
HAKOMI AND THE CREATION CENTERED SPIRITUALITY OF MATTHEW FOX

GREG JOHANSON

GREG JOHANSON IS EDITOR OF THE HAKOMI FORUM AND A THERAPIST/TRAINER OF THE INSTITUTE. HE IS A UNITED METHODIST MINISTER WITH TRAINING IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY WHO IS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN A DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION AT DREW GRADUATE SCHOOL, MADISON, NEW JERSEY. THIS ARTICLE IS THE SECOND IN A SERIES OF FOUR ON HAKOMI AND THE CREATION CENTERED SPIRITUALITY OF MATTHEW FOX. THE FIRST ARTICLE ON FOX'S VIA POSITIVA WAS PRINTED IN THE SUMMER 1985 FORUM. IN ADDITION TO THE MANY BOOKS BY FOX LISTED IN THE FIRST ARTICLE, THOSE INTERESTED IN CREATION CENTERED SPIRITUALITY CAN ALSO SUBSCRIBE TO THE MAGAZINE CREATION BY WRITING CREATION P.O. BOX 19216, OAKLAND, CA 94619.

Path II Befriending Darkness, Letting Go and Letting Be: The Via Negativa

The Via Negativa in Fox's work has to do with concepts such as emptying, silence, being emptied, pain, sinking, nothingness, and in Christianity in particular, the concept of the cross. The Via Negativa presupposes the Via Positiva dealt with in the first article, a radical affirmation of the goodness of creation. Fox notes, "How can one let go of what one has not fallen in love with? The depth of nothingness is directly related to the experience of everythingness." (p.129 of Original Blessing)

Along with Jung, Fox affirms that we have not had a Via Negativa in the Western world for the last three hundred years since Ignatius of Loyola went without one. That was a serious loss. In Catholicism it was replaced by asceticism, the use of will power to control feeling. In Protestantism there was a preoccupation with sin. Both substitutes lent themselves to a John Wayne notion of spiritual development.

The religious acquiescence to "more self-consciousness" and bigger egos in a historical period of rising capitalism, industrial birth, mass armies, and civilian targets in modern warfare did not go unrewarded by the secular guard-

ians of the status quo. When the Via Negativa is ignored, the prophetic voice is invariably silenced. Life becomes superficial, easily manipulated, and ultimately as boring as it is violent. And, above all, cheap. For while the Via Positiva teaches us the cosmic breadth of living, of our holy relationship to stars and atoms, to royal persons and to blessed bodiliness, the Via Negativa opens us to our divine depths.(p.129-30)

He adds that "One could have predicted the loss of the Via Negativa in the West because the Via Positiva and a spirituality of pleasure and hospitality were so profoundly silenced for so long." (p.130)

Hakomi participates in the Via Negativa by its very nature, which will become clearer in the paper. In so doing it participates in a de-mystifying process. The culture has entranced us with ego-based images of what it means to be in the world. We are mystified by these illusions, cut off from our deepest selves, and wander through much confusion and pain. By turning awareness inward toward the concrete reality of experience, by suspending judgments and habitual reaction patterns, by studying what is and how we participate in organizing our experience of what is, the process of therapy frees us from bondage to cultural mystifications. It brings about the

possibility of our re-organizing around more organically grounded beliefs and strategies.

Letting Go Into Silence, Mystery and Darkness

.God is not found in the soul by adding anything, but by a process of subtraction. -Meister Eckhart

.To reach satisfaction in all
desire its possession in nothing.
To come to possess all
desire the possession of nothing.
To arrive at being all
desire to be nothing.
To come to the knowledge of all
desire the knowledge of nothing.
-John of the Cross

.Are you willing to be sponged out,
erased,
canceled
made nothing?
Are you willing to be made nothing?
dipped into oblivion?
If not, you will never really change.
-D. H. Lawrence

Hakomi promotes de-mystification in people the same way the great religious traditions have done it for aeons, by a process of subtraction or letting go.

The first thing we encourage is a letting go of explanations, justifications, and problem solving - wordiness. We encourage a change in a person's state of consciousness from the ordinary take-care-of business mode to that of being mindful.

