

CHAPTER THREE

SELF-KNOWLEDGE, SELF-IMAGE, SELF-CONCEPT THE MIRROR AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The importance of self-knowledge today is overshadowed by the lack of self-knowledge both on the national and international stages whereon the twenty-first century is being acted. However, both this presence and this lack has a history.

Self-knowledge differs depending on whether or not we see ourselves as who or what.

Plato first documents this lack of self-knowledge in the occidental world in his sixth century B.C. (or, for the secular B.C.E.) *Apology* wherein Socrates, his seventy year old teacher is on trial for treason, sedition and being an atheist. The very first paragraph of that dialogue projects a reflection upon an image painted on the verbal mirror of his accusers, the three prosecuting attorneys Meletus, Anytus and Lycon of the city-state Athens with which Socrates disagrees:

I do not know what impression my accusers have made upon you, fellow Athenians, but I do know that they nearly made me forget who I was, so persuasive were they. Yet, they have scarcely spoken one single word of Truth. Of all their many falsehoods, the one which astonished me most was their saying I was a clever speak and you must be careful not to let me deceive you. I thought that was most shameless of them not to be ashamed to talk in that way. For as soon as I open my mouth they will be refuted and I shall prove that I am not a clever speaker in any way at all - unless, indeed, by a clever speaker they mean someone who speaks the Truth.

“...they nearly made me forget who I was, so persuasive were they”. What an indictment of the hypocrisy of slander! However, the American woman or man of today lacks the honesty which Socrates manifests because both look at the image reflected within the bathroom mirror for approval not for reality.

Turn to Tolstoy and his 1886 novella, *The Death of Ivan Ilych* for the lack of self-knowledge so rampant in America today. This time, at the beginning of the first chapter, the image projected is painted in words within the obituary column of a St. Petersburg newspaper, appropriately framed in black:

With profound sorrow Praskovya Fyodorovna Golovina informs relatives and acquaintances that her beloved husband, Ivan Ilyich Golovin, Member of the Court of Justice, passed away on the 4th of February, 1882. The funeral will be held on Friday at one o'clock.

Two lies show up in this death portrait: first, Proskovya did not have “profound sorrow”, but, rather, “profound relief”; secondly, Ivan was not her “beloved husband”, but, rather a “tolerated husband” who “...began to wish he would die; yet she did not want him to die

because then his salary would cease” (*Chap. iv, p.120*). Indeed, the very first words Tolstoy uses to describe his Ivan within the second chapter are: “Ivan Ilych’s life has been most simple and ordinary and, therefore, most terrible”. Such a picture hardly presents or projects a life of self-knowledge! Indeed, Ivan lived, worked, loved, ate and dressed as his peers approved, so rather than a self-reflective man, his life reflected the approval his peers created. Therefore, when Ivan looked in the mirror, he saw an image of what others approved of not the result of self-knowledge.

How one dies is the test of how one has lived!

Actually, what one might call the “fruit” of living or not living according to self-knowledge finds death to be the stark evidence. The reason is simple: the way a human being lives mirrors the way that human being dies. As humans, the one certain thing we can expect in death is the taste of the fruit of how each one has lived his or her life. Nowhere does this appear more factual than in the deaths of Socrates and Ivan Ilych.

Socrates approaches death with peace and hope whereas Ivan Ilych is tormented with the fear of death and with a conscience which gnaws away at his spirit with remorse and guilt. Socrates chides his fellow Athenians because they think that death is negative, observing that they think they know what they do not know because no human knows whether or not death is an absolute end or a passing to another life:

This thing which has happened to me must be a good and those of us who think death is an evil must needs be mistaken. I have clear proof this is so for my accustomed guide (conscience) would have opposed me if I had not been going to meet with something good...

And if we reflect in another way, we shall see we may well hope that death is a good. The state of death is one of two things: either the dead wholly ceases to be and loses all consciousness, or, as we are told, death is a change and a migration of the soul to another place. If death is the absence of all consciousness, like the sleep of one whose slumbers are unbroken by any dreams, it will be a wonderful gain...But if death is a journey to another place and what we are told is true - all who have died are there - what good could be greater than this, my judges? Would life’s journey not be worth taking at the end of which, in the other world, we should be delivered from the pretended judges here and should find the true judges who are said to sit in judgment below?

Ivan Ilych, on the contrary, is dying in torment and the torment began when he looked in the mirror after his brother-in-law looked at him:

After that, try as he would to get his brother-in-law to return to the subject of his looks, the latter would say nothing about it. Praskovya Fedorovna came home and her brother went out to her. Ivan Ilych locked the door and began to examine himself in the glass, first full face, then in profile. He took up a portrait of himself taken with his wife and compared it with what he saw in the glass. The change in him was immense. Then he bared his arms to the

elbow, looked at them, drew the sleeves down again, sat down on an ottoman and grew blacker than night.

