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Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

This issue of the NEWSLETTER offers a number of articles on a variety of topics. New ideas seem to be unfolding in various centers of Metapsychiatry around the country. It started with the idea of setting up libraries of Metapsychiatric literature and tapes. Fern Rubin presents the idea. She describes the basic materials constituting a library and what it would cost. Furthermore, she makes suggestions as to how such a library may be used by students who would want to make an in-depth study of a particular topic. These students can come to the library at appointed hours, or by appointment, especially if the library is in a home, and spend some time in quiet meditation and study. For anyone interested in establishing such a library, there is a list of tapes and books provided in this Newsletter.

In addition, Fern Rubin offers study guides on various topics. Information regarding these guides may be found in the Study Material section of this issue. There is also available an index of study topics contributed by Ilona Blakely.

- Jan Linthorst, D.Min.

O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD

By Ann Linthorst, M.Div.

Eating disorders are the current “hot item” in the field of addiction treatment. The media are full of analyses of compulsive eating, anorexia nervosa (compulsive non-eating) and bulimia, (a combination of the two). Treatment centers have sprung up specializing in the treatment of these problems. Those seeking sure-fire weight-loss plans have constituted a large and lucrative market for many years. But, in an age of psychological sophistication and medical specialization, just being fat is no longer a simple problem. Eating problems have become refined, specialized and popular, offering a whole new market for specialized and expensive treatment programs.

This is not to say that these disorders are not real problems. They are, and they are a source of suffering to many, many people. They also constitute a culture-wide phenomenon – and symptom – which reveal something about the values of our culture. What, we might ask is the meaning of such eating disorders? And what is the meaning of their increasing

prevalence in our society?

The popular analyses of these disorders and their conventional treatment will not be discussed here. There is much available information for those who are interested in it. What intrigues me is the observation of a nation of people suffering from either an inability to stop eating or an inability to eat. Here is the most basic and simple of human functions which, in the nation of greatest abundance on earth, has become a large-scale problem. Here we sit, stuffing and gagging, while millions of other human beings would gratefully feed off the garbage we leave behind.

What could be the meaning of such a ludicrous picture? It came to mind when I was standing in a supermarket line one day. The slender young woman who was checking out the groceries was chatting with a customer, who had apparently commented on her appearance. "I can hardly stand to eat anything, anymore," she said. "I've dieted so much that when I start to eat I gag."

Many readers will remember the Zen story about a Zen master who "proved" his enlightenment by commenting, "When hungry, I eat; when tired, I sleep." How simple. What wouldn't thousands of compulsive-eating or non-eating, insomniac Americans give to get back to such simplicity? On the human level, the problems and their solutions are both very complex.

When we look at the young woman's comment in the context of God, we can see a meaning to her problem. Ingratitude. She looks at the simple blessing of wholesome and abundant food and is ungrateful for it. Her concern to have personal power over the shape and size of her body leads her to look at food and see something potentially bad. Other false values lead us to equally ungrateful reactions. We eat for personal pleasure and consequently disdain anything which doesn't gratify our personal preferences; or we eat to reassure ourselves that we can grab the good anytime we want it, and so, grab we do, never really taking time even to notice the real goodness of the food itself.

Ingratitude is further fueled by the avalanche of "scientific" research data regarding the potentially dangerous, or beneficial, elements in the food we eat. And what is one day labeled beneficial may the next day be declared unsafe. Are we eating good protein or bad cholesterol . . . drinking the all-important water or ingesting potentially fatal chemicals? We eat and drink our fantasies of good or evil, more and more, and scarcely can even see the food itself, let alone the blessing of it.

Food is neither god nor devil, as our personal fantasies would make it. But, food is one simple, material evidence of God's love, God's goodness. Let us eat gratefully, mindful of the blessedness of our lives, and the problems will disappear. A favorite table grace comes to mind: "For these, and all Thy gracious gifts, O Lord, may Thy holy name be praised."

Since we are not here for ourselves nor for others, let us not eat for ourselves nor for others. Let us eat for God, gratefully, reverently.

