

Chapter 7

The Unity of Moral Foundations

I

When we do something wrong in some way, for example, when we actively, or even only passively, harm our neighbors by refusing to extend a helping hand to someone in need, we feel *ashamed* afterwards. Here lies the genuine psychic¹ root of all human moral goodness and the distinctive characteristic of the human being as a moral creature.

Properly speaking, what is experienced here? In the first place, we have a feeling of pity for the injured party, something that was not felt at the moment of the injury itself. Among other things, this proves that the inner impulses of our psychic nature can stir us more deeply, as well as more forcefully, than can material motives. A purely mental reflection can evoke a feeling that would be deaf to external impressions. The invisible distress of another proves² to be more real than a visible one.

Secondly, a new variation (even more vigorous) is joined here to this simple feeling (although it is already refined as a result of the absence of a visible object), since we not only pity those who we did not pity earlier but even pity the fact that we did not pity them at the time. We regret that we were pitiless. In addition to the regret for the injured party, there is now also regret for oneself as the injurer.

[164] However, these two psychological aspects by no means exhaust the matter. The feeling under investigation receives its entire psychic acuity and moral significance from a third aspect, which lies in the fact that the thought of our pitiless

E] As the contents of this chapter reveal, it was written subsequent to many of the other chapters. It is absent from B. §§I—X appeared in *Knizhki Nedeli*, 1898, #2 with the subtitle “From a newly written additional chapter in the second edition of my ‘Moral Philosophy’, now being printed”. §§XI and XII of this chapter appeared for the first time in the second edition of 1899. For the most part, the entirety of §XIII and §XIV up to the paragraph beginning with the words “The fact that the moral good” appeared as part of an article under the title “The Reality of the Moral Order” in *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, vol. 31 (1).

¹ C] psychic] *Absent in A.*

² C] The invisible distress of another proves] An invisible distress proves A.

behavior arouses in us, in addition to the singular reaction of the corresponding feeling, viz., pity, the even more powerful reaction of another, apparently quite irrelevant feeling, viz., shame: Not only do we regret our cruel behavior, but we are also ashamed of it, even though there might be nothing specifically *shameful* about it. This third aspect is so important that it colors our entire psychic state so that instead of “my conscience bothers me” we simply say “I am ashamed,”³ “*J’ai honte*,” “*Ich schäme mich*,” “*mne stydno*.” In the classical languages, words corresponding to “conscience” were not used in ordinary discourse. Instead, they substituted words⁴ corresponding to “shame,”—a clear indication of the fact that the original root of conscience lies precisely in that feeling. What does this mean?

II

Besides a corresponding reaction from the injured moral element, the thought of admittedly violating any moral demand arouses shame.⁵ This takes place even when there are no demands for shame within one’s own sphere (the relation of the human being to one’s lower or carnal nature). The given action, however, may not have been contrary to modesty or to a feeling of human superiority over material nature. That is, the *distinction* between the three fundamental foundations⁶ of human moral nature clearly must not become a *division* between them. These three roots to a certain degree are knitted⁷ together in one, and the moral order, viewed in its formative essence, is with respect to the totality of its norms only the separation and development of one and the same principle from this or that side. The feeling of shame, connected in the most down-to-earth manner with the fact of the sexual sphere, transcends material life and as an expression of a formal disapproval accompanies any violation of a moral norm to whatever sphere of relations it belongs. In all languages, as far as I know, the word corresponding to our word “shame” is noted invariably for two distinctive features: (1) [165] a connection with objects belonging to the sexual sphere (*αἰδώς—αἰδοία*, *pudor—pudenda*, *honte—parties honteuses*, *Scham—Schamtheile*), and (2) the application of these words to all cases expressing disapproval of a violation of moral demands *in general*. In order to deny the unique sexual meaning of shame (or the special shamefulness of carnal relations between the sexes) and equally in order to limit shame to *this* meaning *alone*, it is necessary above all to disavow the word, having recognized it as a senseless contingency.

³ E] In English in the original.

⁴ C] words corresponding to “conscience” were not used in ordinary discourse. Instead, they substituted words] although they could form words corresponding to “conscience,” they were not used and always substituted words A.

⁵ C] the thought of admittedly violating any moral demand arouses shame.] the thought of violating any demand for pity (and also other moral demands) arouses shame. A.

⁶ C] Footnote added in A: cf. *Justification of the Moral Good*, Chap. 1.

⁷ C] knitted] fused A.

The general moral sense of shame is only a further inner development of what is already contained in its unique original manifestation concerning the facts of sexual life.

III

The essence or chief concern of life—for animals—undoubtedly lies in the perpetuation through reproduction of new individuals of that unique form of organic being represented by this or that animal. I say that this is the essence of life *for* them and not merely *in* them, because the most important sexual interest, and which is unique of its kind, is experienced and sensed by them internally, though certainly only passively and involuntarily. When we see a dog, waiting for a dainty morsel, its pose, the expression in its eyes and its entire being indicate, as it were, that the chief nerve of its subjective existence lies in its stomach. However, the most voracious dog completely forgets about food when it is sexually aroused, and if this dog is female, she will voluntarily give up her food and even her very life for her puppies. Here, the individual animal recognizes conscientiously, as it were, that its own life by itself is unimportant, that what matters is only the preservation of a given type of organic life that was passed on through an infinite series of fleeting individuals. This is the sole form of infinity that an animal can comprehend. However, we can understand from this the enormous and fundamental significance the sexual sphere has for human life. If human beings are essentially more than animals, then in order to isolate them from the animal kingdom this intrinsic self-determination as persons must begin precisely here with this source, in this focus of organic being. Any other point would be [166] comparatively superficial. Only *here* does the individual animal sense the infinity of its species-life, see itself (as indeed it is) *as only a finite phenomenon*, as only a means or instrument of a generic process and without struggle and delay surrender itself to this infinite genus, which completely devours its individual existence. It is *here* in this focus of life that a person is aware of the *inadequacy* of the generic infinity in which the animal finds its highest goal. Our generic essence asserts its rights on us too, and through us this essence wants to be immortalized. However, our inner being answers such a demand: “We are not what you are. We are above you. We are *not a genus*, although we are *of a genus*. We are not a genus, but we are geniuses. We can and want to be infinite and immortal not in you alone, but in ourselves. You drag us into the abyss of your evil, an empty infinity in order to devour and destroy us, but we seek for ourselves the true and full infinity, which we could share with you too. What we have from you wants to be mingled with you and pull us down into your abyss above which we have climbed, but⁸ our own being, which is not from you, is ashamed of this mingling and is opposed to it. Our being wants as the only thing worthy of it that true unification in which both of the united members are immortalized.”

