

THE NEW YORK INSTITUTE OF METAPSYCHIATRY
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Thomas Hora, M.D., Director

Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

Metapsychiatry is one of the few disciplines that radically confronts the issue of ignorance. Other disciplines also deal with it, but quite differently. Some religions blame it on the devil. He seems to make us “do it.” Other religions say it does not exist and therefore it is futile to deal with it. Politics touts that ignorance is a lack of worldly savvy and increased social programs will eradicate it. Medicine sees it as a lack of physical knowledge. Better information about the workings of the body is the way to go. And from a psychological perspective, ignorance is a lack of healthy ego functioning. Quite differently, Metapsychiatry looks at ignorance not as an entity that exists and is real, but rather a belief in the illusion of self. The illusion must be dealt with so that false beliefs can be transcended and we can be what we really are—spiritual beings, God-like in every aspect of our life. Such a perspective is based upon the idea that true healing can only come about when, with radical sincerity, all thoughts which prevent us from realizing our true nature are forthrightly scrutinized.

In this issue, the topic of ignorance is presented from several points of view while juxtaposed with existentially valid ideas. The dialogue with Dr. Hora at the Seal Beach Institute deals with the spiritual quality of Creativity. We see how clarity of the issue disposes of much confusion over the nature of creativity. Then there is Charles Gourney’s article: “The Meltdown of Ignorance.” The central theme is that ignorance can only be dissolved in individual consciousness.

We are very happy to welcome an article by Carmen de la Vega-Neafsey. Carmen studies the writings of the sixteenth century Spanish mystic, Teresa of Avila, and the process of spiritual maturity. She shows how the symbols Teresa used are relevant to Metapsychiatry today. Lastly, there is an anonymous paper—a confession of a student who has discovered the value of daily meditation and, in a most humorous manner, helps us see its value, too. Lastly, there are announcements of classes, groups, and the forthcoming Meta-Conference in New York.

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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 and cognitive processes, and ways of improving these through educational methods emphasizing prayer and meditation, spiritual values, and existentially valid metaphysical principles.

Metapsychiatry is an epistemological method of truth realization.

The Seal Beach Institute of Metapsychiatry
Fern Rubin, Director

CREATIVITY

Excerpts from two telephone seminars with Dr. Hora.

Fern: Our topic today is creativity in individual expression. Before calling we discussed how the personal sense seeks to take over an inspired creative idea and spoil it, and how when the ego is in the background we can appreciate and facilitate an idea unfolding in our lives and become an instrument of the idea and work with it. Yet there were many comments about discouragement in creative endeavors. We did ask what is the meaning that we find ourselves interested in playing the piano or painting, but we also notice there are fantasies about being a “painter,” or “pianist.” And eventually, these fantasies discourage us. What is going on here?

Dr. Hora: As you described, it is a pollution of motivation. (What would be the motivation in wanting to be a painter?) Well, to give expression to beauty and harmony and joy in the form of, or the use of, paint or other media. But the real issue must remain the expression of the creative process—becoming an instrument of creative mind. Thinking about oneself as a painter or a pianist immediately brings it down to the human level and then you begin to compare yourself to other pianists and other painters; and the whole thing is shot. You are comparing yourself. How do I stack up in comparison to Picasso? Do you know the story of Picasso’s father? He was a very good painter in his own right. And one day his little boy came home and showed him a painting of a dove which he did, and it was so startlingly beautiful that he put down his palette and from that day on he couldn’t paint anything. He absolutely stopped painting because he compared himself with his son and got discouraged. This is the catastrophic habit of comparison thinking.

Student: I have the thought that my creativity has always been blocked. One thought is that I have never made a sincere commitment to anything or had a lot of opportunity to expand

and express creativity. I taught full-time for the last four years and am now on a leave of absence working in business. I feel that I don't want to go back to teaching. I could just walk away from it and never go back. And along with that thought, there is a sense of failure, that I couldn't make it work or that the situation didn't allow me to express my creativity. I am not clear, but it seems that I am searching for a situation that brings out my creativity.

