

**FORGIVENESS**  
*and the Healing of Compulsions*

**Thomas Hora, M.D.**

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**INTRODUCTION**


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Thomas Hora, M.D., (1914 – 1995), was a psychiatrist with a passion for seeking spiritual understanding. His search lead him to study philosophy as well as psychology and the wisdom of world religions. Most important to him were the spiritual teachings of Jesus Christ, which became the cornerstone of his practice which he called Metapsychiatry. Metapsychiatry offers a unique method of healing which blends psychological insights with metaphysical truths about who and what we really are.

The appeal of Metapsychiatry is broad and deep and transcends denominations. Dr. Hora's patients and students included Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, and non-religious individuals. Some of these individuals went on to become counselors and teachers themselves.

From 1983 to 1987 a group of them\* led by Jan Linthorst, D. Min., distilled the essence of this wisdom on 12 vital subjects and published them as a series of booklets. This is one of them. The others, as well as books and tapes of Dr. Hora, are available through the PAGL Foundation. PAGL is an acronym for Peace, Assurance, Gratitude, and Love, qualities of being which are accompanied by blessing and healings. The presence of PAGL in consciousness, Dr. Hora taught, is evidence of the existence of God and can be seen as a way by which to measure individual spiritual progress.

Dr. Hora's genius was, first, to help individuals see their problems in terms of invalid values, beliefs, and modes of living; and, then, to help them

see their lives in the context of God, and to learn to replace troublesome, unhealthy values with valid ones. Only then, he taught, could problems dissolve and PAGL take their place. Each booklet in this series gives a different glimpse of this process.

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### THE ELEVEN PRINCIPLES OF METAPSYCHIATRY

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1. Thou shalt have no other interests before the good of God, which is spiritual blessedness.
2. Take no thought for what should be or what should not be; seek ye first to know the good of God, which already is.
3. There is no interaction anywhere, there is only Omniaction everywhere.
4. Yes is good, but no is also good.
5. God helps those who let Him.
6. If you know what, you know how.
7. Nothing comes into experience uninvited.
8. Problems are lessons designed for our edification.
9. Reality cannot be experienced or imagined; it can, however, be realized.
10. The understanding of what really is, abolishes all that seems to be.
11. Do not show your pearls to unreceptive minds, for they will demean them.

– Thomas Hora

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### FORGIVENESS

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The simplest way to define forgiveness is to give up blaming. The metapsychiatric method of forgiveness consists of de-personalizing our grievances. This means that we have to separate the individual from the ignorant ideas which have governed his behavior. In this manner we can be relieved of the pressure of blaming a “person.” We come to see that the enemy is always ignorance and miseducation. When there is no “person” to blame, our grievances fizzle out of consciousness, and while we may hate ignorance in any form, it is not possible to carry a grudge against it. Thus, forgiveness takes place and, with it, the healing of compulsions.

Insofar as illnesses are expressions, i.e., somatizations of existentially invalid ideas, they can be healed on the same principle of separating the invalid ideas (meanings) from the individual, who is a spiritual image and likeness of his perfect Creator.

The right understanding of this principle sheds light on the well-known problem that the more someone is criticized, blamed and punished, the worse he tends to become. Criticism, **<p 2>** punishment and blame graft the ignorance onto an individual child or adult until the separation of the “tares” of ignorance from the “wheat” of spiritual selfhood becomes well nigh impossible, and the individual appears to be going from bad to worse. This can be observed in the dismal failure of all attempts at rehabilitating criminals in our penal system.

As long as we blame someone for anything, we are angry and resentful, and we desire to punish or get even or hurt somebody, but we usually hurt ourselves. If we give up blaming, we will not only forgive, but we relieve the pressure under which we are living. To carry a grudge is a very crippling mental condition.

Now, how can we give up blaming if we feel like blaming?

If someone acts injuriously or wrongly against us, we must understand that it is ignorance that is controlling his thinking. So, we are victims of ignorance rather than an individual child of God, who is malevolent. In the Bible it is described that the disciples had a problem with forgiveness. They also found it very difficult to forgive and asked Jesus, "How many times must we forgive people who hurt us? Seven times?" And Jesus answered, "Seventy times seven." That means to forgive again and again **<p 3>** and again.

