person, focuses his/her work on the whole person and his/her goal is to make the students able to formulate their opinions on the reality in an independent way. Asking about the sense of upbringing, we ask about the sense of educational acts, events, facts or the processes which decide about them [22, c. 17–29; 20, c. 15–23; 8, c. 67–68]. So «the main goal of upbringing understood as unification: physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual aspects of a person, is disclosure of «the inner truth», existing in the person, in order to create more harmonious integrity, to achieve sustainable development, including intuition, imagination, creativity and love for everyday life in relation with other people and nature. (...) In this way, integrated and universal education also gains new meaning and dimension – as the integration of all its personalities, including a spiritual aspect» [4, c. 282–283]. Recognition of man as a being of flesh and soul, makes it possible to determine «the area» of pedagogical and educational interactions. In this way, we can distinguish in upbringing such elements as: motivation, choice (decision), realisation and results. Motivation and the source of the upbringing process is taken from an educational impulse, displayed in the need to realise yourself and seen as the basic need of a human being. The choice is the act that allows a person to realise his/her own motivation, specifying and accepting the responsibility for own development. On the other hand, realisation is done through specific educational activities and through realisation of yourself. The result of educational activities is full realisation of your own, mature person [7, c. 401].

In this context, upbringing is one of the elements, or maybe one of the links, of a special form of «spiritual relation» between an educationalist and a pupil, the relation in which both sides feel mutual love and respect and – what is most important – they have their common world of values and ideals. It is an act that aims at fulfilling your own predispositions and helping in acquisition of new skills [24, c. 50–52]. So upbringing in a personal vision is the meeting of people which allows to open a circle of values, thanks to which a man becomes a human. Referring to the deepest layer of our «inner I», to the essence of human existence, it helps to shape



some attitudes and life ideals, it delivers some personal virtues, driving development of two personal subjects. The pedagogical vision, depicted in this way, must aim at discovering in a child the things that are best and probably present in every sphere of his/her functioning – physical, psychological and social ones, but also in the spiritual sphere which is an especially important element of personal nature of a man.

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