

THE IDEA OF ENERGY IN THE MOSCOW SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN NEOPLATONISM

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The philosophical process in Russia in the beginning of the 20th century was characterized by great intensity and accelerated development. This fact brings forth the problem of structuring this process into different currents, trends and schools. It is a large historicophilosophical problem studied only superficially so far and having no generally accepted solution. It is undisputable, however, that the core of the process is provided by the famous Russian Religious-philosophical Renaissance and the philosophy of the latter has the metaphysics of All-Unity founded by Vladimir Soloviev as its main part. We maintain that at the last stage of the metaphysics of All-Unity, just in the years preceding its violent end in Russia, a new philosophical current has been formed which we propose to call the "Moscow School of Christian Neoplatonism". We base our conclusion not on the consideration of some new authors or works, but on the analysis of texts published (though only recently and little studied so far) made from a new point of view which puts into centre the relation of essence and energy, the key relation for the Eastern-Christian discourse.

In its basic features, Soloviev's philosophy of All-Unity belongs in the classical tradition of European metaphysics bordering more closely the systems of the German idealism. It inherited from this tradition the essentialist discourse which shows up clearly in all its basic concepts, the doctrine of God as the Absolute Being, the concept of positive All-Unity and the mythologem of Sophia. As for the category of energy, it was virtually absent from this philosophy as well as from the first sophiological systems following it, those by Florensky in "The Pillar and Foundation of Truth" and Bulgakov in "The Philosophy of Economy". On this stage, Russian theories of All-Unity were basically those of the traditional Christian-platonic type, with no new elements of considerable importance.

The advancement to a new stage has been provoked by the conflict on the Name-Worship (Imyaslavie, Onomatodoxia) among Russian monks of the mount Athos (and later in other places as well), in 1911-13. As distinct from the European philosophical discourse, the Eastern-Orthodox ascetic tradition (the hesychasm), having its centre at Athos, was always based on energetic ideas and intuitions; in particular, the mystical ideal (telos) of the ascetic way, the Deification, has always been apprehended intuitively as the energetic union of man and God. This energetic view of Deification and communication with God, rooted in the hesychast practice, has eventually resulted in the theological teaching on Divine energies which has been developed by St. Gregory Palamas in the 14th century. From 1912 on, Muscovite philosophers of All-Unity grouped around the publishing house "Put'" and the Novoselov religious-philosophical circle start studying the Name-Worship problem and their ever-present veneration of and interest in the Orthodox mystico-ascetic spirituality become more focussed and profound. Most of them, including Florensky, Bulgakov, Ern, Novoselov, turn into active advocates of the Name-Worship teaching and come to the conclusion that the metaphysics of All-Unity should be complemented with the palamitic concept of Divine energy and, after being modified in this way, it will be able to provide the philosophical base for this teaching.

Such a modification of the metaphysics of All-Unity turned out to be a substantial and intricate problem. Three authors – Florensky, Bulgakov, Losev – have presented detailed solutions to it (developed independently of each other and mostly in the postrevolutionary period); Ern’s work, which was started by him most actively, has been broken off by his untimely death in 1917. All the approaches by the Muscovite philosophers share the same basic ontological structure, the platonic ontology of All-Unity complemented by the concept of Divine energy. This transformation represents a complete parallel to the transformation of the classical Platonism into Neoplatonism performed by Plotinus who complemented in the same way the essentialist ontology by Plato with the Aristotelian notion of energy. Hence the conclusion follows that the **Muscovite philosophers trying to present the philosophical apology of the Name-Worship have performed the transition from Christian platonism to Christian neoplatonism in the framework of the metaphysics of All-Unity**. This conclusion is almost obvious and can easily be supported by many other arguments.

In a substantial complex of philosophical constructions which we are going to discuss, the elaborations by Florensky should certainly be put in the first place. They are most independent and far-reaching, and very often the influence of Florensky’s ideas can be traced down in the other authors. In what follows we describe briefly all the three approaches presented.

