

Two Images of Love: a philosophical reflection on the phenomenon of love in the writings of Xaver von Baader

Yu. V. Kovalchuk*

Department of History of Philosophy
The Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine
*Corresponding author. E-mail: julia.kovalchuk91@gmail.com

Paper received 25.08.15; Accepted for publication 05.09.15.

Abstract. In the article is contained a philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of love in the work "Forty Theses on Religious Erotica" by Franz – Xaver von Baader – a German religious thinker, who in a context of research appears primarily as an heir of the androgynous ideas of Jakob Boehme. The existence of love is analyzed in its two images: human and Divine. The human image of love has two vectors: pointing toward God and toward man. Difference between categories of Christian love as "agape" – the great fire of personal love; and "caritas" – the personification of the commandment of love on the part of the Church are shown. Both aspects of love are characterized by mercy and selflessness. The research on the phenomenon of love is seen through the prism of the philosophical thought of Christian religious thinkers as well as representatives of the Jewish tradition. Such key categories in Baader's philosophy of love as "mercy", "repentance", and "reconciliation" are delineated. It is demonstrated that in the context of reconciliation, the German theologian delineates two kinds of betrayal: unreconciled and reconciled. The annihilation by the person within himself of unfaithfulness and betrayal marks the entrance upon the way of true love. The article accents the dialogical character of love, which allows the formation of the relationship of "I – Thou": in opening himself, the lover gives himself to the person he loves, and accepts love in return. God, according to Baader, divests Himself of greatness, so that man might love Him, witnessing the way of descending love. The sacrificial character of Christian love is underlined, since in revealing His love for humanity, the Lord sacrifices His Son in order to save humanity. The differentiation between love-commandment and duty and the law is achieved on the basis of a comparative approach in examining the concepts of love of Franz – Xaver von Baader and Franz Rosenzweig. In the article, based on the usage of the philosophical terminology of dialogue, there appear two kinds of relationships: love, which takes the relationship of "I-It" and love which gives the relationship of "I-Thou". The problem of the recreation of the androgynous image of God in man is researched, resulting from the rediscovery of true love.

Keywords: love, androgyny, agape, caritas, eros, mercy, acceptance, Christianity

Introduction. Christian tradition in its philosophical reflections on the phenomenon of love, as Benedict XVI comments, stresses two images of love: Divine and human. The differentiation of these two images affects the existential nucleus of love: the human image of love – the existence of the human in love; while the Divine image of love constitutes the very existence of love, insofar as God is love. Hence, the essence of Christianity is in the fact that it is a religion of love. Undeniably, the history of Christian love – descending agape or caritas, is filled with moments of the unacceptance of passionate eros, even the condemnation of sexual love between an man and a woman. A radiant example of such contraversial treatment of the phenomenon of love by Christian doctrine is the medieval story of the love between Pierre Abelard and Heloise. Nonetheless, it was the Christian God who so loved mankind that He redeemed it through the death of His Son. The Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ who was executed by men, becomes the merciful defender of humanity. Christian love is unique and its uniqueness lies in its personal character and its mercy. The German theologian and philosopher – Franz-Xaver von Baader appealed and witnessed to this precept. On the basis of the research of the New and Old Testaments, being a disciple of the idea of the androgynous human of Jakob Boehm, the philosopher, through the prism of philosophical eros put forth an interesting treatment of the nature and essence of love in his work "Forty Theses on Religious Eros".

A Brief Overview of Publications by Theme. Thanks to the thematics of love, today the ideas of thinkers such as Denis de Rougemont, who has achieved a solid body of research on the phenomenon of love in European philosophy, of Alen Badieau, Pascal Bruckner, Viktor Malakhov, Alexander Balhaus, Reuben Apresian and others have been analyzed. Jan Kloczowski has achieved a great input into

the philosophy of love with his book "The Philosophy of Dialogue", in which he achieved a philosophical analysis on the concept of love of Franz Rosenzweig. Xaver Knotz described the relationship of Christian marriage in his work "The Sex Which We Don't Know". In the sphere of Christian love, the relatively recent work by Benedict XVI, the encyclical "Deus caritas est" is important.

Purpose. The purpose of the article is the philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of love as conceived by the German religious thinker Franz-Xaver von Baader and the research on two images of love – Divine and human – in Christian spiritual tradition.

Materials and Methods. The basic method used during the research of the given materials, was the method of comparative analysis, which revealed characteristic traits and a specific conception, approaches and ideas of the religious thinker toward the exploration of the phenomenon of love. Also, methods traditional for humanitarian knowledge culturological and hermeneutic approaches, utilizing the principles of holism and complementarity were used. Among the materials researched were "Forty Theses of Religious Eros" by Franz Xaver Baader, the encyclical "Deus caritas est" by Benedict XVI, and a string of other works relevant to the analyzed theme.

