

Psychological Aspects of Unification Thought

Pavel Gurevich

Until recently Russian scientists only knew about the theology of the Unification Church. The printed work revealed the philosophical foundation of the Movement and appeared to be a prominent event in the intellectual life of modern times. Now at least it became possible to combine our efforts and discuss together many philosophical, psychological and religious problems.

In the fundamental and quite up to date work "Essentials of Unification Thought" there is not a single part that touches psychological issues, though the problems that create a paramount interest in the global science of modern psychology have been approached from many different angles. It concerns the following subjects: the modern concept of the world in the light of natural sciences in transpersonal psychology; psychology within the system of humanities; personal perfection; value as the concept of social psychology; the theory of personal growth and many other questions.

For the general research of the above-mentioned subjects it is very important to take into consideration the dual characteristics of *Sung sang* and *Hyung sang*, and *Yang sung* and *Eum sung*, as well as the interpretation of the term "individual image."

Psychologists and philosophers of different ages reflected on how our universe came into being. They wanted to clarify if the world we live in is the result of mechanical processes developing in inanimate, inert but able to react matter? Also they did their best to understand who guided the development of the creation and the universe: Was it God or some Supreme Cosmic Intellect? Finally, they were in doubt as to how to explain material reality: only by the working of natural laws or by the acting of powers and principles beyond any possible explanation?

In this model of the universe created by Newton, life, conscience, people and creative abilities were considered secondary products developed out of the inscrutable accumulation of matter. According to this system, people are just simple material objects. Certainly, they are more developed than animals or biological robots with the ability to think. Nevertheless, they are products of evolution with great potential.

According to this system, our possibilities do not go beyond the limits of our skin. At the same time, our conscience is the product of our thinking organ, that is, of our brain. On the cosmic level, life, conscience and intellect are casual and late guests. They are almost meaningless in the general picture of the world. These three aspects of existence came to appear on the tiniest particle of the limitless cosmos as the result of a billion years of evolution. Life sprang up through some casual chemical processes in the depth of the primeval ocean, the processes that bound together atoms and non-organic molecules into complicated organic structures.

Further, in the process of evolution this organic matter obtained the ability of self-preservation, self-reproduction together with forming cell sequences. Unicellular organisms accumulated, each time making objects consisting of numerous cells of various forms and, as the result, created many species destined to live on the earth, including *Homo sapiens*.

Scientists and philosophers insisted that it was in the later stages of evolution when the conscience came into being as the result of complicated physiological processes in the central nervous system. It is the resultant product of brain activity located within the cranium. From this perspective, conscience and intellect are functions characteristic of a human being and highly organized animals. They cannot exist independently, not connected to biological systems. Through such an understanding of the reality, allowance of the human psyche is limited by the information a human being has gathered from the outer world, beginning from the moment of birth, through his sense organs.

Within the last three centuries, in Western science there has developed a picture of the world created by Newton and Descartes. The name of the system appeared by the initiative of the American scientists Stanislav Grof and Ken Wilber (the latter was mentioned in the bibliography to "Essentials of Unification Thought"), the system of thought was founded on the works of the English natural scientist Isaac Newton and the French philosopher Rene Descartes. Developing this model, physics as a science progressed amazingly and gained respect among other scientific subjects. Mathematical support, high-level efficiency in solving problems, unquestionable practical results made it the model for all sciences. The ability to connect basic discoveries to the basic model of the universe created by Newton became an important criterion of scientific acknowledgment in more obscure and less developed realms such as biology, medicine, psychology, psychiatry, anthropology and sociology. Of course, originally this method generally

influenced science in a very positive way, but gradually the mechanical picture of the world became inconsistent.

The main shift in thinking characteristic of the last century made a complete revaluation in the understanding of the reality of the physical world. Before the introduction of Einstein's Theory of Relativity and quantum physics, scientists insisted that the universe consisted of dense matter. They supposed that atoms made the foundation of the material universe. They imagined them solid and indissoluble. These atoms existed in three-dimensional space and moved according to certain laws, and thus, matter underwent the process of evolution in a definite direction, moving from the past through the present toward the future

So, now we have the universe not in the form of the accumulation of objects, as Newton insisted. On the contrary, we see it as a limitless complicated system of vibrating phenomena. The vibrating systems are possessed of such characteristics and possibilities that Newton's science couldn't even dream of.

