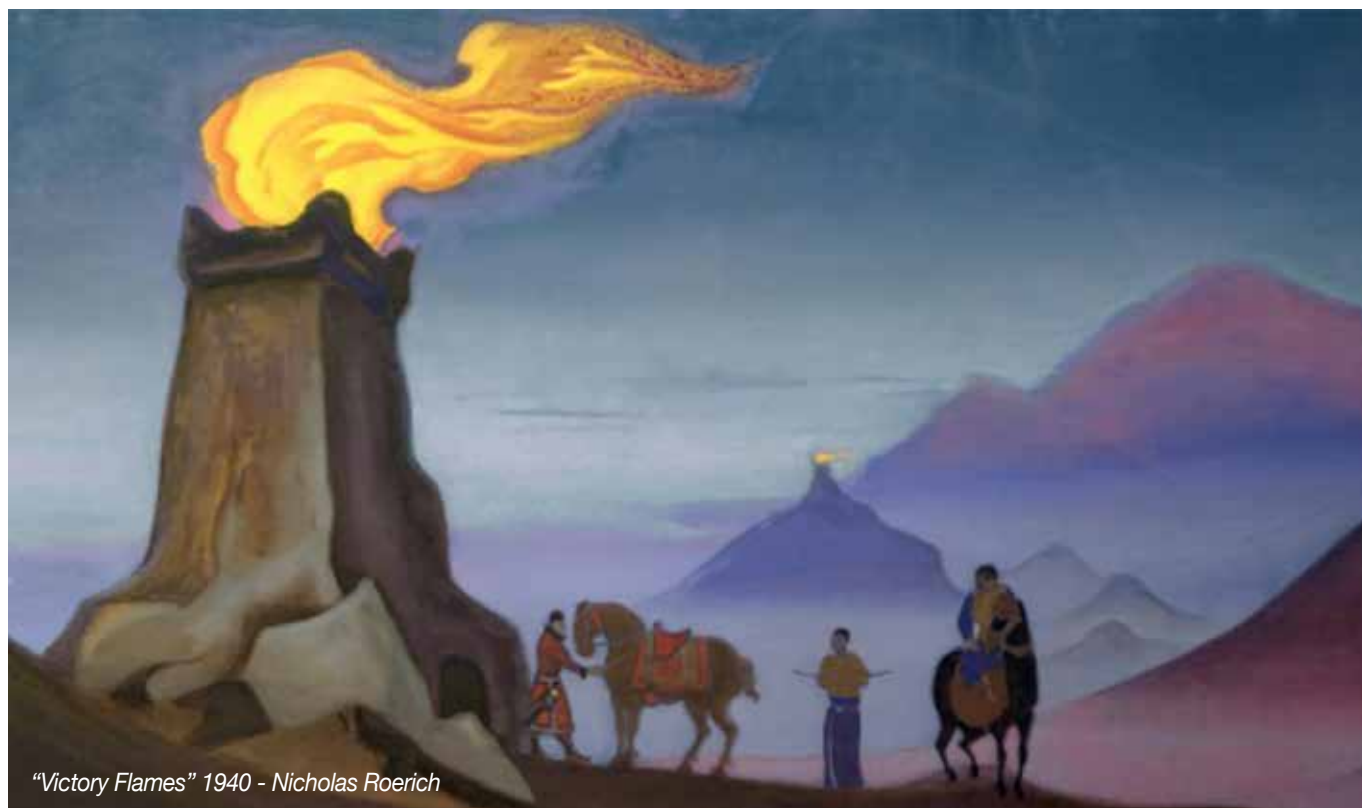


SOME CLARIFICATIONS ON SELF-DIRECTED PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

Translated by Alberto Gabba

Sergio Bartoli

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"Victory Flames" 1940 - Nicholas Roerich

"Throughout my life, I have worked guided by what I considered to be a core value: the will. Now, at the end of my life, I have reflected profoundly and have come to the conclusion that what matters most is love: therefore, learn to love one another and to speak to one another with truth and brotherhood about everything that is amiss. This is the guidance I leave you with."

