

ENCOUNTERS
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WISDOM

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WISDOM

BOOK EIGHT

Thomas Hora, M. D.

The PAGL Foundation
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Editors' Preface



This book presents dialogues between Dr. Thomas Hora, psychiatrist, spiritual teacher, and founder of Existential Metapsychiatry, and some of his students. They occurred in the late 1980s through 1995. Dr. Hora recorded most of the group sessions with his students and made them available to those who attended. The PAGL Foundation¹ has collected many of these tapes and transcribed them. For the reader new to the teachings of Metapsychiatry, it is suggested that these dialogues will be more meaningful if one of Dr. Hora's other books, especially *Beyond the Dream*, is read first.

Dr. Hora maintained his practice in his homes (an apartment in New York City and a house in Bedford, New York). Group sessions were held in the living room, where chairs were arranged in a circle. After the students had gathered, Dr. Hora would enter and sit down. He greeted each student non-verbally with eye contact and a smile, and then he waited for a question to be asked. If no question was forthcoming, Dr. Hora opened the dialogue.

Metapsychiatry values the sincere question, and Dr. Hora always waited for students to formulate questions. He listened for their sincerity as this indicated a student's receptivity and desire to understand. Sometimes a question might be phrased in an awkward or convoluted way. In such instances some of the meandering has been edited here for the sake of clarity.

¹ - PAGL is an acronym for Peace, Assurance, Gratitude, and Love, qualities of consciousness that are the fruit of spiritual progress. The PAGL Foundation was established to make Dr. Hora's work available (see www.PAGL.org).

As a dialogue progressed, there could be long silences or pauses. At such times Dr. Hora might introduce an entirely new topic, perhaps discerning an unasked question. He also saw and was amused by the paradoxes that life offered and shared this often in asides and humorous remarks. He showed his students how to laugh at their woes by lifting their vision to a higher perspective, helping them make the distinction between taking something seriously vs. giving it full attention. Laughter erupted frequently.

Overall, the editors have chosen to keep the flow of the dialogue as it occurred, so that no major changes have been made other than to maintain the anonymity of the participants and improve readability. Although some of the ideas in these dialogues may have been addressed in various ways in other available materials, to the sincere student, the freshness of these sessions can offer new insights and reinforce old ones.

This volume concludes the Encounters with Wisdom Series. The dialogues from Dr. Hora's group sessions, whether in this series or other works do not necessarily appear in chronological order.

* * *

June, 2022

1

Stimulated, Inspired, Awake

Student: In order for me to stay awake it seems that I need to understand the difference between being “stimulated” and being “inspired” and being “awake.” I can think I am awake; I can walk around but I am not really awake. We all need to be inspired to be awake. We could be watching TV or doing whatever we do on a daily basis, and we are really just being stimulated by the senses, but we are not really awake. I would like to understand it better so that I can stay awake. What does it mean “to be inspired to be awake?”

Dr. Hora: Before we can talk about the substance of your question, we have to clarify certain concepts that you are not clear about, apparently. What does it mean “to be stimulated,” “to be inspired,” and “to be awake?” Sometimes we are dreaming that we are awake. That gets very complicated. “Stimulation” is essentially a state of sensory tension in which our senses are stimulated. For instance, you can be distracted with an erotic fantasy and you can have a sensation that you are stimulated. The senses can get stimulated by drinking coffee, listening to some exciting music, watching some type of movie, or talking to an individual who is very excited and tense. Stimulations are always sensory and sensual.

“Inspiration” is always spiritual. There is a lot of confusion in the world about these terms, but it is good if we know what we are saying. We are stimulated by something titillating our senses. It can be food, it can be alcohol, it can be drugs, it can be exciting visual scenes, like racing, sports and competition. Our physical senses are shaken up and this is called “stimulation.” Now, as students of

the spiritual way, we have to be well acquainted with inspiration. Inspiration has nothing to do with stimulation. In inspiration, our attention is awakened, and our interest is focused seemingly by an outside force. Creativity is then awakened within us and we can be surprised how intelligent we can be — beyond our expectations. It is a surprise when we are inspired. Now what can bring on such a state of inspiration? Prayer, meditation, love, beauty, harmony, music – everything spiritual can act upon our consciousness as a source of inspiration. So, that is the difference between stimulation and inspiration. The other question related to —?

Student: Being awake.

Dr. Hora: Being awake. When you are stimulated you are not awake. It just feels like it. It is not real. What happens in stimulation is that all the senses are telling you about something good, or bad or frightening. So, you are under the control of certain external influences. That is stimulation. If someone provokes you and you get angry, you are stimulated, right? There are many ways we can get stimulated.

Student: It seems there is also such a thing as “ideological stimulation.” There are debates on television where people are passionate in presenting their political ideas.

Dr. Hora: Ideological stimulation is essentially intellectual. The intellect is still in the body. But inspiration is not in the body; it is in consciousness, and that is spiritual. It awakens within us creative capacities and higher values. We become aware of higher values. Now when we are stimulated, it *feels* like we are awake. You can sit in the movies and see something very exciting, and you have the impression that you are awake. You are not awake. You are asleep but your sleep is agitated, right? So, it is good to know what we are talking about. What about being awake? There is a story

about the Buddha who is said to have had an exceptional presence. One day a man passed by and asked him, “Who are you? What makes you different from other people?” His answer was, “I am awake.” The normal condition is to be asleep, which is a dream, and yet he was awake. He was not like other people. The condition of his consciousness at the time of the inquiry was not the same as most other people. And he even said many times that we are really asleep. The Bible says, “Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead.”² What does that have to do with anything? Suddenly we are not only being accused of sleeping but of being dead. What does this mean?

Student: To be dead is not to be aware of life, of Reality.

Dr. Hora: Yes. So, being excited is not the same as being awake. When we speak about “being awake,” we need to speak in the language of the Bible or the Buddha. To them, “being awake” means you are not dreaming that you are alive. Normally we are dreaming that we are alive. Now, what happens when we really awaken, and we are not dreaming that we are alive? In what way is the real aliveness different from the dream state which is called “being alive?” We have two concepts of aliveness.

Student: Realizing Reality?

Dr. Hora: Okay. Could you explain?

Student: Everyone thinks that when they open their eyes, they are then awake, and we have learned that we are sleeping most of the time. When we realize Reality and we realize the Truth, then we are awake.

² - “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”
(Ephesians 5:14)

Dr. Hora: In what way is real wakefulness different from the false sense of being awake?

Student: The presence of PAGL?

Dr. Hora: This is very important. Someday it could happen to you: you become enlightened, and you wouldn't even know it! (*Laughter*) You have just entered paradise and you have no idea. (*Laughter*) Isn't that interesting? We can contemplate what would happen. We would become alive. I can assure you that every one of you have had moments when you were alive. What happened in those moments? In those moments you became very peaceful, very grateful, very loving, very joyous and very happy. Peace, assurance, gratitude and love—PAGL. When we contemplate the First Principle³, we seek the awareness of what we call "spiritual blessedness." In spiritual blessedness, there are all these qualities of being which we call "PAGL." It can happen any moment and any time that you awaken to the awareness of PAGL. Now, we are very much interested in the fact that we can seek it consciously. This is very important. If you want to do something intelligent, be liberated from a pain or suffering or fear, you have to learn to put yourself into that kind of attentive consciousness which leads to PAGL. Some time ago we talked about how we can know that we have meditated successfully. Many people meditate regularly but then they get tired of meditating, so they get up and go about their business. That is not meditation. When we really meditate, we get overcome by a sense of peace and contentment. A sense of peace and contentment. What is "contentment?"

Student: The awareness that everything is all right.

³ - First Principle of Metapsychiatry: "Thou shalt have no other interests before the good of God, which is spiritual blessedness."

Dr. Hora: Everything is all right. Nothing is missing. Nothing is frightening us. We are not afraid. We are peaceful. We are satisfied. The Bible describes it this way. “I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.” (Psalm 17:15) This is the “PAGL point.” If we have meditated, which means we have sincerely contemplated the Truth of Being, we reach a point where we become very peaceful, and we cannot think of anything that is lacking. At that point we can get up—you have my permission (*Laughter*)—because we have reached the PAGL point. If we could reach this peace every day, perchance even several times a day, then we have become true students of Metapsychiatry. There is your “proof of the pudding.” It’s in that transcendent, peaceful awareness that all is well. Nothing is lacking. Nothing is frightening. Nothing is worrisome. We even know that we will never die, because the “life” which we are usually aware of is not really life. It’s a dream. In other words, we have reached a point beyond the dream. There’s even a book about it.⁴ (*Laughter*) Isn’t that nice? So, you have “stimulation,” “inspiration” and “awakening,” right? It was a good question.

Student: It seems that there are certain times that we are receptive to being inspired and being awake, but I have a long-held worry that I always dwell on. I can be very peaceful, and then this worry comes, and I can’t seem to get rid of it, and then I “fall asleep.” I have to work to get over that and it takes a while. How does inspiration become a regular part of our life? Is it what you just said: that with the constant practice of meditation, every time these negative or invalid thoughts come, we just constantly need to replace them?

Dr. Hora: There are certain little habits of thought which are always defeating us. For instance, this student said, “We have to get rid of something, and it’s always this worry and we have to get rid of it.” If you try to get rid of zero, what do you get? That’s a bad habit. If I

4 – *Beyond the Dream: Awakening to Reality*. Thomas Hora. PAGL Foundation, 1996.

have a pain, I want to get rid of the pain. What do you do when you try to get rid of the pain?

Student: Make it even worse. Get more involved. Magnify its importance.

Dr. Hora: It gives it reality. It's the same thing when you go to a doctor and you suspect that you have leprosy. (*Laughter*) Then the doctor will surely confirm it or increase your fear without your even telling him. That can be the problem with going to a doctor. The fear itself that something might be found makes the whole situation worse. It seems more real and brings up within us the impulse to try to get rid of this leprosy. How can you get rid of your leprosy if there is no such thing? The harder you try to get rid of it, the more real it appears with all the symptoms and everything, because, after all, everything is thought. So, if you are afraid of having leprosy and go to the doctor, then you say, "Help me doctor to be more aware of my leprosy," and you make greater efforts to get rid of it. Then you are caught. You are caught in a web of self-delusion. This is the tragedy of modern medicine. It would help if we knew that there is nothing to get rid of, wouldn't it?

You see, you were talking very intelligently, but while you were talking, you put in a little catastrophic phrase about "having to get rid of" something. It is catastrophic because it reinforces your conviction that you have a sickness. Some students are already advanced to the point where they know intellectually that there is no sickness, but they still believe it. So, if you believe it, you try not to believe what you are believing. The result is the same. Somebody says, "I don't believe that I have a headache". Many people are discontented with faith healers because they require that you must "believe." Believing and disbelieving are not going to solve the problem. You have good intentions, but you don't realize how you are aggravating your own condition.

Student: So, this is where looking for the meaning of the problem helps.

Dr. Hora: Exactly. You can only reach a point of understanding the unreality of our problems if you understand the meaning.

Student: In terms of being awake, if there is something that tends to be a worry or distracting, you can be awake to the meaning or awake to being interested in learning the meaning rather than getting rid of it.

Dr. Hora: Right. It will lift you out of the “belief trap” – the trap of believing and feeling and disbelieving and wanting and not wanting and liking it and not liking it.

Student: It seems so easy to slip into the dream state when we view something through a set of preconceived ideas.

Dr. Hora: Yes. If you have pain, you feel it and because you can feel it, it seems real. Then you are trapped.

Student: I wonder how it’s possible. We do tend to walk through the world with a set of preconceived ideas. For instance, when we see certain individuals, we make assumptions about them based on their appearance.

Dr. Hora: Yes. So, you see how it is if we are not students of the “Way” [the spiritual path]. If we have a pain or a problem, the first thought which comes to mind is, *Why do I have this pain? Why? What is causing me to feel this?* The second thought is, *Who is to be blamed for my feeling this?* The third thought is, *How can I get rid of this? Where should I go? What should I take? Whom should I consult that I wouldn’t have this? I don’t like it!* (Laughter) Most people never get around to asking, “What is the meaning of this experience?” It is generally assumed that if you feel something,

then that's what it is, right? Now we are learning to ask the valid question, "What is the meaning of this experience?"⁵ And if we are sincere enough, the meaning will reveal itself to us so that we can then transcend the dream of life in matter. All our problems are talking about the physical body which we think is life. We assume that we are physical bodies subject to all kinds of hazards, and this assumption announces its presence in the form of pleasure or pain or fear. You have an itch, you have a belly ache, or you're coming down with a cold. (*Laughter*) You have some virus. Millions of things are coming to mind which we don't like, or we like. So, if you are an enlightened student, you refuse to like or dislike anything or anyone. Neither like nor dislike. You are interested in beholding the good of God, which already is.

When Jesus was asked for help, he didn't say, "Take two aspirin and call me in the morning." He didn't say that. He said, "God is love." That's all he said. So, we don't waste time speculating on what isn't, but we immediately seek to become aware of what really *is*, and that's the healing.

Student: Even after understanding what "meanings" are or "what Reality is," the pain is still there or the experience still seems as ominous as before, and the fear comes back. Even though I may have had that wonderful understanding only moments before. What's happening here? I am sure everyone shares that.

Dr. Hora: Hmm. Yes. Well, you have a car. Usually when you turn on the ignition it purrs and it's good. So, when you cannot start it and it doesn't purr, what are you going to do? You learn more about cars. When we fail to be set free of our problems then we have not enough knowledge of the Truth to get healed, or we are still carrying the knowledge of Metapsychiatry –where?

5 - The Two Intelligent Questions of Metapsychiatry: "What is the meaning of what seems to be?" and "What is what really is?"

Student: In our back pockets. (*Laughter*)

Student: Is the recognition not really complete unless it leads to a sense of regret?

Dr. Hora: Absolutely. We get set free. “Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32) If you have a problem and the problem is not yielding, you have not reached the point where you can say, “I know the Truth.” The “proof of the pudding” is in healing. It can be very frustrating when we are condemning ourselves for not getting healed. Yes? So, let’s not do that, because that is no help. We have to be humble and diligently seek to know the Truth which will set us free, and that’s all there is. There is really no other way.

Student: But isn’t it the case that we haven’t really understood the meaning?

Dr. Hora: Sometimes we have discovered the meaning, but we don’t like the answer to the solution. Suppose you like to snort cocaine and you clearly see that your nose is rotting from inside because you like cocaine. You know the meaning, but nothing is happening. Your knowledge of the Truth is not accepted. It is not really accepted; therefore, you have an unsuccessful attempt at healing.

Student: Is it the regret of the meaning that is the significance?

Dr. Hora: You are trying to isolate something, but it is the whole package. You have to be able to forsake that error which you have come to like. You know it. You see it, but you are still holding onto it, right? It’s like the people who went for an excursion. They rented an expensive yacht and brought a lot of sandwiches and everything. They made themselves comfortable and they were happily drinking beer and having a good time. After an hour or so, somebody in

the party was sober enough and said, “How come we are still in the marina?” They had forgotten to untie the boat from the dock. (*Laughter*) That happens sometimes. We either never come around to asking the question or, if we ask the question, we are not really interested in the answer. We cannot find the meaning, or we find the meaning, but we don’t accept it. So, we need to be sincere. We have to understand that the purpose of seeking the meaning is not just to please Dr. Hora but in order to transcend it. When we transcend it, we lose sight of the whole problem. It disappears with all the symptoms and everything gets straightened out. This applies not only to physical problems. It also applies to financial problems, social problems, and family problems. How is it possible that this applies to all those things? Who knows the answer?

Student: The common denominator among all the problems is invalid thought. Nothing happens without the thought, so it doesn’t really matter whether it’s manifesting itself as a physical, financial, or an emotional problem.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Exactly. Do we all understand this? It is not a mystery. God, infinite Divine Mind, Love-Intelligence is the harmonizing principle of the Universe. By being willing to face up to the meaning, we rise above the meaning and we tune in on the Divine Mind, which has the answers to every situation. When we have so focused on the Truth of Being, the problem, no matter what its character, has no place to be. It has to disappear. God has absolutely no difficulty healing us of leprosy or cancer or whatever the name is—it’s always the same: human error in human consciousness. When this is discovered and attention is focused on the Truth of Divine Mind’s perfect universe, then that error has no place to be, which means it disappears and we are healed no matter what it is. So, when you become a Metapsychiatric helper, you don’t have to be startled by a medical diagnosis. God has no difficulty whatsoever in healing you. You have difficulty accepting it.

Student: Using the example of leprosy, if there is a belief in leprosy, is that part of the meaning? If we believe in it, is that an aspect of the meaning?

Dr. Hora: Well, it is just a word. It can, let's say, be a pimple on your neck or on your body and you can call it leprosy. You can be very creative. You can find very fancy diagnostic categories, and if your imagination is not creative, you can buy a book. All the various diagnostic categories in Latin and Greek are available to you and you can pick and choose. It's amazing how many people want to do this. I was buying lunch this morning in a little coffee shop and there was a man talking to the salesman behind the counter. He told him how he wasn't feeling good yesterday because his colitis was acting up and he had all kinds of diagnostic categories which he learned from the doctor. He told the salesman —before lunch, cheering him up (*Laughter*) —he said, "Today I feel a little better, so I want a half a pound of salami;" (*Laughter*) but he had to inform the salesman about his condition because that's the "in" thing to do. If you don't talk about sicknesses or politics, what else is there? (*Laughter*)

Student: Sometimes it happens that I become aware of an invalid thought, and I reject it immediately because I know that it is invalid. I know that I just don't want to be involved with it. There are other times when that same thought that I was able to reject immediately comes and I don't reject it, allowing it to rule in consciousness. I know that the answer is that I must be aware immediately and be vigilant and pray. Even knowing that, I'll continue to indulge in things that I know are not healthy.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: Is there any way that you can protect yourself or become more alert or more interested in turning away when you don't *want* to turn away?

