



THE EVOLUTION OF ASTHETIC VIEWS IN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

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Abstract:

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This article analyzes the manifestations of the phenomenon of asceticism in world religions in the field of religious phenomenology, which is one of the branches of theology. The essence of Buddhism, Christianity and asceticism in Islam has been revealed based on the research of Eastern and Western scholars who have conducted research in this field.

Keywords: Religion, Analysis, Asceticism, Phenomenon, Christianity, Islam, Asceticism, Apostles.

INTRODUCTION

Asceticism exists in many religious teachings, today it is mainly manifested as a specific practice in the leading religions in terms of the number of believers, especially, in Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism.

MAIN PART

Although asceticism as a spiritual practice is uniquely present in almost all religions, each of them has its own meaning and significance to this situation (event).

It should be noted that asceticism is also found in Buddhism in the study of world religions. According to the famous scholar Govinda Lama Anagarika (Ernst Lothar Goffmann, 1898-1985), who studied this aspect of Buddhism, there are three degrees of perfection. In the first level, there is only physical suffering, in the second, the mental state, that is, the despair of man from life, and in the third level, suffering is comprehensive and becomes an integral part of the surrounding being.¹

In Buddhism, the practice of asceticism is seen as a way to attain nirvana. It is believed that through the practice of asceticism, man is freed from the censorship of cyclical existence, and that the karmic sufferings of the soul are put to an end and enlightenment is attained.

Buddhist ascetics practice yoga and meditation as well as renouncing civilization and worldly pleasures.

According to experts, the emergence and formation of asceticism in Christianity was clearly observed in the I-III centuries. In his research, the Russian researcher P.A. Korpachev² focused on the emergence and development of asceticism in Christianity. According to him, the ascetic activity observed in the I-III centuries was not limited to the stage of preparation for the monastic tradition. Indeed, the process of following the apostolic asceticism in the 2nd century and their subsequent tradition of mystical observation was seen in Christianity as a period of preparation in connection with the emergence of monasticism in the 4th century.³

There is also the concept of "monk" in Christianity, which is derived from the Greek word and means loneliness, living alone. According to Christian teaching, a monk is applied to an unmarried person who has left the world and devoted himself to the worship of God. The monks are believed to pray for one individual, as well as for all of humanity. These people are completely dedicated to the service of the people and renounce the world.⁴

St. Anthony is recognized as the founder of the monastic and monastic system in Christianity. The first monasteries were formed in the III and IV centuries in Egypt and Damascus. In the monks of that period, ascetic

¹ Govinda Lama Anagarika. Psychology of early Buddhism. Saint Petersburg. Andreev and sons Publication House

² P.A. Korpachev. Asceticism in Christianity in I century. Chelyabinsk State University bulletin, 2016. Page 29.

³ P.A. Korpachev. Ascetic tradition in Christianity before the advent of monasticism // Scientific and technical documents of S.Petersburg State Pedagogical University. Humanitarian and social sciences V. 8, № 1, 2017.: page 127.

⁴ Marian I. Bugiulescu The Organization and Role of Monasticism in the Christian Church Constitution and Activity. German. – P. 1.

practices were manifested in situations such as living in cemeteries or abandoned buildings, and spending much of their time in caves and deserts in prayer.

In the Christian tradition today, the monastic system can be said to be a modern form of asceticism.

Many Western scholars believe that Islam came after Christian asceticism and developed a separate way of achieving spiritual perfection (Sufism). This path is not "neither Christian, nor Gnostic, nor Buddhist."⁵

In Islam, asceticism is explained by the term "zuhd" (Arabic: زهد), and ascetics are called "ascetics." Zuhd is one of the basic moral concepts of Islam and generally refers to the renunciation of worldly pleasures.

Before Islam, each Arab tribe had one or more priests, that is, a religious figure. The priest did not have to be a man, there were also female priests; for example, in the Quraysh tribe, a priest named Savdo bint Zuhra was well known. It is safe to say that objectively some priests played an important role in preparing their tribesmen for Islam. They held the position of minor prophets in Judaism among their tribesmen.

At the same time, a specific group of people emerged in Arab society who did not worship idols, were neither Jews nor Christians, and worshiped some one God. Although the informants often gave abstract, contradictory information about them, they unanimously called them hunafa (unit "hanif"). The Hanifs openly mocked the pagans, calling for a fight against alcoholism, gambling, and other evils prevalent among the Arabs of the time. Of course, their call was met with opposition from nobles, officials and idol worshipers. Many Hanifs did not stay in one place, but were forced to live as dervishes (wanderer) and wander around the country. Hanifs cannot be imagined as representatives of an independent religion like Jews or Christians. They can be given the quality of people belonging to different tribes, who are not united in a great bond with each other, mainly against idols and preoccupied with the idea of calling for reform. In his book "Sira", Ibn Hisham gives a brief biography of the Hanifs Zayd ibn Amr, Waraqa ibn Nawfal, Ubaydullah ibn Jahsh, Usman ibn Huwayris, who formed a small group (usba) and denied the prayers and rituals of the Quraysh.

The theme of Zuhd can be found in the first collections of works on the theme of "enlightenment" of hadith, agiographic literature and mysticism of the X-XIII centuries. The concept of Zuhd was formed among the prominent representatives of the early Muslim piety (Zuhhad), including Hasan Al-Basri, Sufyan al-Sawri, Ibrahim Ibn Adham, and others.

According to the ascetics, the main negative force in human nature is the nafs (lust). The task of man is to kill the nafs, to destroy the animal powers within him, to strengthen the spirit and the will, and to attain divinity. To understand the evil of the self is to understand man himself, and hence the divinity. In this way, asceticism played an important role in educating and nurturing the human spirit and directing it to good deeds.

CONCLUSION

While the first ascetics considered piety and abstinence as their main goal, the later ascetics chose intellectual development as their main goal, that is, understanding and knowing the Creator and the universe and man.

The path of spiritual and moral perfection of the ascetics is connected with the addresses of the authorities, that is, strict honest eating, eating less, sleeping less, speaking less, abstaining from all immorality, fighting for the purity of language, tongue and deeds, thus strengthening the soul, peace of mind. The main goal is to achieve, strengthen memory and memorization, deepen the understanding of monotheism and become a part of monotheism itself.

Today, there is a need to study asceticism not only in relation to the phenomenon of religion, but also to other socio-cultural events in the spiritual life of society, such as politics. In order to objectively assess the place of religious consciousness at different levels of cultural development of ascetic views, it is necessary to conduct research of an informational, social and, of course, cultural nature.

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