⁸ C] with you and pull us down ... have climbed, but] with you, but A.

In the feeling of sexual shame, which establishes its enormous fundamental importance as the basis not only of material but also of formal morality, a person recognizes as shameful, and consequently as evil and wrong, not some particular or contingent deviation from a certain moral norm, but the very essence of the natural law to which the entire organic world is subordinate. What is important here is not so much that a person in general *is ashamed* as *what* he is ashamed of. Possessing this faculty of shame, which we do not observe in other animals, a human being could be defined as the animal that *is ashamed*. This definition, which is better than many others, would not, however, distinguish human beings as bearers of a unique world or of a new order of being. However, the fact that human beings above all and most of all are ashamed precisely of the very essence of animal life or of the highest fundamental manifestation of natural being directly shows that we are supernatural and super-animal beings. Therefore, in *this* shame the human being becomes a human being in the full sense.⁹

[167]IV

The sexual act embodies the infinity of a natural process, and a person, being ashamed of this act, denies this very infinity as unworthy of a human being. It is unworthy of a person to be merely a means or an instrument of a natural process in which the blind force of life perpetuates itself at the expense of individuals who are born and perish, *replacing* in turn one another. As moral entities, human beings do not want to submit to this natural law of *replacing* generations, to the law of *eternal death*.¹⁰ Human beings do not want to replace or to be replaced. We sense, at first vaguely, both the need and the ability to include within ourselves the full scope of *eternal life*. Ideally, we already include it within ourselves in the very act of human consciousness. However, this is not enough. We need to implement the ideal in reality, without which the idea is only a phantasy and a higher self-consciousness is only a form of conceit. The *power* of eternal life as a fact exists: Nature lives eternally and shines with eternal beauty. However, this is an indifferent nature—indifferent to individual creatures, which by their succession preserve its eternity. However, among these creatures there is one which does not accept such a passive role. It finds its involuntary service to nature shameful for itself and its reward, namely, personal death and the immortality of the species, to be inadequate. This creature does not want to be an instrument, but the possessor of eternal life. For this, it does not need to create a new life-force from nothing, but only to possess what nature gives and employ it for its personal use.

⁹ C] the highest fundamental ... in the full sense.] the chief and highest manifestation of natural being, directly shows that we are supernatural and super-animal beings. Therefore, in the feeling of shame the human being becomes a human being. A.

¹⁰ C] , to the law of *eternal death*] *Absent in A.*

We call those people “geniuses” in whom the vital creative force is not fully spent on the external concern of carnal reproduction but who concern themselves also with the inner matter of spiritual creation in this or that sphere. A genius is a person who apart from the life of the species perpetuates him or herself and is preserved in the general posterity even though this person produces none of his or her own. However, if such perpetuation is taken as final, it turns out to be illusory. For it takes place on the basis of generations that come and go, replacing one another so that neither those who are remembered nor those who remember have a genuine life. The generally accepted sense of being a genius is only [168] a *hint* of the actual case. The true “genius” within us, which speaks loudest of all in sexual shame, does not demand that we have the highest gift for the arts and the sciences and become a famous name for posterity. No, it demands much more. As a genuine genius, i.e., connected with the entire genus, though standing above it, it appeals not to the chosen alone, but to each and everyone, cautioning each and everyone against this entire process of bad infinity through which mundane nature eternally builds life on dead bones, but to no avail.

V

The object of sexual shame is not the external fact of the animalistic uniting of two human individuals, but the deep and universal sense of this fact. This sense is expressed, above all, but by no means exhausted by the fact that in such an act a person submits to the blind impulse of a basic force. If the path that carries us were in itself good, then we should resign ourselves to the dark character of this impulse in the hope of, in time, seeing the reason for it and freely accepting what at first was an involuntarily submission. However, the genuine force of sexual shame is that in general we are ashamed not only of our submission to nature, but of our submission to it as something *bad, entirely bad*. For the path to which the carnal instinct draws us and against which the feeling of shame warns is one that is shameful from the start and turns out ultimately to be pitiless and profane. This clearly reveals the inner connection of all three moral norms that are already contained in the first. Sexual abstinence is not only an ascetic but also at the same time an altruistic and a religious demand.

The law of animalistic reproduction that we are ashamed of is the law of the elimination or supplanting of one generation with another, a law running directly contrary to the principle of human solidarity. Directing our life’s energies to the procreation of children, we are averted from our fathers, who are left simply to die. We cannot create anything from ourselves—what we give to the future, we take from the past, and through us our descendants live at the expense of their ancestors. They live by the death of the latter. So it happens in nature, which is indifferent and [169] pitiless, and we certainly do not answer for it. However, our own participation in this indifferent and pitiless natural concern is our fault, even though it be passive. We have a vague sense of this guilt already beforehand in sexual shame. We are all

the more guilty in that our participation in this pitiless business of nature, which supplants earlier generations with new ones, immediately concerns those to whom we are especially and most of all indebted, to our fathers and ancestors. This matter, thus, turns out to be contrary not only to pity, but also to piety.

VI

Here we have something like a great contradiction, a fatal antinomy, which in any case we must recognize even if we have no hope at all of resolving it. *Bearing children is a good*. It is good for the mother, who, in the words of the Apostle, is saved by it. It certainly is also good for the father, who participates in this saving business. Finally, it is good for those who receive the gift of life. Yet at the same time it is also indubitable that there is evil in carnal reproduction, not that contingent and external evil of any of the various disasters which the newborn inherit along with life, but the essential moral evil of the carnal act itself through which by our own agreement we affirm the dark path of nature. Its blindness makes it a *shameful* path for us. It is *pitiless* to the departing generation, and it is *profane*, because this generation is that of our fathers. However, only we can correct this evil of the natural way for humanity, and what we of the present generation do not do can be done by a future generation, who, being born by the same animalistic means can renounce it and change the law of life. Here is the resolution of the fatal contradiction: the evil of bearing children can be eliminated by this act of bearing children, which in this way becomes a good. However, the saving character of bearing children will be illusory if those who are born continue to do the same as those who give birth and likewise sin and die. Surely, all of the charm that children present to us, their special human charm is inseparably connected with the assumption and the hope that they will not be like us, but will be better than us—not quantitatively better by one or two degrees but essentially better, that they will be people of another life, that our actual salvation lies in them—ours and that of all our ancestors. *Human* love for children must contain [170] something in itself above what is in a hen's love for its chicks. It must have a rational meaning. However what is the rational meaning of holding someone with delight and affection if the goal in life of this person is to be a future scoundrel, while we condemn an actual scoundrel now?¹¹ If the future presented by children differs from the present only in the temporal order, then where lies their charm? If a poisonous plant or weed grows from this seed, where is the delight in this seed? However, there is the possibility of a better way of life that would lift us above nature with its dark and impotent desire, revealing to us and in us the completeness¹² of power and light. This *possibility* lies in us as well as in children, but it is *fuller* in them than in us, because it is still retained intact, and not wasted as it is in us in

