

Summary of the dissertation:
"The religious thinking of Abraham Joshua Heschel.
Between religion and philosophy"
Author: Andrzej Myrdko
Krakow, 12.10.2023

The dissertation presents the issue of the relationship between religion and philosophy in the context of the thought of Abraham Joshua Heschel, based on the available literature on the subject. The main goal was to try to bring closer and present religious thinking, which, in Heschel's approach, revolves like an ellipse around two foci: religion and philosophy. This thinking is multifaceted, situational and polar; it grows from the depths of Judaism and was defined by the thinker, among others, as philosophy of religion, depth theology, biblical vision of reality. Therefore, it is a thought that is open to both the human and transcendent dimensions. The dissertation uses primarily the analytical-synthetic method. The difficulty was that Heschel was not a systematic thinker, therefore some of the analyzes carried out in the work are of a reconstructive nature, and attempts to clarify not entirely clearly expressed concepts were made on the basis of those that were expressed by him clearly and distinctly. The dissertation also compared his views with the views of other philosophers to indicate that they were not born in a vacuum, but in a specific philosophical, historical or cultural context. Presenting the views of the Jewish thinker using philosophical terms also encountered difficulties due to the often original, metaphorical-elliptical language, which is undoubtedly a characteristic feature of Jewish thought, as well as due to Heschel's poetic inclinations and writing style.

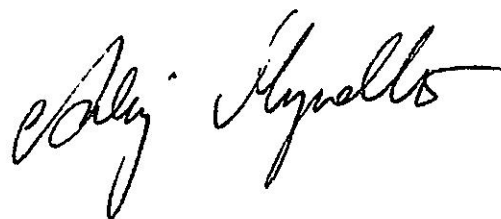
The entire dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first one discusses issues related to the sources of the Jewish philosopher's thought, and then issues related to his philosophy of man. Two sources are indicated: the first is Heschel's traditional Hasidic piety, the second is the tradition of European philosophy, which he never rejected. He was inspired mainly by Husserl's phenomenology, but the influence of, among others, Heidegger, Tillich and the philosophy of dialogue. However, the philosophy of man was one of the most important issues in Heschel's thought. He dealt with it not only because of its significance and importance, but his interest in this subject resulted primarily from his concern and anxiety about the correct view of man in philosophical searches. Therefore, when describing the anthropology of the Jewish thinker, the following issues were raised: the problematic nature and self-understanding of man, the devaluation of humanity, the distinction: human being-human being and the dignity of human existence.

The second chapter presents a detailed analysis of Heschel's religious thinking, the essential feature of which is polarization. Jewish life and thought can actually be understood in terms of a dialectical model, containing opposing or contrasting elements. Just as the two ends of a magnet have opposite magnetic properties, these categories oppose each other and exemplify the polarity that lies at the heart of Judaism. It is the polarity of ideas and events, mitzvah and sin, kavana and action, regularity and spontaneity, uniformity and individuality, halacha and haggadah. The threat to it is the phenomenon described by Heschel as religious behaviorism, represented by Spinoza and Mendelssohn. In addition, this chapter explains, among others: such issues as: the relationship between philosophy and religion, situational and

conceptual thinking, the problem of vision, radical wonder and the sense of the ineffable. The issue of depth theology, which was extremely important for Heschel, was also analyzed quite extensively, including the views of Kierkegaard and Rabbi Mendel of Kock, called Kocker.

The next chapter discusses the issue of God in the context of religious thinking. The views of the most important medieval philosopher for Judaism, Maimonides, were analyzed in the light of Heschel's critical remarks, followed by Heschel's concept of God, criticism of philosophical proofs for the existence of God, and the problem of ontological assumption and the issue of symbolism. Particular attention was paid to the so-called the Copernican revolution of the Jewish thinker, which he expresses in three points: first, God is looking for man, which is the greatest message of the Hebrew Bible; secondly, man is extremely important to God; thirdly - and this could be the essence of religion - God is more involved in man's search than man is in God's search.

The last, fourth chapter presents the prophetic dimension of religious thinking, which led Heschel to abandon his calm and scientific life in order to engage in the social problems of the modern world, following the example of the prophets, but also of Maimonides and Kocker. The characteristic features of the prophet, who was defined by the Jewish thinker as homo sympathetikos, were discussed, and it was pointed out that the understanding of God in the biblical or prophetic approach is at the antipodes of the understanding that can be found in other ancient religions, but also in the tradition of European philosophy. According to Heschel, what distinguishes the God of the prophets from other images or philosophical concepts is the concept of pathos, showing the image of God who is never indifferent to human affairs, can never be beyond good and evil, and always turns to justice. God's pathos is an expression of His special care for creation. This chapter also covers, among others, such issues as: the prophetic understanding of God, pathos and ethos, anthropotropism and theotropism, God pathos and the God of philosophers, pathos and the problem of ontology, Berkovits versus Heschel's concept of pathos.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elyse Heschel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.