In “concrete metaphysics” by Father Pavel, the problem of energy is the key to all his theories. In a more systematic way, it is treated in the Chapter “Name-Worship as a philosophical Presupposition” of the work “By the Watersheds of Thought”, which chapter has been written in the autumn of 1922. Here not only a certain treatment of energy is offered, but also a whole energistic world-view is outlined. Being the first to introduce the notion of energy, Aristotle immediately accentuated the basic role of the relation of energy to essence; and ever after, any concept of energy started inevitably from this relation, shaping it in some concrete way. Florensky states that this relation is an “all-humane presupposition” or fundamental principle of world-view, and points out the main stages in the development of this principle: “The connection of essence with its energy ... is meant by any living kind of thought, in all epoques and nations it has been the ground of the world-view. It has been expressed in the philosophical and discursive way by the idealism of Ancient Greece and then neoplatonism, later on it has been anticipated by medieval realism and stated most profoundly by the Eastern Church in the 14th c., owing to the theological dispute on the Light of Thabor; still later it nourished Goethe, took vague shape in Mach and finally in our days bursted in a burning protest against philosophical and theological illusionism and subjectivism in the Athonite dispute on the Name of God”¹.

What we have here is a fine specimen of Florensky’s way of exposing his ideas: making a list of most heterogeneous phenomena, he states their essential identity and, having constructed a definite line in this way, opposes it to some other line constructed – or concocted – in the same way. In our case, all the line, accepting the connection of

¹ P.A.Florenskii. U vodorazdelov mysli. Works in 2 vols, v.2. Moscow 1990.P.281.

essence with energy, is given the name of Name-Worship and associated with all positive values. Contrary to it, all the views and teachings ignoring this connection are necessarily imbued with “illusionism and subjectivism” and collected into the opposite line given the name of “Name-Fighting” (Imyaborchestvo, Onomatoclasm). With this, all the diversity of the types of world-view and all the evolution of the world thought is represented as a perennial conflict of the two lines or the fundamental opposition

NAME-WORSHIP – NAME-FIGHTING.

Here the Name-Worship emerges in the role of the most general and vitally needful ontological attitude: “It is necessary for everyone in one’s basic attitude to the world to take sides with the Name-Worship or against it... The task of the Name-Worship is... to voice out a primordial human attitude, without which the man is not the man”². This eccentric scheme, claiming a local dispute in a very unphilosophic milieu to be a key event in the world philosophical development, is perfectly logical, nevertheless. On the preceding stage of his work (in the “Meaning of the Idealism”, in the first place) Florensky put forward another dichotomic scheme, where all the philosophical positions were divided in accordance with the fundamental opposition Plato – Kant and the philosophical process was represented as a perennial conflict of the platonic and kantian lines. Quite clearly, the new dichotomy is a direct continuation of the old one and all the progress is basically the appearance of the energy in the role of a new central concept, alongside the essence. The initial platonism did not include this concept, but the neoplatonism included it, and exactly in the role described. Starting with the “Enneads”, energy and essence arise as two dominating notions in the neoplatonic discourse, equal in status and inseparably connected: each essence is provided with energy, energetic (cf. Enn.II 5,3,4; 5,3,5), while each energy is essential, it actualises a certain essence (cf. Enn. II 5,2,3; 5,2,4). It is this reciprocal connection that Florensky means by his “all-human presupposition” and in his new historicophilosophical scheme the Name-Worship means actually the neoplatonism, both phenomena being for him philosophically identical (just as in the “Meaning of the Idealism” he identifies philosophy of Christianity and platonism).

Father Pavel does not put forward a new concept of energy, assuming its traditional neoplatonic treatment³; but he develops certain implications of this concept, aimed directly to the substantiation of the program formula of the Name-worshippers: *The Name of God is God Himself*. First of all, he revises his concept of the symbol, inserting energetic contents into it. As a result, this central concept of his thought (conceived formerly in a rather traditional way, close to the theories of Schelling and Vyacheslav Ivanov) changes very noticeably, taking the form of *energetic symbol*. The union of phenomenal and noumenal sides which constitutes a symbol is now conceived as the union of energies of the two essences, those of the phenomenon and noumenon. What is important, for this energetic union Florensky uses the Orthodox theological notion of *synergy*, defined by him as the “interpenetration and intersprouting of energies, their common action... in which there is already neither one or other energy existing separately, but there is something new”⁴. Assuming, moreover, that the

² Ib.Pp.282,283.

