

Manual of Formative Themes and Practices for Messengers

Formative Themes and Practices for Messengers

Recommended basic bibliography: *Silo's Message* and "Commentaries on Silo's Message."

Formative Themes. These are assembled from a group of talks and brief developments. Among them are highlighted: "The Healing of Suffering," "Failure," "Reconciliation," "Faith," "Religion," "Transcendence," "Unity and Contradiction," "Valid Action," "The Principles of Valid Action" and "The Golden Rule." This list does not exhaust the subject matter of the recommended bibliography.

Suggested Practices. These are grouped as seminars and retreats. Among them are highlighted: "Configuration of the Internal Guide," "The Force I," "The Force II," "Reconciliation," "Profound and Essential Change," "Direction and the Aphorisms," "The Asking," "The Golden Rule and Transforming Actions."

The Practices and Formative Themes are meant to be carried out at the Centers of Work of the Parks for Study and Reflection. If there is no park nearby, halls and meeting centers of the Community are adequate places for these activities.

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¹ All seminars are one day long, retreats last several days.

Part One: Formative Themes

Formative Theme No. 1

The Healing of Suffering

Silo

Punta de Vacas, Mendoza, Argentina

May 4th, 1969

If you have come to listen to a man who it is thought transmits wisdom, you have mistaken your way, for true wisdom is not communicated through books or speeches – true wisdom is found in the depths of your consciousness, just as true love is found in the depths of your heart.

If you have come at the urging of slanderers and hypocrites to listen to this man so that what you hear today may later be used against him, you have mistaken your way, because this man has not come here to ask anything of you or to use you, because he does not need you.

You are listening to a man who does not know the laws that rule the Universe, who is not privy to the laws of History, who is ignorant of the relationships that govern the peoples of the world. High in these mountains, far from the cities and their sick ambitions, this man addresses himself to your conscience. Over the cities, where each day is a struggle, a hope cut short by death, where love is followed by hate, where forgiveness is followed by revenge; over the cities of the people rich and poor; over the immense fields of humanity, a mantle of suffering and sorrow has fallen.

You suffer when pain bites your body. You suffer when hunger seizes your body. But you suffer not only from your body's immediate pain and hunger – you also suffer from the consequences of the diseases that afflict it.

You must distinguish between two types of suffering. There is the suffering that occurs during illness and that recedes with the advance of science, just as hunger can recede if the empire of justice advances. There is also the suffering that does not depend on the sickness of your body but yet derives from that sickness: If you are disabled, if you cannot see, if you cannot hear, you suffer. But though such suffering derives from your body, or from the diseases of your body, that suffering is of your mind.

There is yet another kind of suffering that does not recede even with the advance of science or with the advance of justice. This type of suffering, which belongs strictly to your mind, retreats before faith, before joy in life, before love. You must understand that this suffering is always rooted in the violence that exists in your own consciousness. You suffer because you fear losing what you have, or because of what you have already lost, or because of what you desperately long to reach. You suffer because of what you lack, or because you fear in general. These, then, are the great enemies of humanity: fear of sickness, fear of poverty, fear of death, fear of loneliness. All these forms of suffering pertain to your mind, and all of them reveal your inner violence, the violence that is in your mind. Notice how that violence always stems from desire. The more violent a person is, the more gross that person's desires.

I would like to tell you a story that took place long ago.

There was once a traveler who had to undertake a long journey. He yoked his animal to a cart and began the journey to his faraway destination, a journey he had to complete within a certain length of time. He called the animal Necessity and the cart Desire; one wheel of the cart he called Pleasure, and the other he called Pain. Our traveler turned his cart sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left, yet he never ceased moving toward his destiny. The faster the cart traveled, the faster turned the wheels of Pleasure and Pain, carrying as they did the cart of Desire and connected as they were by the same axle. But the journey was very long, and after a time our traveler grew bored. So he decided to decorate his cart, and he began to adorn it with all manner of beautiful things. But the more he embellished the cart of Desire with these ornaments, the heavier became the load for Necessity to pull. On the curves and steep hills of the road, the poor animal grew too exhausted to pull the cart of Desire. And where the road was soft, the wheels of Pleasure and Suffering became mired in the earth. One day, because the road was long and he was still very far from his destination, our traveler grew desperate. That night he decided to meditate on the problem, and in the midst of his meditation he heard the neighing of his old friend, Necessity. Comprehending the message, he arose very early the next morning and began to lighten the cart of its burden, stripping it of all its fine adornments. Then he set off once more toward his destination, with the animal Necessity pulling the cart at a brisk trot. Still, our traveler had already lost much time – time that was now irrecoverable. The next night he sat down again to meditate, and he realized, thanks to another message from his old friend, that now he had to undertake a task that was doubly difficult because it involved his letting go. At daybreak he sacrificed the cart of Desire. It is true that when he did so he lost the wheel of Pleasure, but then he also lost the wheel of Suffering. And so, abandoning the cart of Desire, he mounted the animal called Necessity and galloped on its back across the green fields until he reached his destiny.

See how desire can trap you. But notice that there are desires of different qualities. There are cruder desires, and there are more elevated desires. Elevate desire, purify desire, surpass desire! In doing so, surely you will have to sacrifice the wheel of Pleasure – but you will also become free of the wheel of Suffering.

Spurred by desire, the violence in a person does not simply remain like a sickness in the consciousness of that person – it acts in the world of other people and is exercised upon them. And do not think that when I talk of violence I am speaking only about the armed act of war, where some men destroy others. That is only one form of physical violence. There is also economic violence. Economic violence is the violence through which you exploit other people; economic violence occurs when you steal from another, when you are no longer a brother or sister to others but a bird of prey feeding upon them. There is also racial violence. Or do you think that you are not being violent when you persecute someone because that person is not of your own race? Do you think that you are not engaging in violence when you malign that person for being of a race different from your own?

And there is religious violence: Do you think that you are not engaging in violence when you refuse work to, close your doors to, or dismiss a person, because that person does not share your religious beliefs? Do you believe that it is not violence when you use words of hate to build walls around

d other people, excluding them from your society, because they do not share your religious beliefs – isolating them within their families, segregating them and their loved ones, because they do not share your religion? There are other forms of violence that are imposed by the Philistine morality. You wish to impose your way of life upon another; you wish to impose your vocation upon another. But who has told you that you are an example that must be followed? Who has told you that you can impose a way of life because it pleases you? What makes your way of life a model, a pattern that you have the right to impose on others? This is another form of violence. Only inner faith and inner meditation can end the violence in you, in others, and in the world around you. All the other doors are false and do not lead away from this violence. This world is on the verge of exploding with no way to end the violence! Do not choose false doors. There are no politics that can solve this mad urge for violence. There is no political party or movement on the planet that can end the violence. Do not choose false doors that promise to lead away from the violence in the world . . . I have heard that all over the world young people are turning to false doors to try to escape the violence and inner suffering. They turn to drugs as a solution. Do not choose false doors to try to end the violence.

My brother, my sister – keep these simple commandments, as simple as these rocks, this snow, and this sun that bless us. Carry peace within you, and carry it to others. My brother, my sister – if you look back in history, you will see the human being bearing the face of suffering. Remember, even as you gaze at that suffering face, that it is necessary to move forward, and it is necessary to learn to laugh, and it is necessary to learn to love.

To you, my brother and sister, I cast this hope – this hope of joy, this hope of love – so that you elevate your heart and elevate your spirit, and so that you do not forget to elevate your body.

Bibliography

- * Book: *Silo Speaks*, “The Healing of Suffering” in *Silo: Collected Works*, Vol I
- * Video Commentaries of Silo: Chapter 3: “The Message,” www.silo.net

Formative Theme No. 2

Failure

“...After many days I discovered this great paradox: Those who bore failure in their heart were able to illuminate the final victory, while those who felt triumphant were left by the wayside like vegetation whose life is muted and diffuse.”

From *The Inner Look* by Silo

From *Psychology I, Psychology Notes*

“The consciousness in front of the world tends to compensate it structurally by means of a complex system of responses. Some responses reach the objectal world directly (expressed through the centers), but others remain in the consciousness and reach the world indirectly through some manifestation of behavior. These compensations of the consciousness tend to balance the internal world with respect to the external one. Such connection is established according to exigencies, with the individual finding herself pressed to respond to a complex world that is natural, human, social, cultural, technical, and so on. The “reverie nucleus” arises as an important compensatory response, and the “secondary reveries” as specific responses to the exigencies.

Reveries can be visualized as images; not so the nucleus, which is perceived as an allusive climate” as it is configured over time, increasing its power to direct a person’s tendencies, their personal aspirations. In the stage when the reverie nucleus is wearing out, when it ceases to direct the psychism, the forms and images that it had adopted can be observed. For this reason the nucleus is easier to register at the beginning as well as at the end of its process, but not in its middle stage, which is when it most strongly directs the psychic activity. The paradox arises that the human being is unable to perceive what most determines its behavior, since the nucleus works as a background that responds in a totalizing way to the multiple demands of daily life.

The “reverie nucleus” rules the aspirations, ideals and illusions that change in each vital stage. Following these changes or variations in the nucleus, existence is oriented in other directions and, concomitantly, changes in personality are produced. This nucleus wears out individually, in the same way that epochal reveries that have directed the activities of a whole society wear out. Whereas on one hand the nucleus gives a general response to the environment’s demands, on the other it compensates the personality’s basic deficiencies and lacks, imprinting a certain direction on the behavior. This direction can be weighted depending on whether or not it follows the line of growing adaptation. The reveries and nucleus imprint their powers of suggestion over the consciousness, producing the characteristic blocking of criticism and self-criticism proper to the infra-vigilic levels. For this reason, any direct confrontation with or opposition to the suggestion of the reverie nucleus” is useless, as it simply ends up reinforcing the compulsion. The possibility of producing a change of direction in an evolutionary line lies in making gradual modifications. The nucleus can regress or become fixed. In the first case, the psychism returns to previous stages, increasing the discords between processes and the situation in the environment. In the second case, when the nucleus becomes fixed, the individual is progressively disconnected from his environment, producing a behavior that does not adjust to the dynamic of events.