¹¹ C] of holding someone ... an actual scoundrel now?] of loving a future scoundrel more than an actual one? A.

¹² C] that would lift us ... us the completeness], of some higher law that elevates us above nature with its dark and impotent desire, towards the completeness A

a stream of empty and bad reality. These creatures have not yet sold their souls and their spiritual birthright to evil powers. Everyone agrees that the special charm of children lies in their innocence, but this factual birthright could not give us joy and delight if we were certain that it will certainly be lost. The idea that their angels directly see the face of the Heavenly Father would not itself provide any comfort and instruction if it were connected with the conviction that these angels now will inevitably go blind.

If the special moral charm of children (on which their aesthetic attractiveness is based) depends¹³ on a greater possibility for them of another way of life, then before giving birth to children for the sake of this *possibility*, should we not ourselves *actually* change our evil ways? To the extent that we do not have the power to do this, giving birth to children *can be* for us a good and our salvation. However, on what basis will we decide in advance that we cannot? Is our confidence in our impotence a guarantee of the future power of those to whom we hand over our lives?

VII

Sexual shame does not concern a physiological fact in isolation and in its isolation with indifference. Nor does such shame concern sexual love in general, which can be unashamed and the highest good. The warning and later the condemning voice of sexual shame concerns only that path of animal [171] nature which is essentially bad for human beings, although at the present stage of human life it may be a lesser, necessary, evil, i.e., a relative moral good.

However, the genuine unconditional moral good lies not on this path, which at least in human beings begins with abuse. There is a positive side to human sexual love that for purposes of clarity and brevity I call “falling in love.” Certainly, this phenomenon is analogous to sexual desire in animals and arises on that basis, but it clearly cannot be reduced to this desire, if only not to reduce in general the human being to an animal. Its individual super-generic character *essentially* distinguishes falling in love from the sexual passion of animals: The object of “falling in love” is a *specific* individual, and the subject aspires to immortalize not the genus but the two individuals concerned. Apart from the other types of individual human love, e.g., parental, filial, sibling, etc.,¹⁴ falling in love is different owing particularly to the indivisible unity of its spiritual and its physical side. It concerns primarily the entire person. For the one who falls in love, the mental and the corporeal being of the loved one are both interesting, significant and dear to *an equal extent*, though in different ways. He is attached to them with the same intensity of feeling.¹⁵ What does this mean from the moral point of view? At that time when all human faculties

¹³ C] the special moral ... is based) depends] the special charm of children depends A.

¹⁴ C] e.g., parental, filial, sibling, etc.,] *Absent in A.*

¹⁵ F] Concerning this and more, see my articles “*Smysl ljubvi.*” E] For an English translation of these originally separate articles, see Solovyov 1985.

are in blossom, a new spiritual-physical faculty emerges in him. It fills him with enthusiasm and heroic aspirations, and a higher voice tells him that it is not without reason that this faculty is given to him, that he can use it for something great. This voice tells him that the true and eternal union with another person, which the pathos of his love demands, can restore in him the image of a perfect human being and can serve as the basis for the same re-creation in all humanity. Certainly, the ecstasy of love does not say the same thing to everyone who falls in love, but the sense of what it tells is the same and represents merely from the other, the positive, side the very thing that sexual shame says. Shame restrains a person from following the improper, animalistic path, and the pathos of love points to the proper path and the highest goal for the positive, excess force that lies in this very [172] pathos. When a person directs this higher force there, namely, to the animalistic business of reproduction, he clearly expends it on an empty pursuit. The business of procreation in humans, just like in animals, does not demand that force. Procreation can be carried out quite successfully through an ordinary organic practice¹⁶ without any of the higher pathos of personal¹⁷ love. When a simple action b is sufficient to obtain the result¹⁸ c , but meanwhile a complex action $a + b$ is used, then obviously the entire force of a is spent in vain.

VIII

The feeling of shame serves as the natural basis for the principle of asceticism, but the negative rules of abstinence do not exhaust the content of this feeling. The formal principle of duty is inherent in shame and forbids shameful or unworthy actions. It condemns us for doing such actions, but shame also has a positive side (in the sexual sphere connected with “falling in love”), which indicates the good things in life that are protected by our abstinence and¹⁹ endangered or even perish with our succumbing to “things of the flesh.”^{20, 21} In the feeling of shame, the desires of the carnal, animal path are opposed not only to the formal level of human dignity or of the rational super-animal faculty of infinite understanding and aspiration, but also to²² the essential *integrity* of human life, which may be hidden though not destroyed in this given state.

¹⁶ C] practice] accommodation A.

¹⁷ C] personal] individual A.

¹⁸ C] result] effect A.

¹⁹ C] by our abstinence and] by our abstinence from the path of nature A.

²⁰ E] Romans 8: 5.

²¹ C] even perish with our succumbing to “things of the flesh.”] even perish by our intemperance. A.

²² C] the desires of the ... but also to] the carnal, animal path is set against the formal level of human dignity or of the rational super-animal faculty of infinite understanding and aspiration, but also against A.

We face here the borders of metaphysics but without crossing over into them, without leaving the ground of moral philosophy. We can and must point to this positive side of the fundamental moral feeling, which is both factually and logically indubitable. Shame in its primary manifestation would not have that unique, vital character, would not be a *localized* spiritual and *organic* feeling, if it expressed only the formal primacy of human reason over the irrational inclinations of our animal nature. Surely, a person does *not lose this* primacy of the mental faculties when following the path against which shame warns. Something else is lost, something that is really and essentially connected with the direct object of shame. It is not without reason that *sexual* modesty is also called *chastity*.

