

THE STUDY OF SPIRITUALITY IN PSYCHOLOGY BY DISCURSIVE AND OTHER METHODS OF COGNITION

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Abstract

Some issues of studying personal spirituality in psychology are covered using various methods: experimental, discourse analysis, and intuitive methods. An idea is given of W. James's discursive description of the spiritual component of the consciousness and subconscious of the individual. It is proposed to consider discursive (based on inferences) and intuitive methods of cognition as necessary for the study of consciousness and spirituality in psychology, built on the new foundations of a holistic modern paradigm.

Key words: spirituality, spirit, ways of knowing spirituality, discursive and intuitive methods.

I. INTRODUCTION

The attitude of psychologists to the sphere of personal spirituality has always been ambivalent. Some considered it an undoubted given, not subject to research. Others unexpectedly discovered it as a psychic manifestation in need of description and study. In support of this thesis, we cite the statements of two great psychologists of the last century.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sigmund Freud, spirit is everything. Man has always known that he has the Spirit. Freud believed that he had to show the existence of such a thing as instinct.

On the other hand, Viktor Frankl felt that humanity had demonstrated its instincts and drives ad nauseam in recent years. Today it seems more important to remind man that he has a Spirit, that he is a spiritual being.

Of course, in accordance with the paradigm and methodological basis of our own approach to understanding this phenomenon, a system of cognitive tools was also chosen. However, to this day,

there has not been a consensus among psychologists either about phenomenology, or about the structure of spirituality, or in relation to research tools and methods of cognition of this sphere of personality.

Although philosophy and descriptive psychology have accumulated sufficient material about the manifestations and characteristics of human religious and spiritual experience, the concepts of “spirit” and “spirituality” have rarely become the subject of consideration of psychology as a science. In recent decades, attempts have been made to include the content of this concept into the semantic space of scientific psychology.

III. ANALYSIS

The spiritual component of personality is a subject in the existential-humanistic and transpersonal directions of psychology. Currently, the term “transpersonal” is used to denote the direct experience of spiritual experience, which denotes going beyond the usual way of perceiving and interpreting the world from the standpoint of the limitations of the social and material Ego.

In the explanatory dictionary of the Russian language by D. N. Ushakov, the word “spirit” has several meanings that are most applicable to the context of psychology. Spirit is: 1) mental abilities, mind; 2) in idealistic philosophy - the basic essence, the immaterial beginning of phenomena; 3) essence, true meaning.

Only the first interpretation of the concept of “spirit” is suitable for consideration within the framework of orthodox psychology. As an example, we can point to the study of spiritual abilities by V.D. Shadrikov.

He defines them as the ability of a spiritual state, which is formed on the basis of both spiritual values and the temptation to renounce the duty to follow an idea, faith, and spiritual values. In the mind of a scientist, these are the abilities of a state of comprehension of truth, holistic understanding; it is an integral manifestation of the intellect and spirituality of the individual.

Spirituality, as a rule, is associated with the spiritual essence of a person, with the spiritual principle, which is the “spirit”, “soul”. In this case, spiritual abilities are understood as the properties of the spirit, a certain ideal cognizing principle - “I”. V.D. Shadrikov believes that “scientific psychology does not need to proceed from the principle of spirit as the active principle of personality” and leave ontological questions to philosophers.

The definition of the concept of “spirituality” in the same dictionary by D. N. Ushakov fully correlates with ideas about the scientific subject in the field of psychology, as noted by V. D. Shadrikov. Human spirituality is understood as detachment from base, grossly sensual interests, the desire for internal improvement, heights of spirit.

The study of spirituality in psychology within the framework of the natural science paradigm began since the time of W. James (psychologists still consider him one of “theirs”). At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. he viewed spiritual abilities as properties that characterize the functional individuality of a person.

Using discursive analysis (rational, conceptual, logical, indirect, as opposed to contemplative, intuitive, direct), he explores the diversity of people's religious experience. From reflections and analysis of situations in the mental or spiritual life of people, W. James draws conclusions about what spirituality and consciousness are. However, using reasoning and inferences based on many examples, at the same time he believed that “judgments about the value, the purpose of phenomena

and events in human life should be based only on empirical research". That is, as a psychologist, he insisted on a combination of various methods to get closer to the truth.

During the formation of scientific psychology, the experimental method as a general scientific method (precise, measuring), and with it test diagnostics (psychotechnics) were established as leading in psychology. Along with this process, descriptive, discursive, and hermeneutic methods were supplanted, faded into the background, and are even completely denied to this day by individual psychologists.