This is only possible if we understand that by forgiving people, we are not doing them a favor; we are doing ourselves a favor. We are hurting ourselves by carrying a grudge, and that is no way to live. We must forgive endlessly, continually. We must forgive our parents; we must forgive our siblings, our friends and our enemies. Jesus explained, "Love thine enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of God" (Matthew 5:44). As long as we hate someone and carry a grudge, we are not able to be conscious spiritual beings, because a spiritual being is a manifestation

of Love-Intelligence. Now, is this not a preposterous demand? It is only preposterous if we don't understand what the whole process of forgiveness leads to. It introduces us to the highest form of love.

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### COMPASSION

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Compassion is the highest form of love. What is compassion? It is understanding the lack of understanding. If we understand that ignorance has taken control of our adversary's thinking **<p 4>** then it is possible to have compassion. Compassion can love the enemy. Anyone who has attained the capacity for compassion is greatly blessed by the fact that he will never have to suffer the burden of carrying a grudge against someone.

A startling thing happens when we become interested in the issue of forgiveness. People who are sincerely interested in the process of forgiveness begin to discover that suddenly they keep remembering long-forgotten hurts from their childhood, the ways they were abused or maltreated. It is almost as if a lid on Pandora's box is opened, and these memories begin to seep through and come into awareness, almost as if they came to be forgiven. As long as there is a desire to blame and punish, these memories remain repressed, but the moment there is a readiness to forgive, then the memories come up. In Metapsychiatry we have a saying: "That which is not remembered cannot be forgotten." In other words, before we can forget something, we have to remember it. The readiness to forgive will result in a spontaneous and gradual lifting of repressions.

Repressions are memories which we are afraid to remember. But unless we can remember, we will not be able to forget. <p 5>

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### COMPULSIONS

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Now, the question could be asked, What is the meaning of holding on to resentments for so long? Sometimes our grudge is so great, that we are afraid that it would destroy us. In that case, what usually happens is that we develop compulsions. For instance, one woman had a sudden compulsive urge to scrub her entire apartment sparkling clean; she worked herself into a frenzy of cleaning in a compulsive way. By compulsively cleaning the house, she tried to protect herself from being overwhelmed with a hostile memory of being tyrannized in childhood by her parents. This kind of compulsiveness is a cover-up for an emerging or threatening memory, a forbidden emotion. Whenever we are compulsive about something, be it work or affection, or even stamp collecting, it is always a cover-up of undesirable memories.

What is the difference between compulsive goodness and love? Love is letting-be. Letting be is reverence for life. Compulsive goodness is based on the fear of becoming aware of hating someone. Compulsive evangelizing or proselytizing is based on fear of becoming aware of <p 6> sinful tendencies and desires.

Compulsions can also be seen as efforts at self-control and face-saving. Underlying all compulsions is a constant threat of anxiety, a mysterious potential for panic and social embarrassment. For instance, a mother may dream of putting a match to

her much admired son's piano. She watches it explode, then desperately (compulsively) tries to hide the evidence of her action.

There are emotional compulsions, ideological compulsions, religious compulsions, etc. Ideological compulsions result in social and political tyrannies. Religious compulsions are the well-known tyrannies of various religious zealots, cultists, and proselytizers. Some of the more troublesome compulsions are the compulsions to be right, the compulsion to help, the compulsion to teach. In the business world, we see compulsive salesmanship. At times a customer may find it impossible to buy an item due to the compulsive pushiness of a salesman. There is a famous saying attributed to Henry Ford who allegedly said, "You can have any color car you want, as long as it is black." All forms of unsolicited solicitations are so many tyrannies, trespassings and violations of the mental integrity of others. <p 7>

When a compulsion is thwarted by resistance of the world, an individual can become sick due to intense frustration. If a compulsion finds a receptive outlet, it tends to become worse. Its appetite grows, so to speak (L'appetit vient en mangeant). Thus, compulsiveness is a double-edged problem which gets worse if gratified and becomes aggravated if it encounters resistance.

The healing of compulsions entails three steps:

1. Recognition
2. Regret
3. Reformation through forgiveness

Recognition is an anxiety-filled, painful, and often embarrassing realization of an underlying self-deception concerning some individuals who played a significantly malignant role in our lives. We must come face-to-face with these repressed emotions, regret them and proceed with the process of forgiveness, without which healing is impossible.