“O, taste and see that the Lord is good.”

LISTENING TO GOD

By Charles Gourgey

Then Zedekiah the king sent for Jeremiah, brought him in, and questioned him secretly in his house, saying: “Is there any word from the Lord?”

As spiritual seekers, we often feel the urge to ask King Zedekiah’s question. There are times when we may understand the meaning of a particular question, but, in spite of all our understanding and search, we cannot find peace. When peace continually eludes us, we may wonder whether God is actually present in our lives. If He is present, perhaps He has nothing to say to us. Actually, God is speaking to us at every moment. If we cannot hear Him, it means we need to learn how to listen.

God is an ever-present refuge, but we will have no sense of His presence unless we can hear His voice. The reason it sometimes seems difficult to hear Him is not that He does not speak, but only that it is impossible to hear God and something else. Actually, we are hearing something all the time, even at those moments when we feel lost and empty. When we hear not hearing the voice of God, what is it that we hear?

There is another voice inside each of us that is constantly speaking. Sometimes it shouts and sometimes it whispers, but even its softest whisper is enough to drown out the voice of God. It is an inner monologue, the voice of the self. The conversation of the inner monologue has many layers. Often it speaks in fantasies, rehearsing real or imagined interactions with other people. Underneath these fantasies is a parade of wants: an incessant silent chanting, “I want this; I don’t want that.” Sometimes the chant gets louder: “This is good; that is bad. This should be; that shouldn’t be.” The self in the inner monologue does a lot of pretending. It may even pretend to be spiritual: “I’m meditating now. See what a good student I am. I deserve an answer.” On a deeper level, the monologue’s message may be more simple: “I’m afraid.” Sometimes the monologue’s message is apparent neither in words nor in pictures, but only as a vaguely defined physical tension. The inner monologue speaks in many tongues, and there is hardly a moment when we do not hear it.

The inner monologue is the voice of personal mind. If we are to hear God’s voice, the personal mind must be suspended. How is this possible? We can begin by becoming transcendent observers. We usually take the inner monologue for granted, and are hardly aware of it even while it occupies our full attention. As transcendent observers we become aware of the inner monologue, observing it “from the outside” and knowing that it is no part of who we really are. Without judging it or reacting to it, we can learn to recognize its many dialects, watch how it arises and fades, waxes and wanes, and eventually grinds to a halt.

As transcendent observers, we can detach ourselves from the inner monologue, but this in

itself is not enough. The mind cannot exist as a vacuum. If God is not realized in our consciousness, then the inner monologue will come rushing back in, and with a vengeance. The transcendent observer creates a space; the space will not exist for long. And so the question arises, how can we realize God when our very problem seems to be that we do not know how to listen to Him?

Be still, and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:11)

And Moses drew near to the thick darkness, where God was. (Exodus 20:21)

And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great strong wind rent the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind was an earthquake. After the earthquake was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire was a still, small voice. (I Kings 10:11-12)

The voice of God is heard in stillness and quietness. There is nothing more healing to the soul than the quietness that allows God's presence to enter. As we observe the inner monologue cease its noisy litany, we enter this quietness. How do we find God there? If we are suffering, it means that we want something. Can we suspend this want, relax our demand, for just one moment? If we can, we can look toward God in non-conditional, reverent attentiveness. We can wait for God in an attitude of "letting-be": for just one moment, without any pre-conditions or demands that God be here for us, with a totally open mind, we can look toward God in patience and in quietness. If we can do this, we will find that our problem has something to say to us. What seemed to be needless suffering, or perhaps even a threat to our existence, turns out to be a lesson. It is a lesson showing us which values are existentially valid and which invalid. It reveals to us how the misdirection of our attention has wasted the resources of our consciousness and impoverished our spiritual life. It orients us toward a set of values that will bring us closer to God.