“No, no, this won’t do!” he said to himself and jumped up, went to the table, took up some law papers and began to read them, but could not continue. He unlocked the door and went into the reception room. The door leading to the drawing room was shut. He approached it on tiptoe and listened.

“No, you are exaggerating!” Praskovyta Fedorovna was saying.

“Exaggerating! Don’t you see it? Why, he’s a dead man! Look at his eyes; there is no light in them. But what is it that is wrong with him?”

“No one knows.” (pp. 127-8)

To be alive means to be unique, different and irreplaceable; to be otherwise means to be miserable.

Ivan becomes obsessed with his illness but continues to deny it has anything to do with dying.

“Something must be wrong. I must calm myself - must think it all over from the beginning”. Again, he began thinking. “Yes, the beginning of my illness: I knocked my side, but I was still quite well that day and the next. It hurt a little, then rather more. I saw the doctors, then followed despondency and anguish, more doctors and I drew nearer to the abyss. My strength grew less and I kept coming nearer and nearer and now I have wasted away and there is not light in my eyes. I think of the appendix, but this is death! I think of mending the appendix and all the while here is death! Can this really be death? Again terror seized him and he gasped for breath. (p. 130)

Three months of pain, anger and doubt ensued until on the final day of his death, Ivan dismissed both his wife and Gerasim from his presence and Tolstoy describes the scene:

He wept on account of his helplessness, his terrible loneliness, the cruelty of man, the cruelty of God and the absence of God.

“Why have You done all this? Why have You brought me here? Why, Why do You torment me so terribly?”

He did not expect an answer and yet wept because there was no answer and could be none. The pain again grew more acute, but he did not stir and did not call. He said to himself: “Go on! Strike me! But, what is it for? What have I done to You? (p. 147)

Ivan’s anguished pain in the face of death is a mirror image of Ivan’s inner pain and lack of self knowledge. Whereas Socrates does not make excuses or seek to place fault, Ivan both makes excuses and places fault. Socrates takes the responsibility of his life as well as his death whereas Ivan Ilych is as irresponsible to himself in life as he is in death.

The question becomes: how can anyone defend his or her lifestyle, whether one's dress, one's work "ethic", one's food choices, one's friends, one's enemies, what people say about oneself, what people think about oneself? Socrates' self-defense is nothing more or less than his statement that his ethical actions as an Athenian citizen might have differed from the morals of Athenian citizens, but he would not have changed them and was not wrong in performing them because the action of asking questions was the right thing for a philosopher, that is, someone who loves wisdom to do. The *Apology* stands as a 2,500 year old defense of an individual's ethics against the society's morals. Socrates acts as he is.

In addition, we considered Ivan Ilych's life of propriety, a moral life aping the life-style and actions of his peers notwithstanding his unhappiness and then his terrible physical pain. Yet, Ivan seems to have chosen to be ethical, prompted by the terrible physical and psychological pain. *The Death of Ivan Ilych* stands as a 230 year old testimony to meaningless moral life and actions in lieu of any ethical decision. Ivan Ilych acts not as who he is but as others thought he should act.

One clear message echoes from the *Apology* through *The Death of Ivan Ilych*: the importance of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge makes the difference between a person's being ethical or moral and consequent happiness or unhappiness. These two works provide two concrete examples which compare the ethical person in his or her effort to live with moral people and the moral person who struggles to find his own ethical character. The contemporary Elton John dedicated a song, "Candle in the Wind" to the "dumb blonde", Marilyn Monroe (Norma Jean Baker with brown hair) part of whose lyrics are:

Loneliness was tough
The toughest role you ever played
Hollywood created a superstar
And pain was the price you paid.

We now discuss the relevance of self-knowledge to self-image and self-concept.

Heraclitus, a Presocratic philosopher of the 6th Century B.C., provides two "self-knowledge" aphorisms which are significant for understanding the difference and similarity of ethics and morals. These are: "I have searched myself" (Frag. 8); and "It pertains to all men to know themselves and to be temperate". (Frag. 9) Ethics or morals begins with our view of ourselves and ends with actions based on this self-view. However, our self-view can be of ourselves as we are, or as other people see us to be. This dual view is the difference between our ethics or our morals. The focus upon self-reflection (<i>metanoia</i>), the turn within is good; however, what or who one finds is more important. "How one is" frequently is skewed by "how one perceives oneself to be".	Knowing things is being learned, but knowing ourselves is being wise.
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A Indeed, human beings are notorious for becoming so enamored of appearance that they accept it as reality; they then reject reality as being un-real. This type of acceptance and rejection could be termed suicide, literally, "the killing of the self". An analogy might clarify such "suicide". Imagine carrot or marigold seeds lying side by side within the ground. One of each germinates, grows and flowers before the others which have spouted next to them. Carrot sprouts look at the carrot; marigold sprouts look at the marigold and say: "I want to be just like him". Yet, such an alternative is impossible given the reality of being a unique living being and the fecundity of nature, so the alternative is death because such identity is impossible and then, as a result, the garden is bereft of multiple flowers and carrots.

