

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT IN GEORGE SANTAYANA AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE IDEA OF CHRIST*

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CHAPTER V

INTUITION AND UNION OF THE SPIRIT

That no spirit can absorb any other is evident, since spirit (as I use the word) is an act, not a transferable or transformable substance. Therefore any spiritual union actually experienced is necessarily specious and a pure datum of intuition (RS, 255).

13. Intuition in Relation to Knowledge (Universal Knowledge)

Since one of the characteristics of intuition is cognition (RS, 108), for «intuition is cognitive in essence» (RS, 111), we must examine in this chapter what kind of knowledge is intuition and what is its relation to the knowledge of fact or animal faith.

a. Of Intuition in General (Intuition in Relation to Animal Faith).

To Santayana's ontological distinction between essence and existence corresponds his epistemological distinction of two stages or leaps of transitivity in knowledge: «the leap of intuition, from the state of the living organism to the consciousness of some essence; and the leap of faith or action, from the symbol actually given in essence or in thought to some ulterior existing object» (ECR, 183). As we can see, then, according to

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this epistemological distinction of Santayana, intuition refers to essence and animal faith refers to existence. So, as Butler remarks, «the only cognitional paths open to Santayana are: intuition of appearance or the datum of consciousness; and a blind instinctive faith in existents as they are encountered in action and anticipation»¹. In this way therefore «Santayana establishes a method, discovers essence in intuition, and reduces all knowledge of fact to faith, all definitions and terms to symbols, and all argument to arbitrary dialectic»². Santayana himself says: «Animal faith, when it describes in suitable symbols (of which a dialectical system may be one) the objects encountered in action, is what I call knowledge», while, on the other hand, the «acquaintance with essence I call intuition, whether it be passive, aesthetic, and mystical, or on the contrary analytical and selective, as in reasoned discourse» (RE,4). «By intuition, the reader will perceive, I do not mean divination, or a miraculous way of discovering that which sense and intellect cannot disclose. On the contrary, by intuition I mean direct and obvious possession of the apparent, without commitments of any sort about its truth, significance, or material existence» (RS, 92). Thus Santayana does not attribute to «intuition any feminine or Bergsonian privilege of being a miraculous substitute for intellect and a short cut to knowledge of fact»³.

In general Santayana characterizes the knowledge of existence (animal faith) as «symbolic» and the knowledge of essence (intuition) as «literal». In his essay on «Literal and Symbolic Knowledge», Santayana says:

It (knowledge of existence) is symbolic spontaneously, and its function (by which I mean its moral function of not leaving us in the dark about the world we live in) is perfectly fulfilled if it remains symbolical... The symbolic instrument of transitive knowledge would hardly have been overlooked, if literal knowledge did not exist also, in a different sphere. Literal knowledge is acquaintance with essence, aesthetic or logical intuition or con-

1. Butler, *The Mind of Santayana*, p. 55.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

3. RE, 176. Of Bergson who, according to H. Hausheer, «was the first to try to give the term intuition a scientific basis» (Rune's *Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 37), Santayana says in the beginning of his essay on him that «the most representative and remarkable living philosopher is M. Henri Bergson» (WD, 58). However, in his definition of intuition Santayana understands it in a different sense than that in which the French philosopher does.

struction, the object of which is purely ideal and, without existing in itself, is summoned into a specious actuality by the flash of attention that lights it up for a moment (ISK, 318, 319; cp. SAF, 103).

Now, as we can understand from the reference of animal faith to existence and of intuition to essence, the characteristic of the former is faith in the «not-given», for «nothing given exists», while the characteristic of the latter is intuition of «the given» or the *datum* which is an essence. «The datum of intuition, when fully realized and clarified, reveals nothing but itself to that intuition. It is an essence» (RS, 95). «That which certainly exists in such a case is only the intuition of that datum, not the datum in its own specious field, which is that of essence» (RS, 246), So, «intuition not only exists, but is the most intense form of existence» (RS, 94). «In intuition we have an instance of perfect actuality, a form of being that preeminently exists and moves (for it is a discovery, an experience) yet is precisely the act of arresting and defining some clear essence» (RS, 95-96). In this sense, therefore, «intuition is the innocent expression of action» (RS, 11). «For intuition is an act and has an organ, so that it executes a movement and traverses duration in merely arising» (RS, 111). It is this actuality or existence that gives to intuition its «first characteristic». The «first characteristic of intuition», Santayana says, is «actuality, or existence concentrated into the sense of existence» (RS, 94; also MWI, 294). It is «the Aristotelian definition of intuition, or of any instance of spirit, as the second entelechy, the perfect actuality, of organic life» (RS, 94).

Considering this characteristic of intuition as actuality or existence, we can see that there is a point on which intuition comes into contact with animal faith, a meeting place in the psyche, for this psyche, which «creates spirit», «creates intent in the spirit», too. And it is this intent that «generates intuition». «Intuition», Santayana says, «is born smothered in intent; and intent is precisely assurance and expectancy turned towards the not-given» (RS, 110). In other words, «the psyche being in this case tensely directed upon the source of stimulation, intuition absorbs vital intent, and becomes animal faith: a specific assurance and expectancy turned towards the not-given» (RS, 109). «Thus attention to the not-given, anxiety, suspense, precipitation dominate the spirit in the beginning» (RS, 110), which is «the leap of intent imposed on spirit by its animal origin» (RS, 110). We can understand, then, that the leap across the chasm between the given (essence) and the not-given (existing thing) is made by *intent*, by which, as Bultler remarks,

«spirit relates her terms to the object she intends, or means, when attending to or discoursing about that object»⁴.

b. Phases through Which Intuition Must Pass in Growing Pure (Relation of Intuition to Experience and Intelligence). Of animal faith Santayana talks in his book *Scepticism and Animal Faith* where he remarks: «Animal faith is earlier than intuition; intuitions come to help it out and lend it something to posit» (SAF, 107). Santayana speaks of intuition in the *Realm of Spirit*⁵ where, as he himself says in his *Apologia Pro Mente Sua*, «he has studied some of the phases through which intuition must pass in growing pure and being liberated from useless pain and distraction» (PS, 580). So, let us see here in brief these phases through which intuition must pass in growing pure, or rather the relation of intuition to the other kinds of knowledge, those by sense and intellect.

