

Gururaj. You can always climb on top of the piano.

Questioner. Gururaj, we talk of a having a conscience but exactly what is this at its deepest level and how does this operate?

Gururaj. What is what we call a conscience and how does it operate?

Questioner. Yes.

Gururaj. Good, fine. What is a conscience? A conscience is the net result of our analytical abilities that analyses all our thoughts and actions and that is the sum totality of what is a conscience. Good. Now, we can be very conscientious with our conscience in applying that conscience in the proper way. Now when we refer to the word conscience, we always try and feel within ourselves a sense of right doing. And yet within the framework of the sense of right doing, there is also a factor that is involved which pulls us back. Because of all the impressions in the mind, we feel that we should do one thing, and yet there are forces pulling us back in such a manner that we don't want to do what we feel to be right. Now what is the criteria that the conscience we have is right. You could have a wrong conscience or else you can be conscience-less. An evil doer, a thief, a murderer, a robber, a looter, we think that, that person has no conscience. It has become a common usage in our language when a person does something wrong, we say that person has no conscience but that is not true at all. The only person that would not have a conscience would be a person who is mentally deranged, a total psychiatric or pathological case where he cannot discriminate. Now even the thief has a power of discrimination. His failure has been this, that because of his associations, his environment, his up-bringing and his samskaras, he develops within himself a kind of lethargy whereby he would want things for nothing. He wants things an easy way. Instead of working hard for the thousand pounds, he wants to get it in a much more easier way, he wants it instantly. Yet behind that, there is something troubling him. Have you ever seen a happy thief? You'd never find a happy thief. He's always bothered. When he walks down the road and sees a Bobby, he skips a beat.

So even the worst person on earth has a conscience and we are none better than those thieves. We are none better. We might do things perhaps in a different way but as soon as a conflict arises in the mind, the better part of ourselves, which is conscience, comes to the fore and puts a check on us. If we ignore the check or if we follow the dictates of our conscience, that is a different question, that is where your free will comes into play. We do it all the time. Businessmen do it all the time, where they should add fifty percent on the cost price, they'll add on a hundred percent, three hundred percent. Right. A person goes and works in the office, how many phone calls don't you make from the office phone for your private needs? Yes, do you see? Like that in every aspect of our lives, we do things and then we

are troubled by them. Good. (Gururaj laughs) That is, that is the upsurge of conscience because basically man is good and his goodness is controlled by that which we call conscience.

Now conscience is not necessarily only of the surface level of the mind, of the analytical level of the mind but it comes from deeper down, for there is no bad person that has no good in him and no good person that has bad in him. We know that old little rhyme, that stanza we know. So, that which comes to the fore in the conscious mind as conscience has deeper origins. And those origins are not necessarily of this lifetime only. They could go further back into previous lifetimes, if you believe in them. So here is constantly a battle, a war, between good and evil that we spoke about during the week. And this battle rages on and the conscience we develop to do good, is like the milk we churn, we churn and churn to let the cream float on top. That cream is the conscience of man. Man can never be without a conscience, because within man is the energy, that Divine Energy, that is locked up within. But it is not totally locked up. It has its vents and it filters through in our daily lives or else we would not be able to talk, or walk, or breathe - this filters through. And through our spiritual practices, what we do, we're just opening the doors wider and wider so that more of that purity, that pure consciousness could come through and invigorate, enhance our conscience.

If a man is to be summed up totally, there is one question we could ask, what does your conscience say about this action? And his conscience will always be progressive, evolutionary, progressive. Good. But the way people behave in life, conscience is a science, a science of drawing forth that Divinity from within and portraying it in our daily actions. But what we do is take that science and 'con' it – conscience, you see? I don't know why they do not pronounce it, 'con-science'. This is the tricks of our language, a lot of things happen like that. Why take laughter and add on an S and call it slaughter. But language grows and in its growth, all these seeming incongruities take place.