Two images of love, Divine and human, give a dialogical character to love, for which the human being does not remain an inert atom, but an active personality of the universe. "Insofar as God first loved us, our love from now on is not merely a commandment, but a response to the gift of love, with which we are approached by God." [2,6] The human being must give his response, but only he may respond, who is. Only he, who is a person, may say "I am". The Danish Socrates Soren Kierkegaard in the 19th century, as did Franz Rosenzweig in the 20th century, regarded Abraham to be such a person, who in response to

God's "Where are you? " could respond firmly "I am here". It was precisely Abraham who was capable of hearing God's call, to answer Him, and to carry the responsibility for his response. Abraham attests through his love for his son, his love for God. Like God, Abraham is capable of bringing love into sacrifice for the sake of love, love for his son for the sake of his love for the Creator. And is precisely this love, strong as death, to quote Meister Eckhardt, which returns his son to Abraham.

Insofar as God's image of love requires of the human image of love a personal character, man requires a personal call to love, in order to reply to it. As Benedict XVI notes, Divine love is personal, a love of choice: God chose Israel and loves it, having a plan of healing for all humanity. Divine love is so strong and great that in His love, God turns to each one, choosing each one; however not every one is capable of responding to Him. Insofar as it is impossible to love with half of one's heart, but only with the whole heart, similarly, as Erich Fromm and Miguel de Unamuno stress, it is impossible to love someone without loving others. The personal character of love confirms love of person to him in whom it will love the whole world. Because of love of God, in God we may love unfamiliar or even hated persons. Because of love of God, the human heart is capable of forgiveness, contrition and mercy. Only he who is aware, conscious of his being, can repent and love.

Personal love is the great flame of Christian love, agape. Agape, in contrast to the passionate arousing eros, is a settled love, a setting sun which warms without burning. The principle of agape in God's image of love is included in the first thesis of the "religious eros" of Franz Baader: "(God) had to divest Himself of His greatness so that we might encompass and bear His help in our weakness and misery. Only love can achieve this and only it is capable of this sacrifice". [1,144] God as love and God Who loves, comes down to the human being, so that man might love Him. In a certain sense, God gives Himself to the human being, which is an expression of agape in the Divine image of love. According to the conception of love of Franz Baader, this great gift of love from God is capable of being received not by every person, and consequently, God, "although Love Himself" [1,145], can love very few human beings. In order that a human being might accept God, accept from Him the gift of love, he must believe in Him, give himself to Him, trust Him. Baader's concept of God as Love is crucial, for as soon as the human being begins to love, God appears in her. The dialogical type of love requires a mutual revelation, mutuality which allows the meeting of the two lovers. He who has not met God cannot love Him. From here flows the sense of Baader's thesis: "...nothing is worthy of love, as love itself". [1,145].

Benedict XVI in his encyclical "Deus caritas est", expresses a similar thought to that of the German theologian of the 19th century: the essential choice of life of a Christian is faith in God. According to the universal pontiff, this choice may be expressed in the words: "We believed in the love of God". [2, 5] Thence also is underlined a seemingly irrational way for the achievement of love, according to which love is not thought of as an illness, *or something, connected with chemical processes in the human organism* (such is the meaning of love proposed by the 21st century), acquiring meaning as a phenomenon. One may even express the somewhat more radical thought: if God is love,

then love acquires a nominal meaning; it is impossible to know, but possible to believe in. "A Faith which sees Divine love in the pierced heart of Jesus on the cross, gives rise to the beginning of love". [2,49]

The human image of love has two vectors: toward God and toward the human being. Man, being in love, may give himself to God as well as to another human being. "Only he, who possesses himself can give himself; and only such may be received; he, on the other hand, who does not possess himself or has lost himself, may be taken without even so much as a thank-you." [1,148] In the terminology of philosophical dialogue, the relationships of those who do not receive or accept, but take instead, are described as relationships of "I – It". A person in such circumstances becomes a thing, which is capable of sexual appetite as instinct, but not of love. (*Such a "thing-like" impression of another human being can be seen as today's leading tendency toward the absolutism of the user, of consumerism*).

The matter of love is a matter of unrepeatable individuality, character, which according to Franz Baader, is capable in itself of recreating the primal androgynous image of God. The essence of love in the view of the German theologian lies in the process of such recreation. The androgyne is recreated through Christian marriage. "Forty Theses on Religious Eros" demonstrate the interesting reflections of Baader in the context of love, in which the religious thinker annihilates the perceived sinfulness of sexual love, giving love between man and woman a mystical meaning. Sexual love, which is a mature love, which chooses only this person and forever, has an exclusive character. As Benedict XVI aptly comments, "Monogamous marriage suits the image of a monotheistic God". [2,19] Marriage must be an expression of love without turning back, which has found him for whom it was intended. Thence, the idea of Franz Baader regarding the androgyne in this context totally correlates with Christian teaching: each person ought to unite into one entity in marriage with his or her "other half", to whom he or she will vow for eternity. According to the German theologian of the 19th century, two become one, recreating the primal androgynous image of God in man, where God lives and acts.

