

Newsletter of the PAGL Foundation Institute

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Introductory Remarks by Jay Houston:

Thank you for being here today. We have been discussing angerless living. Basically, we looked at the third principle which says: "There is no interaction anywhere, there is only omni-action everywhere." We also looked at the session on Anger in *Beyond The Dream* which says that the meaning of anger is wanting and the habit of should thinking and that, "habits of thoughts and words are our tormentors," and not people. This seems to be a very difficult thing to see - that it is not people.

Sometimes when we are angry we want to be liked or approved of, or we desire to be praised, and we are not getting from others what we want, and we are frustrated about this. In the human condition it seems as though there is just an endless wanting of something.

We also consider the thought that most often we are unaware that we are angry, and we are afraid to admit that we are angry. We like to see ourselves as loving, nice, and generous.

It is said that all experiences are dreams, and that dreams are thoughts in pictorial form. We are learning to wake up from the dream of interaction thinking and to see ourselves as spiritual. We looked at a statement from the *Compassion* mini-book which says that we may have these (invalid) thoughts and feeling but we do not have to be involved with them, that there is something higher and better to turn our attention to. We are aware that there is a faculty of spiritual discernment.

One solution to anger is to observe our thoughts. Another solution involves the Three R's (Recognition, Regret, and Reorientation). In the light of what is existentially valid there is a need to observe thoughts and to recognize them; the thoughts of what we want and what we don't want are the tormentors. Then we can regret our ignorance. In reorientation we cherish what God wants and seek to understand spiritual identity.

Another aspect we looked at was a healthy self-esteem. There is a beautiful statement about self-esteem which says: "There is an infinite variety of problems which can flow from lack of self-esteem. Sexual problems, anxiety reactions, chronic hostility, vindictiveness, chronic depression, can all be connected with the issue of inadequate self-esteem."

Those are the ideas we were exploring.

Dr. Hora: This is a very good presentation on the nature of anger, but we were planning to talk about angerless living. The question may be asked: Is angerlessness possible?

Comment: We are waiting to find out.

Dr. Hora: First, I would like to hear some comments on what was said, or does anyone have anything to ask?

Question: I have a question. Jay stated that most people are unaware that they are angry. Is that because we are unaware of our thoughts?

Dr. Hora: We don't like to be aware of our anger because it is not nice to be angry. Very often we just deny the fact that we are angry, like we deny jealousy and envy. We say, "no it is not true, I am not angry, I am not jealous, I am very calm." There is a universal tendency to deny what we are experiencing. But of course that doesn't help us to be angerless. We can reach a point where

we can say with Apostle Paul that: “None of these things move me...” (Acts 20:24). Here many aspects of life which seem normal do not apply to us anymore. We have risen above them and found some other level of interest. We are usually angry when we are interested in something that is not existentially valid. We suffer and we try to deny it, and wrestle with it, or we somatize it. Do we all know what it means to somatize?

Comment: It gets expressed in the body.

Dr. Hora: Yes, we turn it into a physical symptom, and then we don't say, “I am angry,” we say, “I have a cold,” Or, “I have an ache here or there” -- “I have a physical symptom.” Then we go to the doctor and ask him to relieve the symptom which he does, not realizing that the anger is still there. Then when one symptom is relieved another symptom can take over. We can go on for years like that. So the question is: What would it take for us to attain that level of enlightenment when anger wouldn't arise anymore? We wouldn't have to struggle against it. Do you remember the story about the Zen monk who was accused of fathering an illegitimate child?

Comment: Please tell us about that.

Dr. Hora: There was a Zen monk living in a small community where a teenager said that the Zen monk was father of the child. So the whole community became very angry and went to this monk and dumped the baby in his lap saying, “You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you are a holy man and have caused this birth, and this is your illegitimate child, and you better keep it.” The Zen monk said, “Is that so?” That is all he said. He then took the baby, loved it, and took care of it for two years. The baby blossomed and grew and was very healthy. After two years the teenager mother admitted to the people in the community that she wrongly accused the Zen monk who was not really the father. Thereupon the community became extremely angry and went up to this monk and accused him of having kidnapped the baby, and said “You should be ashamed of yourself, you are a criminal and a kidnapper, you have no right to keep this baby,” and they took the baby away from him. And the monk said, “Is that so?” In other words, he didn't get angry, neither when they gave him the baby, nor when they took the baby away from him. This man had really attained this desirable state of consciousness where he could live an angerless life. He could live without anger -- nothing could provoke him, or intimidate him, or seduce him to being angry. Now if we consider this story, we marvel, how is it possible that this Zen monk was able to achieve such equanimity! What do you think?