A thou appreciates beauty
whereas an object is "beautiful".

Socrates perceived himself to be not-wise, so he was wise only in so far as he knew that he did not know; Socrates' self-image was one of limitation, that is, his perfection consisted in being imperfect. Ivan Ilych, on the contrary, perceived himself to be wise with the wisdom of his peers, a perfection gaged by that wisdom which accumulates wealth, attracts honors and attains reputation. The only limitation he recognized was less money, honor or reputation than his peers so he strove for "more".

The importance of "what", or, rather "who" we find through this self-reflection is exemplified by the fact that what or whomever we find, we then project upon the world of nature and society. In other words the "find" becomes the measure of all further discoveries. What, or whom, for instance, do we see when we look in the mirror in the morning or at night? A classic, yet, historic illustration of this fact is provided by Xenophanes, a fifth Century B.C. Ionian philosopher who criticized both Homer and Hesiod for attributing "to the gods everything that is a shame and reproach among men, stealing and committing adultery and deceiving each other", commenting within Fragment 170:

But mortals consider that the gods are born, and that they have clothes and speech and bodies like their own.

Our self-image even
affects our view of God.

Xenophanes continued, observing:

The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have light blue eyes and red hair. (Fragment # 171)

Xenophanes concluded:

But, if cattle and horses or lions had hands, or were able to draw with their hands and do the works that men can do, horses would draw the forms of the gods like horses, and cattle like cattle, and they would make their bodies such as they each had themselves. (Fragment # 172)

Xenophanes noted that human beings made their gods in the image and likeness of themselves. So, if we exchange Xenophanes' analogy of how humans "create" God to how each human "creates" him or herself, then we could say: "If humans were able to draw with their thoughts and do the works which other humans do, each human being would draw the form of self-perfection like their peers and each would make him or herself after some body-builder or sexy size six, rather than how each one is". If this is true, the what or who we see in the morning will set the view each of us maintains throughout the day; likewise, the what or who we see at night means a restful or restless sleep throughout that night. Gerard Manley Hopkins dramatizes this best in poem #44:

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
 What hours, O what black hours we have spent
 This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
 And more must, in yet longer light's delay.
 With witness I speak this. But where I say
 Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
 Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
 To dearest him that lives alas! away.
 I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
 Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
 Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.
 Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
 The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
 As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

A subject is a thou; an object is an it.

Although a first reading of this poem might indicate a negative image of self, further readings of this and other Hopkins' poems dispel this negative image. Hopkins' mood was dark and his life experiences difficult when he wrote this poem; therefore, his reflective view of himself, at this time, resulted in a self-image which became a concept. That concept could have become his self-made "window" through which he viewed nature, society and life itself. An excerpt from another poem illustrates that it did not:

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My own heart let me more have pity on; let
 Me live to my sad self hereafter kind,
 Charitable; not live this tormented mind
 With this tormented mind tormenting yet.
 I cast for comfort I can no more get
 By groping round my comfortless, than blind
 Eyes in their dark can day or thirst can find
 Thirst's all-in-all in all a world of wet.

The above poem implies self-knowledge is first and necessary. However, the kind of knowledge we find within ourselves is a decisive factor in any and all other knowledge we develop about the world, nature, society and even gods. We see others as we see ourselves, so how we look upon ourselves is essential in the "turn within" and the search for our self identity about which Heraclitus speaks.

Essentially two views, or attitudes are possible. We may view ourselves as an it or as a thou. Each of these attitudes results in the "object" of our thought having characteristics which follow from that self "view" or "attitude". A speculative attitude would find that this "object" is an it and acquires meaning only if and when constructed as our peers, our family or our society approve; such an it construct is socially acceptable, a moral-self. A mythopoetic attitude finds that the "object" is a thou and has meaning in and of the self. We, as subjects are, therefore, meaningful because each subject is unique and acquires additional meaning within the social context in so far as this thou learns and contributes self to the world in which this ethical or character-self exists.

The following schema seeks to describe the dominant characteristics of these two opposites, characterize these as the yin and yang of the human psychological world. The one view is characterized as "speculative", literally, "one who looks at" something; the other as "mythopoetic", literally, "one who makes words".