Traditional science supposed that organic matter and life originated from chemical bottom matter in the depth of the primeval ocean only by the casual interaction of atoms and molecules. In the same way it was claimed that the matter organized itself into living cells, and the cells into complicated multi-cellular organisms that came to possess a central nervous system only by casual coincidence and in the process of natural selection. Together with this concept there appeared the idea that the conscience was a secondary product of the material process inside the brain, and this idea became one of the basic metaphysical dogmas of the modern outlook.

To illustrate the inconsistency of such theories, Grof used the following comparison: Imagine some wasteland covered with all sorts of debris, including pieces of iron, paper, etc. All of a sudden there comes a hurricane. It lifts into the air the mentioned objects. After the hurricane calms down, we find on the plain a Boeing-747. The strong wind worked so efficiently that it managed to put together waste objects so well.

Ken Wilber, whose ideas have much in common with "Essentials of Unification Thought," is today one of the most prominent representatives of the transpersonal psychology that appeared more than 40 years ago. His integral approach is directed to unify practically all subjects of knowledge, including physics and biology, theories of systems and theories of chaos as well as art, poetry and aesthetics, the experiences of all important schools and trends of anthropology, psychology and psychiatry, the great spiritual and religious traditions of East and West. The

intellectual and spiritual thinking developed by Wilber is doubtless connected to Unification Thought. It offers new possibilities for binding together and unifying different scientific projects.

In "Essentials of Unification Thought" we find the psychological explanation of two conscience modes, two approaches concerning values and outlook – the hylotropical (or materialistic) and the holotropical (or spiritual). The hylotropical mode represents the idea of the world as a material, physical reality with clearly defined, real objects and limited possibility of their perception. The holotropical conscience is quite different. It represents a certain field of conscience, an integral spiritual continuum beyond limits of time and space.

Underlining the difference between the mentioned modes of conscience, Unification Thought is not trying to represent them as competing modes; instead it shows their duality and productive interaction. The holotropical mode becomes analogous of sacral insight and transpersonal - analogous of prophetic insight or revelation.

Within the last few decades modern psychology and science made a set of discoveries that completely changed the previous scientific picture of the world. But basic statements concerning this we find in the Unification philosophy.

It might seem paradoxical, but namely psychology in its modern version opens possibilities to create a picture of the world that will cast away the traditional controversies between materialism and idealism. Diverse and numerous are the connections between philosophy and psychology. Originally appearing as a part of philosophy, psychology has always gravitated toward metaphysics. The evidence is that many prominent philosophers, including Nietzsche, Jaspers, and Heidegger, created and developed their own versions of psychological knowledge, range and special features of this science. The history of social thought was marked by desperate quest of separate status for psychology, finding differences of its methods from the methods of general philosophy.

In the 19th century, in the process of its development, psychology obtained the status of an independent science. Its progress was successful. But it made the mistake of not accepting philosophical methods of thought and rejecting metaphysical subjects. That is why in modern times there appeared a tendency of further rapprochement between philosophy and psychology. Philosophical anthropology contains some essential features characterizing a human being as a unique earthly creation, possessing intellect and a sense of values. Furthermore, the human being is socialized. The human being is constantly developing. Within him the dramatic fight between

conscience and the unconscious aspect is expanding. Sociability is one of his characteristics. He is high above the realm of nature.

But none of the above-mentioned features reflects the completeness of a human being. It is difficult to point out a human feature (physical form, intellect, etc.) that could fully express the originality of a man. Hence, it's possible that the originality of a human being is in no way connected to the human nature. It just reflects in a non-standard behavior of his existence.

