

Philosophical Way of Life as “Cura Sui”

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Uniqueness of philosophical knowledge is connected with display of existential character of the answer to philosophical problems, therefore knowledge in the form of philosophizing is always “finding of the reality in a situation in which at any moment there is a person.” While philosophizing a person defines oneself by means of the realization. Philosophizing is something through what a person becomes what he/she is, while getting implicated with the reality. The philosophical way of life can be carried out in two ways: either alone as a way of meditation, or together with people as a way of communication. When I carry out thoughtful reflection as a self-reflection, transcendental reflection, and full understanding of the present moment in my life appears peace of mind (despite concern of life), trust (despite all horrors and misfortunes), ability to make decisions (despite fluctuations of passions), reliability and fidelity (despite temptations of this world). Philosophical thoughts are not the guide to action, but a condition of intelligent life: Life becomes impregnated with thought.

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Philosophy is a form of spiritual activity, aimed at the formulation, analysis, and solution of certain philosophical issues related to the formation of a holistic view of the world and the place of person in it. Philosophy becomes an actual thing for person only in certain situations: when he solves certain philosophical questions and problems that life confronts of him. These are the situations that one can neither predict nor change them just being in them. Only way of being in these situations and the possible way out of these situations is only philosophizing. In fact, a person becomes a philosopher as compelled: When you cannot change anything, the only thing you can do is to change yourself, to change your attitude to what is happening, the attitude to the world. In this case, the philosophy is not any special knowledge or profession, but a task that confronts human life itself.

Uniqueness of philosophical knowledge is connected with display of existential character of the answer to philosophical problems, therefore knowledge in the form of philosophizing is always “finding of the reality in a situation in which at any moment there is a person” (Jaspers 1983, 23). While philosophizing, a person defines oneself by means of the realization. Philosophizing is something through what a person becomes what he/she is, while getting implicated with the reality.

Ironically, modern intelligent people do not philosophize, although universally demonstrate their knowledge in the field of philosophy. The path to the philosophy they had held alone in a blind is wandering through the maze of ideas. What they have learned for sure this is what is philosophy, what it really is; it's not something that is taught in the universities. The image of philosophy as science or ideology continues to be

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implanted in the educational system, soaked positivist spirit, platitudes and dogmatism. Then, at your own risk, without receiving any help or advice, modern man begins to build his “philosophical education” alone. Collecting the crumbs of philosophical ideas and trying to reflect himself in them, he usually learns only what is left in his memory the most vivid images. Philosophy is a means of self-admiration. Instead of disclosing the illusions this kind of “philosopher” only multiplies them.

An intelligent person can have a particular philosophy (worldview), but he does not know how to use it, does not practice it, and does not philosophize. Philosophizing is the fulfillment of thought, its completion. If only proclaimed the thesis is not supported by any argument, or if between the thesis and the argument cannot be traced logical connection, the thought remains unfulfilled, unfinished. Philosophy without philosophizing is simply a set of dogmas, beautiful slogans, labels. The most important thing in philosophy is the process of talking about thinking. The involvement in this process, total immersion in it, gives it all meaning. As example, a person who is reading a philosophical book becomes a participant to the dialogue with author. He argues each author’s thesis with examples from his personal life experience, so one or other philosophical idea seems to be so important for him.

But the book was read. How can use the unique knowledge that person discovered in it? How do I report it to another person without losing of meaning? It should be community-minded people who have practiced the philosophy and practiced philosophizing. This can be something like a philosophical club, philosophical café, and philosophical house (Lahav 1995). The main thing is that these communities should be built not on the basis of scientific, educational, and medical institutions. The principle of their activities should form not the norm of a social institution, but personal interest, initiative, self-determination of each member of this community. The main condition: All that was suggested should be reasoned, and all should be listened and discussed.

