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Thomas Hora, M.D., Director

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The New York Institute of Metapsychiatry was founded in 1975 by Dr. Thomas Hora, M.D. for the study and exploration of modes of being-in-the-world, their meanings in terms of qualities of consciousness, cognitive processes, and ways of improving these through educational methods emphasizing prayer, meditation, spiritual values, and existentially valid metaphysical principles.

Metapsychiatry is an epistemological method of truth realization.

The PAGL Foundation is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization which sponsors the Newsletter, as well as other educational and publishing projects.

CONFERENCE DIALOGUE

Part Two

Question: Jim, you referred to bracketing in order to obtain the open mind; would you talk a little about that? I don't really understand what that means.

Jim: The question is about bracketing our assumptions to attain the open mind. Basically, in terms of the image that I was using here, it is a question of becoming conscious of what pole we are using to measure our life by. Is it a pole of financial success or human status and achievement? What is the standard that we are using to get our sense of self-confirmation? We have to become aware of that, and in a way put that aside to be open to

the truth. Now, even to become aware of it is a step.

Question: Is that like the idea of our mode of being-in-the-world?

Jim: Right. So, in other words, I think that so often we start out thinking that we know what the problem is, or what we need, and so forth. What we are asking for with the bracketing is to put that aside for a minute and see what is really happening here.

Question: Jim, self-esteem and self-worth—are they the same?

Jim: Well, they could be used the same way; is there something more behind the question?

Question: My second question is, are they valid? Is self-esteem valid?

Jim: It depends where you are getting it from. If you are getting it from an invalid standard it is not valid, of course. But Dr. Hora mentions in *Beyond the Dream*, I think, that if you think of Jesus getting his self-esteem at the river Jordan at his baptism from being the beloved child of the father—that is a true sense of self-esteem, seeing ourselves through God’s eyes. Seeing ourselves as a spiritual consciousness. That is where our authentic sense of self-esteem comes from.

Question: Would we know that we had self-esteem by PAGL? Would that be a measure by which we would know it?

Jim: Exactly, right.

Question: I would like to understand better the quote from the poem, “the foul rag and bone shop” where ladders start and Jacob who was, as far as we know, the enlightened one. Does it mean we have to start in the foul rag and bone shop? That we have to be aware of the foulness before we can climb the ladder?

Jim: Well, I think as we know in Metapsychiatry, we are either drawn by wisdom or driven by suffering, and the “foul rag and bone shop” is the way that many of us go. It is kind of the preferred way of most spiritual students. But what that also means is that the experience of nothingness or the realization of nothingness underlies all self-confirmatory belief systems and, that we have to contact that. From the point of view of a climber, it is foul and filled with bones and all the rest of it, but there can be a glory in that nothingness when we come to understand it for what it really is.

Question: Because Esau never had that as far as we know.

Jim: Correct, we don’t know a whole lot about him, right, except that he was covered with hair; we don’t know much about his spiritual state.

Question: I would like a clearer understanding of that nothingness, and I am thinking of a specific situation. We are individual units of awareness. Now recently to all appearance my

sister passed away. After a session with Dr. Hora I could no longer think that she died, I knew that that was not possible. And yet there is something lacking in understanding, because I need to be able to see clearer what is that individual unit of awareness. I understand that we are talking about non-dimensional reality and non-material substance, but my tendency is to think of reality and a particular group of spiritual qualities and that is my sister. Like, somehow wanting to differentiate something about her from non-dimensional reality. Is that appropriate? Is there something lacking?

Jim: Well, I think if I understand you correctly you are saying that you appreciated very distinct unique spiritual qualities in your sister that were also divine qualities in a way, but there were some that she manifested in a particularly beautiful or unique way. I see nothing wrong with that—a unique appreciation just as with people who are living. We appreciate their unique spiritual qualities. If it became something that was possessive then that would be different, but what you are speaking about seems fine.