Dr. Hora: If the car doesn't start on the first try what do you do? You need to learn more about the car.

Student: Specifically, what do you do when you are aware that you are participating in something that isn't good for you?

Dr. Hora: You have to learn more about the Truth. The answer is always understanding the Truth. Nothing else has the power to harmonize life. So, something doesn't work. Try again and try harder. Cursing won't help. (*Laughter*) That is why learning to pray is so important. I'm not referring to petitionary prayer. We don't ask God, "Please God, fix my car." Nothing can help us except understanding the Truth. It is not because God is a mechanic, it's because knowing more about the Truth takes care of everything. It all seems so mysterious because we don't really understand God. The answer to every difficulty is to seek to know more about God. It seems totally unrelated to the situation, but the more clearly we understand God, the fewer problems there will be. "In thy presence is fullness of joy. At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light do we see light". (Psalm 16:11, 36:9) The remedy is always going deeper and deeper into understanding what God is. Ye shall know the Truth of God's being, and the Truth shall set you free. There is no mystery or superstition or mumbo jumbo. You don't have to believe anything. You don't have to perform certain ceremonies. It is not wishful thinking. You don't even have to be religious. Nothing is required of you but sincere interest in the good of God.

Student: When you quote something from the Bible or say something like, “Joy is our birthright,” or “The joy of the Lord is our strength,” how do we hear that without just believing or hoping that it’s true?

Dr. Hora: Well, believing doesn’t help. Hoping will raise your interest in learning more, so that can be helpful.

Student: You are saying that we have to get more and more acquainted with God, but when we hear these words, we can get stuck with them.

Dr. Hora: No, we must not get stuck with them because if we do, we are in trouble. Unless we live in the context of conscious understanding of the Truth, we are always in trouble. Consider that everybody always has problems – everybody. So, we are forced to pay attention to God because that is the only way we find relief. Now, we could ask, “Why is God so stingy?” (*Laughter*) “Why doesn’t he make it easier to understand Him? He is so difficult!” (*Laughter*) I find the computer very difficult to understand. Is this nastiness on the part of the computer? No, my interest has to be raised. If I were really interested in computers, I could learn more about them. Isn’t that so? But as long as I can ask someone else, I will never learn. (*Laughter*) Maybe in a few years they will come up with a simpler, more user-friendly computer and I won’t have to learn. (*Laughter*) Many people are this way with God. Why is God so difficult to understand? We need to be more interested.

We have many rationalizations about God. People would like God to be “easy.” That is not illegitimate, but we have all kinds of preconceived notions of how God should be, how God should be working, what He looks like, where He is located, and how we can control Him. Some people think, *Maybe we should have a larger congregation at our church.* Many religions want to have big audiences because in politics, the more people follow you, the

more power you have. But God is not interested in the various religions, or how many or few members there are. Numbers don't count. Geography doesn't count. Religion doesn't count. The color of your skin doesn't count. None of these things can help heal a problem. If there is an individual totally alone in the middle of the ocean on a raft, and if he awakens to the true nature of God and Divine Reality, he will have no problem. He will have overcome the world. It is very strange, right? God doesn't play by our rules. That is why it is so difficult. One student of Metapsychiatry has a very intelligent, bright husband who would see the book *Beyond the Dream* on the table and ask her, at least once a week, "Are you still reading that book? For all these years you only read that book. I read a book in a half an hour and I am finished. You must be very stupid. I don't get it." (*Laughter*)

2

Assurance And Principle

Student: A couple of weeks ago we talked about the issues of “certainty” and “assurance.” Could we talk a little bit further about living our lives with assurance, and how that differs from what I can best describe as “wishful thinking,” or the idea of denying things? There is a lot of evidence that would lead us to feel that there is reason not to be assured in our lives. How do we live our lives with assurance without just thinking that we are kidding ourselves and being “Pollyannas?”

Dr. Hora: That is a very good question. Now, what does it mean to be a “Pollyanna?”⁶ Pollyanna is a naïve belief based on religious sentiment that everything is good. It’s the kind of thinking that believes that if there is a storm, and a tree falls on a house killing a child, and the home is destroyed, somehow this is all right, because “everything is good.” If there are crimes and murders, everything is good. Pollyanna believed this sort of thing. She was a very nice little girl. (*Laughing*) That is a “Pollyanna.” Of course many people’s reasoning, very logically is, “Look here, there is so much evil in the world, how can there be anything good?” Now, that is the great disadvantage of not knowing God. If we don’t know God in personal experience, then we have a choice either to be naïve believers or to be skeptics. But we are not believers and neither are we skeptics. So, what else is there? The secular world will give you a simple choice—either you believe, or you don’t believe. There is no alternative. Most people are either believers or skeptics. When

⁶ - *Pollyanna* is a children’s book by Eleanor H. Porter, published in 1913. The protagonist is a little girl who was unfailingly optimistic and cheerful.

we are skeptics, of course, we have no problem—we just reject everything, and we think there is nothing good in the world—it’s just haphazard. If we are believers, then we become religious, but that has its problems because our belief is based on disbelief. It is not possible to believe without disbelieving, and therefore we have no sense of assurance. We just have some kind of a mental conviction that everything will work out all right. If we are not sufficiently acquainted with the reality of God, then we have nothing to lean on. Then we are gamblers. We take chances. We gamble. Even the gamblers lean on an imaginary god. It is called “Lady Luck.” It’s a female god. (*Laughter*) Gamblers are very insecure because they are superstitious and hope “luck will be a lady tonight.” There is such a song⁷. (*Laughter*) Either you are a believer and you are religious, or you are a disbeliever and then you are a skeptic. You have nothing to go by. There is no certainty, and you have no assurance of anything. Life is just a gamble with two feet planted in midair. (*Laughter*) So, you can rightfully ask, “Where does assurance come from, and what is it?” What is this assurance that we have? By the grace of God, we have assurance. By knowing God in individual consciousness, we have such a sense of assurance that nothing will faze us, and we will not live in fear, and we will not become gamblers. We have this mysterious, inexplicable sense of assurance. What is it made of? The Bible explains it, “Acquaint thyself now with Him and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto thee” (Job 22:21). So those of us who are studying and praying and meditating, seeking to know the Truth, to acquaint ourselves with Divine Reality, we don’t have to believe in God, and we don’t have to be skeptics. What do we have? What kind of a “knowledge” is this knowledge that is neither the intellectual nor the emotional nor the gambling type? This is a strange, mysterious knowledge that is available to everyone who is sincerely seeking to know God. There are many people who talk about God and claim to know God and perform

7 - “Luck Be A Lady,” from the musical *Guys and Dolls*, words and music by Frank Loesser, 1950.

all kinds of religious rituals to reassure themselves that they know God, that they understand what Metapsychiatry is all about, but that is just sort of self-hypnosis—like being a “Pollyanna” is really religious self-hypnosis. But assurance is an entirely different aspect of consciousness, and if we pray to know the Truth and if we are sincere about it, we reach a point when God and Divine Reality will be palpably real to us. Now, how will we know that we are not just kidding ourselves, that we are not just pretending to be religious to impress others?

Student: By the fruits. Our lives begin to be more harmonious, joyful, productive, effective.

Dr. Hora: Right. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” (Matthew 7:20) We call this “existential validation.” The existence of God can be existentially validated. This word “validation” is very precious to us, because that’s a way to come to be assured that God really is and is accessible to all sincere seekers of the Truth. We are seeking to reach that kind of spiritual awareness which will give us such a sense of assurance that we will live life peacefully without fear, without confusion, and without superstitious beliefs. You see, if someone has reached that level of spiritual awareness where God is not a gamble anymore, where God has manifested Himself in his life experience as something reliably present, he will know the fruits of such knowledge as peace, assurance, gratitude, and love. It transforms our mode of being in the world to such a degree that we become “glowers.” We start glowing instead of worrying. We start glowing, and nothing will shake us out of this sense of assurance. This is very little understood. Religious people talk about “having faith.” They say they have faith, but I don’t think this is a valid word, “faith.” It was invented to separate it from all kinds of beliefs. When you understand Divine Reality, you don’t have to have faith, you don’t have to have security, you don’t have to be a believer. You don’t have to proclaim publicly that you believe in

God. You don't have to hope that God will be pleased if you say this in public, and then He will reward you and give you whatever you want. You hear people say, "Ask in the name of Jesus Christ." But the right understanding of the reality of God transforms your entire mode of being in the world in such a way that you have a sense of assurance, and you can live intelligently and effectively that way. But it is important not to kid ourselves. Sometimes we become religiously ambitious and we kid ourselves. We say, "I know God, and I said my prayers, and I prayed very hard." "Praying hard" is considered a virtue. I don't know what they mean by it, as if God would require you to strain yourself. (*Laughter*) It is not necessary to "pray hard." It is just necessary to contemplate the Truth persistently and sincerely until we become aware that God is everywhere present. God is a cosmic principle of harmony. God doesn't listen to our requests. It is not an institution where you can put in applications. (*Laughter*) We work on our consciousness when we pray, when we study and respond to various contingencies of life. If our consciousness is in alignment with the Reality of God, good things tend to happen. That is all we can say. It doesn't require religion. It doesn't require proclamations of our belief. It doesn't mean we have to bang our head against the wall to find ways to influence God. You cannot influence God by saying, "Look, God, I have a son and I was good to him, and I deserve that you should favor me with your presence and do things for me because I did this and I did that." In every religion there are secret ways that people try to get a handle on God in order to influence Him. You can give money to charities. You can do all kinds of things. This is nonsense. We cannot influence God. Nobody can. It makes no sense to try. Usually people approach God as if God were another person, and if you think God is another person, you will use a personal approach. You put on a nice outfit and you go to church and always hope that God will be somehow moved to favor you in a certain way. That is very frustrating because people with good intentions are not achieving anything. So, let us have great respect for the word

“assurance,” and don’t confuse it with “insurance.” Insurance right now is getting a very bad name from Mrs. Clinton⁸. She is really knocking them dead, because it is a corrupt system. The insurance companies are very corrupt and don’t deserve any credit. There are insurance companies that use the word “assurance” in their names. We have to be careful, because there is a lot of lying and cheating and deceiving everywhere in the world, but if we have a clearer understanding of the meaning of these words, then we won’t get confused.

Student: Does religion have something to do with personal experience, personal understanding?

Dr. Hora: “Personal” is not in favor with us.

Student: Perhaps what you mean is that it has to do with “a unique individual understanding.”

Dr. Hora: Nobody can do it for you. You cannot go to the rabbi or priest and say to him, “Fix it up with God for me so I can have assurance. I’ll pay a certain amount of money.” God must be realized in individual consciousness to the point where assurance takes on its own life. It is a glorious thing because you lose your fear. Two things indicate that you are on the right track: You lose your fear of death, and you become peaceful. When we meditate the right way, we become increasingly more peaceful, meanings spontaneously reveal themselves to us, healings happen, and you have this glorious peace and assurance and gratitude and love. Those are the signs that tell us, “Yes, we are on the right track.” We are approaching the consciousness of Divine Reality. It is this consciousness that is the indication of a healing process taking place within us, and we can get up and face the world with certain expectations of goodness.

⁸ - At the time Hillary Clinton had been appointed by her husband, President Bill Clinton, to chair a task force to create a plan for national health care reform.

Many people have been deceived by Pollyanna, a sweet innocent little girl. She had a theological education by her father, who was a clergyman. She was so sweet and everybody loved her until one day she fell out the window and broke her legs. They didn't know what to do with this. How can such a little girl break her legs if everything is good? Frequently people talk about somebody who has met with a disaster of some kind, and they say, "How could this happen to such a nice person?" This is the wrong question, because even the nicest person can have erroneous thoughts and opinions. The right question would be, "What is the meaning of this occurrence, this experience?" It is not an accusation. It is not a judgment. It is an endeavor to understand the meaning of an event.. There was a best-selling book by a rabbi who tried to answer the question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"⁹ He had no answer to his own question. Finally, he came up with the rationalization that God is not powerful enough to deal with all these things. That is what happens when our idea of God is not valid. We can figure out all kinds of excuses for God. God doesn't need our excuses. What we need is a better understanding of God.

Student: What does it mean, "We need to understand God as a principle?"

Dr. Hora: If you understand "principle," you have made a giant step in the direction of enlightenment, because it will help you to rise above the concept of personhood.

Student: Is it like if we have a problem and then we understand the meaning and then we are working with a principle, like the Third Principle?¹⁰

9 - *When Bad things Happen to Good People*, by Harold Kushner. Schocken Books, 1981.

10 - There are 11 Principles of Metapsychiatry. (The Third Principle is: "There is no interaction anywhere, there is only Omniaction everywhere.")

Dr. Hora: The tendency is always to think that a person has a problem, but when you understand “principle,” then you realize there are no persons. There are just individual consciousnesses that can err. It is principle that is the problem, not person. If we think in terms of “person,” there is always judgment connected with it, and blame. Once we have a judgment, there is no mercy, and you have to go to jail or be punished. A principle can give you a transcendent view of the world and the events in the world.

Student: So, if we understand God as a principle of love and intelligence, it’s invisible, it’s something you can be consciously aware of, but you can’t see. I mean, we can see people, but if we are working with a principle in consciousness, then we are in nondimensional reality.

Dr. Hora: Yes, certainly, it is nonpersonal. But our difficulty in solving our problems or being healed of our problems is that we are always inclined to blame somebody for our suffering. “Somebody did it.” “Somebody should be punished.” “Somebody should go to hell.” We’re always personalizing our problems. It’s rather difficult to transcend the personal view of life— and there is no such thing! If you understand principle, you know there are no persons anywhere. There are only events revealing our ignorance of Divine Reality.

[The remainder of the session is missing from the tape.]

3

Changing Our Mind

Student: With regard to “the three Rs”¹¹, can you clarify the difference between “reorientation to the Truth of Being” and “changing our mind?” Sometimes I might think a certain way for a long time, if that’s my mode of being-in-the-world, and I would like to make sure that I understand that we are not saying that I must “change my mind” about something. In the world, people try to change your mind about stuff. They have a different view, and so they try to convince you to see it their way. We are not doing that here, but it goes on a lot in the world. There is a qualitative difference between changing our minds about something and real reorientation when the Truth takes over. It dawned on me that it would help to understand it better — the difference between changing our mind, as when somebody says, “No, no. Two and two isn’t five, it’s four” and you change your mind because somebody told you, and really understanding its truth so that the invalid thoughts are gone altogether.

Dr. Hora: Has anybody ever heard me say, “Change your mind?”

Student: No, you never do.

Dr. Hora: So how come you are asking this question?

Student: Because maybe sometimes there is a misunderstanding.

11 - “The three “Rs” of Metapsychiatry are as follows: recognition, regret, and reorientation.”
Beyond the Dream, Session No. 9, “The Curtain of Time.”

Dr. Hora: If we refrain from saying, “Change your mind,” there is less likely to be misunderstanding. What do we do instead of changing the mind—and what “mind” is there to change? Whose mind needs changing, and if we change our minds, what happens? What is the right way of thinking about these things? What do we say instead of “changing our minds?” Some people have a way of rigidly *not* changing their mind. To change our mind or *not* to change our mind is the same.

Student: But it’s easy to make the mistake if you bring to our attention our certain mode of being. If this is what we are preoccupied with, then immediately we say, “Okay, I won’t be preoccupied with it, and that seems to be where we get stuck.”

Dr. Hora: We never say that somebody should change his mind, right? What are we saying?

Student: A mistake is replaced with the Truth.

Dr. Hora: That’s right. That is not a “change of mind.”

Student: That’s right. We are so used to thinking in the world that way. That’s what I mean, that we need to be very cautious that we are not making that mistake. It’s really important that Truth overcomes the error. I know they are qualitatively different, but sometimes it seems like I am trying to change my mind. That’s my problem. I know there is no personal mind, but if we are not enlightened yet, and there is no personal mind, what’s happening when there is a real reorientation, and those invalid thoughts are gone? It’s not because we changed them. They have been replaced. It’s important to understand this so we don’t kid ourselves.

Dr. Hora: There must be some question there. What is the difference between “replacing an error with the Truth” and “changing our minds about an error?”

Student: The Truth can’t simply “replace.” It has to be understood. “Mind changing” relates to opinions. It doesn’t really relate to the Truth.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Very good. Okay. What is the prerequisite for replacing an error with the Truth?

Student: It is understanding the validity of the Truth in the context of the issue.

Dr. Hora: How do we know the validity of the Truth?

Student: If it’s sincere regret and we know that a certain way of thinking is troublesome, and experience tells us that Truth heals and puts us in the right direction. So is it regret?