Moreover, from the preface to the Russian edition (editor S. Lurie) of W. James's book "The Varieties of Religious Experience" it follows that not only reflection, but more the mystical experience of the author intervened in the writing of the work.

In other words, W. James used not so much scientific methods of cognition as certain hidden possibilities that allowed him to make a number of statements about the consciousness and spirituality of the individual that are little consistent with the ideas of the natural science paradigm.

For example, he writes that "psychology, as a natural science, must admit the existence of a stream of mental states, each of which is associated with complex objects of cognition, experiences various emotions in relation to them and makes a choice between them". Here one can clearly see his indication of such a characteristic of consciousness as flow, which is revealed when entering altered states of consciousness and is not obvious in ordinary consciousness.

IV. DISCUSSION

In the ideas of W. James, consciousness is characterized by manifestations of emotions, will, thoughts that are in the "field of consciousness." And if earlier, as the author notes, psychologists considered ideas to be the unit of consciousness, then at the time of writing (1902) of the book, he defined the entire mental state as such an elementary unit, the entire wave of consciousness, in other words, the entire "set of objects conceivable at a given moment." , i.e. mental manifestations. We now call this state consciousness. Moreover, the author notes that the boundaries of the "field of consciousness" are blurred, not defined at each moment, it can expand or contract. There is a pinnacle of man's consciousness, which is determined by the leading idea and directs the will, and which James called the "center of personal energy" of man. This center may be occupied by another idea, and the previous one may move to the periphery. This is how a person's ideas and worldview change. For James, the "field of spiritual vision" coincides with the field of consciousness; it is of different breadth for different people. Average people are deprived of the breadth of horizons of their spiritual vision. This is how he explains the spiritual ascent of different people.

The fact that W. James used discourse is shown by his conclusions, for example, about the subconscious. He noted the fact that, in addition to the field of consciousness, in 1886 another sphere was discovered in psychology: "... Consciousness is not limited to the ordinary "field", with its "center" and "outskirts," but also covers a whole series of memories, thoughts, sensations that are completely outside the boundaries of basic consciousness and nevertheless must be recognized as unique facts of consciousness.", the so-called subliminal consciousness (Myers). W. James called it the subconscious.

The substantive side of the ideas about spirituality of W. James and other scientists gives us the opportunity to formulate our own definition. We use the term "spirituality" in our articles (following V.V. Kozlov) to designate situations when a person is involved in experiences that have a distinct

transpersonal and sacred (“numinous”) character and are outside the everyday, everyday state of consciousness.

Spirituality is the existential-semantic center of the individual Ego-consciousness. The core of the spiritual Ego consists of intimate, sacred meanings that relate to the core problems of human existence related to the meaning of life. They relate to the most important social feelings of a person: loneliness, existential sadness, melancholy, spiritual love, compassion and empathy, joy of being, service, feelings of happiness and harmony.

The structure of the spiritual Ego traditionally considers moral individual values, which are transformed into a system of requirements, norms and behavior patterns. In our opinion, it is in the spiritual Ego that the content of consciousness acquires a global regulatory function of the personality.

The achievements of modern experimental psychology in the study of consciousness within the framework of the natural science paradigm are indisputable. It can be noted that the traditional methodological complex for studying abilities, intelligence, and values is provided, however, conventional psychological methods for studying the semantic sphere of consciousness, the unconscious (super- and subconscious) are very subjective. The results obtained with their help depend to a significant, if not decisive, degree on the level of qualification of the specialist and on the theoretical positions on which this specialist is based. Empirical study of these psychological manifestations is possible using modern methods, including psychosemantics (V.F. Petrenko, A.G. Shmelev).

Studying the influence of intensive integrative psychotechniques on the spiritual growth of the individual, we asked ourselves the questions of identifying changes in the semantic structure of the individual under the influence of the summer “Spiritual Wanderings”.

The object of study was the semantic “architectonics” of the individual, and the subject was the dynamics of existential meanings under the influence of training. Our assumption was that participants in spiritual development training experience spiritual crises, and the training environment helps to overcome them with a decrease in intensity and duration. To confirm this hypothesis, we studied the course of spiritual crises through the dynamics of existential meanings, which manifest themselves as stressful in crisis conditions.

To study the dynamics of semantic spaces of personality, a computer method was chosen for objective analysis of evoked EEG reactions in response to subthreshold presentation of semantic stimuli (a set of unconscious psychodiagnostic programs - S. V. Kvasovets, A. V. Ivanov, Y. A. Bubeev). With this approach, the patient’s subconscious acts as a “semantic filter”, when unstructured semantic information is supplied at the input, and information about the content of his subjective world is obtained at the output.