So, to have a pure conscience is to allow pure consciousness to filter through us. And then effortlessly all our thinking patterns are changed, all our actions in life are changed. Now, the basic element of conscience is goodness, but that goodness has an overriding factor of man's ego. Man's ego steps in between that conscience and that conscience could become selfishly motivated. So, that pure diamond of conscience becomes covered with dust. Spiritual practices remove that dust, and when we talk of ego, we talk of what 'I' need, me, mine. And when everything reverts around the factor of me and mine then we disobey the dictates of our conscience. Conscience is forever pure. Conscience stems from far deep down within ourselves where all the purity resides. And then we talk of a person having a bad conscience, that means the person is a troubled person, because he has a bad conscience. He is not following the dictates of his conscience but going against them. As I said before, man is essentially pure. Divinity resides in him totally, but through

various factors which we have described before, wrong emphasis has been placed upon ourselves, by ourselves. The emphasis has not been on the real 'I', but the fictitious I which is unreal in the realm of reality.

So therefore egos are forever contracting and expanding. We have a certain kind of ego that just thinks of me and mine. And we say, for example, live with a holy person for a few months, few years, that me and mine disappears, me and mine disappears and it is replaced with thee and thine. For I've got a conscience about this cough. So, when in such company, the me and mine disappears, and thee and thine enters, for man's mind could never remain a vacuum. And when the thee and thine is there replacing the me and mine, it proves one great factor, that the ego is forever changing and the changeable. And that is the changing and changeableness of life from which we suffer, or from which we derive joy. The spiritual self of man, though so near seems so far away. So what do we deal with in our daily lives is the ego. Yet within the ego, which is the bundle of impressions, the load that we have come with into this world, the samskaras, there are factors there that are good. All and everyone here, and everywhere, has done some good in this lifetime or other life times. There is no person that is totally bad, or else badness cannot exist. There's no person totally good until you're enlightened, where the other counterpart does not exist. So man is a composition of that which is good and that which is not good. But all the time, within the mind of man, a sifting process takes place, the churning of the milk we spoke about, where the cream rises to the top, and that truly is the conscience of man.

When we talk of the inner voice, a little bird came to tell me something, that little bird is your conscience, yes. When we find a solution to a problem, or we find an inspirational thought within ourselves, remember it is the cream that has come to the fore in the churning waters of the ocean of the ego. Now, the ego is only real as much as we make it real because the composition of the mind is nothing else but thought forms. The composition of the universe is nothing else but thought forms also. Thought forms exist in the subtle level and they exist in the grosser form. So as far as the mind is concerned, everything tangible we see is nothing but the mind grossified, and existing in a congealed form. Those very vibratory factors are in the subtle form or the congealed, grosser form.

So when it comes to conscience, man's conscience, do realise that the subtler vibrations are coming through the grosser vibrations of our physical actions engendered by the mind. So when we speak of the mind it is, from the absolute point of view, nothing else but an illusion. If it was not an illusion, it would not be so changeable. But now some philosophies have made this mistake, that 'Oh, let me do what I want to do because after all it is just an illusion. It is just an illusion'.

One teacher, was giving, a Pundit, was giving a long discourse on illusion, and he said, 'All this is just but illusion, it is Maya, it is non-existent'. Now this Pundit, or Puruhit, as we call them in Sanskrit, was conducting a ceremony and in these ceremonies, in all those ritualistic practices of the East, there's always a lot of money involved. That is the way these Pundits, or Puruhits, make a living. So, for example, if you want to have your daughter married, well firstly you've got to have a bag of coins with you, secondly the daughter. So as the ceremonies go on and all the Mantras are chanted, the Puruhit will say a Mantra and he says 'you put the Rupee there. Om Bhur Bhuvah Swah Tatsavitur - another Rupee there'. And then the whole area where the marriage ceremony is taking place has to be sanctified, because you can't marry on unholy ground. Oh no, marriage is too holy. So he sprinkles a little water to the East - one Rupee there, and to the west, a Rupee there, and South and North, and like that it goes on.

