

Awareness and consciousness

Brano "Consapevolezza e coscienza", tratto dal libro *OLTRE IL SILENZIO*,¹ pp. 242-250

Traduzione a cura di *Francesco Innocenti*

It is said that the fetus in the womb, from conception to birth, reproduces in its appearance, in a schematic way, all the forms through which nature has come to build the human body.

One thing is certain: every human, from birth to adulthood, experiences – in his/her feeling – all phases of feeling of the forms of natural life which end up with man's life of consciousness. In other words, every human, from birth to adulthood, manifests in succession a life of feeling that goes from the simple feeling of being, which springs from the life of the mineral kingdom, to the feeling of sensation of the vegetable kingdom, to the feeling of emotion of the animal kingdom, to the feeling of thought of the human kingdom, and finally to the feeling of consciousness in relation to the reached degree of consciousness.

In the manifestation of the feeling of consciousness there are two conditioning factors: One is the achieved degree of feeling; the other is the awareness, which fails under normal conditions to fit the reached consciousness. And that's exactly what hinders man from knowing herself/himself. In fact, a man who does not have a sufficiently broad consciousness confuses good intentions, which were abstractly formulated, with principles deriving from her/his way of being, from his/her intimate nature. And when life leads him/her to test the declarations of faith, s/he falls miserably into actions contrary to the declarations made.

The problem of reduced self-awareness involves two aspects, that is, it rises two questions. First, why doesn't self-awareness embrace the whole reality of being? Second, what is the purpose that nature has followed in giving man a reduced self-awareness? In other words, how and why is man's self-awareness reduced?

Awareness is the knowledge of facts or news that have been received in some way. It cannot be identified with knowledge alone, because knowledge is a purely mental fact, while awareness can also be a mere sensory fact. Indeed, even a plant, which does not have a mental structure, is aware of the features of the environment in which it is located (e.g. warm, cold, light, darkness, humidity, drought, etc.). This is not self-awareness, because if the plant could speak, it would not say: "I am hot", or "I am thirsty"; but it would state that the environment where it lives is too dry.

Senses are at the basis of awareness, both when awareness is a merely sensory fact or when it is a complex fact involving mental structures (e.g. self-awareness). In fact, sensation is the first form of awareness, as well as the first and simplest form of feeling: the feeling of being, which is precisely identified with sensation in the most limited beings.

While in the most limited beings the meaning of all these terms is the same, they assume different meanings in beings with a broader consciousness. Now, the fact that awareness arises only from the physical senses at the beginning of the evolutionary scale (so to speak), leads in the process of consciousness' expansion to a sort of habit of using only the physical senses as instruments of awareness. This is the reason why man, whose awareness is predominantly a mental fact, is only

¹ *OLTRE IL SILENZIO*. Cerchio Firenze 77, (a cura di Luciana Campani Setti). Roma: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1984.

aware of what has been detected by the physical senses, with few exceptions due to instinct, also present in animals, and intuition.

However, this does not mean that awareness cannot be achieved in other ways too. It only means that awareness, at least up to mankind, is limited in relation to what one is, or to the possibilities that one has.

On the other hand, man's structure is such that s/he responds only to the stimuli s/he receives, and since the most marked stimuli come from the physical senses, all her/his inner activity is based mainly on the sensory stimuli and on the world from which those stimuli arise.

This priority is not a mistake: this is how it must be. It is a strategy of nature in order to induce beings with a limited consciousness to focus on and live in the right environment for the development of that consciousness. Any distraction from that environment is harmful because it hinders the manifestation of the logically succeeding feeling.

In fact, up to a certain type of feeling, the manifestation of feeling in logical succession occurs only by means of the stimuli coming from the physical world, which is meant in a broad sense, that is, considering physical, for example, also the stimulus that a man can receive from meditating about the existence of the divine. It is said physical also because psychological activity descends from it. More in general, with physical world it is meant not only what purely involves the physical senses, but also anything in man's inner activity that has been induced by the physical senses.

In the next phase, when the feeling is less limited, the manifestation of that feeling is no longer related to the worlds of perception. Thus, awareness, being no longer based on the perceived, develops based on the feeling of consciousness and fits it all. This is exactly that stage in which the double phase of feeling is no longer called creation-perception, but creation-awareness, and the logical succession of manifestation is no longer catalysed by the worlds of perception to such an extent that they are no longer created by the feeling.

To conclude, man's awareness is reduced compared with the individual feeling because it develops itself, by habit, only in relation to the perceived, and this reduction is meant by nature for focusing man's attention on her/his own dimension: the worlds of appearance, of perception.

There are other examples of that process that I have hastily called "habit" and, more precisely, is to draw a definitive or one-way conclusion from two seemingly related events. An example is man's identification with her/his physical body due to the fact that the stimuli that s/he has initially received are only those to which the flesh is subjected.