Intuition as actuality or existence «is a discovery, an experience» (RS, 95). «Physical experience and organic memory» «until the psyche begins to decay, may supply a broadened basis for intuition» (RS, 102). So, perceiving and remembering must be understood under the «unity of apprehension without which no intuition could exist at all» (RS, 100), for intuition is «absolute apprehension» (RE, xi). In this sense, therefore, intuition is comprehensive» (RS, 102) and «cognitive» (RS, 108). As Santayana says, «intuition itself is cognitive from the beginning. It is apprehension of something distinct, capable of being recognized and spoken of again. Yet this something might be a pure feeling or idea, enriching the mind, but conveying no knowledge of anything further. In a pregnant and transcendent sense, therefore, intuition is not knowledge» (RS, 108-109; also SAF, 170). «Intuition tends to sublimate knowledge into vision» (RS, 112). Intuition, therefore, in the sense of apprehension is cognitive. It is «essentially cognitive and spiritual» (RS, 109). It is spiritual, for intuitions are «moments of spirit, qualitatively similar in their cognitive essence, which is absolutely intellectual and unrepresentable to sense» (RS, 102). «And we may say that as intuition is cognitive of essence even when not conveying any knowledge of fact, so it is intelligent and conclusive even when not positing any external object» (RS, 111). However, as Santayana explains, «intuition on its side is not an operation performed by some pre-existing intellect. Intellect exists

4. Butler, *op cit.*, p. 115.

5. See especially Ch. VI by the title «Intuition». Here Santayana defines intuition as «the direct and obvious possession of the apparent» (RS, 92).

by intellection; and intuition is a moment of created spirit, not a power applied, but a brief life received» (RS, 100).

c. Pure Intuition as the Perfect Function of the Spirit. From what we said above about the relation of intuition to sense experience, on the one hand, and to intelligence, on the other hand, we can now understand better what Santayana means in his definition of intuition. He says:

[The] acquaintance with essence I call intuition, whether it be passive, aesthetic, and mystical, or on the contrary analytical and selective, as in reasoned discourse; because at every point demonstration or inference depends for its force on intuition of the intrinsic relation between the given terms (RE, 4). Intuition is an event, although it reveals only an essence; and in like manner discourse is an experience, even when its deliverance is mere dialectic (SAF, 136; also 140).

By experience Santayana understands «a fund of wisdom gathered by living» (SAF, 138). This experience, as we said, «may supply a broadened basis for intuition» (RS, 102); for «... intuition opens its childish eyes upon blank light; experience does begin with the simple, although nature does not. The intuition of a simple essence is called a feeling; and the essence given in a primitive feeling is likely to be some truly simple, quite stupid, essence, such as sheer intensity» (RE, 146). But, «if experience in the child begins with the simple, in the wise man it begins with the complex» (RE, 147).

This essence, however, either simple or complex, is pure; for «*pure*», according to Santayana, «is an epithet proper to all essences» (RE, 49). In this sense, therefore, intuition, whose deliverance is some pure essence, tends to become pure from the beginning by the very impulse that generates it (RS, 92). Pure intuition is characterized by Santayana as «the perfect function of spirit» (RS, 92); it is that in which consists the liberation of spirit. He says:

Distress at its source and distraction about its objects are the enemies of spirit; and its salvation comes when it is freed from all distress or distraction, and becomes pure intuition, be the theme of that intuition simple or complex, a breath of morning air or the sum total of possible knowledge (RS, 92).

Spirit liberated from distraction by this redeeming knowledge is thus united with the Good. This union as «any spiritual union actually experienced is necessarily specious and a pure datum of intuition» (RS,

255). But, let us see now in detail about this union in the following section.

14. Union in Relation to Love (Universal Love)

Spiritual «union», as Santayana understands this term, is in general love, for he says «the great bond of union is love» (ICG, 141). It is love as is expressed first of all as «inner integrity» which is «the first condition of unity with anything else» (RS, 224). It is after that the love of the world by charity (RS, 229ff.) and the harmony in which spirit may adopt the Will in nature as the Will of God (RS, 80). This love or harmony «between the individual and the world» may be established in society at large by some firm political and moral regimen, or religiously by the discipline of the inner man (RS, 12). So beginning with the inner man (inner integrity) which is the basis for every union, we shall treat in this section union with the world by charity (union in the political sense) and «union in prayer»⁶ which «prayer is at once the most childlike element in religion and the most spiritual; for it begins with a cry for help or a gesture of surrender and it ends with complete self-forgetfulness and absorption in the divine life» (ICG, 126); and, since, according to Santayana, spirit is the divine element in man (ICG, 139, 227; also RS, 208, 297), prayer as the union or the dialogue of man with God is in the language of Santayana «the inner dialogue of the spirit with itself» (ICG, 142).

a. Union of the Spirit within Itself (Inner Integrity). The Christian expression: «Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself» means that a necessary presupposition of the love of our neighbour is the love of ourselves because we cannot love our neighbour without loving, at first, ourselves. On this kind of love Santayana, by teaching «inner integrity» as the first condition of union in love, agrees also with Christianity. But, one might say that not only Santayana but every man could agree because the love of ourselves is something natural (there is no one who does not love himself) and, therefore, to talk about this love is unnecessary. However, Santayana does not mean here the selfish love of ourselves which is blind and which is named «egotism». This kind of love is quite opposite from the love for others, because an egotistical person can

6. As for the expression «union in prayer or in love» see RS, 219; see also of the union in prayer especially pp. 243ff.

never love another but only himself; neither does he mean here the innate love of ourselves which we are born with and which is named in the language of psychology «the instinct of self-preservation». There is not any doubt that everybody has such a love for himself, because this love is something natural and inevitable.