Dr. Hora: If you are sincerely interested in expressing your creativity and being involved in a wonderful creative life, you will find the right medium of expression which will come to you. Don't think that you're a failure. Sometimes it takes many years till we find the channels for our creative outlet and sincere interest in living a creative life will be facilitated by your study of Metapsychiatry because that is altogether creative. We are in constant, conscious contact with the source of all creative activity and expression. Don't believe that it would come only through teaching, or some specific way. Even your delicious brownies are a creative expression! We can be creative in the kitchen . . . as long as we are not bragging about it.

Creativity has to take place in secrecy. Our creativity is a very private affair. It is between the individual and God. So many people are failing in their creativity because they are too much involved in boasting and telling people about it. It is a desire for fame that interferes with true creativity.

Student: It is occurring to me as we talk that participating in creative endeavors is seen as a good thing, particularly by spiritual students who have been exposed to spiritual ideas. But there seems to be many "should" thoughts about this issue. People are so willing to demean their own participation and not even recognize it as creativity. (Yes.) We have an idea of what creativity "should" be and how one "should" be creative. This sense of failure to be creative may be a universal idea that people have let themselves down, or let their potential down . . . and we judge this too soon. We are really new at perfecting God's gifts. It does take many years of unfoldment. When you look back you can see that everything was part of the unfoldment. You were never wasting time. (Right.)

Dr. Hora: That of course is a stumbling block. A "should" thought will always be a stumbling block to spontaneity and originality and inspiration. The essence of creative work of any kind is inspiration. God gives us certain ideas which in turn we can bring into manifestation. That is what creativity is, and the best way to proceed is in secrecy.

Student: In trying to learn to play an instrument, the recorder for instance, a voice will say in the middle of the lesson, "You're just not going to be able to do this." It seems such thinking does not have to come from outside of ourselves, the sabotage can come as a voice.

Dr. Hora: Yes, of course, it is in everyone; but it must be recognized, unmasked, and rendered ineffective and powerless with the help of the truth of God's omnipresent power—infinite power.

Student: So when this voice says I will never learn time and rhythm, just say, "Get thee behind me Satan?"

Dr. Hora: That is a very good idea, and also acknowledge that you are an instrument of God and God is playing the instrument through you.

Fern: We were at a concert this morning. We noticed how the musicians loved the music. They disappeared as personalities and became instruments of the piece they were playing. The master of ceremonies was in his 80s and has been a first violinist. He spoke about the composers and their lives and the music they wrote that we would be hearing. You could discern beyond his personality the love of music throughout his life. On the way home we wondered how a single focus like this comes in one's life, like a unique talent, or love of music or art, or even the love of working on car engines. Apparently, this kind of interest could unfold in each individual's life, but it seems that the obstruction to this unfoldment is the desire for interaction. (Yes.) If we are involved in art or music and we desire interaction, we won't have the openness to let this unfold.

Dr. Hora: Yes, that's right.

Student: Is it correct that for each individual being there is some kind of talent or unique interest that comes out in them?

Dr. Hora: Absolutely. We are all given gifts of God to perfect and bring into expression. Everyone has some specific talent, usually more than one, whether writing or woodworking, or music, or horseback riding. Everyone has talent and when we discover this talent we can devote our attention to it and derive a great deal of satisfaction from it. We are then worshipping God by perfecting the gift which he gave us . . . and bringing it into expression.

Student: Is what prevents this in us our interaction with others?

Dr. Hora: You could say that. If you observe a symphony orchestra, there can be a hundred musicians harmoniously co-existing and expressing that particular contribution to the music, and there is no interaction whatsoever, and that is beautiful. That is what is so moving about watching an orchestra. An orchestra is a model for harmonious co-existence in the universe of mind.

Fern: Would the study of solitariness be the beginning, or the next step for us so that an unfoldment like this could take place in our lives?

Dr. Hora: Definitely. You also have to observe your inclinations. Beyond interaction, what is it that you are interested in or that you would enjoy bringing to fruition in your life.

From IN THE COCOON OF SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION

By Carmen de la Vega-Neafsey

Introduction

Dr. Hora has often encouraged students of Metapsychiatry to meditate on the statements of enlightened individuals whose teachings can be considered as spiritual “landmarks.” Meditation on their writings can be of assistance in keeping ourselves oriented toward spiritual reality. Dr. Hora has also written that truth cannot be spoken of directly:

“Therefore, all spiritual guides throughout history had to resort to parables, riddles, analogies, and mythology in order to lead individual minds toward the realization of the truth.” (Beyond the Dream, p. 37)

The writings of Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth century Spanish mystic and spiritual guide, illustrate how she was inspired to do exactly what Dr. Hora describes above—to make use of images and metaphors when speaking of the ineffable.