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### HEALING THE PAST

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If we are loaded with bitter resentments against our parents, or some individuals from the past, and we are very angry, and we don't **<p 8>** know what to do with it, then anyone who is willing to be abusive to us is welcome, because we have a desire to be able to express some rage. That will give us a good excuse. This is called transference.

But if we start the process of forgiveness, suddenly people who we haven't seen for years may begin to turn up, call us, or ask to see us. They come to be loved, and they come to be forgiven without realizing this. They may come to us in our dreams. This process will heal us and set us free for further growth.

As we keep forgiving, we are realizing a greater and greater peace, assurance, gratitude and love, and we are healed. By forgiving, we discover compassion, which is the greatest gift of God. We are able to love those we believed we hated or resented or carried a grudge against. We can even love our enemies, because compassion is understanding the lack of understanding.

Someone remarked that it seems harder to forgive those we love than to forgive our enemies.

We need to see that those we love and those we hate are sometimes connected.

If we have not learned to forgive, then malicious, angry thoughts about someone can break through within us in the form of a **<p 9>** physical disease. In this case, it may be even more difficult to become conscious of our resentments. Symptoms and physical diseases are thoughts, manifesting themselves in the body, because they are too dreadful to be faced in consciousness. In essence, it is transmutation of energy in the most acceptable form. Whatever we are afraid to face in consciousness will have to find a way to express itself, either in the body, in behavior, in circumstances or experiences. The Bible says, "Nothing shall remain hidden... what shall not be revealed" (Matt. 10:26). This is an indication that whatever is repressed has a tendency to manifest itself in one way or another. Our best protection is to learn the art of forgiveness.

We begin with forgiving those we carry a grudge against. As we do that, the grudges of the past are being remembered, and they are healed. We learn to be interested in forgiveness, which will result in compassion. Buddha was called the Great Compassionate One, the Awakened One. Compassion is vitally important, for our freedom, for our physical, mental and emotional health, and for fulfilling our potential. Without these, we are usually crippled to some degree. Does this mean we have to actually say, "I forgive you?" No, there is nothing to express; **<p 10>** this is a battle which takes place in "the secret place of the most High," in consciousness.

Forgiving consists of giving up the desire to blame, to punish and to get even and cherishing the idea of compassion. Compassion is the point where we don't have to forgive anymore. There is a story about a man who came before the Buddha and spat on him. Buddha said to him, "If you spit on me, it is like spitting on the sky; it will all fall back into your face." He had compassion for this man because he was hurting himself. He wasn't concerned about himself; he didn't take offense or feel like a victim of abuse. He was responding in a compassionate and beneficial way to this rude fellow. If we have learned compassion, then we are immune to abuse. In the Bible there is a parable of the tares and the wheat. The ignorance is the tares, and the child of God, the spiritual being, is the wheat. In the process of forgiveness, we separate the ignorance, ignorant ideas, motives, from the so-called perpetrator.

Now, it seems that the Buddha was forgiving the man who spat on him. But he didn't forgive him — he had compassion for him. Once we have learned compassion, true compassion, there will be no more need to go through this **<p 11>** arduous process of forgiving. Compassion deserves a great deal of attention and devotion and sincere interest.

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### A HOLY PROCESS

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The problem with most of us is that we have a natural inclination or desire to be vengeful against those who hurt us. Blaming and wanting to get even and wanting to tell someone off and wanting to punish — these are all human tendencies that make it difficult to forgive. But we must succeed anyway. When there is a sincere desire to forgive, then God

gives us the power and the wisdom and the love to accomplish this holy process. It is a holy process; it is the will of God that we forgive. The Bible says, "Pray for them that despitefully use you... that ye may be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:44).

Praying for someone consists of recognizing them as spiritual beings, living souls, created by God for the purpose of manifesting Love-Intelligence. After a while we become less and less vindictive. Revenge or vindictiveness is a desire to get even with people for whatever they seem to have done to us. This can actually result in a compulsive mode-of-being. **<p 12>**

For instance, there are some people who pursue sex compulsively. In Greenwich Village, San Francisco, and other places, there are homosexuals to whom sex is a compulsive ritual. Around 10:00 p.m. in the evening is called the frantic hour which means that those who have not yet found a companion to go to bed with that night are becoming frantic. They have the compulsive urge to pick somebody up to spend the night with. Clearly, this is compulsive sexuality. It indicates an urgent desire to engage in some activity in order to cover up something that one doesn't want to become aware of. Compulsive activities are psychological ways of trying to cope with unbearable memories and emotions.

