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VARIETY AND RELIABILITY OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE AS A SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

In the summary to one of the medical articles published recently in a corresponding authoritative edition, and, hence, rather representative for a modern general scientific view [SALVER, RABIN], the problem of religious experience of a man is formulated with sharpness of a gravestone inscription, that is why this formula is worth quoting without reductions:

Religious experience is based on brain activity, as well as any human experience. Pre-conditions to neuronal bases of religious-mystic experience can be deduced from symptomatic features of temporal-limbic epilepsy, experience of terminal states and taking hallucinogenic substances. These alienations and conditions can conduce to depersonalization, loss of communication with reality, ecstasy and feeling of extra temporariness, extra spatiality and other sensations supporting religious-mystic interpretations. Religious delusions are an important subtype of deviations at schizophrenia and religious delusions depending on mood — typical characteristic of maniacal-depressive psychosis. Authors of the given article offer a hypothesis of limbic involvement in a religious-mystic experience. Temporal-limbic system marks collisions with external or internal stimuli as unreal, extremely important, harmonious, pleasant etc., thereby giving grounds to religious interpretations of events.

The author's thought is clear: if there are any fluctuations in temporal-limbic system they are automatically thought to be the reason of "religious delusion". Religiousness, as a matter of fact, is considered a neurosis equivalent. But the description of brain functioning itself doesn't answer the question, whether religious experience of a person is delusion. Nowadays neurosciences closely approached the problem of the description of physiology of mystical experience, leaving apart the description of physiology of consciousness of an individual [BUCHBINDER]. Nevertheless, the question still remains, eternal, as the world: what is that "reality", firm belief which urges our doctors of medicine? It is clear that any scientist-materialist is guided by a monistic idea: the world should be one whole (certainly — "real", "material"). But, as a matter of fact, this aspiration can be defined as *hypostasis* — attributing of abstract essence — to a noun *matter* — subject existence, which can be classified as a logic error. The view on *matter* in modern world has

changed to a great extent in comparison with the XIX–XX centuries, which enables solipsism to strengthen its position: at a secret level of microcosm *matter* appears as emptiness in which micro particles vibrate freely, and the border between a corpuscle and field just vanishes. Last achievements of physicists in the field of quantum mechanics prove the existence of a certain force, which has specially designed for us the Universe with its favorable life conditions — this approach has received the name of an anthropoid principle. Scientists are intrigued with *dark matter* which makes about 95% of substance in space: it is just the idea, which explains the phenomenon of expansion of the Universe, and its further investigation will, probably, lead to recognition of the existence of 5th measurement, which was considered as the invention of fantasts. Some scientists-positivists directly confirm the idea of existence of God. Templeton Prize, however, is more prestigious, than the Nobel one (it is presented by the royal family of Great Britain), was nominated last year to the scientist who mathematically proved the existence of God. In his view, the world has been created ideally, and it was evolution, this, so to say, revolt of Creation against the Creator, that spoiled it. Thus, today even traditionally antagonistic sciences in relation to religion are actively interested in religious sphere. It is not surprising in any way that now such a synthetic discipline as neurotheology is being formed, which tries on the basis of joint points of view of physiology, psychology and physics to answer the question — what changes do occur in a human being and the environment during a religious trance? Contemporary modern positive science often tries to define objectively things in common of religion with scientific knowledge and such an interest should be justified for Religious Studies. So, if material vibrations in brain system are, nevertheless, secondary, then is it impossible that we put a carriage ahead of a horse?

The fact, that the authors of the above mentioned article and many other people, consider religiousness as pathology, diverges with the obvious data, confirming that overwhelming majority of the Earth's population is religious, even in our super educated century. Let's take sketchy, but indicative figures on two big countries of the world. According to the data of the *Newsweek* (the end of XX century) 96% of Americans are believers; atheists here are only about 0,5% according to other data; these figures fluctuate, but it is not too essential (so, for the period of 1990–2000 the quantity of Christians was reduced from 86% to 77%). In Russia, which has suffered active secularization since the reforms of Peter I and then almost a century of compulsory atheism, non-believers today make only 16% (All-Russia centre of public opinion studying for 2007).