This entails a slowing down, a quietness, a receptive posture in which experience can be learned from as opposed to dictated to. So it is never, "Why do you think your feeling anxious today?" but "How about hanging out with that sense of anxiousness for awhile? How is it registering in your body? ... Maybe it will tell us more about itself. ... The quality of the anxiousness is like ... what?" We encourage letting go by concentrating on what is most immediately present. As Fox puts it, in the Via Negativa we "let go by entering into the music of one's body." (p.137)

He further comments, that what is needed here is silence, "a radical letting go of language. A concentration on what is non-language, non-self, non-God. It is being. A being still." (p.136-37) Silence then puts us in touch with mystery and darkness.

All mystery is about the dark. All darkness is about mystery. The Enlightenment left us with a pernicious notion that we were to conquer mystery itself just as we were to conquer the land and animals and our feelings. We were robbed of savoring mystery and its darkness. We need to retrieve our rights to mystery and to the darkness in which it is so often immersed and enmeshed. (p.136)

Cultivating mystery is crucial for hakomi therapy for the simple reason that people cannot learn from what they already know. By definition, we learn from what we don't know. The reason a lot of verbal therapy is terribly boring is that people go over and over all the reasons, causes, and feelings connected with their behavior that they are already familiar with. There is no aliveness, curiosity, or exploratory hope. Only an exasperation that their predicament still doesn't resolve itself. That's predictable. Newspapers generally don't do much for us when reading them over for the tenth time.

Fox comments that "Allowing mystery to be mystery is ... essential to deep, spiritual living. Lopez celebrates what he calls 'this tolerance for mystery' which 'invigorates the imagination.' We kill the imagination by refusing to let mystery be mystery in our lives." (p.161) In hakomi our great warning signal is boredom. Whenever the process is hitched to live, present experience the imaginations of both client and therapist are invigorated. Whenever there is boredom, control and habitual reactions have won out over the savoring of mystery, and the therapist must move to jump out of the system.

So, when in therapy we enter the realm of the mysterious, when experience is pre-verbal, not quite clear, and we don't know all the answers, we are on creative ground. But, we are also in the dark; and that can be

scary. In Dreaming the Dark Starhawk says the dark is "all that we are afraid of, all that we don't want to see - fear, anger, sex, grief, death, the unknown." Here is where a therapist does great service by being an agent of faith, knowing in his or her own being, and assuming for the client whether the client can do it or not, that the darkness is not demonic and empty, but divine and full.

In this sinking into silence and non-imaging we do not have to be afraid, for God is "superessential darkness," and to make contact with the darkness is to make contact with the deepest side of the Godhead. "Love God as God is a not-God, a not-mind, a not-person, a not-image." counsels Eckhart...."When you let go of all that is within you, then you can be transported into God's naked being."=Eckhart(p.136)

Letting Go of Doing

There is another aspect of darkness that Eckhart comments on. "What is this darkness? What's its name? Call it: an aptitude for sensitivity. Call it: a rich sensitivity which will make you whole. Call it: your potential for vulnerability." (p.157)

In hakomi we often talk about this in terms of the signal to noise ratio. When we silently enter into the realm of darkness and mystery we are lowering the background noise of ordinary consciousness and enabling an exquisite sensitivity to the signals that are within to guide us, the signals that are normally obscured by the everyday commotion of control, fear, knowing, and busyness.

We explore with a person their experience with the theoretical construct of the sensitivity cycle in the back of our minds. How does this person get in the way of the normal process of increasing sensitivity that comes from insight, action, nourishment, and completion? We have to slow down and listen to find out. We have to cultivate a receptivity to what is.

Essentially, what the Via Negativa is about is learning receptivity. "Everything that is to be receptive must and ought to be empty," observes Meister

Eckhart. The emptying we do of language and images and nosiness or the emptying that comes our way by events of suffering or of ecstasy -- and often these are the same events -- all this carves spaces within ourselves that make receptivity bigger and bolder and more full of surprises than we could ever imagine. (p.159)

So, it sounds like a lot is happening here, and it is, but not through trying to make it happen. Here we are exploring the Taoist roots of hakomi and the Via Negativa; the art of non-doing. Indeed, Fox quotes Jung commenting on the Taoist text The Secret of the Golden Flower.