This kind of love, therefore, is not that which Santayana means by «inner integrity». Integrity, that is, the undivided or unbroken state of the individual, is, according to Santayana, what causes the contradiction of spirit to vanish. Those which bring this contradiction in our soul are the enemies of the spirit, the different passions when they begin to assert their primary right to life and to liberty, in one word, the *devil* by whose personage Santayana understands «any enemy of spirit that is internal to spirit» (RS, 165). For this reason, the devil is the worst enemy of spirit. «Storms», Santayana says, «are not appalling to the spirit, nor even death; what is appalling is only inner contradiction, delusion, and madness hugging its own torments. Integrity banishes all that; and it renders the truth lifegiving and refreshing, like pure air and the solid earth» (RS, 226). «But spirit», as Santayana points out, «is more often distracted than harmonious» (RS, 268). In inner harmony, however, the true love of ourselves can be shown, that is, the objective love of ourselves which can achieve true benefit to the spirit by protecting it from its enemies within and by attaining that unity of the spirit necessary for the good life.

This love, therefore, must be understood when Santayana talks of «inner integrity» which is «the first condition of unity with anything else» (RS, 225). Without this love, that is, love of ourselves, love of our neighbour cannot exist; without inner integrity, that is, unity of ourselves, unity of the individual with society cannot exist because «it is easier», according to Santayana, «for a free spirit to live in charity and peace with an evil society, than for a distracted spirit to tolerate the most perfect universe» (RS, 225).

b. Union of the Spirit with the World by Charity. The inner unity, which as an internal experience is actual, is for Santayana the basis of the union between spirits, which union is «only incidental» (RS, 252) and «a fact external to their experience» (RS, 255). Therefore, «the only spiritual union that can be certain, obvious, and intrinsically blissful, must be not a union between two spirits but the unity of a spirit within itself» (RS, 255). «Not that a real union between spirits may not exist, in that separate minds may be unanimous; but this unanimity would be

a fact external to their experience of it, a truth about them, which they might conceive and credit, but which could not in itself be a condition or ecstasy attained by either of them» (RS, 255).

Based, then, on inner integrity which can be the only certain spiritual union and the first condition of unity with anything else, «the first step towards union with the Good is to have settled one's accounts with the world and with the truth» (RS, 267). The life of spirit is only a small part of the world's life. Santayana says:

Spirit cannot *be* the world; it can only *think* the world; and this function of thinking has conditions that are local and specific; there must be integrity and clear sensibility in some animal psyche. Such perfection of function brings an inner light and happiness. Truth, in the appropriate terms and relevant measure, has been discovered and defined; and this truth is a pure good for the spirit... This spiritual love of the truth is not love of what the world loves, and therefore not hatred or what the world hates; but is understanding of both those passions. It is therefore a kind of love for the world (RS, 226-227).

Concerning this love of the world, «spirit may love the world» (RS, 227) by «vital sympathy»⁷ and «compassion» (RS, 226) and «by transmuting both sympathy and pity into charity» (RS, 229). Charity is «a universal spiritual sympathy with the world» (RS, 234). It is «humane, with roots in nature» (RS, 241).

So, the union of the spirit with the world is attained, according to Santayana, as in Christianity in general, by love which love is divided by him into vital sympathy and charity, according to

the double level of moral life, here natural, there spiritual; and it is only at the spiritual level that perfect union with the Good is possible; union with it at the natural level being precarious, blind, and almost always infected with suffering, remorse, and injustice. These two levels are not to be conceived as separated like heaven and earth, or lived in by different persons: they are moral levels with each life, often within one moment... Our love of the world is natural in so far as it rests on kinship and contagion; it becomes spiritual in so far as it grows disinterested, looks before and after, and discriminates the dead loss from the clear gain (RS, 229).

Therefore, when «the vital dependence of spirit on nature involves

7. RS, 227. Since spirit, according to Santayana, is «an emanation of life» (RS, 227), «we find the pleasures of emotion and of perception, pleasures intrinsically spiritual» (RS, 228).

responsive affection towards nature on the part of spirit» (RS, 228), then this love is vital sympathy. And when this «sympathy with the world reaches the spiritual level it receives a Christian name and is called charity» (RS, 229). This charity, then, is, according to Santayana, «the true spiritual sublimation of love» (RS, 202).

c. Union of the Spirit with All Good in Prayer. If inner integrity is a duty to ourselves and charity another duty to our neighbour or to society, prayer which is the inner dialogue of man with God is a duty in the religious sense. «Union with all good», says Santayana, «is possible only in prayer» (RS, 243). He gives a «double interpretation of the divine will» (RS, 244) in the expression *Thy will be done* of the Lord's prayer:

The will of God on the one hand means whatsoever happens; on the other hand it means that which ought to happen. In the latter sense it seems as yet not to be done on earth as it is in heaven; and the Kingdom of God seems not yet to have come. But this postponement, too, must be according to God's will in the first sense (RS, 244; also ICG, 116).