The mystery of a human being is to be clarified through natural explanations. But at the same time there arises a paradoxical view on the problem. A human being seems to contain nothing unique; the outline of all his "special qualities" can be found in the animal world. Nevertheless, it is more than just a set of certain qualities. A human being represents something principally different. A great number of well-supported options support the idea about the mysterious character of a human being.

Human nature is known by its diversity and changeability. It seems we could point out one really unique feature of the human character: incompleteness in the state of a created object. Unlike other living creatures he has the ability to overcome limitations of his class, be a part of the living world and at the same time be above it. This is a really wonderful and essential characteristic of a human being that makes him unique.

A human being is created incomplete. He is both creating history and himself. He is always changing his nature. He does not only reproduce the same things needed for his class to survive: He is apt to create new values and to re-create his realm of culture. All this makes an impact on his image. ...

There are no psychological revelations that could fully explain the nature of a human being. Human nature is incomplete or fragmented. It seeks completeness whose end, in comparison to all other universal sources of human aspect, is to supply the foundation for human existence and lead humanity to perfection.

Thus, human nature presents an incomplete possibility revealed in numerous variations of unusual and specific existence. Life is a kind of adventurous self-development. Its incompleteness shows as a favorable feature, defects become merits, and good becomes evil. I would classify these ideas as a foundation for a possible approach to solving the problem of incompleteness of a human being. The German philosophers of the last century Max Schaeffer and Helmut Plessner made this discovery.

The problem of human completeness or perfection is defined by the term "human existence." The word "existence" has always had a meaning of ordinariness. But as a philosophical category it does not mean just surviving. On the contrary, existence is presence.

Recently in our country one can see a definite and original tendency. Many sciences accept the notion of "existence" as everyday life. They write about the social, cultural and civilized existence of people. In reality it goes about general living conditions and social aspect.

But in the history of psychology the problem of existence obtains quite a different meaning. The point is that present conditions of human life are considered secondary. An individual "is caught" in not typical but critical or, as the philosophers describe it, in crucial situations.

Existence is defined as human liberation, the mightiest concentration of all human abilities. Our compatriot scientist Bibikhin in his work "Why Existence Exists" writes: "Twice a year migratory birds suffer strain to the breaking point of their biological abilities when they fly thousands of kilometers. Thanks to his uniqueness, a human being can even in modern times live his whole life till the death hour never experiencing the limits of his biological abilities (without mentioning his spiritual abilities), never knowing what 'critical exertion' ever means."

Don't you think that modern humanity is on the verge of becoming extinct? Considering the term "existence," we do not talk about general life conditions. In extreme situations a man cannot but feel strained, and he mobilizes all his inner resources. Imagine a man dying. He is almost helpless. Biologically he is practically a corpse. He has lost his ability to experience life. One more example: A man on his deathbed deeply feels he is abandoned and neglected. Feeling his excruciating lot, he comes to suffer beyond measures.

Thus wrote Leo Tolstoy describing the death of Ivan Ilyich in his novel.

To be human in the true sense is that toward which we are striving; it is a certain ideal that attracts us; it is the utmost, critical tension upon our existence in both the spiritual sense and likewise in the circumstances of our life; it is the fullness of self-discovery. The Russian philosophers assessed the problem of human existence in just such a way, in their attempt to penetrate the mystery of human existence. Prior to the romantic era, the human being was basically regarded as a natural and social creation. Accordingly, in each age man's existence has been contemplated in those concrete forms passed down as the historical legacy.

Behold the peasant farmer, whose calling is to provide bread; behold the aristocrat, who pursues a worldly lifestyle; behold the monk, who dedicates himself in service to God. In this

sense human existence was identified with that which one would attribute to a human being in the social realm. For the individual was, after all, tightly bound to the historical role assigned to him.

With the help of the imagination, a person can easily project himself into another cultural world, moreover, a world which he himself creates with his imagination. Altogether denying reality, the romantic ventures into uncharted realms of his own self. Transforming reality, he attains something unique and independent within himself, belonging to him alone like a living creation.