What did these people do in order to achieve the development that liberated them? As far as I could see they did nothing but let things happen ... The art of letting things happen, action through non-action, letting go of oneself, as taught by Meister Eckhart, became for me the key opening the door to the way. We must be able to let things happen in the psyche. For us, this actually is an art of which few people know anything. Consciousness is forever interfering, helping, correcting, and negating, and never leaving the simple growth of the psychic processes in peace. (p.138)

So, in hakomi we encourage a shift in consciousness. It is a shift away from adding anything new to an already busy consciousness, a shift away from identifying with any particular contents of consciousness. It is a shift into the witness, the part of consciousness that is pure awareness without contents. The witness adds nothing to consciousness, but has the vantage point of being able to notice the automatic patterns by which we routinely organize our consciousness. The possibility arises of noticing barriers to satisfying functioning and choosing more satisfying ways of organizing.

Likewise, the master therapist according to Kurtz, is the one who adds nothing to the already full slate of a busy consciousness. Contact, accessing, and deepening procedures simply reveal compassion, and guide a person

into an increasingly sensitive awareness of what already is. Master therapists are noted for what they don't do, for what they leave out.

Even such active appearing techniques in hakomi as taking over voices and muscular tension patterns are not adding anything. They are taking over what the client is already doing him or herself in such a way that possibilities for increased awareness are enhanced. There is an underlying faith that increased, non-interfering awareness will allow psychic processes the distance and peace they need to start growing in whatever way may be needful.

Consciousness needs to empty itself of doing to allow enough room to become aware of how it has already done itself. In hakomi, we are interested in getting to that level of organization that structures experience and expression before they happen. If we or the client are in a doing mode, an intentional problem solving mode, we are already organized. We are at the mercy of the automatic reflexes of that system.

Pain: Being Emptied

.If we could learn to learn from pain even as it grasps us = Adrienne Rich

.Everything praises God. Darkness, privations, defects, evil too praise God and bless God. = Meister Eckhart

.From suffering I have learned this: That whoever is sore wounded by love will never be made whole unless she embrace the very same love which wounded her = Mechtild of Magdeburg

.By letting pain be pain we allow healing to be healing. = Matthew Fox

We can cultivate a measure of willingness for emptying our consciousness of excessive doing. If we are not cultivating this blessed gift at a rate good for our overall health, pain is often there with us, at no extra charge, to help our motivational level crank up. Fox notes, "It is one thing to empty. It is an even deeper thing to be

emptied. Pain does this. It empties us, if we allow it to." (p. 141)

Usually we do a little dance with it, a two step. A part of us welcomes pain as a sign that points to the "more" that is possible in life. Another part of us moves to dismiss the pain as quickly as possible for fear that even the few crumbs we have will be taken. We nurture the illusion that maybe the old ways would still work if we returned to them with renewed vigor.

Fox is clear that the insight to pain is to enter it, befriend it. "Jesus had the same insight: love your enemies. Pain is our enemy, but that is no excuse to run from embracing it, kissing it long enough so that we might truly let go of it. There is no way to let go of pain without first embracing it and loving it." (p.142)

Here again, is where therapists can function helpfully as faith agents. Where the client would run from the pain, the therapist can provide the curiosity, fearlessness, and trust that there is great wisdom in the pain, along with the skill to promote the necessary safety measures which allow the client to hang in there.

At this point the therapist must be empty and clean. If the pain scares the therapist, the temptation will be to not allow it to deepen, or to offer premature nourishment -- to not simply befriend the pain and learn from it what is needed. If the therapist does not recognize the pain and the resistance to exploring it as a natural, organic part of the process, the temptation might be to promote ego-centered efforting for the client to "hang in there!", "keep at it!", "not run from it!". The pain in a person needs to be honored, not conquered or exorcised. A new person undaunted by pain does not have to be manufactured. Old barriers that have barred the whole person from emerging simply need to be released. Pain shows the way. There are no white knights. God simply heals through the organic life process.