However, Santayana understands the language of prayer in a poetical sense (RS, 245) and God as a symbolic name for matter to which the power of nature is attributed by him. So, the unity or harmony of man's Will with God's Will by prayer is in the philosophy of Santayana the unanimity of the Will at work in the spirit with the Will of nature working beyond the animal soul (RS, 66). Spirit, therefore, to which is often attributed the power of nature,

has no power; and the Will that supports and evokes spirit (and exerts power to that extent) is entirely secondary and sympathetic, being the Will to understand all Will, and to love all the goods that Will anywhere aspires to create (RS, 257). Its Will is not to will, but to understand all Will; and so without willing any of the ends that universal Will pursues (not even the Will to create spirit) it sees the beauty of all those ends, including the beauty of its own impartial but enamoured vision (RS, 268).

In this union, then, of the Will in the spirit with all Will, a union achieved not by physical possession or identity, but by intellectual worship

spirit, forgetting itself becomes pure vision and pure love. Then to the spirit that has renounced all things, all things are restored; and having renounced itself also, it cannot resist any inspiration

or think evil of any good, but embraces them all in the eternal object of its worship, not as they may have existed in the world in passing and in conflict, but as they lie ideally reconciled in the bosom of the Good, at peace at least with themselves and with one another (RS, 271).

CHAPTER VI

DISTRACTION AND LIBERATION OF THE SPIRIT

By distraction I understand the alien force that drags the spirit away from the spontaneous exercise of its liberty, and holds it down to the rack of care, doubt, pain, hatred, and vice. And I will distinguish the chief agencies in this distraction, after the picturesque manner of Christian wisdom, as the Flesh, the World, and the Devil (RS, 119). The nerve of bedevilment... is a rebellion of spirit against the sources of spirit (RS, 166). Distress at its source and distraction about its objects are the enemies of spirit; and its salvation comes when it is freed from all distress or distraction and becomes pure intuition, be the theme of that intuition simple or complex, a breath of morning air or the sum total of possible knowledge (RS, 92).

15. Distraction of the Spirit by the Flesh, the World, and the Devil.

Spiritual union of which we talked in the previous chapter is a natural consequence of the liberation of the spirit from distraction. So, union comes after distraction and liberation, or rather union is the last stage among the «three stages in Santayana's naturalistic version of the perfection of the spiritual life: Distraction, Liberation, Union»¹. Union is the opposite end to distraction in this scale of the three stages of spiritual life.

As Santayana explains, «by distraction I understand the alien force that drags the spirit away from the spontaneous exercise of its liberty, and holds it down to the rack of care, doubt, pain, hatred, and

1. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

vice. And I will distinguish the chief agencies in this distraction, after the picturesque manner of Christian wisdom, as the Flesh, the World, and the Devil» (RS, 119). Let us see here, then, the distraction of the spirit by each of these three chief agencies: the flesh, the world, and the devil².

Regarding the distraction by flesh, «pain is a first form of distraction» (RS, 125). «Distraction [is] seen pure in pain» (RS, 125). Pain has to do with flesh because «if spirit were all, pain would be utterly dark and inexplicable; but even on the lowest plane we may say that to suffer is to learn. We learn at least that we are incarnate; and also that the body is subject to some hostile influence and for the moment helpless before it» (RS, 127). By pain Santayana understands every kind of pain «physical or moral» (RS, 127): physical pain, as for example, «hunger and cold» (RS, 138), «illness, poverty, bad weather, and ill luck» (RS, 137); moral pain, as for example, terror of death (RS, 127), and «the most fanciful and transporting of passions» which it is strange «should be called *par excellence* the concupiscence of the flesh» (RS, 130). Among the latter, therefore, we must reckon also passions of keeping «the sexual impulse alive» (RS, 137), as for example, in the case of the great suffering in the grand passion in which «the victim is attaching his whole soul to one person and to the caprices of that person, and giving to man, or rather to woman, the things that are God's» (RS, 133-134).

As concerns the «transition to distraction by the world», Santayana says:

The sins of the flesh, though the saddest, are the friendliest to the spirit. It may renounce, it will never insult them. They were never themselves hostile to the spirit in intention, only childish gropings of an animal soul caught in the world's trip. It is rather the ill consequences of carnal passion that condemn it, than the quality, dumb longing, of the passion itself; so that for the most part it is the world rather than the flesh that renders the flesh a snare (RS, 138). The world [is] a more external power than the flesh but no less acceptable (RS, 146). As the flesh is the necessary organ of spirit, so the world is its inevitable environment (RS, 194). Thus the soul acquires her second, her social body (RS, 139).

For this reason, spirit loves the world. And it is because of this love that «spirit suffers and dies in the world» (RS, 134-135). This suffering of the

2. Concerning the three agencies in distraction (flesh, world, devil) see also RS, 182, 194, 197.

spirit, or rather this «incurable conflict between the world and the individual Will» (RS, 164) is «because the organism of the individual is natural and has a psyche, while the organization of the world is mechanical... Such civilization has no psyche and no spirit of its own» (RS, 164).

In distraction, however, by pain or by the flesh, as also by the world, «the enemy is external» (RS, 127) to the spirit, but there is an enemy who is internal to the spirit and who, for this reason, is the worst and most dangerous. This enemy of the spirit is the *Devil*. Of the appearance of this enemy in the spirit Santayana says the following:

So long as the passions hide or excuse themselves in terms of some conventional morality, spirit seems to have only the flesh and the world for its enemies; but when each passion begins to assert its primary right to life and to liberty, spirit has come upon an enemy in the spiritual sphere. The devil has entered the stage; for by this personage I understand any enemy of spirit that is internal to spirit (RS, 165).