Dr. Hora: Regret is just a motivating force to consider the possibility that we were mistaken. As you know, we have a method. This method is called “the two intelligent questions”¹², right? So first we ask, “What is the meaning of what seems to be?” When we answer this question, we get embarrassed. Most of the time it is stupid, and we say, “Well, this couldn’t be the Truth.” So first, we discern the stupid meaning, the error, and then we proceed to ask the second question. How do we ask the second question?

Student: “What is what really is?”

12 - “In all our work in Metapsychiatry we ask two questions: (1) What is the meaning of what seems to be? and (2) What is what really is? With the aid of these two questions, we are able to separate the real from the seeming...” *Beyond the Dream*, Session No. 1, “What is Man?”

Dr. Hora: How do we know what really is? It could also be a mistake, right? Who can tell us “What really is?”

Student: We assess whether it seems to be true. Whatever occurs to us comes from the presence or absence of a sense of PAGL, or a sense even of gratitude of Reality being revealed to us. I think there is a sense of gratitude that is somewhat indicative of the fact that we have really encountered the Truth.

Dr. Hora: You approach it from a teleological standpoint. What does that mean? You would ask, “How do we discern the Truth which is to replace the error?” That is teleology.

Student: Then you are talking about self-validation. That it validates itself.

Dr. Hora: How does it validate itself?

Student: It solves the problem. The appreciation of this idea, the acceptance of this idea solves whatever problem was occupying us.

Dr. Hora: How do we know that?

Student: It doesn't necessarily solve the problem at that moment, but the presence of PAGL is an indication that we have tapped into something real. If it's valid, it's peaceful.

Student: Would it be helpful, Dr. Hora, to ask, “What is being reoriented?” What is in the reorientation process?

Dr. Hora: You are being reoriented towards the Truth, but how do we know what the Truth is? When Pilate asked Jesus, “What is the Truth?” what did Jesus say?

Student: He was silent.

Dr. Hora: He was silent. What does that mean? Did it mean that he didn't know?

Student: Pilate couldn't hear it.

Dr. Hora: It was of no use to tell an ignorant, unspiritual, unsophisticated individual the answer to the "second intelligent question." So Jesus remained silent. He didn't answer him. Okay, so do we have to also remain silent? Shut up? We cannot afford this luxury, because Jesus could endure crucifixion but we can't. We don't recommend it, (*Laughter*) even though sometimes it's "the better part of valor."¹³ But look here, for years and years we study the Bible, we listen to Hora talk, talk, talk, and quote from the Bible about the Truth. We are already sophisticated in the realm of spiritual Truth, so when we remember to replace our error with the spiritual Truth, which we were educated to appreciate, the Truth will validate itself by a sudden healing. We become aware. "Ah! I could have had a V8!"¹⁴ (*Laughter*) That's how it works, but we don't change our mind, right?

Now what happens if we have successfully answered and discerned the meaning and obtained an answer to the "first intelligent question," and then we cannot find the answer to the "second intelligent question?" What happens then? We blame somebody. (*Laughter*) If the acknowledgement of the Truth or the valid way of acknowledging the "second intelligent question" doesn't result in

13 - "The better part of valor is discretion" from Shakespeare's, *Henry IV*, has evolved into a proverb, "Discretion is the better part of valor", which means that it is better to avoid a dangerous situation than confront it.

14 - This is an advertising slogan written in the 1970s for "V8," a vegetable juice alternative to tomato juice. The slogan is still used in popular conversation when someone realizes they could have chosen an alternative to something.

existential validation, then we have to acknowledge that we don't yet know the full Truth. What do we do then?

Student: We seek guidance, we pray, we meditate, we keep working.

Dr. Hora: Yes. If we are sincere seekers after the Truth, it always comes, and it always solves our problems, and we are healed. We can be grateful every time we succeed in replacing an erroneous idea with the Truth. Maybe it's not the complete answer, but we can know that we are on the right track. Sometimes it is good to learn to remain quiet and wait for clarity to come, and it comes if we are sincere. Clarity comes.

Student: Are "healing" and "realization" the same?

Dr. Hora: Yes. "Existential validation" is also the same. The Truth is a fact. It is effective in clarifying. We speak about Metapsychiatry as a "hermeneutic process of clarification," and the value of asking the "first question" is to realize that we are uncomfortable with it. It doesn't solve our problems. Some people resist. They know, they may not know. They may just be kidding themselves. People have a tendency to kid themselves, but when the Truth is discerned and replaced, it is like understanding that "two and two is four." Nobody can talk us out of it, right? There is no debating about the Truth. So, we are also saying that we are "seekers after the Truth." Why would anybody bother seeking the Truth?

Student: Human life is hell.

Dr. Hora: Yet it has its values. When we understand the power of the Truth, it will solve our problems, heal us, and bring our love to the fore. We appreciate it and we seek it and we are sincerely contemplating the Truth of Being in any situation. Today I asked somebody this question, "Suppose a friend of yours for whom you

have high regard and whom you consider very well educated in various fields would say, ‘Listen, I have the impression that you are a stupid fool.’ It happens. What would you say to this guy?”

Student: “Is that so?” (*Laughter*)¹⁵

Dr. Hora: There is even a better answer. What would you say?
(*Addressing a particular student*)

Student: You would have to say, “Thanks.” (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Does that make any sense? What happened to our friend who met a man on the street and who spat in her face? We have described this.¹⁶

Student: She said, “Thanks, I needed that.”

Dr. Hora: Yes. We are always grateful for little bits of Truth which come to us, and we don’t have to get upset and get into a fight or call the police.

Student: When negative events happen, it’s an alert, and you need to reorient yourself.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Exactly. Negative experiences do not come uninvited. So there is nothing to be upset about. We have to be grateful.

Student: So, does that mean, Dr. Hora, that there is really no such thing as intimidation? Intimidation would be a human reaction.

15 - Dr. Hora told the story of a Zen master who was falsely accused of impregnating a young woman. At the demands of the villagers, he raised the child. Later the woman recanted her story, and the villagers blamed him for raising the child. His response each time was, “Is that so?” *Beyond the Dream*, Session No. 42, “Levels of Cognitive Integration.”

16 - See “*Dialogues in Metapsychiatry*, Dialogue No.1, “The Supreme Way.”

Dr. Hora: Intimidation is a reaction. When something frightens us; we have a negative reaction. There are various ways of dealing with intimidation. We can start screaming or do something. The enlightened way is to face it and to say, “What is the meaning of what seems to be?” Right? If we are sincere and sufficiently enlightened, we can say, “Well, this is a painful experience. There must be a meaning to it. And how did I invite it?” When you face up to the “first intelligent question,” the “second intelligent question” will scream in your head. If you understand “the three Rs,” the Truth, you can actually experience a screaming in your head because you cannot retaliate, you cannot act like other “normal” people would by being angry and hurt. Then you find the “second intelligent question,” and suddenly instead of being angry, you become grateful. It is a precious lesson, and there is no need to feel hurt or humiliated or upset in any way. There is an answer.

Student: So, we view every lesson from the perspective that there is something for us to learn, as opposed to taking it personally and feeling offended that someone spit at us.

Dr. Hora: It is a process of lifelong learning.

Student: You mentioned “healing” before. What is healed? That particular error in thought is healed; but what about working with our entire mode of being? It doesn’t seem as if our mode of being is completely healed.

Dr. Hora: I have said a thousand times, we are not talking about our “mode of being.” A dog has a mode of being. We don’t have a “mode of being.” What do we have?

Student: A “mode of being-in-the-world?”

Dr. Hora: In the world! What is the importance of this precise aspect of Metapsychiatry: “mode of *being-in-the-world?*” A dog doesn’t know that he doesn’t have to be “in the world,” and he doesn’t think that whenever he is suffering, the problem is that he has a “mode”— period. We don’t have this. All of our errors indicate a mistake: that we assume that we belong in this world. Didn’t Jesus say that we are not of this world?¹⁷ It is very important to realize that we are not “in this world,” that we are humans who can transcend the illusion of belonging in this world. And the Truth helps us to get out of this world and to see ourselves in a spiritual context.

Student: May I try that question again? (*Laughing*) I see the difference there, but I guess when you clarify what our “mode of being-in-the-world” is and what we are preoccupied with, and we understand the overall meaning, then we get a glimpse of the Truth, and we can transcend being in this world. But we are not really healed. We get glimpses of it. Is that just part of the process?

Dr. Hora: If you are not healed right away, then you need a few more private sessions, (*Laughter*) because the right understanding of what we are faced with always results in healing, no matter what it is.

Student: So, is there no such thing as “partial understanding” or “glimpses?”

Dr. Hora: Yes. If we pose the question about “the mode of being,” we are lost at that moment. We have given up the truth of our being because we do not have a “mode of being.” We *seem* to have this mode of being, but there is no such thing. We have the impression that we are in the world, but we are really in never-never land.

17 - “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” (John 15:19)

When we say, “our mode of being-in-the-world,” this implies that we think we are of the world.

Jesus said we are not of this world, and “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) You see, we have to overcome the world as he did every moment of life. The impression is very strong that we live in this world, but if we are interested in “modes of being,” then there is no hope, because the answer to that is “modes of *non-being*.” Anybody who speaks about “modes of being” implies that he believes that there is a way to not be, and indeed it looks like that because some people seem to die, right? So, their mode of being is changing into non-being. But Jesus didn’t recommend that we change our modes of being into modes of non-being.

Student: That’s why it seems so impossible. It’s still dealing with duality.

Student: We can get confused. Even if we are correctly using the term “mode of being-in-the-world,” we can become attached to what we see. For example, if we come for a consultation about a problem and you identify a mode of being-in-the-world which has given rise to this problem, there is a temptation to say, “Oh, yes, my mode of being-in-the-world is that I am preoccupied or possessive, and I shouldn’t become attached to those.” Those are erroneous senses of identity or erroneous ways of looking at the world. When healing comes, we no longer need to have that mode of being-in-the-world. We can improve our mode of being-in-the-world or expand it. The more we understand the Truth, the more our mode of being-in-the-world evolves to more spiritual understanding.

Dr. Hora: Right. Our illusion of “being in the world” disappears, and we suddenly become aware that we are not in the world, but we

are in the Father. “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30) We see ourselves in a spiritual context.

Student: So being here for oneself or being here for others is “being in the world.” Being here for God is in the spiritual.

Dr. Hora: Yes, of course. We have to be very careful because the bamboo pole is not far away. (*Laughter*)¹⁸

Student: What is the difference between sleeping and being awake? It seems that when I am awake, I can contemplate the Truth of Being and be aware of it, but when I’m sleeping, how is that possible? I am asking because it seems like occasionally painful experiences in bad dreams arise during sleep, or I suddenly wake up with a symptom that wasn’t there during the day. How does that happen?

Dr. Hora: Who can answer this question?

Student: It seems like when you are asleep your personal mind isn’t there.

Dr. Hora: Your “personal mind?”

Student continues: There is nothing blocking these thoughts. In your waking hours you intercede. You stop these thoughts, or you entertain other thoughts.

Dr. Hora: Now the question is, “What is the difference between sleeping and being awake?” You could be deep asleep and dream about being awake and being enlightened, but you are still asleep. There was an Oriental mystic, I forget his name. He said: “If you *believe* that you are enlightened, your life is just going from one

18 - In some Zen practices, the master whacks a student’s back and shoulders with a bamboo pole or thin flat stick to awaken one who appears to be sleepy or losing attentiveness during meditation. Metapsychiatry views our problems as “bamboo poles.”

bad thing to another bad thing.” It’s a way of deceiving ourselves. The question is, how do we know that we are awake and we are not dreaming about being awake? You can have a dream that you are enlightened and that you are awake. We are very, very self-deceiving. How do we know that we are awake? How do we know? There are many, many so-called “spiritually awake people” who are just dreaming about enlightenment.

The other day I saw on television a report of a man who held seminars for thousands of people who believed that he was an awakened man. Then it turned out there were allegations of illegal, immoral behavior. It was a tragic situation. People were paying millions of dollars because they thought that he was an enlightened man. So, the question is, “How can we be sure?” Right? Is there a way to be sure?

Student: He was offering a kind of quick fix. He was suspect.

Dr. Hora: Maybe to you, but thousands of people bought everything he was selling.

Student: Jesus wasn’t talking about himself.

Dr. Hora: Jesus was talking about himself, but in a certain qualitatively different way.

Student: Aren’t we all asleep until we awaken? Aren’t we all asleep?

Dr. Hora: We like to inform people that we are enlightened.

Student: Are you asking how we tell if we are awake or somebody else is awake?

Dr. Hora: A man said, “Last night I dreamed that I was a butterfly. Today I am not sure.” We turn to Jesus, the supreme authority, and ask ourselves how can he reassure us that we are awake or that we are not awake? The Bible clearly says, “Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14) What does that mean and how is that helpful?

Student: You were talking a few weeks ago about the fact that we can directly discern spiritual values, and they are God, so if you are in direct contact with spiritual values, you are at that moment awake, and you can know that.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: We need to realize we are sleeping in order to wake up.

Dr. Hora: Yes. That’s right. We have to become aware that we are asleep. How do we become aware that we are asleep?

Student: Someone taps us on the shoulder.

Student: Problems.

Student: Joylessness.

Dr. Hora: If you are joyless you are still asleep, except you are hypnotized. When we are hypnotized, we lose our joy.

Student: If we are not loving – we can be aware if we are loving or not.

Dr. Hora: If you are interested in it. Of course, there are some people who are dreaming about being loving.

Student: No. They are dreaming about being nice. (*Laughter*)¹⁹

Dr. Hora: But of course, to be aware of “nonconditional benevolence” is a very good sign of being awake. How is that?

Student: That means you have left behind the world when you come to that point.

Dr. Hora: Yes. “Perfect love casteth out fear,” (John 4:18) and if there is no fear, you are surely awake. If we would like to learn how to live an enlightened life, we need to ask ourselves, “Am I, right now, aware of nonpersonal, nonconditional benevolence?” How many hours do we spend in a day in that condition? It is not easy but very important. If we would like to be enlightened and our mode of being-in-the-world an enlightened one, we can constantly focus attention on being nonpersonal, which means not being concerned with personal affairs, wants, and not wants but instead be constantly interested in manifesting nonconditional benevolence. I heard a Rabbi say, “To be a good Jew you must constantly preoccupy yourself with good deeds.” In other words, this Rabbi recommended being a good Boy Scout. This is the tragedy of the operational mind. “What shall I do to look like I am enlightened?” These questions preoccupy such a religious man. He wants to do something. You see, an enlightened individual is nonpersonal, nonconditionally benevolent. He doesn’t do anything. He just has a different mode of being-in-the-world, which is actually “out of this world.” Anybody who would like to know how to be enlightened would have to know the secret of perfect love. “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (John 4:16). He doesn’t say, “You do this, and you don’t do that. You behave this way; you wear your hair a certain way.” There is nothing to do. You cannot do it, because every time you approach life in an operational

19 - Dr. Hora frequently spoke of the error of trying to be nice. For instance: “... we have to be careful never to be nice. We can be friendly because God is Love—this is not the same as being nice.” *One Mind*, Dialogue No.27, “Existentially Engaged.”

way, you are saying, “I am.” “I am doing this.” The nonpersonal individual doesn’t *do* anything. He dwells on what *is*: the Truth of Being. The Truth of Being is that we are transparencies for God. It is the quality of our being in this world that reveals whether we are enlightened or not. It is really so very simple. But if you look over the literature on spiritual teachings all over the world, people are being sidetracked by thousands of ways into operationalism, personalism, and conditional love. *Conditional* love.

Student: Has the question you asked earlier been answered? How can we tell if a teacher is awake?

Dr. Hora: Yes, you can tell, but I wasn’t asking about the teacher but about ourselves. (*Laughter*) You can be blind to the teacher also, but how can we know our condition? So, if you are an enlightened individual and somebody says, “You are a stupid jerk,” the enlightened man says, “Thank you very much.” (*Laughter*) “Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14) What is characteristic of the Christly mode of being-in-the-world? It is exactly the perfect love that Jesus embodied and manifested all the time.

Student: Is that what enabled him to talk about himself?

Dr. Hora: Of course.

Student: It was discernable to those that were interested, that he wasn’t pointing to himself.

Dr. Hora: The Pharisees were saying to him, “You are always bragging about yourself. If you are bearing witness unto yourself, then your witness is not true.” And he said: “Even if I bear witness to myself, it is still true because I know whence I came, but you do not know

where you are coming from.”²⁰ There was a different quality of his love. It is a nonpersonal, nonconditional benevolence. How many people do you know who love that way?

Student: A dog I know. (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Yes, that is true about your dog, Charlie. He is so loving. Even if you were to kick him, he would come and love you. I think Charlie thinks he is a person. (*Laughter*)

Student: The ideas that are shared with us here, if they don't fit into our perspective, our world view, it seems that we could never understand it. Sometimes it seems that things are just one step beyond reach, but I've found that if I contemplate these truths, something happens, and I suddenly begin to understand it. A couple of times you've said things I thought I could never understand. I can hear it, but I can't understand it. Then I think about it, I consider it and suddenly it changes. It gets easier and easier. It's like when you practice something on the piano, suddenly there it is. It astounds me that I can see that this is the way it is, whereas a few days before that I didn't think I could ever see it.

Dr. Hora: Right. That's why we recommend sincere contemplation of the Truth of Being. If you do that every day, as much as possible, you get a surprise that something has changed in your responses to the world. It's not that we can do something. It happens to us. What makes someone nasty? Practice.