The “reverie nucleus” launches the human being in the pursuit of mirages, which, when they are not realized, produce painful states (dis-illusions), while partial fulfillments produce pleasurable situations. We thus discover that the reveries and their nucleus lie at the root of psychological suffering.

It is in the great failures – when expectations collapse and mirages fade – that the possibility arises of a new direction in life. In such a situation the “knot of pain” is exposed – the biographical knot that the consciousness suffered from for so long.”

This crucial moment in life, particularly in the evolutionary work of a person, is described with the help of allegories in the chapter “The Internal States” in the book *The Inner Look*:

“...After failure upon failure you can reach the next resting place, called the dwelling of Deviation. Take care in choosing between the two roads now before you. Either you take the road of Resolution, which carries you to Generation, or you take that of Resentment, which causes you to descend once more toward Regression.

Here you face another dilemma: either you choose the labyrinth of conscious life (with Resolution), or you return to your previous life through Resentment. There are many who at this point, unable to surpass themselves, cut off their own possibilities.”

In his speech of May 4, 2004, Silo approached the subject of failure from a different perspective, projecting it toward the work of social transformation:

“We have failed... but we keep insisting!

We have failed but keep insisting with our project of humanizing the world.

We have failed and we will continue to fail not just once but a thousand times over, because we ride on the wings of a bird called Intent that soars above frustration, weakness, and pettiness.

The force that gives life to our flight is faith in our destiny, faith in the justice of our action, faith in ourselves, it is faith in the human being.

Because this is not the end of History, nor the end of ideas, nor the end of humankind; neither is it the definitive triumph of wickedness and manipulation. And for this reason we can always continue on in our attempt to change things and to change ourselves.”

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- * Book: *The Inner Look in Humanize the Earth. Silo: Collected Works, Vol I*
- * Book: *Psychology I in Psychology Notes. Silo: Collected Works, Vol II*
- * Silo’s words at the first annual celebration of Silo’s Message, Punta de Vacas May 4th, 2004, www.silo.net

Formative Theme No. 3

Reconciliation

1. Excerpt from Silo's words during Three Days of Spiritual Inspiration

Punta de Vacas, May 3, 4, and 5, 2007

"...We have made the pilgrimage to this desolate outpost searching for the Force that nurtures our lives, searching for the Joy in doing and searching for the mental Peace necessary to advance in this altered and violent world. In these Days we are reviewing our lives, our hopes, and also our failures, with the aim of cleaning the mind of all falsehood and contradiction. To have the opportunity to review our aspirations and frustrations, even if it is only once in our lives, is a practice that every person who searches to advance in their personal development and their action in the world should do. These are days of inspiration and reflection. These are days of Reconciliation, sincere reconciliation with ourselves and those who have harmed us. In these painful relationships that we have endured we are not trying to forgive nor to be forgiven. To forgive means that one of the parties is placed in a superior moral position, and the other party humbles themselves before the one who forgives. And while it is clear that to forgive is a more advanced step than to take revenge, it is not as advanced as reconciliation.

Neither are we trying to forget the wrongs that have occurred. It is not the case of trying to falsify the memory. This is the case of trying to comprehend what happened in order to enter into the superior step of reconciliation. Nothing good is achieved, either personally or socially, by forgetting or forgiving. Don't forget or forgive! The mind should remain fresh and attentive, without concealments or falsehoods. We are now considering the most important point of Reconciliation which does not admit adulterations. If we are searching for sincere reconciliation with ourselves and with those who have hurt us intensely it is because we want a profound transformation of our lives – a transformation that takes us out of resentment where clearly no one reconciles with anyone and not even with themselves. When we are able to understand that an enemy does not live in our interior but rather a being full of hopes and failures, a being in whom we can see in a short succession of images, beautiful fulfilling moments and also moments of frustration and resentment. When we are able to understand that our enemy is a being who also has lived with hopes and failures, a being that has had beautiful fulfilling moments and also moments of frustration and resentment, then we are placing a humanizing look over the skin of monstrosity.

This path toward reconciliation does not appear spontaneously, as in the same way the path toward non-violence does not appear spontaneously – because both require great comprehension and the formation of a physical repugnance to violence.

It will not be us who judge errors, neither our own nor those of others. For that there is human retribution and justice and the stature of the times in which their dominion is exercised. I don't want to judge myself nor to judge others... I want to deeply understand in order to clean my mind of all resentment.

To reconcile is neither to forget nor to forgive, it is to acknowledge all that has happened and to propose to oneself to emerge from the circle of resentment. It is to look at the situation,

acknowledging one's errors and those of others. To reconcile within oneself is to propose not to walk down the same road twice, but rather to dispose ourselves to repair twice-over the wrongs we have done. But it is clear that we cannot ask those that have offended us to doubly repair the wrongs they have caused us. However, it is a good task to make them see the chain of harm that they are dragging through their lives. In doing this, we reconcile with those whom we have previously felt as an enemy, even though we may not achieve that the other reconciles with us. But this is now part of the destiny of their actions about which we cannot decide.

We are saying that reconciliation is not reciprocal between people and also the reconciliation with oneself does not bring about, as a consequence, that others leave their vicious circle even though it is possible to recognize the social benefits of such an individual posture.

The theme of reconciliation has been central in our Days, but surely we have achieved many other advances by physically making this pilgrimage to an unknown landscape that will have awakened profound landscapes. And this will always be possible if the Purpose that has moved one to be a pilgrim is a disposition toward renewal, or better still, a disposition toward the transformation of one's own life.

In these days we have seen the situations that we consider to be the most important in our life. If we have located such moments and taken them through reconciliation, cleaning them of the resentments that have tied us to the past, then we will have made a good pilgrimage, reaching the source of renewal and transformation.”

2. Excerpt from Silo's words in the Public Talk in Madrid, 1981

“...How will human beings ever triumph over their shadow? By fleeing it? By confronting it in incoherent struggle? If the motor of history is rebellion against death, I say to you now: Rebel against frustration and revenge! For the first time in history, let us stop looking for people to blame. Everyone is responsible for what they have done, but no one is to blame for what has happened. If only with this universal judgment we could declare: “No one is to blame,” and with this establish a moral obligation that every human being reconcile with his or her own past. This will begin here today in you, and you will be responsible to see that it continues, reaching those around you until it has spread to the last corner of the Earth.

If the direction of your life has not changed, you need to change it. And if it has already changed, then you need to strengthen this new direction. So that all this may be possible, accompany me in a free, courageous, and profound act that is also a commitment to reconciliation. Go to your parents, your loved ones, your companions; go to your friends and your enemies alike, and tell them with an open heart, “Something great and new has happened in me today,” and explain to them this message of reconciliation. Let me repeat this: Go to your parents, your loved ones, your companions; go to your friends and your enemies alike, and tell them with an open heart, “Something great and new has happened in me today,” and explain to them this message of reconciliation.

For everyone, Peace, Force, and Joy!

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- * Speech: "Three Days of Spiritual Inspiration," May 3, 4 and 5, 2007, www.silo.net
- * Book: *Silo Speaks*, Public Talk in Madrid, Pabellón de los Deportes, Madrid, Spain, September 27, 1981
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Formative Theme No. 4

Faith

“Whenever you find great strength, joy, and kindness in your heart, or when you feel free and without contradictions, immediately be internally thankful. When you find yourself in opposite circumstances, ask with faith, and the gratitude you have accumulated will return to you transformed and amplified in benefit.”

From *The Inner Look* by Silo

1. Chapter XIV from *The Internal Landscape*

1. Whenever I hear the word “faith,” I feel suspicion grow within me.
2. Every time someone speaks of “faith,” I wonder about the purpose of what they are saying.
3. I have seen the difference between naive faith (also known as “credulity”), and the violent and unjustified faith that gives rise to fanaticism. Neither is acceptable, for the first opens the door to accident, while the second imposes its feverish landscape.
4. But something important must lie in this tremendous force that is capable of mobilizing the best of causes. Let faith, then, be a belief whose foundation rests on its usefulness for life!
5. If it is said that faith and science oppose each other, I will reply that I accept science as long as it does not oppose life.
6. Nothing prevents faith and science from progressing, as long as they have the same direction and enthusiasm to help sustain the effort.
7. And those who would humanize, let them help raise our spirits by pointing out the possibilities that the future holds. Or is the skeptic’s anticipation of defeat useful for life? Could even science be sustained without faith?
8. There is a type of faith that goes against life. It is a faith that proclaims “Science will destroy our world!” How much better to put our faith in working day by day to humanize science, so that the direction it was endowed with from its birth may triumph!
9. The usefulness of faith is evident if it is a faith that opens the future and gives meaning to life, orienting it away from suffering and contradiction and toward everything that is valid action.
10. That faith, like faith placed in oneself, in others, and in the world around us, is useful for life.
11. In saying “Faith is useful” you will doubtless offend some particularly sensitive ears. But do not worry, for if those musicians simply examine themselves a little they will recognize how faith is also useful to them, though their faith may flow from a different instrument than the one you play.

12. All those problems that until now have seemed insurmountable will begin to diminish if you are able to achieve faith in yourself and the best in those around you, faith in our world and in a life that is always open to the future.

2. The Aphorisms

These brief sentences which we call "aphorisms" are of great help to develop a type of faith useful in daily life.