It is good for therapists to remember that the greatest fear and pain will always flow from the client confronting the greatest

possibility of pleasure. That is why verbal and non-verbal probes in hakomi are experiments normally designed around precisely what the client does not believe, is not able to take in; what will evoke the greatest pain and lead most directly to the barriers needing attention.

The Via Positiva is used to facilitate the letting go of the Via Negativa, which in turn facilitates a deeper participation in the Via Positiva as the person reorganizes around greater possibilities of pleasure. The Via Negativa, as Fox says, is not salvation from pain but through pain. "Entering darkness to befriend it becomes a profoundly healing event." (p.162)

Fox notes the example of Molly Rush, the grandmother arrested and jailed for protesting the Trident submarine who commented:

Last October I found myself out in a scrubby prison yard, discovering amidst the mud eighteen varieties of wildflowers. Some of them were almost too small to see until you'd gone around the yard a hundred times. Maybe the hundredth time you would have caught five of them. After several days, you could count eighteen ... Most of the time we never see the flowers around, but when that's about all there is to see, they become precious.

When asked what she learned from her Plowshears action and her jailing, she replied, "I have a greater sense of the preciousness of life." Fox then comments: "The psychological term for how it is that the Via Negativa can in fact increase our sense of pleasure at the basics of life is deautomatization. We become, as adults -- children do not lack this as a rule -- automatized to the beauty and form and shapes and colors and smells that are around us all the time; we lose our sense of pleasure, of the preciousness of life. Unwished for pain, provided we pray it or enter into it and do not cover it up and run from it, can often bring that love of life back to us." (p.144)

That is a good perspective on hakomi therapy. As therapists, we encourage people to go the Via Negativa as a way of suspending

automatic patterns, judgments, and habits that structure our experience in a way that cuts it off from teaching, healing, and enlivening us. We cultivate eyes that see and ears that hear. We trust that the creation is good. Once the fear and pain have been negotiated that separate and alienate us from the goodness of creation, life itself does the healing and making whole.

The God of Nothingness & Laughter

There is a deeper dimension to pain's ability to heal which goes beyond psychological character work to nothingness. The Judeo-Christian heritage affirms we will be recreated as everything is created, ex nihilo, from the nothingness.

It is said of Jesus that he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, thus becoming a source of wisdom. Jesus said the person who saves her life will lose it; the person who loses her life will save it. The cross is the ultimate symbol of letting go. The desert has always been a symbol of the Way for Christians. Meister Eckhart used to "pray God to rid me of God." Gandhi said true individuality consists in reducing oneself, one's ego, to zero. All the major world religions point to the ideal of freedom from attachment. To be enlightened souls we need to become as God, as nothing, as no-thing.

Pain can be a gift, a signal that our ego fed illusions are just that, an avenue into the creativeness of the void. Some alcoholics have discovered that. Carol Christ comments on the experience of women:

Women's experience of nothingness is more far-reaching than men's. Women's experiences of nothingness begin at birth and continue throughout their lives ... Women need a literature that names their pain and allows them to see the emptiness in their lives as an occasion for insight rather than as one more indication of their worthlessness. Women need stories that will tell them that their ability to face the darkness in their lives is an indication of strength, not weakness. (p.150)

Women in general have always provided the majority of those who take the spiritual path, in large part because of their greater experience of oppression. For men, the lesson that true somesbodies flow from the ranks of the nobodies is hard to teach. There is so much stroking in the culture for fulfilling the image of a false somebody. Still, the lesson is there. Fox writes:

In biblical faith our trust extends even to nothingness. Our Creator is author of all things, even of nothingness. Our falls into nothingness can be and must be trusted -- we can learn to let ourselves fall, to let ourselves sink. Isn't this what the seed does as it falls into the ground, eventually to sprout new life? Our Creator God is a God of nothingness as well as of isness. (p.154)

Ron Kurtz talks of the necessity of letting go of efforting. Gerald May in his book Will and Spirit helpfully contrasts the concepts of the willingness involved with surrender vs. the willfulness of conquering. In hakomi, the aim of character work is to encourage communion through promoting characterlessness. It is when we can make peace with our characterological dispositions, when we can let go of the ego illusions that form around them, that we become free.

