

## Sanctity and quality as the conceptual basis of the value of life doctrine in the bioethical discourse

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### ABSTRACT

The article offers a study of the bioethical discourse regarding the value of life through the prism of conceptualizing the main approaches to the study of this phenomenon. It is noted that with all the diversity of approaches that demonstrate a wide range of views on the value of life, the modern bioethical discourse combines the ideas of scientific research, the dogmatics of religious doctrines and the basic principles of moral imperatives, which are interpreted in a civilized society in the context of medico-biological problems of life preservation and reproduction, as well as determining its value. This combination is far from being eclectic. It synthesizes the main achievements of scientific, religious and ethical thought and extrapolates them to the problem of human life, which is a unique phenomenon that should be separated into a specific system of moral norms and imperatives of human activity. The article notes that in modern conditions the bioethical discourse is concentrated around the axiological paradigm in the study of living beings. All the diversity of viewpoints is proposed to be grouped into two main approaches: the ethics of the sacredness (sanctity) of life and the the quality of life ethics. The conceptualization of these two main approaches permits to consider all the diversity of views on the value of life in the context of bioethical discourse as a systematized set of views, which contributes to the creation of an appropriate scientific research situation and will contribute to the deepening of scientific studies on the specified subject.

### KEYWORDS

life,  
value,  
person,  
concept,  
discourse,  
bioethics,  
quality of life,  
sacredness,  
sanctity of life,  
morality.

### Introduction

Bioethics recognizes life in any of its biological manifestations as the highest value. An important problem that arises as a result of fixing such a bioethical position is the life value problem of the Other. In the modern world, when medicine increasingly uses the latest technologies for life support and extension, and ethics introduces the idea of the integral nature and significance of the human personality, bioethics, in fact, appears as a new ethics based on modern concepts of human philosophy (*Filosofs'ki zasady medychnoyi teorii i praktyky, 2018*).

Modern bioethical discourse combines the ideas of scientific research, the dogmatics of religious doctrines, and the basic principles of moral imperatives, which are interpreted in a civilized society in the context of medical and biological problems of preserving and reproducing life, as well as determining its value.

This combination is far from being eclectic. It synthesizes the main achievements of scientific, religious and ethical thought and extrapolates them to the problem of human life, which is a unique phenomenon that should be separated into a specific system of moral norms and im-

peratives of human activity (everyday, professional-medical, research). Thus, bioethics not only expands the traditional field of ethics, but also becomes a basis for revising the basic principles of morality.

The problematic situation is that the world is currently faced with a moral choice in the context of the development and improvement of the latest technologies related to the moral choice regarding the preservation of human life and health. These areas include genetic engineering, cloning and immunotherapy. These technologies raise serious questions about the ethics of interfering with the natural order of things and the individual's right to uniqueness. The development of new treatment methods introduces new ethical challenges related to safety and environmental consequences.

The new ethics of modern life and human health involves a deep consideration of these issues, ensuring justice, security, inclusiveness and respect for human rights in all aspects of our lives. It contributes to the health and well-being of society by helping to solve complex problems in the dynamic socio-ethical context of the modern world. The concepts of sanctity and quality of life are the conceptual foundations of such "new ethics".



That is why, the purpose of our study is to systematize and substantiate approaches and views regarding the issue of the value of human existence through the prism of conceptualizing approaches regarding sanctity and quality of life.

### Research methods

The research methodology is based on the basic principles. The value of life as a scientific problem is traditionally considered within the framework of medical and biological sciences. At the same time, the concept of life as an ontological category is the subject of various philosophical doctrines and concepts. Quite frequently, the result of such studies is bringing the concept of life into the axiological plane. This phenomenon manifests itself most creatively in the religious-philosophical discourse, which requires additional research effort to develop approaches to systematizing and conceptualizing the main fields that study the value of life in the bioethical discourse.