According to the romantic concept, only the human being is capable of discovering the limitless worlds within him. The romantic consciousness, in addition to reawakening the idea of unique and original individuality, opened a fundamentally new vista of the wealth and inexhaustibility of the individual's personal world. The image of man in romanticism was burdened with continual and intense anguish over the human state of incompleteness and imperfection. It is for such a reason that the romantics frequently employ such motifs as "worldly anguish" and the tragic nature of existence.

Most assuredly the quest for the ideal private inner world was accompanied by an inquisitive look into other cultural and spiritual worlds, and this generated fascinating possibilities for the growth and elevation of the human being as an individual. The romantics fixed their attention on the most dominant elements of human existence, such as love, creativity, and death. Yet, at the same time they also turned their gaze toward the frailty and evanescence of human life and disclosed the multitudinous states of the human soul, including grief, anguish, heartache and sorrow, which are no less significant for the human being than, for example, joy, exultation, hope and optimism.

As we can see, in the view of the romanticists, human existence as such is unfathomable in its vast scope of manifestations, although in the fate and life course of any one individual the realm of these experiences may be more limited. One person by himself may not have occasion to experience the entire spectrum and depth of human passions, may not feel the genuineness of the human calling in its fullness, may not come to personally know all the states of the human condition. In order that one can break through to his own true being as a person, it is inevitable that one must undergo circumstances of maximal pressure or tension. There is no easy path, no "light burden" on the way to attain this. It is only by going through trials and tribulations,

excruciating opposition, and torturous persecution in life that a person can come to know the full depth of one's own being as a human. And this is why psychologists have seen fit to apply the phrase "existence as a human being" referring to the limiting state or ultimate expression of human potentiality.

In this manner, we may concretely lay down our thoughts on human existence. One issue is the facts of our concrete lives on this earth, which proceed to eventually make up the reality of this world itself. However, in this life there is something rather greater than the reality of our lives as such. That is, behind the external features of the reality of our daily lives, there looms something more significant, more ultimate, which the human being cannot always sense. For we are not living anywhere near the margin of our possibilities.

At the same time a person feels that his existence could be more full, rich, whole, universal. Before each person there always stands a barrier of sorts, and it is not within his power to surmount or get beyond it. It presents itself as a sort of goal, an expression of the elevated, the meaningful, the unattainable. Nietzsche threw out the challenge to man to forge ahead to overcome himself. He wrote, "You have not the courage to burn yourself up and to die -- and for that reason you will never come to know the altogether New. But as for me -- that which is today wings, bright feathers, clothing and muscles -- tomorrow shall be but ashes" (F. Nietzsche, "Selected Works," vol. 1, 1993, p. 38).

There is a great rift in our human existence. We are born as a man or a woman, and it is not granted us to know the entirety of our existence. Plato reasoned to this conclusion. In his treatise "The Feast" he recounts the myth of the birth of love. As the story goes, the original human beings bore both male and female traits blended together. Zeus' anger was kindled against the ancient people, and he split each person into two halves. From that time on, mind and body agonize in their state of separation. Each half is yearning after its other half in order to recover its original state of wholeness. This is love, as the "self-awareness of the unity of the human race in oneness of the soul" (L. Feuerbach). This is the longing for the original oneness of true human existence.

But the division in the human existence manifests itself not only in this. A person represents open possibilities. Animals live following a predestined way. Each new generation, like many generations before, is adapted to some definite form of existence. Speaking about a

human being, we can say that nothing compels a person to organize his life according to the dictated standard. People are flexible and can change as much as they wish. A person can find himself deluded, can make many mistakes; he has not so many instincts. We can say that he is originally "sick" He is completely dependent on his own free choice.

Potentially a person can do everything. That's why human nature is difficult to define. We cannot reduce it to the common denominator, because a human cannot be specified. He doesn't belong to any category of species; he is unique.