Sometimes people have been through psychotherapy and recovered some of their memories, yet still continue compulsive behavior, such as, for instance, alcoholism. This is a puzzling issue. It points out that if we don't have the awareness of God, we have no place to go with

these memories. They are no longer repressed; we are aware of them consciously, but we cannot loose them; we don't know what to do with them, and they are still disturbing us.

Often, in psychoanalytic therapies, it is recommended that we express our rage against the <p 13> people, even punch them in the nose, to feel better. The idea is that what we have kept bottled up, we let out and hurt those people back, and then we will feel better. This is not forgiveness, but a perpetuation of the conflict. There is no solution without God.

We need to see ourselves in an entirely different context. We drop the context of the interpersonal, and we see ourselves in the context of God. We are talking about a holy process which is taking place in the context of divine Love-Intelligence.

Interestingly enough, none of the psychoanalytical disciplines have an appreciation of compassion. Compassion is considered something of a weakness. We value it as the highest form of love, something supremely desirable. Compassion is a great gift of God. You cannot be truly healthy or enlightened without compassion.

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### **RESPONSIBILITY AND CULPABILITY**

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It is important not to confuse forgiveness with condoning of evil. The tares are separated from the wheat in order to be destroyed. Ignorance is destroyed in the scorching light of correct discernment. <p 14>

The famous parable of the tares and the wheat illuminates another important issue, namely, that

there is a difference between responsibility and culpability. It was the farmer's responsibility to notice the infestation of his wheat field with tares and to separate the poisonous weed from the wheat crop. But nowhere was anyone held blameworthy or culpable for the occurrence of the infestation. Similarly, man, being a steward of consciousness, is responsible for the purity of his consciousness, but is not blameworthy for the ignorant, impure ideas which are prone to infest it. An ancient Chinese saying refers to this the following way: "We cannot prevent birds from flying over our heads, but we don't have to let them nest in our hair." Thus, ignorance is inevitable but not necessary. Man is responsible because he has the ability to respond, but he is not culpable because the adversary (ignorance) is seemingly "abroad in the land." Anyone who understands this will be able to say, "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

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### **FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS...**

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We also need to learn to forgive ourselves. Consider for instance, the problem of jealousy. <p 15> We may discover that we are inclined to be jealous. The first impulse is to try not to be jealous. This is very hard. Every time we try this, we are remembering that we are jealous. This way we get more and more jealous. This is a common pitfall.

Forgiving ourselves requires also to separate the tares from the wheat We need to realize that there is no jealousy and no jealous person. We are not the person that is suffering from jealousy. This person is a figment of imagination. Here one may ask,

whose imagination? The imaginer and the imagination are one.

Imagination imagines the imaginer. The thinker and the thought are one. They are not what we really are. In order to be forgiven and healed, we must separate ourselves from the problem and from the person who is experiencing the problem. We are neither persons nor problem experiencers. We are individual manifestations of divine consciousness. What does it mean to be a divine consciousness? It means to be conscious of the divine.

How then can we be conscious of jealousy? We cannot be conscious of two things at the same time. What we are conscious of — that's what we seem to be. Therefore, correct identification brings about a separation between the "tares and the wheat" The person who has the <p 16> experience of jealousy is the tares which pretends to be our identity, but isn't. The way to be healed of problems which seem to be attached to our personhood is to realize that neither the problems nor the sense of personhood is part of our true being. Thus, we meditate and pray, not about getting rid of jealousy — jealousy is incurable. We pray to realize who we are. In proportion that the reality of who we are dawns on us, in that proportion the dream of jealous personhood fades out of our lives and we are healed.

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### COGNITIVE DIALECTICS

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The nature of consciousness is such that it becomes cognizant of itself in juxtaposition to a lie. Lies therefore can be useful. Unreality is useful. The material experience is useful. It helps us to

understand spiritual reality in juxtaposition. As Heidegger says, "Nothingness, in contrast to all that seems to be, is the veil of being." We lean against a contrast (this is cognitive dialectics), and it helps us to realize the truth, which otherwise would elude us. Thus, the holy process of forgiveness leads us to seeing Reality. That is also how the eighth metapsychiatric principle was formulated: "Problems <p 17> are lessons designed for our edification." We are not afraid of problems. We welcome them; we face them, and we use them as counterpoints for the realization of Truth. Thus, not only are we healed of problems, but we also make a step forward on the way to enlightenment. Otherwise, problems tend to return. This is the pitfall in faith healing, or psychic healing. If we haven't understood anything, we are open to the next problem to come along.

