

Worldview Essence and Cosmic Connotations of Religious Feelings

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The purpose of this study is to identify the essence and features of the cosmic nature of religious feelings, their various meanings, which are unfolded in the system of the "Person-Absolute" relationship. The authors reveal the essence of cosmic religious feeling as the experience of unity, the harmony of a person with nature, with the Universe, in which the experience of beauty (aesthetic feelings), sacred (religious feelings), moral (moral feelings), and intellectual (scientific feelings) are combined. In the trinity of religious feelings — immediate experience, manifestation, and comprehension — certain spiritual existential meanings are fixed, which reflect the unity of the human and the Divine, the finite and the infinite. The authors compare such phenomena as "cosmic religious feeling," "transpersonal experiences," and "peak experiences" and describes their similarities and differences. Religious feeling is immanently inherent in life-meaning orientation, which is associated with the experience of infinity, immortality, and that is due to socio-cultural realities. Religious feeling "expresses" the desire to go beyond the finite, to establish itself in the infinite, and thereby contribute to the integrity of the personality. It should be noted that these experiences are of great importance for the person, differing in generalization, originality, and relate mainly to the emotional states. The authors conclude that the infinity is inherent in religious feelings, which leads to the presentation of them as a cosmic religious feeling that combines religious, intellectual, and aesthetic features resulting in the formation of cosmic consciousness as a certain worldview strategy.

Keywords: religious feelings, cosmic religious feeling, transpersonal experiences, peak experiences, cosmism, William James, Albert Einstein, Stanislav Grof, Abraham Maslow

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Introduction

The modern globalized world, diversifying all spheres of human life, harbors a number of dangers associated, on the one hand, with environmental disasters, nuclear wars, resource depletion, overpopulation of the planet, economic inequality, etc., and on the other, with depreciation of traditional system of values, with loss of the mental and spiritual wealth of humanity. Moreover, the dramatic events of the present affect not only the content of ideals, values, life-meaning attitudes of religious processes but also form new imperatives in the understanding of a religious phenomenon, in particular, the sphere of feelings. The problem of understanding religious feelings is one of the key issues in both theological and scientific discourse. After all, religious feelings are the components of religion and form a religious identity. They become an important factor in the construction of a person's meaning of life and value orientations, and, therefore, are able to influence the attitude and worldview of the person.

It is important to note that in Modern Philosophical and Religious Discourse, there is virtually no deep research on the phenomenon of "religious feelings." In a few studies on this issue, attention is mainly drawn to individual manifestations of religious feelings, their structure, functional aspects, and role in the creation of the human world. However, the problem of the essential features of religious feelings, their different types of manifestation, including their cosmic dimension, requires a detailed scientific investigation.

Methodology for the study of the phenomenon of "religious feeling"

First of all, we should note that the whole range of meanings of the concept of "religious feeling" turns around the concept of "experience." To get closer to the understanding of the process of "experiencing," let us turn first to the analysis of definitions existing in literature, that is, we will look at it through the prism of certain interpretative fields, to clarify the features and traditions of its usage. Usually, in everyday speech, the term "experience" is used as a certain personal state, its reaction to a certain object, event, etc.

German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, exploring the origin of the word "Erlebnis," concludes that in the 18th century, there was no such word in the German texts. The philosopher emphasizes: "Schleiermacher's appeal to living feeling against the cold rationalism of the Enlightenment, Schiller's call for aesthetic freedom against mechanistic society, Hegel's contrast between life (later, spirit) and "positivity," were the forerunners of the protest against modern industrial society, which at the beginning of our century made the words Erlebnis and Erleben become almost sacred clarion calls" (Gadamer, 2006: 55). Gadamer noted that the concept of "Erlebnis" arises on the wave of Romanticism, which swept through philosophy, literature with its cult of feelings, the rejection of normativity, and the rise of the artist's creative activity. The philosopher emphasizes that the word "Erleben" means primarily "to be still alive when something happens" (Gadamer, 2006: 53). Later its meaning "consists precisely in mediating between the two meanings and in seeing these meanings as a productive union: something becomes an "experience" not only insofar as it is experienced, but insofar as its being experienced makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance" (Gadamer, 2006: 53). This thorough study of the history of the concept and the analysis of the thoughts of various scholars enabled Gadamer to determine the proximity of the structure of "experience" as the way of being aesthetic and to formulate the concept of "aesthetic experience," which contains the experience of an infinite as a whole. In this aspect of consideration, it "demonstrates" the semantic coincidence with "religious experience."