Comment: He was aware that there was a higher action going on -- omni-action. He could be in two places at once, so to speak. In a sense he could see what the people were thinking, and he maintained his own higher perspective. So in seeing their ignorance of omni-action there was perfection occurring at all times. “Yes is good, but no is also good.” He could relinquish the baby because there is no loss of love actually in giving the child up. There was no loss of peace, there was no loss of joy.

Dr. Hora: But how about his prestige and self-esteem?

Comment: He must have had a higher self-esteem than one based on the opinions of those in the community.

Dr. Hora: Yes, but he was slandered by many people. And still he remained angerless, isn't that interesting?

Comment: It is wonderful.

Question: I have a question about the monk's response. Would that always be an appropriate response to transcend the situation? If one is exposed to anger directed at oneself do

you just step out of the way as a target, and not necessarily confront whoever it is that is confronting you? I also wonder about righteous judgment. I guess I am little confused.

Dr. Hora: Listening to your question I get the impression you would like to know how to do this.

Comment: Perhaps. I don't know if I asked it in the right way. My question really is related to an appropriate response to anger directed at oneself.

Dr. Hora: The appropriate response to anger directed at oneself. Is that what you would like to know? You mean it is easier to cope with anger directed against others than against oneself?

Comment: Easier to cope with my own anger directed at others? I wouldn't say it is easier, but it is just another issue related to anger. In addition to one's own anger, sometimes there is anger directed against one. I just wondered since the story of the Zen monk came up, it certainly seemed appropriate in that situation.

Dr. Hora: I have observed an interesting thing over the years. Whenever the problem of anger is brought up people immediately start talking about anger against oneself. What could be the meaning of that?

Comment: Would it be that we seem to be more embarrassed about the anger towards others?

Dr. Hora: Exactly, it seems nicer to be angry at ourselves than to be angry at others. So we are willing to make a deal – we will talk about anger against ourselves and thereby avoid talking about anger against others. But, unfortunately, it really makes no difference. There is no nicer anger, or uglier anger. Anger is anger. It is a reaction of the unenlightened personal mind. Whichever way this anger is directed, that is not the important issue. The issue is that it arises. It rises up from the depths of the unconscious personal mind. The sense of personhood is the source of angry reaction. It doesn't make any difference, anger is a problem to all of us who still have the inclination to react to some situations with anger. Today we would like to find out how to be free of this tendency in order that we could discover the secret of angerless living. It stands to reason that if we are able to remain angerless then we will respond in more intelligent ways to various life situations.

Question: Dr. Hora, I have a question about passivity. How do we recognize the difference between passivity and angerlessness? Would you talk a little bit about passiveness, I am not sure what it means in relation to anger.

Dr. Hora: Passiveness is a denial of anger. If we deny that we are angry we assume a posture of being passive because usually we are afraid to be aggressive. To be passive or to be aggressive is the same. It is fear of expressing anger or jealousy or any other kind of existentially undesirable posture. Individuals who say, "I am not angry at anybody, I am just angry at myself," may appear to be passive. But it is not better than to be aggressive. As a matter of fact it is more dangerous to deny our aggressive desires and claim that we are not angry and that we are just passive. Passiveness is more often resulting in psychologists recommending expressing rage whenever it rises. Psychology believes that it is good to express how we feel at all times -- 'get it out of your system, get it off your chest.' Certainly that is psychologically valid and more desirable than to be passive, and to deny the anger and hide your feelings – swallow your pride, etc. But this condition is a psychological condition which invariably results in many physical symptoms. So it is not good to be passive and it is not good to be aggressive. It is not good to be given to anger. What is desirable is to attain to an angerless mode of being-in-the-world. What did this Zen monk have

that we don't have? How could he be so unthreatened and unafraid, and unprovoked, and not seduced to some kind of personal reaction? He did not have a personal reaction. He said, "Is that so?" He didn't talk about how he feels, or how the people are making him feel, he wasn't defending himself, he wasn't passive, but neither was he aggressive. He just expressed a wonderment. What is wonderment?

Comment: A sincerely motivated asking of what really is?

Dr. Hora: Yes, that's right. It is just an observation of an event seemingly happening. We express our wonderment when we see something happening and we observe it, so to speak, from a distance without any personal involvement. When suddenly you see it is snowing outside and it is beautiful, or threatening, you express your wonderment at this natural phenomenon. You don't have a personal reaction unless you are little nutty. You see snow coming down and you express your wonderment, even joy to watch it. It is not a personal reaction, it is an observation of a phenomenon. This monk didn't have a personal reaction, neither when the baby was dumped in his lap with accusation, or when the baby was retrieved and taken away from him. After two years you would think that maybe he would have become attached to this baby, and loved it and would be very unhappy to part with the baby. It usually happens that people get attached to their children. But this monk had no personal reactions. How is this possible? Psychologists would probably say that he was a schizoid -- he had no human feelings. Do you think he was sick?