The first aphorism says: "**Thoughts produce and attract actions.**" What does this mean, thoughts "produce actions?" It means simply that I act in life according to what I feel now, what I remember from the past, and what I imagine about the future. Any activity that I carry out will depend on what I have done previously, and on having a clear image or plan of what to do. If my thoughts are confused, it is very likely that my actions will be confused, and so on.

In regard to how thoughts "attract actions," it is clear that if I have produced confused actions, this will create confusion in my activities and in the people toward whom my actions are directed. Then, as a consequence I will receive the same type of confused actions in return. For example, if my thoughts are resentful and I act in this way, surely I will create resentment, and attract those actions from other people in return. All a person has to do is to believe in their "bad luck" for their actions and those of the people around them to end up producing these "unlucky situations."

The second aphorism says: "**Thoughts with faith produce and attract stronger actions.**" By "faith" we mean conviction, strong feeling, or confidence that something is the way a person believes it to be. It is not at all the same to think something with doubts as it is to think something with strong emotions. When you see how much a strong feeling like love can do, you can understand what we are saying.

The third aphorism is stated in this way: "**Thoughts repeated with faith produce and attract the maximum strength in actions.**"

The more you repeat an action or a thought, the more it is engraved in your memory, the stronger your habits will be, and the more it will predispose you to repeat future actions in the same direction. If a person continuously thinks with faith that they are sick, it is more likely that they will actually become sick than if they only think this a little, or without conviction. The same holds true with the projects that I have in my life. I must think them out clearly, with faith, and I must think about them over and over again. Then, my actions will go in this direction, and they will also create positive responses from my environment and from the people around me in the direction that is of interest to me.

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Formative Theme No. 5

Religion

“When they spoke of a city of the gods, which the heroes of many peoples strove to reach; when they spoke of a paradise where gods and humankind lived together in transfigured original nature; when they spoke of falls and floods, great internal truth was told.

Later, the redeemers brought their messages and came to us in double nature to reestablish that lost unity for which we yearned. Then, too, great inner truth was told.

But when all this was spoken of but set outside the mind it was an error or a lie.

However, the fusing of the inner look with the external world forces this look to travel new paths.

The heroes of this age fly toward the stars. They fly through regions previously unknown. They fly out from their world and, without knowing it, they are impelled toward the internal and luminous center.”

From the *The Inner Look* by Silo

1. From Chapter XII, “Religion” in *The Human Landscape*

(....)

3. We can say nothing about God. We can speak only of what has been said about God. Many things have been said about God, and much can be said about all this that has been said, but not because of this are we making any progress on the theme of God insofar as it refers to God per se.
4. This kind of tongue twister aside, religions can be of profound interest only when they attempt to point to God rather than to talk about God.
5. Religions, however, express that which exists in their respective landscapes, and consequently a religion is neither true nor false, because its value is not logical. Its value lies in the type of internal register that it evokes, in the agreement between the landscapes one wishes to express and what is really being demonstrated.
6. Religious literature is often linked to landscapes, both external and human, and the characteristics and attributes of their gods are not independent of those landscapes. Nevertheless, even when these external and human landscapes change, this religious literature may endure into new times. And that is hardly surprising, given that nonreligious literature of various kinds also finds a following and awakens emotions in distant eras. Nor does a cult’s persistence through time say much about its “truth,” since legal formalities and social ceremonies often pass from culture to culture and continue to be observed even when knowledge of their original significance has been lost.

7. A religion bursts onto a human landscape in a particular historical period, and so it is often said that at that moment God “reveals” himself to the human being. But in order for that revelation to be accepted in a given historical moment, something must take place in the internal landscape of the human being. That change has generally been interpreted as if “outside” the human being, placing it in the external or social world, and there are certain benefits to be gained in doing so. But something is lost as well – the ability to understand the religious phenomenon as an internal register.
8. But religions have also portrayed themselves as something external, and in so doing they have prepared the ground for the above-mentioned interpretations.
9. When I speak of “external religion,” I am not referring to the projection of psychological images as icons, paintings, statues, buildings, or relics (things proper to visual perception). Nor am I referring to projections in the form of chanting and prayer (proper to auditory perception), nor to their projection as gestures, postures, or the turning of the body in certain directions (proper to kinesthetic and cenesthetic perceptions). Finally, I do not say that a religion is external because it has its sacred books, sacraments, and so on. I do not even call it external because to its liturgy it adds a church, an organization, or holy days, or because it requires of its followers a certain physical state or age in order to carry out specific operations. No, that is the way the followers of the various religions struggle among themselves, each accusing the other faction of various degrees of idolatry because of a preference for working with certain types of images. Rather than dealing with anything substantial, however, this only demonstrates the complete psychological ignorance of the contending parties.
10. When I speak of “external religion” I am referring to any religion that claims to talk about God and the will of God instead of speaking about the religious sentiment and the innermost register of the human being. Even seeking support in externalized worship could be meaningful if through such practices the believers were able to awaken in themselves (were able to reveal) the presence of God.
11. The fact that until now religions have been external corresponds to the type of human landscape in which they were born and developed. Nevertheless, the birth of an inner religion is possible, or in order to survive contemporary religions may convert to an internal religiosity. However, this will only occur to the extent that the internal landscape is ready to accept a new revelation. We are now beginning to catch glimpses of this in those societies in which the human landscape is undergoing such drastic change that the need for internal references is becoming a matter of extreme urgency.
12. None of what has been said about religions can remain standing today, however, for both religion’s apologists and its critics have failed to notice the change that is taking place within the human being. If in the past some people have thought of religions as soporifics to political or social action, today they oppose them for their powerful influence in those fields. Where others once imagined religions imposing their message, now they find that this message has changed. And those who once believed that religions would last forever, today doubt their eternity, while those who assumed that religions were soon to disappear are now surprised to witness the irruption of new forms that are manifestly or latently mystical.

13. There are few in this field who can intuit what the future holds, because there are so few concerned with trying to understand in what direction human intentionality, which definitively transcends the individual human being, is heading. If humanity desires something new to “make itself known,” it is because that which tends to make itself known is already operating in humankind’s internal landscape. But it is not by claiming to be the representative of some god that the internal register of the human being is converted into the dwelling-place or the landscape of a transcendent look, a transcendent intention.

2. From “Religiosity in Today’s World,” June 6, 1986, in *Silo Speaks*

“In my opinion:

“First, a new type of religiosity has begun to develop in recent decades. Second, underlying this religiosity is a diffuse background of rebellion. Third, as a consequence of the impact of this new religiosity and, of course, as a consequence of the dizzying changes taking place in all societies, it is possible that at their core the traditional religions may undergo re-accommodations and adaptations of substantial importance. Fourth, it is highly likely that people all over the planet will experience further psychosocial shocks in the coming years and that this new type of religiosity I have been referring to will figure as an important factor in this phenomenon.

Furthermore, and even though it may seem contrary to the opinion of most social observers, I do not believe that religions have lost their impetus. I do not believe that they are increasingly cut off from power in political, economic, and social decision-making, nor do I believe that religiosity has ceased to stir the consciousness of the peoples of the Earth.”

“...It seems very clear to us that religiosity is advancing – here in Latin America, in the United States, in Japan, in the Arab world, and in the socialist camp: Cuba, Afghanistan, Poland, the U.S.S.R. Our question regarding this matter lies, rather, in the issue of whether the official, established religions will be able to adapt this psychosocial phenomenon to the new urban landscape, or whether they will be overwhelmed by it. It may happen that a diffuse religiosity will continue to grow in small, chaotic groups, without constituting a formal church, and if this is the case it will not be easy to grasp the real magnitude of this phenomenon.

Although the comparison is not entirely legitimate, a distant antecedent comes to mind: As Imperial Rome began to lose faith in her official religion, all manner of cults and superstitions began to arrive from every corner of the empire. And one of those insignificant groups eventually became a universal church.

Today it is clear that if it is to advance, this diffuse religiosity must somehow combine the landscape and the language of our times – a language of computer programming, technology, and space travel – with a new social Gospel.”

3. From “The Theme of God,” October 29, 1995, in *Silo Speaks*

“If God has not died, then religions have responsibilities to humanity that they must fulfill. Today they have a duty to create a new psychosocial atmosphere, to address themselves as teachers to their faithful, and to eradicate all vestiges of fanaticism and fundamentalism. They cannot turn away and remain indifferent to the hunger, ignorance, bad faith, and violence in today’s world. They must contribute vigorously to tolerance and foster dialogue with other beliefs and every person who feels a sense of responsibility for the destiny of humankind. They must open themselves – and I hope this won’t be taken as irreverence – to manifestations of God in the many cultures. We are waiting for them and expecting them to make this contribution to the common cause in this exceedingly difficult moment.

If, on the other hand, God has died in the heart of religions, then we can be sure that God will return to life in a new dwelling, as we learn from the history of the origins of every civilization – and that new dwelling will be in the heart of the human being, far removed from every institution and all power.”

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Formative Theme No. 6

Transcendence

“There is no meaning in life if everything ends with death.”

From *The Inner Look* by Silo

1. “Provisional Meanings” Chapter XIII in *The Internal Landscape*

1. When moved by the pendulum of compensation, I search for meanings to justify my existence, directing myself toward what I need or what I believe I need. In either case, and whether I reach my objective or not, how will that affect the meaning of my life, inasmuch as it is movement in a given direction?
2. If I define myself by a particular situation, what will happen when, through some accident, that situation falls apart? These provisional meanings, though necessary for the development of human activities, cannot serve as the foundation for my existence.
3. Unless you wish to reduce existence to nothing more than exhaustion or frustration, you will need to discover a meaning that not even death – were that the accident – could exhaust or frustrate.
4. You will not be able to justify existence if you place as its end the absurdity of death. Until now, you and I have been companions in the struggle. Neither you nor I wished to kneel before any god, and that is how I would like to remember you always. Why, then, do you abandon me, even as I set forth to defy inexorable death? How is it possible that we have said, “Not even the gods are above life!” – and now you kneel before the denial of life? Do as you see fit, but I will bow my head before no idol, even when it is supposedly “justified” by faith in reason.
5. If reason is to be at the service of life, it will help us leap over death. Let reason, then, produce a meaning exempt from all frustration, all exhaustion, all accident.
6. I want no one at my side who projects transcendence out of fear, but only those who rise up in rebellion against the inevitability of death.
7. I want those saints who do not fear but truly love. I want those who day by day seek to conquer pain and suffering with their science and their reason. And in truth I see no difference between the saints and those who, through their science, encourage life. What better examples could there be, what guides superior to these?
8. A meaning that seeks to go beyond the provisional will not accept death as the end of life, but will instead affirm transcendence as the maximum disobedience to this apparent Destiny. As for those who affirm that their actions unleash events that continue in others, they hold in their hands a strand of eternity’s thread.