Freedom is the grace to be all things and no thing. It is a reconciliation with creation, a celebrative rejoining after years of separating the world into me-not me, us-them. The unity principle in hakomi becomes a life sustaining reality. Fox says, "as we sink deeper into the darkness of less and less projection, we experience what is in fact the unity of all things, the darkness that Rilke praises for its capacity to 'pull in everything' ... The Creator God, a great underground river, awaits our sinking more than our climbing. The reason we can trust the sinking so deeply is that, at the bottom, 'my ground and God's are the same.' (Eckhart) God is already home in a deep, deep way ... The Via Negativa is about returning home." (p.161)

Because we are already home in the ultimate sense, there is something comical as

well as tragic about all the pain and drama we put ourselves through. There is much spontaneous laughter and humor that occurs in hakomi therapy. It arises naturally whenever therapists are operating out of the faith that their clients are not sickies, crazies, or fragile beings. We are all creative beings who have what it takes to create a more hospitable world, just as we have created a harsh one. Laughter affirms a person's strength, wholeness, and creative capacities.

Fox writes, "The Via Negativa is the letting go and sinking that occurs in laughter ... A healthy Via Negativa will always include a powerful sense of humor, a recognition of how deep down we are divine jokes, cosmic jokes, and even our pain is not to be taken too seriously. To do so would deny pain its transparency." (p.153) He quotes the feminist writer Susan Griffin:

She lets herself fall ... The room of the darkness of women. Where we are not afraid. Where joy is just under the surface. Where we laugh. Where laughter fills us utterly when we see what we thought was horrible. Where our demands are endlessly received. Where revelation fills us with glee. (p.153)

Sin, Safety, & Strength

.There where clinging to things ends is where God begins. = Meister Eckhart

.To be alive is to be burning. = Norman O. Brown.

.By becoming skilled in our many letting-gos we are preparing for a gentle death, a relaxed entry into another realm. = M. Fox

Strength in hakomi and the Via Negativa, as suggested before, do not revolve around efforting, controlling, and coming out on top. Quite the opposite. Fox says, "The Via Negativa is not a stoical strength of gritting the teeth nor a macho strength of controlling the situation: it is a vulnerable strength, the strength to absorb, to receive the dark with the light, the pain with the

pleasure, a strength to keep on falling."
(p.162)

Strength to fall is related to trust, a trust that the darkness leads to healing and wholeness. "Go your way. Your trust has saved you." (Jesus) Trust in turn is related to an openness to sacrifice.

Sacrifice is another kind of salvific power recovered in the Via Negativa. A sacrifice is a holy offering, traditionally a burnt offering, an offering that is consumed by fire. "To be alive is to be burning," Norman O. Brown says, and to sacrifice is to be so in love with being alive that one is willing to let go: to consume and be consumed, burn and be burnt, out of Eros and not out of nihilism or despair. This kind of willingness paradoxically requires an unwillingness, a letting go of will power and projects, in order to see creation ablaze. Here lies the sense of sacrifice regained. It is not an appeasement of the gods or of God, but a burning out of our own reluctance to let go. (p.163)

Sacrifice and pain are able to energize and heal us because they open us up to greater life, to the cosmos. Our pain can become cosmic pain. "Simone Weil advises us to 'identify with the universe itself.' This cosmic relationship heals for 'everything that is less than the universe is subject to suffering.' ... Suffering is built into the birth process of the entire cosmos. It has to do with sacrifice and yielding, with receiving and birthing forth ... Some suffering -- that which leads to birthing -- can be a blessing." (p.146)

In hakomi we often use the image of the midwife for the therapist. It is nice because it honors the organic process that is happening in therapy. It affirms that whatever is given birth belongs to the client. It also explains why some video tapes of hakomi therapy sessions can be boring. It is literally like child birth. There is a lot of waiting, a lot of salvific, organic, trustworthy waiting that can only be done by those who have let go of doing and artificial agendas. A lot of internal movement is hap-

pening during the waiting of childbirth or hakomi therapy. The one giving birth is aware of it. The midwife is aware of it. But to someone looking in occasionally from the outside, it might seem less dramatic. "What? You means she still hasn't done anything?"