And if pathology, according to logic of common sense, is a property of paltry minority it turns out that the majority of mankind doesn't keep step with representatives of medical-materialistic thought. Well, of course, wise men have always been less in quantity, but there's no evidence in the history of culture declaring greater part of human beings mad. Neither isolation of Brahmins- sages from other

layers of Old Indian community, declared in the Vedas as “cattle of gods”, nor treatment in Dhammapada of sansaric consciousnesses of the majority of people as “nonsense”, nor even declaration of Christian thesis about only “small number” of survivals were so categorical. “Nonsense”, deafness towards wisdom were understood here as something “natural”, low, antagonistic to culture, but by no means as pathology in medical sense. A big fellow, this Esau of the Bible, being unable to utter the word “lentil” for which he sells his primogeniture to Jacob, and calling a delicious lentil soup simply “red”, deserves sympathy, but neither signs of schizophrenia, nor maniacal reflection, is observed here: send this good boy to the army and that’s all. Everything turns out to be more terrible in the latest picture of the world. Majority of people simply slides downwards into a chasm of schizophrenia, epilepsy and a maniacal-depressive psychosis — obviously the proclaimed ancient admonitions of Brahmins, Buddha and Christ haven’t passed without leaving a trace.

However, probably in the opinion of Salver and Rabin it is just Esau who is OK. Esau’s brother Jacob is more likely to be “abnormal” This quivering romanticist, who desperately and defiantly stole from his stupid twin the right to primogeniture, who had fourteen years’ service for his favorite Rachel and saw in his dream a ladder between heaven and earth with descending angels on, this visionary, who challenged God Himself, should obviously be enlisted in the ranks of schizophrenics or maniacs. But the number of stupid “*Esau*”, living only by physical requirements, in today’s world has reduced, probably they can be counted easily in special schools. History and movement of culture is nevertheless determined not by “*esaus*”, and “*jacobs*”, that is why there are more religious people on the planet in comparison with those of nonreligious. Materialistic science should consider this fact not less, than the thought of inviolable physical health of human beings as something standard.

It doesn’t contradict the observation of the famous and rather versatile American researcher GREGORY PAUL. In his latest work [Paul] he came to the conclusion that the most religious societies of the modern world are at the same time the poorest ones. This conclusion is directed against the common opinion that contributes to prosperity, true to say it sounds crushingly. But, from the other hand, unreligious G. Paul is under the implicit influence of Protestant doctrine dominating in America according to which the augmentation of material wealth is a sign of God’s favor, and it denies the doctrine itself, but not the beneficence of religion as a whole. Axiology of non-protestant regions (and even Christian of more traditional structure) doesn’t include wealth as an indispensable criterion for the usefulness of life, so G. Paul’s volley concerning religion is not aimed at the essence of the situation. Furthermore, as it is known, the richest countries of the modern world show the mass tendency towards virtual worlds through such surrogates of spirituality as drugs, alcohol or computer games. It is worth to be mentioned that the decrease of religiousness is observed basically in industrially developed countries of Europe,

North America, and such Asian countries as Israel, Japan and South Korea, representing a consumer society in which people's energy is spent on a mass pursuit of objectively unnecessary material things, that oppresses and narrows spiritual sphere. But, at the same time, rather well — to-do Scandinavian countries where actually all pleasures of corporal life are permitted, are leaders in number of suicides — really, man doesn't live by bread alone.

Among all popular religions probably only Buddhism and Jainism are saturated by the poison of philosophical reflectivity and somehow seem to be genetically related to them (or are typologically close to them). Gnostics consider life and material existence at all as a "mistake"; and all the rest — from the Gentiles and even Satanists to the adherents of revelation religions — treat life like a blessing. Many people believe that religious is an innate characteristic of a person and this is confirmed by the entire sum of facts — from the ancient artifacts of the STONE AGE, when the features of the person were outlined for the first time, and ending with the above statistics. Anyway, the obvious fact that animals have no sacral books, temples, religious ceremonies suggest not only that the religion is the indicator of the propensity to madness, but the fact, that it is distinctive, generic feature of the person. Religion marks soteriological essence which safe the life and sets the appropriate ethical standards, contributing to people's confidence in the sense of existence.