There's a never-ending fight within a human being. A person is not only a compulsory synthesis of opposites (like any living object) or necessary and in general accessible motion of spirit. Since the moment of existence a human being has always been an accumulation of never-ending strife. The Swiss psychologist Jung proved that people are born either extroverts or introverts. He developed the idea of the difference of psychological statements. Extroverts expect extrovert-type reactions from introverts and think that such is the most proper way to react. In their turn, introverts expect introvert-type reactions from extroverts, though it is a part of their own psychological nature. But people are used to adapting themselves to the reality through their different abilities: thinking, feeling, emotions and intuition. There are different psychological types, and each of them includes the fragmentariness of human existence.

Is it likely that the problem of completeness of a human being will prove to be false? Certainly not! One can describe completeness or perfection as the ideal a person wants to reach. The mystery of birth doesn't include perfection, but perfection can be obtained through a person's efforts to overcome his internal strife.

There is a wish to realize perfection of existence, but it is practically impossible. A human is far from finding absolute and perfect unity within himself, though many philosophers describe him as one. In reality, an individual shows himself only as a relative and fragmented unity. A human will never reach complete perfection of his existence, even if he uses all his abilities. He may reach only a partial result.

A human tries to overcome and expand the limitations of his own existence. It is one of his adherent qualities. Still, it was already mentioned that most people can be quite satisfied if they just exist as anonymous beings and particles of society, not even trying to reach the truth of existence. In this case philosophers say that existence is slipping away without revealing. ...

A human being is unique. The fact that each object of creation has its own unique characteristics denotes that each of them has individual *Sung sang* and *Hyung sang*, and *Yang sung* and *Eum sung*. Hence, individual form cannot exist apart from general form, and individual image or form is considered as individualized general form.

Personal individuality is revealed in its value orientations. In "Essentials of Unification Thought" there is a special section about the phenomenon of value. A person himself decides what he wants to consider sacred and valuable. Many people share the same spiritual absolute values. It has long been well known that people cherish certain life settings. But until the 19th century there was no definite term to describe this phenomenon. Unshakable innermost orientation was determined as a "value" -- what people cannot live without. This is what researchers define as the most sacred personal thing for any human being.

An individual is not always striving to follow scientific laws. On the contrary, the majority of people are not ready to accept their purely theoretical statements and recommendations. They prefer to live in a fantastic dream-world, neglecting the reality of life. A person prefers to draw energy from things that are the opposite of cold, scientific postulates. Therefore, a value is something quite different from inspiring truth.

Originally science is alienated from values. Imagine a lamb grazing in a field. Suddenly a wolf appears and tears him into pieces. Science certainly can explain what really happened. But its interpretation would not explain the inner sense of the occurrence. A scientist might say that according to natural law, carnivores devour herbivores. But why and for what purpose is the lamb to be the victim? Alas, this very question doesn't correspond with scientific logic as a means to explain the realities of the world.

Hence, in the course of human history values were born as a spiritual foundation helping people to overcome the hardships of their earthly life. Values can organize reality, bring into it moments of evaluation, reflect different aspects of the surrounding world that have no connection to pure science. They do not reveal the truth; they reflect the ideal, desirable, and corresponding to norm. Values attach sense to human life.

But it would be incorrect to identify a value with a subjective image only, individual preference as a counterbalance of general analytical decisions. Of course, the range of values is wide in any culture, but it is not limitless. A person can choose this or that orientation but not as

the result of absolute willfulness. In other words, values are conditioned by cultural context and certain norms.

A person develops his attitude by following the norm, ideal, purpose as the model or standard. The words "good" and "evil," "beautiful" and "ugly," "righteous" and "unrighteous" can be named values and the different viewpoints and beliefs connected to them can be qualified as valuable ideas that can be evaluated as acceptable or unacceptable, optimistic or pessimistic, actively creative or passively contemplative. In this meaning orientations conditioning human attitude are determined as value orientations. People usually try to balance their actions and purposes with public moral norms. In the course of history different ideals, absolute beliefs and sacred things collide. Values are much more mobile in comparison to historical cultural standards. A change of value orientation can happen even within one culture. Values indicate a personal attitude to the world on the foundation of not only knowledge or obtained information but also personal life experience.

Analyzing a cultural age, we may say that people who lived in those times cherished certain sacred things. Changing those spiritual absolutes brought changes to the whole epoch. Consequently, understanding the sense of certain values helps to explain the specific characteristics of a culture.

