

GUILT, SHAME, CONSCIENCE

Awakening to the nature & the differences between conscience, true individual morality,
& the destructive negativity of guilt & shame, with Psychophonetics¹

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“A person is free in so far as he is able to obey himself in every moment of his life”

Rudolf Steiner, Philosophy of Freedom³

In this article I will share the Psychophonetics process that enables people to clearly distinguish between the three different manifestations of individual morality: Guilt, Shame and Conscience. The theoretical context will be based on a Psychosophy, the practical application of the ethics of the Philosophy of Freedom⁴.

For centuries people were controlled by external power structures through a culture of normative guilt and shame. People heard from early childhood that they were born in sin, are sinful, not perfect, condemned to hell, and their only hope of salvation is to follow the controls of organized belief system. Indeed there was a time, millennia ago, when there was still some living spiritual reality in inspired traditional leadership, but guilt and shame long outlived that period. Tribal traditions, organized religion, colonialism, fascism, dictatorship, racism, nationalism, communism and the un-fettered market forces of inhuman capitalism – all still manipulate guilt and shame-based morality for their own purposes. We are only starting to recover from centuries of the external controls of our morality through the young, emerging individual free thinking.

The evolutionary process of human morality has never stopped. Beliefs kept changing but the striving for morality stayed. It is as essential to human nature as standing upright and speaking. Since the time of Old Abraham – individuals challenged the dominant moral order with new impulses of morality. That process shaped human civilization as much as climate, politics and economy.

Since the middle of the 20th century the claim of individuals to define their own moral authority has become widespread. It has become less tolerable for morality to be dictated from outside. Open debates everywhere on abortion, euthanasia, gay marriage, migration, individual civil rights, women equality, bio-ethics, living wage and environmental responsibility express this evolutionary process.

More and more of us claim the right to be the authority of our own morality. By keeping people under the control of external morality they regress to earlier phases of their development, similar to the attempt to control young adults as if they were children. Humanity as a whole was a child once, in need of parental guidance. Now we

¹ Psychophonetics is a method of personal development, counseling, coaching, consulting and psychotherapy created by Yehuda Tagar in the 90's, based on a development of Rudolf Steiner's Psychosophy.

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³ Steiner. R. Philosophy of Freedom, Part II, chapter 9: 'The Idea of Freedom'. Rudolf Steiner Press 2012.

⁴ Personal and spiritual development inspired by The Philosophy of Freedom, Rudolf Steiner, 1894.

are children no more. Entrenched patterns of guilt and shame are the hooks through which external controls extend their outdated 'parental controls'. Emergent individual conscience is slowly replacing them.

Guilt existed from times immemorial. It could be traced back to Cain's guilt over the murder of his brother Abel in the biblical first family of man. Shame came even earlier, at the moment Adam and Eve felt the compulsion to cover their nakedness in the Garden of Eden, after eating the forbidden apple.

Conscience is the youngest of the tree. The earliest record is the biblical story of Yehuda son of Jacob whose personal morality was tested for by his verdict on Tamar, his daughter in law⁵ whose traditional rights he denied. He could deny his responsibility for her unwed pregnancy. He chose honesty. King David was wrestling with his conscience after sending Uriah the Heath to his death in order to take his wife to himself. That was his personal initiation⁶. In Europe conscience appeared for the first time through the anguish of Orestes, son of Agamemnon, after he killed his mother Clytemnestra in revenge for her murder of his father in Euripides play, 408 BC. He was chased by the Furies from the outside for committing matricide and by his own conscience from the inside.

But conscience is still young for most people, not grounded enough to be clearly distinguishable from the voices of Guilt and shame. Only when explored with spontaneous body gestures, coming directly from sensed memory – the different inner natures of these dynamics reveal themselves. Let us have a close look at them.

GUILT

The experience of guilt, once explored with Psychophonetics, reveals itself without exception as internalized aggression. There is always blaming, accusation and condemnation, spoken or not, external or internalized, at the cause of guilt. It always comes from *EXTERNAL* authority, even when represented by one's own mind. The predictable effect of guilt is the desire to give up, to submit, to obey, to do anything to avoid that unbearable torture.

