

# HESYCHASM IN THE PRACTICE OF ONTOLOGIZATION OF THE ECONOMY

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**Abstract.** The problem of sophisticated ontologization of the economy based on the practices of hesychasm is revealed. Basing on key problems of S. Bulgakov's philosophy and Russian traditions of religious philosophy, this is the problem of the place of the human in the world, and his role in the destiny of human being. Noting the singularity of Bulgakov's anthropology focuses on the ability of being. The paper denotes distinguishes between the ability to be (human ontology) and the ability of to be (human phenomenology).

**Keywords:** hesychasm, ontologization of the economy, philosophy of the economy, mystical practice.

**INTRODUCTION.** The demise of Communism brought with it a moral and political vacuum, and an extreme form of market capitalism has come to that vivid. Russia today itself wrestling with the same questions it faced in the Russian Empire's national days: how can

the blessings of economic development and modernization be attained while at the same time avoiding the sins of materialism and excess? This problem examines the Christian economics of Russian Orthodox theologian Sergei Bulgakov, which we argue provides an alternative understanding of the economic process to the materialism of both capitalism and Marxism. Bulgakov believed that both aptly described the fallen situation of humanity, and felt that they failed to grasp that Christianity could provide the freedom of the individual to transcend material nature and bring it back into communion with God through participation in Sophia.

The primary argument for the necessity of a theological economics comes from within Christian theology. Orthodox Christian theology claims that God has created the world, providentially sustains it, through Christ has redeemed it, and will finally judge and destroy evil, and these claims confront the claims of individuals and academic disciplines to autonomy and finality. Any other type of argument for the primacy of theology, apart from one arising from within theology, would undercut itself. It is not claimed that this argument is acceptable to all economists (is there any argument?) but tension between this claim of primacy of theology and the practices of economists and the discipline of economics is precisely what is predicted by theology, in particular the teaching that we live in a world is characterized by rebellion against God. This type of argument from revealed truth is currently inadmissible in academic economic discourse, and it is worth briefly exploring why at this point. For many economists the objection to the claims of Christian theology is that they are not verifiable, or that they are not falsifiable. Falsifiability, at least in principle, of economic propositions has been particularly important in the 20<sup>th</sup> century methodological debates within economics and if contemporary economists were asked to state their methodological beliefs the most common answer would probably be some version of falsificationism together with some remarks about the futility of methodological discussion.

If there is economic analysis implicit in theology, as well as theological in economic theory this strengthens the case for fruitful links between theology and economics, and the admissibility of economic arguments in theology and

theological arguments in economics. Is there economic analysis in theology? This is not the question of whether economic policy can be derived from scripture, but rather the question of economic analysis which is part of scripture itself. Neither is it the question of the extent to which the tools of economic analysis are helpful in understanding scripture, in the same way as anthropological and sociological tools have been used by writers like Gottwald (1979), Oakman (1991), Theissen (1992), Meeks (1993), Judge (1960) and Esler (1992)<sup>12</sup> What I mean by economic analysis in theology is things like the economics of the year of the Jubilee in the book of Deuteronomy, the economics of the departure of the Hebrew people from Egypt and their subsequent settlement in Palestine, the economics of Palestine in the time of Jesus that lies behind the critique of that society in the Gospels, the structure of the eschatological economy presented in the book of Revelation. It is of course controversial what does and does not qualify as economic analysis, but it is my contention that the analysis in the scriptural documents is substantial and coherent enough to qualify as economic analysis. The work of the late Barry Gordon (1989) stands out in this area.

**METHODOLOGY.** In the Eastern Orthodox and in the teaching of the Church Fathers which undergirds the theology of those Churches, economy or oeconomy (from Greek *οικονόμια*, *oikonomia*) has several meanings. The basic meaning of the word is “handling” or “disposition” or “management” of a thing, usually assuming or implying good or prudent handling (as opposed to poor handling) of the matter at hand. As such, the word “*oikonomia*”, and the concept of touching to it, are utilized especially with regard to two types of “handling”: (a) divine *oikonomia*, that is, God’s “handling” or “management” of the fallen state of the world and of mankind — the arrangements he made in order to bring about man’s salvation after the fall; and (b) what might be termed pastoral *oikonomia* (or ecclesiastical *oikonomia*, that is, the Church’s “handling” or “management” of various pastoral and disciplinary questions, problems, and issues that have arisen through the centuries of Church history.

Bulgakov considered economy as life, life as economy. Researchers of philosophy of economy, the followers of the great philosopher, considered economy as a complex structured multi-factorial establishment, where, apart from the economic component, there are psychological, social, value, and institutional factors. A special place was given to the analysis of the spirit of the property, which is understood as a set of mental and spiritual qualities of a person and their functions. Now many of Bulgakov's ideas, which seemed subjective, unrealistic, take a completely different content and meaning.

**RESULTS.** Hesychasm in this context is understood the heart of mystical practice and ontologization of the economy. There is an imperishable treasure deep inside the human soul – god's gift of endless joy of the eternal life. This gift is hidden in the heart — the center of our spiritual life. The spiritual heart of a person turned to the external is closed – it is sleeping, waiting to be awakened and calling a person to turn inside himself into the quest for and discovery of the divine essence. The response to this call initiates our mystical journey to comprehension of ourselves and finding ourselves in god. There is a teaching and practice in the Orthodox Christian tradition intended for our self-comprehension and for uniting us with god. It is called hesychasm. *Hesychasm* (from Greek word *hesychia* – silence, peace, quietness) – teaching and practice aimed at the acquisition of the holy spirit and deification of human soul and body. The ultimate goal of hesychasm is human transfiguration and theosis after the likeness of the risen Christ.

Hesychasm brings a powerful inspiration for human creativity and grants it deep and prophetic meaning. The masterpieces of the Christian art such as the divine hymns of St. Symeon the theologian, the icon of the trinity by St. Andrey Rublev, and many others, were a result of partaking in the divine life through a practice of hesychasm. Unfolded in time and space, hesychasm has a rich history reflecting a meta-historical process of the formation of the church. A 7<sup>th</sup> century orthodox saint and mystic St. Isaak of Syria said that silence is a mystery of the age

to come. Hesychasm is opened to the eternity and even in this age it allows us to partake in the sacrament of the divine silence.

**CONCLUSIONS.** *Hesychasm* as a “meta – organic system” is defined as a personal act of a zealot and tradition come together in the historical chain of ascetic practices such ascetics. This tradition is caused by external ascetic solitude contributing to inner silence – the purity of heart and mind of thoughts, which is necessary for prayerful communion with God, thinking about him. On the other hand rest means and as an end result of ascetic struggle, as the goal toward which the ascetic. Isichasm inherent psycho-somatic method of mental prayer, where every breath ascetic connects continual remembrance of God as the Jesus Prayer. In view of the unity of body and soul in our human nature to the creation of the Jesus Prayer, combined with the discipline of breath, to this repetition was really constant, it is, and was associated with a constant element of psychosomatic whole person – breathing. Hesychasm is treated the same as the teaching practice of acquiring the Holy Spirit, this work is done silently and wordlessly mind in the depths of the human soul and leads to the purification of the soul for the perception of divine grace, leading to deification. Visible sign of deification is the same vision of the light of the Tabor. This contemplation of uncreated light is inseparable from the ascetic making and reaches its peak in prayerful meditation. It involves a return of the mind (*νοῦς*) to its original purity and enlightenment of his Holy Spirit. This mystical concept includes aspirations of all people all his energies to God, loving Him with all our heart, soul and everything in thought, cleared of all extraneous thoughts the mind and heart to be kept by or for the oscillation of thoughts.

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