

## CONSCIENCE

### Part 2

The description given last week of the divided state of the human personality and the need to awaken Conscience in order to unify it has a strong negative component! This part of the teaching is meant to shock us into taking stock and doing something about it. But what? Is it really possible to do anything? How can we destroy buffers if most our time is spent buried in our many 'I's'? The answer must surely be that it is only possible to do something when a more detached part of the mind, the Observer, is awake. Then self-remembering is possible and so is observation, and that may be enough.

It sounds difficult but all is not 'stick'; there is a huge juicy 'carrot' waiting for us if we can start to awaken Conscience. Ouspensky said that 'Conscience is a special positive emotion'<sup>1</sup> and G spoke of:

. . . the conscience of a man in whom there are no contradictions. This conscience is not suffering; on the contrary it is joy of a totally new character which we are unable to understand. But even a momentary awakening of conscience in a man who has thousands of different I's is bound to involve suffering. And if these moments of conscience become longer and if a man does not fear them but on the contrary co-operates with them and tries to keep and prolong them, an element of very subtle joy, a foretaste of the future clear consciousness will gradually enter into these moments.

To summarise, it appears that Conscience is something like an emotional light. We have put a covering over it composed of our many 'I's', and if we can poke a few holes in this covering, the light will shine through. The first thing we see in this light are the inconsistencies and it is a painful process, but as the light gets brighter and warmer it can melt the covering.

What are we supposed to do? We might start by considering all our emotions in relation to one particular thing that concerns us deeply, our aim, our job, etc. Supposing one spots some inconsistencies and wants to get rid of them, what then? Ouspensky said:

First you must see it; before you see it nothing can be done. And whether you can do anything depends on the size of the buffer and on many other things. Sometimes it is necessary to take a hammer and break it; and sometimes it disappears if you throw light on it, for buffers do not like light.

So in cases when the light or heat of Conscience is insufficient, he prescribes a drastic measure, but Dr Roles was strongly against violence of this sort and we must follow his advice. He said of buffers:

In ordinary life we would go mad without these protective devices; in fact many cases of 'nervous breakdown' come from their destruction in sensitive people by force of circumstances. So a system which sets out to awaken conscience by getting rid of these shock absorbers must first put something very positive in their place; and must avoid any violent measures so that the change comes about gradually and naturally.

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<sup>1</sup> For anyone familiar with the Food Diagram, it is Conscience that provides the second conscious shock.

In a paper in 1979 Dr Roles stated perhaps rather shockingly that 'the chief reason for meditation was to arouse Conscience.'

'Consciousness is elusive and changeable. People can do almost anything in the name of Consciousness. You can't define it. But Conscience is clear; it shouts at you; "don't do that, do this".' [79/20]

Perhaps any method that 'transcends', that is goes to a higher place within the mind and releases the right sort of energy will do the same.

Dr Roles further suggested that the promptings we get from time to time were from Conscience.

The Voice of Conscience is a positive thing; it is not meant to make you go into mourning for your sins. It says to you, "You have been asleep; wake up." So you wake up, and you throw the sleep away - and with it all the mistakes you have made. [77/21]

So I would like to corroborate from one's own experience that his expression 'good impulse' refers to moments when one gets this impulse to do with Self-Realization or Meditation, for these are what brought you all to the meditation - the various impulses or experiences you had as children and all through your lives. When you begin meditating you get more of these impulses. Never neglect them; wherever you are, whatever time or place, if you get an impulse, do something about it - even if it is only to pronounce the Mantra to yourself once or twice, or to collect your attention if you are active and in public; or, if you are alone, you could just close your eyes and repeat it a few times. But always respond to it, because then these impulses come more often and with greater intensity so that you get a voice like the 'voice of conscience', which is loud and sharp. But if you neglect them, then for a long period they'll get fainter and cease to come until you get another shock to get you back on the ladder! [75/6]

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In spite of considerable efforts it was never possible to find an equivalent to Conscience in the Advaita teaching – discussions foundered on difficulties of translation. At one time it appeared that Buddhi – the discriminating mind – fitted the bill, but then it became clear that Buddhi was an intellectual aspect of mind, whereas Conscience belongs to emotional centre.

Dr Roles put the relation between Conscience and mind as follows:

Conscience and the mind should work hand in hand. The mind should check at every point whether what this strong emotion is telling it is fit and apt to the situation and is true with everything else that they know. So it must be checked by a trained mind and that is why a School is so necessary.

. . . It's very important to have a trained mind and to have friends who help one to see whether what one does as a result of this inner Voice conforms with the situation - the results that are appropriate and desirable. There is no criminal who doesn't probably work from what he thinks is conscience. A good murderer (laughter) is one who thinks that he is obeying his conscience which is telling him to shoot someone. [79/20]

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### Further quotations from Dr Roles

Dr R: This is one thing we've really got to be sure of – conscience is entirely positive; whereas most of us have, I think, been brought up to regard it as something that tells you you're a miserable sinner with no further hope! It's one of the two ways in which the Atman speaks to the individual – one through the mind, the truth that the mind sorts out and establishes; and the other through the emotions. The emotions of conscience means, as Mr Ouspensky used to explain, feeling everything you ever felt at once without contradiction. It's there in all normal people, only it is asleep and has to be shaken and woken up. And that's why we have to have a group of people and why it is so difficult to do – get liberation by ourselves. [81/19]

We are assured that there is this guiding voice in every person which is not just one of those voices, but which sees with a God-like eye, sees several extra dimensions. When Mr Ouspensky defined conscience as a positive emotion, like love or faith, which tells you with absolute certainty what right or wrong in this situation now, he was talking about the same thing which he had experienced, but the name of which has got so degraded. The reason for that is that the word 'conscience' is generally used, since the early Christian church based its teaching on the Jewish Old Testament, not for a positive but a negative emotion; by some people of course it has been understood fully, but by a lot of people it has been swamped in self-doubt and worry about one's own deficiencies. And so it ceases to perform the function for which it was implanted in human nature. One has only just lately realized that the reason for this is something very simple, very normal, very easy to get rid of - not at all difficult to understand. At a recent Meditation Meeting here we heard part of a conversation with the Shankaracharya which revealed it to me when he said that there are two ways of approach to this Very Important Person, to this deity within. One is by dwelling on one's own deficiencies as in a 'confession'; and the other is a much more positive way of giving up all thoughts of oneself, of one's little self and one's own world completely, and putting the whole of one's attention on the source of what we know to be there, learning more and more about this 'Being of Light' seeing examples of its action everywhere in ordinary life, concentrating on that. This habit can be made within quite a short time if one really goes at it. Then everything changes - the base metal changes to gold! I would recommend that whatever else you do, you immediately effect this transmutation.

That perennial habit of turning oneself inside out in one's thinking, give it up and go for what to unite with. The mind becomes what it dwells on. Do you understand this all-important point? Because we could hurry things up a great deal for ourselves if we did this much more often during the day. We wouldn't then have to meet with difficulties over meditating during the half-hours, if we could only do something about this the rest of the time. Let's get clear as to the meaning of this transmutation. It's not difficult to do, it's difficult only to remember to do. Dozens of times during the day, I forget to do it. Directly I remember to do it I find it's quite possible and immediately rewarding. [78/36]