

There is also a deeper result a more or less whole unification and harmony on our Conscience between a subject and an object, between the Personal Self and the Universal Reality.

William Mc Dougall, a psychologist who in a clear and moderate way didn't hesitate to empathize the existence and the inner value of Soul and Spirit, writes :

During moments of contemplation of Beauty, limits of our personality happen to fly somehow beyond.

We approach the Universal Spirit , which -weakly or strongly- lights inside ourselves, so we can find ourselves reabsorbed by it.

As for the Ways all, even the Aesthetic Way may show disadvantages and dangers, the first lying on the attachment to the form, the exterior aspect.

It leads to a one-sided accentuation by the aesthete, who searches for pleasures coming from the perception of beautiful things and gets satisfied with it.

The difference between the aesthete and those who attain to the spiritual fulfilment through Beauty resides in the fact that the first one stops at the first step of the Platonic range, and he refuses or is not able to go on further.

The same function revealing Beauty in Nature is accomplished by Beauty in Art, in all its sides.

We must anyway clarify that, while Art can have - or it has- this aspect, not the whole Art practises it!

Sometimes it can even produce the opposite reaction, that's because the psychological level and the maturity of artists can be unlike.

Even instincts and causes which are below an artistic creation can be different.

Notice the big difference on spiritual level between Leonardo and Beato Angelico on one side, and Picasso and Salvador Dali on the other.

Human nature appears many-sided. Multi-faceted is also the psychological structure of artists and poets- they can perceive and express images and "voices" originated by the lighting level of the Superconscious or from the abysses of the instinctive and passionnal Inconscious. So, the same creator can create works producing different or opposite psychological effects.

This is the affair of great and noble artists, such as Goethe and Wagner.

## THE PATH OF REGENERATION THROUGH ETHICS

(by Assagioli's Archives in Florence)

Despite some different aspects, two Paths are examined through an appropriate combination as they have an important common characteristic. They are the first and the second stages of the same process.

The stress is put on the moral purification as a primary condition to reach a spiritual consciousness which is also the Christian expression of God's Grace. The first step on this Path is transcending the ordinary level to wake up with a consciousness about a superior reality as well as with an acute realization of one's own imperfections - "sins" - and the determination to expel them.

In a number of examples quoted by William James and others, it is the prevalent element but later the stress has been put on the purification through a detachment from the world's attractions, through discipline of the personality and in some cases through an ascetic practice. This Path was mostly followed in the past than nowadays as the prevalent religious conceptions used to emphasize the ungodliness of men and thus used to nourish the fear of God's punishment on them.

Despite the different aspects of the moral purification, we can gather them into two general stages called active purification and passive purification. The first one encompasses all those moral practices that aim to increase the control on instincts, passions and imagination and they end in the awakening and the preparation of the Will. This process can be defined by the modern physiologic terminology as the control of the conscious part of personality upon the unconscious one. On the other hand, the passive purification is an act of abandonment and detachment under which the personality undergoes a superior spiritual influence that, according to one's

personality and religious views, can be seen either coming from a superior Self, or a superior Being, or directly from God. In psychological terms this process can be defined as the opening of personality (both conscious and unconscious) to the purifying influence of superior energies that stream from levels of super-consciousness.

In the past the ethical or moral aspects of this ascending Path had been overvalued and had often been practised in a harsh and limited way with harmful effects such as an excessive emphasis on the inherent duality in man and a forced repression of the inferior tendencies that caused neuro-psychic disorders. As it is well-known, all this caused a violent reaction in modern times that was especially displayed by young people through their exaggerating in the opposite direction, this means rebellion against all moral principles and rules and every form of inner discipline. Also some Movements, that aim at the spiritual realization, disregard and sometimes neglect the ethical aspect. The consequences of such a disregard are other than satisfactory and as a result psychic disorders and deviances occur: egotism, self-assertion, illusion to gain spirituality which is nothing more than emotional overexcitement, glorification of the self that sometimes leads to megalomania – all these consequences are not less harmful than the previous ones both for the individual and the society.

On the contrary, the purpose of the spiritual psychosynthesis is to involve the ethical aspect, giving it the right place and function in the whole process toward integration, completeness and unification. In the past a similar direction was followed even though the assumptions were quite different from nowadays. In fact, the outlined aim at the time was the elimination of all the obstacles interposing the spiritual realization, whereas the process was not considered as a sufficient and independent means but as a preliminary stage on the path that leads toward the spiritual realization. It is to be clearly found in Yoga Sutra by Patanjali. The first of the eight means of Yoga, called Yama, as well as the five commandments, are by nature purely ethical. The Buddhism stresses on the elimination of desire that must be enacted while following the eightfold path which contains two stages

called Upright Action and Upright Way of life. The method or the process of regeneration is also based on the ethical value, namely on the fact that the human nature is not able to reach the peaks of spiritual life and it is an obstacle that must be overwhelmed in order to succeed.

This process is indeed conceived as something deeper and more inclusive than pure obedience to moral rules. It is conceived as a transmutation of all normal elements of personality so that the personality can be entirely regenerated and transfigured. For this reason the process was defined as the “new birth” in the past and it was represented through various symbolic forms.

The most famous process is known as spiritual alchemy. The symbolism used by the alchemists is very complicated and it is often confusing so that it is hard to interpret it. However, there are some basic topics that have a clear meaning. The act of regeneration is indicated as *Magnum Opus*, the Big Act, and it is performed within the *Athanor* -the cup, namely the human being. There are three elements in it- sulphur, salt and mercury that respectively correspond to the human nature, the mind and the spiritual spark in the mind. *Athanor* performs the transformation of the man of nature into a man of spirit. Such a process is divided into three stages. The first one is called *Nigredo*, also known as putrefaction. The “black beast” which is the personal element and the inferior nature must appear and then it can be “treated” and dissolved. “*Solve et Coagula*” - “destroy what you have created” is the rule of alchemy. In the language of alchemy, quoted by Evelyn Underhill, it is announced: “There is a black beast in our forest whose name is Putrefaction; its gloominess is called “the Head of the raven, the *Albedo* appears when the head is cut off. This [...] state of Moon or Silver - comments Underhill - corresponds to the second stage of enlightenment. The third and the ultimate stage is the achievement of *Red*, the colour of perfection, or also *Alchemical Gold* – a stage also named “the wedding of the Moon and the Sun”, namely:

- 1) the fusion between human spirit and divinity
  - 2) the fusion of the man with the divine Spirit
- This is the image that conceives the ultimate secret of mystic life: the unutterable union of the finite and the infinite – the reception of a vital inflow which is God’s vitality – the completeness of *Magnum Opus*: the man of spirit, the man of divinity”.

It is an interesting and important fact that psychology has recently discovered in its own development, more precisely it has rediscovered the reality of psychological transmutation as well as the necessity of increasing its curative, educative and social purposes.