Utilizing the metaphor of a flower, Franz Baader introduces into the question of love such ethical categories as forgiveness and sympathy: "And when the flower of love blooms without tears, then it will not be able to take root without this dew" [1,151]. The heart that loves is capable of understanding and forgiving the contrite heart which earnestly confesses. For love to flourish, the two who love must as a result of their own personal input, uphold the fire of love, having destroyed in it everything past and mortal. According to Baader, the destruction by love of everything past and mortal happens as a result of the destruction of infidelity and insincerity, even from the realm of possibility. Man has to persevere against temptation and remain faithful to his love. Each new love, comments the philosopher of love, is like a defenseless, tender infant, who needs care and constant attention. If a person is unable to protect this gift of love, does not know how to give oneself to another, then she is unable to receive love. It is worth noting that infidelity is not the final stage of a relationship, insofar as love, as has been stated above, forgives him, who is contrite and unreservedly confesses it. In the work "Forty Theses on Religious Eros" the author differentiates between

unforgiven and forgiven betrayal, introducing the category of reconciliation. Unreconciled betrayal moves into a central direction, becoming a totality in itself, while reconciled betrayal makes a circular movement, in time returning to rebirth. Forgiveness connects that which has been spoiled more securely with a "thread of love" even more tightly than before the committed infidelity. In the human image of love, the vector which is directed toward the human, the infidelity becomes a crack in the marital relations between husband and wife, resulting in the break-up of the marriage. The person, who lives according to his own desires, easily succumbs to bodily lust and passing pleasures, is capable of infidelity, and exists in the relationship of "I – It", and consequently true love, which needs personhood, becomes impossible under such conditions. And only the betrayed "half" having in her heart true love, which is capable of forgiving and mending a broken heart, by stepping onto the way of peacemaking, may repair this crack. A great love, which forgives mends both halves. Nevertheless, peacemaking is possible only under the condition that the betrayed heart forgives the one who repents. Undeniably, true love is great and strong enough to forgive him who does not realize his fault, but contrition is the condition under which love again acquires the dialogical form: forming the relationship of "I – Thou". As taught by the Jewish religious thinker, and representative of Jewish Hasidism, Martin Buber, only in the relationship of "I – Thou" a true marriage appears: "two people open themselves one to the other's Thou". [3,85] Reconciliation is the moment of the rebirth not of love, but of the spiritual state of the person himself, because love, notwithstanding its latent and actual states, does not cease to exist. Reconciliation is the moment of personal becoming, meeting the other in love, openness in front of the other and his acceptance of it.

In the context of the image of human love one ought to make a distinction between two forms of Christian love: agape and caritas. Both forms of love unite such ethical categories as "mercy" and "unselfishness". Agape, as noted above in this article, is the great flame of Christian love – merciful, personal love. Caritas, merciful Christian love, which is aimed at all humanity, is the practical embodiment of the social teaching of the Church, the practical expression of love, the City of God on the earth, according to Saint Augustine. In the history of Christian love there is a place for the idea, that caritas is the unity of eros and agape or the sanctified agape eros. As Benedict XVI notes in his encyclical, caritas is the embodiment of the commandment of love in the Church as "the community of love". This love is not a law, but a covenant, uttered by Him, Who Himself loves. God gives man His love, descends to man, bringing His Son as a sacrifice on behalf of mankind and if man accepts His love, accepts this great sacrifice, then he must answer Him with his own love.

Franz Baader points to the identification of love with responsibility, insofar as they both indicate a union. Nevertheless a connection through responsibility is one-sided and not free, in contrast to the free, mutual connection in love. Mutuality of union in love indicates that love requires mutuality: God gives Himself to man, because He loves him; man accepts the love of God and responds to Him with his own love, because he loves Him. Consequently, love makes all equal is one of the basic principles of Christian doctrine. Accepting God's love, His great

sacrifice on behalf of man, man must take the responsibility for this love and prove to God that he is deserving of this love. The caring for one's neighbour, love and expression of mercy to others is the very embodiment of caritas, the embodiment of the commandment of love. The German-Jewish philosopher – dialogist, representative of traditional Judaism, Franz Rosenzweig stresses that love is the only commandment, which cannot become law, insofar as the law requires silent acceptance and perseverance, and love requires a person who names himself and acts and loves. "Such differentiation between love – commandment and the law, the philosopher-dialogist bolsters with temporality: the Law belongs to Creation, which was an event and has remained in the present only as the past, but love belongs to Revelation and is an event which is experienced here and now, which becomes here and now. It is precisely in the relationship of revelation where man stands facing God". [5,108]