SPECULATIVE THINKER	REALITY	MYTHOPOETIC THINKER
Thinker sees an.....IT		Thou.....sees I

(characteristics of:)

IT is impersonal
non-emotional
objective
clinical

Thou is personal
emotional
subjective
imaginative

This IT is...inanimate/
So, the INANIMATE is REVEALED
THROUGH CONCEPTUALIZATION
The sign carries the meaning
of the signified;

animate.....is Thou
ANIMATE REVEALS SELF.

The symbol IS the meaning;
reality reveals itself.

Here are distinguished:

REALITY/APPEARANCE or:
Thus, EXPERIENCE is
subordinated to the THOUGHT
(Therefore, the thinker
seeks a WHAT
The WHAT-seeker formulates
general laws; so all happenings
are understood in so far as
they are manifestations of those
general laws, such as "gravity".

SACRED AND PROFANE
THOUGHT is subordinated
to the EXPERIENCE felt.
the I seeks a WHO

The WHO-seeker views each
event as individual, a
manifestation of life,
understood in its
experiential uniqueness.

The WHAT-seeker is LOGICAL;

The WHO-seeker is CONSISTENT.

So, the basic rule here is:
 THE AFFIRMATION (or NEGATION)
 OF the WHOLE is AFFIRMATION
 (or NEGATION) of the PARTS.

The WHAT-seeker wants ONENESS
 or unity ACCORDING TO REASON.

EXPERIENCE.

The WHAT-seeker wants ONENESS
 the SYSTEM OF THOUGHT;
 and analyses particulars
 THROUGH/WITHIN the UNIVERSAL,
 the conceptual general
 representative of all
 similar experiences.

The WHAT-seeker attempts
 IMAGELESS, and CONCEPTUAL
 thought(s), ABSTRACTIONS.

As a result, WHAT views
 time/space as QUANTITATIVE
 and measurable, segmented.
 Greenwich mean-time dominates.

WHAT-seeker is a SPECTATOR,
 outside the world, viewing
 events, categorizing them.

The WHAT-seeker is a
 RATIONALIZER, about which

e e cummings speaks:

when god decided to invent
 he took one
 breath bigger than a circustent
 and everything began

when men determined to destroy
 himself he picked the was
 of shall and finding only why
 smashed it into because

But,the basic rule here is.
 AFFIRMATION (or NEGATION)
 of the PART is the ASSERTION
 (or DENIAL) of the WHOLE.

The WHO-seeker appreciates
 MULTIPLICITY, or DIVERSITY
 ACCORDING TO EACH

The Who-seeker emphasizes
 EXPERIENCE, seeking the
 particular for which no
 UNIVERSAL is adequate, or
 perhaps, available.

Whereas, the WHO-seeker uses
 multiple, personal IMAGES
 in human likeness(es).

Whereas, WHO views
 time/space as QUALITATIVE,
 not measurable and uniform.
 Biological time permeates.

WHO-seeker is INVOLVED,
 inside the world, feeling action and
 empathizing with them.

The WHO-seeker is a
 LOVER, about which

e e cummings observes:

may my heart always be open to
 little birds who are the secrets
 of living
 whatever they sing is better
 than to know
 and if men should not hear them
 men are old

may my mind stroll about hungry
 and fearless, thirsty and supple
 and even if it's sunday may i
 be wrong
 for whenever men are right

they are not young

and

may myself do nothing

usefully

The speculator finds a what whereas
the mythopoetic sees a who.

and love yourself so more than truly
there's never been quite such
a fool who could fail
pulling all the sky over him
with one smile

The above schema has but one purpose: to show differences without implying separation. This means that we humans think both speculatively and mythopoetically; indeed, we act both morally and ethically - if, that is, the person is human.

But, few people realize, for instance, that Bohr's construct of the atom, for a long period of time, the physicist's first principle and scientific picture of the universe, was just as much a myth as the 2nd millennium B.C. Sumerian construct of Ptah, their first principle and cause of the universe of Gods and men. Camus best describes this tension between mythopoetic or self-knowledge and speculative, so-called scientific knowledge in the Myth of Sisyphus, within the essay "An Absurd Reasoning":

We see others in the image and likeness of ourselves.