³ It is easy to find texts, in which Florensky states directly the Plotinian reciprocal connection between the essence and energy. Cf.e.g.: “The action actualises essence and vice versa: for the essence there is a corresponding activity”. P.A.Florenskii. *Ob Imeni Bozhiem // Works in 2 vols., vol.2.P.328.*

⁴ P.A.Florenskii. *Loc.cit. P.285.*

noumenon is higher and ontologically more valuable essence, he comes to the basic definition: “Symbol is such essence, the energy of which, being joined or, more precisely, fused with the energy of some other and more valuable essence, carries the latter in itself”⁵. This definition brings us already close to the achievement of the apologetic task. Since the symbol carries in itself a higher essence, it may take over its name: “Although a symbol has its own name, but it has the full right to be named by the name of that higher essence and in the respect we are interested in, it must be named by this latter”⁶.

After agreeing upon this, only the last step is still to be done: one has to make sure that the uttering of the Name of God is an act of synergy, the union of the created energy and Divine energy. This is achieved by means of the model of the word as an energetic symbol propounded by Florensky. According to him, the word is an “universal instrument” of cognition, while the latter is conceived as a “synergetic process”, in which energies of the cognizing person and cognized reality are joined. And, being an expression of the “synergy of cognition”, which “urges to secure for the cognizant the synergetic revelation of the reality ... the word is already neither one nor the other energy separately, nor they both taken together, but a new double energetic formation”⁷. Finally, according to the general neoplatonic paradigm of stepped structure, in the verbal sphere concentric shells of increasing “noumenal (synergetic, symbolic, etc.) concentration” are identified, going as follows: usual word – name – proper name. Now, the conclusion needed is reached: the Name of God is not just a symbol, like any word; it is the symbol par excellence, and hence it “not only has the full right, but must be named” God.

Thus the main task of Florensky’s energetic constructions is fulfilled – and even with interest: not only the thinker justifies the Name-Worship, but he claims for it the great role of the “all-human presupposition”, fundamental ontological attitude, “without which the man is not the man”. Besides this task, his energetic concepts obtain many other applications, in the religious sphere (metaphysics of the icon and temple, of the Church sacraments, etc.) as well as in the philosophic one: in epistemology (as we have already seen), philosophy of nature (where the concept of the “pneumatosphere”, the Universe built out of energetic symbols, arises naturally), linguistics, esthetics and so on. Doubtless, the spectrum of possible applications is far from being exhausted and this new stage of Florensky’s philosophy offers interesting themes for thought. But it is equally doubtless that in the central (for him) theme of the Name-Worship, the positions of Florensky’s energetism not only are disputable, but definitely unsound, since their firm neoplatonism, based on the Greek ontology of symbolic Being-Cosmos, is far away from the proper context of the theme in question: the context of ascetic anthropology and Christian ontology of personal being.

Being born out of the ascetic experience, the Orthodox theology of energies was always preserving carefully the orientation to this anthropological experience. Hesychast-palamitic energetism is entirely confined to the God—man mystico-ascetic economy: it does not develop any theory on energy in general or natural, cosmic

⁵ Ib. P.287.

⁶ Ib.

⁷ Ib. Pp.289,292.

energies, but it watches very closely the energies of man and articulates theologically the ascetic experience of transforming the whole set of these energies, “energetic projection” of a human person, to the coherence and collaboration with the Divine energy or God’s grace. *It is this coherence of the whole “energetic man” with the Divine energy that is called synergy, in the true Orthodox-ascetic meaning of the concept.* By definition, this concept belongs in the specific sphere of Christian personal intercourse with God, and its constitution takes immanently into account the ontological distance or split between God and the created fallen man’s being. Due to this split, it is not only impossible for the synergy to be always automatically available, but it is equally impossible to achieve it by means of any natural, empiric activity. It demands special anthropological premises, being the fruit of the whole practice of spiritual ascension (praxis noera, umnoye delaniye). Synergy is the energetic union-intercourse of God and man, in which only the man can enter and only by steps of a special grace-guided transformation of his whole energetic projection.