### Results and Discussion of the research

Currently, the research situation demonstrates a variety of approaches that embrace the interpretation of the sanctity or quality of life as a dominant ethical paradigm in the general bioethical discussion on determining the rules of attitude towards life in general, and human life in particular (Horban, Martych, 2020a: 101-102). These issues focus around the problem of sufficient reasons to recognize any manifestation of living existence as valuable, the requirements to respect each of its manifestations, and the way of expressing and presenting this value. From this follows the following ethical disposition - whether life is the highest good, and death, accordingly, absolute evil; whether possible intervention in the life process is ethical and what are the limits of such intervention. Based on different foundations and obtaining different conclusions, researchers have formed two bioethical traditions in relation to the value of life, which have conventionally received the names of the concept of "sanctity of life" and the concept of "quality of life" (Horban, Martych, 2022a: 87-96). It should also be noted about the diverse corpus of sources in philosophical and other scientific literature, which is involved in this discussion. It includes both specifically philosophical literature on moral and ethical subjects, as well as research in the field of biology, medicine, biotechnology, and even the latest research on digitalization and virtual reality. On the other hand, literature on religious and ethical subjects, which represents a unique perspective of understanding the value of life, endows it with divine features ("the image and he similarity of God", the result of divine providence, etc.), was widely used in this discussion. As a result, we get two conceptual approaches that differ both in focusing on separate aspects of a single object of research, and in fundamentally different approaches to the goals and meaning of human existence (for example, life as suffering is one of the dominant Christian religious dogmas). Adherents of one or another approach accuse opponents of dehumanization, violation of moral laws or customary order. Instead, they declare themselves almost the only "defenders of man" (Sleczeek-Czakon, 2004: 233).

Let's pay attention to each of the conceptual approaches. The concept of sanctity of life has its main principles related to religious postulates. Even in ancient times, philosophy began to investigate the problem of the value of life. But it was then that a religious view of this problem was perceived as the only possible one (Horban, Martych, 2020b: 3-10). Life was recognized as a holy sacred act,

from the moment of its birth and throughout the entire cycle of its existence. The sanctity of life demonstrates a property that gives its object exceptional significance, contrasting it with the profane, earthly.

In particular, E. Durkheim considered the main feature of the sacred to be its separation, inviolability, the absolute opposite of something ordinary. A higher power touches the sacred and endows it with its properties, so holiness is a higher rank of being, the divine fullness of life (Durkheim, 1954: 105-110). The outstanding modern philosopher M. Eliade singles out such signs of the sacred as power, inviolability and fullness of being, which emphasize the exclusive "authenticity" of this form of living being. According to the researcher, an object that encounters the manifestation of the sacred absorbs its power, deepens into reality, allows to participate in the fullness of life (Eliade, 2001: 19).

The idea of sanctity of life recognizes the inviolability, uniqueness and value of every life. This approach is frequently associated with moral and religious beliefs and the belief that life is a sacred and unpredictable gift that should be respected and cherished. Key aspects of the sanctity of life concept include respect for life as a universal human value. Regardless of status, religion or social position, every person has the right to life and respect for his life. The sanctity of life emphasizes the inadmissibility of killing or harming an innocent person.

This applies not only to a physical threat, but also to a threat to spiritual, emotional or social security. On the other hand, respect for the end of life is cultivated. The concept of the sanctity of life can include respect for the right to die with dignity, as well as respect for old age and those experiencing serious illness. A special field of conceptualizing the sanctity of life is the development of ethical norms of medical practices. The corresponding formed ideas influence decisions in such medical fields as euthanasia, abortion, terminating life by artificial means or the use of medical means that can affect the quality and length of patients' life.

A new field of conceptualizing this doctrine is the so-called ecological sanctity of life. In this context, the concept of the life's sanctity extends its moral and ethical approaches to the natural environment, calling for respect for all living beings on Earth and for the preservation of biodiversity.

This approach in bioethics is most vividly and fully represented by modern religious discourse. In this context, it should also be noted that, taking into account the presence of scientific inconsistencies of an ethical and legal nature in views on the problem of "living" in the context of scientific and technological progress, a return to the syncretic foundations of human knowledge, to sense as wisdom, in which rational and cognitive is related to practical philosophy. In this sense, the principles of bioethics resonate with the postulates of representatives of the Christian church. Which, in turn, determines the fact that a significant part of the modern bioethical discourse is occupied by the discourse of modern Christian theology, which has its special manifestations in various currents of Christianity. Such features of mutual discursive synthesis are revealed, first of all, in the affirmation of the objective ontological status of the human personality by Christian personalism. Secondly, in the teachings of Christian theologians who affirm the beauty and righteousness of life created by God, while nature and man in it are understood as something sacred, and therefore the actions caused against them are sinful and unacceptable. Thirdly, the basis of human life is rooted in the spiritual world of the person himself, correlated with divine transcendence (Horban, Martych, 2018: 98-99).

Christian personalism as a philosophical and theological approach considers the individual as the central object of moral and theological reflection. In Christian personalism, the human personality has a special ontological status, which is considered as objectively existing and inseparable from human nature. The central idea of this teaching is the view of man as "Imago Dei" - that is, created in the "image and similarity of God", who has a mortal physical body and an immortal soul. Based on this uniqueness of man, the important characteristics of the human personality, from the point of view of Christian personalism, are independence, own dignity and rights that must be protected. People have moral freedom of choice and the opportunity to answer for their actions before God and the community. A person is morally responsible for his actions and choices, which makes him the object of moral judgments. In the context of Christian personalism, a person is considered not just a social or biological object, but also a person who has a unique natural gift, but, at the same time, a need for love, mutual understanding and justice in the modern world.