Of whom and of what indeed can I say: 'I know that!' This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction. For if I try to seize this self of which I feel sure, if I try to define and to summarize it, it is nothing but water slipping through my fingers. I can sketch one by one all the aspects it is able to assume; all those likewise that have been attributed to it, this upbringing, this origin, this ardor or these silences, this nobility or this vileness. But, aspects cannot be added up. This very heart which is mine will forever remain indefinable to me. Between the certainty I have of my existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, the gap will never be filled...(pp. 14-15)

Again, Camus comments on the "rule of reason", or what this author would call a secular worship of objectivity within our Occidental world, this time in the essay "Helen's Exile":

We (Western world) have exiled beauty; the Greeks took up arms for her. First difference, but one that has a history. Greek thought always took refuge behind the conception of limits. It never carried anything to extremes, neither the sacred nor reason, because it negated nothing, neither the sacred nor reason. It took everything into consideration, balancing shadow with light. Our Europe, on the other hand, off in the pursuit of totality, is the child

of disproportion. She negates beauty, as she negates whatever she does not glorify. And, through all her diverse ways, she glorifies but one thing, which is the future rule of reason.

Again, an e e cummings' synopsis is simple and brilliant:
pity this busy monster, manunkind,

not. Progress is a comfortable disease:
your victim (death and life safely beyond)

plays with the bigness of his littleness
-electrons deify one razorblade
into a mountain range; lenses extend

As I am, I am irreplaceable; as
others see me, I am replaceable.

unwish through curving wherewhen til unwish
returns on its unself.

A world of made
is not a world of born-pity poor flesh

and trees, poor stars and stones, but never this
fine specimen of hypermagical

ultraomnipotence. We doctors know

a hopeless case if-listen: there's a hell
of a good universe next door; let's go

The first and last lines are telling: "busy monster, manunkind" and "a hell of a good universe next door; let's go". We speculators (not we human beings thinking speculatively!) are "busy", so busy that we become a monster to ourselves and literally, "manunkind"; speculators "make over" nature - the "world of born" becomes the "world of made"! Speculators seek to control, not to understand; to be right, not to learn; to know not to love. That is a "hell" of a world; indeed, speculators live half-lives, as Tolstoy described Ivan Ilych: "His life was most ordinary and most tragic"; organized, proper, successful, powerful, monied, but "tragic", that is, unpleasant, unhappy, literally, "hell". Yet, every change excited him because it provided a hope of happiness from possessions and achievements which he did not have within himself - "a hell of a good universe next door; let's go". The difficulty was and is that speculators carry hell within and wherever speculators look or move because speculators project that inside "hell" without!

Our relationship to the world, nature
and society is contingent upon our
relationship to ourselves.

If we concentrate on being moral, in pleasing others, whether family, friends, fellow citizens then we have decided to live as other in "world of made". Such a world is conditioned, that is, a world of knowledge, a world fabricated by the human mind. We

literally look at ourselves as we appear to others, not as we are. Thus, we judge the rightness and wrongness of our actions as they are viewed by others; we live as did Ivan Ilych, as functionaries, in a word, slaves of the latest fashion pleasing our public. One of Maya Angelou's poems, "Woman Work," offers a perfect example:

I've got the children to tend
 The clothes to mend
 The floor to mop
 The food to shop
 Then the chicken to fry
 Then baby to dry
 I got company to feed
 The garden to weed
 I've got the shirts to press
 The tots to dress
 The cane to be cut
 I gotta clean up this hut
 Then see about the sick
 And the cotton to pick.
 Shine on me, sunshine
 Rain on me, rain
 Fall softly, dewdrops
 And cool my brow again.

Storm, blow me from here
 With your fiercest wind
 Let me float across the sky
 'Til I can rest again.

Fall gently, snowflakes
 Cover me with white
 Cold icy kisses and
 Let me rest tonight.

Sun, rain, curving sky
 Mountain, oceans, leaf and stone
 Star shine, moon glow
 You're all that I can call my own.

Maya Angelou laments the plight of being other in this case, wife, mother, healer, sharecropper, housekeeper, everyone except yourself. We do "as expected" of us, as an object being, rather than do as we are capable, as a thou would do. She can only be who she is before nature, the sun, the rain, dewdrops, the wind, snow. To be herself is "to rest" and because nature does accept her as she is, namely, a "thou" human being, nature is all she can call her own. Such "natural acceptance" is unconditioned, that is, as a result of love - each unique being and person is beloved as it or s/he is. Maya Angelou exposes

two selves, one as known by others, that is, as conditioned by how she is known, the other as she is, that is, as unconditioned by being loved. To see oneself as one is is to perceive self as being loved and, therefore, as loveable.

So, the self we know might or might not be the self we is; however, if we know the self we is, we cannot help

If a chick imprints on a chicken, it lives; if, however, it imprints on a duck, it drowns and dies!

but love that self as unique and irreplaceable. Yet, if we know some "other self", then our self-love is contingent upon how we conceptualize that self because the other self becomes replaceable - indeed, at the drop of an eyelash, as it were, some "friend" might move from liking and accepting my appearance to disliking and rejecting that appearance. So, basic to the human being is the knowledge of who, and just as necessary is the knowledge of how the who is. Both are essential to self-love or, the lack thereof to self-hate and both are critical in our decision to be ethical or to be moral.