3. Fragment from “Commentaries on Silo’s Message.”

“In almost all of these ceremonies there are two realities present that, whether treated explicitly or not, show their importance through the profound significance that they have for life. We know these realities, which allow for different interpretations, by the designations “Immortality” and “the Sacred.” The Message gives the greatest importance to these themes, and explains that one must have the full right to believe or not to believe in immortality and the Sacred, because the orientation of a person’s life will depend on how they place themselves in relation to these themes. The Message acknowledges the difficulties of openly examining these fundamental beliefs, confronting the censorship and self-censorship that inhibit free thought and good conscience. In the context of free interpretation that The Message favors, it is accepted that for some, immortality refers to actions carried out in life, but whose effects continue in the physical world despite physical death. For others, it is the memories retained by loved ones, by groups, or even society, that ensure continuation after physical death. For still others, immortality is accepted as personal continuity on another level, in another “landscape” of existence.

Continuing with the subject of freedom of interpretation, some sense the Sacred as the engine of their deepest affection. For them, their children or other loved ones represent the Sacred and bear the highest value, something that should not be disparaged for any reason. Some consider human beings and their universal rights as Sacred. Others experience divinity as the essence of the Sacred. In the communities that are formed around the Message, it is assumed that the different positions in facing Immortality and the Sacred should not merely be “tolerated,” but genuinely respected.

The sacred manifests from the depths of the human being, hence the importance of the experience of the Force, as an extraordinary phenomenon that we can cause to erupt into the everyday world. Without experience everything is doubtful; with the experience of the Force we have profound evidence. We do not need faith to recognize the Sacred. The Force is obtained in ceremonies such as the Service and Laying on of Hands, and in the ceremonies of Well-being and Assistance we can also perceive the effects of the Force. Contact with the Force causes an acceleration of and increase in psychophysical energy; this is especially true if coherent acts are realized daily, something which on the other hand creates internal unity oriented toward spiritual growth.”

4. From the talk “Meaning of Life,” October 10, 1980, México City

“...As human beings grow and develop, they continually encounter resistances in much the same way. And in encountering and overcoming these resistances they become stronger; and as they become stronger they integrate difficulties; and as they integrate these difficulties, they surpass them. Thus, all the suffering that has arisen in the course of human development has also helped the human being to become stronger than that suffering. So it is that past suffering has contributed to human development, in the sense that it has helped to create precisely the conditions to surpass that suffering.

We do not aspire to suffering. Moreover, we wish to reconcile with our species, which has endured so much suffering, thanks to which humankind has been able to achieve new

advances. The suffering of primitive humankind has not been in vain; the suffering of generation upon generation – limited by the conditions of their times – has not been in vain. Our gratitude goes out to those who have preceded us, because despite their suffering it is thanks to them that we can now attempt new liberations.

The point is that suffering did not appear all at once, but rather with the development and expansion of humankind. And clearly, as human beings we do not wish to continue suffering but rather to move on, to break through these resistances, to integrate them, and to forge a new path in the continuing process of our human development.

We have said that it is through *meaning in life* that we will discover the solution to the problem of suffering, and we have defined this meaning as one's direction toward the future, a direction that gives coherence, that provides a framework for one's activities and fully justifies existence. This direction toward the future is of the greatest importance, because if, as we have noted, the path of imagination, of project, of future, is cut off, then human existence loses direction, and this becomes an inexhaustible source of suffering.

It is clear that for everyone death looms as the greatest future suffering. From this perspective, people can see that life has the character of something provisional, and therefore in this context that all human construction is useless, leading only to nothingness. This is why, perhaps, that turning their gaze away from the fact of death has made it possible to “change” life and to make it as if death did not exist... Those who believe that everything will end with death can make themselves feel better by thinking that they will be remembered for their splendid good works, or that their loved ones, or even future generations, will never forget them. But even should that be true, we all march finally toward an absurd nothingness that will interrupt all memory.

There are also those who think that all one does in life is to respond to needs as best one can. Well, soon enough those needs will end in death, and the struggle to escape the rule of necessity will have lost all meaning. Some might say that an individual's personal life lacks importance in the life of all humankind, and that therefore an individual death has no significance. If that were the case, then neither one's life nor one's individual actions would have any significance, any meaning. There would be no justification for any law or any commitment, and there would be, in essence, no great difference between good actions and bad ones.

Nothing has any meaning if everything ends with death. And if everything ends with death, the only recourse for making it through life is to seek solace in provisional meanings, provisional directions to which we can apply our energy and our action. That is in fact what generally occurs; but in order for that to happen, one must constantly negate the fact of death – one must act as if death did not exist.

If you ask people what meaning life has for them, they will probably tell you that meaning in life is related to their families, or other people, or humanity, or some cause that, according to them, justifies their existence. And those provisional meanings will give them a direction and enable them to face life. But when problems arise with their loved ones, when they become

disillusioned with that cause they embraced, when something changes with respect to that meaning they have chosen, then absurdity and disorientation will return to claim their prey.

Lastly, the problem with those provisional meanings in life, those provisional directions, is that if they are achieved they are lost as references, they lose their value for the future. And if they are not achieved, in that case, too, they lose their value as references. Of course, after the failure of one provisional meaning, there always remains the alternative of adopting a new provisional meaning, perhaps one opposite to the one that failed. As the years go by, then, people go from meaning to meaning, all traces of coherence obliterated, and in doing so they increase their contradictions and thus their suffering.

Life has no meaning if everything ends with death. But is it true that everything ends with death? Is it true that one cannot achieve a definitive direction in one's life, a direction that will not be turned aside by the accidents of life? How can human beings position themselves to face the problem of everything ending with death?

We observe five states associated with the problem of death and transcendence. Every person can be found in one of these five states.

There is a state in which a person has indisputable evidence of transcendence, arrived at not through education or surroundings, but through the person's own experience. For such people, it is completely clear that life is only a transition and death the merest accident.

Others believe that the human being will go on to a state of transcendence of some kind, and this belief comes from their education and their surroundings, and not from something that they *feel* or have experienced. This is not something evident to them, but rather they believe it because it is what they have been taught and have accepted without any experiential basis.

There is a third way of locating oneself with respect to meaning in life, and it is present in those people who *want* to have an experience of faith or certainty of meaning. You must have encountered those who say, "If only I could believe in something, have that certainty, it would change my life." We can find many examples of this – of people who have suffered misfortunes and have overcome them, either because they have faith or because they have a register that these difficulties, because they are transitory or provisional, are not all there is to life but instead are simply a test, a resistance or obstacle, that in some way makes them grow in knowledge. You can even find people who accept suffering as a tool for learning. It is not that they seek out suffering – unlike those who seem to have a special taste for suffering. We are talking about people who, simply, when something bad happens, take the best from it, not people who go around looking for ways to suffer, but rather those who, finding themselves in a situation of suffering, assimilate it, integrate it, and surpass it.

Very well, so there are people who locate themselves in this state: They have no faith, they have no belief, but they have a *desire* to believe – they *wish* they had something to encourage them and give direction to their lives. Yes, these people exist.

There are still others who suspect, intellectually, that there may, perhaps, be a future beyond death, that some sort of transcendence could exist. They believe that this is possible, although

they have had no experience of transcendence nor do they have any sort of faith, nor do they aspire to have that experience or that faith. You will also encounter people in this state.

There is, finally, a fifth state, which corresponds to those who deny any possibility of transcendence. You will also find people in this state, and even among you it is possible that many think in this way.

So we see that, with variations, each person can locate him or herself among those who have evidence of transcendence and for whom it is indisputable; or among those who have faith because they were taught to have faith when they were young; among those who *wish* they had that experience or that faith; or among still others who consider it to be an intellectual possibility but don't give it much further thought; or finally among those who deny any possibility whatever of transcendence.

But we have not yet come to the end of this point regarding how one locates oneself with respect to the problem of transcendence. Clearly, there are also different *depths* in this matter of locating oneself regarding continuity or transcendence. There are those who say that they have faith, who affirm this, but what they say does not really correspond with what they experience. We are not saying that these people are lying; we simply mean that they say this superficially. Today they say that they have faith, but tomorrow they may no longer have it. And so we observe different degrees of profundity in these five positions, and thus in the shakiness or firmness of people's convictions with respect to what they affirm. We have known people who were devout, who were believers in a faith, but then, when a family member died, when a loved one died, all the faith that they said they had disappeared, and they fell into the most profound state of non-meaning. That faith was a superficial faith, a peripheral faith, the vestiges of faith. On the other hand, quite the opposite occurs for those who suffer terrible catastrophes, and yet continue to affirm and even strengthen their faith.

And then we have known other people who were absolutely convinced that transcendence did not exist. You die and you disappear and that's it. In a manner of speaking, these people had faith that everything ends with death. Of course, once in a while, walking past a cemetery on a dark night, some may have walked a little faster and felt a little uneasy... and how is this compatible with their absolute conviction that everything ends with death? So there are people who, even in their negation of transcendence, are superficial, are not firmly in this state.