But here there is the eternal problem of reliability of a religious experience of a person: who understands religion deeply — the one who can pray and generally resides in the bottom of faith, or someone who considers everything as an abnormality?

Compelling religious experience is subjective, rooted in the depths of our mental self, and is probably why religious people are so hard to strive for unity in the community such as churches, to constantly make sure a system of dogmas, rituals, and behavioral norms of the truth of his own inner experience. Usually, tests of faith in these communities are quite strict. Here is an eloquent example: doctors recognized the authentic two thousand healings of Lourdes, the Catholic Church the same — only 67 cases [GUBIN, p. 67]. However, the history of religions shows that there is no shortage and in a more generous loan of trust: minute ecstasy Mohammed, claiming that he had been in heaven and received the Qur'an to mankind, at the foot of the throne of the Almighty, has created a powerful movement of Islam, numbering in the world today more billion adherents. Moreover, it happens that, due to excessive credulity, religiosity takes mass though, but no less shocking grotesque forms. Suffice it to recall an African cult of *churinga* — a deity, so to speak, to date: the god of today will be the object or creature, which falls on your eyes when you exit the gate of the court — chicken, rusty horseshoe crumpled wrapper from a pack of cigarettes etc. There is a religious feeling — for a total elemental materialistic consciousness.

The word *religion* (lat. *religia*) means, according to most interpretations, the *resumption of ties*. In other words, the essence of religion is to make a contact with the hereafter, and this contact is originally conceived as an existing but only temporarily disrupted. Those that seems for the conscious person as unique reality: our bodily needs, our daily activities, love and hatred, attachments to parents and the birth of children, political struggles and a lot of other things which seem to be the only sense of life from this point of view is temporary and secondary. Real, highest reality for the religious person is moments of communication with God, when the material world is dissipated as haze, and you find yourself in the face of a deity.

Let's analyze, for example, the structure of the Bible. Together with all its significance as a historical book which fixes a number of important events of the past, first of all it is built as a series of episodes of the God's revelation to people. For example, the God appears to Abraham when he was 75 years old, but there isn't any information about his past life — everything that was up to this point of time is unimportant. German scientist E. AUERBACH mentioned that there is no plot construction in the biblical books:

from the phenomena only those parts which are important for the ultimate goals of the action, everything else is hidden in the darkness are pointed out; only crucial moments of the action are highlighted, everything that lies between them is devoid of materiality; space and time left without definition and require special interpretation... [Auerbach, p. 32].

In order to be facing this new reality one should discard everything that blinds him to the life values, to enter into a trance (literally — to pass “through the reality”). The world of religion (in this case Christianity) is transcendent — it exists beyond the reality. If the lips of the person pronounce the words of the prayer mechanically, and his head is busy with everyday problems, if he doesn't feel that this prayer is heard by somebody above the reality we cannot talk here about real religiosity.

Even if the researchers of the religion are skeptical, even if they discover an exceptional erudition in the field of external moments of religious situation (for example — philological), they understand the prayer as the “escape from reality”, “emotional discharge”, self-affirmation, or “social supervision” They are sure that the prayer is “without the answer” and the person who prays is talking to himself [BOGACHEVŠKA, p. 213]. A lot of people who pray understand the prayer in the same way, whereas here homeostasis is ensured by the direct “God's voice” (comparing theological position about the “silence of the God”) or by the distinct psychological outcome. The “feedback” in this situation is not necessarily signified by the visions of opening heavens and angels, although such manifestations are poorly understood even within the theology. And of course, that the Christian “praying to the void” doesn't differ from the illiterate peasant from the Buddhist world, blindly turning prayer wheel. It is in the best case the belonging to the particular religious and cultural tradition.