Dr. Hora: Well, you see, we always would like to put our finger on something. It is difficult to put our finger on a non-dimensional being except that we have to settle into a consciousness of love and gratitude, and that will bring us peace, and we shall not try to figure out in what way is her non-dimensionality different from somebody else's. So we don't have to be afraid that our love will be moving in a wrong direction and perhaps somebody else will get it. Just settle down and be grateful for whatever you knew and you know that these spiritual qualities are never lost.

Comment: Thank you.

Dr. Hora: You're welcome. Any more questions?

Question: I have a question about talent. Talent is manifesting God's gifts and God wills to be manifested, and we see talents manifesting. I have a feeling this is just an interaction thought, but is part of manifesting talent that it would be manifest to others? Or could talent and good just be manifested, for instance in art forms, without others becoming particularly aware of it, would the world benefiting by it be part of what it means to manifest talent?

Jim: Well, I think you are on to the problem that could come in thinking of it that way—thinking of it in terms of an interactional way—it could slip into doing something to get recognition from others. You can be a beneficial presence in solitude and still it is going to affect others. We are not confined to just time and space and who happens to be in the room at the moment. But it will affect others, and God is going to radiate in some way.

Carmen: I guess the focus would be to desire to be a unique expression of God in the world and that Love-Intelligence is going to manifest through your unique talents. So the focus is on manifesting God, expressing God, and that unique expression will take on certain talents and gifts that each one of us has. But the focus is there, and yes, people will know, but your interest is not in people knowing about your talent, but people knowing about God, and so you look at it that way.

Question: I am thinking especially of one person who has a talent to write a beautiful poem or stories, or compose music, and it isn't known to others, so that is still God manifesting even though it doesn't have to be that others would know about it? That would still benefit the world in a sense?

Dr. Hora: Must be so.

Question: So in respect to that what does it mean to shine or not to hide your light under a bushel?

Carmen: I think that we could hide our talent or hide our light under a bushel if we were caught in comparative thinking, because if we are caught in comparative thinking then we keep missing the way Love-Intelligence wants to express itself through us. We miss it because we are caught up, and so we miss showing our light—we don't show our light—and we are hiding it under a bushel, and we can hide it under a bushel when we are caught in interaction thinking and comparative thinking, and ambition. We are hiding it, we are missing it, we are missing expressing it.

Ruth: I would just like to add something. Often we think of talent as something special, unique, that the world has to know. But it is really maybe just expressing something in the right way at that very moment; just giving a smile, whatever occurs that is healing and that is good which provides for the needs that are being presented at that moment—that's a talent. Nothing special in the sense that the world thinks of it as special.

Dr. Hora: If you consider the question which we asked in one of the mini-books: What Does God Want? What was the answer? Apparently we have the impression that God wants to be manifested in the world, yes? But we say, "Well, I want to be manifested in the world." "I have these talents, God gave them to me, therefore I have a right to manifest *my* talents in the world and get admiration for it." Which is normal human reasoning, right? But we are not here to learn normal human reasoning—you already know that, we could leave now! So, God gave us talents so that we might manifest *Him* in those talents, not ourselves. We are manifestations of God, instruments of God, you may have heard this before, that we are here for God, and if we have talents then we are here for God in a certain specific way so that the world might become aware of God. "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) So if we have God given talents, God gave them to us for Himself. So the Bible says, don't hide your talents under a bushel, put them on a candlestick for the world to see. ("Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:15, 16)) But not to your own glory, but so that you would be here for God.

THE HEALING OF AMBITION AND GREED, A CASE STUDY

By Carmen M. Neafsey

In Metapsychiatry we define ambition as moving in two directions at the same time. This movement creates a conflict in consciousness since it seems as if we are being pulled back and forth between opposite poles. For example:

- Wanting to be a success and fearing failure
- Wanting to be rich and fearing poverty
- Wanting to be powerful and fearing powerlessness
- Wanting to be recognized and fearing being ignored
- Wanting to be healthy and fearing disease and illness, etc.