Comment: It would appear that he was not imposing his own personal or preconceived wants into the situation.

Dr. Hora: Exactly, what does a schizoid want? If he had been insane, what would he want? The schizoid individual wants to run away from responsibility and love. He wants to isolate himself from all human emotions and contacts with other people because he cannot say that he was schizoid or mentally sick. What can we say?

Comment: The monk knew unequivocally the source of his good, so that having the child or not was beside the point.

Dr. Hora: The monk knew the source of his good. Would you elaborate on that?

Comment: He knew that God ran the whole show. He knew that the source of his good was God.

Dr. Hora: How do you know that he knew this?

Comment: He knew it otherwise he would have reacted to what was going on around him.

Dr. Hora: So you are theorizing about it now. "It must have been that way." So we don't really know this. If you would have asked him, "How is it that you were able to respond in this way?" He wouldn't have told you that there is a God, or that God is the source of his good. Zen people hardly ever mention God. So this is our speculation about the source of the equanimity that he displayed. We are not saying that it is wrong; it sounds right but we have no proof of this. Is there anyone else who could speculate about the source of this man's strength?

Comment: I know that in Zen one develops a broader picture of life beyond the individual.

Dr. Hora: Yes, how large?

Comment: Infinite to a point where one reaches enlightenment and becomes a Bodhisattva. So one sees not just the moment and the day but everything that one does in a very large perspective. So I imagine the Zen monk must have been trained to see everything in a broad perspective. Seeing his life, seeing the people's lives as going in a direction of perfection, and that perfection being present at all times. So I imagine having that larger vision would help. The

Buddha, the perfect one, must have been ever-present in his consciousness, and he was attempting to also be that perfect one. So in confronting something petty and humanly trite from the perspective of the larger picture, he could respond spiritually and not react humanly. From my little knowledge of Zen I understand that one is moving always onward to enlightenment.

Dr. Hora: Yes. So what does all this have to do with Zen?

Comment: That was one of the things I was wondering, what was in his training that could fine tune him, so that he would not react but could respond?

Dr. Hora: Let's hear if others have something to say about this. Let us consider the fact that this man has demonstrated the most desirable quality that anyone can aspire to -- it is a magnificent illustration of something that is extremely desirable to attain in life. And what is it? All the things that were just said are very good, and very close, and it needs a little more clarity.

Comment: It seems to me that grace is what he was aware of. It is a gift from God when we become clear about who we really are. So to me it seems that he was very graceful, and none of that affected him because of this gift from God -- he understood who he truly was.

Dr. Hora: Yes, that's right, that is very close. That's true. But he would probably not have known what grace was. We speak of grace. How do you define grace?

Comment: I can't really define it.

Comment: Would it be being one with God?

Dr. Hora: The Bible speaks of grace as love freely given. Any other comments?

Comment: Is it compassion, that he could recognize that what was going on was not life was not true. In compassion we recognize and understand the lack of understanding.

Dr. Hora. That's very good. Compassion is extremely important and he certainly was absolutely compassionate in a spontaneous way. Alright, now what else can we say about this man?

Comment: It seems he had absolutely no sense of himself as a separate person.

Dr. Hora: That's right, very good. That is a very important quality. What else?

Comment: It seems as though the monk was a wonderful example of what you have always talked about us nonpersonal, nonconditional benevolence.

Dr. Hora: Nonpersonal, nonconditional benevolence - what is this?

Comment: Love.

Dr. Hora: Yes, it is the definition of perfect Love. Perfect Love makes perfect. If anyone would be interested in becoming absolutely perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect then he better learn perfect Love. This monk actually demonstrated perfect Love, and so we can see that he already attained to perfection. He wasn't yet a master, we haven't read that he was a Zen master, he was just a humble monk, and he already was able to manifest perfect Love. Nonpersonal, nonconditional benevolence. This attainment is fervently to be desired by everyone who would like to fulfill the biblical command which says: "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Isn't that interesting; don't you find it extremely interesting that the Zen monk was able to show that he is as perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect? We often speak about perfect Love. The Bible says: "Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). It also casts out the inclination towards anger, and if anyone would like to attain to angerless living, he would be well-advised to devote a great deal of attention to perfect Love. How to love perfectly, how to be perfectly loving. All of your remarks gradually were guiding us to ever more perfectly understand this tremendous quality, this glorious freedom of an enlightened consciousness which has no personal reactions, which can love nonconditionally. The monk remained loving even while they

were cursing him.

Question: Could we say that his response was God responding? He was one with the Father and so the “Is that so” remark wasn’t the man speaking, but it was spirit speaking. Is that what happens when one become angerless? One becomes a transparency to the presence of God?

