

Psychological Problems Connected with the Transition of Modern Humanity from Religious Civilizations to the Scientific World View

Sergei Sayadovich Oganessian^{1*}, Tarim Anverovna Khaadi²

¹Senior Research Fellow, Federal Research Institute of the Penal Enforcement Service of Russia.

²Vice-President of Intellect and Spirituality Fund Moscow, the Russian Federation.

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***Corresponding author:** Sergei Sayadovich Oganessian, Senior Research Fellow, Federal Research Institute of the Penal Enforcement Service of Russia.

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Abstract

The article looks at the stages of the mental transformation of humankind reflected in the Holy Scriptures of monotheism (the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran). The features of world perception, the value world and the norms and rules of people's behavior in each of the mental epochs are characterized. The authors argue that the transition of humankind from religious mental epochs to the scientific world view is inevitable. Religious people should, first, understand that living according to the constitutions of secular states, which are fruits of human intellectual activity, is an objective law envisaged by the Holy Scripture. Second, they should become aware of the continuity between the Holy Scriptures of monotheism (the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran) and the Constitutions of secular states, above all at the level of fundamental worldview-related values. Demonstration of inevitability of succession of mental civilizations can go a long way toward relieving tensions, stress and other adverse phenomena of the human psyche connected with the transition of our contemporaries from one civilizational mentality to another and, accordingly, to alleviate the somatic disorders that engender them.

Key words: mental epochs; paganism, monotheism; the scientific perception of the world; islam

Introduction

The history of modern humanity, from our point of view, can be divided into three stages of mental development. The primary sources of monotheism, such as the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran, do not only clearly identify these three stages, but predict the advent of the fourth stage. The first stage is paganism. It was the longest in duration, lasting tens of millennia from the emergence of Man on earth as a being fundamentally different from all the other living creatures, above all, in the mental sphere.

The main feature of the first stage (paganism, polytheism) was not only the worshipping of many gods, but also the fact that each family, gens and tribe had their own gods. Practically all ethnic groups and peoples have gone (or are going) through this stage.

The second stage is monotheism. According to the Holy Scriptures of monotheism, it began from the moment the One God revealed himself to Abraham and told him to leave his father's tribe and go to a place the Most High would indicate. Next, according to monotheistic sources, the One God revealed his essence to Moses, a descendant of Abraham, and gave him Tablets of Stone inscribed with Commandments on Mount Sinai (Zion). According to the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran, it is through Moses that the Most High revealed to the sons of Israel a new perception of the world as well as the laws and principles which should form the world view and legal basis of their life, i.e. sent down a legal system aimed at forming the value world of the sons of Israel with its notions of "good and evil," righteousness and sin. It is not by chance that the monotheistic sources refer to the Torah as The Law or The Law of Moses.

Then for more than two thousand years monotheism was preached to pagan peoples by the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ.

Finally, six centuries after the Messianic activities of Jesus Christ Muhammad, an Arab, was vouchsafed God's revelation which he passed on to his fellow Arabs who, in turn, disseminated it among the peoples that in their historical development were mature



enough to adopt monotheism.

The third mental stage through which modern humanity is living, is directly linked with the intellectual activity of Man himself who, without any Revelations from above, exclusively on the basis of his inborn mental faculties, proceeded to develop his own ideas of the surrounding world, explore his own mental, physiological, psychological, psychosomatic and other nature and run his social life through legal systems which are the products of his own intellectual activity. That stage began from the late 16th century, i.e. the epochs of Renaissance and Enlightenment in Europe and then spread and is still spreading to all the other continents.

That stage, we believe, is clearly indicated in the Quran which states that it is the last message to Man from the One God and that Muhammad is the last prophet of the Most High [Quran, 5:3; 33:40]. For ahead lay the period of man's independent activity to develop a world view and establish norms of behavior. Otherwise why should the Most High teach man the names of all that and subject to him not only our planet, but all the "worlds" [Quran, 96:4,5; 55:4] [Torah, Breishit 1 Breishit;24] [Bible, Jews;2:5-5]. And after Man, according to the Quran, displayed his knowledge, the Most High ordered the angels to prostrate themselves before Man and elevated Man above all the worlds [Quran 2:30-34, 7:140]. Hence it is clear why, according to the Quran, the One God "subjected to man whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth – all for Him. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought" [Quran, 45:13].

