According to Patristic Tradition, there is a rational or cataphatic knowledge of God, and apophatic or ineffable knowledge. The latter is superior to the former because it completes it. God is not known in His essence, however, through either of these. We know God through cataphatic knowledge only as creating and sustaining cause of the world, while through apophatic knowledge we gain a kind of direct experience of His mystical presence which surpasses the simple knowledge of Him as cause who is invested with certain attributes similar to those of the world. This latter knowledge is termed apophatic because the mystical presence of God experienced through it transcends the possibility of being defined in words. This knowledge is more adequate to God than is cataphatic knowledge.

_Dumitru Staniloae_

The aspiration of the one who accepts to become witness of Life, of Being, provokes the reaction of the little “I”. At this point this one begins the grow and becomes capable to receive the great force that works starting from the night of the Mystery. “The night of the Mystery” expresses, of course, the point of view of the one who has not penetrated it, because the Mystery, when one realizes its presence, in itself, is Light, pure transparency. Thus one must begin with the opening... As for the structures that are revealed to us, once our vision ceases to embrace only the little “I”, their study is entirely the object of mathematics. Meaning is the content of a new life, this one internalized, where our existence is finally in totality impregnated by Being. Being is the All which forms the One. This is also the Head of Creation from which the seed springs, the light-cell of matter.

_Anoushka von Heuer_
Meaning and Mystery: From the Philosophy of Knowledge to the Theology of Person

There are six main different concepts in this title: meaning, mystery, philosophy, knowledge (or philosophy of knowledge or epistemology), theology, and person. They may seem very different from each other, and rightly so, yet, there is something that brings them together in surprising ways, and this something is, in fact, somebody, and His name is the divine Logos incarnated in Jesus Christ the Saviour.

The concept of Logos - since Logos implies both word and reason - is indicative of meaning and mystery. Meaning, because of being Word, and in particular, The Word, has to have a meaning. This brings us to the cataphatic aspect of the word/Word. Mystery because the divine Logos is born of the Father before all ages, being consubstantial with the Father. Consequently, as He is born before all ages, no one after Him can encompass or exhaust His being, meaning, nature, and hence, the apophatic aspect of it.

The Logos is subject to Philosophy and Theology, because both deal with meaning. As pre-Christian philosophers, such as Heraclitus of Ephesus for example, in their attempt to understand and explain the world came up with, actually invented, the concept of Logos, Logos is a major philosophical starting point of reflection and because of that, a source of knowledge.

Yet, since this Logos, present in vague ways in pre-Christian philosophies, is the counterpart (or even same part!) of Christian Biblical Theology and then of Christian Systematic Theology, when it comes to His incarnation in Jesus Christ, that brings us into the field of Theology and of Personhood.

Thus, several fields of belief, life and reflection are brought together in one single mathematical-theological equation: the multiple equals the one.

In this Symposium, experts from different fields in the Humanities will explore the logic and the paradox of these philosophical and theological concepts and will reflect on either their common denominator or on their proper nature and on the contribution they bring to a fruitful interchange of ideas, knowledge and experience.

Theodor Damian