Now these ceremonies, depending - and meanwhile the priest while he's chanting from his book, he has his eye on that bag. So if he sees the bag is still full, he can extend that ceremony for two hours, three hours. And of course this ceremony is done in front of the Sacrificial Fire. And of course this is a different thing altogether, because fire or light represents the entire universe. It is very symbolic and there's very deep symbolism in it, the inner light and all that. So, these ceremonies can go on from an hour to three hours until the bag gets empty. Meanwhile the same Pundit had been giving a lecture in the morning on all this is Maya, all these tangible things, its here now and gone tomorrow. So this clever father, came with a big bag to the ceremony, his daughter was getting married, but he had the bag filled with stones. Yes. So every time, one Rupee there or one Rupee there, he took out one stone and put it there. There the priest was watching him. He says 'What's happening here? What's happening here?' So he said, 'Look, if the money and the coin is Maya, this is also Maya. If that's an illusion, and everything is an illusion, then why do you discriminate between the silver coin and the stone, it is all illusion!' You see. Good.

But now, living in this relative world, we bring reality to illusion because illusion too is real. Because without reality how can there be illusion, without illusion how can there be reality? So, although there are illusionary factors involved, all this is real. The real illusion is our understanding, and on which we put great emphasis. Are we putting the greater emphasis on the real self within us, or are we putting great emphasis on the ego self? So, the emphasis is the illusion, and not that which exists. And this has been a great mistake made in many philosophies. The illusion lies in emphasis. The illusion lies in thought. If you find a person suffering from some kind of mental dementia, and he is so convinced, he conjures pictures up in his mind that his wife is unfaithful to him, and she could be a total Goddess, never a more faithful or sincere woman could be found. That thought going through the mind of this person, praco-dementia that is the illusion, not the wife, she is real. You see.

So illusion is a factor of where the emphasis lies. Illusion is the factor of what kind of thought that we are producing, and when we produce wrong thoughts, the net result is the suffering of a bad conscience. And we produce good thoughts, then we say it is good conscience, for conscience is forever good, being the net result of our thought processes. So here, here, every time when we meditate, we are bringing to the fore subtler layers of our mind, which has great bearing on our conscience. And this can so easily be seen. A true meditator could be pointed out a mile away, and you can say this person is a meditator. There is a certain glow, a certain radiance because the person is living within his, or her, conscience. And that purity of conscience, which is forever pure, stems from far deeper down within us, to the superconscious level. So conscience is the result of consciousness, that you are becoming conscious of that deeper layer within yourself, that deeper level within yourself, and then you walk as a freeman on this so-called illusory world. There is freedom, for if the conscience is clear, you are free. And conscience is forever clear. But when we mix it up and dirty it with all this me and mine, and all the unnecessary needs and wants, we are led into actions that are not conducive to our harmony and peace of mind. Therefore people with a bad conscience would never have peace of mind. If we perform our daily tasks well, we sleep well, nothing to bother us, and we say 'This day has been well lived'.

Now there is no person earth that has not got a conscience. Everyone has a conscience, but sometimes that conscience could well be buried, and then the real slavery starts. Then we are really bound, hand and foot to the dictates of our senses that would make us eat the wrong foods for example that are not good for us, that are not good for us that will make us have smells, and hear things, and touch things that are not good for us. Now this is no criteria - that is a totally individual matter whatsoever because the conscience has been buried. But through spiritual practices, when it is enlivened, pure consciousness is portrayed through conscience which is the direct channel from the deeper level of ourselves, the inner level of ourselves to the exterior level of ourselves which guides all our actions in life. It is another way of saying, be established in self - then act. But to be established in self and then to act requires some connecting factor, a connecting point, a link, a wire from the generator to the light bulb, and that connecting factor is the conscience.