The sacredness of human life in the teachings of Christian theologians manifests itself, first of all, as the beauty and righteousness of life. They are seen as an expression of inner harmony, divine order and justice in the world created by Him. Hence, the opposite phenomena of the existence of life – sinfulness and ugliness – are manifestations of the anti-divine essence, which manifests itself in those aspects of life where a person gets rid of moral imperatives, loses spiritual union with God, which leads to the desecralization of life and the corresponding punishment for the fall into sin.

A special manifestation of the sanctity of life in the Christian religious discourse should be considered the ability of a person (more precisely, the spiritual world created by him) to comprehend divine transcendence. This idea indicates that the inner essence of a person, his soul or consciousness, has a direct connection with the worlds of the spiritual and supernatural, including God or other higher realities. At the same time, the human soul is considered as part of a separate spiritual reality, which is both immanent (present in everything) and transcendent (beyond the boundaries of the natural world).

Having a religious origin, the concept of the sanctity of life functions only under the condition of openness to the transcendent, that is, the belief in the existence of a certain force or factor that surpasses the usual, earthly or visible order. According to Ch. Taylor, such openness implies a certain anthropomorphism, when objects external to a person are understood in relation to him. At the same time, the problem of the relationship and connection between the mind and the body turns out to be unthinkable, since the latter does not acquire the degree of objectification characteristic of the modern and postmodern worldview, and the mind, on the contrary, is subjectivized. It is about a special way of world perception and interpretation as "a state of the life-world, when what we might call an interpretation of the moral/spiritual is experienced not as an interpretation, but as an immediate reality" (Taylor, 2013: 30).

The concept of "quality of life" looks more acceptable and popular in modern bioethics, as it has more widely and deeply accepted ethical and ontological theories. On the other hand, unlike adherents of the sacredness of life, whose main representatives today are religious groups, the idea of quality of life meets the demands of modern liberal society.

The concept of quality of life covers a wide range of factors and indices that affect the general level of satisfaction and well-being of people. This concept includes such aspects as physical health, emotional well-being, economic security, social relations, education, access to cultural resources and others.

The main idea of the concept of quality of life is that true happiness and satisfaction in a person's life depend not only on material goods, but also on such factors as the quality of the social environment, opportunities for self-realization and satisfaction of personal needs, the level of education and cultural development, access to healthy living conditions and many other aspects.

Quality of life assessment can be used to compare the level of well-being and satisfaction in different population groups, in different countries or in different socio-economic groups. Various indicators are used to measure the quality of life, such as indices of health, education, income, unemployment, access to basic services, and others.

Quality of life is traditionally understood as "...the degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, able to participate in life events or enjoy them [...]. Quality of life is seen as multidimensional, encompassing emotional, physical, material and social well-being" (Jenkins, 2023). In bioethics, the concept of quality of life permits solving many practical questions related to life and death. Among them, it helps to single out the position regarding the permissibility of shortening life by euthanasia or abortion. A clear understanding of the term affects actions related to birth control through contraception, sterilization, artificial termination of pregnancy or abstinence from sexual cohabitation. The content of the concept determines the justification of interventions in human biological nature by means of genetic engineering, cloning, artificial insemination, and forms the appropriate social policy in the field of demography, ecology, and health care (Reich, 1978: 829–831).

The conceptualization of the quality of life in the bioethical discourse covers various aspects related to the assessment and definition of what makes life valuable and high-quality, especially in the field of medicine and bioethics. This concept is based on the understanding that the quality of life should be preserved and improved, and that it depends on such factors as physical and mental health, social and economic situation, relationships with loved ones, access to medical services and many others.

In the bioethical discourse, conceptualizing quality of life becomes an important factor in making ethical decisions regarding medical treatment, diagnosis, palliative care, and euthanasia. It is important to know how to assess and take into account the individual needs and preferences of patients, as well as to take into account ethical, legal and socio-cultural aspects.

Conceptualizing the quality of life is also related to education and research aimed at the development of innovative methods and approaches to improving people's lives. It becomes the basis for the development of efficient strategies and programs aimed at ensuring a quality life for all people, regardless of their health status.

Within the framework of this system of views, there is an attempt to introduce into the modern bioethical discourse, along with the concept of "organism life" and its synonyms in this series, "body life", "biological life", a special concept - "personal life". With this approach, the concept of "life of the body" is only a basic condition for a higher qualitative level in the materiality of the "living" - "life

of the individual". And if a given human organism lacks certain qualities, then there is an opportunity to deny such a life a moral status, that is, in relation to a person as an individual.

