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Artyomenko N. A.
V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University

THE DOCTRINE OF BISTAMI AS A REFLECTION OF HELLENISTIC PHILOSOPHY IN THE EARLY ISLAMIC MYSTICISM

Стаття присвячена впливу елінистичних вчень на релігійно-філософську концепцію Абу Йазида Бістамі. Неоплатонізм та гностицизм при взаємодії з ортодоксальним ісламом склали основу онтології і гносеології ранньоісламського містицизму, а також сформували своєрідну модель взаємовідносин особистості та Абсолюту. У статті проаналізована термінологія, яка вперше була використана Бістамі, однак у подальшому широко використовувалась як у ортодоксальному ісламі, так і у суфізмі. Автор реконструює дане вчення, що лежить в основі більшості релігійно-філософських доктрин Близького Сходу.

Ключові слова: суфізм, неоплатонізм, гностицизм, зухд, фана, містицизм.

Статья посвящена влиянию эллинистических учений на религиозно-философскую концепцию Абу Йазида Бистами. Неоплатонизм и гностицизм, взаимодействуя с ортодоксальным исламом, легли в основу онтологии и гносеологии раннеисламского мистицизма, а также сформировали своеобразную модель взаимоотношения личности и Абсолюта. В статье проанализирована терминология, которая впервые была использована Бистами, но в дальнейшем широко применялась как в ортодоксальном исламе, так и в суфизме. Автор реконструирует данное учение, лежащее в основе большинства религиозно-философских доктрин Ближнего Востока.

Ключевые слова: суфизм, неоплатонизм, гностицизм, зухд, фана, мистицизм.

The article studies the influence on Hellenistic teachings upon religious-philosophical conception of Abu Yazid Bistami. Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, interacting with orthodox Islam, formed the basis on ontology and epistemology on early Islamic mysticism, and formed an original model on relationship between the individual and the Absolute. In the article author analyzed terminology that was used first is Bistami's conception, but later has been widely spread in orthodox Islam and Sufism.The author reconstructs this doctrine that underlies the most of the religious and philosophical doctrines of the Middle East.

Keywords: Sufism, Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, zuhd, fanah, mysticism.

Islamic civilization owes its existence to the frontiercultural situation. Resulting from the meeting of different traditions syncretism formed the basis for further processes of formation of Islamic culture. A striking example of this syncretism is Islamic mysticism as a set of different teachings and doctrines.

Synthetic character of mystical teachings is reflected not only in its multicultural roots, but also in the fact that it becomes a kind of compromise between religious and philosophical knowledge. Being a branch of Islam, mysticism applied philosophical concepts of East and West to the Muslim ontology, epistemology, as well as to values, personality and identity issues.Thus, under the influence of philosophy religious doctrine is being formed. The teachings of the Neoplatonists, merging with the Islamic dogma, determined ontologycal ideas in some mystical teachings. Inspired by influence of the Hellenistic Gnostic teachings, Islamic thinkers have raised the questions about individuality, personal nature of faith and human presence which were not characteristic for orthodox Islam of earlier periods.

The aim of this article is to analyze and classify the models of relations between an individual and the Absolute regarded by early Islamic mysticism and represented by the teachings of Abu Yazid Bistami. Drawing parallels with the concepts of Neoplatonism as well as interpretation of early Sufi terminology contribute to a better understanding of philosophical content of Islamic theological studies. Hence, *the objectives* of this work may be defined as following: reconstruction of Bistami's conception based on discrete range of texts of his followers and contemporaries; comparison of Bistami's teaching and philosophical ideas of Vedanta and Neoplatonism; analysis of the central notions of Bistami's doctrine (such as «*Arsh*», «*fanah*» and «*zuhd*») and observation of their correlation with terminology of Western and Indian mystical traditions.

The novelty of the work lies in the number of points. Foremost, for domestic scientific tradition, this is the first attempt to reveal the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy upon the emergence

of early Islamic mystical teachings, a vivid example of which is the conception of Abu Yazid Bistami. Second, the doctrine of Abu Yazid Bistami has not been studied in details and there had not been made any attempts of its reconstruction as of philosophical system. So, in this article we undertook such kind of observation. Third, the article contests a widespread thesis that the doctrine of Bistami originated under the influence of Indian philosophical schools, particularly, of Vedanta. Fourth, there was given original interpretation to the key terms and concepts unfolded by Abu Yazid and there has been made their comparison with Qur'anic and Vedanta terminology.