Suppose someone suffers from vanity. He prays about it and nothing happens. It seems incurable. Certainly, vanity is incurable, just as anything else. How can we cure what doesn't exist? We have to recognize the problem and discern the meaning of the problem. Vanity is the desire to be admired as a beautiful person. We need to separate and then abolish the sense of personhood. There is no such thing as a vain person. There is only an individual divine consciousness. The vain person is a fiction. We do not try to heal vanity; we try to wake up to our true identity. We cannot make a vain person into a not-vain person. That would be another dream. After a while, we begin to appreciate that we are divine consciousnesses, and we get the taste of peace, assurance, gratitude and love (PAGL).

**<p 18>** Here we see the value of the four “W’s:” Who are we? What are we? Where are we? What is our purpose? The more we become conscious of ourselves as divine individualities, and appreciate it, the more we see a growing distance between the sense of personhood with problems, or without problems, and the reality of being. Everything else is only a cure which is but the alleviation of suffering at the expense of persisting ignorance.

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### CURING AND HEALING

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Suppose someone is suffering from a lifetime affliction of timidity. Most people would say, “Assert yourself more.” That we would call a cure, one sickness “curing” another. If, on the other hand, we take the metapsychiatric approach, we ask, “Who do you think you are? A timid person? There is no such thing. God never made it. Timidity is not known to God, and personhood is also not known in divine reality.” We do not have to make people courageous. We just have to help them see that they are not timid persons.

Suppose someone has a cold. Can a healing come about in the same way? What is a cold? A cold is an experience. It is a thought — a **<p 19>** thought about ourselves as persons in a material body who perhaps have been slighted, injured, or left out (in the cold), or victims of maltreatment. The first thing is not to try to cure the cold because the more we would try to cure the cold, the more we would become conscious of having a cold. We must leave the cold “out in the cold.” Instead of trying to cure the cold, we say, “I am not a person who has

been slighted, left out in the cold. I am not this suffering human, physical person. This is no part of my being. I am an individual, divine consciousness. I am not conscious of any person with a cold. A divine consciousness is conscious of the divine. I am mindful of the good of God, of the love of God, which means that my mind is not full of germs or viruses, but filled with the love of God. I am conscious of divine love, and that is what I am, and this other thing is no part of my true being.

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### THE EVOLUTION OF SEEING

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In these above instances the main issue is the separation of what seems to be, from what really is. This is the holy process of forgiveness. It rests upon an epistemological principle. Which means that forgiveness is helpful in the **<p 20>** development of right seeing or knowing.

In the Bible we read the following story: “Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and he beheld the angels of God ascending and descending on it” (Genesis 29:12).

This dream indicates the development of transcending awareness, beginning with perception of things on earth all the way to beholding divine reality. We discern, therefore, seven levels of seeing: 1) Perception, 2) Cognition, 3) Empathy, 4) Telepathy, 5) Intuition, 6) Spiritual Discernment, and 7) Beholding.

1) Perception is sensory. Our senses inform us about form and formlessness.

2) Cognition is intellectual. We see our thoughts, our preconceived notions, our likes and dislikes.

3) Empathy is emotional resonance to others' emotional states. We can see how others feel. Our reaction can be positive; then we sympathize. If it is negative, we antipathize. <p 21>

4) Telepathic seeing is an expansion of empathy into space.

5) Intuition is the expansion of empathetic awareness in time. It can be positive (expectancy of good), or negative (premonition of evil).

The first five levels of seeing refer to the phenomenal world of good and evil, form and formlessness. The sixth and seventh levels refer to the noumenous and inform us of spiritual reality.

6. Spiritual discernment is the faculty to see spiritual values, qualities, creative ideas, aesthetic realities, and to separate them from the world of form and formlessness. These values are good without an opposite. They are non-dual.