- Sergio Bartoli (from: Dedicated to Sergio Bartoli, Founder of the Community of Living Ethics – 16 January 2009 – 16 January 2019)

INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS PROCEEDINGS OF THE 1976 CONFERENCE IN FLORENCE

SOME CLARIFICATIONS ON SELF-DIRECTED PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

Dr. Sergio Bartoli

Having taken part in all four round-table discussions at the recent Psychosynthesis Conference, I am now able to revisit my proposals from that time – with the help of notes taken by some friends – and present them to you once again in our newsletter.

Let us begin with self-directed psychosynthesis. At the

time, I characterised it by five essential requirements, namely: a joyful and optimistic attitude towards life; the search for the possible "phenomenal experience" of the Self; the constant exercise of the will; trust in the human group; and the continuous, planned restructuring of our personality.

Let's start by looking at the first point.

In my view, a joyful and optimistic attitude towards life is essential, one that goes beyond the "objective responses" that life itself provides.

Indeed, it is precisely prolonged and repeated negative responses that should encourage us to practise further in order to develop these two qualities, thereby enabling us to face adversity with less difficulty.

And this is possible if we realise that "the source of joy" from which we must draw this quality is not to be found in the outside world – that is, in the objects and people we come into contact with – but within ourselves, and that it must be nurtured with persistence and consistency so that joy and optimism become fundamental characteristics of our being.

The more and the better we are able to practise this training (through specific techniques of Psychosynthesis, such as those involving the evocation of higher feelings), the more and the better we will be able to accept and make use of the inevitable series of misfortunes that life has in store for us. Joy, in fact, is a precious mineral that must be painstakingly extracted from the "mine" of our spirit and not sought amongst the "mountains" of events or in the 'mirages' of the actions of others.

A second point that I would describe as essential in self-directed psychosynthesis is the "conceptual openness" and a "sustained commitment" to the phenomenal experience of the Self through contact with the higher contents of our psyche (Assagioli's "approach" to the higher unconscious, so to speak).

This "transpersonal tension" must, in my view, represent the "directional constant" of any discourse on self-formation, and all the more so in the field of Psychosynthesis, given that it constitutes its fundamental and distinguishing characteristic compared with other humanistic psychologies.

The third point to emphasise is the fundamental importance of the will, understood as an "essential function" of the self and employed as a genuine method. To have experienced its "centrality", to develop this characteristic so as to make it "integral", and to constantly monitor its implementation by assessing the various stages, means having assimilated the "supporting structure" of the whole of Psychosynthesis.

It means knowing how to awaken the "life force" within us and having discovered the path to becoming who we "truly" are. Indeed, the "will to be" is already implicit in the very act of birth, and it is only by subsequently awakening this intrinsic quality of our personality that we shall be able to achieve our true goals and tap into that immense wellspring of creativity that is our true self. Then, from spectators, we shall become actors in the process of life and move from the ranks of the executors to the ranks of the creators of the world.

A fourth point, which I believe is important to consider, is to recognise that mutual trust is an indispensable element in fostering productive communication and right relationships between people. Nurturing prejudices or a sense of isolation is not only unproductive but is strongly discouraged, as it creates the conditions for division and conflict, which are to be regarded as contrary to any process of self-development.

If we were to realise that the "goal" towards which we must strive is the Unity, and that the essential characteristics of achieving this are acceptance, understanding and selfless love, we would immediately realise just how harmful and dangerous a mindset of mistrust towards others is.

Solitude itself is to be regarded as a merely transitory experience (whether endured or sought) of the "human condition", which must always and in any case be overcome through the attainment of the 'true human dimension'.

The fifth point with which I concluded my speech at the first round-table discussion of the conference concerned the observation

*that self-directed
psychosynthesis is essentially
a continuous, planned
restructuring of the human
personality,*

through the constant use of “active techniques” (to use Assagioli’s terminology).

This leads us to say that human beings are, in essence, engaged in a continuous “existential training” to express their “Absolute Potential”. Understanding this means “taking an active stance” towards life, and consequently

no longer living it with a detached or fatalistic attitude, but rather assuming specific responsibilities for its interpretation and realisation, outside – or rather, above – any “pietistic” or “unrealistic, faith-based” consideration regarding it.

So I ended there then, and I shall end here today as well, leaving further reflections on educational, therapeutic and social psychosynthesis for future issues of our newsletter.



Detail reproduction of _The Virgin of the Rocks_, Leonardo da Vinci, (between 1491/1492 and 1508), National Gallery, London, curated by Carmen Selles de Oro.