The degree of scrutiny of the issue is determined by traditions of Islamic religion studies. For philosophy, this topic is almost unexplored. In major studies on Islamic mysticism, the teachings of Abu Yazid Bistami received quite a little attention. His doctrinewas not seen as a holistic conception, and the analysis of his texts has been reduced to detailing of theological fine distinctions. Besides the compilations of Bistami's contemporaries, there are some scientific works concerning the different aspects of his teaching. These include works by A. Korben, A. Shimmel, A. Knysh, I. Nasyrov.

Islamic mysticism originated in the first centuries of the Hijra. Works of early Muslim mystics formed the basis for most of the Sufi teachings. While our awareness of great Sufi thinkers' doctrines (such as ibn'Arabī, al-Suhrawardī, Rumi, etc.) is quite voluminous, the information about early mystics' conceptions is poor. Their original treatises have not survived to our time, but many of their ideas were reflected in the writings of followers, numerous retellings and aphorisms. Reconstruction and analysis of the first teachings allows us to define vectors of early Islamic religious thought.

In the VIII-IX centuries Muslim philosophy was divided into two trends – the orthodox and the mystical ones. At the heart of the mystical tendency there was a thesis that understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an needed new background, different from the official *tafsir* (Tafsīr) Traditionally, the interpreters of the Qur'an used analytical tafsir method that mysticism, since Zhu-n-Nun, considered to be a great mistake. [18, p. 58] According to early mystical teachings, human heart is a Mirror of the Divine Intension. [12, p. 22] With the help of heart a person can understand the Scripture, and analytical work of mind isonly a hindrance. As an illustration, there are the words of Persian Sufi Anwar al-Kasymi (Anvar Al-Qasimi): «The heart of a gnostic (*'Arif*) is in the contemplation of Truth. The heart of a reasonable man is caught by the cycle of speculation and doubt» [18, p. 63].

Mystical tradition was not monolithic even in the early stages of its existence. Many researchers make a mistake calling all the early mystical teachings «the Sufism». Analytical and comparative approach allows to distinguish two tendencies within early mystical doctrine (let us call them «Gnostic» and «Personalist» versions of mysticism).

In Personalist teachings human is regarded as God's creation. God is the Absolute and the Kingdom of Heaven is the Great Otherness. God acts as a demiurge and, at the same time, exists as an object of human love and aspiration. The motive power in the quest for the Absolute is love. Love gives insight, leads mystics to sacred ecstasy and gives them Knowledge.The relationship between human and God stays intimate and personal. Such an approach formed the basis for most of the Sufi teachings. This position depreciates the authority of text and tutorship, because each person is considered to be a carrier of Divine Love. Sudden inspiration can happen to anyone, and Revelation can be given either to well-educated person or to ignorant one. This is the distinctive feature of the major Sufi orders such as Suhrawardi, Mevlana, Naqshbandi, etc.

Quite a different position is represented by Gnostic mysticism wing, which Ibn-Arabi named *Al-wujudvahad (waḥdat al-wujūd)*, «The Unity of Being». According to this doctrine, the Deity dwells beyond time and space and thus is a single reality. Empirical reality is only a derivation from True Being, similar, in terms of Sufi symbolism, to reflection in a mirror. [14, p. 61] Mystic endowed with enlightenment, is akin to Platonic philosopher, who ought to return to the cave and felt embarrassment transferring experience of True Reality to residents of darkness because there were no categories with which one can express divine essence. This position differs from the Sufi's one, however, many researchers erroneously consider it as such.

The first Islamic thinker, who put forward mystical thesis of unity of being, was Abu Yazid Bistami, known for his saying «I am God». [18, p. 60] His doctrine is at the very heart of Islamic mysticism. Understanding the reason of Bistami's conception and analyzing his texts we can reveal heterogeneous borrowing in Islamic mysticism, define the problem field of early Islamic philosophy, observe the evolution and transformation of Middle East philosophy in general.