Such treatment by Franz Rosenzweig brings to mind a certain analogy with Metropolitan Ilarion. In his work, "A Word about the Law and Blessedness" Ilarion, Metropolitan of Kyiv affirms that the Old Testament is the fulfilment of the Law, whereas the New Testament is the fulfilment of Blessedness in the person of Jesus Christ: whoever has believed in the beloved Son of God, he joined himself to the love of the Lord. Jesus Christ is therefore that Event, which has brought the Revelation of the Lord for humankind, the love of God. In the given context one ought to note that Saint Augustine confirmed the presence in latent form of the New Testament already in the Old. Franz Rosenzweig was also in solidarity with this thought, for whom the New Testament is the "soil in which the seeds" of the New Testament grow.

The image of human love is able to say "Thou" when turning toward God in his contrition. It is precisely after the fall of man, as noted by Franz Baader, that salvific love came from the Lord's heart, which began the process of reconciliation. Through this healing love began the unification of God with man, while through man came the unification of God with the world. "The ray of God's love, or Jesus, passed in the moment of the fall directly into Sofia, the true matrix of all prime images, and in the prime image of mankind became a person of spirit, insofar as from this moment began the natural embodiment in time " [1,157]. Thanks to such categories as forgiveness and sympathy, reconciliation leads to mystery, which occurs in the breast of every person, when she enters more deeply into the heart of him, who has betrayed her. Thence, alongside reconciliation, generosity and mercy have a place, the heart of the Lord serving as the example. Nevertheless, it is God who brings the sacrifice in the name of love to humanity, "man", as enunciated by Sen-Marten, "wanted to be human without God, but God did not want to be God without man" [1,143]. The heart of God, betrayed by man's fall, sends him His love, yearns to help him recover himself, to overcome the division, which emerges in this multifaceted connection of love. The blood from the heart "is the glue" which repairs the cracks in the union of love, making this union even more firm and lasting in the face of the testing of fate. Franz Baader holds that the human, who passes through the way of reconciliation, finds himself not far from the Kingdom of God.

Results and their discussion. The results of the writing of this article is the presentation of a philosophical analysis of the conception of love by the German religious thinker Franz-Xaver von Baader. Two images of Christian love are researched and vectors of their direction indicated. The research showed the personal and merciful character of Christian love.

In the results of the completed work one can make theoretical and practical summations and propositions:

"Forty Theses of Religious Eros" by Franz-Xaver von Baader is a brilliant treatment of the essence of love in the context of Christian doctrine and mysticism. As a result of the identification of God as love, the very existence of love is indicated – love which exists in itself. Thence, this love is the unity of eros, agape and caritas – it is ever and everywhere present. God's image of love is the presence of love for man, the expression of which is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore such love has an ascending character: through Jesus Christ God's love descends to man, in order to raise him to Himself.

In keeping with the conception of love of Franz-Xaver von Baader, descending love is the moment of genuine giving of oneself to another, which points toward mutual

giving. Exhibited further is the dialogical character of Christian love, which is grounded in the relationship of "I – Thou". Love needs a person who is able to love and give himself.

The human image of love is the existence of a human in love, and while in such circumstances, love may be aimed both at man and at God, it is indivisible and one. It has been shown that in love toward God man loves humanity, and in love toward the unique human persona, he loves the Person of the heavenly order – God.

Therefore, the union of man and God is possible on condition of the recreation of God's original image of man, which is in turn made possible through true love. The androgyn is recreated in Christian marriage, which has stepped onto the way of reconciliation: realizing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, truly contrite, it awaits Love, giving its own love (mercy). Thus through the androgyn, God unites with the world.

The practical conclusion of this article is the delineation of love – caritas, which needs a practical implementation: concern for neighbour, which in turn allows the embodiment of the commandment of love in the Church, as "community of love".

REFERENCES

- [1] Baader, Franz. Forty abstract religious eroticism // Thinkers of German Romanticism. – Ivano-Frankivsk: Lily HB, 2003. – P. 143-157.
- [2] Benedict XVI. Deus caritas est. – Missionary, 2008. – P. 57.
- [3] Buber, Martin. Me and you. The way human Hasidic teachings. - Kyiv: The spirit and letter, 2012. – P. 272.
- [4] Kłoczowski, J.A. The philosophy of dialogue. – Kyiv: The spirit and letter, 2013. – P. 224.
- [5] Kovalchuk, J.V. Love as revelation of I and Thou in the philosophy of dialogue // Scientific Proceedings of the National University "Ostroh Academy". A series of "Historical religion". – Ostrog: Publishing House of National University "Ostroh Academy", 2015. – Issue 17. – P. 107-111.