Florensky’s exposition is drastically different. Here synergy is a union of energies of any two essences: in the world of nature, it is physical synergy, the mutual coherence of two physical energies, their resonance; in the extended symbolical Being-Cosmos, it is metaphysical or “cognizant” synergy, present in any cognitive or verbal act. And, in particular, -- no difference between the acts of union of two created energies or a created energy and the Divine one is made! -- the synergy is also present in the Name of God taken separately and independently from any spiritual or anthropological conditions. Such a discourse has simply no chance of meeting the discourse of the ascesis: they proceed in different planes and presume different ontologies. The Orthodox notion of synergy simply does not exist out of the personalistic Christian ontology and within the symbolistic Being-Cosmos of the neoplatonics and Florensky; and his formulas like “resonance is synergy”, “cognition is synergy” or “word is synergy” are theological nonsense, naturalistic substitution of the ascetic and personalistic notion. – Thus, the philosopher’s thought in the new stage preserves its former principal trends and features. Contrary to the anthropological orientation declared for this new stage (the project of creating the “anthropodicy”, characteristic of “concrete metaphysics” as a “philosophical anthropology in Goethe’s vein”, etc.), this thought keeps staunchly its antianthropological character. Just as before, it moves among Christian themes, consistently substituting the anthropological and personalistic Christian discourse with the cosmological and symbolistic one.

The views of the other authors can be now discussed more briefly: in all the themes we consider – energy and essence, word and name, Name-Worship, role of neoplatonic ideas – Florensky picked out all the principal problems and stated all the main theses of the “Moscow school”. It is especially obvious in the case of Losev. In the first half of the twenties, when all the three authors were reflecting intensely on the problems of energy and name, Losev was already laying the foundations of his philosophical system, which was to appear in a few years in the famous cycle of 8 books. Here his own philosophical method is developed, joining the dialectics, phenomenology and symbolism, rather eclectic and scholastic, and very different from Florensky’s method and style. Hence it is all the more noteworthy that Losev’s positions in all the key subjects we discuss almost repeat Florensky; and often the main

ideological accents of the “Moscow school”, the loyalty to the Name-Worship, platonism and neoplatonism, are stressed by Losev in a more radical form. Losev has devoted to studies of the Greek thought and, in the first place, the platonic tradition, much more work than Florensky did; but still the basic conclusions of his interpretation of platonism are entirely in accordance with the views of Florensky in the “Meaning of the Idealism”, sometimes sharpening Florensky’s theses. Cf., e.g.: “Platonism is a teaching on the idea as the revealed image of an object carrying the energy of its essence... Platonism is mystical symbolism... philosophy of ascesis and actual deification”⁸. Even more categorically than Florensky, Losev places platonism, neoplatonism, Orthodoxy and Name-Worship into the same line as expressions of the same world-view and type of spirituality. Next, we find in Losev, as well as in the late Florensky, the basic neoplatonic ontological paradigm, the hierarchy of concentric shells of a united symbolic Being-Cosmos, differing from each other by the degree of the fullness of sense, or presence of the noumenon in phenomenon. Florensky exploits this ontological model most systematically and diversely⁹, but it is Losev who presents its careful reconstruction from the original Greek sources in his book “The Cosmos of ancient Greeks and the modern science” (1927).

The said above makes it inevitable that the energy – essence problem is treated by Losev also in the neoplatonic way. His solution of the problem corresponds completely to the neoplatonic essentialist-energetic discourse, in which energy and essence are the two dominating and mutually connected principles. Ćf., e.g.: “Essence and energy demand mutually each other... Energy of the essence is the essence itself... Energy is mutually determined with the essence”¹⁰. On this basis, in Losev, like in Florensky, an energetic, symbolistic and hierarchical model of word and name arises naturally and inevitably. “A whole hierarchy of energies can be outlined. 1. The sound. 2. The sememe. 3. The noema. 4. The idea”¹¹. In structuring the phenomenal fabric of the word, this scheme is less detailed than the corresponding Florensky model (phoneme – morpheme – sememe), but in the noumenal structure it adds a new level, the noema, which clearly reflects Husserl’s influence.