The section concerning education in "Essentials of Unification Thought" looks very productive. In ancient Greece they defined sciences as practical or moral. At first sight, they considered vital needs, work and knowledge most important. Paradoxically, ancient Greeks were exceedingly interested in moral problems. How to build a ship is to a certain extent clear. But it's quite a different thing when you try to form human relations or coordinate human behavior and moral principles. What exactly inspires a person to action?

Imagine a group of the wisest Greek thinkers who gathered together to discuss the most essential philosophical questions. Probably they would share ideas about the creation and organization of the world, secret characteristics of the matter. But in fact, Socrates turns to those who are ready to reveal their highly sophisticated approach with a plea to know the world: "What is virtue?"

We know that the choice a person makes in his life mostly depends on a number of virtues he possesses. Virtue is a good habit, the internal desire for goodness. We say that virtues are the wonderful qualities of a person. The opposite word is "vices." These are the bad qualities of a

person. Does it seem that everybody is talking about things well known to all? Can anybody imagine a lesson at school teaching about virtue? No, because the majority will consider it an unproductive waste of time, when there is so much unclear in mathematics, physics, chemistry and natural sciences!

But let's remember how accurate, scrupulous and paradoxical Socrates is, when he reflects on virtue. He says that a person always chooses the best for himself; such is his nature. But paradoxically, a human being appears to be a very strange object of creation. He understands many things correctly, but does not act as he should. If a person behaves wrongly, there should be some reason. It means he made a mistake, Socrates explains. He insists: Intended evil is better than unintended evil. For example, a thief commits a crime intentionally, fully realizing what he is doing. If he knows what goodness is, then he is able to practice it. If a person has no idea of what he is doing, he doesn't know what goodness is. Such a person is incapable of good intentions.

Now, let's recall, how often, after committing this or that misdeed, we justify ourselves ("I didn't know it was bad," "Nobody told me how to act") or blame others. Such ignorance or pointing at others is much worse than the evil deed itself. In this case we accept our neglect of goodness and lack of responsibility.

Socrates wants us to always evaluate our actions, to reflect on them. Situations when we have to make choices occur every day. Tell me what you have chosen and I'll tell who you are. But first of all one has to adopt ideas of goodness.

Certain qualities cannot be inherited. Courage, self-control, justice – one should nurture these qualities in one's soul. Only then will one's actions be praiseworthy.

Socrates gave humankind a reliable moral standard. For example, he could not know what would happen in the 20th century, but his criteria of good and evil have not lost their significance until now. After the Second World War many German generals were brought to trial, and they tried to justify their crimes. At the trial, they said: Yes, I gave the order to shoot innocent people; I gave the order to put people into the gas chamber, I gave the order to flay men and women and make handbags out of their skin. However, I also had to obey orders. I am a law-abiding person; how could I know that my actions would be considered a crime? I had my orders, and I was doing what other people did as well. ...

The standards for the new program of general education in Russia have a completely different goal: Give young people as much practical knowledge as possible. Young people will go to the wide world having the practical skills that can be useful in their future profession. Some of them will study bookkeeping; others will master the basic skills in the field of economics or law. However, nobody is concerned with morality, which is the foundation for education. Some moral topics are presented in the new strategy of education as trivial reminders, ready principles, which should replace the living voice of one's soul. Meanwhile, as the Russian philosopher I.I. Kireyevsky justly said, "The truth cannot be perceived by a morally crippled person."

Why were ancient peoples so indifferent to practical knowledge and so scrupulous about moral knowledge? The answer is clear: They knew that practical knowledge that has not passed moral approbation is fruitless. There is a phrase, which is often repeated in the new educational standard: "A student should know. ..." However, is it the task of education to make a human being a "library turned upside down"? A human being becomes a human being only through the process of moral education. The mission of the school is to polish one's intellect, to develop one's skills and awaken the sense of morality.