Instead, we have told you that man is also made up of an astral body, which attributes to her/him a world of emotion, a mental body, which gives her/him a life of thought, and a feeling of consciousness that represents the truest nucleus of her/his being, because only the feeling of consciousness continues to exist and is destined to expand itself even further.

The world of thought and that of emotion, affected by education and other environmental factors, constitute man's psyche. This is another type of feeling that we named feeling in the broad sense and, in a radical way, defined it as artificial, because it does not remain, is contingent, and can be induced unlike the feeling of consciousness.

However, it is important to note that the more one splits and differentiates reality, which in fact is unity, the greater the inaccuracy. Likewise, man is a unity and is fully incorporated into her/his world. Distinctions are made only to better understand and should be made only to the extent to achieve that goal.

We have also told you that the feeling in the broad sense is basically an instrument through which man expands her/his feeling of consciousness. In the deficiency of the feeling of consciousness, man is directed by her/his feeling in the broad sense and has those experiences that lead her/him to integrate the deficient part of her/his consciousness.

Now, someone might believe that the feeling in the broad sense, that is, the psyche, or in practical terms man's personality and the environment where s/he lives – (I am not saying that they are chosen by her/him, because we have already said how illogical such a statement is and above all practically impossible) – are ordered by the divine plan a priori and man goes to the place that belongs to her/him for the best of her/his evolution or, speaking metaphorically, that the army's hierarchical structure is established by the divine order a priori and that man is just supposed to fit in it.

Instead, things are exactly the opposite: the army's hierarchical structure is designed as a function of the characteristics of the force, that is, in relation to soldiers' skills.

This may seem a worthless clarification, but if we look at where it comes from, we realize how important it is for the exact understanding of the feeling. Indeed, one understands the relation between the feeling of consciousness and the feeling in the broad sense.

We talked about the creation of the feeling, the fact that limitations create the environment, and particularly about the senses that create the physical world, reversing the conception of reality in this case too.

In fact, we have said that man does not grasp reality through her/his senses, reality that exists independently of perception. In contrast, the world that man considers objective does not exist beyond the creation-perception of the physical senses. So, those who have the same type of senses create in their perception the same type of world, of environment, of reality.

Having man's senses, however, is determined by the feeling of consciousness that the individual has. To belong to the human species or not is determined by the feeling, and not vice versa. Every man would have then the same type of feeling, be s/he a saint or a criminal, but as you can see that cannot be. Therefore, by type we mean a set of degrees of feeling all belonging to the same range, which can still be conventionally grouped by analogy in degrees. So, the range delimits the species: Analogies delimit the degrees.

Within a degree of feeling, fusions and the transition to the upper degree occur due to the dropping of limitations, until this leads to the transition to the upper range or species.

All of this is specifically concerned with the feeling of consciousness. The feeling in the broad sense, instead, does not determine the belonging to a species or to a degree, it is determined by those instead. In mankind, the feeling in the broad sense is determined by her/his feeling of consciousness and the environment in which s/he finds herself/himself. However, with environment it is meant, for example, planet earth, that is, a set of environments and, for mankind, a set of very different social status, each of them leading to so many different experiences that no feeling in the broad sense will ever be equal to another, even though they have, as a substratum, feelings of consciousness so similar to be equal apart from a single limitation.

However, even in the same environment, for instance, two twins who have two similar feelings of consciousness, the feeling in the broad sense is very different, because the emotional and mental spheres are different. The physical, astral, and mental bodies that in the course of life are diversified by the different experiences, are not equal even at birth: they potentially contain the

roots of future diversification, roots that come from the feeling of consciousness of the individual. Although man's physical, emotional, and mental spheres are malleable, they are genetically characterized by the feeling of consciousness.

So, man's social status or what s/he is and what s/he is not in the world, being a consequence of her/his way of being, are the consequence -in the first place- of her/his feeling of consciousness, which diversifies the instruments of her/his feeling in the broad sense, that is, the physical, astral, and mental bodies. The diversification of the individual is further accentuated in the development and use of these tools. This is how the diversification of individuals is implemented, even though they have feelings of consciousness so similar to be equal but a single limitation.

However, it should be borne in mind that diversification does not exclude unification, which is the opposite of separateness only, since unification is the unitary synthesis of the multifariousness.

Therefore, the divine plan to which everything, including the worlds of perception, is ordered accordingly is not something pre-existing. In contrast, it derives precisely from what exists and reflects the quality of the feeling of consciousness. This reveals the creative function of the feeling, which takes place in the simultaneity of the cosmic consciousness, in the state of eternal present of the cosmos' consciousness.

The cosmic consciousness – one per cosmos – is the broadest relative feeling and represents the first virtual limitation of the Absolute. It contains the entire cosmic reality made up of all the possible feelings that follow in logical succession from its original limitation. These feelings, united in chains of logical development, originate the beings who live in and construct the cosmos. These beings, beyond the succession of the becoming – a consequence of the very nature of the relative feeling – are not beings who feel, but sets of feelings, like many pearls of the same necklace united by the thread of logical consequentiality.