[173] We have been deprived of the *integrity* of our being and of our lives, and in true, *chaste* love for the other sex we strive, hope and dream to re-establish this integrity. Such aspirations, hopes and dreams are destroyed by an act of momentary, external and illusory union, which nature, suppressing its shame, substitutes for the desired integrity. Instead, the spiritual and corporeal interpenetration and intercourse of two human beings is here only a contiguity of organic membranes and the mixing of organic secretions (discharges). This superficial, though secret, union only confirms, strengthens and perpetuates the profound factual division²³ or fragmentation of the human being. Following the fundamental division into two sexes, or in half, the external union of the sexes results in a split into successive generations that replace and displace one another and whose coexistence leads to the creation of a multitude of separate, independent individuals, who on meeting are hostile to one another. Human integrity or solidarity is broken in depth, breadth and extent. However, this aspiration to fragment, this centrifugal force of life, is a tendency that can never be fully realized, although it is partially realized everywhere. In the human being, where it has the intrinsic character of an intended wrong, or sin, it resists and reacts against our intrinsic abiding integrity. In the first place, the fundamental feeling of shame, or chastity, opposes the mixing and splitting tendency of nature in our real or sensuous life. It rests also in the positive manifestation of shame, viz., in the pathos of chaste love, which does not reconcile itself either with the division of the sexes or with their external, deceptive union. In the sphere of the social life in which humans have already multiplied, the centrifugal force of nature manifests itself as *the egoism of each and an antagonism of all*. It provokes opposition to the same human integrity that expresses itself here as the intrinsic solidarity of externally disparate individuals mentally sensed in the feeling of *pity*.

IX

The centrifugal force of nature that works against unity and tends to shatter human unity in both our psycho-physical life and our social [174] life also acts in the same sense against the connection that unites us with the absolute principle of our being.

²³ C] the profound factual division] the profound division A.

Just as in us there is a natural materialism—a tendency to surrender with groveling delight to the blind forces of our animal nature; just as in us there is a natural egoism—a tendency to stand apart intrinsically from everything else and to place everything that is ours above everything that is someone else’s, so there is in us a natural atheism. (I mean this in a practical sense, since theoretical atheism sometimes has a purely cerebral character and is only a mental mistake, which is morally innocent.) This is a practical atheism or a proud tendency to relinquish absolute perfection, to posit ourselves as the unconditionally independent principle of our own lives. This is the most fundamental and important form of the centrifugal force (for this is the source of our separation from the *absolute* center of the universe). This force strips from the human being not only the possibility but also the desire for a fully integrated being. (For we can become everything only through our intrinsic unity with what essentially is everything.) It evokes a powerful opposition from our innermost integrity, which is reflected here in our religious feeling of piety. This feeling provides us with direct and inescapable evidence of our private and general dependence on the highest principle in its various manifestations starting with our own parents and ending with the universal Providential Heavenly Father. The exceptional importance of *this* (religious and moral) relationship conforms to that special variation which a consciousness of what should not be experiences when it is aroused by a breach of a religious obligation. Here, we already speak not of being “ashamed” or of having “pangs of conscience,” but of being “scared.” Our human spiritual essence responds with special concentration and intensity in that feeling of “fear of God”²⁴ which with a transgression, even if unwittingly, of the highest will, amounts to panic terror (*horror sacrilegii*), something that was so well known in antiquity.

Horror sacrilegii (as understood by the ancients) passes with human spiritual growth, but the fear of God remains as the necessary negative aspect of piety—as “religious shame.” To have a fear of God or to be pious certainly does not mean to be *scared* of the Deity but means to be afraid of contradicting the Deity or of an improper relationship to Him. It is a feeling [175] of a real discrepancy²⁵ with the absolute Good or perfection. Similarly, in the positive feeling of reverence or piety we assert our proper or fitting²⁶ connection with the higher principle, namely our aspiration to participate in its perfection, preserving and realizing the integrity of our essence.

²⁴ E] “fear of God”] See, for example, 2 Corinthians 7: 1, but also many other passages in both the Old and New Testaments.

²⁵ C] of a real discrepancy] of our factual inadequacy A.

²⁶ C] fitting] adequate A.

X

Understanding shame, as a manifestation of human integrity and which is rooted in the realm of sex, we will not be surprised that this feeling overflows into other moral spheres.

In general, we must distinguish the intrinsic essence of morality both from its formal principle, or the moral law, and from its real manifestations.²⁷ The essence of morality in itself is *one*. It is human *integrity*, inherent in our nature as the abiding *norm* and realized in life and in history through a struggle with the centrifugal and dismembering forces of being,²⁸ as a moral *doing*. The formal principle, or law, of this doing in its purely rational expression as *what should be done* is also unique in itself: You must adhere to the entire norm of human existence, protect the integrity of the human being, or, putting it negatively: You must not allow anything that contradicts this norm, any transgression of this integrity. However, the unique essence of morality and its single law manifest themselves in various ways in accordance with the real, factual relations that arise in the lives of people. There are an indefinite number of these relations, though logical necessity and the facts of experience equally force us, as we know, to distinguish three chief types that are all subject to moral evaluation. These are: relations dealing with the world below us, relations dealing with the world of creatures similar to us and lastly those dealing with what is higher.

The roots of the whole of reality are hidden in terrestrial darkness, and morality does not belong to that kingdom where the roots of trees grow upward. Indeed, the roots of morality are hidden in the lower sphere. All of morality stems from the feeling of shame. Its intrinsic essence, its real manifestation and its formal principle, or the law of the moral order, are contained here fused like a plant in a seed and are distinguished only in the mind's reflection. We sense in the feeling of shame [176] the human moral essence itself defending its integrity, and we sense a special type of this integrity in the given relation (chastity). We also sense, indivisibly with the other two, the moral imperative, which prohibits us from yielding to the powerful encroachments on our integrity from our lower nature and which blames us for the concessions already made. These commands and these reproaches of shame do not have only a negative and conservative sense. There is a positive *goal* in them. We must preserve our intrinsic potential integrity in order to be able to realize it in reality, in order actually to create the whole person in a better and more lasting way than nature presents it to us. The feeling of shame tells us, "No, that's not it!" thereby promising "*something*" *genuine and proper* for which it is worthwhile to forsake the carnal path.. This path, which shame condemns, is that of psycho-physical fragmentation, not only spiritual but also corporeal, and to this fragmentation is opposed not just human spiritual but also human corporeal integrity—psycho-physical integrity.