Many researchers of Islamic Philosophy as Robert Zener pointed the influence of Indian Philosophy upon the teaching of Bistami [14, p. 237]. The author was drawing the parallels with a concept of Sankara and Advaita Vedanta School. But equally interesting is the comparison of Bistami reasoning with ideas of Western Gnostics and Plotinus, whose texts were translated into Arabic by Abu Yusuf Kindi shortly before sermons of Bistami. [20, p. 117]

Bistami's texts abstracts, being taken out of a context of the dialogue with classical philosophical systems (the dialogue often unnoticed by contemporaries), caused incomprehension and confusions. It seems to us that the doctrine of thinker is of interest for philosophical and theological interpretations in the context of multicultural interaction as its precondition. In addition, the integrity of Bistami'smystical conception, presented in original textsas fragmentary and aphoristic, can be found only on the background of more ancient traditions – In thematic similarities, terminological references and even in semantic alterations.

Noteworthy is the fact that Bistami's statements are represented by his biographers and followers as self-sufficient hermetic symbolic systems, which contained, in addition to the obvious sense, some hidden meanings as well as their mystical «codes». Munavi, who was the one of compilers of Islamic texts, gave the following saying: «If the Throne and what is around it, and what is inside it, would be placed in a corner of the heart of Knower, they would be completely lost in it» [14, p. 240]. Delineated in such a way fragment appears to bean esoteric text «closed in itself», while historical and philosophical connotations allow us to discover a range of possible interpretations and to enrich original text with new meanings.

«The Throne» and «what is around it» can be understood as being, that is a double reflection in the «mirror» of human soul. Since human reality is a projection of True Being, then «the Throne», «Kingdom of Heaven» (according to Bistami, the projection of human reality), is the result of double ontological «refraction». This metaphoris, on the one hand, an aftersound of Neoplatonic ideas, and its interpretation is diametrically opposed to ontological order performed by Plotinus' philosophy, on the other. Plotinus' cosmic mind (nous) generates matter; from Bistami's point of view, on the contrary, matter is the source for nous. Mentioned «Heart of Knower» is similar to True Reality.

Notions of the trinity of reality is typical for Advaita Vedanta. [16, p 395] Therefore, the comparison of Advaita Vedanta with Islamic mysticism seems quite appropriate. However, the following phrase of Bistami reveals the difference: «But Love is in the Throne (kursi), Arsh, and it is equal in all its manifestations» [2]. If in Sankara's doctrine we can find the idea of «diminishing» of substantiality in the process of descending to the lower levels of reality (the highest level is valid, and the lowest turns to be an illusion), Plotinus takes all three levels as equal: «Imagine a spring that hasn't gotany other beginning, but that gives itself to all flows, not being exhausted by these flows, and staying calm within itself. Imagine also, that each of the flows that stream out of it before running in different directions, still stay together, but everyone already knows where its way is» [8]. This thesis practically repeats the idea of ontological identity expressed by Bistami.

In this regard, it is important to underline the terminological subtleties of Bistami's text. So, it is worthy to notice how does Bistami use the Qur'anic term «the Arsh». The Arabic words *kursi* and *arsh* are synonymous and refer to «the throne». However, Bistami's concept the «*the Arsh*» means rather fine line between Being and Otherness (between the higher and lower reality) than the «place» where the Absolute dwells. *The Arsh* acts as the image of the finest thing that, being the boundary between realities, in the same time is accessible to the human mind. «The finest boundary» is equal to the «One Reality», which thesis also shows the influence of Neoplatonism upon the conception of Islamic mysticism.

Another author, Luma'a, ascribes to Bistami the following statement: «As soon as I reached the Oneness with Him, I have become a bird with the body of Unity and wings of Eternity. I continued flying in the area of Quality, until have reached the area that was a million times greater. I found myself in the field of Eternity and have seen the Tree of Unity» [19, p. 75]. This passage also makes possible a conclusion about affinity between tradition of Neo-Platonism and Islamic mysticism. Qualities, according to Plotinus, refer to the lower level of reality that determines the existence of the material world. Above the realm of Quality Bistami places the sphere of Eternity, similar to the space that Plotinus reserved for demiurge. The tree is a distinctive symbol in the Neoplatonic mysticism: existing as a unified entity, Being branches out different forms. [15, p. 271]

The Tree of Unity is also present in the Gnostic teachings, for example, of Basilides of Egypt. However, the Gnostics give another interpretation to this metaphor. Besides the embodiment of «the Soul of all souls», a tree represents the descent of Sophia *aeon*, the Wisdom plucked out of *pleroma*, «the fullness of plurality». [15, p.1 28] According to Valentin the Gnostic, Sofia plays the role of mediator between the material world and pleroma. [17, p. 419] Just as Valentine and Basilides do, Bistami describes human, who «reached the Tree» and has become a part of it. And only having felt himself a part of a higher unity, Bistami had begun preaching his teachings and considering himself a mediator between Being and Otherness.

