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## Section:

# PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSONALITY

## FAITH IN GOD AS A PSYCHIC FACTOR IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING

VIKTOR MOSKALETS

**Abstract.** The analysis of the human's position in the modern world suggests that faith in God is a vital factor in the state of their spiritual well-being and consequently the strategic paradigm for all forms of psychological help. For the unbiased mind, the miracles of grace and the axiological truth of the humanistic religions are convincing arguments in favour of choosing faith in God. They are evidence that the existence of this world, the being of humanity are blessed with meaning and purpose. An effective strategy in helping a person to shape their dispositional stance after they have rationally accepted faith in God is to emphasize a significant aspect of the true 'fear of God' – the one who believes in afterlife does not want to find themselves in Hell for their sins; it forms the psychological basis of compliance with religious moral guidelines.

**Keywords:** faith in God, state of well-being, miracle, humanistic religion, being blessed with meaning and purpose, existential anxiety, frustration.

Science does not provide evidence which could either confirm or refute the existence of the transcendental (supernatural) world and God as its integral embodiment (personification) in human religious consciousness. Though scientists can and should study why mankind embraces God because faith has an enormous positive influence on the human psyche and therefore on all social connections and relations. According to the strategic concept of the World Health Organization, the individual's general health depends on their subjective state of well-being; this indicates the utmost importance of investigating religious faith and its psychotherapeutic, psychocorrective, psychoprophylactic, psychohygienic possibilities.

The psychotherapeutic aspects of faith in God was studied by many researchers (F. Schleiermacher, S. Kierkegaard, M. Heidegger, L. Shestov, K. Jaspers, G. Boysen, J. Oliver, W. James, P. Tillich and others), but the problem has never been analyzed in detail from the perspective of the general state of the individual's well-being.

It is generally known that a person believes certain information to be true if they trust the individuals or groups who present it or the sources of information; the level of trust is in its turn fully determined by their prestige [3, p. 137-142]. Though employing practical, empirical and/or theoretical, scientific methods, one can verify the truthfulness and precision of information. For instance, millions of people believed in the communist and Nazi ideas, which proved utterly mendacious. The remarkable achievements of paleontology, comparative morphology, embryology, physiology, biochemistry, ethology, population genetics provide abundant evidence supporting Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, at least its basic ideas. I use the term *trust* in the meaning of considering something

(information, idea, concept) as true or real, not asking for verification; it refers to the facts of 'earthly', material world, which the individual's mind is able to analyze and comprehend; while the term *confidence* refers to one's readiness to trust in something (information, idea, concept, etc.).

I agree with P. Tillich's interpretation of the phenomenon called healing through faith; according to him, faith healing, in the modern sense of the term, is an attempt at healing other persons or oneself through an act of intensive concentration on the healing force other persons or a person himself/herself possess(es). There really is such healing force in people and nature, and it can really be actualized through appropriate acts of concentration [6, p. 203]. I believe this phenomenon, which so far evades scientific explanation, can be called absolute confidence.

Religious faith is significantly, distinctly different from such trust and confidence; no 'earthly' (scientific, empirical) methods can verify it because in its essence, it does not belong to the material world of natural causes; faith concerns transcendental phenomena, which are beyond the possibilities of human science. The supernatural, if it really exists, is arranged and organized in a way that is radically different from the natural, earthly world. How it is arranged we cannot know; human intellect is incapable of conducting cognitive research into the sphere of the transcendental. People know only those things about it which it chooses to tell them – it reveals itself in the forms people are able to comprehend; we call them Holy Theophany, Incarnation, revelations, miracles; or they are people's fantasies, cherished dreams, what they think about it or ascribe to it. So people have only one alternative (strictly disjunctive) option in what concerns the cognitive bases of their attitude to the supernatural and God as its integral personification: either to believe in Him or not. But if the individual cannot prove non-existence of being/thing in whose existence he/she does not believe, such unbelief is actually the belief in the opposite of what he/she rejects.

Thus the essence of faith in God (religious faith) may be regarded as the individual's assurance of the existence of God and the Supernatural world despite the fact that it is impossible to provide any scientific (analytical or empirical) proof for that.