But, how can such a thing be possible? How should spirit oppose or contradict its own nature? «Different impulses, contrary thoughts may cross the spirit» so that it is torn «by a divided personality» (RS, 165). Extreme forms of such distraction are called by Santayana «insanity» (RS, 166) and «intellectual suicide» (RS, 173). So, «the distraction of the spirit by the devil reaches its height in insanity and suicide: on the way to which there are many stages and devious paths of sophistication, obsession, delusion, and fanatical pride» (RS, 194-195). As Bulter explains, «the devil, according to Santayana, is a symbolic figure for pride of power and knowledge»³. Santayana himself talks in this case about a «proud intelligence» (RS, 166) or «the pride of knowledge» when it «proclaims itself absolute» (RS, 175), and about an «ego full of natural pride» or a «spirituality» which «has become egotism» (RS, 176). In this case, therefore, as Santayana explains:

The nerve of bedevilment is that it renders *any* harmony impossible either within a man or between man and nature. It is a rebellion of spirit against the sources of spirit; an attempt to be intelligent without docility, spiritual without piety, and victorious without self-surrender (RS, 166).

As such the pride of power and knowledge is symbolized by the devil and personified by «the devilishness of a Caliban or an Iago, of a

3. Butler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

Lucifer or a Mephistopheles» (RS, 166; also 171, 177). But, as Santayana points out, «true knowledge is imperfect and demands humility» (RS, 172) such as we find it «pictured in Christ» (RS, 176). «Heaven would open wherever spiritual humility happened to look» (RS, 191).

16. Liberation of the Spirit by Peace with the Flesh, with the World, and within itself

Since the distraction of the spirit is made by the flesh, the world, and the devil, we can understand that the liberation of the spirit from distraction is attained by the peace of the spirit with the flesh, with the world, and within itself. So, liberation of the spirit is not *from* the flesh, the world, and the devil, but of peace *with* this three-fold enemy. This distinction between *from* and *with* is very important for Santayana because it concerns the defence of his naturalism against supernaturalism. But, let us see what exactly Santayana means by this distinction.

The liberation of the spirit is not a liberation *from* the flesh because spirit is not «a separate substance» and spiritual life is not «another life in another world» (RS, 182). «Because spirit is essentially a culmination, and perfect happiness, a quality to be attained occasionally by natural life, not another non natural life existing beyond» (RS, 183). For this reason, there is «no escape possible from nature» (RS, 182). So, «spirit is freed by the perfection of the body, not by its absence» (RS, 193). «We should liberate the spirit quite enough from the flesh if we could liberate the flesh» (RS, 193), for it is «the flesh as a power that liberates us from flesh as an obsession» (RS, 193). For Santayana's naturalism, therefore, the conception is not valid that «the devil is in the flesh» or Plato's teaching about the body as a source of evil⁴, as the grave (*σῆμα*) of the soul⁵ and as the prison of the soul⁶ because of the bodily «slavish pleasures»⁷. «We find, then», according to Santayana, «that it was not the flesh in its simple animal functions that imprisoned the spirit, but the world and the mind» (RS, 193).

Concerning the liberation of the spirit from its distraction by the world, Santayana remarks also that this liberation is not a liberation *from* the world. It is not «liberation for the spirit to be removed from

4. *Phaedo* 66b (Cp. *Timaeus* 70e).

5. *Cratylus* 400c; *Phaedrus* 250c; *Gorgias* 493a.

6. *Cratylus* 400c (cp. *Phaedo* 83d).

7. *Phaedrus* 258e (See all these references to Plato in *The Dialogues of Plato*; tr. by B. Jowett, New York, Random House).

the world», as for example, «a hermit or a lover of nature may flee from the world of men» (RS, 194). As in the case of the flesh there is no escape possible from the natural body, so in the case of the world such a liberation from it is also «physically impossible» (RS, 194). In this case the spirit is liberated «by understanding the world, not by quitting it» (RS, 194). «Spirit, in the measure in which, by attentive study and sympathy, it may have understood the world, will be liberated from it, that is, from distraction by it» (RS, 194).

As in the case of the flesh and of the world, so in the case of the devil, the liberation of the spirit from its distraction by him is not a liberation *from* the devil. «The devil needs indeed to be exorcised, but cannot be destroyed so long as spirit endures, because in their substance the two are one» (RS, 194). Since the devil, as Santayana understands this personage, is any internal enemy to spirit, any rebellion of spirit against the sources of spirit, we can understand that «liberation cannot be liberation from spirit itself» (RS, 196). This liberation of the spirit, therefore, in the case of the devil can be only a liberation by the attainment of peace or of «unity of a spirit within itself» (RS, 255; also 261). In other words, it is a liberation attained by «inner integrity» (RS, 224), which (integrity) banishes what is appalling to the spirit: «inner contradiction, delusion, and madness hugging its own torments» (RS, 226). Considering that the distraction in the spirit by the devil reaches its height in the pride of power and knowledge, it is evident that the liberation of the spirit from this kind of distraction lies in its unity in a eulogistic sense, in a union attained by «wisdom and humility» (RS, 218), by «wisdom and self-knowledge» (RS, 269; also 247), by «virtual knowledge of the truth» (RS, 219).

17. Liberation of the Spirit from Distraction by Intuition

The knowledge, by which the spirit is liberated from its three-fold enemy is not that of «pure reason» (RS, 194), but the «knowledge» which would be pure intuition (RS, 175), as the «sum total of possible knowledge» (RS, 92). Of this pure intuition, then, in relation to liberation from distraction in general, Santayana says the following:

The end in view is liberation, or the attainment, if only in glimpses, of the highest good. The steps are to be regarded as steps towards the end. What profit has the spirit in existing, and who are its

true friends and enemies? To which I reply: The perfect function of spirit is pure intuition. By the very impulse that generates it, intuition tends to become pure. It is the movement of apprehension by which anything is given to consciousness; and there is a natural joy in it, whenever it can live unimpeded by fatigue or pain, and not harassed by care, fear, doubt, desire, or any other obsession about the not-given. Distress at its source and distraction about its objects are the enemies of spirit; and its salvation comes when it is free from all distress or distraction, and becomes pure intuition, be the theme of that intuition simple or complex, a breath or morning air or the sum total of possible knowledge (RS, 91-92).