Teresa’s major work, *The Interior Castle*, has long been recognized as one of the most significant contributions to our understanding of the spiritual journey. Her purpose in writing was to draw attention to the beauty and spiritual capabilities of the soul which can only be appreciated when the individual seeks to realize his or her true identity as an image and likeness of God. Teresa knows human nature well enough to recognize the universal tendency to remain ignorant of our true identity. She writes: “It is a shame and unfortunate that through our fault we don’t understand ourselves or know who we really are.” (*The Interior Castle*, p. 284)

The desire to assist her readers in discovering themselves as an image and likeness of God prompted Teresa to search for an adequate metaphor, one that would enable her to speak about the mysterious unfoldment of this Truth in consciousness. While in meditation Teresa was given the image she sought—she “saw” with the eyes of her soul that there seemed to be an analogy between the marvelous depths of the interior realm and the spaciousness and transparency of a magnificent crystal castle. Within the crystal castle, many rooms or mansions can be found and “in the center and middle is the main dwelling place where the very secret exchanges between God and the soul take place.” (Ibid.)

In Teresa’s analogy, discovering one’s true identity is a gradual process which unfolds “mansion” to “mansion.” It is as if “awareness” journeys through the various rooms of the castle until it arrives at the center where it becomes one with God. Teresa makes use of several images and metaphors through *The Interior Castle* in order to give voice to a deeply mysterious process that is unknowable to personal mind: the evolution of spiritual consciousness and the realization of our oneness with Infinite Love-Intelligence. The journey itself seems to progress through seven levels or stages. Yet Teresa would be the first to affirm that the goal of the journey—union with God— already IS at any given moment and at any place within the castle.

The Cocoon: A Time of Darkness and Struggle

Teresa compares the critical period in an individual's spiritual journey to the dark transforming phase in the life cycle of the silkworm. Evidently she is attempting to describe a spiritual event in consciousness, a truth realization which cannot be spoken of directly. In order to draw spiritual light from her analogy we must first explore the possible meanings this imagery may have for our understanding of the spiritual question.

"The silkworms nourish themselves on mulberry leaves, until having grown to full size, they settle on some twigs . . . they themselves go about spinning the silk and making some very thick little cocoons within which they enclose themselves." (Ibid. P. 342)

For Teresa the life of the silkworm seems to symbolize the life of those who begin to take an interest in spiritual nourishment, such as spiritual reading, meditation, and good works. They are drawn to spiritual values and desire to receive the grace of "Holy Wisdom." After some time, these individuals arrive at a point in their journey when they suddenly discover that in turning away from the things of this world and turning toward the Christ dwelling at the center, they have "spun" themselves bit by bit, into what seems to be a "tight spot." It is a contained space from which there seems to be no exit.

No doubt, what Teresa seeks to express might be familiar to students of Metapsychiatry. Giving up interest in what we cherish, fear, or hate creates confusion within personal mind. For a period of time we really don't know who we are or what we truly desire. Courage is required in weaving the cocoon, a task which unfolds moment to moment as we relinquish our attachment to self-love, self-will, and our dependence on anything created, in Teresa's words, "any earthly thing." Weaving the cocoon means a willingness to give up all SELF-CONCERN and the narrow restricted perspective of personal mind.

As the darkness of the cocoon encloses us, we begin to sense that in some unknown way, we have come face to face with death, with our obvious and inescapable mortality. This awareness releases within us layer upon layer of anxiety and fear. It would seem that our ultimate physical extinction is at hand. Yet Teresa is quick to point out that, although the silkworm has indeed built a house in which it will die, this house, this container, is Christ. She writes: "I have read or heard that our life is hidden in Christ or in God, or that our life is Christ." (Ibid. p. 237)

Teresa seems to be saying that in the cocoon, a merely human context of living and being is exchanged for a divine one. In the cocoon we discover that our TRUE life is Christ and this life is beyond the threat of death or physical extinction. With such a prize awaiting us, Teresa urges to let the silkworm die.

The awareness of being a silkworm with its own limited personal mode of being slowly dissolves in the darkness of the cocoon. As the silkworm looks back on its silkworm life, it begins to regret to tremendous burden of its self-imposed limitations and attachments which kept it crawling on its belly. It is a deeply painful time.