Therefore, a being is not an entity whose feeling evolves, but a set of relative feelings united by logical consequentiality that, precisely because they are relative (i.e. limited), seem to end up while proceeding from one to another, but instead they continue to exist in the eternal present as elements of the cosmic consciousness and thus of the absolute consciousness.

The cosmic consciousness, however, does not represent a feeling given by the sum of its forming feelings. Instead, the cosmic consciousness is a feeling that, in terms of quality, goes beyond the sum of its elements, due to the principle of transcendence that takes place in the simultaneity of the existence of what is multifarious but united.

The relative feelings with their natural function of creation-perception are the instruments through which the cosmic consciousness builds the cosmic environment. Although this construction is closely related to each relative feeling, it goes beyond the capacity of the individual feeling, because it occurs in the phase of simultaneity and thus transcending it. Instead, the perception-awareness, which represents the self-feeling and thus the result of creation, appears precisely due to its structure (i.e. to be able to exist) as occurring in succession, so without originating transcendence. The individualization of the relative feeling arises from this succession.

It should be noted that, while creation, though simultaneous, has a logical sense in which the minimum feeling follows from the maximum feeling, perception-awareness has the opposite direction: from the minimum to the maximum, even though in reality everything is simultaneous.

This is reality beyond its appearance.

The hypotheses that are made about it are all spoiled from the beginning and thus all wrong, if based on the assumption that what appears is real.

It is wrong to believe that time and space are objective, that what was in the past no longer exists, and that the future does not exist yet: it does not exist in the individual perception exactly because its structure excludes simultaneity.

It is wrong to believe that we are an entity that becomes, to whom what was felt no longer belongs and what will be felt does not belong yet. Even to feel of being an entity is wrong because it implies a total and definitive separateness, which is actually virtual and apparent.

Separateness is not even temporary, because this would imply that it was real even if only for a moment. In contrast, separateness is illusory because it does not exist in the structure of reality: It's just a feeling.

Thus, it is wrong to identify ourselves with our physical body, to believe not only that we are an entity that feels, but also a feeling that is truly distinct from the divine feeling.

We are partial feelings that exist as cause and consequence of the absolute feeling, that if they really existed (i.e. they were really separated from Him), they would annihilate everything (if everything could be annihilated). What we consider an elapsed feeling belongs to us or does not belong to us as well as it does or does not any other feeling.

The real being, which constitutes the true identity of every illusory being, is the absolute being.

He is not that God, just, merciful, all love -if you want- but unattainable because at most he would admit man to enjoy his image. He is the supreme state of consciousness into which we are led by the irrepressible and uninterrupted feeling of being, which bases itself on increasingly wider states of consciousness, ever more all-encompassing feelings until the fall of the last limitation and the achievement of true identity.

The true greatness of God, or – if you want to put it in mystical terms – the true and greatest gift that God gave us, is the feeling of being, because the feeling of being gives the sense of unity of the whole and leads the unreal part to enjoy the fullness of the real Whole.

Yes, it is true, you are not that God, far away in his immensity, who measures his omnipotence with the fragility of man, who mocks us by giving us the mind while hiding himself behind the absurd dogma and then confuses us.

You are not that God who treats our mistakes as sins deserving eternal punishment, who denies his grace to those who do not recognize him. And how can we recognize you if it is true that we can never understand you?

You are not that God who needs to be prayed and flattered to then gratify someone, but nobody knows who and why.

That God I am used to pray. But if one takes away from me such enigmatic and despotic God, do I have to feel lost or inhibited in the mystical sense?

And what can my prayer be, if it still makes sense to pray?

How can I turn to you, Father, if you are not a person?

How can I ask you anything, when you already give me everything before I ask?

How can I think to understand what my good is and asking you that, when my gaze does not go beyond my limitations and, consequently, my judgment is so partial?

I can only pray you to forgive my presumption of substituting myself for you in knowing what is necessary to me, without considering that only the real good is my real need, not that that I believe to be so.

My prayer can only be a thanksgiving.

I must thank you because you do not listen to me, because you do not do my will, but yours. My prayer cannot be a way to contact you because I am already indivisibly in your bosom, despite my unconsciousness, and never, for anything that I do or feel, you disown me, never the existence that you communicate to me vanishes.

Father, if I have to endure what I am going to face for my own good, help me find the strength to endure it even if I am not aware of its necessity, but if it has to happen to stimulate me to fight and react so that it does not happen, help me find the will and the determination that I need.

My prayer can only be that I turn to you, Father, to find, myself or others, the awareness of such a truth, because under such awareness every worry, every fear, every bewilderment, every loneliness are extinguished, and every serenity, every certainty, every solace, every fullness are found.

I am in you, Father, part of your existence!

Kempis