In *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, C. G. Jung says, 'I have treated many hundreds of patients. Among those in the second half of life – that is to say, over thirty-five – there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given their followers, and none of them has really been healed who did not regain his religious outlook' [8; 9].

This stunning statement of the founder of analytical psychology inspires us to study religious faith as a means of healing those in need of psychological help.

Researches on the human problems in the modern world give us every reason to suppose that a sincere faith in God is a necessary and uncontested condition for the individual's general well-being; hence it is a strategic paradigm for all forms of psychological help (psychotherapy, psychocorrection, psychoprophylactics, etc.). Human experience shows that the Renaissance and the Enlightenment optimism about the human mind and science as its mightiest weapon is, using a politically correct word, an exaggeration since now humanity faces a real threat of self-destruction. The conceited and arrogant human mind cannot confront the general crisis of spirituality and morality, which clearly shows itself in the dominance of egotism, selfinterest, decline of the system of values of individuals and groups; in the global overwhelming lust for easy money and profit; in immorality, carelessness, thoughtlessness, irresponsibility. Things from which they get no benefit, so-called 'high matters' (the questions of religion, morality, world view, ideology, social life, art and aesthetics) are of little interest for self-centred individuals. It is this rapacious, profit-seeking, greedy, mercenary exploitation of modern super-powerful technologies that cause the global ecological crisis. The weapon of mass destruction controlled by such individuals presents a real threat of thermonuclear apocalypse [3, p. 14-19].

This brief account of the hazards for humanity living on a 'highly active volcano' points to at least two conclusions:

1. Either in a short period of time humanity (de facto, not just de jure) makes high spiritual and moral values the cornerstone of its being or it faces the threat of self-destruction brought about

by utilitarian and rapacious exploitation of super-powerful technologies and/or the use of the weapon of mass destruction.

2. If the Higher Powers do not avert future cosmic and planetary cataclysms predicted by scientist, the human civilization will be destroyed.

The first conclusion cannot be ignored; the second one is far from being utopian. Firstly, in the developed countries and the progressive developing countries, social relations are governed by the rule of law based on 'Human Rights' – the legal equivalent of the humanistic paradigm of philosophy, ideology, and politics. And the roots of modern humanism are the Christian morality of love [3, p. 149-162].

Secondly, nobody can deny that some mysterious forces keep averting planetary disasters on Earth, preventing them. For example, according to the scientific researches, the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe might have been much more disastrous. The scientists cannot explain why they turned out to be considerably less devastating than the predictions had led to believe. Thousands of people in Siberia and other places on the planet witnessed some strange capsules catch, hold, and break big meteorites. The scientists confirm these facts, but the human mind cannot explain them. Prevention of such planetary catastrophes is deeply humane because it stimulates optimistic faith in the high meaning of human life and human civilization: humanity is not alone facing destructive natural and technogenic cataclysms. The Almighty cares about us, protects us, and, hopefully, will keep on protecting us if we are worthy of His care.

These grave risks to human civilization make us look more closely at the main problem of humanity, which actually lies at the basis of existentialism, – the inevitability of death, the inescapable end of human life. The individual, who has come to the world – though they are never asked to give their consent for that to happen – will sooner or later have to leave it, will die, and this will also happen regardless of their will. The individual has their dreams, they hope for future benefits and tomorrow's happiness until they realize that the inexorable march of time inevitably brings them to death. Thinking about their existence in time, the individual comes to a dawning realization that their life has its beginning and its end, that they – unavoidably, hopelessly, and decisively – belong in time, their most powerful enemy, which mercilessly brings them to the 'termination date'. Having fully realized the sad prospect, the individual asks themselves a question, 'Does human life has any sense? Isn't it absurd? Is it worth all the efforts, doing one's best, all the sufferings if all people come to the same end – death, and one does not know how and when they will die? In addition, it is quite probable that sooner or later, everything one values and holds dear – family, friends, civilization, nature, culture, nation – will also be gone.