The Cocoon: A Metapsychiatric Perspective

In the mini-book, *Marriage and Family Life*, Dr. Hora speaks of the caterpillar as an image of unenlightened consciousness. The caterpillar ignores the fact that it is potentially a butterfly. Thus it represents the individual who has not been able to evolve beyond the limits of the human condition. Being a caterpillar means being caught in misperceptions about our true identity. And these mistaken ideas about who we think we are constitute the source of all our suffering. The caterpillar, restricted to crawling on its belly, is also restricted in what it can see. It limits its horizon to the narrow personal perspective on life. To be able to SEE differently would require not only new capabilities but also a much larger context, a NEW HORIZON.

The caterpillar or the silkworm is ready to spin the cocoon in which it will die when it has grown tired of suffering and weary of crawling. Only then do we seem to be genuinely interested in giving up all self-confirmatory thinking. We become more and more interested in discovering our true spiritual identity. Thus we begin to weave our cocoons and to enclose ourselves in the painful process of recognizing the many ways we seek to confirm our sense of personhood.

We come now to a consideration of the meaning of the cocoon phase described by Teresa. From a Metapsychiatric perspective, it would seem that the purpose of the cocoon phase is to assist us in realizing a very important shift in consciousness, a shift in which we move from seeing ourselves in a narrow, restricted way to seeking to see Infinite Mind. To be able to make this shift in consciousness becomes an essential step on the road to spiritual maturity.

The cocoon, then, could be understood as a spiritual container in which our mode of being-in-the-world undergoes a confrontation with what really is. The cocoon phase represents that period in the spiritual journey when we are intensely focused on recognizing our silkworm or caterpillar misperceptions of reality. Slowly we begin to discover how easily we allow PAST experiences of rejection, criticism, and abandonment rob us of our joy in the PRESENT; how easily we are willing to relinquish, even momentarily, our God-given identity in exchange for the illusion of being persons who have been wronged, abused, betrayed, misunderstood, etc.

In the darkness of the cocoon we learn to face our deep attachment to the dream of experiential living. It is indeed embarrassing to discover how much energy we invest in keeping this dream going and how terrified we are of letting it all come to a grinding halt. Yet in the cocoon phase, this is exactly what happens. We are then forced to recognize that whatever experience we seek—doing, loving, hating, succeeding, failing, eating, drinking, thinking, buying—all are self-confirmatory defenses against the emerging sense of emptiness, the dread of non-being.

While being hidden in the container of transformation, we are made aware of how we distort reality when we see it through our particular filters or how we can entrap ourselves in the endless treadmill of subjectivity. In the cocoon we are made to “eat our projections,” to take back all the shadow contents we strove to lay at the feet of those “others” who were “responsible” for our suffering.

Dissolving projections in the human domain represents only one part of the process. Something else is needed to complete the burning away of ignorance and idol-making. God too must be seen and understood as God is, and not through the veils of our projections. And this is perhaps the most painful task awaiting us in the passage through the cocoon. The tendency to think of God in an interpersonal or horizontal perspective represents one of the greatest obstacles to spiritual unfoldment. As long as we are attached to this misperception of God, we remain prisoners of our ignorance. Believing that separation from God's Omni-active and Omni-present Love is the "normal state of affairs," we continue to suffer acutely and are unable to fulfill the deepest longing of our heart—to see and know God and to realize our inseparability from the One Love. In the measure that we become interested in being here for God, and in knowing the true nature of God, we may have to endure intense periods of seeming loss and abandonment.

We each enter the cocoon at different points in the journey and we each have different spiritual tasks to attend to during the process of reorienting to spiritual reality. But all of us have one task in common: discerning our misdirected mode of being and learning to be here for God. This brings us to a consideration of the unique graces of the cocoon period.