Methodologically significant for our research are the ideas about the experiences in the works of the Georgian philosopher Merab Mamardashvili, in which he indicates that the limits of the possible and the impossible are presented in the experience: "...this undoubted experience we always feel as a boundary experience, with the help of which we face the impossibility of the possible or the possible impossibility" (Mamardashvili, 2002: 287-288). The philosopher calls such experiences "tying up acts," staying in which we carry out certain spiritual acts, which reflect the process of correlating of the world of human life with its value-semantic formations. As a result, it represents what is subjectively meaningful for the person. Especially, this can be vividly manifested in tense situations, life crises.

In our opinion, it was the American philosopher, psychologist William James who, for the first time, tried to conceptualize the phenomenon of religious feeling by defining its features that lay in the intentionality (are directed at the object) and the role they play in human life. He noted: "Religion shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine" (James, 1902: 32). James stressed that religious feelings are the deepest source of religion. As the content of visual senses is light, the content of auditory senses is sound, the content of religious feeling is the existence of the Supreme Being, God, which makes it possible to distinguish that common, inherent in all religions (James, 1902).

Referring to James's "The Variety of Religious Experience," Stephanie Gripentrog draws attention to the fact that religious experience is a purely personal phenomenon — a person cannot receive it from another person as ordinary information. It is always perceived personally, and, most importantly, experienced personally. In this sense, it is impossible to "get" it, but it needs to be experienced. Therefore, it is quite clear that it is precisely due to the intensification of religious feelings, the personal experience, "the subjective power of the persuasion of such experiences seems to be overwhelming and can scarcely be questioned anymore" (Gripentrog, 2018: 246).

Consequently, religious feelings are, firstly, an immediate experience, which reflects the feeling of a certain mental state receiving experience in the "man-Absolute" system, secondly, a manifestation in which various forms of explication of internal states and processes are realized, thirdly, comprehension, in which the inner work of self-awareness takes place according to the awareness of mental states and the whole existential situation. The Ukrainian philosopher, psychologist Denys Predko, revealing the dynamic, life-meaning nature of religious feelings, draws attention to the fact that "the concept of infinity, eternity, immortality is closely connected with religious feelings since the attraction to eternity is a person's awareness of both his mortality and personal higher purpose" (Predko, 2018: 46). Therefore, the religious feelings are characterized by the ability to go beyond the limits of "Self" and thereby overcome the finality, including a person and all the uniqueness of his being in the context of infinity.

Cosmic nature of religious feelings

In this study, we will be interested, first of all, in that aspect of religious feelings, in which the unity of the personal and the Divine, finite and the infinite is revealed. Thus the cosmic character of religious feelings is manifested.

Let us turn to the reflections of Albert Einstein, who drew attention to the relationship between the nature of feelings and the form of human religiosity. He noted that quite diverse feelings, which have a certain structure in the historical genesis, are involved in the formation of religious experiences. In this case, the scientist considers them as certain "stages," where each has a functional specification.

Therefore, in primitive societies, religions arise from the experience of fear. This feeling can be identified as a psychological response to danger. Later, as Einstein notes, social impulses become a source of religiosity: the religion of fear is transformed into a moral religion. In this case, religious feeling acquires an axiological dimension. Its emergence is correlated with an awareness that someone's actions may be incompatible with various religious precepts. Einstein stated that both of the above-mentioned historical "stages" of religious feelings are characterized by an anthropomorphic conception of God.