If we find ourselves under the influence of ambition then we are caught in a dualistic mind-set. Everything is seen and interpreted within a dualistic frame of reference: either/or. Thus we fail to perceive what really is and become increasingly disturbed, fearful, and unhappy.

Let us take the case study of a woman who struggled with issues related to dualistic thinking and whose spiritual awakening may be of help to us in understanding the healing of ambition and greed.

Jean was a middle-aged therapist who suffered a great deal from her tendency to over-do in many areas of life: work, relationships, physical exercise, seminary studies, etc. Even her relationship with God was colored by the compulsion to over-do. It was as if the thought prevailed in consciousness that the successful outcome of everything depended solely on her personal efforts. And so Jean expended tremendous energy trying to keep all her projects safely afloat in the sea of success.

As students of Metapsychiatry we have come to recognize that one of the main distractions of ambitious people is effort. Ambitious individuals try too hard, at times forcing themselves beyond their natural limits and at other times forcing situations to fit their expectations.

Jean was caught in similar patterns of thought. She was often exhausted and ill because she was unable to sleep well. Yet she drove herself with the same level of intensity whether she had a good night or a bad night. Sometimes she used sleeping pills in order to get enough sleep so that she could cope the next morning with the pressure of appearing successful, bright, competitive, and accomplished.

Clearly Jean seemed to be suffering from ambition, perhaps even greed, and certainly from vanity. Her values and mental preoccupations seemed to demonstrate habits of thought which moved in two directions: either being strongly attached to success or fearing and avoiding failure. In fact, any task Jean undertook was always viewed through the lenses of self-promotion. It was as if she constantly asked herself, "How can I use this particular task to promote my image of being successful and efficient?" All of this gives us an idea of Jean's mode of being. In *Beyond the Dream* we read:

“It is not possible to pursue personal success without at the same time courting failure. So the success-hunting individual has a misdirected mode of being-in-the-world.” (BTD, p. 53)

“Ambitious people are successful and failing at the same time. That’s the tragedy of the dualistic mode of being . . .” (BTD, p. 40)

Jean continued in spiritual guidance for nearly three years before being able to confront her misdirected mode-of-being. During those three years the work consisted primarily in dream interpretation and in exploring the meaning of several unsuccessful relationships. Jean never perceived these relationships as her failures but rather as situations which did not work out because the individuals involved failed to meet her expectations. She did not seem able to recognize the men who came into her life as spiritual beings. Instead she misperceived them through the filters of dualism, seeing them either as helping her achieve her goals or as obstacles, sometimes even as competitors, in the game of success. This was, of course, very unfortunate for Jean. In the book, *Dialogues*, Dr. Hora addresses this important issue—how ambition can lead us to misperceive our friends. He writes:

“Ambition disturbs the harmony of individual existence. If we are ambitions, every fellow human being becomes, more or less, an enemy because he stands in our way.” (D, p. 172)

“In ambition there is a power struggle being cherished in consciousness . . .” (D, p. 187)

If we truly understand that “Ambition disturbs the harmony of individual existence,” then we will likewise understand that if we approach others through the greedy eyes of ambition we fail to see who they really are and end up casting them as our enemies, our rivals, or our competitors. Our dealings with our friends, family, and acquaintances are fraught with problems and suffering since we are not approaching them with an open, reverent, loving mind but with a calculative and operational mentality, the “gaining mind.” Sometimes we unconsciously use others, as we observed in Jean’s story, to shore up our own damaged self-esteem. Ambition constricts the mind, blinding us to the true nature of Spiritual Reality. We misperceive ourselves, others, and, ultimately, even God. As a form of self-confirmatory thinking, ambition alienates us from our at-one-ment with Love-Intelligence, the Infinite Source of all our blessings since ambition creates the illusion that we are self-sufficient, the sole creators of our existential project.