Student: We could be “perfect love” if we practiced.

20 - “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.” (John 8:12-14)

Dr. Hora: Exactly. That's the point.

Student: That's a funny way to get the point across. (*Laughter*)

Student: I don't understand the word "practice." I always associate the word "practice" with doing something. Yet you just said it's something that happens to us.

Dr. Hora: The word "practice" extends itself to habits of thought. You know the First Principle of Metapsychiatry, which says: "Thou shalt have no other interests before the good of God, which is spiritual blessedness." Having interest in something is a practice, but it is a mental practice. It is not an operational practice. We are not saying you have to do something. You have to be mentally preoccupied with something, cherish it, appreciate it. That is why the whole world is meditating. Millions of people around the world are practicing meditation. All kinds of meditations more or less, but it is not an operational process. There is a book entitled *Can Meditation Be Done?*²¹ Do you remember this book? (*Laughter*) It addresses the worldwide operational misconception about meditation.

21 - *Can Meditation Be Done?*, by Thomas Hora. PAGL Foundation, Inc., 1986, 2013.

4

Attachment/Commitment vs. At-One-Ment



Student: Dr. Hora, you spoke last week about the pitfalls of attachment, and that we can't even be attached to God. I don't really understand this. You said that spiritual principles and biblical quotes are our lifeline. So, is "being committed" the replacement for "being attached?" Do we need to be committed to knowing the Truth?

Dr. Hora: What would be the difference between "being committed" and "being attached?" What happens when we become attached to God?

Student: You said last week that we would be "knowers." We would try to remember and memorize and maybe intellectualize but not really understand.

Dr. Hora: People who are attached to God have a certain name. They are called "religious." The religious are attached to God. To them, God is a certain priestly kind of entity, so it's not good to be attached to God.

Student: Does "being attached to God" then make God into a person?

Dr. Hora: Yes. Absolutely. Unfortunately, this is creating a lot of trouble in the world, because if you are attached to God, then anybody else who is also attached to God is your enemy, because his idea of God is something else. How can you be attached to something that

is non-dimensional? You can be attached to a chair or to another person or to lasagna. (*Laughter*) Now, “commitment” is another issue. What is commitment?

Student: It’s when you are willing to pay attention to something valid, even though other forces seem to be pulling you in a different direction, but you know how precious something is and you are just willing to stick to it.

Dr. Hora: Is commitment better than attachment?

Student: It sounds better. (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: I am afraid it is not better. We can be attached to an *object*. It can be animal or material. It is an object. We call it “object relations” in psychology. A “commitment” is to an *idea*, which is also a form of attachment. Religions and theologians. Theologians are committed to certain ways of interpreting the Bible. It is still in the domain of belief. When you are attached, you believe that what you are attached to has certain important advantages for you. Commitment is to an idea. It is an intellectual attachment, so that is not advisable.

Student: What does it mean when the Bible says, “Commit thy way to the Lord?” (Psalm 37:5)

Dr. Hora: The Bible, of course, is not Metapsychiatry, and Metapsychiatry is grateful for the biblical wisdom, but when we look at the words, we notice that for thousands of years people were committed and attached and detached, and it wasn’t working. It’s no solution. So where does that leave us? What else is there?

Student: The knowledge of God. It's not learning *about* God, but it's the knowledge *of* God. If we are seeking to understand the Truth of God's existence, that is very different from religion.

Dr. Hora: Yes. We are not trying to be committed. When the Communists were committed to Marx and Engels, there were intellectuals and philosophers who cherished these concepts. "Attachment" is more an emotional kind of clinging to something tangible. None of these things work. When they are masquerading as religion or enlightenment, you see that it doesn't work, because throughout history, religion didn't help people to be united and to be free and to be loving and to live harmoniously. So, what we are doing here is called "radical iconoclasm." "Radical iconoclasm" means that we destroy everything. Everything that people worship or are attached to or are committed to, we are destroying. Isn't that fantastic? How can we be so cruel? (*Laughing*) So many books. They all must be destroyed if we are interested in enlightenment. The Buddhists say, "If you meet the Buddha on the way, slay him."²² We are encouraged to commit "murder." It is radical, right?—the destruction of false gods. Whatever you can be *attached* to, whatever you are *committed* to, is a false god; but if you are a seeker, you seek the Light. You seek to understand the true nature of Reality so that you could be an integral part of that Reality. When you become enlightened, you become an aspect of God, and that is none of those things. Any questions?

Student: Where does "interest" come in? That's not the same as commitment.

Dr. Hora: Certainly not. It depends on what you are interested in. "Religion" involves the study of theology and the history of religions. These people are looking to being attached to something or to be committed to something—to have the power to influence

22 - Attributed to Linji Yixuan, China, 9th century CE.

persons, places, and things. They are all looking for power. What is an enlightened man looking for?

Student: What is “at-one-ment?”

Dr. Hora: If you are sincerely seeking enlightenment, you can actualize in your life this idea that “I and my Father are one.” That is at-one-ment. That’s good. This is neither attachment nor involvement in any way. Jesus so plainly expressed it, “I and my Father are one, I am in the Father, the Father is in me. And we’re having a ball!”²³ (*Laughing*)

Student: So, when the Bible talks about “casting out strongholds,”²⁴ is that a good description of what you said about radical iconoclasm?

Dr. Hora: Yes. Casting out false beliefs and “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” What does that mean? The “obedience of Christ” is a desire of the enlightened individual for complete identification with Jesus Christ. Everybody else throughout history was teaching attachment and commitment. Always trying to make “the two” somehow coalesce into one; however, the Zen master says that if correct understanding is sought about these issues, we can only say, “Not two.” We have to be careful. When you are on the right track and you seek enlightenment, you realize that Reality is monotheism. It is oneness. Reality is non-dual. There is no such thing as “me and God.” There is just God in me and me in God, “and the two shall be one,”²⁵ the realization of the

23 - “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30). “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” (John 14:11)

24 - “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

25 - “In *The Gospel According to Thomas*, Jesus is quoted as saying: ‘The Kingdom of God shall come when the inside will be outside...and the two shall be one...’” Thomas Hora, *Commentaries on Scripture*, “Adam’s Rib,” PAGL Foundation, 2013.

non-dual Reality — the non-dual nature of God, Reality. As long as there are “two,” you are just religious. That is probably worse than nothing, because all the warfare, intolerance, rivalry — everything evil can come from misunderstanding religion. If religion were understood, there would be no denominations. There would be no Catholics, no Jews, no Protestants. None of these fragmentations would really exist. There would be just the Truth of Being. So, when we pray, we sincerely contemplate the Truth of Being. I and my Father are one. That makes everything very simple, doesn't it? If the whole world would understand this oneness, there would be no wars, no jealousies, no rivalries, no hatreds, no attachments, no commitments. None of these complications would be there to torment us.

Once I saw a *Star Trek* episode. We've spoken of this before. There was a man who was half white and half black, and this man was hating everybody. He was wild with hatred, critical of everybody. They asked him, why are you so intolerant of people who are just white or brown? Then there was another man who was also black and white, but in reverse, and he hated him most. They asked him, “Why do you hate this man, he is just like you?” He said, “Oh, no, he is black on the wrong side!”²⁶ (*Laughter*)

Student: I don't understand how “commitment” is not really valid. It seems that while we are students we are easily distracted and that we always have choices between functioning on the human level or being committed to the principles we are attempting to know. So, it seems that commitment is valid. I sense that commitment is personal, but if we don't somehow summon some kind of personal initiative to be committed to principles rather than to be seduced by human interaction, those that are on the spiritual path are lost.

26 - “The Last Battlefield,” 1969, Season 3, Episode 15 of the original American science fiction television series, *Star Trek*.

Could you explain further why commitment is not valid? It seems so necessary.

Dr. Hora: In commitment there is the duality of the subject and the object. In Reality there is no duality. Reality is non-dual.

Student: It does seem that in the beginning, some energy is required to keep paying attention. Something is required to keep paying attention.

Dr. Hora: Well, it's not forbidden.

Student: I think what you are saying is that the Truth can only be realized through interest, but with an element of commitment, where one is using personal will to overcome one's real interest, this is something else. (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Sincere seekers after the Truth get confused and misguided by these elegant words, because philosophers and psychologists think that these are good words. "It's good to be committed." "It's good to be attached." It's good to be this and that. Just because unenlightened man lives on a human level, it doesn't mean that he *must* rise beyond the human level. However, if you don't reach that transcendence, you've got nothing, and you are nowhere. You are just living in a dualistic world where everything is just a dream. You never get beyond the dream. In absolute Reality there is neither object nor subject. There is neither self nor others. There is hardly anything. (*Laughing*) But it is good to know these things, because millions of sincere seekers after the Truth are studying philosophies and esoteric knowledge. They are studying and studying and debating and not getting anywhere. It is just remarkable how millions of people don't get it. All the effort is wasted because they don't know that Reality is non-dual. Therefore, to try to exist on the human level, as was pointed out, well, it's not forbidden. It is not

forbidden, but you are not getting anywhere. You are just treading water. To get beyond this, we have to keep in mind that what we are after is the realization of the Truth of Being, of Reality, and that's the real issue. Once you see what Jesus so easily and nicely pointed out, then you are making progress. I and my Father are one. You no longer think about two levels of existence. You no longer think on the human level because you know that is just a dream. You are focusing in on the spiritual plane of the Truth where there is no duality. There is no self and other. The Zen master says, "In the realm of Reality there is neither self nor other; there is only that which really is." Is you is or is you ain't?²⁷ (*Laughter*)

Student: This past week I read something that seems to say that there is an "eternal self," an eternal identity, and a "temporal self." Then I read something else where the author is talking about the "I," with a capital "I," and then there seems to be a "me." I don't understand that. I guess the test is to realize that there is only One. It always seems there is a great gap. Even in deep moments of contemplation there seems to be a gap. Does one eventually lose the sense of temporal identity?

Dr. Hora: Your reasoning reminds me of a mathematician who says, "Two and two is more or less four." There is no law against being religious or committed or fanatical or hostile. No way. It's all right if you want to go in that direction. It's like treading water. You are not really swimming. You are just moping around.

Student: I have an aunt. I will never forget what I noticed about her when I was a young girl. She was a very nosy person and always a comparative thinker. She has always had to see what the other person has that she doesn't have. She prides herself on being a very religious person and going to church every week. And if you can

²⁷ - Dr. Hora often used this expression made popular from the song "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" by Billy Austin and Louis Jordan for the movie, *Follow the Boys*, 1944.

understand treading water, you can see it in an individual like that. Today she is still a very nosy person and a comparative thinker. She seems to think she is more religious, and that's it. Nothing's happened.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Nothing happened to her. People don't even know what religion is. I was watching a television program yesterday called, "Mind Extension University." Well, they were trying to figure out what religion is. They couldn't. It is just a study with a commitment to certain traditions and religious theological books and interpreting the history of religion on the basis that Reality is dualistic. They believe that in the beginning there was good and evil. That's the belief. There never *was* any evil, even though millions of people are being murdered. But we cannot say that is evil. God never made evil. Man creates his own experiences of evil because of ignorance of non-dual Reality.

Student: If God didn't create evil, how could evil have come about without evil having been around?

Dr. Hora: Evil has never come about.

Student: It seems to be in physicalness.

Dr. Hora: Yes. We can *experience* evil. We all do, but that doesn't mean there is such a thing as evil. It's a dream. Our experiences are dreams, and we have to wake up by contemplating the Truth of Being and seeking to understand what Jesus was saying, "I and my Father are one."

Student: So, if one is not manifesting God, one's thoughts immediately turn to ignorance?

Dr. Hora: Yes. Of course. Ignorance has the majority vote.

[Blank pause in tape]

Student: ...lots of chanting going on. The way he took a glass of water —you knew he was completely present.

Dr. Hora: He wasn't very thirsty. (*Laughter*)

Student: No, I didn't mean that. His actions were very slow and purposeful. Whatever it was. There was just something about that. Whatever he would do, he would do fully.

Dr. Hora: We are not in the habit of functioning that way. We prefer to function like the Goddess Shiva, who had seven hands functioning simultaneously, independently of each other. There is a saying, "Be here now." Certainly, if we learn not to be distracted, it contributes to our integrity and to our sincerity. The quality of our lives improves, and the effect of our work must be very good.

Student: But the key to healing is sincerity with selflessness. What about the people who were crippled, the epileptics and the others who were suffering who called on Jesus to help them? They were really interested in getting rid of their infirmities and becoming happy. It didn't appear they were interested in Metapsychiatry. Would you explain that?

Dr. Hora: To begin with, you must never judge anything by appearances, just because somebody has a certain physical, mental, or emotional problem. Maybe if they would be taught to be sincere and be focused on one issue at a time, it would help them in some way. Nobody has ever tried it. (*Laughing*) I heard a British writer being interviewed. He was asked, "What about Christianity? Are you a Christian? Isn't Christianity the solution to the world's problems?" And he said, "It's never been tried." So, what did he mean by that? Christianity has never been tried.

Student: The true spirit of what Jesus was teaching was not really understood.

Dr. Hora: Nobody is even trying to be sincere — Christian or Jew or Muslim. Sincerity is not a very fashionable or appreciated quality of being. But we could try. Try it, you'll like it.²⁸ (*Laughter*)

Student: Is the Japanese tea ceremony an example of sincerity?

Dr. Hora: It could be. I never participated in one, but I've watched it. There are many subtleties in the ceremony. It didn't occur to me as an example of sincerity, but of graciousness. They are focusing attention on being very graceful with the pottery and with the brush and the making of the tea and the setting. It's nice aesthetics. It is an aesthetic form of meditation.

Over the weekend I spoke with a lady who had been studying Metapsychiatry for a few years, and I always had misgivings about her sincerity, and I didn't want to hurt her feelings. She hadn't been coming for a while, and this time she called up and reported that lately she had had two episodes of a heart attack on the golf course. I remember a few years back she also had a heart seizure on the golf course, and I tried to warn her, "Listen, you cannot play golf. It is very dangerous for you to do that," but she did it anyway, because it was a social occasion to be on the golf course and play golf. The insincerity is driving her into dangerous situations. She can kill herself with golf. So, it is very important to be sincere under all circumstances. There is nothing wrong with golf, but it is dangerous to be insincere about any kind of activity we get involved with. You can play golf if you are sincere about it.

Student: Sincere about your interest in golf, not interest in interaction. Is that what you mean?

28 - Popular slogan from a commercial for a pain reliever.

Dr. Hora: Yes. That is correct.

Student: Is being issue oriented a way of being focused on being sincere?

Dr. Hora: Yes. Absolutely.

Student: Because the motive is purer when we are issue oriented than when we are not issue oriented.

Dr. Hora: It could be anything. There is a Zen monk who wrote about dishwashing as an occasion of sincerity and truthfulness.²⁹ Surprisingly enough it is not difficult to wash the dishes that way, except some people would say, “Well, that’s boring, and I don’t want to do boring chores.” Okay, you are entitled to think that way, but we have to be focused and nonpersonal and sincere no matter where we are, no matter what we do. It would be very helpful to anyone to cultivate this discipline.

Student: I was blessed this weekend with a lifting of thoughts of blame and criticism and hatred. I have heard about “perfect love”³⁰ here as long as I can remember, and I was interested in actualizing that always, because I can appreciate what it is, but I never could actualize that universally in my life. And I suddenly had this awareness that my consciousness was free from thoughts of criticism and blame and malice and things like that, and I became aware that this must be what “perfect love” is. My consciousness was filled with nonpersonal, nonconditional benevolence for the sake of God. There wasn’t even a person there. There was nothing there but God. I said, “This must be what Dr. Hora means when he talks about ‘perfect love.’” I knew how to say it and think about

29 - See: “The Essential Discipline - Washing the Dishes to Wash the Dishes”, *The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation*, by Thich Nhat Hanh. Boston: Beacon Press, 1975.

30 - “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.” 1 John 4:18

it, and I was just dumbfounded that after all this time I could be blessed by knowing what it is you are really talking about. I am trying to understand in the line of what happened that suddenly I was blessed by an understanding of something. It was wonderful. Was it sincerity? What was it? It's mysterious to me, because how could you explain something like this? It's so important and I can't even explain it.

Dr. Hora: Yes. The important thing is to wash the dishes. (*Laughter*) Sincerity is really a great thing. It brings us into meaningful contact with the Truth. If we are sincerely interested in being sincere, we discover the Truth of Being, and that has very beneficial effects in our lives. It's a good idea never to forget this seemingly minor issue.

Student: Is it lack of sincerity that makes all the interaction that we experience so empty, because we know we are not being sincere?

Dr. Hora: That's right. You are absolutely right. When we are sincere, we cannot afford to be selfish, hypocritical, manipulative, hateful, deceitful, etc. We have to be very simple. It's beautiful whenever you meet someone who has this quality of sincerity. Such an individual appears to us very beautiful and communicating with him or her is very pleasant. On the other hand, I just spoke to a lady who had difficulty breathing during her private session, and there was such tension around her, such an uneasy feeling in the whole room, because she was not sincere. She was trying to pull the wool over my eyes.³¹ Some people have a habit of pulling the wool over the eyes of people with whom they are dealing.

