

Conscience: A Nightmare Good Friday 2020

[R Hodges](#)

I had a nightmare. I had clicked on a tempting link for a Way of Salvation. It had installed malignant viruses in my machine. Dozens of images kept popping up on my screen: ads, promotions, noble thoughts, pornos, political rants. I clicked the X to dismiss each one but couldn't keep up. At the bottom of the screen the banner ad for The Way stayed no matter what I did. I needed to reboot but the button to do that had been removed.

I woke in terror, sweating. Reflecting, I realized it was an image of my being—it is myself that is infected with being-viruses. Each center of sentience—thinking, feeling, sensation—was infected with the factors enumerated by Beelzebub as diseases of faith, love, and hope. But I suddenly recognized in me an independent center of awakesness. It was in danger of being smothered.

Call it "Conscience". It appeared in a form like the Akhaldan Sphinx, in the heart of my body. I saw that the viruses were not merely something from outside: for each there was an active turning away from Conscience that allowed it to live in me, that excused myself from responsibility.

A fevered question arose, which I hardly dare speak or think about, lest this precious center too be contaminated and fail to do its work and burn away the virus.