One can find oneself in any of these states, and also at various depths within a state. At certain times in our lives, we may have believed one thing about transcendence, and at another time something else. Our belief may have changed not only at various times in our lives but also in response to different situations – it is something mobile, not something static. Our belief with respect to the problem of transcendence can change; it can even change from one day to the next. Sometimes in the morning I believe one thing, but by the afternoon I believe something else. And this is clearly of the greatest importance, because it means that the orientation of human life is excessively variable. And in the end, it brings confusion and disharmony to our daily lives.

Thus, the human being can be located in one or another degree of one of these five states. But what is the *correct* location? Does one exist, or are we simply describing problems without

giving a solution? Are we able to suggest what is the best position from which to face this problem?

Some people say that we either have faith or we don't; that faith either arises in us or it doesn't. But let's look more closely at that state of consciousness. Someone can have absolutely no faith at all, yet at the same time can *want* to attain it. This person can even understand, intellectually, that such a thing would be interesting, that it might be worthwhile to orient him or herself in the direction of having faith. Well, then, when that begins to happen, it is because something within the person is already moving, already expressing itself in that new direction.

Those who achieve that faith or that transcendent experience – even if they cannot define it in precise terms, as one cannot precisely define love – will recognize the need to orient others toward meaning in life, though never do they try to impose their own landscape on those who do not recognize it.

And so, coherently with everything that has been said, I declare before all of you my faith and my certainty of experience that death does not stop the future, that death on the contrary modifies the provisional state of our existence to launch it toward immortal transcendence. And I do not impose my certainty or my faith upon anyone, and I live in harmony with those who find themselves in different states with respect to meaning in life. But I am obliged in solidarity to offer this message – a message that I recognize makes the human being happy and free. For no reason will I evade my responsibility to express my truths, though they may seem doubtful to those who experience the provisional nature of life and the absurdity of death.

Furthermore, though I clearly define my own position with respect to this point, I never ask others about their personal beliefs. And I proclaim the freedom of all human beings to believe or not to believe in God and the freedom to believe or not to believe in immortality.

And so, among the thousands upon thousands of men and women who, shoulder to shoulder, work with us in solidarity, there are atheists and believers, people with doubts and people with certainties, and none of them are asked about their faith. Instead, everything is given as an orientation that may help each of them decide for themselves the path that best makes clear the meaning of their lives.

It is less than courageous to refrain from proclaiming one's truths, but it is unworthy of true solidarity to try to impose them upon others."

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Formative Theme No. 7

Unity and Contradiction

Almost all of the actions that we carry out every day have a routine character, largely related to habits we have acquired through repetition over a long period of time.

We also carry out actions that, instead of leaving us indifferent like those we regularly repeat, leave us with a feeling of fulfillment, or of uneasiness.

There are actions that give us a good feeling, and then, when we remember them, we wish we could repeat them again. They also have the characteristic of being things we don't get tired of, but rather, when we carry them out, they give us the register that we are becoming better, that we are growing internally. If we eat a delicious meal, this leaves us with a pleasurable sensation, but we become tired of it if we eat beyond a certain limit. Also, if we remember this meal when we are hungry, we want to eat it again, but each time we do we have a sensation of being full or satisfied, but not of personal improvement or internal growth.

There is another type of action that leaves a good sensation at the moment we do these actions, but later on when we remember them we feel bad. For example, if in order to relieve our momentary tensions we fight with someone, it is possible that at the time we will register an internal release, but afterwards we will feel something like remorse, and will realize that it will not be good to repeat such actions. We will also notice that this form of behavior does not make us grow internally; it does not make us better.

Actions that give internal unity always have these qualities: 1. doing them gives us a good register or feeling; 2. we would like to repeat these actions; and 3. they give us a feeling of becoming better. If any of these three requirements is absent, it means that we are in the presence of actions that are habitual and necessary for life, but more or less neutral; or with actions that are momentarily pleasurable; or finally, with contradictory actions.

Unifying or contradictory actions give you a characteristic feeling when you do them, and when you remember them, and they predispose you toward certain behavior in the future. Therefore, avoiding contradictory actions and reinforcing actions of internal unity is of the utmost importance. Having the disposition to achieve a unified life marks the beginning of a true meaning and a new direction in our behavior in everyday life.

Observing the Principles presented in Chapter XIII of *The Inner Look*² leads us directly to carrying out valid actions that give internal unity and lead us away from contradiction.

Thus, for example, the "Principle of Accumulating Actions" says:

"Contradictory and unifying acts accumulate within you. If you repeat your acts of internal unity, nothing can detain you."

² *Silo: Collected Works*, Vol I. Latitude Press. 2003.

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Formative Theme No. 8

Valid Action

What actions are valid? This is a question that people have answered, or attempted to answer, in many different ways. They have tried, almost always on the basis of the goodness or the badness of an action, to discover what it is that makes an action valid. In other words, since antiquity people have attempted to answer what has been known as the question of ethics or morality. For many years we have been concerned with consulting others about what is moral and what is immoral, what is good and what is bad. But fundamentally, our interest has been to discover what it is that makes an action valid.

People have given us a variety of answers. Some have given us religious answers, some have given legal answers, and others ideological answers. In all of these answers, what we have been told is that there are certain ways in which people ought to do things, and other ways of doing things they ought to avoid.

It has been very important for us to obtain a clear answer to this question, because a person's whole way of life follows from whether his or her actions go in one direction or another. All the varied elements that make up our lives find their place according to the direction that we take – my present situation corresponds to the direction that I take toward the future. So this question about which actions are valid and which are invalid, what is good and what is bad, affects not only the individual's future but his or her present as well. And it doesn't affect only the individual – it affects groups and even entire peoples.

The various religious positions have offered their solutions. So it is that if one is a believer in a certain religion, one must obey certain religious laws; one must follow certain precepts inspired by God. And that is valid for believers in that religion. But we find that different religions cite different precepts. Some religions say that one ought not to perform given actions so as to avoid a certain turn of events; others say it is so as to avoid a particular hell. Sometimes these religions, which in principle are universal, do not agree among themselves; they agree neither in their precepts nor in their commandments.

But what is most troubling in all of this is the situation of so many throughout the world who, though they may in good faith want to obey these precepts, these commandments, cannot do so because they do not feel them. And so for nonbelievers, who are unable to keep these commandments – and who, according to the religions, are also the children of God – it is as though they have been forsaken by God. It is not because a religion occupies the whole of the world geographically that it is a universal religion, however, but rather because it occupies the hearts of human beings, independent of the condition in which they live, independent of the latitude at which they live. And so religions present us with certain difficulties in regard to their answers about ethics.

This has led us to consult the judicial systems, inasmuch as they, too, are shapers of human conduct. These legal systems form our conduct and shape our behavior by laying down certain rules about what one ought to do or ought not to do in one's relationships, in one's social behavior. There are codes of many kinds to regulate relationships, extending even to penal codes that

establish punishments for various crimes, for behavior considered unsocial, or asocial, or antisocial. Legal systems, too, have tried to give their answer to the question of human conduct, in terms of what is good behavior and what is bad behavior. And like religions, they have given us their answer, and that is fine – fine for those who believe in a given legal system. Each legal system gives its own answer, and that is fine for that historical moment, fine for a given type of social organization – but none of this speaks to the individual who must follow one of these systems of conduct.

Although reasonable people will undoubtedly agree that it is interesting for social behavior to be regulated as a means of avoiding total chaos, such regulation is a technique of social organization, not a justification for any particular morality. And in fact, depending upon their development and depending upon the way they view their world, various human communities have regulated behavior legally or judicially in ways that are sometimes in striking contrast to one another. So it is clear that legal systems have no universal validity. They serve for a period of time, for a particular type of social structure, but they do not serve for all human beings or for all times and all places. And most important of all, they say nothing to the individual about what is good and what is bad.

We have also consulted various ideologies. These ideologies are more development-friendly, so to speak, providing explanations that are quite a bit more colorful than either the somewhat dry legal systems or those precepts and laws handed down from above. Some of these doctrines characterize the human being as a kind of rapacious animal, a being that develops at the expense of everything else, that will proceed without regard for anything else, even without regard for other human beings. A kind of will to power, then, underlies this morality. Having appeared romantic to some, this morality is in fact success-oriented, and it says nothing to the individual about how to handle those times when things go badly in this quest for power.

There is another kind of ideology which tells us that, since everything in nature is in evolution, and the human being itself is the product of that evolution, and since the human being is the reflection of the conditions that prevail during a given period, then human behavior will be a reflection of the type of society in which a person lives. Thus, one class will have a certain type of morality, while a different class will have another. According to this point of view, morality is determined by objective conditions, by social relations, and by the mode of production. Then there's no need to worry, because one does what one is mechanically driven to do, even though for public relations purposes people talk of the morality of one class or another. Being limited to this mechanical development, I act as I do because I'm driven by mechanical forces to do so. But where is the good and where is the evil in all of this? There is only the mechanical clash of particles in motion.

Other rather singular ideologies tell us, for instance, that morality is a social pressure that, like a kind of super-ego, serves to contain the force of impulses. Then, the compression brought about in the cauldron of the consciousness is what allows those basic impulses to be sublimated and gradually channeled in other directions.

So our poor friend, seeing himself variously defined by these often conflicting ideologies, finally sits down by the side of the road and says, "What am I supposed to do? On one side I'm constrained by social pressures, and yet at the same time I have impulses that apparently can be sublimated – if I'm an artist. But if I'm not, it's either lie down on the psychoanalyst's couch, or wind up neurotic."

So morality appears as a way of controlling those impulses, which sometimes, however, still boil over.