A. Camus studied the key existential problem most thoughtfully and intently. He interprets it as a contradiction between the individual's aspiration towards kinship with the world and boundless belonging in the world, which gives them understanding of the high meaning of their existence in the Universe, on the one hand; and their realization of the inevitability of death, alienation from the world, the world's indifference to them and their fate, on the other. 'If man realized that the universe like him can love and suffer, he would be reconciled. If thought discovered in the shimmering mirrors of phenomena eternal relations capable of summing them up and summing themselves up in a single principle, then would be seen an intellectual joy of which the myth of the blessed would be but a ridiculous imitation' [10]; [1, p. 283]. But the human mind cannot satisfy these aspirations. 'If the only significant history of human thought were to be written, it would have to be the history of its successive regrets and its impotences. <...> I realize that if through science I can seize phenomena and enumerate them, I cannot, for all that, apprehend the world.' Human desire to know the truth about their existence always runs up against the unsurmountable, impenetrable barriers, which demonstrates the absurdity of the individual's and humanity's existence [10]; [1, p. 234-236].

These existential discoveries cause a permanent negative emotional state, which colours the individual's thoughts and behavior; the existentialists have dubbed it spiritual nausea. The main elements of such state are revulsion and anxiety, the latter covers the anxiety of fate and death, and the anxiety of emptiness and the complete absence of meaning of life. The term 'fate' points out the

inevitability of death, the individual's inability to avoid it, to avert the real danger of losses, ruination (illnesses, accidents, purposeful destruction by enemy hands, etc.) [11]; [6, p. 32]. According to Tillich, anxiety is the awareness that nonbeing is irremovably part of one's being, which constitutes the definition of human finitude.

The burden of spiritual nausea is the integrated product of the individual's realizing, comprehending, and emotionally experiencing existential absurdity of their position in the world; hence it is possible to get rid of this burden destroying one of the components whose combination results in this position – either the world or oneself or the pride of the mind, which believes that the only truth is the things it can examine 'by touch' using its rational and scientific methods. The individual cannot destroy the world (if we forget for a moment about the possibility of ecological and thermonuclear omnicide). The analysis of self-destruction (suicide) for ontological reasons (the desire to get rid of the burden of spiritual nausea) is beyond the scope of this article. The futility of such an action is discussed in my previous works [2, p. 73-76]. A. Camus emphatically rejects suicide [1, p. 214-318]. Consider the following quotation from his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*: 'It is a commonplace to compare philosophical theories and the behavior of those who profess them. But it must be said that of the thinkers who refused a meaning to life none except Kirilov who belongs to literature, Peregrinos who is torn of legend, and Jules Lequier who belongs to hypothesis, admitted his logic to the point of refusing that life. Schopenhauer is often cited, as a fit subject for laughter, because he praised suicide while seated at a well-set table' [10]; [1, p. 226].

The majority of the existentialists rejected the burden of the arrogant mind. For example, K. Jaspers reached the conclusion that the fiasco of the human mind in the sphere of the central existential problem irrevocably directs it towards the Transcendental, towards God. L. Shestov's statement is categorical and emotional: 'The only way out is where there is no way out for the human mind. Otherwise why would we need God? We ask God to do the impossible. To do the possible, humans will suffice.' S. Kierkegaard called to fully sacrifice the human intellect to God because the believer triumphs in their intellectual fall – faith in God gives their life ultimate meaning, feeling of belonging to the absolute Truth, Good, Beauty; fervent hope for the immortality of the soul. People's life would become perpetual and unbearable despair if they had irrefutable evidence that there is no almighty and merciful God, who had high and good purpose creating the world, who rules this world, takes care of them, loves them, and gives everyone the hope for happy immortality; and that the world is the seething of dark forces and passions with nothing beyond it but emptiness, abyss.