The Name-Worship principles find easily their expression in this context: “Name signifies the energy of the essence”¹²... The Name of God is the energy of God’s essence”¹³. Still more resolutely than Florensky, Losev states the great universal significance of the Name-Worship: “Onomatodoxy is the basis of positively any religion, since it is the basis of any human life in general”¹⁴. Structuring the word less carefully, Losev comes to formulations, which are sharper and cruder than the theses by Florensky on the magic nature of the word: “Sounds themselves ... are the carriers of the energy of God... God itself is present in them”¹⁵. Extreme character of such

⁸ A.F.Losev. *Filosofiya imeni u Platona* // *Nachala* 1995, ¹1-4.P.213.

⁹ Analysis of applications of this neoplatonic paradigm by Florensky can be found in our book: S.S.Khoruzhii. *Mirosozertsaniye Florenskogo*. Tomsk 1999.

¹⁰ A.F.Losev. *Analiz religioznogo soznaniya* // A.F.Losev. *Imya*. SPb., 1997.P.46.

¹¹ *Ib.* *Zametki bez nazvaniya 1925 g.* // *Nachala* 1995, ¹1-4. P.244.

¹² *Ib.* *Spor ob imenakh v XIV veke i ego otnosheniye k imyaslaviyu* // *Nachala* 1995, ¹1-4.P.228.

¹³ *Ib.* *Tezisy ob Imeni Bozhiem, napravlenyye v 1923 g. o. Pavlu Florenskomu* // *Nachala* 1995, ¹1-4.P.250.

¹⁴ *Ib.* *Veshch i imya* // A.F.Losev. *Imya*. P.178.

¹⁵ *Ib.* *Tezisy ob Imeni Bozhiem...* P.251.

formulas urges then the author to make provisos, recognizing the irreplaceable role of human factors in acts involving the Name of God: “The effectiveness of the Name is always connected with the active and subjective faith of one who names... the activity of a person is involved here”¹⁶. Similarly, it is suggested that the distinction is to be made between an arbitrary act of Name-uttering and the “true” one, in which “human mind is turned to God”, and stated that the arbitrary Name-uttering “is not the force by itself”. Removing the contradiction to the real experience, such provisos at the same time make the philosopher’s position not well-determined and even close to senselessness. They imply immediately that that particular energy of God, which is God’s Name, in the absence of some additional conditions “is not the force by itself” and has no efficiency. But since energy is nothing but actualisation, action, activity, the “energy that is not the force by itself” or “inefficient (i.e. inactive) energy” are senseless formulas – or they just mean the absent, zero energy. The only possible conclusion which one can draw from the recognition of the necessity of “the faith of one who names” consists in leaving the Name-Worship postulates and returning to the well-known Church position: namely, the energy of God is present in the act of the Name-uttering not with a magical or physical necessity, but only in a definite spiritual situation. And the situation in question is none other than synergy, conceived not in the cosmical and naturalistic way, like in Florensky, but in the anthropological meaning and context, like in Ascetic Fathers.

In the period after the Twenties, Losev returns repeatedly to all these themes, avoiding only that of the Name-Worship, which became forbidden and very really dangerous. It will be correct to say that he never left them. In studies of the Greek thought, philosophy of language, theory of symbol his positions developed significantly. But all this long and fruitful work already does not belong to the phenomenon which we discuss now, the “Moscow school of Christian neoplatonism”.

In the vast theological and philosophical system by Father Sergiy Bulgakov, the themes of Christian neoplatonism are found mainly in two parts, the linguistic philosophy (philosophy of the name, developed by him, just as by Florensky and Losev, for the defense of the Name-Worship) and sophianic cosmology (theory of the world Theo-anthropological process as the “reunification of created Sophia with Divine Sophia”). In the first of these two parts, Bulgakov’s theories are not too far from the positions of the other authors of the “Moscow school”, while the second part has no parallels in them, representing a specific element of his system. Another specific element is the lesser presence of philosophical reflection and conceptual articulation. The themes we discuss are usually found in Bulgakov’s texts in a form mixing together scriptural, mythological, liturgical, theological and philosophical discourses. In both parts mentioned, the notion of energy is not analysed and very little used and energetic aspects of the theories developed remain to a large extent implicit.