Our mode of being-in-the-world can only be transformed by the capacity to discern spiritual reality and to be able to perceive spiritual qualities such as peace, assurance, gratitude, and love in ourselves, in others, in the world. Dr. Hora has written that the faculty of spiritual discernment makes it possible to discern the difference between the phenomenal world and noumenal Reality. It is the faculty by which we are able to separate Reality from unreality. (Beyond the Dream, p. 302) Spiritual discernment, one of the graces of the cocoon period, enables us to recognize the truth about ourselves; that is, it enables us to begin to recognize our God-given spiritual qualities. In time, we are gradually able to reorient ourselves to the truth. This process of reorientation is what constitutes the shift in consciousness. Moment by moment we learn to keep our gaze fixed upon our TRUE identity: we are sons and daughters of the Living God. We learn to keep our awareness attuned to the Good of God, to the will of God. As we become more adept at shifting the abode of our awareness from self-confirmation to God-confirmation, we begin to discover that we are no longer seeking our identity in any aspect of the human project. Instead, we begin to realize with increasing clarity that the locus or home of our true identity is within the infinite horizon of Divine Love.

THE MELTDOWN OF IGNORANCE

By Charles Gourgey, Ph.D.

"He uttered his voice, the earth melted." (Psalm 46:6)

"The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord." (Psalm 97:5)

The Meltdown of Ignorance"—what a strange title for a research seminar! We usually think

of a “meltdown” as a catastrophe. What does it mean when applied to our ignorance? Will our liberation from ignorance have to be catastrophic?

Our search for healing usually begins with a catastrophe. At first we suffer blindly; then, after our first exposure to Metapsychiatry, we learn that our suffering has a meaning. The meaning of our problems always indicates some aspect of intelligent living we do not yet know. Therefore, when studying Metapsychiatry we discover that the only thing we really suffer from is our own ignorance.

Before setting out on the spiritual path, the only world we know is the world of our experience. In this world God seems absent, and bad things happen to us apparently for no reason. Once we see that our misfortunes have meanings, the world begins to make sense after all. If the world does make sense, then perhaps there really is a God who, in spite of our ignorance, is available to govern our lives. We would like to have the awareness of God, with its promise of peace, assurance, gratitude, and love. However, we still experience ourselves as separated from this awareness by a wall of ignorance.

The wall can indeed seem formidable. Even if we have studied Metapsychiatry for a long time, so often do we find ourselves suffering from the same problem over and over again. It is important to become aware of our ignorance, but this alone is not enough. Simply seeing the wall in front of us will not enable us to cross it and enter the land of PAGL. We may even become more frustrated, having identified our favorite forms of ignorance but still finding ourselves unable to rise above them. Not only must we become able to see the wall before us; we must also learn how to melt it down.

What is the nature of this meltdown process? Even after we discover the ignorant thought that expresses itself as our problem, we will have to defend ourselves against it ceaselessly, until the first moment of our transformation. *This moment comes when we allow our ignorance itself to become our teacher.* Our healing requires that we recognize the meaning of our problem, but the meaning alone cannot heal us. Only the true knowledge of reality will heal us. What will teach us this true knowledge? The very problem with which we are struggling! When looked at in the right way, every problem points us toward the truth by exposing the errors that have distracted us. Every problem is therefore a natural *koan*, with which we wrestle until it reveals to us the secrets of enlightenment.

Let us illustrate the meltdown process by considering a problem that is almost inevitable whenever people join together in the spiritual quest: the problem of envy. When we first set out on the spiritual path we do not give much thought to envy. All we know is that we are suffering, and we need our health restored. We begin the quest in solitariness; we learn to examine our motivations and values in the privacy of our own consciousness. At a later stage, however, we find it helpful to gather in groups, and to attend seminars, classes, and conferences. We do so to participate jointly with others in the clarification of issues and the search for healing.

At this point we become distracted from our original concern. We forget that our purpose for attending these gatherings is to find healing. We fall into comparing ourselves with our

teachers and fellow students. We begin to resent the other people in the room. If our teacher appears to possess superior knowledge we become impatient, wanting him to make us know what he knows. We also want to show him how dedicated we are. These desires may lead us to see other students as rivals. We compare our knowledge to their knowledge, and heaven help us if another student seems to be making faster progress. We may even find ourselves searching for weaknesses in that individual, waiting for him or her to make a mistake. The “Four Horsemen” (envy, jealousy, rivalry, malice) express themselves in a variety of ways, and in our hearts we know the ways they are most prone to affect us.