²⁷ C] both from its formal principle ... from its real manifestations.] both its real manifestations and its formal principle, or moral law. A.

²⁸ C] of being,] of blind nature A.

The realization of such a *complete* integrity for which chastity is only the beginning, however, demands a complete set of conditions encompassing all of human life. This realization is complicated and delayed but not eliminated by the accomplished fact of human reproduction, by the division of a single being into numerous individuals. Thanks to this new condition that creates a *society of human beings*, the abiding integrity of the human essence is manifested not in chastity alone, which protects us from natural fragmentation, but also in social solidarity, which restores through the feeling of pity the moral unity of the physically shattered human being. The difference between the moral elements fused together in the original feeling of shame appears more clearly at this point. Our feeling of pity expresses the intrinsic solidarity of living creatures, though it is not identical with that solidarity, preserving its psychological distinctiveness in comparison with shame, which is involuntary. Fused with its psycho-physical foundation, the element of shame in formal morality stands out here as the more subtle and abstract feeling that is called “*conscience*” (in the precise sense of the word). The transformation of our carnal instinct into egoism corresponds to the transformation of shame into conscience. However, we see here the original and fundamental sense of shame, for, as we already pointed out, instead²⁹ of “my conscience is bothering me” we can say “I am ashamed” [177] in those instances where it is a matter of purely egoistic actions that have nothing to do with the sexual sphere. Morality is one, and its complete manifestation in shame in response to matters of the flesh thereby is (implicitly) a response to the bad consequences of this matter and incidentally to the egoism of the human being, who has reproduced. However, a special, specific moral reaction against this new evil is psychologically expressed as pity, and its expression in terms of formal morality is the conscience, or “social shame.”

However, neither the moral purity of chastity protected by shame nor the comprehensive nature of moral solidarity, which forces our heart to pity equally all living creatures, gives us sufficient strength to realize what chaste love and an all-encompassing pity requires. Yet our conscience clearly tells us, “You ought, therefore you can.”³⁰

The human being is ashamed of the carnal path, for it is the path of fragmentation, of the *scattering* of the life-force, that then leads to death and decay. If someone is actually ashamed of this, feels it to be improper, this means this person must proceed along the opposite path of integrity and concentration, to immortality and imperishability. If, furthermore, one actually pities all those similar to oneself, then the *goal* of this path is to obtain immortality and imperishability *for all*. Our conscience tells us that we ought to do this, therefore we can.

At the same time the evidence shows that the task of creating immortality and an imperishable life for all is greater than the human being. However, are we re-

²⁹ C] for, as we already pointed out, instead] for instead A.

³⁰ E] “You ought, therefore you can.”] This exact slogan does not stem from Kant but has a long tradition in Kant-interpretation. For example, Schopenhauer writes regarding Kant’s ethics, “Yet in spite of his convictions, freedom is assumed, although only idealiter and as a postulate, through the famous conclusion “You can, for you ought.” Schopenhauer 1965: 76.

ally separated by some impenetrable wall from what is above us? Surely, our hidden normal human essence responds in religious feeling just as clearly to human impotence as we react in shame to carnal desires and in pity to egoism. The same conscience, having adopted the fear of God in a new form, tells us: All you should be and all you can be lies in God. You ought, therefore you can entirely surrender to Him and through Him attain the real perfection of your integrity, attaining the ultimate satisfaction of your chaste love and your pity, obtaining for yourself and for everyone immortal and imperishable life. Your *impotence* is essentially the same *anomaly* that you saw for yourself in shamelessness and pitilessness. This anomaly arises from your disconnection with the unconditional principle of all that should be and all [178] that can be. Through a reunification with Him, you can and should correct this anomaly.^{31, 32}

Religious feeling connects us to the highest principle, but this principle is not only an *ideal* perfection. As an idea, perfection is attainable for the human being. However, we are powerless to make our perfection real, to make our moral good a genuine and real happiness. This is the most profound basis of our dependence on the one whose absolute perfection is given as the eternal reality and who is the indivisible and invariable identity of the Moral Good, Happiness and Bliss. To the extent that we unite with it through the purity and completeness of our morally good aspirations, we obtain the power to fulfill and the force to realize the potential integrity of our panhuman essence.

This is why we are ashamed or feel the pangs of conscience with every bad deed, even if only conceived. No abstract principle or arbitrary rule is violated here. A false step has been taken, and a delay occurred for us and for others on the one true path to the one worthwhile and dear goal—the restoration of an immortal and imperishable life for all.

Shame, conscience and a fear of God are only negative expressions for the necessary conditions of our real concerns as much as of our higher, divine-human one.³³

XI

Thus, the moral *good* by its very essence is the means actually to attain a genuine *real good*, i.e., *happiness*, or bliss, i.e., the bliss that can give us lasting final satisfaction. *Happiness* (and bliss) in this sense are only another side of the good or another point of view on it. Between these two ideas, there is the same inner connec-

³¹ F] In the church prayer, the impotence of humanity is placed alongside sins and lawlessness: “O Lord, cleanse our sins. O Master, forgive our transgressions. Visit us, O Holy One, and heal our infirmities.” These *infirmities* are contrasted in particular here with *holiness*. E] “O Lord, cleanse ... our infirmities.” [Anon.] 1964: 14. C] *This entire footnote absent in A.*

³² C] essentially the same ... correct this anomaly.] anomaly. A.

³³ C] for the necessary ... higher, divine-human one.] for the very real and, moreover, perfect divine-human one. A.

tion and the same impossibility of contradiction as between cause and effect, a goal and the means to attain it, etc. We *should* desire the moral good for *itself*, [179] but such a pure will is not violated by our awareness that the moral good is *itself* necessarily also an element of happiness for those who fulfill its demands. On the other hand, it is *natural* to desire happiness for oneself, but this in no way prevents us from understanding and taking into consideration the empirical fact that any happiness that is not imaginary or illusory must be conditioned by the moral good, i.e., by the fulfillment of moral demands.