There are other ideologies, also of a psychological nature, that explain good and bad on the basis of adaptation. But a morality of adaptive behavior – behavior that enables one to fit into one's society or, to the extent that one doesn't fit in, results in one's being segregated from it – entails problems of its own. That is, it says that the best thing you can do is just to walk the straight-and-narrow and try to "fit in." It tells us that what's good and what's bad is based on one's degree of adaptation, one's conformity to one's surroundings. And that's fine – it's another ideology.

In periods of great cultural exhaustion, as have occurred time and again in past civilizations, there tend to arise short-term, immediate answers to the question of what one should and should not do. I am referring to what could be called the "moral schools of decadence." As various cultures fell into decline, there arose moralists who tried to adapt their behavior as best they could in order to give some direction to their lives. Some said things like, "Life has no meaning, and since life has no meaning, anything goes – as long as I can get away with it." Others said, "Since life has little meaning (laughter), I should just do whatever I like, whatever feels good to me, regardless of how it affects anyone or anything else." And still others said, "Since I'm stuck in this bad situation, since life itself is nothing but suffering, I should just do what I have to do, do my duty and keep a stiff upper lip – I should be stoic." And that is the name of these schools of decadence, the Stoic schools.

Even though these schools represent are what in effect "emergency" answers to these questions of morality, behind them there is also ideology. The basic ideology appears to be that all meaning has been lost, and there is a corresponding urgent response to that loss of meaning. Today, for example, we find some who try to justify action with a theory of the absurd, into which the idea of "commitment" has been smuggled. But this is like the coercion imposed by the banks – that is, somehow I'm "committed" to something, and therefore I must fulfill my obligation. Yet it is difficult to understand how commitment can be established if the world I live in is absurd and ends in nothingness. Nor can this last position give the person who holds it much assurance.

The various religions, legal systems, ideological systems, and the moralities of decadence have all recognized the importance of the justification or lack of justification for human actions. So it is that they have all endeavored to give answers to this serious question of behavior in order to establish a morality, to define an ethics.

But what is the basis of truly valid action? The basis of valid action is not given by ideologies or religious mandates or beliefs or laws or social regulations. Even though all of these things have great importance, none of them provides a basis for valid action. Instead, the basis of valid action is given by the inner register that an individual has of that action. There is a fundamental difference between the valuation of an action when that valuation is seen to come from the outside, and when it is based on the internal register that human beings have of the actions they carry out.

And what is the register of an action that is valid? A valid action is experienced as giving one greater unity. At the same time, this action gives one a feeling of inner growth; it is something one desires to repeat because it has the flavor of continuity in time. Let's examine these aspects separately – the register of internal unity, on the one hand, and continuity in time, on the other.

In the face of a difficult situation, I can choose among various ways of responding. If I'm harassed, for example, I can react violently to the irritation produced in me by that external stimulus, seeking in this way to relieve the tension provoked in me. If I react in this violent manner, I can experience relief as that tension is released. Thus, the first condition of valid action has apparently been met – faced with an irritating stimulus, I remove it, and in doing so I un-tense myself, and in relieving myself of tension I have a register of unity.

But an action cannot be said to be valid simply because of that momentary relief of tension if this feeling does not continue in time; indeed, without this continuity the situation that occurs is exactly the opposite – a feeling of contradiction is produced in me. Suppose, for example, that at moment A I produce a release tension by reacting violently as I have previously described, but at moment B I find that I am not at all in agreement with what I did only a short while before. That kind of release of tension is not unitive, inasmuch as the succeeding moment contradicts the preceding one. To be valid, an action must also meet the requirement of giving one unity through time, without gaps or subsequent contradictions. We can all find many examples in which what seems to be a valid action at one moment is not so in the next. In such cases a person cannot coherently seek to prolong that action and that attitude, because the register is not one of unity but rather one of contradiction.

And there is yet another point to consider: the register of a sensation of inner growth. There are many actions that we carry out in the course of our daily lives that relieve various tensions. These actions have nothing to do with morality; we carry them out, and we release tensions. This alleviation of tension produces in turn a certain pleasure within us, but it doesn't go further than that. And when that tension arises once more, again we discharge it, and in capacitor-like fashion the charge rebuilds, until at a certain point it discharges once again. Finally, with all that charging and discharging like a capacitor, we find ourselves with the sensation of being trapped on an eternal wheel of actions, endlessly repeating. Even though there is a sensation of pleasure at the moment the tensions are discharged, we're left with a strange taste when we realize that if life is simply this wheel of repetitions, of successive pleasures and pains, then it can never be anything other than absurd. So it is that today I feel tension and I discharge it, and tomorrow the same . . . and so, like night follows day, the wheel of actions turns endlessly, independent of all human intention, independent of all human choice.

There are, however, actions of a different type, actions that we may perhaps have carried out only a few times in our lives. These are actions that give us a sense of great unity at the moment we do them. In addition, they give us a register that, through having done them, something has become better in us. These actions offer us a future project, in the sense that we feel that if we could repeat them in the future something in us would continue to grow, would continue to improve. These actions give us unity; they give us a sensation of inner growth, as well as a sensation of continuity in time. These, then, are the registers of valid action.

I have never said that this type of action is better or worse; nor have I said, coercively, that this is something that one must do. Rather, I've outlined proposals related to valid action and the systems of registers that correspond to these proposals. I have spoken of the actions that create unity and those that create contradiction and, lastly, of how valid actions can be perfected through repetition. And to complete that system of registers of valid actions I have said: "If you repeat your acts of

internal unity, nothing can detain you.” This refers not only to the register of unity, the sensation of inner growth, and to continuity in time, but also to the possibility of improving valid action, since clearly not everything that we do turns out well on the first try. In fact, quite often when we attempt new and interesting things, they don’t turn out very well at first, but we know that with practice things can be improved. So it is that valid actions can also be perfected. Repeating those acts that give one unity and inner growth and that have continuity in time is something possible, and it is what constitutes the improvement of valid action.

In very general principles we have indicated the registers of valid action, and highest among these principles is the one known as the “golden rule.” This principle says, “When you treat others as you want them to treat you, you liberate yourself.” This is not a new principle – it is thousands of years old, and in many parts of the world, in many cultures, it has withstood the test of time. It is a universally accepted and valid principle that has been formulated in various ways – sometimes in the negative, as in “Do nothing to others that you do not want them to do to you.” That is simply another approach to the same idea, as is the formulation, “Love thy neighbor as thyself.” Of course, it is not exactly the same as saying, “Treat others as you want them to treat you.” But that’s all right; however they may have phrased it, since ancient times people have invoked this, the highest of all moral principles, the highest of all principles of valid action.

But how do I want others to treat me? Even if we take it as given that it is good to treat others as I want them to treat me, exactly how is it that I want to be treated? I will have to answer this question by saying that if other people treat me in certain ways they are treating me badly, and if they treat me in other ways they are treating me well. I will have to answer this in terms of good and bad. Once again, I will have to return to the eternal wheel of defining valid action according to one theory or another or one religion or another. For me, a certain thing is good, but another person may see this differently. And there will never fail to be people who treat others very badly, while still claiming to be applying the same principle, because supposedly these people like to be treated badly.

This principle that speaks of treating others according to how I want them to treat me, according to what would be good for me, is all very well. But it would be even better if I knew what would be good for me. So that’s how things stand, and we’re interested in turning now to the basis of valid action, and the basis of valid action lies in the register that one obtains from this action.

If I say that I should treat others as I want them to treat me, immediately I find myself asking, Why should I? But it’s as if there is some internal process or some way in which the mind functions that creates problems inside me when I treat others badly. But what type of function could this be? If I see someone in a very bad state, if I see someone suddenly cut or injured in some way, something resonates inside of me. But how can something that is happening to another person echo inside of me? It seems almost magical! It happens that when someone is in an accident, somehow I experience, almost physically, the register of the accident in that other person.

As students of these phenomena, you know that to every perception there corresponds an image, and you understand that there are images that can cause certain points in one’s body to tense up, just as other images can cause them to release tension. If every perception is linked to a representation, and that representation in turn has its register – that is, a new sensation – then it is not so hard to understand how when I perceive a phenomenon there is an internal image that

corresponds to that phenomenon. And when that image is mobilized, certain parts of my body or intra-body can experience a corresponding sensation, since they have been modified by the action of that image. I feel “identified” when someone is injured, because the visual perception of that phenomenon is accompanied by the triggering of a visual image and, correlatively, an unleashing of coenesthetic and tactile images. In addition, these images carry with them a new sensation that ends up provoking in me a register of the other’s injury. So it cannot be good for me to treat other people badly, because when I do I have a corresponding register in myself.

Let’s look at this almost technically. In order to do that, we’ll simulate the functioning of the mental circuits, step by step, even though we know that the structure of the consciousness works as a whole. But for the sake of illustration, we can separate out a “first circuit” that is comprised of the initial perception and its representation, then a re-taking of the representation, and finally an internal sensation. And we can separate out a “second circuit” that has to do with action, whose results might be described as follows: For every action that I launch into the world, I also have an internal register. That feedback is what allows me, for example, to learn things through doing them. If there were no such feedback from the actions I take, I could never perfect them. I learn to type, for example, by repetition; that is to say, it is through trial and error that I record these actions. But I can record actions only through performing them. It is through the doing of actions that I have a register of them.

Here I would like to make a short digression. There is a serious prejudice that at times invades the field of education: the belief that one can learn by thinking about things rather than by doing them. Clearly, one learns because one has received data, but no datum is simply memorized. It always corresponds to an image, which in turn mobilizes one to new activity: checking, testing against experience, rejecting, and so forth, demonstrating the ceaseless activity of consciousness, not some supposed state of passivity within which the datum somehow resides. This feedback is what allows me to realize, for example, that “I typed the wrong key.” As I type, I register the sensation of correctness or the sensation of error. In this way, I gradually perfect the register of correctness, I become more fluent, and little by little the correct way of typing becomes automatic. All of this is related to the “second circuit.” The “first circuit” relates to the example of the pain in the other person that I register inside myself, while the “second circuit” relates to the register I have of actions that I perform.