Nevertheless, Bulgakov’s conceptions of the word, name, language as well as his substantiation of the Name-Worship, in their general ideas belong quite clearly to the sphere of neoplatonic energetism. Like both Losev and Florensky, Bulgakov

¹⁶ Ib. P.252.

accepts the Humboldtian energetic treatment of language, with the famous thesis “the language is *energeia* and not *ergon*”; and he develops a symbolistic model of the word, in which the thesis on the immanent loading of a word with the meaning is enhanced to the extent of “extremal platonism” and “linguistic magism” (as puts it I.B.Rodnyanskaya, the modern publisher of the “Philosophy of the Name”). Bulgakov not only states that “any word means an idea”¹⁷, but accepts highly arbitrary hypotheses on a unique prahistorical Language, for which the real, historical languages serve as its “modes” or “dialects”; on a hidden law describing all the diversity of languages; on “meta-words” or “pra-words”, which are “cosmic symbols or myths”... But it is more important for us to point out that the word in Bulgakov is exactly an energetic symbol, which carries the energy of its expression: not only “the word is the symbol of the meaning, joining of idea and sound”¹⁸, but “words, sounding inside us, utter themselves”¹⁹.

The logic already known to us leads from this symbolistic, energetic-essentialist model of the word to the statements of the Name-Worship. “The Name of God contains Divine energy... the Force of God is present in it, which is inseparable from the Essence of God and is God Himself, in this sense”²⁰. In order to avoid the “fetishism of the Name”, Bulgakov, like Losev, accepts certain anthropological conditions of the effectiveness of calling the Name; the calling should be “praying and ontological” and “for those who wish to experience the action of the Name of God... the wish is needed to utter precisely the Name of God, and not the sounds j-e-s-u-s”²¹. He also insists that such conditions do not involve any psychologism: “the principal moment here is not at all psychological, but ontological... the mystical intention [in which] a living touch of God is performed”²². As a specific element of his theory, these common arguments of the “Moscow school” are complemented by the sophiological interpretation of the Name of God, according to which “Jesus ... is the universal-symbolic name of Divine Sophia”²³.

The second of the main locations of neoplatonic energetism in Bulgakov is also connected with his sophiology. This is his theory of the world and world history as the Theo-anthropological process which is described on the basis of the well-known concept of the “seeding logos” (*logos spermatikos*). This concept was widely used in the late antiquity by stoics, neoplatonics and Church Fathers; but in the system of Bulgakov it is clearly in accordance with the neoplatonic positions. Being of the world is represented here as the process of “sprouting of seeding logoses”, and this process is essentialist, entelechical and theleological (since all the essences-meanings, “all the fullness of verbal seeds of being” are given beforehand, in the creation of the world) and at the same time energetic (since it is performed by “the Divine force acting in the created world” and this force is Divine energy). The energetic nature of this process is of the neoplatonic type, since the energy is here essentialist (the energy actualises the “seeds of being”), while the essence is energetic (as “nothing in the world is conceived

¹⁷ S.N.Bulgakov. *Filosofiya imeni*. M.1999.P.17.

¹⁸ *Ib.*P.37.

¹⁹ *Ib.*P.25.

²⁰ *Ib.*P.171-172.

²¹ *Ib.*P.174.

²² *Ib.*P.172.

²³ *Ib.* P.181.

by itself, devoid of the acting principle”²⁴. Moreover, the representation of the process as the “reunification of created Sophia with Divine Sophia” corresponds evidently to the central ontological paradigm of neoplatonism, the paradigm of the return, epistrophe, with the modification that the purely intellectualistic neoplatonic process of the return of the Soul or Mind to the One is substituted by the holistic Theo-anthropological process.