Yet, the most important consideration of all is the fact that our relationship to the world, nature and society is contingent upon our relationship to ourselves. So, if we see self as being loved, then we unconditionally accept self as unique and irreplaceable. Indeed, the power and strength of our love of others is in direct proportion to our power and strength to love oneself. It is we who first love or hate ourselves, so the heaven or hell in which we find that we dwell is the house we have built for ourselves. But, our love of self is born from our awareness of being loved.

The moment of crisis for each human being is that moment when we decide whether to love or hate ourselves. How a human being exists is the decision of nature and parents: nature dictates that the human being have short and long chromosomes; parental chromosome "power" determines that this child be male or female, an accidental dominance. These are "givens", over which no human being has power. We do, however, have the power, or more importantly the obligation, to accept, marvel and love the unique genius we are since each one's uniqueness is ipso facto proof of being loved. Indeed, the only power each of us has is the power over how we act and react to the things which happen to us and the people with whom we interact. This is the first moment of decision; how will the individual react to who s/he is?

The second moment of crisis is contingent upon that first, indeed, conditioned by that first decision. The second moment is the decision of the individual as to how s/he is (will be)? This is the ethical decision which we usually reach after many years of living morally, namely, with the family's, the peer's and the community's mores, or morals.

Socrates is the philosophical example of ethical living, and Confucius and Lao-tzu offer alternate examples through their presentation of the sage or wise man. Ivan Ilych arrived at the ethical life through living a tortured moral, proprietary life. The fact is that how we is lies within our own decision-making power; each of us literally makes himself or herself to be. Thus, just as we are a unique gift of self, so we are a unique gift of self-completion to the world. So each of us can provide a unique answer to a world of problems or we can become adjunct to the world's problems.

The relevance of these two moments of crisis to our decision to be ethical or moral is significant. The fact is that we, as individuals are born into a social reality: first, a family of mother and father, perhaps siblings; secondly, a neighborhood, perhaps including an extended family of grandparents and nephews and cousins; thirdly, a city or

Reason both makes us human and deprives us of being human.

country town; fourthly, a nation, and finally, as inhabitants of this globe within this solar galaxy. Yet, each is born as an individual with the power of free choice and the potential to develop self as a unique person and contributor to the social world into which each is born. Such a person may have a twofold attitude, as Victor Frankl describes. A person may live only in so far as he or she “gets” meaning from the world - a property relationship. Or, the person may live in order to “give” his or her meaning to the world - a love relationship generated by the awareness of being loved, as Frankl was by his wife. The “getter” takes and “lives” as Ivan Ilych; the latter is a “giver” and “dies” as Socrates!

Whatever moral values we inherit and/or are born into are well and good, even necessary - analogous to the chick's tendency to imprint the hen's actions, a tendency essential to the continuation of the chick's life and the chicken species. However, unlike the animals' natural tendency to imprint to conserve life and continue the species, the human being has free choice and, therefore, the ability to be responsible and to be unique. So, to be fully human we must be ourselves, develop our individual character, do the actions we do because they are right, or stop doing some actions because they are wrong - we must, therefore, be ethical, if we are to live.

The first indication of the human identity crisis is described in Chapter Three of *Genesis*, the first of five books of the Hebrew Pentateuch, called The Law, or Torah, by the Jewish people. The "serpent" asked Eve, (Eve meaning "earth"): "Did God say, 'you shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" Eve, of course, denies this and states that Yhwh

The Achilles' heel of reason is to know everything, so its capacity becomes its desire!

only forbade the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden because if they ate it, they would die. The "serpent" counters: "No, you shall not die...for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil". Now comes the identity crisis. Adam and Eve enable us to study this identity crises and the psychology of temptation: the over-generalization which sets us up for rationalization - namely, the sham of defending the truth in order to have an excuse to violate the truth.

The key to understanding this Adam and Eve story is that both became aware of their nakedness, or, to phrase this in another way, became aware of their physical differences. But, what is the relation between eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and Adam and Eve realizing that they are physically different and, then of trying to cover up those physical differences? The answer to this question lies in the fact that before each ate of that fruit both were naked and did not react as they did after eating that fruit. The answer obviously is that after eating the fruit of the tree of

knowledge of good and evil, both Adam and Eve reflected that being physically different is a good which was “bad”. Yet, prior to their eating this fruit, both obviously saw each was biologically different, however, both viewed their sexual differences as complementary goods to the good of their human similarity. So, fear of these differences becomes the first effect of their eating this fruit and the second effect is their seeking to cover up these sexual differences - of course, the current misguided and un-biological manner in which women seek so-called equality with men and vice versa is nothing but a reenactment of this Genesis story of the “fall”. In addition, should we term Adam’s and Eve’s decision to disobey Yhwh’s directive an original sin, then we must note that any rejection of difference, call it prejudice as manifested in any so-called discrimination is the effect of that original sin.