All of you here know the difference between those actions that we call cathartic and those that we call transferential. Cathartic actions refer basically to the discharge of tensions and go no further than that. Transferential actions, in contrast, allow us to transfer internal charges, to integrate contents, and to facilitate healthy psychic functioning. We know that there will be difficulties for the consciousness when there are mental contents that, like islands, are isolated from one another. If we think in one direction, for example, but feel in another and, finally, act in yet a third, we can see that things won’t “fit together” and that the register we obtain will not be one of completeness. It seems that only when we build bridges between our inner contents does psychic functioning become integrated, allowing us to advance a few more steps. There are some very useful transferential techniques that can mobilize and transform problematic images. One example of such techniques is presented in literary form as guided experiences, some of which appear in the book *Tales for Heart and Mind: The Guided Experiences, A Storybook for Grownups*.

However, we know that, in addition to the work of images, the actions we carry out are also capable of setting transferential and self-transferential phenomena in motion. But there are actions of different types. Some actions allow us to integrate our internal contents, whereas other actions are terribly disintegrative. There are certain actions that a person never wants to repeat, because they produce such an overcharge of grief, such regret and inner division in the one who performed them. Unfortunately, however, such actions remain strongly linked to that person's past. So, even if the person does not repeat such actions in the future, nonetheless those actions continue pressing from the past, with the consciousness unable to resolve them – unable to translate, transfer, and integrate its contents. As a consequence of all this, the person is prevented from having that sensation of inner growth that we spoke of earlier.

It is not, then, a matter of indifference which actions one carries out in the world. There are actions that give one a register of unity, and there are other actions that give one a register of contradiction and dis-integration. If we study this carefully, in light of what we know about cathartic and transferential phenomena, the matter of one's actions in the world with respect to the effect of those actions on the integration and development of one's contents, will be much clearer. And, of course, all this simulation of circuits we have gone through in order to understand the meaning of valid action is part of this complicated subject.

Meanwhile, our friend keeps asking us, "What should I do?" Even if we have only a minimal knowledge of these things, we register it as unifying and worthwhile when, through simple words and deeds, we offer what we know to that disoriented person, who is without references in his or her life. Even if no one else offers help to this person, we make what we have available – as we offer so many other things that allow people to overcome pain and suffering. And in doing so, we will also be working for ourselves.

Silo, Las Palmas, Canary Islands
September 29, 1978
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Formative Theme No. 9

The Principles of Valid Action

(Chapter XIII, The Principles, from the book *The Inner Look* and the *Book of The Community*)

Introduction

Even in the most remote historic testimonies that have come down to us there seems to have been a vital interest in distinguishing right and wrong, good and bad, thought and conduct that are correct and incorrect. In short, every culture has given a lot of care to define for its members what could be considered the correct moral code.

Moral codes are not a theme reserved only for philosophers, they are vital for our existence. Our point of view about right and wrong has a direct effect not only on our present situation but also on the direction of our life.

For those of us who are interested in internal growth, it is very important to have a set of values, a moral code that resonates with the laws of life and does not go in a direction that opposes them – universal guidelines that are valid for all human beings.

For us these guidelines are **The Principles**.

The Principles help us choose the most appropriate attitude and action in facing the different situations life offers us, in order to keep improving ourselves, to improve our daily relationships, and to build a world in harmony with our deepest aspirations.

Development

“Different is the attitude toward life and things when inner revelation strikes like lightning.

Following the steps slowly, meditating on what has been said and what has yet to be said, you may convert the non-meaning into meaning.

It is not indifferent what you do with your life. Your life, subject to laws, is open to possibilities among which you can choose.

I do not speak to you of liberty. I speak to you of liberation, of movement, of process. I do not speak to you of liberty as something static, but of liberating yourself step-by-step, as those who approach their city become liberated from the road already traveled. Thus, “what one must do” depends not upon distant, incomprehensible, and conventional morals, but upon laws: laws of life, of light, of evolution.

Here are the “Principles” which can help you in your search for internal unity:

1. To go against the evolution of things is to go against yourself.
2. When you force something toward an end, you produce the contrary.
3. Do not oppose a great force. Retreat until it weakens, then advance with resolution.
4. Things are well when they move together, not in isolation.

5. If day and night, summer and winter are well with you, you have surpassed the contradictions.
6. If you pursue pleasure, you enchain yourself to suffering. But as long as you do not harm your health, enjoy without inhibition when the opportunity presents itself.
7. If you pursue an end, you enchain yourself. If everything you do is realized as though it were an end in itself, you liberate yourself.
8. You will make your conflicts disappear when you understand them in their ultimate root, not when you want to resolve them.
9. When you harm others you remain enchained, but if you do not harm anyone you can freely do whatever you want.
10. When you treat others as you want them to treat you, you liberate yourself.
11. It does not matter in which faction events have placed you. What matters is that you comprehend that you have not chosen any faction.
12. Contradictory or unifying actions accumulate within you. If you repeat your acts of internal unity, nothing can detain you.

You will be like a force of Nature when it finds no resistance in its path. Learn to distinguish a difficulty, a problem, an obstacle, from a contradiction. While those may move you or spur you on, contradiction traps you in a closed circle with no way out.

Whenever you find great strength, joy, and kindness in your heart, or when you feel free and without contradictions, immediately be internally thankful. When you find yourself in opposite circumstances, ask with faith, and the gratitude you have accumulated will return to you transformed and amplified in benefit."

Recommendations for working with The Principles:

First, we suggest reading the Introduction and becoming familiar with all of the Principles.

Then, approach the Principles one at a time and meditate on them over a period of time (at least one week).

Of course, interchange with others about the Principles is of fundamental importance.

Examples of Reflections

1. Examining moments in our lives when we were unaware of a Principle and therefore acted against it will illustrate its meaning very well.
2. It will be even more interesting to reflect on the current situation we live in and to study the consequences of suffering in us and those closest to us when we do not keep this Principle in mind.
3. When you work with a Principle, starting in the weekly meeting for example, try to reflect on it for a few minutes each day, before falling asleep. Think about the difficulties you had during the day and try to relate them to the Principle that you are working on.

In this way you will remember the Principle in future situations when the same problem appears, and you will surpass it more effectively. Also, think about the positive elements of the day and see whether you put one of the Principles into practice.

4. In the measure that you advance in your understanding of the Principles, you can take a given situation and reflect upon it in the light of all the Principles, focusing more on those that best clarify the situation.

1. The Principle of Adaptation

“To go against the evolution of things is to go against yourself.”

This Principle emphasizes that when we know clearly beforehand the outcome of a situation, the correct attitude is to accept it as completely as possible, trying find opportunities even in this unfavorable situation. What we are saying is that we should not oppose things that are inevitable. However, if the human being had believed, for example, that illnesses were something unavoidable, then medical science would have never advanced. **Humanity progresses thanks to the need to solve problems and to the possibility of doing so.** If a person becomes stranded in the desert, is it inevitable that they will die? This person will do everything they can to get out of the predicament. And it will be more likely that they will find an oasis or be rescued if they use all possible resources to make themselves visible at a distance. Thus, to be applied correctly this Principle is used only in situations that are truly inevitable.

2. The Principle of Action and Reaction

“When you force something toward an end, you produce the contrary.”

This Principle explains that all things and people have their own characteristic behavior, and that they will resist or facilitate our projects, depending on how we act. When we are moved by irrational impulses and pressure something against its own behavior, we will find that although initially it may yield to our demands, sooner or later consequences will return that are different from those we wanted to achieve.

Human beings are forgers of events, they define directions for things, they plan and carry out projects. That is, they aim toward goals. But the important question is: How should we move toward these goals? Suppose a problem comes up; how can we make the other person understand the way to solve it? Do we use violence or do we use persuasion? If we use violence, sooner or later there will be a reaction. If we use persuasion, sooner or later our strengths will add together.

Many people think “the ends justify the means,” and they tend to force everything around them. And they may often achieve successful results. But if they do this, difficulties will surely follow. They achieve their goal, but they will not be able to maintain it for long.

The Principle we are discussing refers to two distinct situations. In one, the goal is achieved, but the consequences are opposite to what was hoped for. In the other case, by forcing situations, there is an unfavorable “rebound.”

3. The Principle of Well-Timed Action

“Do not oppose a great force. Retreat until it weakens, then advance with resolution.”

Note that this Principle does not recommend that we retreat when faced with the little inconveniences or problems we run into every day. We should only retreat, the Principle explains, when facing a force that is too strong, one that will surely overwhelm us if we confront it. Retreating before little difficulties weakens people, it makes them timid and afraid. Not retreating before great forces, in contrast, inclines people toward all kinds of failures and accidents.

The problem appears when you do not know ahead of time which has more strength, you or the difficulty. This leads people to try little “tests,” to try small confrontations with the difficulty which don’t completely commit them. This leaves room to change their position if it turns out to be unsustainable. In earlier times people used to speak of “prudence,” and this is very close to the idea we are explaining.

There is also another key point: When should we advance? When has the difficulty lost its strength, or when have we ourselves gained enough strength to advance? Here we can use the same idea of trying little “tests” every so often to check, without committing ourselves completely.

When we do find that the balance of strength is in our favor and the inconvenience has weakened, then this is the time we should advance with everything. To hold back reserves in this situation will endanger our success, because we are not advancing with all the energy we have available.

4. The Principle of Proportion

“Things are well when they move together, not in isolation.”

This Principle means that if, in striving toward a goal, we disrupt our whole life, then we may in turn be subject to numerous accidents that make it hard to reach our goal, and even if we do reach it, this result will have bitter consequences.