Now, the positions of the “Moscow school” can be already seen with the sufficient clarity. The core of these positions is a conceptual pattern, reproduced identically in all the three authors: the problem of theologo-philosophical justification of the Name-Worship and, in the first place, the formula “the Name of God is Divine energy”, finds its solution on the basis of the neoplatonic treatment of energy. But this treatment, completely cut off from the anthropological context, does not correspond at all to the conception and role of energy in the Orthodox ascesis, to which the Name-Worship movement belonged, and hence the apologies developed by the Moscow philosophers prove to be unsound. Impersonalist and platonic metaphysics of the Silver Age does not provide an adequate approach to the ascetic experience.

A question arises, however: but how could the theses of the Name-Worship, the ontological basis of which turns out to be inseparable from neoplatonism, be born and supported in the very midst of the ascetic community? The answer is instructive; the origins of the movement have nothing to do, of course, with neoplatonic influence. There are many aspects and elements in the ascesis, which can easily generate a proclivity to diminish man’s own role in the spiritual ascension: the attitude of humility, needed critically on the path of the ascesis; the inaccessible, breath-taking height of the task of the deification; and also the feeling of the “numinous”, pious veneration in front of the sacred... And if this proclivity obtains the maximalist, unreserved expression, the role of man’s action and attitude can be reduced to zero, the synergy will seem to be permanently and automatically achieved in the Name of God as such, and the spiritual ascension will be turned into an impersonal act or event. This is what happened in the Name-Worship of monks. As distinct from the Name-Worship of the philosophers, it is a characteristic fruit of the folk nontheologizing piety: an attempt to express the extreme degree of devoutness and adoration of God in the most direct way, by means of the extreme diminishing, obliteration of the role of man’s action and attitude.

However, such an attempt lacks the “ascesis of mind”, which demands to check soberly any immediate and immoderate impulse. This is exactly the point of “The Report on the Teaching of the Name-Worshippers” presented in 1913 by the Greek theological school on the Halki island. The connection between the theology and ascesis was traditionally more tight and profound in Greece than in Russia. As the Greek monks have written, “this teaching... originates from the living religious feeling and manifests living faith and love, but still it follows rather inspirations of the heart

²⁴ S.N.Bulgakov. *Uteshitel’*. Paris 1936. P.233.

and immediate feeling than those of the mind”²⁵. And hence “this opinion itself, that they [Divine names] are energies of God, is a new invention and empty words”²⁶

The last aspect which should be mentioned is the role of the Moscow school in the development of Russian religious thought. Obviously, its works represent an important progress with respect to essentialist systems of the metaphysics of All-Unity which immediately preceded it. Here Russian thought turned directly to the hesychast experience which constitutes the core of Orthodox spirituality, but never before came into the orbit of philosophy. This experience was not given a proper interpretation, however: Russian thought again achieved only “the truth of questions, but not the truth of answers”, by a popular expression of the Silver Age. This fact has determined the destiny of the School, its historical place. In the period to come, the reconstruction of theology, ontology and anthropology inherent in the hesychasm and Palamism became the central problem in the work of theologians of the Russian diaspora. The detailed and profound work by G.Florovsky, V.Lossky, J. Meyendorff, Bishop Basil (Krivoshein) e.a. provided the basis for the modern stage of the Orthodox thought known as “neo-patristics” and “neo-palamism”. But this work has practically no connection with the Moscow school; in particular, as I tried to demonstrate²⁷, the idea of energy implied by the key patristic and hesychast concept of deification, is different from the original notion by Aristotle as well as from both ancient neoplatonism and Christian neoplatonism of the Muscovites. The profound divergence of the Hellenic and Christian visions of energy not noticed or even guessed by thinkers of the Silver Age is the border which divides the two stages of Russian religious thought. The study of this non-aristotelian energetism implying the Christocentric, personalistic and dialogical ontology is perhaps the most topical problem now.

²⁵ Otzyv Khalkinskoi bogoslovskoi shkoly ob uchenii “imeslavitsev” // Nachala 1995, ¹ 1-4. P.270.

²⁶ Ib. P.272.

²⁷ See, e.g. S.S. Horujy. On the Old and the New. St.Petersburg.2000.