The highest stage of the development of religious feeling is a cosmic religious feeling, where the anthropomorphic character of God conception is overcome. Such a feeling is inherent in developed societies and especially in talented people. What is the essence of this feeling? Einstein explains it this way: "The individual feels the futility of human desires and aims and the sublimity and marvelous order which reveal themselves both in nature and in the world of thought. Individual existence impresses him as a sort of prison, and he wants to experience the Universe as a single significant whole" (Einstein, 1930). In this sense, religious feeling becomes a powerful and most noble factor of scientific research. "If we recall that, for him, music was an expression of religious feeling and that often, while playing music, he "suddenly" found the solution to a scientific problem that had intrigued him for some time" (Jammer, 2002: 56).

Speaking about the tendencies towards the rapprochement of religious and scientific worldviews observed in modern science, it is necessary to note the attitude to the religion of many famous scientists, including Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Vladimir Vernadsky. The following things unite them: awareness of the unity of a person with nature, the feeling of the presence of the Universal Mind, and perception of the Harmony of the World, which Albert Einstein called "cosmic religious feeling."

The expressions "cosmic religious feeling" probably first appeared in Albert Einstein's article "Religion and Science" (1930). Such a religious feeling, according to Einstein, is the only creative religious activity. This conviction he kept until the end of his life. According to Einstein, "the religious geniuses of all ages have been distinguished by this kind of religious feeling, which knows no dogma and no God conceived in man's image" (Einstein, 1930). He believed that the cosmic religious feeling is transferred to people and is cultivated in people through art and science. Scientist emphasized: "... I maintain that the cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific research. Only those who realize the immense efforts and, above all, the devotion without which pioneer work in theoretical science cannot be achieved are able to grasp the strength of the emotion out of which alone such work, remote as it is from the immediate realities of life, can issue" (Einstein, 1930). Albert Einstein linked his understanding of the perfect structure of all that is incomprehensible, which is hidden behind the immediate experience of the rational structure of the world, with the "mathematical construction," with those forms that the human mind must freely build before their real existence is confirmed and thus, with the phenomenon of pre-established harmony and the inconceivable effectiveness of mathematics in the natural sciences. In this case, Einstein's "cosmic religious feeling" consonant with the "pre-established harmony" of David Hilbert and Platonic-Pythagorean divinity of the mathematics of the world. It is about such feelings that are mentioned in Ryan Gillespie's work "Cosmic Meaning, Awe, and Absurdity in the Secular Age: A Critique of Religious Non-Theism" (Gillespie, 2018), which considers the understanding of religion by Albert Einstein. Ryan Gillespie states that aesthetic feeling coincides with religious feelings: "It is wisdom and beauty, and it is knowledge, and it is feeling, and this knot is what he means by religion" (Gillespie, 2018: 473).

By the way, Einstein's ideas about cosmic religious feeling somewhat overlap with the phenomenon of cosmism (a number of religious-philosophical, aesthetic and natural science trends, which are based on the idea of cosmos as a structurally organized world and man as a "citizen of the world," as well as a microcosm similar to the macrocosm). The ideal of cosmism is the unity of humanity in a planetary community. It is consonant with globalist concepts. Thus, cosmic participation in eternal being is born when the unity of man and the Universe is revealed, where the experiences of religious, aesthetic, moral, intellectual phenomena coincide. The representatives of cosmism (Nikolai Fedorov, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Vladimir Vernadsky, and others) have developed worldview strategy as a semantic unity of cultural dialogue with the past and future of man and humanity, combined with the ideas of cosmic universalism and human freedom. The main idea of cosmism is the awareness of the unity of the objective world in all its manifestations, including the unity of the Universe and Person.