Dr. Hora: Well certainly. When the Bible says, “Be ye therefore perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect,” it means that you are a transparency for God, and you don’t have any personal reactions, you have divinely inspired responses. That is a glorious enlightened state. The Zen people talk of the Buddha nature, and we speak of the Christ Consciousness. It was pointed out that this man has no sense of self apart from God. Selfhood apart from God is the basic problem people suffer from. As long as we see ourselves as being persons apart from God we will have personal reactions. So the definition of perfect Love makes three points. It is nonpersonal, it is unconditional, and it is benevolent. Do we all understand the word benevolent?

Comment: I don’t understand.

Dr. Hora: Benevolence means goodwill. You have unconditional goodwill -- usually we are goodwilled only towards people who agree with us. And if somebody disagrees with us we are annoyed and we lose our goodwill towards them. But in perfect Love our benevolence is unconditional. We remain loving under all circumstances because it is nonpersonal.

Question: I am having a hard time seeing the difference between the Zen master and being passive. To me the behavior appeared passive.

Dr. Hora: Yes, I can understand that. Jesus said, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). If you look at this man superficially, on the basis of the way he appeared to be behaving, you get the impression that he is passive -- didn’t even wiggle his earlobes.

Comment: Nonemotional is another way of viewing it.

Dr. Hora: Right, of course. What are emotions? Feelings and emotions are personal reactions to certain thoughts. Since this man knew he was not a person he was free of feelings and emotions in connection with this seeming assault. Twice he was assaulted by a number of people cursing him, and blaming him, and attacking him, and calling him ugly names. Yet, he had no feelings or emotions about it. There was only one pervasive sense which to an unenlightened way of looking would seem like emotion. One of you has expressed it -- compassion. But compassion is not really a feeling it is a quality of understanding where we understand the lack of understanding of people we are confronted with. We have a compassionate perspective on the situation. So there were no conventional ways of reacting: no feelings, emotions, fear, anxiety, defensiveness, aggressiveness, passivity -- all these things were absent. Isn’t that amazing, wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could love in this way?

Question: I think it would be wonderful if we could all love in that way. Do the people who were making the false accusations understand or does it matter? I guess this is connected to the question on passivity, what did the people in the community learn? Did they learn by his example?

Dr. Hora: Well, maybe some of them have watched it in amazement and they may have learned something, or most of them, as it usually happens, would rationalize and say, “This is a crazy guy!”

Question: It sounds like you are suggesting that we are not to be concerned about whether the people are learning or not.

Dr. Hora: Love remains loving under all circumstances. This is not a personal ambition. We are not personally ambitious for other people, not even for ourselves. It is love that is in charge. This is perfect Love. In perfect Love the nonconditional nonpersonal nature of that love expresses itself usually very effectively and it blesses even the enemy. Jesus said: “Love thine enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you that ye may be the children of God” (Matthew 5:44). He was demonstrating the Christly recommendation of how to respond to hostility. This is a beautiful example and very valuable; if you immerse yourself into it and contemplate it with reverence and appreciation something may happen to you. You may become transformed by virtue of understanding what the Bible means about perfect Love. Perfect Love casteth out fear.

Comment: Regarding the statement: We are not ambitious for other people, not even for ourselves, and considering perfect Love, the thought occurred that in contemplating nonpersonal, nonconditional benevolence we see the truth of our being. So then we are not ambitiously endeavoring to understand something, but there seems to be a shift to where we are no longer seeing ourselves as a person trying to understand something.

Dr. Hora: Right.

Comment: And our authentic truth of being is nonpersonal.

Dr. Hora: Right.

Question: It seems to take a lot of the ambition out of our meditations and contemplations. Is that true?

Dr. Hora: No. First we have to consider the fact that we are not really persons, we are individual manifestations of Divine Love-Intelligence. What is the difference between a person and an individual?

Comment: Individual means undivided, and person comes from the word persona. An individual is undivided, it is whole, it is one.

Dr. Hora: Is a person divided? Is it schizophrenic?

Comment: A person sees himself as a separate entity apart from everything. .

Dr. Hora: Apart from God, Personhood is a claim of autonomous existence apart from God. Individuality is undivided from God, a direct emanation of the Divine mind, and is governed by God. So we are not really persons, we just seem that way -- we seem to exist apart. We are individual manifestations of God, infinite Love-Intelligence and this realization comes when we become interested in understanding perfect Love.

Comments: So the need is to be interested in understanding perfect Love.

Dr. Hora: Yes. We have a capacity to choose what we are going to be interested in, and the Truth is drawing us towards this kind of realization. The Zen monk has demonstrated and helped us to understand the great value of perfect Love. He showed us how it works.