We can understand the important contribution of intuition for the liberation of the spirit in the «two stages, or two dimensions» (RS, 209), by which Santayana distinguishes in general the free life, as historical and as mystical. The «one is rebirth by expansion and re-incarnation in all those phases of spirit in which the spirit is free, and therefore self-forgetful» (RS, 209). In this stage, then, «self, so turned into a mere pedestal, ceases to intercept intuition, yet continues to make intuition a possible temporal and local fact, and determines its point of view, language, and perspectives» (RS, 210). The other stage is «a possible liberation ideally, in the vertical direction, when at any moment, or habitually, the spirit in a man recalls its universality, its merely momentary lodgment here, or preoccupation with this trouble, and expands intuitively into the equilibrium of all moments, and the convergence of all insights, under the intense firmament of truth» (RS, 210-211). This second stage or dimension of the free life, therefore, which especially has to do with mystical intuition, is a liberation in a mystical sense, that is, a liberation «by identification with pure spirit» (RS. 211).

CHAPTER VII

THE GOOD LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

The end in view is liberation (RS, 91), the pursuit of all Good, guided by all knowledge (RS, 242). It is with the Good that a liberated soul should be united (RS, 215). It is with the Good only that union is good; and only with the Good that is spiritually possible. Union with anything less, or with anything more, kills the hope that was to be brought to perfection and damns the soul that was to be saved... The union sought by a liberated spirit is no fusion of its substance with any other substance, but a moral unanimity or fellowship with the life of all substances insofar as they support or enlarge its own life (RS, 220).

18. The Nature of Good in Santayana

After discussing in the previous chapter the liberation or freedom of the spirit from distraction, let us now examine in this chapter the last one of the first part of this treatise the Good as the object of the life of spirit.

a. Universal Knowledge and Universal Love, and their Combination into Intellectual Union (Spinoza's Influence on Santayana). Of the object of spirit in relation to its freedom Santayana says the following:

This object, in the case of spirit, is universal knowledge and universal love. Freedom for spirit would therefore require a supernatural station, from which all perspectives should be equally visible and equally neutralized; and it would require inhuman and superhuman sympathies, by which an infinite variety of goods might be appreciated and impartially judged. In man, in any finite creature, spirit is therefore deeply enslaved. It tastes freedom, and gets some notion of it, only in those movements of intuition in which the animal seat and the animal bias of the Will

are forgotten and intelligence and love, as if disembodied, fly to their objects without hindrance from the flesh... (RS, 68-69).

These two objects of the spirit, universal knowledge (or intelligence) and universal love (or union) are combined by Santayana elsewhere into «Intellectual union, which is no less spiritual than love» (RS, 81). This is what in another place he calls *intelletto d'amore*, this understanding and this love universalized (RS, 231-232). From this alone is evident the influence of Spinoza on Santayana's conception of the Good which is defined as love or union and is characterized by the one as eternal and by the other as universal and by both as intellectual because of its derivation from intuition. In this sense, therefore, Santayana's philosophy, as «intelligible» with its «emphasis upon the contemplative life», «reminds one of the way in which Spinoza climaxed his *Ethics* with the doctrine of the intellectual love of God»¹.

Spinoza in the last part of his *Ethics* says the following about the intellectual love of God as the highest good of moral life: «From the third kind of knowledge necessarily springs the intellectual love of God»². By «third kind of knowledge» Spinoza understands the «intuitive knowledge» which is higher than the two other kinds of knowledge, those from experience and by reason³. This kind of knowledge, according to Proposition XXXIII, is characterized as «eternal». «The third kind of knowledge (Prop. 31, pt. 5, and Ax. 3, pt. 1) is eternal, and therefore (by the same Axiom) the love which springs from it is necessarily eternal»⁴.

However, Santayana, instead of intellectual union or love, talks most of the time about knowledge and love⁵, both characterized by him as universal; though sometimes the epithet «universal» characterizing «knowledge» (or intelligence) and «love» (or sympathy) is changed into a name added to the two others, those of «intelligence» and «sympathy».

1. M. K. Munitz, *The Moral Philosophy of Santayana*, p. 87. In general Spinoza was one of Santayana's favourite philosophers. In his preface to *Scepticism and Animal Faith* he considers Spinoza, besides the Greek naturalists and the Indians, as one of those who «have been right on the chief issue, the relation of man and of his spirit to the universe» (SAF, p. viii; also UR, 245; concerning especially intellectual love in Spinoza's philosophy, to which Santayana refers, see UR, 251 and ICG, 208).

2. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Pt. 5, Corol. to Prop. XXXII (*Selections*, p. 390).

3. *Ibid.*, Pt. 2, Schol. 2 on Prop. XL (*Ibid.*, p. 186).

4. *Ibid.*, Pt. 5, Demonst. of Prop. XXXIII (*Ibid.*, p. 390).

5. Knowledge and love are replaced by him elsewhere by «wisdom», «intelligence», «successive intuitions» (for knowledge), and «sympathy», «charity», «union» (for love). See, for example, *Realm of Spirit*, pp. 69, 194, 195, 197, etc.