If we feel uncomfortable at classes or conferences, or if we feel our progress coming to a standstill, let us carefully search our consciousness for the presence of such thoughts. At first we may not like what we see, but if we fail to face our envy it may destroy our progress completely. Nevertheless, it has much to teach us, both about ignorance and about enlightenment. If we carefully consider what it is, envy will reveal many secrets to us. *Envy is a symptom of the belief in personal mind.* When we feel envious we are not suffering from the success of others, but from the belief that we possess a personal mind that manufactures its own intelligence and engineers its own progress, and that can be better or worse than the mind of someone else. If someone else’s mind seems to create better ideas or nicer qualities than our own, we feel devastated, and will go to any lengths to assure ourselves that it is really we who are superior. We may even try to destroy our rival, in fantasy if not in actual experience.

If we understand what envy is, we will also see that its pain and destructiveness are sure signs that this belief in personal mind must be false. Envy alone cannot hurt the one who is envied, although it may destroy the envier. Envy is therefore the belief in personal mind proving itself invalid. If we recognize this belief and see its invalidity, we are already on the track of the healing truth.

The truth is that *there is no personal mind.* Every valid idea and every beautiful quality that has ever been produced comes from the same source: the one divine Mind. My intelligence and your intelligence, my love and your love, come from the same place; they all originate in God. It is really only God who is loving and intelligent, never you or I. If we know that any truly valid ideas we may have are not our own work but God’s work in us, then our pride will give way to a deep sense of peace. If we know that the love and intelligence in others are not their own work but God’s work in them, then our envy will give way to a deep sense of peace, and we will be released from bondage.

God is my ego and God is your ego and neither of us can claim possession of God’s creation. We suffer from envy only to the extent that we believe that good is limited. If someone else seems to possess a good, we fear we will be left out, the odd man or woman in life’s game of musical chairs. Personal good is always limited, but personal good is only a belief, the belief that good originates in matter. The good that God creates does not originate in matter, even though material affluence may point toward its presence. We know the good of God as *unfoldment*, the fulfillment of our unique, individual destiny. Since God is both my ego and yours, my unfoldment can never interfere with your unfoldment. *God does not work against*

himself. His manifestation in one individual can never diminish his manifestation in another. His good is unlimited, and we are each called upon to express it in unique, complementary ways.

Confronting our envy reveals to us the truth of our being, and exemplifies the “meltdown of ignorance.” There is a more familiar term for the meltdown of ignorance: we call it the *spiritualization of consciousness*. This is a more positive description of the maturation process, and is something we can practice daily. The spiritualization of consciousness simply means learning to shift our attention from personal mind to omniactive Mind. *Omniaction* is the benevolent, intelligent, creative activity of the divine consciousness. It is the only real activity taking place in the world, which we learn to detect as we progress spiritually. At first we do not believe that omniaction will sustain us in all phases of our lives, and we still try to exert control through personal mind. As we practice the spiritualization of consciousness, however, we will see omniaction increasingly evident.

Can we truly see God as the source of the goodness of this student, or that teacher, or even of ourselves? If we can, we will no longer experience envy—it would be as if God were trying to envy himself. The essence of enlightenment is to know that there are no personal minds, but only one Mind. To know this is to know our true identity: not a personal mind producing its own good, but a living Soul, here to reveal God’s goodness to the world. This knowledge is the highest of spiritual gifts: a gift that our sincere confrontation with envy can bring to us.

CONFESSIONS OF A FENCE-SITTER

Name withheld, lest it be boastful

“Thou shalt have no other interests before the good of God, which is spiritual.” (1st Principle of Metapsychiatry)

“A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:8)

James certainly was a practical teacher, sharing his insights into the application of the truth to daily living. Throughout the Bible we are taught to commit ourselves wholeheartedly to “being here for God,” as we say in Metapsychiatry. So why don’t we all just do it? Or should we ask “what is the meaning of our double-mindedness?” Many sages have told us this: if we value something which we attempt to give up, then it is impossible to leave it behind; for we will be preoccupied with its absence.

Many people, seeing the danger in certain thoughts and activities, enter a new calendar year with resolve to leave their habitual mistakes and indulgences behind them. But, almost immediately the resolution is forgotten! As students of Metapsychiatry we might listen to a tape, read an article, attend a group meeting, talk with our teacher, and, with uplifted thought, wonder how we could ever be interested in the garbage again. I recall that after returning from the conference on Angerless Living I immediately became angry with

someone. So furious was I that for two days I ruminated about my fury and was completely preoccupied with anger. It became so painful that finally I paused to seek relief. After becoming still and meditating awhile, I recalled where I had just been! I had completely ignored all that I learned at the conference. As soon as I applied what I had learned, the anger faded, and I was given dominion over these angry thoughts.