The results obtained using computer techniques made it possible to evaluate the semantic structure of subjective experience from the point of view of the functioning of defense mechanisms, levels of organization, and the modality of emotional experiences of training participants. In practice, these computer technologies are used, for example, to study unconscious mechanisms of dependencies, to analyze intragroup and intrapersonal conflicts, etc.

An example of combining the capabilities of measuring techniques and methods of studying the semantic sphere of a person indicates the admissibility of integrating theoretical and methodological foundations for studying the deepest and highest spheres of consciousness. Descriptive and discursive methods are among those used for these purposes.

The study of consciousness and its highest manifestation - spirituality - encourages methodologists to think about expanding the natural scientific paradigm. In recent decades, a systematic study of scientific objects and its synergetic concretization in the study of self-regulatory systems, one of which is the psyche, has become established. In accordance with the systemic vision, the possibility of studying an object is associated with exit from the existing system into a wider one. According to A.V. Karpov, a methodology for the systemic and metasystemic study of human mental phenomena exists. However, studying the holistic consciousness of a person on the principle of entering the metasystem at a theoretical level is difficult. But secondary images “correctly” constructed by man provide such an opportunity, they provide a bridge for the transition and connection of individual consciousness with the universe. The transition to the other side, entering the metasystem is accompanied by disidentification with these images and pictures. In practice, this looks like a way out of ordinary consciousness into something changed.

In the probabilistic model of personality, V.V. Nalimov discursively described the levels of consciousness. In his chart, both individual consciousness and meta-level consciousness exist. One of the levels of individual consciousness, namely the level of pre-thought, is associated with the meta-level (cosmic consciousness). An even more ancient level of individual consciousness - the contemplation of images - is also associated with a level that goes beyond the limits of individual consciousness, namely, with the collective unconscious, so well described by K.-G. Jung.

Spirituality as the highest level of development of individual consciousness is the first opportunity to enter the metasystem, the opportunity to connect with the Spirit. From the experience of many spiritual practitioners, and scientists, such an exit into the metasystem is possible. For example, meditation as a psychopractice allows one to transcend individual or narrow group experience in science too.

According to Rudolf Steiner, through meditation it is possible to rise to that which connects a person with the Spirit. “Meditation is a means leading to supersensible knowledge. For each person carries within himself, along with his own - let's call him so - an ordinary person, also another, higher person... And everyone can only awaken this higher person in himself.” The introduction of intuitive methods into the methodological complex of psychology at the present stage of the development of science does not even stand as a methodological problem, but in the history of science the most outstanding discoveries have been made precisely through intuition.

The study of the spiritual sphere of personality is largely connected with the integration of various methods, including methods of transcendence. From the traditional methodology of psychology to the foundations of the study of spirituality, spiritual self-realization of the individual, we include, first of all, the approach to the study of complex self-regulating mental systems by V. E. Klochko, the metasystem approach of A. V. Karpov, the principles of integrative psychology and the basic ideas of V. V. Kozlov about the essence of consciousness and the structure of personality and some others.

Spirituality as an existential-semantic locus of individual ego-consciousness contains an example of a person's worldview, on the experience of the integrity of which his social well-being depends. Phenomenologically, this level of consciousness manifests itself as the integration of emotions and feelings, thoughts and actions. This is not just knowledge and experiences, but also a set of personality properties through which this consciousness manifests itself.

Moreover, when speaking about spirituality as a state and experience, we also mean the experience of the unity of the individual with some higher, incomprehensible manifestations of

consciousness. The framework of the natural science paradigm limits the knowledge of spirituality in this aspect.

As modern research shows, for various reasons, the main one of which is the lack in science of both a holistic and unified vision of the very essence of the psyche, the subject is not defined and the methodology of science is fragmented. The issues of modern psychology's use of methods of cognition are inextricably linked with the problem of uniting all branches and subject areas with their own paradigms into a single field.

Integral or integrative psychology (K. Wilber, S. Grof, V.V. Kozlov), uniting many separately studied aspects of the psyche, may be the beginning of a future unified scientific and practical psychology. Its subject is individual and group consciousness as the basis for various forms of its manifestation in the mental and behavioral.

V. CONCLUSION

It is clear that consciousness, being the subject of integrative psychology, will not only allow us to combine the studied object areas of the mental, behavior, unconscious, etc., but also expand the knowable object area and "legitimize" the already studied spiritual levels of human consciousness.

To understand this sphere of the psyche, adequate methods and methods will be required, which include both experimental and precise measurement methods, and methods of understanding and descriptive psychology, discursive and intuitive, united not only by the principle of complexity, but by integral consistency and sensitivity.

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