A. Camus called such sacrifice of the critical mind burden to faith in God 'flight from the Absurd'. According to him, the 'escapist philosophers' demonstrated the existential absurdity only in order to immediately dispel it. The exquisite sophistication and the deep analysis of the absurdity of the human's position in the world he called rhetorical jugglery; and any attempt to present the irrational desert of such position as the transcendental truth, the humiliation of thought. The might of the existential absurd lies in its ability to wreck illusory human hopes; the might of the individual in their proud single combat against the absurd. The idea that faith in God is our protection against the absurd veils the latter. Recognizing the existence of the incomprehensible transcendental in order to explain with the help of its reasoning the absurdity of human existence does not explain it because it is impossible to rationally explain the irrational with the help of the irrational.

Having comprehended the existential absurd, the individual with a clear mind, a brave critical thinker, does not fool themselves, but courageously resists it; the critical mind does not agree to pay any price for the consolation of hope; it accepts the world in which there is no place for hope. Thus for all its limitations and weaknesses, it has its strength. As the same time, according to A. Camus, such a mind has no valid reasons to deny the existence of the transcendental, of God, who takes care of people and their earthly being; the philosopher even suggests that God may reveal Himself to people when their consciousness affirms goodness and sanctity [1, p. 244-250].

But it has not happened yet and the comprehending individual enters this world knowing that the hell of human life is their only kingdom. It arouses their passions, feelings, sharpens their senses of beauty and poetics, forms and colours, makes their craving for the beautiful ever stronger; they aspire

to the things which, according to F. Nietzsche, make this life worth living and give high pleasure – courage, art, music, dance, wisdom, spirit, everything that is creative, exquisite, mad, heavenly. A. Camus also mentioned the pleasures of the flesh, tenderness, creativity, nobility. Filling their life with these things, the individual with a clear mind, a brave critical thinker, a proud and courageous rebel, challenges the irrational, indifferent, and hostile world. According to the philosophers, there is nothing greater and more beautiful than such a rebellion of the individual against far more powerful forces.

Though in my opinion, one needs specific masochistic qualities for such a philosophically sophisticated rebellion, since the individual draws inspiration for life, energy for fight and creation from despair and 'nausea' of existential frustration. In order for this frustration, sufferings to become a source of inspiration and a vital force, they have to be some specific 'hellish' pleasure, which is actually a form of masochism. Apparently such 'masochists' are not numerous. So, if faith in God saves people from sufferings caused by their being aware of the existential absurd and experiencing it, we can validly state that such faith has high psychoprophylactic and psychotherapeutic power and significance [3, p. 119-120, 162-172].

Unlike A. Camus, an outstanding Ukrainian psychologist V. Romenets believes that miracles are good enough evidence of the veracity of the religious teaching [5, p. 611]. There is a multitude of reports, in mass media in particular, about miracles happening in the world and miracles which affected the human psyche. Science fails to explain many of them, nor can it satisfactorily answer the question about their origin, nor can it prove the deliberate or unwitting falsifications of facts. Mysterious prevention of planetary cataclysms has been mentioned above. I can point out another miracle that has been occurring *regularly* for centuries – the *Holy Fire* that has mysterious properties; not on the same day, but on Holy Saturday, the day preceding Orthodox Easter, a moveable feast, it ignites in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Another phenomenon should be mentioned. 'For more than a year, starting on the eve of Tuesday, April 2, 1968, the Blessed Holy Virgin Saint Mary, Mother of God, appeared in different forms over the domes of the Coptic Orthodox Church named after Her at Zeitoun, Cairo, Egypt. <...> The apparitions were seen by millions of Egyptians and foreigners. Among the witnesses were Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, Moslems, Jews and non-religious people from all walks of life' [12]. There is abundant evidence that the human soul survives the death of the body. A. Camus does not write about such phenomena. We do not know how his proud critical mind would explain them.

Neither scientists nor politicians nor educators nor psychologists give proper attention to such miracles and mysteries. Apparently it is the influence of the proud Renaissance mind, which sees the truth only in the facts it can explain and prove using its own rational-cognitive-scientific methods. From the perspective of humanistic axiology, the truth of religious and secular axiological teachings, of their spiritual values and principles is established not ontologically, but through their influence on people's psyche and human relations. It means that they are true is they assert humanism, spirituality, morality, nobility as basic principles of the individual's life and human relations; and it does not matter whether the objectivity and truthfulness of the foundations of these teachings are scientifically verified or not. E. Fromm uses this criterion of truthfulness to classify religions as authoritarian or humanistic.