If the law of happiness, or genuine eudaemonia, is determined by the moral good, there can be no contradiction between the ethics of pure duty and eudaemonism in general. The morally good will must be autonomous. In fact the opposite is the case: the recognition that proper behavior leads to a genuine sense of well-being certainly does not involve the heteronomous will. Such a recognition, which makes happiness dependent on the moral good, subordinating happiness to the moral good, is completely in accordance with moral autonomy. Heteronomy, on the contrary, consists in separating eudaemonia from the morally obligatory, in subordinating the desirable not to the moral but to another law *extraneous* to morality. Thus, the fundamental contradiction in the field of ethics concerns not eudaemonia in general, but only abstract eudaemonia, or more precisely a eudaemonia that *abstracts* or separates happiness and a sense of well-being from its *real*, purely moral conditions without which only a pseudo or illusory happiness is possible.

However, why is it that doing one's duty seldom brings *complete* satisfaction? I have so little desire to evade this objection that I will even reinforce it: human virtue *never* gives complete satisfaction. However, when is this virtue itself ever *complete* and who born between *εκ θεληματος σαρκος* and *εκ θεληματος ανδρος*³⁴ has ever completely fulfilled one's duty? Clearly, the complete moral good is not realized by any single human individual, and it is just as clear that a super-human individual capable of realizing the complete moral good will find complete satisfaction in doing so. It follows from this too that the autonomous (self-legislating) will, i.e., the ability to want *only* the pure moral good is only a formal and subjective trait of the human being. In order to realize this objectively, a person must still acquire the ability in fact to *accomplish* the *entire* moral good and in that way give the human being [180] complete satisfaction. Without this, virtue has only a negative and inadequate character, which does not follow from the essence of the moral principle. So, first of all when this principle demands that the spirit have power over the flesh, this demand in itself involves no external constraints on such power. The norm here is the complete and unconditional power of the spirit over the flesh, its full and real autonomy, the consequence of which is that it must not be subordinate to the extraneous law of corporeal existence—death and decay. That is, in this sphere only the immortal and imperishable life is a perfect moral good, but it is also a perfect sense of well-being. So, a morality that does not lead to real immortality and imperishability cannot, strictly speaking, be called autonomous, because it obviously is subject to a law of material life from without. Similarly, in the altruistic sphere the moral

³⁴ E] John 1: 13—of the will of the flesh and of the will of man.

principle, which prescribes that we help everyone, does not place any fundamental limitations on this help. Obviously, the *complete* moral good demands here that we procure for all our neighbors complete happiness, or absolute bliss. If our altruism does not yield this, the deficiency of our moral good has its basis not in the moral law, which demands the greatest, but in the law *from without* of limited material existence. Consequently, altruism, which is subject to this law from without, cannot be recognized in the strict sense as an autonomous morality but turns out to be in essence heteronomous.

XII

Therefore, the moral good can be connected with dissatisfaction or the absence of happiness only if and insofar as this moral good itself is incomplete or imperfect or the moral law is not fully fulfilled and still concedes its place to another law at its expense. The perfect moral good, i.e., one that is free of any law from without, provides complete satisfaction. In other words, the moral good is separated from happiness not by the inner character of its demands but only by external obstacles to their fulfillment. The moral principle, consistently implemented to the end, a completely fulfilled duty, invariably leads to the highest good, or bliss. Consequently, if there is a contradiction between eudaemonia and pure morality, [181] it is only accidental and arises from the empirical imperfection of the human moral good or a false understanding of both the moral good and of happiness. In the first case, the discrepancy between the moral good and happiness (“afflictions of the righteous”)³⁵ testifies only to the inadequacies or imperfections—the *incomplete nature* of the given moral state. In the second case, i.e., with a false understanding, a moral concern is completely absent. It is all the same whether or not the incorrectly understood moral good coincides with the incorrectly understood happiness. So, for example, when someone fervently prays to God to find a purse with money on the street or win the lottery, the *failure* of such a prayer has nothing to do with the question of a disparity between virtue (in the mentioned case, religious virtue) and eudaemonia, or between the moral good and happiness. For here we have an incorrect understanding of both: A prayer contrary to both Divine and human virtue as the means to a selfish and base end is not a real moral good and getting undeserved money does not yield happiness or actual bliss. On the other hand, let us suppose a person engages in philanthropy not out of pity nor from an altruistic principle but only in order to be honored with a decoration, which he in fact does get. The *coincidence* between the incorrectly understood moral good and incorrectly understood bliss is of as little significance to ethics as their lack of coincidence is in the first example. Although such philanthropy can prove useful in some of its social and practical forms, there is no need, however, to prove either that it is not a virtue nor that a decoration is merely an illusory form of happiness. Clearly, *real* happiness can arise only from

³⁵ E] See Psalms 34: 19.

noble feelings and actions, i.e., those that have moral worth, that agree with the moral good and in turn the real moral good cannot lead ultimately to disaster, i.e., to evil. In fact, it is quite common that one and the same concept of “evil” equally expresses the opposition to both virtue and a sense of well-being. That villainy and ill-fortune are both recognized equally as evil clearly shows the inner affinity between the moral good and happiness, both of which are in themselves often identified in general discourse, one substituting for another.

Thus, we come to the conclusion that the dichotomy between the moral good and happiness (or a sense of well-being) is only a contingent phenomenon [182] and that the unconditional essence of the moral good includes complete happiness.

The original question of the meaning of life, then, is ultimately not answered by the fact of morally good feelings, inherent in human nature nor by the principles of proper behavior that reason deduces from a moral awareness of those feelings. Moral feelings and principles are themselves a certain relative moral good, but they do not give complete satisfaction. Both feeling and reason compel us to pass to the Moral Good in its unconditional essence, which has no trace of contingency and no external limitations. This is why it gives real satisfaction, the true and complete meaning of our lives.

XIII

That the pure moral good must ultimately be experienced as the highest good, i.e., as complete satisfaction, or bliss, was recognized by the strict preacher of the categorical imperative himself. However, the path by which he intended to unite³⁶ these two supreme ideas cannot at all be recognized as leading to this goal.³⁷

The great German philosopher,³⁸ who irreproachably determined the formal essence of morality to be the unconditionally independent, or autonomous, activity of a free will did not avoid in the ethical sphere that one-sided subjective idealism³⁹ which constitutes the general character of all his views. On this basis, only a pseudo-synthesis of the moral good and happiness, only a pseudo-realization, of the perfect⁴⁰ moral order is possible.