We will consider in greater detail the issue of finding out the essence of cosmic religious feeling, since it contains a considerable heuristic potential. Such feelings are inherent to many scientists. Philosopher Inar Mochalov (Mochalov, 1988) notes that the religious experiences of the famous scientist Vladimir Vernadsky embraced space, life, on the one hand, and creative intentions of scientific search on the other. Indeed, sometimes it happens that a scientist, fascinated by a scientific search, experiences a "cosmic religious feeling." Such a feeling was inherent to Vernadsky. However, this feeling, as Mochalov notes, is significantly different from religious feeling: "1. Religious emotions of believers in their masses usually have a sensual character. They are distinguished by their imagery, visual representation and are associated with very specific sensations — visual, auditory, etc. However, Vernadsky's emotional-religious mood has the abstract sensual character of such a generalized emotional experience, that literally all specific attributes of a religious feeling evaporate. 2. Religious feelings of believers are aimed at objects that really do not exist (God, angels, saints, etc.). Instead, Vernadsky believed that the content of religious experiences was quite real objects — Cosmos, life, person, mind, science, and scientific creativity. 3. Religious feelings of believers are accompanied by a so-called "prayerful," in essence, an irrational state of personality. On the other hand, they were accompanied by a very rational state of spirit in Vernadsky, expressed in the experiences of the process of his scientific search, and philosophical reflections" (Mochalov, 1988). Consequently, in this case, religious feelings coincide with intellectual feelings — their essence includes a rational component.

In order to find out more deeply the essence of cosmic religious feeling, let us turn to transpersonal psychology ("the fourth force in psychology," which is designed to complement the one-sidedness of the previous three projects in psychology: Psychoanalysis, Behaviorism, and Humanistic Psychology). It emerged in the USA in the late '60s of the twentieth century on the basis of a transpersonal project in culture. By the way, transpersonal psychology made a significant contribution to the reassessment of the role of the brain in the process of human mental activity, especially in such important aspects as religious feelings. The American psychologist Abraham H. Maslow rated the transpersonal movement rather highly. "For Maslow, this implied an explicit reference to transcendence, which was also to be part of his new psychological anthropology and its corresponding therapy. He wrote: "Without the transpersonal, we get sick, violent and nihilistic, or else hopeless and apathetic"" (Gripentrog, 2018: 249).

The famous researcher and psychologist Stanislav Grof introduces such a construct as transpersonal experiences (the term transpersonal is used in the sense of what is superior

to personal). According to Grof, transpersonal experiences of various types are the basis of both religious experience and religion. Most importantly, in any developed religious system, except for transpersonal experience and religious experience, there is a religious doctrine (dogma), theology, cult, church etc. However, the basis of religious faith and religious life is, precisely, the transpersonal experience. Grof identified four types of experiences: 1. Abstract and aesthetic experiences, explained by the language of the physiology and anatomy of the senses. 2. Psychodynamic experiences include our bibliographical memory, unsolved conflicts, emotions, and can be interpreted within the theory of Sigmund Freud. 3. Perinatal experiences are based on the fact that the human unconscious contains repositories or matrices, the activation of which leads to the re-experiencing painful processes of birth, death, and rebirth. 4. Considering Transpersonal experiences, Grof notes: "The common denominator of this otherwise rich and ramified group of phenomena is the subject's feeling that his or her consciousness has expanded beyond the usual ego boundaries and has transcended the limitations of time and space" (Grof, 1985: 159). Moreover, the transpersonal experiences of "mystical" varieties are quite diverse. In particular: unity with life and all of creation, both at the macro (Universe) and at the micro (world of atoms and elementary particles) level; various parapsychic (extrasensory) abilities, described by people as being in the other world, meeting with various archetypal and divine characters; intuitive understanding of universal symbols; similar to the descriptions of the experiences of adepts of the Indian psychological techniques (activation of the chakras, kundalini energy, etc.), identification with cosmic consciousness or void, etc. Mystical experiences, having a beyond-senses origin, are the immanent experience of transcendental reality. Therefore, transpersonal psychology has opened new aspects of beingness, has made a penetration in the field of transcendental. "Not only does this type of psychology represent a clear rejection of the materialistic paradigm in science, it also claims to open up a path for the connection of the individual psyche with the anima mundi and the process of man becoming one with the cosmos" (Gripentrog, 2018: 264).

According to Stanislav Grof, the identification with "undifferentiated consciousness of the Universal Mind or the Void" (Grof, 1985: 36) belongs to the peak levels of transpersonal experiences. In such a dimension, transpersonal experiences acquire the status of an event in which a person becomes united not only with humanity but also with the Universe as a whole. This new transpersonal dimension of a person is compatible with the cosmic religious feeling as a unity with the Absolute, Supernatural. Grof believed that such archetypal patterns as "The sense of cosmic unity, identification with the Universal Mind, or experience of the Supracosmic and Metacosmic Void ... have an enormous therapeutic potential" (Grof, 1985: 354).