Tradition is a separate problem. It is almost impossible for the researcher of the religion to understand the whole world in its entirety. However, the age of armchair scientists putting down the materials of practical observation into certain tendentious scheme has passed away. Today we trust the researcher who entered into the system while studying the beliefs of a savage tribe; who was subjected to the appropriate initiations, and who has personally experienced that particular trance, which he would later describe in his scientific work.

However, you cannot be absolutely sure in something here, especially because of the incredible spread of quackery. Here is an example of a somewhat different, but very close field. Once, me and my deceased daughter saw UFO in the afternoon in the form of the transparent cylinder then changed its form close to the form of the disk and then disappeared. To my surprise cry a woman with a baby ran away from me. Who will believe me if there is no longer the witness of this situation? Will people believe both of us? I confess that one time being in-depth found of yoga, and spontaneously came out on the level of raja-yoga, I felt more than a real opportunity to influence things. I have a live witness but can we both prove that it is not a kind of conspiracy? Now I learn a meditation on Catholic rosary reading hundreds of times Jesus Prayer and the Rosary but my feelings are my own personal experience. They are difficult to check and they are uninteresting even for the people performing the same things.

But one thing about this I can say for sure: I have borrowed such meditation techniques from various sources which condensed the collective experience of the pioneers in this field. In fact, I'm still checking this experience based on the fact that the scholar who cannot compose a poem and the art critic who cannot something to draw are poor persons. Religion is described as the doctor describes the patient; panoramic statistical researches sometimes resemble a report on the movements of enemy troops. It seems to me that the study of the religious phenomenon should be radically reconstructed not from the "outside" and "inside". Socio-political view cannot dominate here, here should dominate psychological point of view. Religious experience is something extremely different from every day human experience. Religious scholars should develop some common system of scientific and objective evaluation of such situations.

Modern psychology uses the notion of an altered state of the consciousness mainly in relation to such phenomena as archaic shamanism with its use of drugs (modern "psychedelic" is an imitation of this model. But the application of this definition is observed to each state of religious trance: experiments conducted on people who are at this state prove deep physiological changes in the human body. Often in a trance person doesn't feel pain, doesn't afraid of death, can walk on hot coals, etc. It is proved that at the time of intensive religious experience brain becomes unusually active, highlighting "experienced" as something very important.

The term “dark religious fanaticism” doesn’t cover everything. Consciousness works with high energy and precision; emotions become extremely rugged and at the same time they are controlled by the intellect. People in a trance feel themselves attached to the deity, raised above the normal limitations of consciousness. Psychologically a person in a trance feels as a receptacle of divine energy. If this moment didn’t exist in religion, it would really be a total deception, “opium for people”, the darkness of which provokes psychological manipulations and suggestions by selfish priests or politicians. It is easy to scoff at the shaman who enters himself into the trance by a hallucinogenic drink and violent whirling with the sounds of tambourines. But those who are believed to be mankind luminaries and their activities have changed the world experienced such kind of trance without drugs.

It should also be mentioned the weight of mythological consciousness in such situations that is inherent to pre-logical, primary way of thinking (K. LEVI-STROSS, L. LEVI-BRUHL, E. CASSIRER, etc.) which represents for our contemporary a kind of alternative to the intellect. Such images are the basis of the sacral mythology in different nations.

The mythological consciousness is physically based on the activities of that hemisphere of the brain, which controls emotions, and the second hemisphere of the brain specializes in the evolution of the logical operations. And once, it seems, two hemispheres of the brain worked “in the mode of emotions” Therefore, for most atheists-rationalists religion is the sphere of purely mythological consciousness, of “dark” emotions and fantastic images, the product of “undeveloped” brain. Religious beliefs are identified with the literary images created by the imagination. The world of religion is entirely equivalent to the world of poetry.