Subjectivism in its crude, elementary sense is certainly eliminated by the very idea of a *pure will*, i.e., a will free from all empirical, contingent⁴¹ motives and determined only by the unconditional idea of what should be (*das Sollen*), i.e., the universal and necessary norm of practical reason by virtue of which the moral principle

³⁶ C] the path by which he intended to unite] the means by which he established the connection between A.

³⁷ C] leading to this goal.] satisfactory. A.

³⁸ C] philosopher,] thinker, A.

³⁹ C] subjective idealism] subjectivism AB.

⁴⁰ C] perfect] *Absent in A.*

⁴¹ C] empirical, contingent] external and contingent AB.

of our activity (and of each of our actions) can only be what we can assert without inner contradiction as an unconditionally universal law, applicable, consequently, to us in the same way as to everyone else.

This formula is in itself (i.e., logically) perfectly **[183]** objective. However,⁴² where is its actual force? Providing a demand for a moral order in an unconditional form Kant vouches only for the *possibility* of *fulfilling* it: That you should means you can. However, this possibility⁴³ in no way vouches for its reality, and, consequently, the perfect⁴⁴ moral order can, in general, remain unrealized. Indeed, from this point of view the ultimate inner foundation of this very⁴⁵ moral demand is not obvious. In order for our will to be pure, or (formally)⁴⁶ autonomous, it must be determined exclusively by a respect for the moral order. This is as clear as that A is equal to A. However, in general why demand this A? What is the basis of this demand for a “pure” will?⁴⁷ If I want to get pure hydrogen from water, I must certainly extract the oxygen from it. However, if I want to drink or to wash, I have no need of pure hydrogen. Instead, I require only that specific combination of it with oxygen, H₂O,⁴⁸ which is called water.

Without doubt, Kant should be recognized as the Lavoisier of moral philosophy. His analysis of morality into autonomous and heteronomous elements and his formulation of the moral law represent one of the greatest achievements of the human mind. However, our concern here surely cannot be limited to a theoretical scholarly interest alone. Kant speaks of practical reason as an unconditional principle of actual human behavior, and here his assertions are similar to the way a chemist would demand or consider it possible for people to make use of pure hydrogen instead of water.

Kant refers to the conscience as the real support for his ethical point of view. Certainly, the conscience is more than a demand; it is a fact. However, despite all of the sincere respect of the philosopher for this evidence of our higher nature, it serves no use to him. In the first place, the voice of conscience does not quite say what it should say according to Kant’s conception, and in the second place the objective significance of this voice in spite of everything remains problematic from our philosopher’s point of view.

As is well known, Kant recognizes every motive except pure respect for the moral law to be alien to true morality. All other motives including those motives stemming from a self-interested calculation, which prompt us to do good for the sake of some personal advantage, he considers to be morally illegitimate. (In this, he is unconditionally correct.) **[184]** Thus, a person who from a simple feeling of

⁴² C] objective. However,] objective. It is an unobjectionably precise expression for the abstract concept of moral truth. However, A.

⁴³ C] this possibility] this very possibility A

⁴⁴ C] perfect] *Absent in A*

⁴⁵ C] very] *Absent in A*.

⁴⁶ C] (formally)] *Absent in AB*.

⁴⁷ C] “pure” will?] “pure,” or “autonomous,” will? **AB**.

⁴⁸ C] H₂O,] *Absent in A*.

pity assists a neighbor in need of help does not thereby display a “pure will,” and in Kant’s⁴⁹ view this action is devoid of moral worth. In this case, he is indeed correct from the standpoint of his moral chemistry, but the fact is that the highest court to which he himself appeals—the conscience—does *not* take this standpoint. One can imagine only in jest—as Schiller does in a famous epigram—a person whose conscience bothers him for pitying his neighbors and helping them with profound sympathy.

Willingly serve I my friends; but, alas, I do it with pleasure;
Therefore I often am vexed that no true virtue I have
As there is no other means, thou hadst better begin to despise them;
And with aversion, then, do that which thy duty commands.⁵⁰

Our real conscience obliges us to treat everyone in the proper way, and whether this proper treatment takes the form of an abstract consciousness of general principles or directly acts as an immediate feeling or, best of all, unites both is a question of degrees and of forms of moral development. This in itself is a very important question. However, it is extraneous to conscience and therefore has no decisive significance for the general evaluation of human actions in terms of their moral essence.

However, in spite of the disagreement between Kant’s ethical demands and what the conscience he alludes to tells us, what significance can the very fact of conscience have for “transcendental idealism”? The voice of conscience, which testifies to the moral order, filled Kant’s soul with reverence. However, we know that the sight of the starry sky filled him with the same reverence.⁵¹ From Kant’s point of view, what is this starry sky? Perhaps it still represented some kind of reality for the author of the *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*,⁵² but the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason* destroyed the delusions of simple-minded⁵³ realism. The starry sky, like the entire universe, is only a representation, an appearance in our consciousness. Although evoked in us by the unknown influence of something [185] independent of us, this appearance in its actual form and properties has nothing in common with those unconditionally mysterious entities and does not express in any way the genuine being of things. The appearance is completely created by the forms of our sense intuition and the faculty of imagination, which act in accordance with the categories of the understanding. And if Kant revered the grandeur of the starry sky, then the genuine object of this feeling could only be the grandeur of the human mind or, more precisely, of the intellectual activity that creates the order of the universe in order that we may then cognize it.

However, Kant’s “idealism” has removed genuine reality from not only the visible world but also from the psychic world. In his critique of rational psychology,

⁴⁹ C] Kant’s] our philosopher’s A.

⁵⁰ E] Schiller 1902: 281.

⁵¹ E] “Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.*” Kant 1996a: 269.

⁵² F] Kant’s chief work in his pre-Critical period.

⁵³ C] simple-minded] naïve AB.

he has shown that the psyche has no existence of its own, that⁵⁴ in fact there is only a complex aggregate of appearances and a series of appearances of inner sense that have no more reality than do the appearances of the so-called external world. The connection between inner appearances (as well as those of “outer” ones) does not arise from the fact that they are experienced by the same⁵⁵ creature who suffers and acts in them. This connection, or unity of psychic life, depends entirely on certain laws or general correlations, forming a specific order or established mechanism of psychic appearances.⁵⁶

If we find in this mechanism an important driving force that is called “conscience,” then in spite of all the specific features of this appearance we are no farther away from the sphere of subjective representations than does the one of its kind ring of Saturn, which we can see through a telescope.