In therapy, we likewise know that there are those transition stages where the fear of pain can arise and the person tighten against the movement that is wanting to happen. This is analogous with literal childbirth. Fox quotes an experienced midwife commenting on the transition stage of labor:

A drastic change, may lead to panic or anxiousness if not properly supported and prepared ... As in the early stage of labor, she can assist only by relaxing. If she loses control, fights the contractions, she will increase her own fear, which in turn increases her discomfort. For most women, this is the most difficult stage because the interlude seems to threaten the loss of control, and momentarily at least, to be without fruit. (p.159)

Here we are talking about the not so easy aspects of sinking into divine pain and nothingness. There can be panic in sinking. "Here the refusal to trust, to trust the buoyancy of the water, of the darkness, of the pain, of the nothingness, of the God of nothingness, of our own body, own air, own lungs, own trust -- all this is sinful because it stifles our spiritual growth." (p.159)

"Clinging is sin in the Via Negativa. Clinging to ego and therefore refusing to let it go for deeper and more transcendent experience, clinging to control, to will power, even to religious control, to ascetic control in the name of spirituality, clinging to our sacred images of our sacred selves -- all this can be sin against the spirit of darkness and sinking." (p.160)

In psychological terms, those who are neurotic, those who are getting in their own way and take responsibility for it, are on the spiritual path. Those who have personality disorders, those who blame all their

problems on external factors and disavow responsibility, are clinging, self-justifying - - sinful. Sin in the Via Negativa is "the refusal to let go, the refusal to admit the need for receptivity in our lives and therefore the refusal to develop receptivity." (p.159)

Hakomi maintains a paradoxical stance in relation to sin, namely an attitude that sees clients as absolutely responsible and totally dependent. On the responsible side, it is acknowledged that nobody can be helped who doesn't want it, that everyone is responsible for his or her own growth. There are many dispositions that affect us, but none of them ultimately in a way that would make us robots. On the dependent side, it is assumed that fear, tightening, and clinging are a normal, organic part of the person's process, a cause for compassion, not condemnation. Fear is accepted as an integral life force. It is studied and used to find out what is needed to provide it the safety to let down. It is studied and used to allow it to lead awareness to the normally unconscious core organizing beliefs that stimulated it.

The brilliance of Kurtz's methods are in how they support defenses as opposed to attacking or challenging them. The defenses are used as avenues for deepening a person's process. Resistances that are seen by some therapies as obstacles to overcome that bog down all progress are used by Kurtz as royal roads to the unconscious. Paradoxically, honoring resistances for their wisdom leads to seemingly magical speed in getting beyond them. Hakomi therapists working gracefully with others continually confirm the wisdom that perfect love casts out all fear, and with it, the sin it produces. In hakomi dragons are not a chaotic force to be conquered. They are a living, organic system to be fearlessly approached, in the faith that they will calm down when they are enabled to get what they need. Again, force leads to drama and noise. Mindfulness leads to sensitivity, letting go, and satisfaction.

The satisfaction we let down into becomes a source of strength and power. "Strength is, after all, a letting go of weakness, of self-pity, of puerile shame, of fear to be different or to be ourselves.

Such strength saves. Not only oneself, but others." (p.164)

A final way Fox talks of sin is the sin of projection. "Projection is the refusal to let be, to let others be different, be surprising, be themselves. This refusal to let be comes from an inner refusal to let oneself be, to be with oneself -- the essential spiritual gift learned from solitude." (p.160) To be able to work without artificial agendas or preferences, therapists themselves need to participate deeply in the blessings of graceful solitude. Our own emptying and healing, our own being, becomes our greatest instrument in ministry.

