

of the “humiliator”, of which we are often not aware. Who has been hurt, hurts. Humility is the recovery of his own humanity, it means to be rooted in our humus, soil, no more leaks or alibi. Standing with our feet on the ground rather than surrender to the Pindaric flights of the obsessions or illusions or regrets, carriers often of disappointments.

We have said that often we face real circles of hell during our lives, sorrows, pains, both for the spirit and the body. After those follow long periods of purification by anger and pain. After these tests, what sense does the search of Paradise?

Some time ago, I heard a joke about it: “Everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die!”

Interesting, provocative and ironic. It brings to our mind the story of our Ego; during the phases of our evolutionary development we build it up, chisel. Then somebody comes and tells us: give up your Ego. The Ego must die to the Self. Death is not part of the biophilia of life, reminds us of Fromm. I will not dwell on the difference between Ego (false self-image, despot of our true Being), and the Self, unifying centre of the elements of personality, inner witness of our psychic life. But I break a lance in favour of those who desperately clings to the old identity (Ego), because the void, the nothingness, the surrendering to the “shipwreck is sweet to me in this sea”, for some it is a terrible and fearful experience. Perhaps that is why, doing a trip to hell and back, a stop in Purgatory, with the ideal aim of Paradise, is not an easy task, and it takes or a unifying inner centre, solid, or an ideal model, a unifying external centre, that is an aid in such arduous path.

Then, the search for Paradise? We must be careful, because such aspiration can become a dangerous trap, a delay that indefinitely removes the goal, without enjoying the “here and now”, the presence of the moment, the joy for the infinity of the moment; or, it may be a mirage, an escape upwards, hiding the “junk” of the personality under the carpet of the spiritual quest.

I believe that each of us has tried the “torments” but also the “ecstasy” in the course of our existence. It is difficult to describe with words what I am going to write, but I try to conclude these my reflections. There are some moments in life, where suddenly, in the most unexpected situations, everything is perfect, in harmony, there is nothing to add or remove. It is simply and clearly quite real, a timeless moment, which manifests itself in the everyday of our lives. I believe that this type of experiences are fragments of Paradise ... that perhaps, like the Kingdom of God, are already in us, even before that in mind, in our heart.

Elena Morbidelli

THE STARRY HEAVENS ABOVE... THE MORAL LAW WITHIN

“Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within. I have not to search for them and conjecture them as though they were veiled in darkness or were in the transcendent region beyond my horizon; I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The former begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connection therein to an unbounded extent with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and moreover into limitless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuance. The second begins from my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity, but which is traceable only by the understanding, and with which I discern that I am not in a merely contingent but in a universal and necessary connection, as I am also thereby with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates as it were my importance as an animal creature, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe). The second, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as may be inferred from the destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination not restricted to conditions and limits of this life, but reaching into the infinite ...”

The above quotation, taken from the Critique of Practical Reason by the philosopher Immanuel Kant, results as the most admirable reflection on the profound connection between beauty and ethics, to the point that Königsberg thinker wanted it as his epitaph.

Kant had discussed the subject of morality and the definition of beauty in two distinct works, the former in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the latter in the *Critique of Judgment*.

At the basis of morals he places practical reason, that is the reason capable of determining will and ethical action. Kant wants to prove that this reason can move will without the mix of causes dependent on pulses and sensitivity, anticipating the psychosynthetic concept of transpersonal will, independent from the constraints of historical personality. In fact, the discovery of will as moral faculty was a prerogative of Christian culture, that exceeded Greek ethical intellectualism, according to which good was light to itself and those who knew it could not avoid practising it. So moral exercise was the activity of the Logos and the only choice that man could make was between knowledge and ignorance. With the Christian idea of original sin, instead, that is of the fall into matter and the acquisition by man of the concept of good and evil, it was necessary to resort to a choice involving will: this could now also decide, despite knowing what is good, to tend towards evil. Moreover, with the success of Christianity, what was right and what was wrong was fully described in the religious Decalogue of commandments, that is in a code set down in writing and universally valid, which was completely missing in Greek culture.

For Kant, brought up in Christian pietism, human being was endowed with pure will, that is not determined exclusively by the phenomenal world, or experience, so he could access the noumenal sphere practically, that is the world of the super-sensible and intelligible, implementing the moral action. The latter, to be such, must refer to universal, general rules, that are valid for all men and in all times, to which are subject the practical principles of application, that the philosopher called maxims and imperatives. Maxims apply only to the individual and therefore are subjective, for example “be clever” or “react against every insult”, “always aims at success” that may not be related to all beings endowed with reason. On the contrary, imperatives are practical, objective principles, i.e. duties, rules that express the objective necessity of the action, that is to say that, if reason alone

determined completely the will, the action would take place according to this rule, while in the everyday reality emotional and empirical aspects disturb human actions, diverting them from the commands of reason.