How does this process bring us closer to God? If we can wait just one moment in sincere non-conditional reverent attentiveness, then we have already found Him. Metapsychiatry understands God as a universal principle of love and intelligence. By love, we mean not interpersonal "object" love, but the desire to express goodness without placement of conditions. When applied to God, this means non-conditional reverent attentiveness. Relaxing our grip on what we want, waiting for God without demanding any specific response, is therefore an act of love. Our consequent ability to see our problem as a lesson and to grow from it is the unfolding of intelligence. In the holy instant of quiet waiting, we realize both love and intelligence, and are therefore entitled to the full sense of God's presence. This is what it means to turn our attention from what we want to what God wants. It is the fulfillment of the first and great commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

The love expressed in attentive waiting and the intelligence expressed in the willingness to learn are God already entering the space we have prepared for Him in our consciousness. We need only to remember that He is there, and His presence will be comforting and healing. Moses found God in the thick darkness, and that is usually where we first look for

Him. However, once we learn to recognize God and to see Him where He has always been, the darkness becomes no longer dark.

Still, still with thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with thee.

- Harriet Beecher Stowe

Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. (Matthew 28:20)

A NEW HOME

By Susan Ayers

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts, and in this place will I give peace . . . (Haggai 2:9)

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it . . . (Psalm 127)

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. (Psalm 90:1)

Recently, a problem arose as a spur to look at the “former house” in which thought could dwell regarding family ties. This former house may represent any invalid attachment, or mode of being-in-the world. (Hora, 1977) In this house, consciousness can dwell on fear, anger, guilt, envy, jealousy, rivalry, malice, no freedom, confusion, a sense of meaninglessness, un-fulfillment: no peace. It is a very fleeting house; a moment of pleasure here, a moment of pain there; a little success, a little failure: no lasting harmony.

What does it take to leave this former house of state of consciousness? How do we stop dwelling in it?

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. (Psalm 85:10)

We leave this former house when we come to the realization that the only company we find there are the “four horsemen” (envy, jealousy, rivalry, malice) (Hora 1984). Peace, Assurance, Gratitude, and Love (PAGL) cannot dwell in such a house. When this is clear, we do not try to make it more comfortable in the former house; we seek a new home.

The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, and in this place will I give peace. We come to see that this new home is a consciousness where love, goodness, and intelligence can dwell. We are no longer dwelling on interaction thinking (Hora, 1977) and there is a quietness in consciousness; in this quietness, the good that IS can be realized. We haven't invented (built) this new house from our fantasies. This latter house is spiritually built, spiritually inhabited, and spiritually maintained. Being spiritual, it is eternal.

This new home is built on a foundation of peace which holds a promise, "I am with you always even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20) What is the end of the world in light of the above? The end to an interest is interaction thinking; the end to an interest in envy, jealousy, rivalry, malice; an end to an interest in suffering. This end heralds a new beginning, and a move from the former to the latter house. We do not leave out of malice or anger; this would only bind us to our former house. We move graciously, with love, towards the good. In this way, all participants could be released from the agony of invalid attachments.

How do we know when we have reached the threshold of this new home? When consciousness has ceased dwelling on what should be and what should not be; what we want and what we don't want; how we feel and how we don't feel. Instead there is peace and a hunger for spiritual good. An interest in understanding what authenticity (Hora, 190) is in the sight of God. A freedom that comes from the dawning realization of our true identity, and the glorious joy that comes with it: an eternal gratitude for having been shown the way towards our new home.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isaiah 35:10)

"WHETHER THEY KNOW IT OR NOT"

By Joan Rubadeau, M.A.

There I stood in a line that threatened to take all afternoon to move me to my appointed rendezvous with the Traffic Court Clerk. I needed a duplicate copy of a receipt showing that a traffic ticket had been paid. I saw this waiting time as an opportunity to consider the good of God, clearly present in the gorgeous day, the blooming plants, the intelligence expressed in the court system, the courthouse itself, and the endless variety of other individuals moving around me. It was also a protection against the complaining and discontent expressed by some of the others in the line. The time passed in this peaceful and interesting manner.

I became aware of the idea that the court system represents human thoughts: "the necessity of blame" and "punishment for wrongdoing." Though lip services is paid to helping people learn from their transgressions, there is little evidence of learning from the mistakes nor of understanding the mistakes as indications of larger lessons about life that need to be learned. In spite of the limited thought on which it is based, the court system performs a useful function and Love and Intelligence are served by it in many ways.