The fourth stage of Man's mental development, according to the New Testament and the Quran, is connected with man's life *in heaven close to his Creator* [Quran, 81:1-6; 82:1-19].

Thus Apostle Paul, conveying to humans the mystery revealed to him by Jesus Chris, says: "*The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man. I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep. But we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality*" [Bible, Cor. 15:45-53].

Here it is important to note that the transition from one civilizational mentality to another is inevitably accompanied by the destruction of old clichés and the value world of people, traditions, customs, norm and rules of behavior. This inevitably induces in the adherents of the civilization mentality which has outlived itself an acute sense of psychological discomfort, tension, stress, distress and other phenomena which spill out into conflict-generating situations that give rise to extremism and terrorism with all the consequences that entails for the loss of psychological stability and the emergence not only of various nerve disorders but also somatic diseases.

Suffice it to recall, on the one hand, the Diocletian persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire which started in 303 and continued under his successors until 313; and on the other hand, the Edict of Milan issued by Theodosius in 391 which declared all sacrificial and religious rites in pagan temples to be crimes against the emperor punishable by fines and confiscation of property. Within a decade after the Milan Edict Christians with their boundless faith in the One God were destroying, looting and desecrating many ancient pagan temples, tombs and monuments.

The relevance of the topic of this article consists in the fact that explaining to broad masses of especially religious population, the inevitability of the change of mental civilizations relieves the psychological stress always experienced by the representatives of outdated views, norms and behavior rules and enables them to adapt themselves to new historical realities.

The goal we set ourselves in this work is to demonstrate that mental civilizations inevitably change as humans develop and, accordingly, to show to the citizens of secular states, irrespective of their religious and philosophical views, convictions and preferences the need to live according to the Constitutions and legislative acts of the country they live in and thus significantly diminish psychologically traumatic situations in societies.

Research methods

The work uses traditional methods of humanities research. Content analysis, conceptualization, logical and systemic analyses, synthesis and methods of hermeneutic analysis have made it possible to outline the general strategy of mankind's development and stages of its mental transformation indicated in the sources of the Holy Scriptures of monotheism.

Comparative analysis of the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran as well as logical and deduction-induction methods have been used to forecast the development of the human race.

Research results:

A comparative analysis of the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran, as well as the data of ethnographic and historiographic research show that mental stages differ, above all, in people's perception of the world, their values, norms and rules of behavior, as well as the forms and methods of organizing their life. For example, the pagans were dedicated to their family deities, their families, their gens and tribe. They perceived all other people as enemies who threaten their lives and well-being. That is why among pagans, the cohesion of family and clan members united around their tribal gods and observance of traditions and customs of their gens or tribe were paramount [Fustel de Coulange].

The One God, after demonstrating his omnipotence, presented Himself as the sole and true Creator of the universe and its Lord. Through his prophets the One God declared that He is the Creator of the first man (Adam) from whom were produced his wife and then all the diversity of tribes (ethnic groups and peoples) existing on earth. In this way the One God disabused clans and tribes of their views of themselves being exceptional and isolated from other human communities and brought people into a single and coherent entity fundamentally different from all the other living



creatures on our earth.

The civilizational stages of polytheism and monotheism can be called religious inasmuch as, first, they were based on data presented to people from outside, through the Holy Scriptures and holy legends; and second, were sincerely perceived by the pagans and monotheists as unassailable truths sent down by some higher forces (gods) over which humans had no dominion. Compliance with them was mandatory because strict compliance with the commandments, laws and ordinations of the Holy Scriptures handed down from divine ancestors, in the opinion of religious people, was crucial for the life and death and well-being of every man and all people.