So, we have the arrangement of these three names in the following order, «intelligence, sympathy, universality» which the spirit, as Santayana explains, «has chosen» as «what in its own eyes is the better part» (RS, 89).

b. Intuition and Union Not a Fusion of Existential Elements and with the Absolute (Santayana Compared to the Mystics). The «universality» which in this case means «the pursuit of all Good, guided by all knowledge» (RS, 242; also UR, 254-256), and which, as an epithet characterizing knowledge and love, relates them especially to intuition and union, is different from «synthesis», a characteristic usually given both to intuition and union. «The word synthesis», says Santayana, «is highly ambiguous and misleading, like other Kantian terms that have become convenient or indispensable» (RS, 97). Concerning this term in the case of intuition especially, he says:

Intuition is in some sense always a synthesis, even when the datum is an inarticulate feeling, like a scent or a pain (RS, 97). The selection of features appearing in such an intuition is made for it by the psyche, under the physical influences of the moment; and here there is a real *synthesis* of tensions and processes (RS, 100). (But) in the realm of spirit there is no machinery, nothing compounded, dynamic, mysterious, or latent; therefore there is no synthesis at that level (RS, 97). Synthesis, conceived as a fusion of existential elements into a new existential unit, is therefore incongruous with spirit, and belongs to the realm of matter (RS, 98).

So, Santayana concludes in general that «in intuition there is momentary unity of view but *no* synthesis» (RS, 98).

Like intuition in the realm of spirit, spiritual or moral union, too, is not a «synthesis, conceived as a fusion of existential elements». To this synthesis which is «a material fusion» (RS, 249), Santayana contrasts the «union in the moral sphere, which is that of spirit; because in material union with the universe, or fusion with the Absolute, no spirit is required or even permitted to survive» (RS, 249). What Santayana means by «fusion with the Absolute» in the above passage is the «mystic union» which «resides in intuition; it is not a union of objects or with objects, but a synthesis reached in life and expressed in a given quality of feeling. This is a feeling of union and bliss...» (RS, 256). «Here the mystic» «may take his dazzled feeling itself» and «say that infinite Being is itself simply feeling, or intensity without quality or distinction...» (RSL, 298).

c. *The Good in Santayana as «Union»*. Is the mystic union really a confusion of incapacity with the object (PSL, 298), a trick of identity between intuition and essence (RT, 137), an «egotistical error» (RT, 136), as Santayana thinks? Anyhow, this union of which Mystics speak is also for them, as for Santayana, the aim of moral life, but in a different sense from his. And this meaning is what determines for them the supreme object with which they must be united. However, «it would be useless», according to Santayana, «to recite the names given to this supreme object; God, Brahma, the One, the Absolute» (RS, 215). The question for him is «what these words stand for». Thus in the ninth chapter of the *Realm of Spirit* (the concluding chapter of all *Realms of Being*), under the title of «Union», he starts the discussion about the Good by taking «the name given to this ultimate object by Plato and his followers... This name is the Good: it is with the Good that a liberated soul should be united» (RS, 215).

Examining briefly in the first pages of this chapter the classic meaning of the Good in «Socrates, in whose mouth Plato puts his views on this subject», Santayana concludes:

Socrates and Plato were therefore true spokesmen and great liberators of the spirit when they made the Good, and not the universe or even the truth, the goal of life, attainment of which was happiness. They thereby placed the object of union in the moral sphere, which is that of spirit; because in material union with the universe, or fusion with the Absolute, no spirit is required or even permitted to survive. There can be no union where there are not at least two things to be united. If one is suppressed, the other may remain, but not the union between them; and if the two are merged in a single thought or feeling this feeling or thought is a new fact, a material resultant, perhaps, of two previous existents, but not a union between them, since both now have ceased to exist. Union in prayer or in love requires the persistent physical separateness of the two things united; and their union can be only spiritual, a union in intent, a perfect unanimity. If it were more than that, it would not be a moral union at all, but a material fusion in the dark, with a total extinction of spirit. Everybody achieves that substantial union by dying and being dissolved into cosmic energy and the flux of change. It is a consummation, in some cases, devoutly to be wished; we may thereby turn into the potentiality of many a better thing than ever we were actually. Yet that better thing in its day, and spirit in any of its instances, can exist only by distinction; not only by distinguishing one essence from another in intuition but by distinguishing one object or eventuality from another in appetition, aspi-

ration, and love. The truth and the universe will enter into this union only under the form of the good; that is to say, insofar as they contribute, by support and by denial, to define both the adored and the attainable good, both religion and politics. But it is with the Good only that union is good; and only with the Good that it is spiritually possible. Union with anything less, or with anything more, kills the hope that was to be brought to perfection and damns the souls that was to be saved (RS, 219-220).

So, Santayana approaches a fundamental point which is settled by his inquiry as concerns the nature of union in the moral sphere:

The union sought by a liberated spirit is no fusion of its substance with any other substance, but a moral unanimity or fellowship with the life of all substances insofar as they support or enlarge its own life (RS, 220).

19. Actuality and Potentiality of the Good (Existent and Non-Existent Good)

a. Moral Union with All «Substances» Is Attained. As we can understand, union in the moral sphere, like intuition which is characterized by «actuality» (RS, 94ff.) and which as such «certainly exists» (RS, 256), is actual and existent, too. And this kind of union is what Santayana means by «Union» as «a moral unanimity or fellowship with the life of all substances». This union, as a union within man (inner integrity) and of man with other men (union with the world), is real and actual since «man», according to Santayana's definition, «is a *substance*, because his human and his personal essence have become forms of substance in him» (RM, 27). It is also real and actual as a union of *spirit* or «within the spirit» since spirit is «a natural manifestation of substance in man» (RM, 27). And, since, according to Santayana's definition substance is the manifestation of essence in existence (RM, 14,27), the Good, that is, the Union of spirit with all substances, is something which exists.