There are innumerable directions from which one can go sliding off the straight and narrow into the Five Gates of Hell. (How many times have you tried to list the Five Gates only to stumble around forgetting one or two . . . emotionalism, intellectualism, personalism, and, er, ah, materialism, and, ah, let me see . . . uh, sensualism! We're usually stumped by the ones we love most.) "I have set before you life and death . . . therefore choose life." (Deut. 30:19) Recently there was a movie on TV in which dead bodies were energized to appear alive but actually they were dead, wandering around in mindless agony . . . not unlike our zombie-like existence when we are unaware of God. We choose death until through wisdom (rare) or suffering (more popular) we begin to be interested in choosing life.

In the mini-book *Self-Transcendence*, Dr. Hora helps us understand some of the obstacles to a whole-hearted surrender to God: skepticism of the truth that the first principle is the key to life is one obstacle. Another is the lack of gratitude. "Skepticism can blind us to the presence of spiritual qualities." (Tape 3, 1986 Conference/Transcendent Regard) He recommends meditation: "Through meditation we can develop a clear awareness of the thoughts which interfere with our ability to perceive God (*Self-Transcendence*, p. 9) Dr. Charles Gourgey offers some helpful thoughts in his paper *Overcoming Obstacles to Meditation* as he clarifies each kind of meditation and the purpose it serves. In meditation we have the opportunity to watch our thoughts, non-judgmentally, without "shoulds." No self-condemnation for being interested in ego-gratification, just observation. "The non-reacting, non-judgmental Transcendent Observer within us is immune to the stress of interaction thoughts . . . it lives with God, completely at peace." It was the Transcendent Observer which became aware of the anger in the instance mentioned above.

By practicing meditation we identify ourselves with the "solution" rather than with the problems of our lives. The solution is always the Truth of Being, and the truth of our being is the Transcendent Observer. So, for those of us who persist in fence-sitting, we would do well to practice meditation. Although we don't do meditation, it is something which improves with practice. It isn't like sitting back and watching TV. No magic wand comes and "boing" we're enlightened; however, we can develop that alertness the Zen Buddhists call "mindfulness." Dr. Gourgey suggests beginning with meditation twice a day.

If we notice that our problems seem to go on and on with the deadly monotony of a broken record, it does not help to shake our fist at God or moan that "this stuff doesn't work." We need to realize that we are probably kidding ourselves . . . we're probably sitting on the fence (a picket fence!) rather than paying attention to being here for God—with the urgent attention "as if our hair was on fire" as one Buddhist master advised. If such urgency is not present we need to recognize it. If we are choosing death, realize that this is what we are choosing. But realize, too, that there is a choice. We learn in *Metapsychiatry* that our ego-

self is the one opting to be here for itself in what we call self-confirmatory ideation. It demands gratification.

Have you heard the one about the man who fell off a high cliff? Part way down he saw a branch sticking out so he grabbed it. Holding on desperately, he cried out: "Help me God; please save me!" He heard a voice reply: "I will save you, but first you must let go." Those of us who refuse to let go are still clinging to our notions of what we think life should be, and how we can make it that way. If we stop a moment, we'll see that PAGL (peace, assurance, gratitude, and love) is not attractive to us at that moment: all the "yes, buts" crop up . . . "Yes, but can't I *have* this, or *do* that, or *be* such-and-such?"

I have been a fence-sitter for years, calling out to God to save me, but enjoying the pleasures of my mode of being-in-the-world more, it would seem, than I hate the accompanying pain. Letting go of the branch, or jumping off the fence, takes place when we become willing to let go of the world of dualities . . . pleasures which offer no real satisfaction and pains which only become more painful. Recently, following the suggestions of Drs. Hora and Gourgey, I have begun to practice meditation. I notice that I'm not eager to pause to do this but I also notice a liberation from the interaction thinking. And with this liberation comes the perspective in which my interest changes from being rescued and finding comfort to being interested in being a beneficial presence. Each day makes the prospect of meditation time more pleasant. And I'm not spending so much time on the fence.