Let us return to Jean’s story. The suffering brought about by ambition, greed, and vanity reached an acute level. One final significant relationship collapsed, one in which Jean had risked opening herself to the possibility of marriage. The sense of loss and betrayal left her feeling deeply hurt and she entered an intensely dark and painful period. She was at last ready to understand the meaning of her suffering and to acknowledge the attachments, the fear and insecurity which really lay beneath the outer trappings of her success.

To help us appreciate the depth of the changes Jean would undergo in the next eight months, let us turn for a moment to an example taken from nature. The radical changes surrounding the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly can be understood as an analogy signaling the profound transformation in consciousness that occurs when we begin

to confront our misdirected mode-of-being. We enter the “cocoon” as a caterpillar with certain restricted capabilities and we emerge as a butterfly capable of soaring far above the earth.

Jean would endure a similar transformation that transpired quietly in the secret place of the Most High. The image of the “cocoon” took on a special significance. It seemed to help Jean accept the pain involved in letting go of cherished ideas about who she wanted to be in the eyes of the world and in the eyes of her own personal self. The image seemed to convey to her a sense of peace and assurance in the midst of much darkness and anxiety about the future. The following selection is a quote from Jean’s journal which she included in a paper for one of her courses:

“I am writing from inside the cocoon. I have climbed the ladders, I have reached the top, but there is nothing to see through these eyes of my own effort, just blurriness and darkness. To climb higher will not assure clear vision. I am writing from inside the cocoon. There is only fatigue. There is nothing more that I can do. I have worked my way to this point. Now I must let another force move me toward the next stage of my journey. I am past climbing, walking, crawling. I can no longer move from my own will, my own power. When I do, there is dryness, no meaning, just repetitive, empty acts . . . I am trapped, caught in the web of my own activities. There is no way for me to get out. To break the cocoon now would be to condemn myself to another lifetime of crawling, eating, and spinning. More repetition . . . and even less purpose, for I can no longer fool myself that all this striving is going anywhere but into darkness. Now I know that all my busyness simply places me in the case of eternal night.”

Jean’s reflections help us to see how she was finally able to face up to a certain compulsiveness which in the past seemed to have served her well and given her the illusion of being a somebody, a “doer.” In the “cocoon” she at last confronted the fear of emptiness, the dread of being a nobody, which all her activity and successes had previously concealed from her awareness.

For Jean, the “cocoon” came to mean being encased in the structure of her own endeavors, a structure in which the personal mind or ego had to die. It was a time of no exit, a time of feeling trapped, stuck, up against a wall. She would say often, “All my old ways cannot free me now.” She told herself that she could only wait in patience. She prayed often for the grace to surrender her interest in her old life, and to be able to embrace the unknown, the un-programmed life which was hers in the timeless now.

We often hear and read in Metapsychiatry that the physical is mental. A curious thing happened to Jean which seems to illustrate this truth. Just at the time she was beginning to confront her invalid identity as a “doer” Jean was thrown from a runaway horse and broke her right arm. Suddenly she found herself unable TO DO things in her accustomed compulsive way. She could not drive nor jog; she could not prepare meals or even dress herself without some assistance. Everything slowed down. She was forced to take several incompletes in her course-work and to postpone her graduation. For Jean all of this represented the crumbling away of a personal sense of self bound up with being a “doer”:

someone who could achieve anything through personal effort and sheer willpower.

While it was true that on a physical plane Jean was incapacitated, in the spiritual realm she was being given new abilities. Gradually, a spiritual idea began to take hold in Jean's thinking. It would prove to be the gentle dawning of a truth being realized in consciousness. This is how she recorded it:

"To see that we are at the Source, to recognize that there is nothing more to do is a special vision granted by God. For in the blind sight of the hard worker, the Source will not be recognized . . . In the narrow sight of the striving ego there will always be more to do, more ladders of its own making to climb. The vision must be a gift. Undeserved. Freely given. The power to see that we Are At The Source."