From this alone it is plain why pure Being or God for the Mystics is not identical with the Good in Santayana. Pure Being as an essence (RE, 45, 50, 119; RM, 85; RT, 24) has the characteristic of every essence, that is, it *is* but does *not exist*. Good in Santayana, on the other hand, not only *is* but *exists*, too. For this reason, he contrasts himself with those who identify pure Being with the Good; «the idea of final union with pure Being contradicts the very nature of spirit» (RS, 263). Spirit, like matter and unlike essence, exists. In this sense the union with Good for Santayana is not union with God but with existent Good. Therefore,

his opinion is contrary not only to Brahmanism and Christian Mysticism, in which Good is identical with God, but also to the view of Plato, who separates the Good from God.

b. Santayana's Realism and Naturalism Contrasted to Plato's Idealism and Dante's Supernaturalism. The Good which Plato describes in his *Republic* as the ultimate aim of the ideal State does not exist for Santayana, nor is the ideal State itself in reality but a «utopia» which in Greek (ὄψοπία)⁶ means «without place», that is, non-existent. So, though we find in Plato the classic meaning of the Good (RS, 215), Santayana disagrees with him because this Good is unrealized not only in the State as social harmony but also in the individual as a mystical union. This Good which «as we learn ultimately, is harmony, to be established by the perfect definition and mutual adjustment of all natural functions, both in the individual and in the State, is a «rational Good» «so abstract» and «so cold and repressive a Utopia in political philosophy» (RS, 216). It is a Utopian Good, non-existent, because as a harmony both in the individual and in the State it is not an actual harmony, is «not a good realized but a new set of conditions imposed upon the spirit» (RS, 221). For this reason, according to Santayana, «the Platonic system is mythological: if taken literally and dogmatically, it can seem to cold reason nothing but a gratuitous fiction, as all systems of religion or metaphysics necessarily seem to the outsider» (PSL, 237).

The mystical union of the soul with God Who is the highest Good for man is also for Santayana a non-existent Good. Such a Good is conceived as «the union of our wills with the Universal Will in which every creature finds its true self and its true being»⁷, to use the words which Dorothy Sayers employs to describe this good as conceived by Dante. And Santayana says that Dante may be expected to remain the supreme poet of the supernatural, the unrivalled exponent after Plato» (TPP, 122).

c. The Peace of Mind in the Indians, a Potential Good for Santayana (Shangri-La). Not only the Good in a heavenly Paradise of Dante, like that of the union with the ideas in a «celestial sphere», according to the Platonic myth, but also the Good in every earthly Paradise, like

6. Claude and Paul Augé erroneously consider the word «utopia» of Latin origin rather than of Greek (*Nouveau petit Larousse*, Paris, Librairie Larousse, 1955, p. 1063).

7. Introduction to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, I: Hell; tr. by D. L. Sayers, The Penguin Classics, Edinburgh, R. and R. Clark Ltd, p. 19.

that of the Garden of Eden in which «we invoke only an animal placidity» (RS, 182), does not cease to be a fable⁸, for Santayana, something non-existent.

The Paradise which the romantic and the idealist writers describe in their books as a place of absolute peace and happiness is simply an endeavour of man to liberate himself from the distraction and difficulties of this life, hoping to find at least in his imagination what he lost in reality, the Garden of Eden, Milton's «Paradise Lost», though this Paradise, as we said, could never exist in the past or future, according to Santayana. He says:

The myths about a paradise, past or future, are transparent parables, expressing the rare, transporting, ecstatic quality that distinguishes the culminating moments of natural life from its endless difficulties, hardships, and embolded hopes (RS, 183).

Such a mythical and imaginary Paradise could be, for example, according to Santayana, that of Shangri-La in James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*⁹. Shangri-La is the name of an ancient Buddhist lamasery in the valley of the Blue Moon, a distant and isolated place in the Mountains of Tibet where in 1734 a Capuchin missionary, Father Perrault, organized the small community of the Buddhists, who lived in this valley, as an ideal State¹⁰. «Peace of mind» was the ideal of this state established in a place whose chief characteristic was tranquility. To this quiet place, then, an idealistic Englishman, Hugh Conway, the main hero of the book, indignant and exhausted by the First World War, escapes from the disorder which the war had brought on the world, in order to find peace of mind¹¹ in the peaceful valley which like «a deep unrippled pool matched the peace of his own thoughts»¹².

This peace of mind, which is the ideal of Shangri-La and of the

8. «Those revealed histories were but fables» (RS, 222). «The garden of Eden is an inverted image of aspiration, like Arcadia or the garden of Epicurus; not, however, the image of a wise aspiration» (ICG, 167).

9. First published 1933 by Macmillan and Co., Ltd.

10. James Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, London, Pan-Books Ltd, pp. 108ff.

11. In the *Saturday Review of Literature*, in an article trying to analyze the great success of *Lost Horizon*, appeared the following about the author of this book: «Mr. Hilton gave the public, many of whose authors were engrossed with the class struggle, a glimpse of escape into philosophical reflection, a sight of a man who made peace and quiet in his own mind, and the public rose to meet him» (*Current Biography*, New York, N.Y., The H. W. Wilson Co., 1942, p. 373).

12. *Lost Horizon*, p. 128.

Indians in general, is not an actual but a potential Good for Santayana. In his *Apologia Pro Mente Sua* he says:

(The Indians) sometimes identify that final peace, which is an ideal, with a longing to be merged in primeval substance, which is an unlimited potentiality; and here I cannot follow them, because the peace of the sea is treacherous, and potentiality is not an ideal, but a blind commitment (PS, 56).

Peace in Santayana is something actual; it derives from union with this world which exists, it is a harmony between our interior and exterior world. Therefore, peace or harmony for Santayana is not potential, like what he supposes that of the Mystics and the Indians to be, in whom union with pure Being, according to him, is a non-existent Good. In opposition to this kind of Good, the Good for Santayana is actual and exists.

(To be continued)