Student: I was talking to my daughter on the phone, and she was wearing a phone headset. It was a long conversation, and afterward she said, "I just washed the kitchen floor, and I cooked, and a few

31 - An idiom for tricking or deceiving someone.

other things. Mom, you should get a phone like that.” So, while we were talking, she was doing all these things, and at that time I thought it would be a good idea. (*Laughter*) So you are right. I do many things at the same time.

Dr. Hora: Of course, this is habitual in life in the United States. Most everybody is multitasking. It’s a new development. It characterizes the consciousness.

Student: It’s no wonder we ruminate all the time. That’s multitasking, too.

Dr. Hora: That’s right.

Student: I was just thinking about Jesus. He was very sincere.

Dr. Hora: Well, that is what we have *learned* about him. We cannot say that he was sincere. We can only say that this is the information which we have received about his character. Here again, we have to be very truthful. We don’t know anything about him firsthand. Whatever we think about him was handed down to us one way or another. It is just information. It is not direct knowledge. Of course, there are areas where we realize what he was talking about or what the religions are teaching about him. If we can come across a direct experience of a value which is handed down to us through religious teachings, sure, we can say, “Well, we heard this and we believe it, and I have even experienced the benefits of adhering to such rumors about Jesus.” It’s a funny thing, sometimes when you listen to the preachers on television and they talk about Jesus as a personal acquaintance. “He does this, and he wants you to act that way, and he has done that,” as if he were living during the previous week. If you are stuck on Truth, you are very careful not to report something that you only *heard* about or that you were just told about, as if you gained an insight about his character through a

direct experience. But when the preacher talks about God or Jesus as a personal acquaintance, he is lying, of necessity. It is so silly. It is like a mother talking about Santa Claus to her children. There is an actress on television who has a favorite saying, “God will get you for this.” How does she know? (*Laughing*)

Student: What’s the difference between “concentration” and “sincerity?”

Like an artist who is involved in one task or even doing the dishes — very involved in one task. Sometimes being involved is not tiring.

Dr. Hora: Concentration sounds more like an effort not to be insincere.

(*Laughing*) It’s an effort to at least make an impression of sincerity. If we are interested in being sincere, then we lose interest in everything extraneous to that moment. In order to wash the dishes, you have to wash the dishes. And if it’s an effort to do it, then you are struggling with the problem of truthfulness and insincerity, and you do not have the freedom of functioning on that level.

Student: Talking about Jesus and what we read in the Bible, when we are truly sincere, especially in verbal communication, it’s usually very simple, very direct.

Dr. Hora: Yes. I was just touching on that subject, that if we speak sincerely with someone or confront the situation, it is very simple and very clear and quite pleasant. There is no anxiety, there are no problems, and no fear of being misunderstood. And there is no effort on our part to make sure that somebody understands, because that is an attempt to influence. It is just simply issue-oriented communication where the issue is clarity. It simplifies life in every area, so you picked the right subject. It makes everything simpler and better.

5

Sincerity

Student: Dr. Hora, in a private session with you the issue of “sincerity” was raised. You said that if we wait to be inspired to be sincere, we will have to wait a long time. I would like to explore this more. How can we be sincere?

Dr. Hora: It’s really amazing. Such a bright fellow. Only once in ten years do we get a student who will ask this question, “How do you be sincere?”

Student: I forgot the answer! (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: How do you be sincere? Are you waiting for God to do it for you? You could say, “I can stop breathing now because God is in control of my life, so I am not going to breathe.” That is carrying religiosity a little too far, don’t you think?

Student: Dr. Hora, do you think maybe what happens is, when we come here, we commit ourselves to watching our thoughts and we realize how insincere we may have been for many years? Then suddenly, we realize that, to this point, we have not been sincere because we have been trained not to be. I think, *Okay, from now on I am going to be sincere*, and yet I keep realizing I’m not being sincere.

Dr. Hora: What do you mean, “We are trained not to be sincere?”

Student: Maybe not “trained,” but as children we pick it up.

Dr. Hora: In other words, you grow up thinking that it's smart to be a liar. You believe that from childhood on, the way to get along in life is to be a good liar. Being insincere means being a liar, a cheat, right? Isn't it mind-boggling that anybody could defend the idea of insincerity? How is that possible?

Student: Isn't it possible to deceive oneself without being fully aware that one is deceiving oneself?

Dr. Hora: Of course, it is possible to deceive oneself, but if you deceive yourself, you are already insincere. This student thinks that perhaps being insincere is inherent in our humanity, and everybody has to be insincere unless, by the grace of God, he goes crazy and starts telling the truth. Isn't it mind boggling?

Student: The issue of knowing whether one is being sincere is a matter of being aware of what one's real interest in life is, as opposed to what one pretends to be to others.

Dr. Hora: I don't understand this. Can anybody help?

Student: What seems to be a problem with me is recognizing that I am not really as sincerely interested in the good of God as I either pretend to be or want to be. I seem to be sincerely interested in something other than the good of God. Sincerity has something to do with what we are interested in.

Dr. Hora: If you are insincere, that is a sign that you are interested in cheating, lying, deceiving, and taking advantage of people. So where are we? What's the sense of being here—or anywhere, for that matter? You see, there are “bullshit artists” who develop the art of insincerity to a point where it seems natural to them. It is absolutely natural to pull the wool over people's eyes, to lie, to deceive, to take advantage of things and to never speak the truth.

Now imagine if this becomes your mode of being in the world. Where are you? How can you survive and who would want to talk to you?

Student: I saw a celebrity being interviewed on TV. He had been accused of murdering his wife but proclaimed his innocence. He admitted that he was guilty of being corrupt and he tried to make light of the whole incident. He said that the press was being too aggressive, that he and his wife had had a domestic quarrel but that the whole thing was over with. One can understand that someone in the limelight would be uncomfortable with all this attention, but it was impressive how glib he was at dismissing it.

Dr. Hora: I remember. This is a very serious disease, especially among psychologically sophisticated people. Some years ago, when I was still a young psychologist, everybody was suffering from “anxiety.” People were writing books about anxiety, the nature of anxiety, and the therapy of anxiety. Most books that were written those days were about anxiety. The prevailing theme of semi-educated people was a concern of how to hide their anxiety. The books gave advice about various techniques for being calm. There were courses in overcoming anxiety, controlling anxiety, hiding anxiety. Everybody was learning to cope with anxiety. They thought that there was nothing wrong with being insincere as long as you could hide the meaning of the insincerity. This is the tragedy of millions of people. When you don’t consider the meanings of problems in your life, then if there are symptoms like anxiety, a phobia, or emotional problems, you are just interested in how to control it. You are not interested in facing up to it and being healed of it. Nobody understands that insincerity will always make you anxious because, if you are insincere, you are a thief and a liar and a cheat. It’s normal. I remember it was once fashionable that all you had to do was develop a strong ego to control your anxiety. Everybody was wasting energy in achieving this power — “ego power” they

called it—to control their anxiety. If you could control it, then nobody would notice that you were being insincere, or unethical or a thief. If they don't notice, there's no problem, right?

Student: Because appearance is the most important thing, and if you show by your appearance that you are not anxious, nobody will know that you are anxious.

Dr. Hora: Right. It's all that matters. It's unbelievable, when we look back at this, we see how widespread this was—and still is, even in religion and in science. Today it was revealed in the news that a scientist falsified the results of his research about breast cancer. Now what in the world did he think he was doing? He was getting paid for finding an answer to this terrible curse, this disease. He must have been thinking, *I can lie about it and give false data about achievements of my research. If people don't know it, then it's okay.* Meanwhile people are dying. But he looked “good” because he had presented the world with new “facts” of scientific research. So perverted is our world that these things are happening. Other research projects have also been revealed to show that the researchers consciously falsified the results of their research, not caring that people are dying! They are after the Nobel Prize. They want to be recognized. Isn't it amazing? Unbelievable! So depraved. These educated scientists were thought of as being honest and having integrity. Grants, money, and rewards were being thrown at them. They were respected because they were scientists but look what they were doing! The idea of sincerity has become preposterous to many.

Some years ago, there was a student of Metapsychiatry who had limited education and did not have an ethical upbringing, so he was smiling when he said, “Only a fool would bother being sincere.” Now, here, today, is a guy who is educated, and he is asking this question about how you can be sincere unless God is doing it for

you. So, is it God's fault if we are not sincere? What do you make of that? Are we studying spiritual values in order to *pretend* that we are honest?

Student: Sometimes it seems that we want something, and we want it more than anything else. That is not a valid mode of being.

Dr. Hora: There are such people, right? (*Laughter*)

Student: Then we are stuck with being insincere because in that way we are perverted. We can be well educated. We can know what it means to be sincere, but when it comes to certain issues, we have a blind spot. We want it and we just don't care. We want it! So, in that way we are all insincere as long as there is that blind spot.

Dr. Hora: So, what is the answer you give to somebody who says, "I am really, sincerely desirous to be sincere? How do you be sincere?" We gave the aforementioned student the answer. It finished him in this group. He eventually dropped out, deceiving himself, and returned to snorting cocaine. People think, *It must not be bad because, after all, elegant people are doing it. They have cocaine parties, they snort and have a good time,* —and they are studying Metapsychiatry! How in the world can you combine that? Drug addiction is increasing and people get consistently more fraudulent and debased because they rationalize, *God has created me. God is in control of the universe. Why doesn't he take care of my insincerity?*

Student: So, we can't use that as an excuse. We have to recognize that our "want" is instilling us with the wrong ideas. We can't use that as an excuse not to be sincere. Is that what you're saying?

Dr. Hora: If you are looking for an excuse to be insincere, you might as well go home. It is absurd. It doesn't make any sense.

Student: I recognize that the key to being healed is through being sincerely interested in being here for God

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: My concern is the fact that I don't seem to be sincerely interested in being here for God. On the one hand, I am suffering. On the other hand, I seem to see the key to being healed but yet I don't seem to be *sincerely* interested in being here for God. Now that's a dilemma. I can recognize that perhaps I had been waiting for inspiration to become sincere, and you had said that you can't do it yourself.

Dr. Hora: Absolutely you *can* do it yourself. You just have to assume responsibility for yourself. Nobody can twist your arm to be sincere.

Student: In the past I remember you responded to a student who was talking about recognizing our motives who asked, "What's next?" And you said, "Maybe a painful problem will come along and make you more sincere."

Dr. Hora: Yes, but one would find a devious way of getting around that pain. Everybody is trying to be clever enough to get around the Truth.

Student: You said, "Take responsibility." I never heard you say that before. Do you mean we need to take responsibility for our thoughts? Is that what you were referring to?

Dr. Hora: Yes. Our thoughts and everything else life throws at us. We have to live an authentic, genuine, sincere life. There is no getting away from it. As long as we are insincere, we will always have troubles, symptoms of all kinds, interaction problems, hatred, fear.

That period of concern about “anxiety” was a huge thing. People were trying to find a way around the problem of sincerity. Actually, that is what psychology is in a nutshell: an endeavor to find a way around the problem of sincerity. We see this in religions. Some religious people know how to pretend that they are righteous and can pull the wool over people’s eyes. They’re presenting themselves as “religious” or “spiritual.” You hear a lot about “spirituality” nowadays, but these people who talk about it so much are only trying to appear to be religious or “spiritual.” That’s what it means if someone talks a blue streak about being “spiritual.” It’s sad how twisted people can become and how it spreads like wildfire. That’s all there is to psychology. You learn how to be insincere, manipulative, pretending in such a way that people wouldn’t guess that you are insincere. You yourself may not be aware of it! So, you might say that psychology is the art of bullshitting in an imperceptible, self-righteous manner, giving certain clichéd answers to life’s problems and pretending to be honest.

Student: This psychology stuff is so prevalent. How do you deal with individuals that are insincere?

Student: My husband was telling me today about meeting with someone who was very restrained and seemed to watch every word. It was apparent to my husband that this man was so uncomfortable he couldn’t wait to end the conversation and yet they have a business dealing. He asked me, “What do you think?” It didn’t occur to me to say that I know the other individual and he is very insincere, but he is well-meaning. He does the best he can, and I really didn’t know how to respond to him. He was aware of something going on that he couldn’t put his finger on. He does business with him. So, what does he do?

Dr. Hora: Well, watch out. You have to be very careful. If there is a sense of anxiety, embarrassment, insecurity, then we have to ask

ourselves, “What is it that I am talking about? How am I responding to this situation?” If we experience anxiety, embarrassment, loss of words or if we are uneasy, it means that anxiety is operating inside of us, in our consciousness. We are not being sincere. So, all it takes is to stand firm and say, “I am going to be sincere even if I lose \$100,000. I will not give up my integrity. It is not worth it. I will not lie. I will not pretend anything. I will just be forthright and loving.” But do not compromise your integrity with people in any situation because you are just hurting yourself.

Tonya Harding³² was a good example. She knew how to skate. She wanted to be a champion, so she went all the way to commit a crime to gain an advantage. It didn’t matter that she would be regarded as a criminal for the rest of her life. It’s a good example of how the integrity of an individual can be corrupted.

Student: By “taking responsibility” do you mean not allowing anyone to seduce us, provoke us, intimidate us? This tends to contribute to us being insincere when we try to cope with it.

Dr. Hora: Yes. It is impossible to be healthy if we are not sincere. It is not possible, but there are people who say, “I can make it. I can succeed in these things.”

Student: So, how can I be sincerely interested in being here for God? The issue is “being sincerely interested.” For some reason I just don’t understand this.

Dr. Hora: I don’t know how to help you.

Student: The only way we can be interested in the good of God is by realizing that it is the only way to be. There is no viable alternative.

32 - Tonya Harding was a competitor in the 1994 Winter Olympics figure skating competitions. Her ex-husband, in an effort to give Tonya an advantage, orchestrated a physical assault on a competitor before an event.

Dr. Hora: “Viable” is really the right word.

Student: I heard a well-known minister say, “God is, no matter what,” and that, therefore, we need to condition ourselves through being diligent and watching our thoughts so that we can be “in the flow.” That doesn’t sound right.

Dr. Hora: Perhaps he is trying to find a technique of getting closer to God or something like that. Isn’t it fantastic that such a simple issue like truth-telling, being forthright and refusing to lie is such a problem?

Student: Is “sincerity” the same as “honesty” and “forthrightness”?

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: So, if you admit that you are not sincerely interested in God, to that degree you are being sincere.

Dr. Hora: We are not asking that you be interested in God. Today we are talking about being interested in sincerity. You don’t need God in order to be sincere.

Student: You just have to be honest.

Dr. Hora: Yes. That’s right. We didn’t talk about “being interested in God.”

Student: That is what *I* am talking about.

Dr. Hora: Then you are confusing the issues. Nobody is teaching you to be religious here. We are not learning to be religious. We are learning to live by ethical principles.

Student: What kind of quality is sincerity? It's not a spiritual quality.

Dr. Hora: It is a spiritual quality because it is the truth. The truth is the quintessential value of spirituality, but you don't have to be religious. You just have to be truthful. Hora talks about God, but this doesn't mean that Hora is religious. In some religions they wear certain clothing or jewelry to show they are religious, but underneath they can lie as much as they want. Don't confuse Metapsychiatry with religious dogma.

Student: What does it mean in the Bible, "Thou art a liar and the father of it?"³³

Dr. Hora: It means that God didn't create you to be a liar. You are the producer of these lies. You have to assume responsibility for the lies which you are expressing.

Student: Is that what "personality" is or is that just confusing the issue?

Dr. Hora: "Personality" is a special way of being a liar. (*Laughter*) You want to look good while you are lying. That's all there is to it.

Student: So, what good is it to sincerely say, "I am not sincerely interested in the good of God?"

Dr. Hora: It's good for nothing because you are not dealing with the issues. God is not a *prima donna*. He is not asking you to be interested in him. God is Truth and if you value your integrity and truthfulness, that is all that is needed. You don't have to be a theologian to be sincere. I haven't yet met a theologian who was sincere.

³³ -"Ye are of your father the devil...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him...for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44)

Student: It sounds like this student is restricting the sincerity issue to “being interested in God,” whereas you are broadening it to say that it relates to much more in your life than being interested in God.

Dr. Hora: There is no virtue in “being interested in God.” It means nothing. When you put it this way, you are implying that God is vain, and that He wants personal attention. However, you can be interested in *godliness*. That’s different. Godliness is a quality of God which man is here to express. It’s very simple.

Student: So, the idea of “radical sincerity” that we talk about as a prerequisite to prayer —

Dr. Hora: It’s a prerequisite for everything. You cannot get along without it. Without sincerity, life is a sham and nothing means anything. Nobody will ever believe what you say, and you will be full of anxiety and embarrassment and ashamed of yourself because you are lying. Go to church and you are lying. You go into business, you are lying. Have you ever experienced anxiety? It’s from the lying.

Student: If we want something then, is it also a lie because we want the wrong thing? (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Is there such a thing as wanting the *right* thing? The question is, “Is you is, or is you ain’t?”³⁴ You are nothing. You ain’t never was nothing! (*Laughter*)

Student: What does it mean “to be sincere” in daily life, as with family, acquaintances, liking/not liking, “becoming buddies” – that type of thing? Everybody is looking for interaction and relationships.

³⁴ - A popular expression originating from the song “Is You Is or Is You Ain’t My Baby?” by Billy Austin and Louis Jordan from the movie, Follow the Boys, 1944.

People ask personal questions. “How do you feel?” “Am I making you feel uncomfortable?” It seems hard to be sincere sometimes.