The individual's authoritarianism is their desire to rule and dominate, to force into obedience and total submission those dependent on them giving commands, imposing sanctions, subjecting people to repressions, using other methods of subjugation [3, p. 112-113, 138-139]. Thus the cardinal virtue of an authoritarian religion is servile submission, obedience to the authorities; and the cardinal sin is critical comprehension of its dogmas, normative and regulatory guidelines (principles, norms, rules of behaviour) sanctified on behalf of the deity. Submitting themselves to the will of their authoritarian religious leaders, the individual loses their inner freedom, right to critical thinking, to authentic choice and independent, informed, responsible decisions; instead, they gain the 'conformist' freedom [3, p. 112-121].

According to E. Fromm, the humanistic religions are human-centred; in accordance with the Christian principles of the Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, their highest values are the person's freedom, independence, development, improvement of human vital forces. In these religions, the individual is

called by God to develop their free and unbiased mind and to seek the truth – belief in the high meaning of life, their calling and place in the world, conscience, kindness and charity, ability to love other people, themselves, nature, culture. In the humanistic religions, there is no place for hate or malicious contempt, the individual must be careful that they are not self-righteous in their attitude towards sinners. The individual's conscience has to be the most severe judge when it comes to the matter of judging their sins. Pangs of conscience are the basis and the factor in the true repentance and atonement [4, p. 109-145].

Thus for the clear critical mind, the miracles of grace and the axiological truth of the humanistic religions are convincing arguments in favour of choosing faith in God because such a mind knows that in this existential semantic field it is the choice within the boundaries of faith – to believe in the existence or non-existence of the transcendental, of God. In other words, these arguments are valid enough to conclude that God had some high purpose in the creation of the material world and people; this purpose is partly revealed to people in the miracles of grace, the humanistic religious moral teachings, and the Christian moral commandments as their quintessence (the humanistic moral teachings of other religions are not discussed here; for this issue, see [4, p. 127-135]). This is why the existence of this world, the being of all humanity, the life of every person have absolutely divine meaning, which gives high meaning to all human life-giving, vital forces safely joining them into one whole. An old Christian theological postulate says, '*Esse qua esse – bonum est*' – 'Being as being is good'.

In my opinion, psychological therapy aimed at achieving spiritual well-being should start with explaining these basic ideas to clients, suggesting they should make this mental, rationally balanced existential choice. All those who suffer from frustration caused by the impossibility of achieving the desired and removing the undesired have to accept these arguments, since the latter are a steady and strong 'light at the end of the tunnel'. They can considerably ease the burden of frustration giving hope for a happy outcome, as the state of adversity is caused by negatively coloured emotions, emotional frustration.

Everybody (except for a peculiar group of those inclined to social masochism) wants to rid of their negatively coloured emotions, the desire being proportional to the intensity of these emotions. The most effective method of such purification of the soul is the removal of sources of exhausting emotions, the factors behind them. Unfortunately, this is not always possible.

Frustration is defined as a psychological state of the individual determined by objectively non-removable (or perceived as such) barriers on the way to the vitally important goals. The emotional core of the state of frustration is despair, despondency, hopelessness. It is the state typical of individuals with neuroticism because neuroses are a group of the most common neuropsychiatric disorders caused by aggravating factors, which a person suffering from neurosis cannot effectively resist. The resultant effect is permanent negatively coloured emotional state, domineering anxiety, which can be classified as 'subjective ill-being'. Presumably, many of those suffering from psychogenic, psychosomatic diseases are also in the state of subjective ill-being, since the psychogenic disorder is a disease caused by negatively coloured emotions – sufferings, sorrows, fear, anxiety, envy, the sense of guilt, etc. These emotions are mostly of frustrative nature because, in the majority of cases, the factor behind them is the individual's inability to rid of the things that embitter them, to get vitally important objects, to achieve their ambitions, etc.