XIV

Kant, who labored as much under the burden of subjectivism in the moral sphere as he was proud of it in the theoretical, well understood that the fact of conscience by itself still does not liberate him from this subjectivism. If conscience is only a psychic phenomenon, then what is its obligatory force? And if it is more than this, then this means that the moral law has its foundation not only in us, but is also independent of us. In other words, this unconditional law presupposes an absolute legislator.

[186] Despite the influence of Rousseau, Kant, who was without any moral optimism, at the same time clearly saw the abyss between what should be according to the unconditional moral law and what there is in reality. He understood well that this abyss cannot be filled in, that the moral good cannot be fully triumphant and that the ideal cannot be completely realized given the conditions⁵⁷ of our empirical existence and of our mortal life. Here he “postulated” the immortality of the soul—the same soul the existence of which he had ruled out in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Therefore, contrary to his critique Kant wanted to find⁵⁸ God behind the starry sky above us and the immortal soul in the image and likeness of God behind the voice of conscience within us.

He called these *postulates of practical reason and objects of rational belief*.^{59, 60} However, there is no belief at all here, since belief cannot be deduced. And there is

⁵⁴ C] of its own, that] of its own (is not a substance), that **AB**.

⁵⁵ C] by the same] by one and the same **AB**.

⁵⁶ C] of psychic appearances] *Absent in A*.

⁵⁷ C] given the conditions] within the bounds **AB**.

⁵⁸ C] wanted to find] found **A**.

⁵⁹ F] We will restrict ourselves here only to these two, since the question of free will lies on another intellectual plane.

⁶⁰ E] *postulates of practical reason*] See Kant 1996a: 238–247 E] *rational belief*] See Kant 1996a: 255–257.

little rationality, since the entire argument moves in a vicious circle: God and the immortal soul are deduced from morality, but morality itself is dependent upon God and the immortality of the soul.

By themselves, these two metaphysical⁶¹ ideas have no validity from Kant's point of view. However, since the reality of God and of the immortal soul is demanded in order for the moral law to have real significance, it follows that we recognize these ideas as valid truths. However, any skeptic or "critical philosopher" has every right to turn this argument directly against Kant: Since the existence of God and of the immortal soul is necessary to establish pure morality and the validity of these ideas cannot be proven, it follows that the pure morality depending on them, remains a presupposition without validity.

If the moral law actually has unconditional significance, it must be grounded on itself, and there is no need to connect it with these "postulates," the object of which was so systematically disgraced in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. If the moral law needs foundations for it to have real force, these foundations, in any case, must have an independent validity, which does not rest on it. The moral law [187] cannot depend in any way on something that depends on the moral law.

Morality actually is autonomous, and in this Kant was not mistaken. This great intellectual achievement, connected with his name, will not be lost to humanity. However, morality is autonomous, precisely because its essence is not an abstract formula, hanging in the air. It *has within itself all the conditions to make it real*. What moral life necessarily presupposes—the existence of God and of the immortal soul—is not a demand for something else that accompanies morality. They are its own, intrinsic foundation. God and the soul are not postulates of the moral law, but the direct, constituting forces of moral reality.⁶²

The fact that the moral good is not universally and definitively realized, that virtue does not always happen to be efficacious and *never* (in our present life) happens to be *fully* efficacious, obviously does not eliminate the other fact that the moral good still exists and the third fact that the degree of the moral good in humanity in general is *increasing*. This is to be understood not in the sense that individual people are becoming more virtuous or that the number of virtuous people is increasing, but in the sense that the average level of the *obligatory* moral demands that *are being met* is increasing. This is an historical fact that cannot honestly be disputed. What is the source of this increase in the moral good in humanity, taken as a collective whole, independently of the moral state of human individuals, *taken separately*? We know that the growth of the physical organism takes place through a surplus of nutrition that it obtains from the surrounding physico-organic environment, which *precedes* a given organism. Turning to moral growth, it is logically inexplicable from the physical, because such an explanation would ultimately amount to deducing something greater from that which is less or of something from nothing, which is absurd. Just as with physical growth, moral growth can be explained only from a surplus of nutrition, i.e., in general from the positive influence of the actual moral

⁶¹ C] metaphysical] *Absent in A.*

⁶² C] but the direct, constituting forces of moral reality.] but the direct content of moral experience—what is actually given in such experience. **A.**

or spiritual environment. In addition to the unsteady and for the most part doubtful moral growth of separate individuals, which is explicable by the educational activity of the social environment, there *is* the steady and indubitable spiritual growth of humanity or of the social environment itself (which is the entire sense of history). In order to explain this fact [188] logically, we need to accept the reality of a super-human environment, which feeds the collective life of humanity and the surplus of this feeding, which is responsible for its moral progress. And since the reality of this super-human Moral Good must be accepted, there is no basis to reject the spiritual influence of this Moral Good on the individual moral life of a person. Clearly, this highest activity extends to everyone capable of perceiving it. The influence of the social environment must be understood not as the source but only as one of the necessary conditions of the moral life of every person. Furthermore, once the moral life (understood both collectively and individually) is understood as the interaction of a person (and humanity) with the perfect super-human Moral Good, this life is essentially removed from the sphere of transient material appearances. That is, both the individual as well as the collective soul are recognized as immortal. This immortality does not presuppose in the least the substantiality of souls in themselves. It is possible to conceive each soul not as a separate independent substance, but only as one of many, inseparably linked, constant and, consequently, immortal *relations* of the Deity to some *universal* substrate of worldly life. However, a clearer determination of this is not of direct interest to moral philosophy. We know nothing *yet* (i.e., prior to a theoretical investigation of metaphysical questions) of the substantiality of the soul as well as of the substantiality of the Deity. We do know firmly, though, something: *God is alive—My soul is alive.*⁶³ If we would reject this fundamental principle, we would cease to understand and affirm ourselves as moral beings. That is, we would deny the very meaning of our existence.⁶⁴

⁶³ E] *God is alive—My soul is alive.*] Derzhavin 2005: 30. This poem dates from 1797.

⁶⁴ C] The fact that ... of existence.] *This entire long paragraph absent in AB.*