From a Metapsychiatric perspective Jean had glimpsed the non-dual nature of Spiritual Reality and she had understood, in a moment of timelessness, that she was already one with God, Love-Intelligence, the Infinite Source of Divine Energy. She recognized that this oneness was not something she had to work at nor could she approach it with an operational mentality or with the "gaining mind." It was a grace. And Jean had by now reached a point of receptivity so she was able to receive what is always being given, the Good of God.

Every little glimpse into the true nature of God has powerful therapeutic effects since it is like "beholding the face of God" or like looking out on eternity. Jean began to notice small changes in awareness that slowly began to manifest themselves in changed perceptions.

From that moment on, Jean was able to leave behind the "natural woman," the compulsive doer, and begin to appreciate not only her true spiritual identity but also the spiritual identity of others.

In proportion that Jean realized her at-one-ment with the Source of Cosmic Energy and Love she was healed of the operational striving and calculating inherent in the mode-of-being of ambitious people. In the past Jean had driven herself relentlessly, trying to protect and safeguard her self-image of the successful "doer." But this image had been confronted and seen for what it was. Jean no longer needed to repair a damaged self-esteem with good performances and flashy accomplishments. She embraced her true identity as a spiritual being, an image and likeness of God. When we discover who we are and what we are, all problems of self-esteem are healed.

This moment of spiritual awakening marked a significant turning point in Jean's journey through the "cocoon" of transformation. The Light of PAGL began to dawn steadily in her consciousness as she learned to cultivate the grace of spiritual awareness. And gradually in the weeks that followed, Jean became more and more adept at discerning when the old compulsive patterns of the ambitious "doer" threatened to take over. She was able to step back, observe, be aware, dis-identify, and then turn to the Truth. The Truth could always be recognized in those instances when she was assured that her doing was in harmony with God's doing. To be in harmony with the Infinite Source of Divine Energy became the

spiritual touchstone in Jean's day-to-day living out of spiritual discernment.

In reflecting on the changes and healed perspective that have come to Jean since her passage through the "cocoon" it seems that it is the second principle of Metapsychiatry which best captures the freedom she has discovered. In commenting on the second principle, "Take no thought for what should be or should not be. Seek to know the Good of God which already is." Dr. Hora writes:

"It is a recognition of the fact that everything, everywhere is already all right and all things are working together for good; that yes is good and no is also good. When we have developed this awareness we know that we do not have to agonize over what should be or should not be; we do not have to control anything anymore. There is a higher intelligence present, active, operating, harmonizing all our affairs and blessing us." (BTD, p. 129)

One final point: Jean recorded in her journal that while hiking in the mountains a prayer welled up from the Infinite Source within her. The prayer was a heartfelt and spontaneous cry, "Here I am Lord, I am here. Here I am Lord." The prayer seemed to announce the healing of her mode-of-being. It seemed to say, "I am no longer a doer, the creator of my own project, but I am here in the world for God."

Several years have passed since the faculty of spiritual discernment was awakened in Jean's consciousness. Through the principle of existential validation the joys and blessings of dwelling in the land of PAGL have become increasingly attractive to her. But it is her capacity to discern spiritual reality which has helped the greatest in maintaining her spiritual consciousness. Joy and light have become so evident in Jean's life that one wonders whether she has discovered what Dr. Hora calls "bliss consciousness."

"Once we discover bliss consciousness we are no longer interested in feeling good or feeling bad; being rich or being poor; being right or being wrong; having power or being powerless. We are interested in true happiness which changeth not." (BTD, p. 130)

CONFERENCE DIALOGUE

Part Three

Question: After reading your paper on St. Teresa I was struck by how you used the image of the cocoon in the therapeutic process. In this transitional time it seems that Jean had to face the realization that she could do nothing to save herself—in order to avoid falling into just a fear that nothing would change and it was sort of the end of the line for her, she must have perhaps found a kind of faith to help her get through that transition. Would that be correct, and if so could you perhaps say a little more about what this faith is, and how it grows in an individual who is going through this process.