Modern personology and neurology state that the elements of neurosis can be diagnosed in every person and that the difference between the sick and the healthy soul is of quantitative nature. The psychosomatic nature of most diseases is a clear proof of this statement; the signs of these diseases, to say the least, can be diagnosed even in the healthiest person. So many of those people whose negatively coloured emotions have not reached the level of frustration yet, have not triggered neurotic and psychosomatic diseases need psychological salvation from the state of ill-being. It means that the turning to faith in God can be psychic basis for their personal well-being.

I have professional experience of communicating with people whose genuine desire was to go into non-existence, to rid of their lives because their life burden was more than they could endure. They were suffering unbearable heartache caused by negatively coloured emotional state, which is the

decisive motive for non-pathological suicide. Analyzing their psychological state, we used the notions of religious origin – ‘hell’ and ‘heaven’. They agreed that for them, life was hell; so absolute non-existence seemed heaven, which would rid them of hellish tortures; subconsciously, they were guided by the psychological postulate – pleasure is the absence of sufferings. Then the questions arose: What if, as claimed by religion, suicide is not the way to non-existence? What if this cardinal sin is punishable by an even greater hell? Maybe a person has to deserve the ‘heaven’ of non-existence, as they actually have to deserve any ‘heaven’.

Having agreed that there are no convincing, incontrovertible answers to these questions, my clients and I proceed further. The hell of intolerable heartache negates and ruins human life, as many other negative things in this world do. But every living thing or being has vital force, which is the source of their resistance to destruction and their power to establish themselves. Who or what gives them this super-powerful force in all its wondrous manifestations? There are no convincing and incontrovertible answers to these questions either. But the miraculous power of this force makes a wise and reasonable person join it, deliberately activate it in themselves instead of resisting it.

Many of my clients who suffer in the ‘hell’ of being and wish they were in the ‘heaven’ of non-existence (not to mention other frustrated persons in the state of ill-being) take interest in these arguments and finally accept them.

If a client's rational mind can accept faith in God the Creator of being, the idea of being as blessing, and the high meaning of human life, we can move on and try to change the client's disposition; at this stage, the Apostle Paul's aphorism *The sting of death is sin* (1 Corinthians 15-56), whose brilliance of artistic and aesthetic form rivals only that of its existential and ethical content, can be used as the key principle. As mentioned above, many potential suicides, for whom life is a real ‘hell’ and non-existence is an imaginary ‘heaven’, are afraid of suicidal death; presumably because it is a cardinal sin and the severe punishment is still greater hell. That is, we speak about an important aspect of the ‘fear of God’: a person who at least assumes the existence of afterlife cannot but fear the possibility of finding themselves in Hell for their sins. This fear of death is the key psychological factor in compliance with religious moral guidelines.

I will not discuss here the matters of psychological phenomenology of the individual's humanistic religious morality, which are highlighted in my other publications [3, p. 149-162; 4, p. 123-146]. I would only stress that providing psychological help involves appealing to a client's sense of duty to people and things that are important for them – to those with whom the individual psychologically identifies themselves (children, parents, spouse, other family members), fatherland, nation, nature, culture, and others. My experience proves that the actualized sense of duty stimulates the equal measure of love, whose psychological phenomenology I define in terms of Jesus' Commandments of Love [3, p. 155-157]; rationally, consciously actualized love heightens the sense of duty. Thus the positively productive reverberation circle is triggered in the individual's psyche.

I believe that faith in God (religious faith) becomes complete and gives the individual a powerful spiritual force after they have obtained the grace of conversion to God and experienced religious ecstasy as its brightest manifestation, i.e. if they have their personal ecstatic experience in communication with God and trusting Him. This grace is the most reliable and inexhaustible and powerful source of the individual's subjective well-being: blessed is the one who believes. Unfortunately, neither intellectual, conscious efforts nor any actions can get one such grace [4, p. 164-165]. But I disapprove of contemptuous attitude to rational, ‘purely intellectual’ faith in God, which is sometimes unfairly regarded as incomplete, ‘untrue’. Firstly, there is no faith, as there is no any other conscious psychic phenomenon, without rational, logical and intellectual grounds – it is the necessary basis of faith [4, p. 146-149]. Secondly, as a practicing psychologist, I can state that for a clear, critical mind of the individual who seeks salvation from ill-being caused by any kind of frustration, the above arguments in favour of faith in God might be quite a safe psychic ‘outpost’ for self-defense against this frustration; it gives the individual spiritual compensation for sustained losses, helps to foster the disposition to love and doing good. As to the grace of conversion to God, the individual who