7. The highest level of seeing is beholding. It is a capacity to see the Infinite Omnipresence. It is the capacity to see with an "innocent eye" all things in the context of omniactive Love-Intelligence, Cosmic Mind. Such a "seer" is a beneficial presence in the world; he is a focal point of harmony and healing.

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### NEITHER FORM NOR FORMLESSNESS

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The question could be asked, "How can anything exist beyond form and formlessness? The

<p 22> medieval physician Paracelsus was convinced that nothing could exist beyond this point. He said, "Nihil est in intellectu quod primum non fuerit in sensu," by which he meant that nothing can be known beyond what the senses tell us. Of course, since that time man has devised ingenious instruments to augment the reach of the senses into the universe and into microscopic elements of perception. But still all this remains within the limited scope of form and formlessness.

When an enigmatic Zen master said that form is formlessness and formlessness is form, he may have tried to challenge us to discover that reality is neither form nor formlessness. But then, what could it be? Now, the apostle, Paul, who was sort of a Zen master himself, tells us the following: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14). Suddenly, he confronts us with a claim that there is a way of seeing which is beyond psychology; he calls it the faculty of spiritual discernment. Just what is this faculty of spiritual discernment? Where is it located in us, and what does it see? <p 23>

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### THE EYE OF WISDOM

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The oriental sages believe that it is located in the third eye. They don't exactly say where this third eye is located, but they call it the eye of wisdom and compassion — prajna, paramita, dhyana, etc. They believe that this third eye can be opened with the help of certain training. In the western tradition, we speak of this kind of seeing as

spiritual consciousness having the faculty of awareness which can see and distinguish spiritual values and qualities from carnal and material phenomena.

What characterizes these spiritual values and qualities? First of all, as mentioned above, they are beyond form and formlessness. They are not invented by man. They are discovered, or better yet, realized. To realize something means that reality becomes real to us. Spiritual values and qualities are neither thoughts nor feelings; they are not sensations, emotions, attitudes, or experiences. They are realizations which illumine consciousness when sincere attention has reached a point of receptivity.

We all have the faculty to discern spiritual qualities in the world. We can see honesty; we <p 24> can see integrity; we can see beauty; we can see love, goodness, joy, peace, harmony, intelligence, and so forth. None of these things have form; none of these things can be imagined; none of these things are tangible, and yet, they can be seen. What is the organ that sees these invisible things? Some call it the soul or spirit or consciousness. Man is thus a spiritual being, endowed with spiritual faculties and discernment.

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### **AS THOU SEEST SO THOU BEEST**

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Spiritual values and qualities have a radical transforming effect on character, that is, our mode of being-in-the-world. The awakening of consciousness to spiritual values is often accompanied by spontaneous healings. The Bible

says, “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17).

Our spiritual faculties of discernment constitute the essence of the good life. Whatever is good in life, whatever is “happyfying,” whatever is comforting, whatever is healing, whatever matters in life, is the awareness of these attributes of reality. There is no such human being who would not be spiritual, but we tend to be so involved with experiential living that <p 25> we are distracted from the awareness of the spiritual dimension.

There is a radical difference between what is mediated through the senses and has form, is imaginable and can be experienced, and that which is unimaginable and cannot be experienced but can be spiritually discerned. It is the universal Love-Intelligence, man’s true dwelling place. The apostle Paul said, “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” — meaning real (II Corinthians 4:18).

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### **BEHOLDING**

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Looking at the things which are not seen is called, in Metapsychiatry, the “prayer of beholding.” In order to be effective healers, we must become “beholders.”

When an individual on the spiritual path is confronted with the necessity to seek healing, he may find himself wrestling with the “devil,” trying to resist some misdirected ideas or false desires. After wrestling with the devil, he may turn to wrestling with God. He may begin to implore God

by thinking spiritual thoughts, **<p 26>** hoping to influence God mentally. This is usually experienced as an arduous process, often accompanied by a sense of futility. At this point he may become interested in being a “beholder,” namely, relaxing into a state of awareness of God’s infinite omnipresence. The beholder moves from thinking about God to being aware of God.

The question is often asked, “What makes it so difficult to move from thinking to awareness? The answer is that thinking is something we seem to be doing. It gives us an illusion that we are doers. As long as we live with the conviction that we are doers and thinkers, we are unable to be aware and to behold.