Many things can cause in us a philosophical wonder, doubt, or emotional shock. But it is not always clear that in fact I was so surprised and shocked. Feelings are experienced by myself, but that I had knowledge of these feelings, I need to present it indirectly by means of reason’s tools. I start process of philosophizing to expand the boundaries of my consciousness. I explore myself as a human who wonders, has doubt and has worry. From this finding, being able to very vulnerable and helpless, I need that someone was near and sensitive towards everything that is going on in me, and I try to express all it in words. Through the so called philosophical “diving,” I want to hear something important, weighty, and profound. Only at this level of immersion I am fully prepared to accept the philosophical ideas, but, of course, not as a direct guide to action, but as new opportunities, methods, or areas for my long voyage. While in the community, and having the opportunity to speak and to listen, I will begin to understand better the hidden side of my life experience and experience of others. I begin to understand better people themselves. This unique philosophical experience conveys the famous Aristotelian concept of “φρόνησις.”

However, actual for us is not so much the institutional aspect of this topic but essential and existential aspects, in fact that is the need to seek the advice of a philosopher. Apparently, in the person of the philosopher they want to find a good adviser, “fellow traveler,” “other,” which was not for them to either a priest or an ideologue, not a teacher or therapist in the conventional sense of their social status and role. Philosophy, in this case, gets its original status. It becomes a set of exercises and practical skills that a person may have in his possession or can make available to the others to be able to get the existential care of himself and others. A philosopher himself should give up the role of “professional” philosopher (scientist-theorist), and become a

practitioner of organizing the process of philosophizing in a community or individual communication. In this way, philosophy and philosophizing can be integrated into the everyday life of people. Only such a "philosophical practice" will have some meaning.

This philosophizing is not the kind overstepping the bounds of ordinary-practical knowledge but comprising reflective, existential, and critical components. As a matter of fact, it is a self-reflection by all possible intellectual means. Beginning with such conceptual affects as wonder, doubt, experience of existential conditions, philosophizing finds direct continuation in the intellectual game as the form of communication. We consider communication as a necessary condition of realization of philosophizing; therefore the optimum way of its realization is the live conversation in the form of a dialogue or a polylogue provoked by spontaneous asking.

The most important stage of actualization of philosophizing is the period of childhood with a child's judgment on ordinary-practical knowledge and his/her life experience by means of arising spontaneous philosophical reflection. Naive philosophizing is based on the principle of "open borders" between the ways of philosophizing. The play-related nature of naive philosophizing serves a powerful "antidote" against ideological dispute passing into the dispute of "party interests." Certainly philosophizing as an intellectual game is interesting, but it is more involved with the process of philosophizing itself. Following "the party interest" makes the mind private and limited, the risk "to lose" in dispute should be reduced to a minimum; however, the game interest induces a person to take risks. This risk should not be avoided as it serves the main purpose of intellectual discoveries and turns the mind to wisdom (Borisov 2013).

The most widespread form of philosophizing is asking. Asking is close in meaning to antique dialectics that is to ask and to search of the answer, or, to say it better, the recognition of any knowledge passing through a question. For us it is important to emphasize that query as a form of philosophizing is caused not so much by satisfaction of mere curiosity but a personal interest of the enquirer looking for reference points in a new, unusual reality. "An output in opened" has no other choice criteria for research aside from wonder, doubt, and will for communication, specific to philosophizing. Asking, a person starts to understand. It expands the space of the vital world with a question to contain new knowledge in it.

Unfortunately, such naive philosophers do not meet proper understanding and attention to their raised problems from adults. Bewilderment, irony, various excuses from adults make the given areas of comprehension taboo in a child's mind. The cultural tradition paradoxically ignores the importance of naive philosophizing in development of a child. But in that case it is the "culture of keeping the child silent." It belongs not only to education of children. It is characteristic for university education too.

Experience of philosophical practice is the attainment of the internal order, which may significantly diverge from the external order of everyday life. In today's world, in which there is practically no connection with tradition and which is based mainly on the ordering from outside a person feels unsatisfied. Philosophical practice gives us the opportunity to build ourselves, relying on our own resources, because the world does not provide it more. The philosophical practice is a way out of the state of being lost, of the state of oblivion, absolute absorption in work, when a person suddenly wakes up, terrified, and asks himself what I am, what I was missing, what should I do? To overcome this self-forgetfulness, I must constantly pull out me from the world of the usual, mindless, self-evident things, in fact, out of nothing.

