

CONSCIOUSNESS

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We doctors are mainly dealing with consciousness as a process, that is being more or less aware and awake or unconscious, and rarely as a noun in the form of one consciousness. Maybe it's because we have been schooled in scientific materialism, so that we primarily believe in and relate to the physical world and all that can be seen measured and weighed. So we do when we describe different levels of consciousness, understood as a human who is unconscious and gradually wakes up. Consciousness is more than a process, it is also a state of being, and this state is an individual experience and thus it is difficult to relate to as an external observer.

And this is how we doctors are trained as scientific observers. The medical journals are still characterized by the conviction that the subject (the doctor) can look objectively at the object (patient), and thus we may forget that nothing is an object. No one out there is an object to us; we are all a part of each other and an experience of the moment. We are ever changing living beings, equally to a brief observation of the moment. Several researchers including Niels Bohr have claimed, that the object, cannot be separated from, the subject, the observer. They influence mutually each other's experiences. A person from the outside will never fully be able to describe another person's experience, as his own sensations are part of his observations. A description will always be coloured by the observer's imagination and perceptive organs.

So when we allow ourselves to be objects for subjectivity, we are risking being judged by the observer's values and concepts of "normality". We may become their observations if we believe in them.

Only as one unit we will be and experience the same reality. There is a large unexplored world of formlessness,

formless energy and formless forces as gravity, microwaves, magnetism and love. However we accept these formless energies and the latter even without proving its existence, we simply know from our own experience that love exist and make us feel good.

So what is consciousness? I have obviously not a full answer, and the last seven years I have spent much time in exploring, understanding and explaining it after I had a sudden shift in consciousness. I have also been reading and listening to different scientists and philosophers who do not have a common understanding of consciousness, yet they can agree on it as a formless energy.

A common statement I have heard is that consciousness is a formless energy triggered by neuronal activity in the brain, and that it is the brain, which produces consciousness. I think this is far from an adequate description, since each cell has consciousness, it knows which type of cell it is, and which group of cell it belongs to, and is reproduced into when it is replaced, and it knows its limitations, unless it becomes a limitless cancer cell. The brain doesn't tell the skin cell to be and act as a skin cell. The skin cell knows. Remember that our cells are constantly renewed throughout the body. Even in the brain there is a central area, where nerve cells are renewed, and fortunately it turns into a nerve cell again and not a muscle cell. And fortunately the cells stop growing and replicate in the healthy body, so when the liver cells regenerate the liver undertakes its proper form size and space and leaves space for the other organs in the body, which are in a similar process of replicating and renewing.

It is an indescribable intelligence and an indescribable overview, this greater awareness exhibits in the regulation of the human body from single cell level to the entire body. The

brain is in this context an organ, which collects and coordinates sensations from the body but also information's received from outside the body. The brain creates a momentary image, which allows us to communicate our sensations, and when the brain is dead along with the rest of the body this ability to communicate sensations disappears. But the consciousness of the lived experience still exists although in a different form, which I will return to in a later chapter.

The following sentences are an attempt to illuminate the concept of consciousness:

- 1) Consciousness is energy, which can undertake all forms.
- 2) Consciousness is a state and a process
- 3) Consciousness is an omnipresent awareness of our own and our common existence.

I will elaborate on this with specific examples throughout the book. As a final appetizer I will introduce you to Memory anaesthesia.

Memory Anaesthesia and Consciousness

Memory anaesthesia is a term doctor's use for people who wake up after general anaesthesia, and tell about the surprising and frightening experiences they had during surgery while they were seemingly anesthetized and un-conscious. There is an interesting study made by some Danish psychologists in 2012, where they interviewed a number of patients who had experienced memory anaesthesia. This study illuminates consciousness as a formless and movable energy in the body, as "the thing" in humans, which at the same time is experiencing and observing the body's sensations. Of special interests is the following common feature among the personal experiences:

- **They have lost sense of time:** some believe that 5 minutes have elapsed others think several hours. They are in a timeless dimension, as when we dream.
- **They perceive:** everyone experiences paralysation, as they cannot communicate with either body or speech. In addition, they have different sensory experiences, some hear conversation in the room, others sense touch of their bodies, some have pain, and others feel anxiety, panic, guilt, disappointment.
- **They have another sense of reality:** as they describe their experiences with words like: "perception of reality is changed", "I felt buried alive", "I felt dehumanized".

Who is experiencing all this?

According to medical science: "it should not happen" but it certainly is while the doctors are observing the patient in a death-like state of being. The person seems unconscious. But he is certainly not "un-conscious". His higher consciousness observes and senses what is going on. In a medical perspective it is somewhat incomprehensible, as the machines and the doctor apparently controls the heart, lungs and level of consciousness. These people's painful but valuable experiences, is to me a self created scientific proof of simultaneously awareness on different level of consciousness, which they can't measure and control in usual scientific ways.

The person with Memory anaesthesia is present in a timeless state of being as the observer, and also in the present room, perceiving with his body while the operation is going on. Like the woman who describes her feeling of disappointment during the procedure: "The doctor had promised that she would not wake up the second time." This was her second Memory anaesthesia despite the doctor's great efforts.

So there is awareness at the cellular level as a more or less full-bodied experience, as the persons describe that they experience feelings, and bodily sensations like pain, touch and paralysis. And then there is the observer, the witness, which observes it all. Naturally they describe it afterward as a feeling of "derealisation" as they were experiencing it while they at the same time were laying "unconsciously" in the room. They experienced two realities at the same time. It was naturally a completely new and frightening experience to them; however both were real just at different levels of consciousness. The consciousness in the body experienced sensations during the operation, and the conscious observer of the ongoing operation in another timeless dimension.

Consciousness is, with these people's valuable experiences and descriptions, obviously a full-bodied experience at the cellular level and also at a higher level of awareness. Consciousness is integrated in our entire body and it is also energetically connected with a higher awareness, as neither the brain nor the body can observe itself.

It seems as if consciousness can be more or less integrated in the body from time to time, as experienced in Memory anaesthesia, severe psychosis and near death experiences.

The descriptions from the Memory anaesthesia patients have strikingly many features in common with people who have had near death experiences, out of body experience and severe psychosis. Many of them describe that "the sense of time is ceased", that they have a sense of "derealisation" and that they still sense in different ways, while experiencing this unfamiliar state of being. Without having shared their experiences with each other, they tell about some common features. Experiences, which cannot be explained by conventional medical science, and as science finds it difficult

to understand and relate to, these patients, May easily, get a feeling of being wrong. As one of the memory anaesthesia patients described: "I feel guilt in not being able to take care of myself." Shame and guilt are heavily emotions to carry around. The patients are not "wrong", neither before the operation nor after or while they are telling about their experiences. In ignorance we may give the patients a feeling of being wrong or abnormal, when we do not understand what is going on. We doctors have great authority behind our words, so we must be particularly careful with our wording, especially if we call something abnormal when it basically is a normal variation, or reaction. I am sure that Memory anesthesia patients have a completely normal reaction to a very unusual experience.

And it is either not the anaesthetic that causes this reaction, because it is fortunately rare that people have these experiences during an operation. And even if it was the form and the amount of anaesthesia, the point of interests is what they are experiencing while they are seemingly unconscious. As previously described these derealisation experiences are recognizable by many other people in different contexts. It is about understanding consciousness and sensitivity and individual variation. I will return to it all in the following sections. It brings a deeper understanding of our many unique ways of perceiving life, at a given time.

Let's begin with the brain-organ and our entire conscious body as an entity.

Excerpts from the book "Consciousness" by MD and psychotherapist, Mette Mouritsen. All rights for this article belong to the author.