A conscience is nothing else but a subtle energy which is always wanting to be directed for our own good, and the good of others, that is conscience. We say, when somebody does something wrong, 'Hasn't he got a conscience?' Of course he has a conscience, but a blocked conscience where those energies are not flowing through as it should. And when purity does flow through us, then we have its replacement, its shadow, impurity. The light is there but we are putting emphasis onto darkness. Therefore in our prayers we say 'Asatoma Sad Gamaya. Lead me from untruth to truth. Mrityorma Amritam Gamaya... Lead me from death unto life, or from mortality unto immortality'. And this prayer is a

Universal Prayer in every theology. And it's just a matter of brushing up; cleaning up the conscience, for every man has that. Conscience is the linking point from our physical self, through our mental self, to the superconscious level of ourselves, that is conscience. It is a reality. The only reality in the functioning of thought forms which constitute this universe. And conscience too could be equated with God, with Divinity. The tangible form of that which is abstract brought into it's - of the intangible abstract, brought into its tangible day to day working reality, that is conscience. And to have the purity of conscience or to abide by one's conscience is to be in contact with a force higher than ourselves. So, this is how the abstract becomes concrete. Now we can influence this from the concrete to the abstract. We can, through effortful living in a good manner, enliven that connecting wire called conscience. And enlivening it, enforcing it, we find the link, so that too becomes a two-way process. As we clean it, from the exterior level of life, so the interior level flows more clearly through it. That is conscience. See. It's very, very simple, just to do and not to die, that is it. Another question? Half past nine. Oh, there's a Concert tonight. Ah. Ah hah. Ten minutes. Right.

Questioner. You lay greater emphasis on the householder's way of life than on that of the ascetic. What is the justification, if any, therefore of the monastic way of life?

Gururaj. Ah, good. There is only one justification and that is this, your own personal temperament. You might have been an ascetic in a previous life and the body had to collapse, but the asceticism is the monastic way of life, is still so embedded and impressed upon that which carries on. The subtle body which, when taking birth will give you the natural tendencies to become an ascetic. So there is nothing wrong. Now, the path of the ascetic is a very hard path. He has to very, very strongly control all his senses, for one. He has to develop the ability of sublimating his sexual energies, so that, in the awakening of himself, not a single bit of energy is lost and with the one-pointedness of his pursuit, he tries to find God. But that is a matter of temperament and such a person has to go through many, many austerities. Fine. Now if you would study this statistically, you will find one true ascetic in fifty million, if not more, a hundred million. So, there would be perhaps forty only true ascetics in this world. Now, you might see forty thousand ascetics what - not genuine ascetics by temperament. Many of them are just escaping life, escapists, that cannot face the problems of the world and want to run away from them. Austerities are good, penances are good, but the ascetic tries to overdo them. It's also not only escapism but is also a kind of extremism. They go to various extremes and they mortify their bodies. They go live in the caves and the jungles, they do that and then they meditate and practise various kinds of austerities.

Now, the householder's path, which composes ninety-nine point nine, nine, nine of the temperament of man is the easier path. In this time, in this age, Kali Yuga, as they would call it, Karma Yoga is the most conducive path, and Karma

Yoga is the path of the householder. That means, very simply, I've spoken made many tapes on Karma Yoga, but very simply, it's right thought and right action, that's Karma Yoga, which is the same as what the Bible says, 'Do unto others that which you would expect to be done to yourself'. That is Karma Yoga in a nutshell. Now as we live as householders, trying to the, to live to the best of our ability is the great thing. You don't expect a child, a Matriculant to do the maths problems of an M.A. You don't. The child will do according his capacity trying to do the best in his Matric, and trying to do one's best, according to one's ability, is part of Karma Yoga. Who wants everyone to be perfect? If everyone here was perfect, I would not be able to live in this world, that is true. There has to be those little imperfections, but we are trying to rise beyond the imperfections. That is Karma Yoga. And in Karma Yoga, as we do our best to live a good life, so many things develop, such as Bhakti develops, love develops, because in performing a right action, there is so much love in doing it, that very action becomes a dedication. And a dedication becomes an offering, and the offering is non-else but devotion and love.