The main result of philosophical practice is a serious attitude to my communication with people, to happiness and sorrow, to success and failures, as well as to the all unknown, that is, inside and outside.

According to Karl Jaspers, the philosophical way of life can be carried out in two ways: either alone as a way of meditation, using every opportunity to thoughtful contemplation, or together with people as a way of communication, using every opportunity to understand themselves in the joint action, joint conversation, and the joint silence (1983, 68). The fact that religion is performed by worship and prayer has its counterpart in this philosophical insight into the being.

What is the possible content of such a thoughtful contemplation? Firstly, it is self-reflection. I'm going back to what I was doing during the day, what I was thinking, what I felt. I check that it lies where I was dishonest with myself. Secondly, it is transcending thoughtful contemplation. Following the philosophical line of thought, I make sure in the true being. Thirdly, I contemplate on what I can do at the moment. When I carry out thoughtful reflection as a self-reflection, transcendental reflection and full understanding of the present moment in my life appears peace of my mind (despite concern of life), trust (despite all horrors and misfortunes), ability to make decisions (despite fluctuations of passions), reliability and fidelity (despite temptations of this world). Philosophical thoughts are not the guide to action, but a condition of intelligent life: life becomes impregnated with thought.

At the end of my article, I bring to your attention some meditation exercises, designed to increase the existential energy. These exercises help to carry out the care of themselves in front of such givens as a death, existential isolation, freedom, and a meaningless of existence (Yalom 1980).

Death is the most significant of givens. Everyone realizes that he ever dies. But some people believe that they cannot escape, and continue to live in peace, while others experience it neurotically. We can distinguish two mechanisms of protection from this type of anxiety, namely: (1) belief in immortality and (2) belief in a savior.

Next of givens is a freedom. People have different understandings of it. Person thinks that he fully saved in the world and there is no threat to him. But actually it is not. Sooner or later, the person starts to realize that the freedom takes away the soil underfoot. The opening of this emptiness comes into conflict with the need for “soil” and its structure. The person realizes that he is the creator of the world and therefore he is responsible for it. The mechanisms of protection from anxiety associated with freedom, take away a person in a false awareness of lack of responsibility for himself and for his own life choices.

The third of givens is existential isolation. People come into the world and go out of it alone. This existential conflict is a conflict between the need in contact and the conscious of insulation. Mechanisms in this case: an attempt to self-assertion at the expense of other people, as well as merging with another individual or group.

And finally, the fourth of givens is meaningless. Here, people are asking such questions as: “What is the meaning of life, if I'm yet going to die,” “Why do we live?” “How should we live?” Mechanisms of expenditure of an existential energy: a compulsive activity that takes it all possible time, as well as “revolt” or nihilism that is so vividly described by Albert Camus. According to Nietzsche, a nihilist experiences the feeling of nothingness. He does not see anything other than his own will. And will for the sake of the will is the will to nothingness.

Exercises with death:

1. Exercise “Avoiding negation:” The theme of death is very important, the discussion of this topic is necessary; therefore we should not maintain ourselves in the negation of death.
2. Exercise “Acceptance of death:” We have to understand that it is not necessary to hope for eternal life

and obtaining immortality and a miraculous salvation. Yes, we feel anxiety, which is associated with death, but this anxiety is an indication that we need to fill our lives with the fullness of the present existence.

3. Exercise "Conversation with death:" focus on the anxiety associated with death; complete all the feelings, thoughts, and images that are associated with that anxiety (where? when? how?); if you want to perform your funeral mentally without bitterness or anger, feel the complete absence of the world and the world without you.

Exercises with freedom:

1. Exercise "Mirror:" focus on the protection of species and ways to evade responsibility and choice, which you use in life; understand that every time defending and evading, you transfer the choice, responsibility, and guilt on others; it would be like to stand before the mirror and do not see self-reflection; try to be "reflected" in the mirror, try to feel and understand that making responsible choice, whenever you choose yourself, and in this choice you will not need to depend on someone or to blame someone.