The Politics of Pain

As with the Via Positiva, Fox also understands a number of political implications that follow from taking the Via Negativa seriously.

"A healthy experience of letting pain be pain is always a schooling in compassion. Pain destroys the illusions of false, that is elitist, pleasures. It burns from the inside out. It therefore sensitizes us to what is truly beautiful in life." (p.143)

"As the poet Angelus Silesius put it in the seventeenth century, "There are no objects for compassion because there are no objects." By dropping or letting go of worlds of subjects/objects, we sink into a consciousness of interdependency and indeed transparency. Our experiences of transparency and synchronicity are experiences of no-thing-ness, and vice versa. As we allow this truth to penetrate us more and more deeply we begin to realize the truth of compassion: to relieve another person's pain or to celebrate another's joy is to relieve one's own pain and to celebrate one's own joy. Here the unnatural boundaries between inner and outer, personal and social, I and you, truly melt, and we return to a micro/macrocosmic relation to existence." (p.152)

"An energy derived from suffering is the manner in which letting pain be pain links us with others.. All social movements and organizations were born of pain. Not privatized pain or pain kept to oneself or the

wallowing in one's own pain, but pain shared. Unemployment shared. Unjust taxes shared. The evil, bitter taste and experiences of racism, of sexism, of ageism -- all shared. Today it is the pain of nuclear war that people enter into by meditation and reflection and storytelling that is birthing that social movement that can -- if it is not too late -- finally put an end to war as a means for solving human conflict. Nonviolence is born of the shared experience of the pain of violence." (p.1435)

"In our times, salvation would include a recognition of the need to let go: the letting go of crazy military projections and nuclear madneses; the letting go of nation-states and their rights to control us; the letting go of narrow and parochial political systems and unjust economic systems. The letting go of war itself as a totally unreasonable and humanly insulting way to solve differences; therefore the recognition of the obsolescence of war that the nuclear age is trying to teach us before it is too late. The letting go of patriarchy which creates one-sided citizens of women and men alike and culminates in violent living and violent relationships. The letting go of satisfaction with the way things are for the poor, the homeless, the starving, the ignorant, the sick -- yes, and with the way things are with the too-wealthy, the too-powerful, the too-knowledgeable. Clearly the political implications of salvation as liberation are tremendous for the Via Negativa." (p.166)

Summary

"In this entire reflection on letting pain be pain, I must emphasize how important it is that we not glorify pain or cling to our pain or wallow in our pain. That is not letting pain be pain -- that way lies letting pain be our boss. That way lies sado-masochistic manipulation. The purpose of letting pain be pain is precisely this: to let go of pain." (p.147)

"The emptying and letting go of the cross was a prelude to an ever greater birth, just as our letting-gos are followed by creativity. In moving on from the Via Negativa we journey into Path III, the Via Creativa. We take delight in letting go even of letting

go." (p.172) ((Part three of this series, that on the Via Creativa, will be in a forthcoming edition of the Forum.)

"When we are ill we feel separated and isolated from those who are well. We sense a profound difference in our 'space quality' -- the sense of relatedness and connectedness with all else evaporates and we feel closed in, and fragmented from those around us. When we are sick we become a Newtonian object: a bit-piece stranded in a flowing time."

Larry Dossey, M.D.
Space, Time and Medicine

"When the mind is disturbed, the multiplicity of things is produced, but when the mind is quieted, the multiplicity of things disappear."

Ashvaghosha
The Awakending of Faith

"The Eastern mystics tell us again and again that all things and events we perceive are creations of the mind, arising from a particular state of consciousness and dissolving again if this state is transcended."

Fritjof Capra
Tao of Physics

"...relativity and quantum theory agree, in that they both imply the need to look on the world as an undivided whole, in which all parts of the universe, including the observer and his instruments, merge and unite in one totality...The new form of insight can perhaps best be called Undivided Wholeness in Flowing Movement... In this flow, mind and matter are not separate substances. Rather they are different aspects of one whole and unbroken movement."

David Bohm
Wholeness and the Implicate Order