Mentioned similarity of Bistami's and the Gnostics' ideas, is not single. In Islamic theology the thinker is a best known thanking to the thesis «I am God», for which he was repeatedly condemned by both the orthodox and Sufi theologians. [14, p. 237] In the opinion of Abu Yazid Bistami, the amalgamation with the Absolute means rather the totality of divine being, its «omnipresence», than just the unity of the lower and higher realities. According to the Gnostics (in particular, the teaching of Basilides), a teacher, a mentor, embodies the emanations of mind, faith, wisdom and etc. aeons. As a result of spiritual practices mentor has reached a unity with these aeons and had become their bearer in the material world. Bistami believes that he became a preacher, having joined the Tree of Unity, i. e. he became the bearer of sacred knowledge, having appeared a part of it. The bearer of sacred entity, who achieved being «beyond the categories», has been endowed with the qualities of the Absolute. To illustrate this point, Luma'a gives the following dialogue: «He [Bistami. – *N. A.*] was once asked, «Tell us about your day and night». And he said, «I have no day and no night, because day and night exist for those who have the features of creation. I threw myself away just as a snake throws off its skin» [10, p. 580]. Joining the Absolute leads to the «depersonalization» of a sage. Communion with the Absolute, which is the key idea of Bistami philosophical doctrine, is called «*fanah*». Later, meditation on this term formed the basis for doctrines of many Sufi orders. And the meaning of the term has being changed essentially.

In Bistami's teaching, *fanah* is a denotation of self-cognition and, as a consequence, the cognition of God. As an example, the text of ibn-Muāz, quoting remarks attributed to Abu Yazid Bistami: «I cognized God through God, and what is other than God, I have cognized with the help of His Light» [6, p. 282]. This thesis expresses ontological conception of Sufism in the most complete way. God appears to be an absolute reality, cognition of which is available only by means of absolute knowledge.

Completeness of knowledge of the higher reality is accessible only to those who took the position of the Absolute and have achieved unity with God. All the criteria of rational thinking, in terms of the Sufis, are irrelevant: they are regarded as an extra burden which is useless in a state of *fanah*. But if God is a sum of all entities, then the question arises, what did Bistami mean under the notion of «what is other than God»? Apparently, this definition refers to empirical projection of the Absolute. In this sense, parallel with Plato's metaphor of the cave seems to be appropriate. Cave Dweller is able to realize all the gravity of his living among the shadows, only being blinded with the splendor of Truth. The circle of concepts, which, according to Abu Yazid, as age applies to cognition of God, can be converted into language for description of empirical reality. However, the reverse process is impossible: the notions of empirical descriptions are inappropriate for the knowledge of God.

In the process of cognition of God worldly things (*zuhd*) turn into a serious obstacle. Thus, while in the later Sufi tradition (for example, in Ibn-Arabi's doctrine), *zuhd* is used for description of worldly attachments, material needs or the abandonment of laws for the sake of pleasure [1, p. 105], in the early Sufism we can see a different situation. According to Bistami, *zuhd* is neither a non-material component of being or thought of it, nor a «trap», prepared for a sage by empirical reality. This is non-identity, «watershed» between subject and object of thought founding the «facility of judgment», and as a result, the removal from the Absolute (as the Absolute is outside of categorical thinking).

In the case when the world is regarded in terms of *zuhd*, the object of knowledge can be God or not-God or, as Bistami defined it, to represent being or non-being. Since nothing but the Divine reality exists, whatever level of being would be focused by consciousness of knower the object of comprehension can be only Allah. The only thing that is available to human as knowing subject is self-affirmation through the rejection of individual being, and, paradoxically, the establishment of «quantifier of (individual) existence» in the state of *fanah*, the Oneness. The following saying of

Bistami confirms our findings: «I became Him, and only after that I have exclaimed, "Subahani-ma, I'm great, I exist!"» [18, p. 64].