So practising for the householder as he practices his karmas, his actions in life, he also very simultaneously develops love and devotion. And as love and devotion develops, and his actions are conducive to the laws of nature and harmonious within himself and that which is around him, he starts developing an understanding. And the development of the understanding is Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of wisdom. The wisest people I have met were people that could not even read or write. Their wisdom stems from inside, you could call it direct perception, bypassing the analytical mind and just operating from a sense of knowingness. That wisdom is inherent, and now because of good karma and the devotion, and the love, that wisdom just shines through. I, for example, have never studied philosophy systematically. At University I did courses in commerce and accountancy and things like that. And my reading of things are not more than yours. I read as much as an average person would read. The whole idea is to allow, to bypass the mind and let that inner self operate where every word that is spoken comes from beyond you, not the physical you, not the mental you, but the spiritual you. Therefore I am never conscious of what I speak about, unless I hear a tape the next day, and I say, 'Did I say that?'

So in Karma Yoga all these things happen. And while performing actions is a dedication, which is an offering, which is a devotion, austerities come unto us automatically. We have the wisdom and the discrimination if we use the mind, that look such and such a thing is no good for me and by relinquishing certain patterns or certain habits, is an austerity in itself. By observing certain rules in life, that makes life smoother, is an austerity. I want to go to the cinema tonight, and then I say, 'Wait, there's a lovely chapter I glanced upon in a certain book. Let me rather cancel the cinema, let me read this. It is so beautiful; it's a lovely poem, something very uplifting, or some thought of some great man'. So

here the decision in seeing Sophia Loren, or Bertrand Russell for example or Tagore, now deciding on that, which is going to be better for you is an austerity. So everything is an austerity for the householder when he exercises a discipline.

So discipline and austerity is the same thing. For example, if you have to sit down to meditate, but all around you, I'm referring to males now, all around you there are pictures of naked women. I see a lot of those Ads in Soho; we took a drive through it the other night. Ooff! (General laughter) A person could really write a book just compiling those titles. Right now, let us use this example, where a person is sitting in a room meditating surrounded by all these naked women, right, and, why are you laughing so much? (General laughter)

Voice. It might be a great idea!

Gururaj. Then you'll find the ascetic sitting in a forest, beautiful trees and grass and flowers. And they sit on Acusha grass, or the leopard skin, tiger skin. Now there's a purpose for the tiger skin, by the way, in ancient times, it prevents all the little insects from crawling up to you. That is why they use the tiger skin. But I see some gurus use it in England and America as well, where these 'Hochars' are not crawling around. And they even employ a special person to carry that tiger skin around and following the teacher, so before the teacher sits down, the tiger's skin is spread out. I don't suppose many people know who I'm talking about. Good, fine.

Nevertheless, who is the stronger man that could meditate without having his mind distracted, who is the stronger man? He, for whom all the conditions of the forest is conducive to meditation, a help to meditation, or the person that could meditate with all the beautiful naked women around him and not be distracted, and his mind would not be swayed into lust. Who is the stronger man? The householder. I can sit right in the middle of Soho, with all those things around me, (General laughter) and still go into that oblivion, that I know of. You see. And yet, I will still look at the naked woman (General laughter) And I will say, ' Oh God how great a Creator you are, how great you are, for creating such beauty, for creating such beauty' You have created such beauty. Because there's nothing more beautiful in this world than a beautiful woman, is there? She is equipped as a mother, mother of the world she is. The next generation and the generation depends not on the father but on the mother, that brings up a child, that moulds the child. The mother is more closer to the child than the father. The father only brings home the bean and bones, the beans and bones, or whatever you call it. But sometimes somethings go missing about that too, because they could not resist opening the pay-packet before reaching home - you have too many pubs around here. That's all by the by.



Nevertheless, so the path of the householder is of Karma Yoga and that is what is needed in today's world, in today's society. For the Karma Yogi is perhaps less selfish than the ascetic who runs away to the forests. If he does that genuinely, because his temperament is such, then good, but there are very few. You won't find more than forty in this whole world, while the householders are ninety-nine, point nine, nine, nine, nine, of the world's population. Therefore I am a guru for the householder. I share your joys, I share your tears, I share the laughter, I share your love, the householder.

Now time for concert, let's enjoy the concert as householders. Why not have some fun?

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