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FACULTY OF THEOLOGY**

**THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE ORIGIN OF THE COGNITION OF
THE ABSOLUTE IN ÁKOS PAULER'S PHILOSOPHY**



THESIS OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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*The Significance and the Origin of the Cognition of the Absolute
in Ákos Pauler's Philosophy*

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The theistic philosophy of Ákos Pauler (1876-1933) is objective idealism based on eternal truths, appearing in Plato's Saint Agostinus's, Aristotle's and Leibniz's works. His theory was built on firm bases and primary values whose cannot be proved by any other way but with the evidence recognised immediately by the intellect therefore they are the supreme criteria of every science. He understands the essence of thinking, namely that each individual idea is based on universal prerequisites. Pauler emphasises that „cognition is relying on universal contents”¹. He creates the uniform system of pure logic and this system embraces his whole philosophy.

During my investigations, a number of approaches arose about the Absolute, among others, the question of the proof of God's existence, the significance of the preliminary knowledge of being, the analysis of the concept of the Absolute. I write about the relationship between God and man as Pauler sees it in his philosophy. I discuss the essence and the process of realization of Pauline cognition, (awakening, egeresis). I point out that Pauler's awakening concept that is very similar to Plato's anamnesisz, to Saint Augustine's illuminatio, to Saint Thomas's excessus and to Rahner's Vorgriff concept.

In his system, Pauler recondacts everything to the three logical principles as the ultimate formal prerequisite of truths and the logical principles integrate his system. The three logical principles are also metaphysical principles. The first one is the principle of identity (everything is identical only with itself, principium identitatis) is the most decisive. The second is the principle of coherence (everything is related to everything else, principium cohaerentiae), and the third principle is the principle of classification (everything belong to a class, principium classificationis). Pauler adds to the three logical and metaphysical principles the item of correlation (reciprocity, mutuality). It is the item of correlation of correlativitatis, that is given in the logical principles as their corollary, as their consequence. It expresses that „for every assumed thing, something unconditional belongs”². It means, there is no relativity without

¹ PAULER, ÁKOS, *Introduction into Philosophy*, Budapest. 1933. 234. p.

² PAULER, ÁKOS, *Introduction into Philosophy*, Budapest, 1933. 32. p.

absoluteness, that is, every cognition and value judgment supposes the existence of a certain ultimate Absolute, that exists in oneself, since it is independent of everything else.

Based on the many ideas revealed, I finally answer the question raised in the title of the dissertation. My investigations have led me to recognize that in Ákos Pauler's philosophy the Absolute, who is God has a central position, and the final perception of his system is a theocentric world view. The conclusion of my dissertation is that for Pauler, the Absolute is the source of the entire knowledge, the Absolute makes cognition possible and the Absolute is also the final object, the ultimate goal of every cognition. God is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

According to Pauler, the origin of the knowledge of the Absolute can only be in the Absolute itself. As he stated, the existence of God we recognize by awakening (egersis), „the idea of the Absolute arises in our mind during autothetic cognition”³. In cognition the Absolute has a decisive role. On the one hand, the Absolute makes cognition possible because the Absolute created the cognitive individuals in such a way that in the absolute ideas are unconsciously there in them. These are called universal, a priori knowledges. The essence of our cognition is the awakening for a priori knowledges. Sensual experience only triggers cognition but does not define its content. The essence of our thinking is that all the individual knowledge can only be created by certain universal prerequisites. Pauler emphasizes the Platonic idea that the essence of our cognition is recognizing universal truths. It comes from this that the idea of God is an inner necessity of our spirit, God's existence is an ancestral certainty. The Absolute is thus known insofar as much as it is manifested in relativity. Pauler explains that this is a kind of reflection, „God can manifest in his creatures”⁴. Everything that is not absolute, but relative, is the creature of the Absolute, so in every relative there must be some trace of the Absolute. We can say that the relative refers to the Absolute.

On the other hand, the idea of the Absolute is not only a chance for us to cognize anything, but the Absolute is the final object of cognition, too. Our cognition can be finished only when we find some autonomous – independent – absolute, ultimate contents, so „actually, in every cognition we are trying to get to know the Absolute”⁵. And if all our cognition is, ultimately the pursuit of the Absolute, Pauler explains, then it is clear that our cognitive desire cannot calm

³ PAULER, ÁKOS, *Metaphysics*, Budapest, 1938. 73. p.

⁴ PAULER, ÁKOS, *Metaphysics*, Budapest, 1938. 95. p.

⁵ PAULER, ÁKOS, *Metaphysics*, Budapest, 1938. 74. p.

down by getting to know any intermediate objects, unless it has reached the Absolute. Therefore „neither experience (induction) nor mathematics (deduction) provide complete assurance, but the grasping of certain aspects of the Absolute, to which the reduction leads us”⁶ – Ákos Pauler writes.

I intended to express these thoughts with support of with my researches. I tried to place Ákos Pauler, in the context of Hungarian and international, present and Pauler’s contemporary, positivist- and metaphysical philosophy. In my dissertation, I used my own earlier writings on this subject, first of all my licentia study which did not appear in print (its title: *Ákos Pauler’s Intellectual Development and the Realization of His Theism*) as well as my already printed studies, namely *To the Intellectual Roots of József Somogyi: the Idea Theory of Ákos Pauler’s* (Budapest, 1998. 92-108. p.); *The Effect of the Transcendental Tomism of Pierre Scheuer SJ on Béla Weissmahr’s SJ Study of God* (Budapest, 2015. 117-143. p.); *The Origin of the Knowledge of the Absolute in Ákos Pauler’s Philosophy* (Budapest, 2014. 49-62. p.); *A Collection of Philosophical Definitions* (Kecskemét, 2004⁴).

Last, I would just like to add that it was a great experience for me to deal with Ákos Pauler, to deal with the truths formulated by him, I learned a lot from it. Pauler’s philosophy, his objective idealism, is suitable for and capable of satisfying our desire for a unified world view, and convince us about the beauty and truth of being, the goodness and intelligence given by God.

⁶ PAULER, ÁKOS, *Metaphysics*, Budapest, 1938. 77. p.