In itself the source of Guilt: the blamer or the critique, once explored, is always hateful, heartless, cruel, bent on disrespect and control. Its effect is to destroy the heart of the guilty one. The pain of it is unbearable. It manifest as a negative, authoritarian father, although it can equally come from women. Its effect stays burnt in one's inner flesh for the rest of one's life, unless consciously eradicated.

SHAME

This is the opposite of Guilt but equally destructive - shame is soft. Its source always hides in the depth of the soul from time immemorial. Shame does not confront you, it manipulates you from behind. Its immediate affect is the desire to disappear completely, or at least to hide. But the voice of shame always appears behind consciousness, like a hissing snake. One does not see it directly, making hiding impossible, resulting in high anxiety. The universal impact of shame is to become a very small target, to diminish oneself as much as you possible. That is its style of destruction.

Its source is an unquestionable, inherent, invisible authority. This authority cannot be said to be external, as it never was made conscious. The first experience of shame is recorded by Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden. They disobeyed God in eaten the apple and he confronts them, not from outside but from the *INSIDE*. They have never seen him, only heard him as an inner voice of inner authority with nowhere to hide as he is everywhere. It

⁵ The biblical story of Yehuda, father of the Jewish people, Genesis 38.

⁶ Psalm 51.

lives not in the nerve system but in one's blood. That is the reason for blushing in shame. No one blushes in guilt or in conscience.

Shame acts like a manipulating mother whose authority is given from birth unquestionably. Its effect on the heart is devastating, in a direction opposite to Guilt: shame sucks the heart empty, depletes it from the inside. It sucks us out of ourselves.

The master of shame, once exposed in spontaneous gesture is always somewhat ridiculous. It is a character that is trying to be bigger than he/she really is. Being empty of intrinsic value inside itself it is trying to live off the content of the victim's vitality, like a spider, giving the impression of being almighty. All it takes to cut it down to its real size is confrontation. The mind cannot do it. Gesture can. The archetype of shame always drags people down below their real worth.

CONSCIENCE

This is a totally different phenomena from guilt and shame. It is the true voice of one's heart awareness. The two others are strangers to the heart, attacking it in opposite directions. Conscience comes *FROM* the heart itself, from its own authentic self. Its effect is not to destroy but to restore the heart integrity, form and health. It is heart conscious rather than intellectual. It is centered and centering, open and opening, honest and direct, enabling clear communication and uprightness. The archetype of Conscience is a friend of humanity, a common being beyond all conflicts, true and loving to all, the 'I' that is 'WE'.

All three claim to be the highest moral authority. Conscience is the youngest of the three, the one without any outside support, requiring taking an inner stand. They all have equal access to one's intellect, but it is left to the individual Moral Intuition to decide which of them is to be the best advisor. There is freedom about this decision. That choice IS human freedom. Conscience itself does not make that choice. It just advises. One is still free to choose to act *against* one's conscience, and we often do. But at least one can hope to be free from the deception of guilt and shame who pretend to be the voice of conscience. Moral Intuition is still freer than conscience itself.

First, one must determine clearly which of the three is impressing on one's consciousness. Psychophonetics' major way of doing it is the following:

- a) Choose 3 examples of moral dilemmas from your past when you knew for sure when the causes were guilt, shame and conscious. There are plenty of such past examples.
- b) Experience them fully and sense them in body memory.
- c) Gesture each one of them and visualize the form of these gestures once outside of them.
- d) Then compare it with the present dilemma regarding which you are confused.

In doing so, you will have liberated the 'puppet' of the mind to see clearly the nature of the 'puppeteers' that control it. You will see immediately which form your present dilemma resumes and you will know which voice is coming from which of the three sources.

More needs to be processed for a complete freedom from guilt and shame, but the discovery of what controls us is the solid beginning for a Psychology of Freedom. On that basis one can become one's own inner authority, one's own master, shaping one's destiny from the core of one's being. In achieving that clarity, we birth the next level of our spiritual development and in doing so we birth the next step of the evolution of human consciousness.

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