In reality, however, a religious emotion, the ecstasy of a prayer, and other such things do not exhaust the concept of religion. The very word *faith*, often perceived as synonymous with *religion*, means a very difficult psychological work. To understand the situation, let us recall that KANT’S division of things into those that have already been understood by us (phenomena), and those that we have no idea of (noumena, or things inside themselves) is the situation forever. Because the greatness of the Universe does not leave us any hope, that all humans throughout their lives will comprehend the existing realities, the only thing for us to do is to admit that we are destined to know very little, and that most of the existing realities will forever remain mysterious “things inside themselves”. Incomprehensibility of the universe has been an eternal problem for humanity, and, as the Greek sage ZENO noted, the more the man learns, the more it expands the island of his knowledge in the vast ocean of ignorance, that is the boundary of its junction with the ocean.

The man delving deeply into these matters often becomes desperate from his inability to find a rational explanation to the world. And no life will be enough to learn all the sciences of the world and create a logical and, above all, true picture

of reality (think of the book depository library shelves). This generates the feeling of smallness and weakness of the man, and it is not unreasonable. A sudden illness, loss of a relative, a natural disaster, taking away lives of thousands of people, unclarity of own destiny and future in general — all these things are able to destroy people's confidence in the universe. Existential issues have not been solved by scientists yet and are unlikely to be completely resolved, though as long as humanity exists, most prominent thinkers have been racking their brains over them. Kant was well aware of this phenomenon, so he put forward the principle of “pressing the mind in order to give room for faith” (fideism). If we did not believe that life, besides its tragic nature, daily difficulties and inevitable death, does make sense, we should immediately commit suicide. An irrational sense of confidence in the existing order of things, hope of what we don't entirely understand its meaning, courage to live, to love and to give a birth to a child, who will be probably hostilely accepted by the world, are blocked by countless noumena, give optimism and hope. The difference is that atheist believes in this constitution of things, relieving emotion of existential horror, and believers of different confessions are giving themselves to religious anxiety and are trying to build for themselves a system of theological proofs, which would confirm their belief. Besides mental activity is not paralyzed by religious emotions but on the contrary, in the majority of situations people try to interpret critically their own religious experience, to check it by intellectual proofs. That is how the theology appears, which uses rational methods of proving the verity of belief. In fact the expert in this question G. MAYOROV, the author of the book about medieval philosophy, mentioned that medieval church scholastics was a direct heir of antic philosophy and was a laboratory, where famous European rationalism was born, including rationalism of positivistic character [MAYOROV, p. 19]. There exists a strict line of demarcation between religious science and theology, but they both can cooperate and mutually supplement each other, as it is seen for example in Poland [look: HOFFMAN].

But in religion emotions are not separated from philosophizing, it means that not only “intellect” is active here but what L. TOLSTOY called “intellect of heart” It is groundless to consider such a way of cognition and self-determination of a man in the world as deficient. The rationalistic logical model of the world, based on purely scientific views, which are constantly changing, is imagined less spiritually full-fledged and what is more important less “human”

Emotionally engaging with the other world powers, which are, according to the conception of a believer, authoritative over all known and unknown things, a man overcomes existential fear and arms with special kind of psychological cognition, religious experience. This experience may be exchanged among people — in such a way different religious systems are formed by.

Therefore the myth is emotional, figurative generalization of any significant phenomena of reality for a man — like things which are conceived with sense

perception and things which are cognized psychologically. To see the cloud covering the sun like horrific dragon doesn't mean existing of "distortion" of reality. As the sun is being swallowed by the cloud, it is getting scared, cold and gloomy. Basically the myth is cognition, not darkening of what is really existed. That's why now myth is interpreted as "soft form of rationality", it is clearly spacing from the fairytale with which a lot of people identify religious world view. Such fairytale appears as the decomposition product of the once sacred myth, fun for kids at a time of great religious crises. According to VLADIMIR PROPP, the author of a famous book "The Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale", Baba Yaga, the monster of Slavic fairytales is the memory of respected former witch ("one that knows"), who in Christian culture became a person associated with the evil spirits. But in general each of us can separate in his minds fantastic, mythological and logical-cultural things. It is groundless not to trust your spiritual and psychological work of non-logical direction, which originally considered as chimera. Even in the mental-logical activity sphere there are a number of intelligible things, not connected with concrete-sensual experience, which is comprehended only by the mind — for example, idea. "In the head" (or, if you wish, "in the heart") a man understands such things as good and evil, morality and immorality, divinity, etc.