Dr. Hora: That’s what they all say, but we are saying that it is very hard not to be sincere.

Student: Today I made a presentation to a large New York City agency about recruiting employees for them. One of the members of the examining committee was a Hispanic gentleman who asked me how I would recruit minority candidates for various divisions within the agency. I said, “I don’t recruit minority candidates. I recruit the most qualified candidates.” Well, they looked at me as if to say, “What is this?” and I said, “That would be reverse discrimination and we don’t discriminate.” Well, you could see everyone pulling back from the conference table. My colleague at the presentation, who happens to be Black, immediately spoke up and apparently said “the right things” about how we can “discriminate,” if you will. Everyone began smiling again and there I was. When you said that we must be sincerely interested in walking away from \$100,000, I had my opportunity to do it. I just kept quiet and allowed somebody else to say what the committee wanted to hear.

Dr. Hora: It is God that you are talking about. It’s God that saved your situation because you and your colleague were given the right words and the right support. Nobody had to lie. You didn’t have to lie. You were sincere and to the point. So, you see, no problem!

Student: The committee wanted me to discriminate.

Dr. Hora: You bring out the truth, a value which is valid, and it is also legal. You don’t lose on such a basis, and if you *would* lose, you just take your loss and go home because your integrity is more important than money or anything else.

Student: You're saying that "being sincere" means "telling the truth." In our daily conversations with people, I think I get confused by what is "truth." For instance, what if someone asks, "Do you like my dress?" If I say, "I don't like your dress," then I've said something that is going to be hurtful and will bring discord. Perhaps it's more of an interaction situation than if I say, "Yes," or don't say anything. The question of whether you like or don't like the dress has nothing to do with giving an opinion.

Dr. Hora: Right.

Student: In our daily lives it seems then that we are constantly in this sort of "sea of insincerity" because the conversation is usually interpersonal. It seems very difficult to think in terms of any exchange between two individuals that isn't shrouded in insincerity.

Dr. Hora: First of all, you have to reach a point where you like all dresses. (*Laughter*) What is there not to like? (*Laughter*) The truth is we like every dress. It's beautiful in its own way. You know that song?³⁵ When we say, "I like your dress," we are not saying that the dress is nice, we say we are saying, "It's good to like *you*." It's good to be good. So, when you say, "I like your dress," then you are being good, and it's good to be good. There is no problem.

Student: It's learning to like every dress. (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Absolutely.

Student: So, is it sincere to respond to an individual who asks, "Do you like my dress?" If you want to respond in a way that is going to make them feel good, that seems insincere.

35 - "Everything is beautiful in its own way," from the song, "Everything is Beautiful," by Ray Stevens, 1970.

Dr. Hora: If somebody asks, “Do you like my dress?” she is not talking about the dress. We appreciate all of God’s children no matter what the dress looks like. We don’t have to be experts on couture. (*Laughter*) We just love our neighbor as ourselves³⁶, and it’s good to be good. When you say that the dress is beautiful, you are saying, “You are beautiful.” It is sincere because when you are a loving individual you are interested in helping people to be happy. You don’t have to give detailed expert opinions.

Student: In this case you are asked to judge.

Dr. Hora: Right. You don’t discourage them by saying, “Don’t ask me that.” I have never seen a dress I didn’t like. (*Laughter*)

Student: Wasn’t there a Zen teacher who used to say, “When you are enlightened every day is a good day.” I guess we can expand it to say, “When you are enlightened, every dress is a good dress.” (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: You don’t have to wait until you become enlightened. (*Laughter*) You can be good right away — loving, expressive, accommodating, and generous. Every time you help somebody to be happy, you would be happy too. Life would be beautiful. We don’t have to lie. To a loving consciousness, there is always beauty.

Student: But you do have to be careful that if you are responding to the person in a loving way that you are not also thinking, *Maybe you are going to like me better.*

Dr. Hora: Sure. Thinking, *You are going to like me if I like the dress,* is interaction thinking.

36 - “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31)

Student: We don't have to be enlightened to be sincerely interested in the good of God. We don't have to be enlightened to be interested in godliness.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: Just interested in godliness.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Sure.

Student: We don't have to wait to be enlightened to lead a godly life.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: With the example of the dress, if anyone asks us a question to get us to confirm an opinion, if we are interested in responding sincerely, we can respond in a more transcendent manner which is not interactive, right? Because if we give an opinion back, that is "interaction." When you commented, "I never saw a dress I didn't like," that's not really giving an opinion, yet it is a loving response which puts an end to the nonsense. So, it's the pure motivation and the idea of being sincere that allows us to respond in a loving way.

Dr. Hora: Of course. No problem.

Student: We don't really have to worry about avoiding interaction thinking, we only need to focus on being sincere and our motivation in responding to individuals. We don't have to be focused on interaction.

Dr. Hora: We cannot respond to "individuals." The moment we respond to "individuals" there is interaction. We respond to an *issue* and then there is no problem. Is this clear to everyone?

Student: I find quite often, particularly at work, that if I am in a discussion, I must ask a couple of questions before I even understand what is being discussed. You can run into insincere questions in communications.

Dr. Hora: Yes. So, we learn how to respond in a genuine way, by focusing our responses not to individuals but to *issues*.” It’s good to be good. We don’t say, “You are good.” “You’d better be good.” “You” – the word “you” is not helpful. We talk issues. There is really nothing else but issues. Everything “personal” is just a dream.

6

Spaceship Earth

Student: You always speak about “perfect love” and “being loving.” I find that difficult because I am often defensive. Generally, when we go out, I find that there is a sense of wanting to protect myself, my consciousness, when dealing with people. I sense a defensiveness rather than perfect love. I don’t know how to move beyond this defensiveness. I have to be careful about what I’m saying or what I’m not saying.

Dr. Hora: What are we defending when we are defensive?

Student: I feel like I have to defend myself against my own interaction thoughts. That type of thing. I get more concerned with that than being loving.

Dr. Hora: Could you tell us a little more about this defensiveness?

Student: No. It’s just a general sense I have—I’m assuming I’m going to run into situations where I’m criticized and I’m shielding myself against this.

Dr. Hora: There is good defensiveness and there is sick defensiveness. How do we know this? What is “sick defensiveness?” Right now, there is a mother at a Connecticut hospital who is desperately ill. She was taken there in an ambulance in the middle of the night with alarming symptoms, and the whole staff was working very hard to find out what is wrong with her, and they couldn’t find anything. So, they gave up and transferred her to another hospital, and now

more doctors are doing dozens of expensive tests on her trying to find something to blame the symptoms on. Until now, they have not found anything.

The daughter of this woman is a student of Metapsychiatry, so she was in touch with me and asked, “What can I do? What can I do? I am helpless.” The mother is tremendously sick with all kinds of alarming symptoms and the whole family is living in panic over it, and there is nothing they can find. None of the tests show anything.

Student: What does this have to do with defensiveness?

Dr. Hora: That’s a good question. I was just asking myself that. *(Laughter)* You see, the essence of this woman’s problem is, she is extremely defensive against other people’s thoughts and opinions. She is a self-righteous individual who has always tried to convince people that she is right, and that she knows everything. The doctors got into a hassle with the daughter, who is also a very knowledgeable person, and the mother and daughter fight about who is right, and the doctors are trying to pick sides and find out who is right. This is a very upsetting disease. Have you ever seen somebody who is obsessed with the idea of being right? If it is important to you to be right, your whole life depends on being right, and you can get into a—how do they say? — “a funk?” You can get into a funk over being right, and when you are in a funk, your whole system is in a state of upheaval. You find yourself hating your loved ones who don’t agree with you or who think that you are not right. She is putting all her vital energies into the battle to be right, to prove to everybody and even the doctors that she is right. The whole problem is that they got into a funk and cannot extricate themselves from this clinch—the mother and the daughter and the doctors and the relatives and the husbands, because nobody can afford to admit to ignorance. You see, if you are self-righteous, you can never say, “I am sorry.” Have you seen Archie Bunker struggle with

this problem?³⁷ He had to admit to his wife that he was sorry. He couldn't do it. He tried all kinds of ways, and she insisted that he say, "I am sorry," but he couldn't do it. His self-esteem depended on being right. So, they just got too tired of arguing about it. Now, this mother is defensive to a pathological degree about being right, and everybody is trying to convince her that she isn't right. This kind of defensiveness is a mental disease. We say defensiveness is a problem—certainly it can be a terrible problem, but there is healthy defensiveness too. What would that be? What would "healthy defensiveness" be?

Student: Could it be protecting ourselves against invalid ideas and interactive thinking?

Dr. Hora: Exactly. Have you ever heard such a thing, that we have to defend ourselves? How do we defend ourselves effectively so that we don't get sick in the meantime?

Student: You just said that if God is more important to you than the thoughts of others, then that would make you never lose your joy or your peace.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Right. So, if we understand the Truth of Being, if we understand God, if we understand that we have a right to defend ourselves against evil thoughts coming from other people who want to influence us to believe something that isn't true, what happens? Religious wars can develop if you don't know what you are defending. It is not your self-respect or your personality, but your consciousness that you are defending. You are defending it from being invaded by invalid ideas and the influence pressuring you to agree with it. When Galileo discovered that the Earth was round and moving around the Sun, the whole Catholic church descended on him, including the Pope, and pressured him to say that he was

37 - Archie Bunker was a fictional character in the 1970s television series, *All in the Family*.

wrong. He resisted until they threatened to burn him at the stake. They actually came together and consulted with all the hierarchies to put him on trial in Rome and execute him through fire. At that point he said, “What the heck? Why should I insist that I am right? Let them think what they want. I don’t have to defend myself.” So, he said to the Pope, “Okay, have it your way.” He added a little thing, “nevertheless”—“You are right, but nevertheless, the Earth is moving around the Sun.” He said it secretly so as not to provoke them, but you see, it was important to him to publicly defend what he knew was true. But he didn’t have to do that. It was dangerous to do. So, this kind of defensiveness can be blown up and it can result in all kinds of tragedies. It is all right to be defensive—just don’t insist too much. (*Laughing*) Don’t insist. Give people the right to be wrong. That’s the solution. We respect people’s right to be wrong. In such instances we would be fighting their opinions and their beliefs. This creates a lot of anxiety in them, and hostility rises, and everybody suffers.

Student: It seems that when you are communicating with others, everybody always has an agenda of trying to influence you in one way or another. It does seem sometimes you have to protect yourself.

Dr. Hora: Yes, but do it the right way. (*Laughing*). The Zen Master, of course, gives us the right advice, “Above all, cherish no opinions.” You are safe if you don’t cherish opinions. These poor people in Connecticut, they all want the world to know that they are right. If it is important to you that you are right and that your opinion is respected, then you are sick. You can easily get destroyed through your defensiveness.

[*To Student:*] What will you do? How will you survive this defensiveness?

Student: I am not sure.

Dr. Hora: Sometimes if you say, “I have no opinion,” people can’t believe their ears. “How can you say that? You are an intelligent man. You have no opinion whatsoever? What’s the matter with you? Are you an idiot or an uneducated person? How can you say you have no opinion?” They don’t believe it. They think you are hiding your opinion. (*Laughter*)

Student: An opinion is a personalized thought.

Dr. Hora: Yes. An opinion is a claim of personal knowledge. If you cherish opinions, you believe you are the originator of that idea and nobody else owns it—only you.

During the Gold Rush, if someone found a spot where there was gold, they claimed the whole area for themselves, and if anybody tried to trespass, there would be immediate warfare. Now this type of thinking is going on secretly all the time because some people are afraid to get entangled in some personal warfare. People don’t let anybody know what their opinions are, so they don’t get silenced in churches and in groups. Like this, here, if there were someone who cherished an opinion; he would be silenced. The best thing is to really understand that nobody can claim personal knowledge of anything. All valid knowledge comes to us through inspiration, from the Divine Mind. Such an individual has peace, assurance, and gratitude. He lives in the land of PAGL. No problem. But many people suffer from opinions that they don’t realize they have.

Just recently I was watching a court procedure on television. A doctor was being indicted for violating her responsibility at a hospital. A patient in the hospital died when the doctor was working on administrative papers and left the bedside. The nurses didn’t know what to do for this patient, and the patient died. After the court procedure, the prosecuting attorney was bombarding the poor nurse, telling her that she should say, that in her opinion, the patient

would not have died if the doctor had been there. He insisted that she tell her opinion about the case. In legal proceedings, opinions are highly regarded and very much in demand. People demand that you express your opinion when it is a legal issue, but in medicine you cannot say “in my opinion.” Opinions don’t count in medical practice. There is an irreconcilable conflict here, because in legal cases you can be forced, but this nurse knew it was dangerous for her to express an opinion and she didn’t want to say, “in my opinion.” I got fed up listening to this. I don’t know what happened in the end, but there can be such situations, where people demand that you have an opinion and they don’t believe you when you say you don’t have an opinion. That’s defensiveness.

Student: Perhaps it’s not just defensiveness. I’ve had problems with this before. It’s hard to be perfectly loving when there’s judgmentalism going on. It’s not something I can just turn off. I see things and I hear things, and I seem to automatically react. I can’t get beyond that. I just have a hard time observing it. I see and hear things, and I get lost.

Dr. Hora: Specifically, what is disturbing you? Do you insist on having an opinion?

Student: When I see something I think is wrong, my opinion is, *You shouldn’t be doing that. It should not be so.*

Dr. Hora: “It should not be so.”

Student: I know it’s wrong, and it shouldn’t be happening.

Dr. Hora: (*Laughing*) So you haven’t discovered yet that there is nothing wrong with *not* having an opinion. The matter with having an opinion is ignorance.

Student: Earlier you said that people have the right to be wrong and if we respect that right, then we are not judgmental about their being wrong. Sometimes, though, we feel it is affecting us in some way. Is that the situation you are talking about?

Dr. Hora: It always feels like it affects us. Everybody would like to be considered intelligent and sane. Everybody wants to be sane. It's an impossible situation. (*Laughing*)

Student: What is also impossible is when you look at a situation where someone you love is being harmed and you think, *It shouldn't be*.

Dr. Hora: So, what are you saying? I didn't get it.

Student: It's hard to be shouldless.

Dr. Hora: Aren't you grateful that we have a principle that recommends to you to always be shouldless, no matter what? "Take no thought for what should be or should not be; seek ye first to know the good of God, which already is."³⁸ Of course, if we don't already know that there really is a God, then we are defending ourselves against defensiveness. It is hopeless because we have no place to turn. If we understand, at least to some extent, that there really is a God, there is Divine Intelligence, there is Divine Love—we don't have to have opinions. We can be peacefully facing the fact that nobody really has an opinion, because nobody has personal knowledge. There is no such thing as "personal knowledge." Does that make sense?

Student: At my job, almost every morning, every half hour people come over and ask me, "What's your opinion?" (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: People are assuming it's normal to have opinions.

38 - Second Principle of Metapsychiatry.

Student: Would you say something about “spiritual discernment” as opposed to “judgment?”

Dr. Hora: If you are judging, you are expressing a personal opinion, but if there is in you sufficient understanding of spiritual Reality, then you can say, “It came to me that perhaps it’s this way.” If you have spiritual discernment, you are not making categorical statements; you are always mentioning that what you are talking about is an inspired idea. So, in this way you just avoid any kind of judgment.

Student: A friend told me last week in her school the children were vomiting all over the place all day. The teachers were hurting themselves all day, not related to the vomit—a sprained ankle; four or five teachers that day had injuries. There was no awareness whatsoever on the part of this individual that all this was thoughts being manifested. The throwing up was a virus. The accidents, she had no explanation for. (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: We are in this world but not of it.

Student: In essence, though, what I am hearing is that the greatest protection is knowing that anything that manifests itself is just a thought. That alone could relieve us of a great deal of the pain. So, if we have a sense that we are hurt but we don’t know why we feel hurt, then at that moment it is important to turn around and say, “Okay, we have symptoms manifesting but nevertheless it is only a thought.”

Dr. Hora: Yes. Right. Sure. We can get hurt by the thoughts of others, and we can hurt ourselves by our own thoughts. Not long ago I spoke to a man who was very depressed because his business was failing. I said to him, “But you are not your business. Why should you suffer?” (*Laughter*) Amazingly, he had never talked about it. He found it very interesting, but he still didn’t understand. So, I

said to him, “If you are the captain of the ship and there is a storm on the sea and the ship is moving precariously and in danger, are you doing the storm? You are not the ship. You are just a traveler on this ship. If you are a captain, you can be so naive and vain that you consider you are the ship and you are responsible for the storm on the sea. It is very dangerous to be proud or to be vain about our work. I am not the work. I am just going around doing what needs to be done. If you are proud or vain, you can get sick from your own misperception of Reality. There is a French saying, “*Le Monde ne s’arrêt pas...*” “The world does not stop...” The world doesn’t stop if your business goes under. You are not the business. You are just coming along for the show. If we are proud and vain, we tend to identify ourselves with our work. Recently in a large department store, a clerk was asked, “Do you have this item?” He replied, “I don’t have it. I am going to have it maybe tomorrow.” People often tend to identify themselves with what they are doing or what they have. This is a form of pride and vanity. If you make that mistake, you can get very hurt. If you are captain of a boat and there are passengers on the boat and the boat is in trouble on the sea and you think of it as, *This is my boat and I am this boat*, you can get hurt. Suddenly there is a squall, and you get sick. You don’t know what to do. You cannot stop the storm. What kind of captain are you if you cannot stop the storm, right? But if you understand that you are only a traveler on this boat—whether you are the captain or a shipmate—you are just a traveler, you are not this boat, then you are not in danger of getting sick from a false sense of responsibility. So, you stop blaming yourself. If you know that you are just a traveler on this boat, no matter what your function is, then you are safe. It is a very important thing to know, right? You are just a traveler. Then just consider this, the planet Earth is a ship— a spaceship. Did you ever think of that? We are all travelers on this spaceship, and it has its limitations of time and possibilities, and you cannot control this spaceship, but you can travel on this spaceship. As long as you

know that you are just a passenger, then you can act intelligently on this spaceship.