Carmen: As I shared in the case study, this woman in particular—in fact, this is the woman who inspired the article that was submitted in the newsletter—the image of the cocoon was really important for her, and it was an image that I shared. She came to spiritual

guidance and began this really dark and painful period, and at that time she was doing some reading in Christian mystics; I think she was reading St. Teresa of Avilla, but she hadn't yet come across the image of the cocoon; I shared that with her, and it must have named the experience for her from a faith perspective. It was like: "I am in this cocoon, but the final outcome is transformation, and the final outcome is this new creature, and so the pain that I am experiencing, and the fear that I am going through in letting go of this old identity is somehow going to shift, it is going to change." I think that was the faith that she had—that it wasn't a suffering that was going nowhere, but that God was a work; that God was very active; that it was a spiritual awakening that she was going through. Does that answer your question?

Comment: Yes, so she could see God in that process even though she really couldn't see how she would emerge from it.

Carmen: Yes, she could not predict when she would emerge, how she would emerge, but the cocoon was mediating the presence of God to her as an image.

Dr. Hora: It also helps to know that man's extremity is God's opportunity. Suffering is never in vain if we have a suspicion at least that there is a God. It is particularly helpful when we face suffering if someone explains to us that there is a meaning to it. If we don't know that there is a meaning to our experiences we can really lose all hope, but once someone can show you that there is a meaning, that it is not just blind, stupid, hopeless cataclysmic suffering, a tremendous hope awakes. We don't suffer in a meaningless way, and we don't suffer in vain if we have the blessing of understanding that our sufferings, our experiences have meaning. We are not just sitting ducks in the devil's shooting gallery.

Question: I listened with longing to the solidity of her vision, because it sounds as if once she discovered the difference between doing and being inspired, everything was fine from then on. For me it's back and forth, and I see that there are times when I know the difference, and I will dwell in it joyfully and gratefully, and then somehow I just go over this way and before I know it, I am not on a consistent path. There seems to be an awakening over and over. What goes on for someone who can see so clearly that it seems to be once and for all and that's it?

Carmen: I don't think it is once and for all even for this woman. I think what was healed in the cocoon at that time—and there may be perhaps other passages through dark existential periods—but what was really healed for her at that point was her mode of being of seeing her doing as flowing from God. That was now and then, what was different was—and this is where Dr. Hora is so clear and helpful—that the faculty of spiritual discernment had been awakened. We cannot perceive spiritual reality without the faculty of spiritual discernment. So that was the gift and the grace that was given to her. She could validate over and over again when her doing was compulsive, and when her doing was peaceful and harmonious. So it isn't so much that it was a once and for all thing; what was once and for all was her capacity to discern when she was in ego and when she was not, which was not her gift prior to this dark time. She didn't have that capacity. I think that is real important for all of us to hear. To know that there is a time when that gift is given, and once that

happens then I think we begin to move.

Comment: Thank you.

Question: In conjunction with that you said there was a point when she said, “All my old ways can’t save me now.” And there seemed to be a realization that the old mode of being was useless, bankrupt, and then this ability to proceed; it seems to get to a point of the mystery of grace, clearly a spiritual guide was there to say this has meaning, and let us point beyond that. But to me the difficulty is understanding the bridge; I can come to the point and say, “All my old ways can’t save me now,” and stop at this point, and then probably try some new ways, many, many other roads except the right path, in spite of having it on good authority to consider some other ways. My question is what happens at that point of true humility of saying, “The old ways don’t work,” and then grace occurs. It is a tremendous mystery.