If we compare Lao-tzu’s comment that “...once there were names, one should know when to stop...” to this “original sin”, then we observe that the human’s use of words to unify (or is it to simplify!?), for instance, classifying each unique human being or even diverse humans, such as, women and men as human is as dangerous as it is useful. If and when the words we use to classify different, yet similar beings begin to hide, cover up or bury the differences, then our words result in our forgetting about difference being complementary to similarity and then we use words consciously or unconsciously to lie. Then the reality of difference becomes the appearance of similarity and similarity becomes the world in which we demand to live and difference becomes the world which we reject out of fear. Such a reaction results in the loss of self-identity because such fear backs us into group identity and a false comfort which becomes a way of life rather than merely a manner of expressing our uniqueness!

Of course, the principal source of each one’s loss of self-identity and the consequent “discovery” of being naked is the motivation each one had in seeking the “apple”: each sought not what each had to contribute to life, but what more each could “get out of life”. Thus, the motivation was not ethical, that is, for the sake of virtuous action, but moral, that is for the sake of acquisition!

Eve, the “gatherer” sees that the forbidden tree’s fruit was “good for food”, “pleasing to the eyes” and “desirable for the knowledge it would give”, so “She took of its fruit and ate it, and also gave some to her husband and he ate”. Adam chose to follow his wife’s example and take; Adam chose to be moral, rather than to decide for himself and be ethical. Eve, the wife as “help-mate”, does not encourage Adam to decide, rather, she tells him to participate. Yet, in all deference to the truth, “he ate”; he chose not to be ethical. We realize that Eve’s reason seeks more than the fruit of good and truth; reason wants all fruit, both good and evil, truth and falsity! Indeed, Adam’s and Eve’s reason sought even the knowledge of “good and evil” because they thought such an acquisition would give them total control over the world in which they lived. We might call this the urge of Adam and Eve to control through knowing, making all things knowledgeable through identifying them by names. In the process, each overlooked the uniqueness of each one’s gift of subjectivity and what each could give to the world!

The psychology of the identity crisis is interesting; call it the "set-up". Eve, indeed, any human being who looks in the mirror, views the work place, or lives in the world, looks about and sees what is appealing and desirable, namely, we see someone with pretty hair, so "I'll dye mine that color"; or we see that someone was promoted, so "I'll do the same things he did"; "they", namely, "others" do bad things, but they "succeed", so "I'll cheat, also". This is the "set-up" for the identity crisis because we use the fact that we see a good as an excuse to perform in a manner less good. In other words, we seek to achieve an identity, but in the process we deny our differences. Thus, this story in Genesis is a story wherein the human being denies differences in order to achieve identity. This appetite for identity denies the fact of each of us being different and, therefore, is non-acceptance of being unique, or of being an irreplaceable gift, valuable in and of self!

To want to be more than one is means to cut oneself off from who one is - this means one dies.

We use the success, approval, whatever others achieve as the "reason" to imitate them; we, therefore, avoid making a decision to be responsible in our choices of what is right or wrong, becoming moral instead. Our motivation is our Achilles heel: we seek more than we are. Our reason is both our strength and our weakness because we seek more than we are capable of possessing: we seek all truth, goodness and beauty, yet, we seek more: we seek to know truth and falsehood, goodness and evil, beauty and ugliness, in effect we want reality and un-reality, being and non-being. We want both white and black, the presence of and absence of all color respectively, we want to be more than who we are, we, at the same time want to be other. Like God, we seek to be simple, even diaphanous to ourselves! We desire to have light without darkness, indeed to be perfect with no imperfection!

Eve observes that what she was told was a "no no" is good for the passions and the spirited appetites (Compare Plato's analysis within the Republic). On the basis of what is good to eat, what is good to know, she "takes and eats" as the good for her; she disobeys. The act, of course, is bad enough, but the motive was worse: "to be like God...to know good and evil". The irony of Adam's and Eve's separate acts is that they both got exactly what God told them they would within Genesis and exactly what they wanted: the knowledge of good and evil. This fact is dramatically illustrated by Adam's and Eve's reaction "to cover up" their physical differences of male and female, a decision which implies that differences are wrong, something that has occasioned dissention between and among human beings throughout their history.

So, eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil resulted in Adam and Eve viewing themselves not as they existed, that is, as created by Yhwh, specifically as is, as unconditioned, or as being loved. They now viewed themselves as known, that is, as naked and different, or, as conditioned. Thus, they reacted to their knowledge and covered up.

The identity crisis sets in. The first effect of this good fruit-food was: "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they realized that they were naked..". Yet, prior to the

eating of this good-fruit, both Adam and Eve were naked, so what is the difference now? Well, before they were natural, that is, they existed within nature as “the way things are“.

But, when Yhwh asks "Where are you?" Adam rationalizes: "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I

The desire to be other than we are means that we have to cover up the lie we try to live.

was naked; and I hid“. Adam uses reason to excuse their disobedience, to regain the natural control they experienced before they disobeyed. This is our original, human identity crisis. Eve and Adam occasioned it because they wanted to be more than the way they are, to know more than they knew, to know evil as well as good, to know everything. They sought to have unlimited knowledge rather than be satisfied, as was the pagan Socrates, knowing that they did not know. This desire for unlimited knowledge compounded the nature of conditioned knowledge for it resulted in a reduction of wholes, or integral unities into irreducible and contradictory differences. Yet, differences and similarities are in reality complimentary, just as the oriental sees yin and yang in respect to life.

The first effect of their disobedience, therefore, is their awareness of "parts“, differences, how they existed, namely, "they were naked“. Then Eve and Adam do the first thing that the "fallen" human being does: they cover up. We notice, however, that their motive has nothing to do with the "leave well enough alone" advice - even though this advice is more frequently than not a "cover up" also. Nor does it have anything necessarily to do with the "leave sleeping dogs lie" advice. They discovered “fear” as a result of disobedience, so, they "rationalize" their actions by saying they were "afraid" of being seen uncovered.

This "afraid" is the identity crisis problem which prevents any remedy and precludes any solution. We call this "the hide out“, but basically, it is "the lie“, the inability the human being exhibits to accept the "way things are“, the "way s/he is" and "the way s/he is not“. We humans attempt "to cover up” in order to hide from the truth, that is, we try to make what we have done to be the way things are. This viewpoint is more frequently than not avoidance behavior. This motive is merely and clearly: cover up what we are not aware of and hide it from everyone else, even God. Then, when our cover-up is discovered, we deny what we have done. Such “cover-ups” are natural to all liars since the lie is literally a denial of the truth. The lie is “saying” something is other than the way it is! Reflect on Ivan Ilych. He became so used to living his life as a lie, that is, as other people approved of him, that he forgot about his natural life, as a child and young student - before he learned to live as a liar.

Knowing things is being learned, but knowing ourselves is being wise.

Now, return for a moment to Heraclitus' words: "I have searched myself“. These words can be both beginning and end. It is the end when, as it was with Adam and Eve, the motive is wrong. Motive, or intention for which we do something, is of monumental significance always, and at all times and can quite literally be the catalyst to deeper understanding, hope and spiritual awakening. The moment Adam and Eve's motive became other than the search for truth, (to be more than they were - to know more about other things than about themselves), they were on the

irrevocable path to depression, even despair because they were dishonest. This dishonesty resulted in suicide, that is, they killed the spiritual life within them, losing what some call the “preter-natural gifts“. Furthermore, dishonesty is always against nature, indeed, in violation of nature because it is a turning without, a turn which "covers up knowledge of self" and, thus, leads us away from ourselves; then the knowledge acquired increasingly distracts us from self-knowledge and thereby blocks our return within.

Again, this fact bears analogy to the difference between being moral; this knowledge that we do not know effects a motive and occasions an attitude. The motive is one of a search to learn; the attitude is one of questioning everything we learn, but, when the attitude seeks to control the search, then a self-concept replaces self-knowledge and dishonesty begins.

Self-knowledge and such a self-image cannot be a self-concept because it is not and cannot be a stopping place, an end. Rather, it is the truth which has emerged because the human being has perceived the who within and not reflected the what or who from without! The ethical person might also be moral, however, ethical people perform any action because it is right or do not perform it because it is wrong. The ethical person is, therefore, responsible to self first, literally, true to self. If the ethical person's action is also moral, that is an additional benefit. But, if the ethical person's actions are judged immoral, as were those of Socrates, such a judgment, even to the point of death, is irrelevant to the life of the ethical person. Lao-tzu, a 6th Century B.C. Oriental philosopher offered a solution prior to ever having had the Torah available to him in # 33:

He who knows others is learned;
 He who knows himself is wise.
 He who conquers others has power of muscles;
 He who conquers himself is strong.
 He who is contented is rich.
 He who is determined has strength of will.
 He who does not lose his center endures,
 He who dies yet (his power) remains has long life.