There are many people who suffer the consequences of misperceiving their situation. Vanity and pride can get you to misperceive your real situation, and from there can mushroom out all kinds of panicky situations and physical symptoms and interactional problems on this planet Earth. In this great spaceship when some people identify themselves with a particular place and others identify with another place, then what happens? War. What are wars? Wars are just people misperceiving themselves in relation to Earth. If everybody would understand that we are all just travelers on this ship, then everybody would cooperate and try to make sure this spaceship is safe. Everybody would stop throwing bombs at each other, because, “we are all in the same boat,” as the saying goes. We are in the same boat whether you are Black or White or an important person or unimportant person. We are just travelers here for a limited trip. The voyage is limited for all of us. What’s the sense of getting into trouble through a faulty perception of Reality? We frequently talk about “Reality” and “perceiving.” This is happening all the time. What is nationalism? What is chauvinism? What is racial intolerance? What are hostilities and wars? It is just people misperceiving their own importance on the planet Earth. This is a spaceship. “No, this is mine.” “That is mine.” “This is Israel.” “This is that”—If you misperceive your situation, you can do very foolish things, and one of the globally foolish things is war. The people who go to war over a piece of land say, “This is mine. That’s me. I am an opinion,” right? They claim part of the spaceship. That is what “nationalism” is. You claim that part of the spaceship as yours. You never made it. You don’t own it. You don’t have the power to control it. You are just passengers. Sometimes even without a ticket. That is called “an illegal passenger” on the Spaceship Earth. (*Laughter*)

Student: A few weeks ago in one of the groups you said that the normal inclination is that every human wants to be attached to something because there is something to identify with. All these thoughts are just another way of identifying ourselves. Whether we think we are responsible for the business or whatever, it's just false identity, and that leads to a false sense of responsibility and obligations.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Right. It starts with a misperception. On a television show if someone says, "I was born in Brooklyn," the audience cheers and breaks out in applause. (*Laughter*) It's the human veil of seeing.

Student: You asked, "Isn't it boring to live a life of joy instead of excitement?" It makes me think about how you describe people seeking the Truth—you say some are driven by suffering and some are drawn by wisdom. The issue of excitement and boredom is when the Truth is only of interest in a situation of suffering and that when it seems as though harmony is just in reach, this is when we lose interest. It's a difficult step between "being driven," where we sort of wait for one more accident or one more disease or one more pain, and "being drawn," which has a more permanent sense of understanding. Can you talk a little more about this? I don't understand how it happens. How can you reach the point where the excitement really is not of interest as much as being in joy all the time?

Dr. Hora: Your question is not sufficiently clear, and I don't see how it relates to what we were just talking about, but we can talk about it anyway. We were talking about misperceiving our situation in the world or in small parts of the world. What if you are an employee in a business and you become embroiled with other employees, and things are getting worse because every one of these employees secretly claims ownership of the business—do you follow this? It's a secret pride. "I have this business. I am this business. I own this

business. I work here, therefore I have part of this business. This department is mine.” I once saw a cartoon where a woman was standing in her bathroom, proudly gesturing as she surveyed the situation. There were two towels in this bathroom. One towel said “His” and one towel said “Mine.” (*Laughter*) This is how it is in offices and businesses. Every individual is assigned to a certain job. Pretty soon they fantasize this part of the business – it can be a big department store— “This is mine.” So that is one problem. The other problem, which you were talking about, if I understood correctly, is that you observe that something good has happened in your marriage, which is called “harmonious coexistence.” This harmonious coexistence is a quality of life you see as yours, and you are thinking, *It is mine*. You would like to claim personal ownership of that particular quality. We must be very careful with our perceptions and to know *globally* that we are only passengers with temporary tickets into oblivion. If we do not claim ownership of a particular piece of the planet for our own space, we can “travel light.” We can travel with no problems. Let’s be enlightened travelers and know that we are all on the same boat and we don’t run the show. There is a Super Captain.

Student: What would you be saying if you were not looking at this erroneously, but gratefully? What would be the difference? What would it be if you were grateful?

Dr. Hora: It is God who owns the marriage. It is God who owns the department store where they sell certain items. If you observe a large department store, there is often tremendous rivalry between salespeople, other employees, and even the owner. People develop all kinds of fantasies about ownership of the workplace or whatever. The world is suffering from ignorance, and ignorance misperceives Reality. We are on a ship that travels a certain distance, and we can work on this ship in a beneficial way and be peaceful and enjoy the trip as long as it lasts, and when it is over it is over. (*Laughing*) Right?

Student: Last night I was watching Ann Richards concede that she lost the election for Governor in Texas. She said a beautiful thing. She said, “Life is not over. It’s just a campaign.” (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Yes. Intelligent lady. We would like to take credit for everything under the sun if it were possible, and if it is not possible, we make a supreme sacrifice, and it becomes possible. How? Simply by going insane. You can own the world if you are willing to be insane. At the mental hospitals you see people who “own everything.” They are rulers of the Universe and all kinds of things. Insanity is a great help for people who don’t want to compromise with Reality. Our institutions are full of insane people—and there are many who are *not* in there. (*Laughter*) It is not hard to find people who develop exaggerated fantasies about themselves. They “own” this ship Planet Earth. That’s why psychiatrists are so rich. (*Laughing*) I have so much to do! I was just joking. (*Laughter*) Everybody claims a piece of the Planet. But you cannot “own” harmonious coexistence, it is not something that you can own—unless you make an extra effort of insanity, and then you will say, “This is mine; this harmony is mine. I did it, I made it happen, and I own it, and nobody will take it away from me.” If we are willing to be insane, we can twist things around to suit us.

Student: What’s uneasy about the thought of being a traveler is, when you travel, you really must minimize the number of things you travel with to have freedom of movement. The thought just occurred to me if we can really see life as traveling through it, then we are not attached to everything because we go through it. We can’t hold onto everything.

Dr. Hora: So, you are compromising. You are saying, “If I will be willing to settle to have the part of Brooklyn where I live, I can own part of this Planet. This is a modest thing and not bad, or, maybe I can be made sane if I only own Central Park West.” (*Laughter*)

People develop certain attitudes of ownership of their houses and their apartments. Then there are people who are interested in gobbling up more and more. They say, “Buy, buy! Buy real estate! They don’t build them like this anymore!” If we are interested in confirming ourselves through ownership, we can go crazy that way. Suppose you own this house. Do you really own it? You cannot own anything. The danger is in *wanting*—wanting to own. You are unwilling to travel light. You can say, “Well, at least I will buy a smaller house, but it will be mine,” right? No, it won’t, but if you are willing to be just a traveler and that’s all, then you don’t have to be afraid of hurting yourself with your thoughts.

How much of the planet Earth did Jesus own? Wars will never cease as long as there is misperception in the world. People see things in a different context that is not compatible with peace. Saddam Hussein³⁹ is not going to rest until he grabs Kuwait or something. People have always been that way. There have always been wars and strife and suffering because of this idea that you have to own this ship. “It’s my ship and I am the ruler over the ship.” Now, if you are the owner of a business and you are doing well, every day you are making a lot of money, and you are inflating yourself, and you look around thinking, *This is mine*, and then this business runs into trouble and collapses, either slowly or fast, and suddenly there is an intolerable unacceptable thing in front of your eyes. *I don’t really own this business. I don’t have anything. I cannot live. I have to die. This was mine and now it isn’t.* It was never yours! You are you. The business is the business, and you are both traveling on a spaceship called Earth that has very limited existence, and people deploy sooner or later.

Student: If a business is failing, one can’t help but think, “How will I survive if there is no money coming in?” It just seems like an inevitable thought. But if we understand that we are not the

39 - Saddam Hussein was the 5th president of Iraq at the time.

business and it's not our life and it's not our existence, we focus on the idea we are here for God and that's really our only journey.

Dr. Hora: Right.

7

Personal

Student: Sometimes I take things personally. Then I look to see what the issue is in the situation, rather than it being about me. What does it mean that I take things personally? There is an awareness of thinking about myself, but still it happens. What does it mean “to take things personally?”

Dr. Hora: When we take something personally, we are involved with self-confirmatory ideation, and God doesn’t talk to such people. God says, “Unless you will sincerely acknowledge the truth of my power, I am not talkin’ to you.” (*Laughter*) You are on your own, and that’s not good, right? So radical sincerity is a requirement for understanding life in the spiritual context.

Student: What does “radical sincerity” mean?

Dr. Hora: It means acknowledging that there is no other power, no other presence, no other reality, no other intelligence, no other life but God, the Good, the Omnipotent. Some people find it hard to make this commitment. Some people are even embarrassed to have a desire to acknowledge these truths, because it seems childish. It sounds like kindergarten stuff.

Student: Acknowledging God is like “kindergarten stuff?”

Dr. Hora: Yes, because children are brought up to “pray” and be superstitious, and the parents are not committed to the Truth. They

pretend that they are committed to the Truth. If the parents are not sincere about the reality of God, nothing will work — absolutely nothing. You go from one crisis to another, which is the way most people live.

Student: That's really helpful. In those circumstances where we are taking things personally, we are in a self-confirmatory mode, and that is going to block any kind of inspiration.

Dr. Hora: Nothing will work. You can fool yourself that you are a student of spiritual ideas, that you are praying, that you are studying, but nothing is happening. Most people would say, "Nothing is happening no matter what I do." How could it? I mean, if you consider this, you will say, "What a foolish idea for me to bother about God and waste my time on prayers and study if I am not really sincere about it." The first infidelity is towards God, the second infidelity is between people.

Student: "The first infidelity is towards God?"

Dr. Hora: Yes. When we are *pretending* to be religious or interested in the good of God, this is the "first infidelity." After the first infidelity, we feel more comfortable. (*Laughter*) It is such a foolishness to pray or to study. It's absolute foolishness, because nobody is listening. (*Laughing*) Bad things begin to happen: accidents, colds; you get aches and pains. You get into conflicts with people. You lose money. All kinds of things. Whatever is important to you will fail, and you keep failing until you wake up. You cannot trifle with God.

Student: What do you mean "trifle?"

Dr. Hora: "Fool around." (*Laughing*) We have to be sincere about our interest and our devotion and commitment to life in the context

of God. Immortal Mind governing all must be acknowledged constantly. “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.”⁴⁰

Student: What are distractions? Is that just a cop-out? We say, “Oh, I was watching TV and I completely forgot.”

Dr. Hora: And God says to that, “I am not interested in excuses.” You can do it, but you are not getting anything out of it.

Student: What does it mean that “God helps those who let Him?”⁴¹

Dr. Hora: Tell us. What do you think it means? Does it mean that we would like to have a gimmick? *Okay, I will let God do His shtick, and I will do mine.* “God helps those who let Him” is a principle, and one must be sincere about the principle and not look for a way to get around God. *I will say this. I will say these words. I will do it and maybe it will work.* Everybody wants to find a way to make it work. It “ain’t gonna happen no how.” It doesn’t “work” because you are dealing with Reality. You cannot make Reality from unreality. “You cannot make a silk purse from a sow’s ear.” Have you heard that saying? Do you understand it?

Student: I don’t understand it, but I have heard it.

Dr. Hora: It’s a strange idea, “to make a silk purse from a sow’s ear.”

Student: It says you *cannot*.

Dr. Hora: Right, but people are trying.

Student: So, we are trying to make a Reality out of unreality.

40 - Exodus 20:3

41 - Fifth Principle of Metapsychiatry

Dr. Hora: A “silk purse,” yes. (*Laughing*)

Student: It seems so real sometimes. When it’s a particular issue that I’ve been stuck with for my whole life, even though there are many blessings, a certain pattern of thinking seems so real. It doesn’t seem like I can really let go of it, because if I let go of a particular concern, I will get hurt, because I won’t be watching. I can’t seem to let it go.

Dr. Hora: So, you are the supervisor of God’s activity.

Student: It seems that if I let go, I’ll get hurt. It seems real to me.

Dr. Hora: What does it mean if we are afraid that we will get hurt?

Student: Self-concern. I understand it intellectually.

Student: There comes a time when there is nothing else we can do on a human level to solve the problem. We are against a brick wall and realize there is nothing else but to view the problem within the context of Divine Reality. I guess we have to come to that point. Those of us who are stubborn. (*Laughter*)

Student: Before I came to see Dr. Hora, I was in a problem situation that I had worked on for years, and it was completely unsolvable. There was absolutely no solution to it, and on the way to work I often stopped at a little chapel. One day when I stopped there, I said, “Okay God, I absolutely give up. There is no way out. I can’t solve it.” I had never heard of Dr. Hora before that time, but within 60 days I was here working with him, and this impossible situation was resolved. It was an interesting experience. I learned that when I give up absolutely everything I know how to do—when I completely give up—a solution comes out of a place I didn’t even know existed. It was amazing!

Dr. Hora: It helps to know that God’s law of adjustment is the harmonizing principle of the universe and everything gets resolved by our commitment to the Truth. We cannot bargain with God. We cannot make deals with God. We have to reach a point of “do or die,” except we are not asked to *do* anything. Some people are operational, and they are sincerely trying to do something about the state of the Universe. That doesn’t work. God is not asking us to do anything. Have you noticed that? He never says, “If you do this, I will do that.” You cannot make a deal with God. Some people try to make a deal with God. They say, “Okay, God, if you fix this, I will go to church every week for six months.” God is not an operational principle. It is purely spiritual, which means mental—spiritually mental. What God requires is that we acknowledge that this is the only Reality: the spiritual and mental nature of God. Once we have sincerely acknowledged this and can see that this is indeed the Truth, everything gets cleared up and we don’t have to do anything. God “does” something by bringing us into a state of clarity, and we are clear about what is real and what is not real. That is the only thing, and it’s not difficult.

Student: I don’t know about this not being difficult. (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: It seems difficult. You are not required to perform heroic acts. There is a story in the Bible about a Syrian army commander who was a leper.⁴² He went here, and he went there, and he prayed here and prayed there and made deals, contracts, and nothing happened. Finally, he was led by a slave girl to seek consultation with a Jewish rabbi whose name was Elisha. He went with horses carrying all sorts of treasures, and he went to this rabbi, and the rabbi saw him from far away, and he said, “Stop there and don’t come near. I know who you are and what you want. You will be healed if you take a bath in the Jordan River and dunk yourself in it seven times. Seven times you have to dunk yourself in the Jordan River.” This

42 - 2 Kings: 5

was an intolerable humiliation for this proud soldier, and he said, "I cannot do it. I am not going to do it, and this Jew will not force me to do it." There was a great upheaval in that camp. The friends of this general were pleading with him. "Listen, you are such a big hero. You have performed all kinds of deeds of courage, and you are hesitating to do this little thing which the rabbi has asked you to do." And he replied, "This is an outrage! At least if he would let me dunk myself in a *Syrian* river!" (*Laughter*) Eventually he got down from his horse and dunked himself seven times in the Jordan and came up healed. This is an example which gives the false impression that God wants something, and it seems that in this case God wanted him to *do* something. God isn't interested in whether you take a bath today or tomorrow, or whether it's a Jewish river or a Syrian river. No, God is the redemptive power of the Truth. God was really saying, "You have to make a commitment to the Truth of Being, then you can be healthy." It was not a deal of, "I will do this for you if you do that for me." When we are sick or in danger or we are suffering, we need to find a way to bring ourselves into alignment with the redemptive power of Infinite Mind. What has to change is our thinking. We are phony liars. We are cheating. We are fooling ourselves. We are fooling others or trifling with religions of all kinds, believing that maybe it will work or maybe it will not work. No, it's very, very simple. It is our vanity that makes it seem difficult for us.

Look here, so many people go to churches. Sometimes on television you see thousands of people praying with various preachers, gurus, and teachers. There are people who are very sick and suffering who would really like to be healed, who are asking one question: "What should I do to get God to heal me?" Of course, this question will never result with any healing. Nobody can do anything. Nobody is required to *do* anything. We have to come into alignment with the redemptive power of Infinite Mind. That's all. God does not require us to publicly humiliate ourselves, or to get up in public and

proclaim, “Yes, I believe in God, I believe.” “*Credo in Uno Domino*” (I believe in one God). This was, and still is, a requirement in some Christian churches to get up and proclaim in public that you believe in God and in Jesus Christ whom he sent. So what? If you are smart enough, you can do it. Some people would find it very embarrassing to publicly acknowledge that they are believers, mind you. How silly it is. Anybody can say, “I believe.” Believing is not the issue. *Sincerity* is the issue. You don’t have to advertise it. You don’t have to tell anybody anything about it. We have to be sincere about our commitment to being here for God, silently, quietly but with radical sincerity — that’s all. Think of all the ceremonies that people go through trying to pray and meditate.