My turn came and I moved to a window only to be confronted with what seemed to be a very angry and surly little person. When I presented my request, she became even more incensed. "It will take a lot of time to find the record and prepare the duplicate. It will take at least half an hour and maybe longer," she threatened. It was clear that blame and punishment were part of her view of the situation. Since I had been focused on spiritual

ideas for the hour I had been waiting, her communication did not provoke me. "All right, thank you." I sat down to wait. The Meditation on Right Seeing came to mind. "Everyone is here for God, even this angry and impatient young woman. She can't help herself. She is an instrument of Love-Intelligence, whether she knows it or not. This receipt is needed and she is in a position to supply it. Everything will work out well." I was aware of a lovely sense of peace and even felt sure that it would take nowhere near half an hour. She was back in ten minutes bearing the duplicate and smiling a beautiful smile. "I am sorry to have been a bother and thank you very much," I said. "It was no trouble at all," she assured me still smiling. I almost laughed out loud in delight and gratitude. It was such a complete reversal of her former attitude.

The conscious awareness of the fact that everyone is here for God whether they know it or not means that life is effortless and others are friendly and helpful. As instruments of Love-Intelligence, they can't be any other way.

"THERES NO HOME LIKE PLACE"

A Report on the First 6-Week Intensive Training Course

by Ann Linthorst

One of the two students who participated in the first 6-week intensive training course for professionals, summed up what she had learned in the words of the title: "There's no home like place."

Patty left her Denver home, family and practice to study at the School for 6 weeks, full time. She was joined by Donna of Sydney, Australia, who also came for the 6-week program. Both women were kept busy with the special classes designed for the program, plus the many regular activities of the School and the Seal Beach Branch of the Institute.

The special classes included a counseling class, which met four hours a week and formed the heart of the study, one-hour-a week classes in spiritual and therapeutic literature, two hours of group supervision per week, an individual therapy session and one or two group therapy sessions, attendance at the regular parents' group, the School PAGL group, the Seal Beach meditation group, the regular monthly Master Class and Research Seminar with Dr. Hora. And all of this followed the very busy opening week which began with the International Conference on Metapsychiatry in Laguna Beach.

Donna wrote in her summary: "(The teachers) continually clarified both counseling and individual issues in the light of spiritual Reality. We have been helped to understand more clearly the existential principles of Life and have been healed of much in the process."

The high level of interest, commitment, and receptivity on the part of these students was

inspiring to all of us at the School. The program proved so enriching that we expect it to become an annual event.

EXISTENTIAL METAPSYCHIATRY STUDY LIBRARY

By Fern Rubin, M.S.

A library is most often made up of a systematic collection of books and tapes for reading, reference, or loan. In keeping with the teachings of Metapsychiatry, an existential library goes beyond being a collection or reference library, in that its aim is healing and transformation of consciousness. Therefore, an existential library cannot be acquired, nor can the material in it be mastered. The function of an existential library is to provide opportunities and guidance for spiritual study that lead us to greater clarity, contemplation of truth, and healing. It is a place where we can be lifted out of the world into spiritual reality.

Whenever a library is made available to interested students for study, we find a wealth of opportunities for useful and creative library work. For instance, transcribing each of the tapes of Dr. Hora's offers deeper understanding and adds to the library materials written transcripts for others to study. Focusing research on a specific topic, such as healing, or relationships, or parenthood, allows individuals to shed light on relevant aspects of their life experience while spiritualizing thought. To help students go beyond the desire for mastery in their approach to learning, study guides have been developed so that information can become transformation and the knower or the thinker can become a seeker of truth.

A new addition to our library materials is an Index that serves as a concordance to the tapes of Dr. Hora. A copy of the Index can be reserved now. The Index is an example of many years' worth of fruitful research completed by volunteer library workers. Hundreds of relevant topics are listed and can now easily be studied. Research that focuses on a topic is what made the mini books, Discourses in Metapsychiatry, a possibility.