

Sofia University " St. Kliment Ohridski "

Faculty of Theology

OPINION

by **Associate Professor Dr. Kostadin Kirilov Nushev**

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On the PhD dissertation on the topic :

"The idea of reincarnation in the Eastern religions" (Theological analysis)

Field of higher education: Humanities

Professional field: 2.4. Religion and theology

Scientific specialty: History of religions

Name of the doctoral student: Victoria Albert Traykova

Victoria Traykova's dissertation presented for public defense is dedicated to a current theological problem in the field of History of Religions, Systematic Theology and Comparative Studies of Religions. The dissertation research was developed within the scientific specialty "History of Religions" under the scientific guidance of Prof. Dr. Clara Toneva in the doctoral program at the Department of "Systematic Theology". The topic of the dissertation is relevant for the Bulgarian theological science and for the research of the religious doctrine and the different views and ideas about the reincarnation in the eastern religions. The topic was developed with a view to Christian theology, and its scientific development contributes to the specification, expansion and deepening of research in this scientific field of theology, and specifically on this topic, in the scientific specialties of History of Religions, Christian Apologetics and other scientific and theological disciplines from the circle of Systematic Theology.

1. Data for the doctorate, the abstract, the dissertation and the publications.

During the training and scientific work of the doctoral student Victoria Traykova on the topic of the doctoral research, and in the course of the procedure for internal discussion and preparation for the defense of the dissertation, all necessary legal and academic requirements were met and no violations of the Regulations and legal norms of the Academic Staff Development Act have been committed.

The dissertation, which contains 280 pages, meets the general requirements of the law for doctoral research, contains the necessary structural components, sources, scientific-critical

research on the topic, scientific bibliography and scientific conclusions. There are the necessary scientific publications in connection with the topic of the dissertation (3 publications), which demonstrate specific results of the undertaken theoretical theological and critical research and testify to the achieved scientific results. The abstract of the dissertation correctly reflects the content and presents the main theses, plan and structure of the research, results, conclusions and contributions of the doctoral dissertation.

2. Short description and scientific contributions of the dissertation

The dissertation is developed within a well-prepared plan for presentation and systematic distribution of content, and the individual components of the study are logically and compositionally arranged in the preface, introduction, three main chapters and conclusion. In terms of content, the dissertation presents a theological-systematic review and critical analysis of the ideas of reincarnation in the main traditions of Eastern religions - Hinduism, Buddhism and various branches of Chinese religions (Taoism). A rich source and current scientific-critical and relevant theological, religious-philosophical and other literature was used, and in the study of the subject and object of research in the dissertation a complex theological, historical and comparative-religious methodology was applied. The content of the dissertation is distributed according to historical-chronological and systematic plan and reveals the complex and rich history of the idea of reincarnation in the main Eastern religious traditions, offers a critical Christian reading and theological analysis of sources and basic doctrines of the Vedic tradition and the Upanishads throughout the history of various Eastern religious teachings and practices related to reincarnation.

The first chapter traces in detail the origins of the idea of reincarnation in the main traditions of the great Eastern religions and contains a theological and comparative religious-historical analysis of doctrinal statements on the subject in Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese religious tradition. The second chapter contains a critical theological analysis of the idea of reincarnation in terms of Christianity and the teachings of the Church, the place of this idea in the ancient Greek religious and philosophical tradition and the doctrinal aspects of the problem in the Western tradition. The third chapter contains contemporary theological analysis and a Christian critical reading of the religious idea of reincarnation and its various incarnations in recent times, which are spreading as alternatives to Christian doctrines or seriously challenging the Church today in terms of its missionary and apologetic ministry. and the gospel.

The Christian truths of the faith of the resurrection, the immortality of the soul and eternal life, and the fundamental differences between spiritual awakening and moral reincarnation, according to Church teaching, and notions of reincarnation and reincarnation of the soul in Eastern religions and modern new religions are critically examined. In this last part of her research, the author shows the current connection of the idea of reincarnation in its religious dimension to some modern incarnations of this idea in various sectarian doctrines and other religious movements.

In the conclusion of the dissertation the more important results and main conclusions from the theological and religious-historical research are systematized and arranged in a logical sequence. Sufficient source and scientific literature on the topic of the dissertation was used in terms of volume and quality, and the relevant research of leading Bulgarian and foreign scientists and authorities was cited. In the course of the undertaken critical analysis, in view of the subject and object of the research, important scientific papers on the topic of Bulgarian and foreign authors were used, and the scientific bibliography included major scientific papers (256 in Bulgarian, 30 in English and other languages) of leading researchers in the field of Christian theology, apologetics, philosophy and history of religions.

3. Conclusion

In general, in her dissertation Victoria Traykova successfully realizes the goals and objectives of her doctoral research. There are the necessary results and achievements within the presented dissertation, which sufficiently reveal the achievements obtained within the undertaken research on the topic in the light of the Christian critical analysis of the idea of reincarnation. The conclusions and the contribution moments of the dissertation testify to an emphasized seriousness of the research, to the substantiated scientific interest, systematic approach and Christian critical view to the problems and various aspects of the dissertation research topic. These circumstances, along with good scientific guidance, determine the success of the study with the mentioned conclusions, contributions and results.

Based on the mentioned merits, results and contribution moments of the research, I evaluate the proposed doctoral dissertation of Victoria Traikova as a successfully completed scientific and research work that meets the requirements of the law and regulations for obtaining educational and scientific degree "Doctor". I support with a positive assessment and recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to award the candidate the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the scientific field 2.4. Religion and theology and I will vote in favor of awarding this degree.

June 14, 2022

Assoc. Prof. K. Nushev, PhD.....