In polytheism these were numerous gods, mainly dead ancestors on the father's side. The pagans were convinced that ancestor-gods in the other world (subterranean or heavenly), if properly worshiped, help and guard their descendants who live on earth [Fustel de Coulanges].

In monotheism it was One God who, according to the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran created man and "breathed into his nostrils the soul of life" whereupon "man became a living soul" [Torah, Breishit 2, Breishit 7], an honor bestowed on no other living creature except man. Stressing God's mental unity with man, Jesus said: "*Father, just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*" [Bible, John, 17: 9,10; 16-24].

Only the last stage in people's life on earth, the stage at which much of modern humanity finds itself today, is connected with strictly intellectual (mental) activity of humans themselves. Whereas people in the religious epochs were highly susceptible to suggestion and believed in all sorts of miracles and omens (think of Christ's words "according to your faith be it done to you"), people with a scientific world perception trust repeatedly verified facts and experiment data, questioning everything. The great Enlightener Rene Descartes said, "Doubt of all things" [Rene Descartes]. A true believer, owing to his mental make-up, could not question a single line in the Torah, the New Testament or the Quran.

Practically all ethnic groups and peoples pass through the first three "earthly" stages of mental development. They do not do so simultaneously or at once, but at different historical periods, often coexisting within the confines of one continent and even of one state.

Not infrequently, ethnic groups and peoples, under the pressure of geopolitical circumstances (wars, etc.) moved (skipped) to a higher stage of mental development after being conquered or included in the victorious state or dropped to a relatively lower stage as a result of natural cataclysms (earthquakes, floods, prolonged droughts, etc.). However, as soon as the factors that caused ethnic groups and peoples to move to a level that did not match their civilizational mentality, they usually reverted to the stage they should have occupied during the course of their natural historical development. Contemporary ethnic groups and peoples of the former Soviet Union provide a striking example: after the collapse of the USSR the Baltic and Central Asian countries found themselves in different civilizational epochs, with the former gravitating toward the scientific perception of the world and the latter toward the religious view. The countries of Western and

Eastern Europe, including a sizable part of Russia's peoples, as well as the North American and some South American states are rapidly moving toward the civilizational stage of the scientific perception of the world.

A considerable part of Southeast Asia is largely at the monotheism stage while some peoples on the African continent and in the Far North are at the polytheism stage. Given powerful migration and integration processes characteristic of the modern world and engaging in diverse economic, social, political and other relations, ethnic groups and peoples with different civilizational mentalities naturally face problems arising from mutual rejection of each other's values, norms and rules of each other's behavior.

However, it has to be admitted that in departing from the norms and rules of behavior and the values of religious epochs, the ethnic groups and peoples which have embraced scientific organization of life have yet to develop stable norms and rules that correspond to the new civilizational stage of mankind's development. Hence the numerous acts of extremism and terrorism, based not on faith, but on political, social racial, ethnic, gender and other factors [Terrorism as]. This despite the fact that the scientific perception of the world is inherently tolerant of all old and new views, positions, opinions and viewpoints. It recognizes pluralism of opinions, views, hypotheses and theories and is suspicious of absolute truths.

And yet the process of the emergence of the scientific world view and way of life and a new type of relations between the representatives of different mental civilizations is accompanied not only by trial and error, abuses and excesses, but by tough confrontations which often spill over into extremism and terrorism, bloody clashes and wars. More often than not they are initiated not by the representatives of the nascent civilization mentality, connected with the scientific world perception, but by the representatives of religious civilizations which see the demise of their habitual way of life.

There is no doubt that the powerful scientific and technological progress in the modern world will usher in the fourth stage in the development of mankind predicted by the New Testament and the Quran, and humanity will "See God", i.e. its Creator [Bible, Matthew 5:8; Quran, 75:22,23].