It is clear that, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, “reason” for Kant is not only common sense and logic, but a higher faculty with metaphysical roots, similar to psychosynthetic transpersonal will.

The imperatives can be hypothetical if they determine will to achieve certain goals, such as “study if you want to be successful”, “train, if you want to win the race”, “avoid vice, if you want to stay healthy”. These imperatives, unlike maxims, apply to all those aiming at the same specific purposes, but whether or not one desires to achieve those goals is delegated to individual choice. That’s why their “imperativeness” is conditioned by the agent; then, to remain in psychosynthetic language, we could say that only strong or wise will would apply to them.

However, there are imperatives that determine will not to obtain the realization of something desired, but simply as a will: they are categorical imperatives that say “you must because you must”, “you must and that’s that”.

Really moral laws are only these imperatives that go beyond sensible inclinations, go beyond the constraints of natural laws, of the limitations imposed by impulses, desires, emotions and thoughts. They seem to respond to what Assagioli called Will for Good.

Kant believes that the categorical imperatives do not depend on their content and can not be confused with commands suitable to carry out certain things, as noble and elevated they might be, but they are worth for their form of universal law: “do not kill”, “do not lie”, “do not steal”, “do not do violence”, regardless of the causes from which the actions originate and of the consequences that they can bring.

In other words, Königsberg thinker transposes into philosophical language the Gospel principle that morality is not what you do, but the intention with which you do it. What in the morality of the Gospel is “good will”, in Kant becomes the adjustment of will to the absolute form of the moral law. In the *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals* he reinforces the assumptions of

categorical imperatives, stating: “Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end” and later: “[Act] only so that the will could through its maxim at the same time consider itself as universally legislative”. The moral law within us is not derived from anything preceding, if not by the fact that we are free beings, that we can because we must and we must because we can choose freely. Freedom is the independence of will from the natural law of phenomena, that is from causality and from any form of mechanism.

Assagioli has admirably explained this with the example of the mother who, in front of one of her children crushed by a car, is able to lift a weight that her muscular strength would not allow, ignoring any fear of dying, or of an athlete who, in a climb or a race, goes well beyond the limits imposed by his body, experiencing a state of ecstasy, or even of a soldier who, for love of his country, overcomes the fear of dying imposed by the natural law of self-preservation. But more than that, Assagioli with his vision gives numinous and luminous levity to Kant’s austere statements on duty, making us understand that we “must” in relation to an existential project that we have freely chosen as embodied Selves, the implementation of which would give meaning to our lives. And if all men remained faithful to their own projects, the world itself would be full of truth and beauty.

Here, then, the true moral law raises man from any sense of transience and ephemeral of his existence, and going back to the initial quotation, reveals that his “invisible identity”, his Self, which Kant calls, differently from Psychosynthesis, personality, is in deep connection, not merely accidental, but necessary and universal, with all the existing worlds, in the immensely large and, we could now say with current scientific knowledge, in the immensely small, extending to infinity.

We come, thus, to the concept of sublime that the philosopher, while leaving it evident in the Critique of Practical Reason, discusses in the Critique of Judgement, work in which he questions himself on the source of the idea of Beautiful and Sublime.

The Beautiful and the Sublime fall within the type of reflective judgment, that is, that judgment that can not refer to a universal already given, that is a codified rule, but for which we need to compare and join one to the other some particular representations and relate themselves to our faculty of knowledge. In other words, objects already cognitively determined must find an agreement between them and the knowing subject. In this type of judgment we grasp things in harmony one with the other and also in harmony with ourselves. It is from this particular relationship between an object and a subject that, harmoniously using all human faculties, in psychosynthetic terms the whole Star of Functions, is born the concept of beauty that allows people of all times and cultures to recognize, admire and enjoy the beauty of a field of ripe wheat, of the Parthenon or of one of Mozart’s sonatas “without purpose and without concept”, that is without interested practical purposes and without a limiting intellectual definition.

Yet, Kant goes well beyond the concept of beauty when he speaks of the sense of annihilation that captures man before the immensity of the universe, as a finite animal creature, who must return to the planets the material from which he arose. Soon thereafter, however, due to moral law, man realizes that he is no longer tied to the limitations of the animality and that he is greater than the immensely large and immensely powerful that seem to annihilate him. This is the sublime, made of attraction and repulsion, of continuous wonder and esteem, a pleasure inspired by the unlimited, seeming like a “negative” pleasure, because the materially embodied individuality appears too small and inadequate to withstand this revelation and this fusion with the Absolute.

This is the deep point of contact between beauty and ethics, Greek *kalokagathia*, both reminiscent to the man who opens to them, that he belongs to this material world, with all the responsibilities, limitations and suffering that this implies, but that he is also the son of another world, where there are no more divisive influences, where everything is most beautiful, true and good: the dimension of Spirit.