2. Exercise "Looking from the side:" when you confront with a particular unpleasant situation, you have a point of view about its causes, consequences, and meaning. Now try to look at the situation from a different, unusual for you side, try to change completely your point of view first on the individual details of the situation, and then on the situation in whole.

3. Exercise "Who is guilty:" try to see and analyze the situation from the past because of it which you feel guilty. Focus on this feeling and transfer it to the situations that happen to you now; try to understand that as long as you behave in the present as you acted in the past, you cannot forgive yourself for the wrong choices made in the past and will blame for it not only yourself but also other people or life circumstances; let the past remain in the past, do not transfer it in the present.

4. Exercise "What do I want:" try to give simple and clear answers to the questions "What do I feel?" "What do I want?" think about why it is difficult to give such answers (Do we lack the right words? do not we have the skill to talk about it? or maybe something disturbs to recognize and talk about it without reference to the difficulties and problems associated with other people and life circumstances?) Try to feel your feelings and desires as only your feelings and desires and their realization depends only on you.

Exercises with existential isolation:

1. Exercise "Agreement with solitude:" feel yourself alone; try to understand your solitude without the anxiety and fear of the emptiness; fill it yourself, your feelings, thoughts, desires; realize the essence of your life which is that you bring to it.

2. Exercise "Who I am:" listen to yourself; do you feel the contradiction between who are you to other people, and who are you for yourself? Did you find it difficult to see and understand this contradiction, because if you realize it, you will find that you are not what others say about you; but still try to feel and realize who you really are; keep this awareness always, where and with whom you are.

3. Exercise "My best friend:" realize yourself as the best and faithful friend of you; focus on your best qualities, which you have a lot; open yourself and take care of yourself, feeling unconditional love to yourself; feel that with such a friend as you, you will always feel quiet and safe, because yourself are the only one who knows you so well and who always gives some help.

Exercises with meaninglessness:

1. Exercise "The First Commandment" ["don't create (not make for yourself) the idol"]: imagine all the diversity of things, people, events that make up the world; think, can there be in all this variety a single

objective meaning? Probably not, because everything, every person, phenomenon, or event has its meaning; Our life is a part of this diversity, therefore, it has its own unique meaning, but that meaning is necessary to discover again and again, it is not given in advance.

2. Exercise “Anxiety about the meaning:” focus on anxiety about the meaninglessness; conscious of your uncertain desire not so much to deal with a meaning of the situation, how to suppress the growing sense of anxiety; Don’t let this feeling distract you, try to focus on finding the meaning of the situation; the meaning starts to become clear only when you feel an active participant in your own life; the situation will not change, worrying about it is useless, but you can change yourself: Be free, intelligent, confident; in fact, you worry about yourself, your human qualities and capabilities; the meaning of any situation in the manifestation of these qualities.

Philosophizing is the practice of self-care. However, many people are constrained by a care of the outside world. So they set themselves tasks that have no solution. They do not help themselves, and throw themselves on the mercy of fate. However, the more we depend on the outside world, the more we have borders and obstacles that limit our actions in this world. This will lead to the illusion that we gradually give up establishing their own rules by which we can build our lives and behavior. We increasingly have to play by someone’s rules. Of course, at the same time, we will do a lot for the outside world, but these things do not bring us any benefit or satisfaction. Philosophizing can perform both therapeutic function (psychological component) and developmental function (intellectual component). These functions complement each other. For example, philosophizing can play for the intellect the same role that sports game performs for the development of muscular system. We often see people who are educated, but they are bad-thinking, bad-talking. But we cannot imagine a thinking person, who did not own certain meaningful knowledge that should know a reasonable person. In our opinion, in the philosophy, there is one main problem which is the inability to correct accents. Only philosophizing makes it possible to go from a deep emotional experience to rational efforts, and then to the attainment of the long-awaited psychological balance. This therapeutic effect of philosophizing is fully used neither in the practice or education nor in psychological practice. Education has set itself other goals and objectives, and psychologists usually do not use philosophical tools and do not absorb the philosophical tradition.

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