In addition, there is a term that somewhat corresponds to the phenomenon of "cosmic religious feeling" in the writings of Sigmund Freud. It is "oceanic feeling", with which origins of religion are associated. In his work "Civilization and Its Discontents," Freud made an attempt to comprehend the essence of the oceanic feeling. The psychoanalyst does not agree with the interpretation that this feeling is the source of religion. Without denying on this basis the fact of the presence of similar feelings in other people, he raised at the same time the question of how correctly it is interpreted and can be considered a source of religious beliefs. Scientists believed that feeling could serve as a source of energy only when it is motivated by a strong need. In this respect, a religious need was derived by Freud not from the oceanic feeling, but from a child's helplessness and the adoration of the father associated with it. At the same time, Freud admitted that later this feeling turned out to be connected with religion. Freud noted: "I can imagine that the oceanic feeling became connected: with religion later on. The 'oneness with the universe' which constitutes its ideational content sounds like a first

attempt at a religious consolation, as though it were another way of disclaiming the danger which the ego recognizes as threatening it from the external world” (Freud, 1962: 7).

Paying attention to the formation of the Ukrainian religious worldview, the ideologist of Ukrainian Orthodoxy Arsen Richynsky, along with such characteristic features as the absence of any mediators between man and deity, a feeling of intimacy between a person and God, natural optimism, based on the idea of God as the human Goodness, the just Master of the world, distinguishes the cosmic feeling as the phenomenon by which the boundary between the real world and the otherworld is overcome “into the intuitive anticipation of the internal unity of the World” (Richynsky, 2002: 109).

Therefore, the cosmic religious feeling refers to beyond personal experiences. It is a feeling of the greatness of the world and personal involvement in this greatness. In this regard, the cosmic religious feeling comes closer to a mystical phenomenon, which is formed of both faith and religious beliefs.

Religious beliefs are changing with the development of social realities. When a particular religion is in crisis, a gradual process of “recoding” existing religious beliefs and ideas takes place: they become subject to critical rethinking. However, in this continuous, moving stream of religious beliefs, their driving force is still religious feelings, which, by intensifying religious faith and consolidating themselves in religious experience, nourish and intensify religion.

Consequently, the cosmic religious feeling is a kind of worldview strategy. However, the philosopher Vyacheslav Skosar notes: “Einstein’s cosmic religious feeling is not the highest type of religiosity, as the famous theoretical physicist thought, but an elegant form of natural religiosity. This form of religiosity is inherent to some people with subtle mental strings and an increased ability of abstract thinking” (Skosar, 2007). We believe that it is hardly possible to agree with this opinion. Indeed, there is a moment of unity of the human and Universal in the cosmic religious feeling, where there are no clear boundaries of the object of reflection, where the experiences of the beauty (aesthetic feelings), sacred (religious feelings), moral (moral feelings), intellectual (scientific feelings) are combined. In the latter case, we are talking about a matter of thought, which by its specification, is more philosophical than scientific.

Philosopher Mikhail Epstein in his article “About philosophical feelings and actions,” notes that since philosophy is a love of wisdom, so it is marked by some “feeling” nuances. “After all, love is a feeling, and wisdom is not only a thought, but it’s a fusion of both: the ability of emotional filling of thought and intellectual filling of feeling” (Epstein, 2014: 168). In such an intellectual and emotional union, the presence of the Divine is experienced as a factor of order and harmony of the Universe.