The prayer of beholding requires us to realize that we are individual expressions of awareness (divine consciousness). Jesus said, “God is Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). We can rephrase this quotation by saying, “God is infinite Awareness, and they that worship him must commune with him in awareness.” When an individual awareness is aware of infinite Presence, then there is conscious union with God. Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30); “I am in the Father, and the Father in me (John 14:11). Beholding is a state of **<p 27>** consciousness which is aware of God’s infinite presence.

We can understand this by placing side by side the statue of Rodin’s “Thinker” and the statue of the Buddha. The thinker is a twisted, tormented person with an expression of despair on his face. The Buddha is an example of the beholder who is

serenely aware of beauty, harmony, peace, assurance, wisdom, love. The Buddha sits cross-legged in a lotus position; he doesn’t do anything. He isn’t cogitating, he is only aware. He is not a person; he is a presence.

Meister Eckhard said, “I see God with the same eye as God sees me.” This may mean that God doesn’t see us as doers or as thinkers, but as individual expressions of his own awareness. We are places where awareness is “taking place.”

It is challenging to consider the possibility that God, who knows everything may not know that we are thinkers. Only we seem to be capable of knowing what isn’t. God can only know what is. God is the only thinker, and we can learn to be aware of what God, the divine Mind, is thinking. “I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11). If we want to pray effectively, **<p 28>** we must know who we are, what we are, and where we are. Instead of thinking about God, we must be aware of God. When we are aware of God, there is peace, assurance, gratitude, and love (PAGL). There is no effort involved. The secret is knowing ourselves as God knows us.

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### MEDITATION AND MIND-FASTING

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When we have realized that we are awareness, then we can pray. This brings up the importance of meditation. In meditation the doer disappears and the thinker disappears, and we become aware of awareness as the All-in-all.

The beholder is alert and understands that he can be aware of what is, but also of what isn’t. He

can be aware of spiritual values, spiritual ideas, spiritual good, spiritual reality, but he can become distracted by things of this world (the “sea of mental garbage”). Thus, awareness can be apparently focused in one direction or another. Interest has the faculty of attentiveness and the power of focusing.

The issue of awareness as identity is beautifully illustrated in a story derived from Taoism. Yen Hui was a great scholar and court advisor to **<p 29>** one of the emperors in ancient China. He was also a student of the famous Taoist sage, Chuang-tzu. When Yen Hui was asking for the secret of enlightenment, his teacher advised him to practice “mind-fasting.” Chuang-tzu explained, “If you see with your eyes, don’t see with your eyes; if you hear with your ears, don’t hear with your ears; if you understand with your mind, don’t understand with your mind. Learn to see, hear, and to understand with the Spirit.” Yen Hui retired to the woods and spent three years practicing as instructed. After three years he returned to his teacher and said, “Master, I have become enlightened.” The master said, “Well, prove it to me!” Whereupon Yen Hui answered, “Before I practiced mind-fasting, I was sure I was Yen Hui. But now, having practiced as you instructed me, I realize that there never was a Yen Hui.” The master said, “Yes, you have realized “shue,” which means emptiness, i.e., nothingness.

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### GATEWAY TO REALITY

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If we consider this story in the light of what has been said before, we see that Yen Hui discovered

that he is not a thinker or a doer, and that in spite of his extensive scholarship, he **<p 30>** is but an individual awareness, i.e., a “place” where the Spirit manifests itself as intelligence, understanding, perceptivity, and responsiveness. He is not a person but a divine presence. He discovered that seeing hearing, understanding, etc., are not things we can do. They are events taking place in consciousness due to the activity of a power called Spirit. “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63).

Most of us are convinced that we are products of our childhood experiences. But who is it that was having these experiences? The thinker and the doer interacting with other thinkers and doers? But there never was such an individual. It is reported that someone asked a recently returned disciple from India what he was doing lately. He answered, “I am learning to be nobody.” This reminds us of a quote from St. Paul who said, “If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Galations 6:3). It is important to understand that this “nothing” is not a negative, but the gateway to Reality.

Heidegger’s main philosophical theme is as follows: “Nothingness by contrast to all that seems to be is the veil of being.” In line with this, the Zen Master Eido Roshi of New York **<p 31>** offers the following koan: “Nothing is as it seems to be, but neither is it otherwise.” Metapsychiatry says, “Man is a place where God’s presence reveals itself as omniactive Love Intelligence.”

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