Actually, religion doesn't reduce to the mythology at all. Only its early forms have strictly mythological character. A sacred writing plays an important role in the developed religions, theological comments to it, literary and written comprehension of the nature and history; researching aspect supplements with the folk-mythological beginning or replaces it at all. It touches upon in particular so-called Abrahamic religions, which are characterized by "awesome worship of a word, a book, a literature of specific kind, that, incidentally, means appearance of revelation religions only in well-developed in cultural way societies" [MAYOROV, p. 35]

Every person goes through the trance differently. However, the revelation he gets, is the truth and the symbol of the belonging to the Divine goodwill and power. Such trance often opens the hidden abilities of a personality. The national heroine of France, JEANNE D'ARC, heard the voices from the other world, which call her to head the war against the Englishmen-invaders, and if she had neglected them she would have stayed a simple shepherdess with her head out of order. Though there is no doubt that one can meet a lot of occasions when a man falls into useless religious mania felt himself called, but he does nothing important.

There is a question, how much other people need that experience. One should say that time places everything in a right way. A maniac, calling to confess in a metro, is avoided by people and disappears in obscurity. Moses says that he gets the tables of Testimony from God, which the whole world of Judeo-Christian civilization lives according to nowadays, despite numerous hesitations in belief. Being a persecutor of Christianity, Apostle Paul goes through the vision, where he sees dazzling light and hears the Christ's voice that reproaches him for (the surroun-

dings see him only fall from the horse); afterwards Paul became a preacher and Christianized a lot of pagans. We have already mentioned about MOHAMED' ecstasy turned into the text of the Koran and stimulated the emergence of Islam. Jeanne d'Arc was burnt as a "witch", but afterwards she was glorified as a saint.

An ecclesiastical experience of other religions arouses nothing but an essential curiosity in mind of the true believer. A Moslem, for example, cannot accept God as a Trinity or acknowledge the fact of Mohammed is not worshipped in Christianity. At the same time, a Christian adjures the religion which propagates the position of Christ only as a less powerful predecessor of Mohammed, disavows him as a part of Trinity. An expert in religion nuances is of much more skeptical opinion but he can't resist the temptation of objectivism.

At the sometime the burning methodological problem is touched upon. You cannot but agree with M. ELIADE'S claim:

(...) if you strive for the understanding of the religion phenomena you have to absorb all categories of memorials and materials (myths, rituals, the pantheon of Gods, superstitions, etc.) as equally important. This kind of understanding should be realized in historical context [ELIADE, p. 31].

Alongside with this fact of scientific objectivity which requires sober and impartial analysis of all religious systems in the world it must not grow into aloof and detached description. It would be the manifestation of positivist's indifference which conceals detachment from the subject-matter of the investigation.

Pluralism becomes the form of civilized society. It seems to be absolutely perfect in general. But at the same time you shouldn't forget that the history of religion is a part of the history of our civilization, which was built on gradual elimination of barbarism. But alas! For more than two centuries the European mentality has been enthusiastic about denying the achievements of civilization and lavishly poeticizes savagery. The situation is aggravated by the fact that establishing hierarchy does not lie in the sphere of science. But education cannot stand apart watching how due to the lack of information the young people plunge in god-seeking or get wild. I'd like to add that religion substitutes — drugs and alcohol addiction, sexuality cult and the rabid passion for the virtual reality which are popular with the young people, testifies first of all to the unsatisfied longing for religious Trans.

It's needless to say that the way back to the black magic is always available. It's also possible to continue professing persistently the discredited postulates of "multicultural society" and to pose the religion in general as the product of my theology and superstitions, mixing ideas of civilized society and archaic paganism together. But taking into account the common sense it is obvious that an archaic individual sacrificing his own child differs undoubtedly from the Christian one who praises and gives his bloodless sacrifice in order to assert love and good as the irrefutable values.