The American psychologist Abraham H. Maslow shares similar ideas on the essence of religious feelings. He identifies the heightened experiences of happiness, ecstasy, fulfillment as peak experiences. Moreover, “perception in the peak-experiences can be relatively ego-transcending, self-forgetful, egoless, unselfish” (Maslow, 1964: 68). During peak experiences, a person feels a sense of awe, admiration, and moments of relaxation, bliss, and peace. Maslow emphasizes: “It (peak experiences — O. Predko, D. Predko) is felt to be a highly valuable-even uniquely valuable experience, so-great an experience sometimes that even to attempt to justify it takes away from its dignity and worth” (Maslow, 1964: 68). These experiences are an ecstatic state that is experienced at the culmination moments of love and intimacy in the gusts of creativity, insight, discovery, and unity with nature.

Peak experiences, as Maslow believes, are characterized by a sense of discovery of limitless horizons, a sense of being both more powerful and more helpless than ever before, a

sense of delight and awe, a loss of space and time sense. Sometimes religious feelings cause sudden experiences. That is why the American psychologist Abraham Maslow calls such experiences “peak experiences,” the summit ones, which open up the unlimited possibilities of the person. These experiences include the feeling of God. “Peak experiences” are caused by strong feelings, works of art, music, impressions caused by an exceptional beauty of nature. Such peaks of the upswing of the emotional sphere may take from several minutes to hours. It’s very difficult to talk about them, and this is what makes such kind of experience related to each other. They are not necessarily linked to the rationally tangible presence of God. Such feelings relate specifically to beyond personal experiences. It turns out that such experiences are almost always, on the one hand, empty, have no specific content, but on the other — they are comprehensive.

The concept of Maslow emphasizes the uniqueness of a person, affirms an optimistic view of humanity. After all, a person’s life cannot be understood if one does not take into account its high aspirations — growth, self-actualization, striving for health, the search for identity and autonomy, the thirst for beauty. Maslow noted: “because of such an experience, were totally, immediately, and permanently cured of (in one case) chronic anxiety neurosis and (in the other case) of strong obsessional thoughts of suicide” (Maslow, 1964:68). Thus, peak experiences have a psychotherapeutic effect. At the same time, they require healthy, developed, socialized, free, critically-thinking, mature personality who, recognizing the limits of his own capabilities, could integrate such experience into his own structure of personality, avoiding the dangers of dependence, irrationalism, escape from reality and selfishness in relation to other people. Hence, peak experiences are the highest degree of the experience of feeling and are characterized by a high degree of intensity, go beyond person’s subjectivity, loss of self, ecstatic involvement with the Universe. At the same time, Abraham Maslow warns that such experience requires a high level of personal development and social inclusion.

The phenomena of “cosmic religious feeling,” “transpersonal experiences,” and “peak experiences” are semantically related.

The cosmic religious feeling manifests the moment of unity of human and Universal, where there are no clear boundaries of the object of reflection, which combines the features of religious, intellectual, and aesthetic feelings resulting in the formation of cosmic consciousness.

Transpersonal experiences acquire the status of an event in which a person becomes united not only with humanity but also with the Universe as a whole.

“Peak experiences” are heightened experiences in which the way of expressing, preserving, and transmitting the relationship of a person with the Absolute at the level of a mystical phenomenon as a personal form of a transcendental manifestation is presented.

Conclusion

The cosmic religious feeling is based on the perception of the beauty and harmony of the Universe and on selflessness (it does not depend on the fear of punishment and the desire to receive a reward), the human need to move towards perfection. This sense of mystery is the experience of the presence of the Divine in the foundations of the Universe, but not in an anthropomorphic form, but in the form of the principle of the ordering of phenomena. Thus, in the existential space, through the process of the unfolding of religious feelings, a new meaning is constituted — qualitatively different, rethought and experienced. Moreover, meaning is born as a result of experiencing a relationship, on the one hand, between the “Self-

concept” and sacred objects, and on the other — between us, between subjects, who constitute the meaning. Therefore, in the cosmic religious feeling, there is a moment of unity between the human and Universal, where there are no clear boundaries of the object of reflection, where the experiences of the beauty, sacred, moral, and intellectual, combine to form the cosmic worldview paradigm. Such a paradigm is able to unite and consolidate humanity on the basis of Beauty, Sacral, Morality and Truth. In this context, promising opportunities are opening up to comprehend the cosmic nature of religious feelings — their axiological and praxeological potential as a criterion of humanity.

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