Student: You have said that there is no involuntary suffering. Is that because the option to be radically, sincerely committed to God is always open, and we are just not taking it? So suffering is voluntary, not involuntary.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: For those who love or appreciate music or art, it seems easier to sincerely appreciate that than it is for some reason to acknowledge and appreciate God. What is the difference?

Dr. Hora: Suppose one requirement for enlightenment would be the love of pizza. Would that make it easier to become enlightened — being a pizza lover? (*Laughter*) So it is with art. Art for some people is extremely enjoyable. Other people may be bored by it, and other people may be trying to publicize their artistic interest, and they find themselves an expensive seat at the symphony or opera. This is not the same. You cannot do anything for pleasure, neither are you required to suffer. There is no virtue in the love of music. The love of music is a gift of God, which is available to anyone who is sincerely interested. It is spiritual consciousness. It’s a gift of God,

and you can enjoy it even if you are not religious or not interested in God. You are interested in this pleasurable sensation which good music or lousy music can give you, like “Rock and Roll.” There are people who sincerely enjoy Rock and Roll, but that is not to be confused with enlightenment. Enlightenment will open your eyes to Infinite Good, but love of music will just make you a more cultured person.

Student: What I was asking is that it seems easier to love music and to be sincerely interested in music as an expression of God.

Dr. Hora: Thousands of people are sincerely interested in baseball. Did you know that? You frequently bring up the issue of art. There is no virtue in enjoying art or even giving money for art. It is not an issue of spiritual virtue. What is “virtue,” anyway?

Student: Virtue comes from veritas. *Veritas* means “truth.”

Dr. Hora: Yes. Socrates asked, “What is virtue?” When you are a lover of truth, you are being truthful, but you are not yet enlightened, because the love of the truth, which you have chosen to enjoy, is not spiritual love and does not lead to enlightenment. You can just love music and become a musicologist. (*Laughing*) Just like people who like psychology become psychologists, and we know how far away that is from Truth. God is the real issue.

Student: You said earlier that vanity keeps us from being sincere. Does this vanity mean that we believe we have the ability to fix our own problems?

Dr. Hora: Yes. Absolutely.

Student: So, the healing of vanity is contemplating humility.

Dr. Hora: Define “humility.”

Student: “Of mine own self I can do nothing.”

Dr. Hora: When we meditate on this issue and we become sincere about desiring to understand, then we reach a point where we can really say, “Of mine own self I can do nothing. It is the Father that dwelleth within me. He doeth the works.”⁴³ In other words, our love of God and Truth makes it possible for us to become sincere. No big deal. We just have to be sincere.

It is interesting that various religions seldom speak of “sincerity.” I have explored several different theological studies and have looked for “sincerity.” It’s being ignored. Religious people don’t talk of sincerity. Isn’t that interesting?

Student: Does “sincerity” mean “single-mindedness?”

Dr. Hora: (*Laughing*) Well, you can be double minded too.

Student: In religion also, if vanity is the main issue, then of course one would never find enlightenment.

Dr. Hora: That’s right. That is why there are very few religious people who become enlightened.

Student: Many religious people seem very self-righteous. They seem to be saying that they know, and others don’t.

Dr. Hora: That’s also bullshit. That is very troublesome. Very troublesome. People wonder how it is that Zen masters appear violent when they hit students with a bamboo stick⁴⁴. Do they like

43 - See John 5:30 and John 14:10.

44 - In Zen Buddhism the master uses a wooden slat or stick to hit the back of a student who is showing signs of a lapse of attention during meditation.

to beat people? Actually, it is necessary to have that experience. Imagine this master sitting there 24 hours a day in his zendo. One after another, the students come to him, and they lie. They all try to fool him and deceive him. He has to be Christlike and forgiving. It's not easy to be a Zen master. (*Laughter*)

Student: If we realize the meaning of a problem and get really embarrassed, is that the same as getting mentally beaten up? It seems that way.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Of course. Surely. You have seen me do it. (*Laughter*)

Student: We can't take it personally. (*Laughter*)

Student: Dr. Hora, if we are not able to respond compassionately to someone, is it that we don't fully understand ourselves, so we are not tolerant of someone else's ignorance? The Zen master understands compassion, so he can be infinitely loving while he is beating you up. (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Yes. It is very interesting. You can be tough and loving at the same time. Some people have discovered something called "tough love." Have you heard about it? It doesn't seem fair to the recipient, but it's a good idea. You have to be tough if you want to help somebody.

Student: There is a difference between being tough, and not being tolerant. If we are not tolerant, it's probably because we are irritated.

Dr. Hora: Being "irritated" is wanting. That is already a personal factor. If we *tolerate* something, we are letting something fester that is invalid. We are not "tolerant."

Student: We need to see the issue and address the issue.

Dr. Hora: Yes, exactly, and no exceptions and no briberies. (*Laughter*)

Student: With regard to sincerity, you said people could be coming here and not be sincere. Is it that in Metapsychiatry we are here to learn “to be here for God,” but we have other agendas? I mean, is that the bottom line? Does each one want something rather than the Truth?

Dr. Hora: Yes, you have many ways to be insincere. It’s no big deal. Anybody can do it, and most people do it all the time. Actually, it is rare to meet people who are totally sincere. In the Bible, Ecclesiastes said, “Vanity of vanities. All is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Isn’t that interesting? Vanity makes it difficult for us to be sincere. Ecclesiastes clearly states that the problem is vanity. Vanity makes it impossible for us to be sincere. When we are not sincere, God is not talking to us.

Student: If we are not sincere, can we cultivate an interest in being sincere? Is that an accurate way to put it? Can we cultivate an interest?

Dr. Hora: You cultivate it and you fertilize it.

Student: But not with bullshit. (*Laughter*)

Student: Is that valid? Can we cultivate an interest? I am confused.

Dr. Hora: Nothing will make us sincere except commitment, and nothing will make us committed except suffering. When you talk about “cultivating” in this context, it is like saying, “I love music and I can listen to music. Music has a lot of spirituality in it, and that will help me to become enlightened.” No, sir. It will not happen. The Zen master doesn’t bargain with the student. He gives him a

koan⁴⁵, and you live or die on that koan. When you are working on a koan, you cannot say, “I am cultivating and eventually I will get there.” That is because the idea of “cultivating” in this instance means “trifling with an idea.” If you are trying to cultivate the Truth, you are compromising with it. The Truth cannot be cultivated.

You can say, “I am very much committed to understanding this riddle, but I am not cultivating an understanding of the riddle. I am opening my consciousness for the riddle to reveal itself to me.” You can cultivate mathematical formulas. You can cultivate your love of music, but you cannot arrive at enlightenment through cultivating anything.

Student: You often say, “Trying is lying,” when we are trying to do something.

Dr. Hora: That’s right. If we don’t understand it, we say, “Not yet.” That’s all, because it cannot be figured out. With rational reasoning you cannot arrive at an irrational discovery. The process of enlightenment is an entirely unique and different approach to Reality. You cannot cultivate Reality. You can cultivate music and other things where there is space for playing around with ideas, but not when it comes to Truth: you cannot play around, you can just keep your interest open and live in the expectancy of awe. It’s a strange thing. No amount of studying and talking will do it. In Zen there is the matter of *mondō*. Do you know what *mondō* is? They are challenging dialogues which Zen teachers have with their students to challenge them to get beyond rational reasoning. This is a way of working with enlightenment. The enlightenment realizations come in a totally unexpected way. We have no control over it, but a sincere interest in becoming enlightened helps.

⁴⁵ - A koan (from the Japanese term *kōan*) is a paradox or riddle given by a Zen Master to a student who is to find its meaning through transcendence of rational thought.

There is the story about the Zen monk who was working very hard for 30 years with the koan which was assigned to him by the master. He couldn't get anywhere. It was very frustrating.

Student: 30 years?! (*Laughter*)

Dr. Hora: Those guys had a lot of time. (*Laughing*) Then the monk was walking in the garden, and he accidentally kicked a pebble, and this pebble hit a bamboo tree and gave off a certain sound, and suddenly this sound awakened in him the understanding of the koan. Completely unexpectedly. This is an extreme example of trying to illustrate that you cannot cultivate enlightenment. You can just receive it in unguarded moments. But the *mondō* technique is very helpful, provided you are free of the desire to impress people. You are just interested in insight. You are not interested in figuring out how you will explain it to your friends or something like that. It is completely nonpersonal. You surrender the space to God. It is God who reveals the Truth if we sincerely seek enlightenment. If we cultivate understanding, we will not become enlightened, but we can become theologians or philosophers. Socrates was complaining about his wife, Xanthippe, who was world famous for being bitchy. He said to his friends, "Listen, without Xanthippe there would be no philosophers." (*Laughter*)

Student: Dr. Hora, sincerity is not incremental. You talk about "radical sincerity" —

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: — and yet our growth, our awareness seems to be incremental. You just said that enlightenment comes in moments of awareness. So even if sincerity isn't incremental, we can have glimpses of sincerity.

Dr. Hora: Yes, but it is not incremental. It's just surprises. Incremental means "little by little we get more and more enlightened." We don't. We just learn to pay attention to something unexpectedly good and liberating. We don't know what it is. Recently we had a session here in which the parable of the lost sheep from the Bible came up.⁴⁶ There were 100 sheep, and one got lost, and the shepherd turned away from the 100 and went to retrieve this one. There was great rejoicing that he found the lost sheep. At one of the seminaries this story was repeated and debated, and one of the theological students said to the teacher, "This guy was stupid, because if he neglected the 100 sheep and he went after the one; this is a stupid thing to do." Well, that's true, but the Biblical story is not intended to make us feel stupid. It has to have a meaning, and therein lies the koan. The meaning of the koan is not immediately understandable unless you are prepared for it spiritually. Immediately after the thing came up, it occurred very clearly that the meaning of this story is that in the Kingdom of God you don't quantify sheep. You don't have to think about "one sheep" or "100 sheep" or "20 sheep". That is not the issue. In the Kingdom of God there are life forms that are individual manifestations of Divine Love. So, whether it's 100 sheep or just one sheep, you rise above this quantitative process. You don't have to count sheep. You can "count" interest. It becomes immediately, surprisingly clear that here is this story, and if you are just a rational being, you say, well, the shepherd was stupid or he neglected the other sheep. That's fine, but it's not the point.

⁴⁶ - See Matthew 18:10-14 and Luke 15:3-7.

8

The Truth of Being Heals

Student: In a private session you clarified that we cannot look to “the two intelligent questions”⁴⁷ and expect healing from them. I think you were pointing out that it is by the grace of God that healing occurs. The two intelligent questions are not here so that we can turn them around to try to make God be here for us. They are a vehicle for us to see the Truth so we can be here for God. When we use the two intelligent questions in prayer to try to heal someone or to want a healing of any kind, what we are really thinking is that God is here for us. There is a lack of sincerity, and the healing has to come through grace. Is that what you were pointing out?

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: I have been thinking about that. We can’t want *anything*, not even for our loved ones. There is no such thing as “human good” when looked at from that perspective. You can’t want anything, not even for the good of another.

Dr. Hora: Right. Okay. Yes. So, what now?

Student: It is helpful in that several thoughts have been revealed to me that were invalid. I am grateful because I am just not concerned anymore. That was very helpful, but then it also calls into question the idea of “human goodness” and what it means to be good. I

⁴⁷ - “In our pursuit of understanding Reality, we have a method based on ‘two intelligent questions.’ In all our work in Metapsychiatry we ask two questions: (1) What is the meaning of what seems to be? and (2) What is what really is? With the aid of these two questions, we are able to separate the real from the seeming, the good from the evil.” *Beyond the Dream*, Session No.1, p.11

am amazed at how little all of that is valid. It's radical. What I hear is that it's only by the grace of God, and that's it. We can't think that we are protected by Metapsychiatry or the two intelligent questions. That is invalid. It is only by the grace of God.

Dr. Hora: Yes. We cannot *use* God.

Student: When you say, "only by the grace of God." What does that mean?

Dr. Hora: It means that we have to leave it in God's power. Everything is in God's power.

Student: That's because everything is God.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: We are constantly bombarded and distracted by what is not real and it is very persuasive. We live our lives in a constant state of relative distraction.

Dr. Hora: Right. (*Laughing*)

Student: Is it the distractions that keep us from seeing the grace of God? This grace is available, but we are easily distracted and not firmly committed to being here for God. If we are constantly distracted, is this an indication that we don't fully understand or value being here for God?

Dr. Hora: More or less.

Student: On several occasions, at least in my case, I may not like being here for God, and that's the problem. We seem to recognize "what really is" but may not necessarily like it.

Dr. Hora: Yes. (*Laughing*)

Student: What is "power?"

Dr. Hora: "What is power?" Power is the Truth of Being.

Student: So, when you say, "It's God's power that heals," you are referring to Truth. Truth heals.

Dr. Hora: Sure.

Student: How do we align ourselves with the grace of God? Can I ask that? Because it's grace, it's totally free. Can you want the grace of God to help you with a problem?

Dr. Hora: "How do we align ourselves with the grace of God?"

Student: Yes. How do I get the grace of God to heal a problem, or is that wanting?

(Dr. Hora did not answer the student's questions.)

Dr. Hora: Any other questions?

Student: Maybe it's like the idea of "understanding is." If the grace of God is a basic Reality, then we ask, "How do we see that grace? How do we see God as power in the right way? I guess our tendency is to think that we have personal power – even power to "get" the grace of God. It just boils down to just understanding "what really is."

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: Are we ever *not* aligned with God? We don't have the power to align ourselves with God or *not* to align ourselves with God. We may have the ability to be aware of it, but it really doesn't change what is.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: If we understand the answer to "the second intelligent question," we understand Truth. Is that how a healing comes? The Truth is revealed?

Dr. Hora: Certainly, the more clearly we understand the Truth of Being, the more we are in tune with Reality. It is this attunement with Reality, that strikes us as the Truth. Whenever we understand "what really is," then we have been blessed by the Truth and good things can happen. It doesn't have to happen, but it *does* happen. We would like to be able to control the Truth, but anyway, healings occur when we understand somewhat of the Truth.

Student: When we understand the Truth, we understand that what we thought was a sickness isn't really true. When we look for the meaning of a symptom, if we really understand the Truth, we know that the symptom wasn't there.

Dr. Hora: Yes. It has a tendency to disappear, yes.

Student: So, the *understanding* is what comes by the grace of God.

Dr. Hora: Yes. Right.

Student: The healing occurs in our consciousness, and it gets us closer to understanding God, but that doesn't necessarily heal another

individual's symptoms. It helps us see the Truth of the situation. I always thought that if we understand Truth, it blesses someone else. That is not necessarily so. I guess I felt a little bit disappointed that it doesn't "spill over." If someone is not receptive it makes no difference to them in any way, but it seems to help us because we are not involved in the situation in an unhealthy way. Is that right?

Dr. Hora: I don't really know if you understand what I am saying. We have to come to the point where we are aware of the fact that God is all there is, and then we have seen something. We have seen the perfection of the Truth.

Student: Which then has a tendency to validate itself in our lives.

Dr. Hora: Right. Yes.

Student: What is healing? Is that a spiritual idea or is that an operational idea?

Dr. Hora: "What is healing?" Healing is an "aha" experience.

Student: So, if we have that "aha" experience, a realization of the Truth, then we wouldn't be looking back to see whether the symptom was healed or not.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: I know when I pray and I think I understand something, I sort of peek back to see, "Did it work?" (*Laughter*) and of course it didn't. That kind of thinking indicates an attempt to use God.

Student: We don't even think about being a blessing to others or healing others. We think God is all there is. Is that the ultimate? You just

see God and you are not thinking of “self and other,” or “I hope they get a blessing and get healed” and all that?

Dr. Hora: Right. True.

Student: I knew a mother and her eleven-month-old child who was on the verge of walking by herself. Whatever she did, she would hold on to her mother. The toddler still wanted assistance and wasn't learning the idea that she was ready to walk by herself. The mother couldn't understand what was going on. One day she asked a teenager to babysit. The teenager came and when she handed the child a toy, the child just took it with both hands and started walking around with it. The mother realized that when she let go of wanting her child to walk, it happened. This made me realize that, with any kind of learning, whenever I let go of trying to learn, suddenly I catch on. Struggling doesn't help. When something has been healed, I have no idea of how it happened or when. There is just joy and happiness. But I tend to look back and say, “Now, for the next time, maybe I will learn how to do that.” You are saying that it's an “aha” experience.

Dr. Hora: Yes.

Student: It seems that when one is around an individual who has a pure quality of consciousness one is blessed by that. That would make one think that there is this transferability that she was talking about, like being healed when touching the hem of Jesus' garment.⁴⁸ What is at work when there is a high quality of consciousness, and other individuals are blessed?

Dr. Hora: Beholding something of Reality.

48 - Luke 8:40-48

Student: I see. So, when you are in the presence of a consciousness like that, this is what Jesus meant when he said, “He who has seen me has seen the Father,”⁴⁹ and by seeing the Father you are blessed.

Dr. Hora: Surely. That’s the way it is. That’s what Walter Cronkite said.⁵⁰ (*Laughter*)

[The recording of the rest of the session is missing.]

49 - John14:9

50 - Walter Cronkite was an American broadcast journalist who closed his nightly news programs with the phrase: “And that’s the way it is [and the date].”

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