Different systems of Vedanta, in which many researchers of Sufism see the basis of Bistami's teachings, oppose the object and the subject of knowledge, supposing that cognizing person saves his «self» all the way to the Absolute. In Vedanta, individual (*pramatrichaitanya*) can cognize the object (*vishayachaitanya*) with the help of four universal categories (*vritti*). [16, p. 434] As a result, the knowledge of reality is modified depending on which of categories-vritti was used. Such kind of demarcation between the knower and the known, established by the doctrine of methodological choice, indicates the divergence of Sufi tradition and Indian backgrounds that were attributed to it.

The idea of identity and harmony-in-God enriches human activity with the absolute sense, leads to reconciliation of a thinkable and a thinking, connects descending and ascending beings as well. Dynamic identity of different is able to regularize the primeval chaos, run the complex mechanism of Plotinus' ontology or form the basis for the Christian idea of a Godman. This identity appeared to be the highest ontological ideal for the Neoplatonists, Gnostics and, subsequently, the Sufis.

Regarding the main results of our study, we can make some *conclusions*. A detailed analysis of the conception demonstrates that thetraditional thesis of the Indian origin of Bistami's doctrine appeared to be unsound. In the religious and philosophical doctrine of Bistami one can found obvious traces of Neoplatonic and Gnostic influence. Our thesis about Gnostic character of Abu Yazid's teachings is supported primarily by the concept of the *Unity of Being*. In Vedanta, the unity of existence implies the saving of personal qualities of an individual, which is contrary to the principle of *fanah*, formulated by Bistami.

In addition, it is necessary to emphasize the apartness of Bistami's conception of the later Sufi currents. The philosophical conception of Abu Yazid became a basis for most of the mystical branch of Islam. In the same time, its specific terminology expressed in the terms of *zuhd* and *fanah*, peculiarities of ontology as well as interpretation of dialogue between an individual and the Absolute, make Bistami's doctrine an unique example of religious and philosophical thought of the Middle East.

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Тягло А. В.
Харьковский национальный университет внутренних дел

НА ПУТИ К ЛЕГИТИМАЦИИ ЮРИДИЧЕСКОЙ ЛОГИКИ

В статье разносторонне проанализированы вопросы существования и особенностей юридической логики. Аргументировано, что юридическая логика существует, во-первых, *in re* – как особый строй правильных рассуждений в поле права, устоявшийся в неких временных или культурных границах; во-вторых, *post rem* – как часть современной науки логики, ближайшим образом «полуформальной», которая исследует этот особый строй и учит, как его воплощать, то есть сознательно строить юридически правильные рассуждения, избегать ошибок или критиковать их. Утверждение ценности человека и законности в современном цивилизованном мире порождает нормы правильности юридических рассуждений, отличные от норм традиционной формальной логики, соответствующей «математической модели».

Ключевые слова: юридическая логика, юридические рассуждения, нормы правильности рассуждений, полуформальная логика.

У статті різнобічно проаналізовані питання існування і особливостей юридичної логіки. Аргументовано, що юридична логіка існує, по-перше, *in re* – як особливий устрій правильних міркувань у полі права, усталений у певних часових чи культурних межах; по-друге, *post rem* – як частина сучасної науки логіки, найближчим чином «напівформальної», що досліджує даний особливий устрій і вчить, як його утілювати, тобто свідомо будувати юридично правильні міркування, уникати помилок чи критикувати їх. Утвердження цінності людини і законності в сучасному цивілізованому світі породжує норми правильності юридичних міркувань, відмінні від норм традиційної формальної логіки, суголосної «математичній моделі».

Ключові слова: юридична логіка, юридичні міркування, норми правильності міркувань, напівформальна логіка.

Issues of existence and specificity of juridical logic are analyzed from different sides in this paper. It is argued, that juridical logic exists, firstly, *in re* – as special order of correct reasoning in field of law stable in some temporal or cultural frames; secondly, *post rem* – as a part of nowadays science of logic, directly «semi-formal», which studies the special order and teaches by what way to implement this one, i. e. deliberatively construct legally correct reasoning, avoid or criticize fallacies. Adoption of values of human being and law in today civilized world generates some norms of correctness of juridical reasoning, which differ from norms of the traditional formal logic coherent to the «mathematical model».

Key words: juridical logic, juridical reasoning, norms of correctness of reasoning, semi-formal logic.