Among the attempts to define those qualities that can be a criterion for the difference between biological life and the life of an individual, the opinion is of interest belonging to the American bioethicist Mary Warren, who believes that to include anyone in the moral community of individuals, such qualities are necessary as: consciousness, reason, independent activity, self-awareness and ability to communicate (Warren, 2001: 457-458).

The specificity of the concept of "quality of life" is that, along with objective criteria, it includes subjective criteria, which are understood as physical, mental and social well-being. The totality of these factors constitutes the discourse of health. Then "low-quality life" should be recognized as a disease. However, there are enormous difficulties in such identification, as perceptions of what constitutes a "good quality of life" during which, for example, a particular type of treatment can vary widely among patients and the medical community (Bowling, 2001: 12).

Therefore, the concept of "quality of life" in the modern bioethical discourse needs further reflection and research. Nevertheless, it has already become one of the main categories of medical ethics, especially when discussing such states of "living beings" as "health", "disease", "pathology", "norm". In addition, the quality of life idea is an important characteristic of the modern medical and ethical discourse, which permits clarifying the purpose of medical intervention for the "good" of the patient, as well as taking into account not only a purely clinical perspective, but also the patient's point of view (Horban, Martych, 2022b: 63- 69).

### Conclusions

National expressions of patriotism of the Ukrainian army are based on the archetypes of "Clan", "Father", "Mother", "Family". The archetype of the mother-protector in the Christian era receives a new embodiment in the image of the Mother of God as the heavenly protector of the entire human race. One of the varieties of a woman-mother's archetype in Ukrainian spiritual culture is Mother Nature, which transforms into the archetype of Mother Earth, which in turn is transferred to the paradigm of the native land - "Nenka-Ukraine", creating the archetype of the Motherland. Therefore, the vital content of the concepts "Temple" and "Home" determines the main existential aspects of national life.

The Orthodox tradition of military chaplaincy is based on the spiritual union of Cossacks and monasticism during the liberation struggle. Later, the formation of the Ukrainian military clergy was closely connected with the Greek Catholic Church, which at that time had the greatest experience in moral and spiritual support of the Ukrainian national liberation struggle participants in the western Ukrainian lands. On the basis of the positive experience of the leading world's countries, an own system of professional training and education of personnel was created, which was based on defining principles: national dignity, patriotism, Christian morality, fidelity to the oath, fidelity to military duty.

Based on the positive experience of the leading countries of the world, the activities of military chaplains in the

Armed Forces of Ukraine are primarily aimed at providing spiritual assistance to servicemen, increasing their morale, endurance in the conditions of military service (especially during combat operations), providing psychological support to personnel, promoting harmony of military teams. The formation of an educational ideal as the goal of patriotic education involves deepening the feeling of love for the Motherland, understanding of national identity. In the conditions of a global threat to national security, the essence of the pastoral activity of military chaplains should be focused on the education of highly patriotic feelings and fighting spirit based on the moral and spiritual potential of the religious and cultural heritage of the Ukrainian people.

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## Святість та якість як концептуалізаційні основи вчення про цінність життя в біоетичному дискурсі

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В статті пропонується дослідження біоетичного дискурсу стосовно цінності життя через призму концептуалізації основних підходів до вивчення даного феномена. Зазначається, що при всьому різноманітті підходів, які демонструють широкий спектр поглядів на цінність життя, сучасний біоетичний дискурс поєднує в собі ідеї наукових досліджень, догматику релігійних доктрин та основні засади моральних імперативів, які інтерпретуються в цивілізованому суспільстві в контексті медико-біологічних проблем збереження та відтворення життя, а також визначення його цінності. Це поєднання носить далеко не еkleктичний характер. Воно синтезує основні досягнення наукової, релігійної та етичної думки та екстраполює їх на проблему людського життя, яке виступає унікальним феноменом, що підлягає виокремленню в специфічну систему моральних норм та імперативів людської діяльності. В статті відзначається, що в сучасних умовах біоетичний дискурс концентрується навколо аксіологічної парадигми у вченні про живе. Все різноманіття точок зору пропонується згрупувати в два основні підходи: етика сакральності (святості) життя та етика якості життя. Концептуалізація цих двох основних підходів дозволяє розглядати все різноманіття поглядів на цінність життя в контексті біоетичного дискурсу як систематизовану сукупність поглядів, що сприяє створенню відповідної ситуації наукового пошуку та сприятиме поглибленню наукових досліджень із зазначеної тематики.

**Ключові слова:** життя, цінність, людина, концепція, дискурс, біоетика, якість життя, сакральність, святість життя, моральність

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