Why were all these principles replaced by doctrinal coaching, cramming and moral indifference? Should a middle school student be versed in law? Yes, of course, but to what extent? If a policeman takes an underage boy to the police station, the boy has the right to summon his parents to come. However, is it necessary to study law profoundly, to memorize the clauses of the criminal or civilian code? A latent thought is present here: The more knowledge we give to a student, the less is the possibility that he commits a crime. ...

This idea is out of date! Even before Kant, it was well known that morality does not belong to the sphere of knowledge. It forms a separate sphere – the sphere of values. There is a clear distinction between these two spheres: Knowledge comes from the world, but values create the world. Knowledge explores the structure of the universe, the direction of history, and the reasons why climate changes. Morality is structuring the world of human relationships, forming its very foundation.

Morality does not deal with proofs, but with choice. Do we need a death penalty? Can we answer this question from a scientific point of view? In a discussion we express various opinions, but all of them are based on our choice. In the sphere of morality we do not ask what one knows; the only thing that really matters is the level of one's moral development. However, can we

attain a high level of moral development, if the task set before us is to memorize, comprehend, and learn by heart?

I would like to mention one more important aspect. We want our children to know the basics of bookkeeping, economics and modern law, but we do not take into consideration that in the nearest future economics and law will change. Talking about the future, we pay special attention to the development of computer technologies, but we do not realize that the content of the knowledge is transforming.

A famous American futurologist, Alvin Toffler, in his book “Powershift” says, the rapid spread of computer technologies in the last few decades has been called the only important change in the system of knowledge. The significance of such an invention as the computer can be compared only to the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, or even to the spreading of the written language. However, the system of knowledge changed as a whole. Once high technologies become firmly established, society begins to reorganize its knowledge and experience. The things necessary for economics or politics are becoming more abstract every day. Taking a risk to follow the knowledge of the present, we will drop behind the flow of information. While we are studying the law, it will surely change. The economy will transform, not talking about the forms of obtaining knowledge.

Now, in the era of postmodernism, the context of education is changing. Nowadays knowledge is taking a form of a sign, a symbol, and a metaphor. The progress in the sphere of artificial intelligence systems serves as the basis for creating new methods of concentrating expert knowledge. It raises interest in the “blurred logics” of neurobiology and other intellectual trends, which are connected to the very structure of cognition. In other words, the reconstruction of knowledge is as deep as the reconstruction of other social factors. Taking into consideration this changing background, we should review the rise and fall of civilizations and concrete nations. That is why many modern evaluations often seem erroneous.

Suppose a student memorizes the criminal code, but the legislative system will totally change in 10 years. How can he apply his knowledge? What if a student obtains knowledge about civilization and a civilized way of life, but the environment will change by the time he graduates from school? Is it better not to teach at all than to give knowledge that will quickly become obsolete?

No, of course, we should teach, but in teaching we should focus on things that are not so fragile and conditional. First of all, I am talking about morality. Moral principles, even trampled on by society, will never lose their significance. Let us remember Kant's example. People used to reproach Kant: "Your moral principles are too strict, too imperative. You assert that moral norms have no exception. One cannot say, 'Do not kill,' and then add, 'but you can do it sometimes.' However, if a starving boy steals a loaf of bread to save his life, does your ethical code condemn such behavior? It is not fair." To that, Kant replied: "A starving boy can steal a loaf of bread, but please do not call this action moral." It is very simple. The moral norms have no exception, even if society neglects them. Moreover, the society will dearly pay for this mistake.

So, the moral education is still important. We can say the same thing about education in general – about philosophic rationalism, futurological knowledge, and social imagination. However, these things are not included into the standards mentioned above.

Education is a very important part of human life. We cannot solve the problems of education unless we submit this question to general discussion, involving scientists, educators, and teachers. Unfortunately, now the main role in this process belongs to bureaucracy, although European history knows such a bitter expression as "the lost generation."

Pavel Gurevich

Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Linguistics

Professor, Head of the Department of Psychology, Moscow State Technological University,

Head of the Sector of the Institute of Philosophy at the Russian Academy of Sciences,

Vice President of the Academy of State Research