This prophesy of the New Testament and the Quran does not look mystical because modern humanity has reached a development level that enables it to create and transmit over infinite distances its "other dimension", "electronic version" which is no less real than the "biological version" of man whom the Most High has created with his own hands. And man creates his "electronic version" himself with the help of his intellect.

The appearance of the Torah, followed almost one and a half millennia later by the New Testament and then the Quran almost six hundred years after the preaching of Jesus Christ, shows clearly that the Holy Scriptures of monotheism, while considering the changing conditions of life and offering new norms and rules of behavior and organization of life corresponding to the realities of the new times, nevertheless do not always keep up with change.

Thus, in asserting that "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for Sabbath. So the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath" [Bible, Mark 2:27,28] Jesus does not only challenge the principle



of the Torah that all the commandments, laws and ordinations in it are eternal, but propels mankind to a new stage of its mental development. The Quran is even more categorical on the inevitability of changes of commandments, laws and ordinations sent down by the One God. Muhammad, for example, was ordered to convey that the Most High envisages its own behests (commandments) for every period and that “Allah effaces whatever he wills (outdated commandments) and asserts (by His wisdom those principles that should be strictly adhered to), for “With Him is the Mother of the Book” (Quran, 13:38,39).

On the other hand, it has to be admitted that because the Holy Scriptures were sent down by the Most High they were not to be amended and their parts, phrases and words could not be rearranged. For they were sent down in verbal form by God Himself Who possesses, as religious people are convinced, omniscience and unfathomable wisdom and foresight.

Only interpretation of commandments, laws and ordinations by “learned men” was allowed. Outstanding examples of “interpretations” dictated by the new times and new living conditions were the Jerusalem and Babylon Talmuds, Agadu, Zogar, Church Fathers’ books, Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, etc.

Even so, it is important to understand that considering the intellectual capacities with which the Most High, according to the sources of monotheism, endowed man, it is not by chance that beginning from a certain historical moment God delegated the power to initiate legislation and make laws to man himself [Oganessian). This happened under the Prophet Samuel to whom the Most High ordered to draw up the laws of “the kingdom of the sons of Israel” and submit them to Him for approval [Bible, 1 Kings,8:7-9].

So when in November of 2020 the United Arab Emirates (UAE) changed the norms of Islamic law allowing free sale and consumption of alcohol, cohabitation of men and women and abolished punishment for attempted suicide we should take it as a historically inevitable development. Just like the fact that in early 2021 Saudi Arabia, that spiritual bulwark of the Muslim world, allowed women to travel without a male escort. Such easing of restrictions on the part of the Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia where the Quran has the power of the Constitution, would have been unthinkable only five years ago.

All this shows that those who advocate strict adherence to the prescriptions of the Holy Scriptures are challenging the foundations of the world view underlying the sources of monotheism and the strategic path of humanity’s development they have charted.

Religious people should, first, understand that living according to the Constitutions of secular states which are the fruit of the intellectual activity of man is an objective development foreseen by the Most High. Second, they should accept the continuity between the Holy Scriptures of monotheism (the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran) and the Constitutions of secular states, above all, at the level of fundamental worldview values.

It is no accident that by the middle of the last century humanity had reached a level of mental, socio-economic, political and cultural development when international law and international

organizations are being formed as a result of which the modern man, on the one hand, is becoming aware of himself as a single mental-biological organism on our plane and on the other hand, the modern world is in the throes of working out universal human values which influence the life of every people, ethnic group and every individual with all the psychological and mental problems that entails..

Conclusions:

It follows from the above that, first, the periodization of mental civilizations given in the primary sources of monotheism (the Torah, the New Testament and the Quran) fully coincides with the observed trends of the development of the human race; second, that each mental civilization has its specificities in world view, values, social norms and rules of behavior; third, that all the citizens of secular states, whatever their faith, should live according to the Constitutions and laws of the country they live in; fourth people, especially religious people, should be aware that a change of mental civilization may go a long way to relieving the tensions, stresses and other negative psychic phenomena and thus bring down the level of somatic disorders that generate them.

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