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ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF METAPHYSICS

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How is metaphysics possible, and how is it possible as a science? This Kantian question is asked by all those who are involved in it to one degree or another. However, the same question can have completely different meanings and contents in relation to different eras of thought.

The task of substantiating metaphysics could be posed and considered with complete seriousness during the time of Kant, but now it has lost its epistemological value. Whether someone likes it or not, science is an occupation that can only be substantiated by the results obtained during the process of practicing it, and pure and abstract reasoning has no practical use.

The absence of theoretical self-justification can in no way be considered a vice of a particular science. This is a standard situation, and in some cases (as can be seen in the example of quantum mechanics, and in quantum theory itself), not only the lack of epistemological justification, but even the lack of understanding of the conceptual meaning of the cognitive model does not impede its practical and effective use. Of course, quantum theory is an extreme case, and yet the fact itself is indicative.

Understanding the trends of scientific development will help determine the prospects of metaphysics itself. It seems to me that, firstly, it is necessary to recognize the senselessness of attempts to justify by metaphysics (as well as philosophy in general) itself, its subject, etc. The best rationale is the ability to effectively solve problems. Who set? In a broad sense, problems are posed by society, a cultural-historical situation, through the prism of which a particular topic (problem) is relevant or not. Therefore, there cannot be in the literal sense of “eternal topics”, nor can there be “final answers”, and even respect for the classics of the past cannot serve as a reason and justification for the uncritical perception of their ideas.

In addition, it should be borne in mind that the answers of philosophers of the past were given in a cognitive situation that is different from that which takes place “now”, similarly to the fact that the situation “now” will be different from that which will be “tomorrow”. But this does not mean that all answers are erroneous and arbitrary, but that in the process of the growth of knowledge, the meaning of both answers and the questions themselves changes; this is precisely what Hegel had in mind, ironic over his intention to consider the history of philosophy only as a “gallery of opinions”.

Further, it is necessary to abandon the intention “once and for all” to define the boundaries of both metaphysics and the human mind as a whole. I do not claim that the possibilities of the mind are unlimited. However, these possibilities are only partly ontological, and otherwise – are cultural-historical; from this, in particular, the most important conclusion follows for metaphysics: just as modern scholars easily solve
problems that their predecessors could not do, modern metaphysics can tackle problems that the great thinkers of the past could not cope with.

That metaphysical concept is effective, which is able to offer original answers to fundamental questions and at the same time create workable models of the investigated reality. Metaphysics cannot be not only a gallery of opinions, but also a collection of antiquities. Its vitality directly depends on how adequate it is to the demands of our time. In other words, the justification of metaphysics is not something that can “exist on its own”, regardless of the specific forms and objectivity of metaphysical discourse. Justification of metaphysics can be given only “from within” the discourse itself, in the course of its development. Thus, in the course of its formation, metaphysics becomes its own justification.

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AL-GHAZALI’S THE NICHE OF LIGHTS AS PHILOSOPHICAL TRACTATUS

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Islam’s faith and practice are based on interpretations of the Quran and hadith. The Quran – from the Arabic word meaning “recitation” – is a book in Arabic that Muslims believe is the literal word of God given to the prophet Muhammad through the intermediary of the archangel Gabriel. Throughout Islamic history, certain people have arisen who have produced such well-respected interpretations of sacred texts that they have become enduring touchstones of piety and practice. Many Muslims have deemed al-Ghazali such a person. During his own lifetime he was known as “the Proof of Islam” (hujjat al-islam) and “the Renower of the Religion” (mujaddid al-din) [2].

The exact date when Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058-1111) wrote The Niche of Lights (Mishkat al-anwar) is not known. However, the nature of the book and the fact that al-Ghazali mentions other dated works have led scholars to suppose that treatise was composed toward the end of his life, after he had written his magnum opus, The Revivification of the Religious Sciences.

The treatises that al-Ghazali composed in the first part of his life criticized and refined the rational methods employed by the jurists, theologians, and philosophers in their search for knowledge of God. They do not explain the inner dimension of Islamic teachings or describe how to cultivate the sincere intentions and virtuous attitudes that should accompany religiously guided behaviour. They neither emphasize the need for a Muslim to become near God in this life nor recognize the