

Summary of Doctoral Thesis

The study is devoted to the analysis and systematic reconstruction of the concept of the human soul in the philosophical and theological approach of Czesław Stanisław Bartnik, one of the most important representatives of contemporary Polish personalist thought and the creator of the system of universalist personalism. Its primary aim is to demonstrate the relevance and coherence of the proposal of Lublin theologian, who understands the soul as a constitutive and irreducible dimension of the human person, determining their identity, spirituality, relationality and openness to transcendence. The author assumes that the problem of the soul remains one of the central issues in philosophical and theological anthropology and that contemporary simplifications of this problem often lead to materialistic, biological or psychological reductionism. The purpose of this study is to show that Bartnik's universalist personalism offers an integral and still highly relevant conception of the soul as a dynamic principle of the personal existence of the human being.

The first chapter presents the origins and development of the concept of the soul from the historical, linguistic and conceptual perspectives. This analysis is a creative extension of Bartnik's research, conducted in the spirit of personalistic hermeneutics, according to which reliable philosophical and theological reflection must be preceded by an analysis of the language and meaning of basic terms. The author shows that the way of understanding the soul in different eras was closely related to the conceptual apparatus specific to a given culture and language. The key Greek terms – *psychē*, *thymos*, *nous* and *pneuma* are discussed in details – which in ancient and biblical literature expressed various aspects of inner life: the principle of life, the emotional-volitional sphere, the ability of rational cognition and the spiritual dimension of human existence. This analysis shows the gradual process of shaping the concept of the soul as an immaterial and at the same time life-giving reality.

Subsequently, Hebrew terminology is discussed, in which the central place is occupied by the concepts of *nefeš*, *rûaḥ* and *lēb*. These concepts point to a holistic, existential understanding of the soul, interpreted not as a component of the human being but as their entire life, the inner centre of the person, the ability to build relationships, experiencing emotions, making decisions and bearing moral responsibility. The biblical understanding of the soul appears to be deeply rooted in the experience of life, history and the relationship with God, not in an abstract speculation. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the Polish term „dusza” (soul), its etymology and cultural connotations related to breathing, life and

sprituality which allows for the continuation of the experience of the soul in both European and Polish traditions.

The second chapter is devoted to the issue of origins of the human soul. The author presents the main positions presented in the history of philosophy and theology. He demonstrates the richness and complexity of attempts to answer the question of the origins of the soul – from ancient philosophical speculations, through patristic and medieval reflection to contemporary theological approaches. The particular attention is devoted to the critical dialogue, Bartnik engages with concepts that reduce the soul to matter, biological or purely evolutionary processes. Within the framework of universalist personalism, Bartnik proposes an approach according to which the soul comes directly from God and is a personal gift constituting the uniqueness of each individual. Its creation is not mechanical or naturalistic in nature, however personal and relational. The soul is inscribed in God's creative act, which brings the human person into existence as a corporeal-spiritual being. The chapter demonstrates that the question of the soul's origin is inextricably linked to the question of the meaning of human existence, freedom and moral responsibility.

The third chapter presents Bartnik's systematic theology of the soul. Its spiritual nature, essence and eschatological destiny are discussed. The soul is presented as a dynamic personal reality, capable of knowing the truth, making free choices and establishing relationships with God and other people. Bartnik emphasizes that the soul constitutes the inner center of the human person and the principle of his or her unity. It permeates all dimensions of human life – physical, psychological, moral and religious – and opens the human being to transcendence. From an eschatological perspective, the soul is not annihilated with the death of the body but retains its identity and remains the subject of moral responsibility and the hope of salvation. In this way, Bartnik situates his reflection on the soul within the broader context of the salvation history and Christian anthropology.

The entire study presents the soul as a central element of an integral personalist anthropology, combining philosophical, theological and existential dimensions. The author argues that Bartnik's concept of the soul constitutes a coherent and profound proposal for understanding the human person, free from reductionism and open to transcendence. The study also has a distinct polemical and methodological dimension: following Bartnik's thought, the author critically addresses contemporary anthropological trends that reduce the human being to biological, psychological or functional dimensions, neglecting the spiritual and personal character of human existence. He demonstrates that such approaches cannot

adequately explain the phenomenon of the human person, their freedom, conscience and capacity for a transcendent relationship. Bartnik's universalist personalism is presented as an integral proposal, capable of combining the data of natural sciences, philosophy, theology and existential experience into a coherent vision of humanity. In this way, the study not only reconstructs a specific conception of the soul but also contributes to the broader debate on the contemporary understanding of the human person and their place in the world.