The study deals with Max Scheler, Erik Ahlman and Lauri Rauhala’s ideas of the human being, and its focus is on spirituality, values and the question “what is a human being?”

Scheler applies the phenomenological method to e.g. ethics, religious philosophy and sociology. According to Scheler’s outlook on life, emotion – in its spiritual form – guides and defines the contents of life, rules the world and history, but emotion is also irrational and makes the source of creative energy. Furthermore, Scheler favours metaphysical individualism which puts emphasis on the “self’s” independency and value as concrete and existential and denies its deriving from the idea of spiritual. In spirituality the human being is somehow committed to deity. Spirituality is however an autonomous and original circle of being, self-supporting and super-individual. Spiritual activity is a person’s activity. A person is a psychophysical whole. Human beings are part of the Cosmos.

Ahlman studies the human being with the aid of special features deriving from spirituality. The prime mover of spiritual activity is the spiritual fundament of the human being. It is not the same as the conscious, thinking ego but by thinking we can become aware of it. The spirit is self-understanding. As Ahlman puts it, the human being is a rational being which is equipped with the ability to understand oneself. The word ‘spirit’ is positive to its value. The superego is the spirit’s implementation in the human being. Truthfulness and emotionality make the spirit. Volition’s world takes action in the human being. It is singular and absolute but also problematic: volition has emotions with it. Volition manifests itself as ethical awareness. Its special quality becomes clear in expressions. All activity contains intuition. Intuition makes us understand what cannot be understood by sense. Intuition goes hand in hand with intellect and serves it. Values and volition are inner realities, even though they have their expression on the outside. Metaphysics appears in the human being’s impersonality: the human being approaches the spirit, represents a timeless idea.

Rauhala takes the human being as an individual, a holistic whole, applying the idea of the human being and the view on the human being, the ontological-philosophical analysis to his studies. According to Rauhala’s trichotomy, the concept of being consists of physicality, consciousness and situationality. Those are features which have rational grounds. Spirituality belongs to the highest level of consciousness. The human being’s uniqueness in the world is based on the hidden wisdom of evolution in that the human being has developed awareness of the ego and the world. The human being is a person. Features of humanity are e.g. consciousness, intentionality, the unconscious, the conscious and ethicality. To work ethicality requires a human individual.

The distinguishing feature of these three philosophers is their different approach to the problem. Common for them are their aims to obtain knowledge to solve the problem of the human being.

Main sources:
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