Carmen: Well, it is a tremendous mystery and it is a tremendous grace, because what is happening is that the individual is finally facing their fear or dread of nothingness, of being a nobody, of emptiness. Now until those thoughts are really faced in consciousness the individual is not really ready or receptive to receive the good of God which is always being given. I think this is what happened, I don’t know if that is what you are searching for—what is that little point of transition? It is like the “top of the pole”—it is our willingness to float on nothingness. It is our willingness to face our nothingness, or the fear of being a nobody—for her it was emptiness. “All my old ways cannot free me now,” meant that she had finally said, “Okay, I will just say stay here until I am given what I need to have to move to the next step.” Does that answer your question?

Comment: Yes.

Dr. Hora: There is also a certain way that one can facilitate or be facilitated. In childbirth if a doctor stands by, the whole process can be facilitated both through psychology and through expertise in obstetrics. Here is a situation where we have become born again. In Metapsychiatry we have a very helpful concept of the “Three R’s.” Do we all know the Three R’s? Recognition, Regret, and Reorientation. I think that happened, and Carmen described it with different words in four stages. Would you please tell us? It was very nice—the four steps she went through. This is an analogy to the Three R’s.

Carmen: She was able to step back, observe, be aware, disidentify, and then turn to the truth. Actually those are the Three R’s: Recognition, Regret, and Reorientation.

Question: Carmen, was Jean able to meditate, and does spiritual discernment come through meditation?

Carmen: Yes, Jean was able to meditate, to answer your first question. I think the grace of spiritual discernment is helped along by meditation, because in mediation we are turning our attention and our interest to God and spiritual values and spiritual reality, so meditation predisposes us to receive the grace.

Question: So what would be the meaning of not being able to meditate?

Carmen: I would have to ask you what do you understand by meditation.

Comment: I am connecting her doing mode of being too busy and not being able to sit.

Carmen: Her capacity to meditate really came to her when everything stopped. When her mode of being reached bottom or whatever expression you want to use. At that point she began to turn more and more to meditation. But it was something that she learned gradually.

DOMINION OVER GRIEF

By Susan Shaloum

Recently I received news of my sister's untimely death; she had been killed instantly in a car accident. It was a situation that clearly called for understanding that Metapsychiatry could provide. Immediately I endeavored to retreat from the obvious reactions of emotionalism and cause and effect thinking to spiritual consciousness to clarify what appeared to have taken place in light of what is existentially valid.

Mindful of the principle that nothing comes into experience uninvited, that our outward experiences mirror our thoughts, compassion for my sister prevailed in consciousness. This compassion was not only for the tragedy of the accident, but even more importantly, for spiritual consciousness unrealized.

Before leaving to join the family in Minnesota, where my sister lived, I knew I must attain a clear perspective on her seemingly tragic death, and that my participation as a beneficial presence was essential to all concerned. During a visit with Dr. Hora, I remarked on a thought that persisted in consciousness: "I can't believe she's dead." Dr. Hora's response was that she isn't! The persistent thought had continually affirmed the truth despite the conflict with what seemed to be. What was gone was a body, a collection of thoughts, resentment, anger, and a host of other invalid and interpersonal thoughts. What my sister really is—an aspect of Divine Consciousness, an individual expression of Love-Intelligence, a spiritual being inseparable from God—can never die.

Contemplation of these ideas provided comfort, relief and PAGL as well as immunity from the pitfalls of various self-confirmatory reactions. Many were caught up in emotionalism, commiserating by sharing similar experiences of theirs, sharing their experiences of my sister and their feelings; crying was highly contagious. Many resort to cause and effect reasoning, placing the blame on weather conditions, the car, or fate and predestination. Gratefully, I clung to spiritual consciousness, endeavoring to maintain a hold on what really is, not what seemed to be.

Oddly enough, about a week after my return home when a colleague approached me with a long face saying, "I'm so sorry," for the moment I could not imagine what she could be talking about, so completely had any experience of sorrow or death been erased from my thoughts.

"I am the resurrection, and the life: He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25)