does not receive it has to obediently accept the fact that rational, 'purely intellectual' faith is allotted them by the Higher Power.

As to doubts the individual's critical mind can harbor, I will cite P. Tillich. In *The Dynamics of Faith* he states that 'There is no faith without an intrinsic "in spite of" and the courageous affirmation of oneself in the state of ultimate concern. This intrinsic element of doubt breaks into the open under special individual and social conditions. If doubt appears, it should not be considered as the negation of faith, but as an element which was always and will always be present in the act of faith. Existential doubt and faith are poles of the same reality, the state of ultimate concern' [13, p. 223]; [6, p. 198]. In other words, doubts are immanent in living faith in God because it is not based on the flawless arguments of human rational cognition, it is an existential choice and no guarantee is given. Removing doubts, the individual makes their faith stronger.

As to participation in the life of the church and religious communities to which the individual belongs, for instance, attending the worships and taking part in the rituals, in my opinion, they should do it if they wish; such activities, their forms, structures, means of influence symbolically represent the holy, the transcendental. These activities help to perceive the actual presence of the Higher Power, they are the 'daily bread' for faith, without them faith becomes abstract and empty [4, p. 55-83].

Thus the analysis of the modern individual's position in the world shows that the sincere faith in God is a vital factor in their state of well-being and consequently the strategic paradigm for all forms of psychological help.

After the individual who appeals for such help has rationally (intellectually) accepted faith in God as the Creator of being and being as blessing, which gives human life its high meaning, a client and the psychologist can start working on a client's new dispositional stance: an important component of the true 'fear of God' is the fear of the punishment for sins, including the sin of suicide. This fear of death is the key psychological factor in complying with religious moral guidelines.

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**Address:** Viktor Moskalets, Vasyly Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, 57, Shevchenko Str., Ivano-Frankivsk, 76025, Ukraine.

**E-mail:** bober.it@gmail.com.

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Москалець Віктор. Україна і Польща перед викликами ХХІ століття. *Журнал Прикарпатського університету імені Василя Стефаника*, 4 (2) (2017), 79–87.

В основі українсько-польських відносин лежать пошуки спільної стратегічної мети, яка на кожному історичному етапі втілюється в життя народів-сусідів. Складність міждержавного партнерства пов'язана із розташуванням України й Польщі на цивілізаційній межі, на котрій відбувались історичні катаклізми. Водночас упродовж століть пріоритетом суспільного розвитку була боротьба обох народів за державність. Новим етапом українсько-польського єднання стало визнання Польщею незалежності України, що засвідчило зрілість польської політичної еліти. Польща доклала багато зусиль для пропаганди інтересів України на міжнародній арені. Визначена періодизація процесів зміцнення українсько-польського партнерства.

Досвід Польщі на шляху трансформації суспільства став для України платформою для моделювання свого політичного курсу.

Польща як член Європейського Союзу всіляко підтримує Україну в її євроінтеграційному та євроатлантичному русі. Посилюється економічне співробітництво. Важливою ланкою міждержавних зв'язків став розвиток співпраці на міжрегіональному рівні, між органами місцевого самоврядування. Поступово вирішується питання вдосконалення візового режиму, налагоджуються міжлюдські контакти. На порозі ХХІ ст. відбувся перелом у свідомості українців і поляків щодо складних періодів в історії українсько-польських відносин у минулому.

**Ключові слова:** Україна, Польща, історіософія, українсько-польські відносини, міжнародне партнерство, політичні еліти, євроінтеграція, візовий режим, регіональна безпека.