The subject of the religion analysis is supposed to call the public attention to the problems of variety of religions and their values. It must be a product of unprejudiced mind. Confessional engagement as well as radical materialism and staunch belief in the endless possibilities of a human being are harmful.

The situation makes again and again to recall NIETZSCHE'S thought: if possible the scientific study of religion, and then she died. We strive to study religion as a study carcass, but the majority of mankind, in spite of us, continues to believe in diversity and vibrancy of this spiritual experience is impossible to drive in the rationalistic scheme. Should perhaps be changed in principle, the methodology of science?

But, surely, these problems require further research.

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Odmiany i niezawodność doświadczenia religijnego jako problem naukowy

Streszczenie

Z medycznego punktu widzenia religijność jest uważana za coś równoważnego nerwicy. Wielu naukowców uważa religijność za patologię. Ten fakt różni się jednak od oczywistych dowodów potwierdzających, że przytłaczająca większość populacji Ziemi jest religijna. Okazuje się, że większość ludzi nie idzie krok w krok z przedstawicielami myśli medycznej i materialistycznej. W historii kultury nigdy nie było tak, żeby większą część ludzi uznać za szalonych. Ani izolacja braminów–mędrców z pewnych warstw społeczności, które są zidentyfikowane w Wedach jako „bydło bogów”, ani oznaczenie świadomości sansarycznej w Dhammapadzie jako „bańki”, ani nawet deklaracja chrześcijańskiej tezy o jedynie „nie-wielkiej liczbie” wybrańców, nie były tak kategoryczne. To wszystko jest typową dedukcją, pozbawioną żywych korzeni praktyki religijnej. Dzisiaj jest prawie niemożliwe, żeby badać religię „w gabinecie”. Mamy zaufanie do naukowca, który podczas badań wprowadził do systemu religijnego wierzenia jakiegoś dzikiego plemienia, został poddany odpowiedniej inicjacji i osobiście doświadczył tego konkretnego transu, który później mógł opisać w swojej pracy naukowej. Nowoczesna psychologia posługuje się pojęciem odmiennych stanów świadomości głównie w odniesieniu do zjawisk archaicznego szamanizmu z zażywaniem narkotyków, i łatwo jest szydzić z szamana, który wchodzi w trans poprzez halucynogeny i dźwięki bębna. Ale ci, którzy są uważani za luminarzy ludzkości i ich działalność zmieniła świat, doświadczyli takiego rodzaju transu bez halucynogenów i bębna. Definicja „odmienne stany świadomości” jest stosowana do każdego stanu religijnego transu. Udowodniono, że w czasie intensywnej religijnej emocji mózg staje się bardzo aktywny i roztropny, emocje stają się niezwykle wytrzymałe, jednocześnie są one kontrolowane przez intelekt z dużą energią i precyzją. Otóż określenie „ciemny fanatyzm religijny” nie obejmuje wszystkich dzieł świadomości. W rzeczywistości jednak religijne emocje, ekstaza modlitwy oraz inne podobne rzeczy nie wyczerpują pojęcie religii. Ale wiara — serce religii — oznacza bardzo trudną psychologiczną pracę, ponieważ wielkość Wszechświata nie pozostawia nam żadnych nadziei, że wszyscy ludzie przez całe ich życie zdołają zrozumieć istniejące realia. Jedyne wyjście dla nas, to przyznać, że bardzo mało wiemy, że większość z istniejących rzeczywistości zawsze pozostanie tajemnicza. Człowiek, zagłębiając się w te sprawy, często staje się zrozpaczony z powodu swojej niezdolności do znalezienia racjonalnego wytłumaczenia dla świata. Irracjonalne poczucie zaufania do istniejącego porządku rzeczy daje nadzieję i odwagę by żyć, kochać i urodzić dziecko, które będzie, prawdopodobnie, wrogo przyjęte przez świat. Takie poczucie pobudza optymizm i nadzieję. Oczywiście, sama natura religii pokazuje, że człowiek pokonuje strach egzystencjalny w praktyce doświadczenia religijnego, a badanie tego doświadczenia metodami nauk pozytywnych jest coś w rodzaju daltonizmem.