For example, if in order to gain wealth or prestige we harm our health, sacrifice our loved ones, or give up other values, we may have accidents that will keep us from reaching our goal. Or we may obtain it, but no longer have good health to enjoy it, or loved ones to share it with, or other values that give us meaning.

“Things are well when they move together.” This is so because our life is a whole that requires balanced, not partial, equilibrium and development.

Since some things are more important than others, everyone should have a true scale of values so that first, second, and third level priorities can be taken care of in proportion. If energy is applied according to the importance given each priority, everything will truly work together.

5. The Principle of Acceptance

“If day and night, summer and winter are well with you, you have surpassed the contradictions.”

This Principle deals, in a figurative way, with situations where there are opposites. However, such apparent opposites can be reconciled if one changes one’s point of view about the situation or the problem.

The excessive heat of summer makes us think of the cold of winter as a compensation, and then the excessive cold of winter makes us think of the warmth of summer. Every difficult situation make us remember or imagine an opposite one. But once we are in this opposite situation, discontent again arises. Then this new compensation leads us back to the opposite point. Whenever suffering appears, a compensation begins. But this compensation does not itself overcome the suffering.

A person who is oriented by a well-defined meaning in life will have a very different point of view and behavior when facing difficult situations from someone who does not. If a person believes that their life has meaning and that everything that happens to them serves for their learning and self-improvement in this direction, then they will not simply try to avoid the problems that arise by compensating in the usual way. Rather, this person will take on these problems, trying to discover some usefulness in them. The cold of winter can be made use of, as can the heat of summer, and when each arises this person will say, “How do these different seasons oppose each other, if both are useful to me?”

6. The Principle about Pleasure

“If you pursue pleasure, you enchain yourself to suffering. But as long as you do not harm your health, enjoy without inhibition when the opportunity presents itself.”

This Principle may seem shocking the first time you read it, because you may think it is saying, “enjoy yourself, even if you harm others, because the only thing you need to worry about is your own health.” But this is not what it is saying.

Indeed, this Principle explains that it is absurd to harm your health through excessive indulgence in pleasures, or through directly harmful pleasures. In addition, this Principle stresses that if, because of beliefs or prejudices, you negate or deny pleasure, this also produces suffering. It also means that participating in pleasure while you have problems of conscience is harmful.

In summary, the main idea is not to pursue pleasure, but simply to enjoy it when it presents itself. To search for a pleasurable object when it is not present, or to deny it when it does appear, are both actions that are always accompanied by suffering.

This Principle (like all the others) should not be applied separately from the other Principles, nor should it be interpreted in ways that oppose the other Principles. For example, there is another Principle which says, “When you treat others as you want them to treat you, you liberate yourself.” Therefore, the meaning of each Principle changes when they are all exercised together, and not only as single, isolated Principles.

7. The Principle of Immediate Action

“If you pursue an end, you enchain yourself. If everything you do is realized as though it were an end in itself, you liberate yourself.”

This Principle teaches us to obtain benefit from all the intermediate steps and situations that lead to the achievement of an objective. It doesn't tell us that we should not have goals, since planning any activity is carried out on the basis of goals. It explains that given any goal, all the steps leading to it must be approached in the most positive way possible. Otherwise, all of the activities previous to achieving the goal produce suffering, and therefore, even if the goal is achieved, it loses meaning because of the vital cost represented by the suffering invested in those steps.

8. The Principle of Wise Action

“You will make your conflicts disappear when you understand them in their ultimate root, not when you want to resolve them.”

This Principle invites us to avoid improvisations motivated by irrational impulses. It doesn't say that we shouldn't do something about a problem, but that, at the same time that we take action, we should comprehend what we are doing. Almost everyone becomes anxious when faced with a conflict, and tries to solve it without comprehending the root of the conflict. In this way, the problem can become even more complicated and give rise to new problems in a never-ending chain.

9. The Principle of Liberty

“When you harm others you remain enchained, but if you do not harm anyone you can freely do whatever you want.”

This Principle begins by explaining that if you create problems for others, as a consequence others will create problems for you. But it also says that there is no reason not to do whatever you want if no one is harmed by your actions.

10. The Principle of Solidarity

“When you treat others as you want them to treat you, you liberate yourself.”

This Principle has important consequences because it leads to opening, to positive communication with other human beings. We know that isolation and self-enclosure generate problems that can be serious. What is called “selfishness” can be reduced precisely to a problem of self-enclosure and lack of communication. This Principle gives importance to the act of going positively toward others, and it complements the previous Principle that recommends: “Do not harm others,” although there is a great difference between the two.

11. The Principle of Avoiding Opposition

“It does not matter in which faction events have placed you. What matters is that you comprehend that you have not chosen any faction.”

This does not mean that you have to abandon all factions. Rather, it suggests that you consider your position as being the result of factors that have little to do with your own choice: your education and upbringing, your surroundings, etc. This attitude makes fanaticism recede, and at the same time permits you to understand the factional affiliations and the positions of other people. Clearly, this way of considering the problem of factions contributes to a freedom of the mind, and opens a fraternal bridge toward others, even when they do not agree with your ideas, or even appear to oppose your ideas.

This Principle, at the same time that it recognizes the lack of freedom in the situations one has not created, affirms the freedom to deny that there is true opposition if others are also part of involuntary situations.

12. The Principle of Accumulating Actions

“Contradictory or unifying actions accumulate within you. If you repeat your acts of internal unity, nothing can detain you.”

This Principle is saying that every action one carries out remains recorded in one’s memory, and from there it influences the other two pathways (senses and imagination). Therefore, repeating acts that give internal unity, or generate contradiction, will shape behavior that conditions further unifying or contradictory actions in the future.

To repeat acts of internal unity means to practice the Principles in daily life. This twelfth Principle also helps us understand that this does not mean repeating just one action (or Principle) in isolation, but rather repeating a whole set of actions that give internal unity.

Without question, by practicing all of the Principles together we find an integrated discipline which is capable of transforming our condition of suffering into a new way of life, one of growing internal unity, and therefore of growing happiness.

Sometimes the life of a person or a whole human group is built upon an accumulation of contradictory actions. And this person or group may even obtain very successful results for a time. But sooner or later, catastrophe will result, because the basis of their entire life is false. Many people see only the successful anecdotes, without realizing the process this life will have over time and, above all, its final absurdity.

Formative Theme No. 10

Commentaries on the Golden Rule

Lately, the phrase “treat others as you want them to treat you” has promoted good communication with many people who remain lost in their own contradictions, people who are, moreover, continually increasing the contradiction in those around them. People’s behavior today is becoming more and more erratic and they don’t know how to relate to others; at the same time, the others don’t know what to expect from them.

At times we have alluded to “morality.” Today, this word rings hollow, as has happened with so many words that have been manipulated and used with the worst of intentions. What is “morality” today but a wornout mess that nobody believes in? Our morality has nothing to do with the established farce. We base what we do on a great principle of behavior that has been called “the Golden Rule.” Clearly, for those familiar with Humanist thinking “the Golden Rule” presents no problems. It fits our vision of the human being perfectly.

Nevertheless, a few comments may help disseminate a type of behavior that affirms and justifies the effort to eradicate pain and suffering in the society in which we live. When we speak of anti-discrimination, respect for diversity, and choosing the conditions of life to which we aspire for ourselves and for others, this morality resounds!

In the *Dictionary of New Humanism*, we define the Golden Rule as “A moral principle found among a wide diversity of peoples, which expresses the *humanist attitude* (*). Following are examples of the various ways it has been expressed. Rabbi Hillel: ‘What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to your neighbor.’ Plato: ‘May I always do to others that which I would want them to do to me.’ Confucius: ‘Do not do to another what you would not want others to do to you.’ Jainist maxim: ‘Man must try to treat all creatures as he would want them to treat him.’ In Christianity: ‘All those things that you would want men to do unto you, do also unto them.’ Among the Sikhs: ‘Treat others as you would have them treat you.’ Herodotus recorded the existence of the Golden Rule among various peoples of the ancient world.”

In Humanism we say: “Treat others as you want them to you.” In the Humanist Movement many understand, practice and/or try to practice this principle of conduct. These people start from a sensitivity, an appreciation of others that is different from that which has been imposed until now in this period of destructuring of human relations. A worthy understanding of this principle begins with comprehending the structure of human life as a whole. This understanding is different from the habitual. In the Movement, we mistrust the sincerity of others who claim to share in this belief, because their vision of the human being is frequently opposed to that of Humanism. If people habitually do not treat their neighbors according to this principle, how does this leave things when they speak of changing society and the world? What is the real basis of their struggle to improve the conditions of life for the human being?

Let's see the difficulties.

"Treat others as you want them to treat you." In this relationship of behavior there are two terms: the treatment one requests from others, and the treatment one is willing to give others.

A. The treatment one seeks from others

It is common to aspire to be treated without violence and to call for help in bettering one's existence. This is true even among the most violent and exploitive of people, who demand cooperation from others to maintain an unjust social order. The treatment people request is independent of what they are willing to give.

B. The treatment one is willing to give others

What is common is to treat others in a utilitarian way, as is done with objects, plants, or animals. We're not talking about the extreme of cruel treatment because, after all, you don't destroy something you want to use. We tend to take care of others as long as their existence pleases us, or may be of some use in the present or future. However, there are certain "others" who cause us greater commotion: those we call our "loved ones," whose suffering and whose joy touches us deeply. In them we recognize something of ourselves, and we tend to treat them the same way we would like to be treated. There is, then, a big difference between our loved ones and those others in whom we do not recognize ourselves.

C. The exceptions

In regard to our "loved ones," we tend to treat them with help and cooperation. This also happens with strangers in whom we recognize something of ourselves, because the situation in which the other person finds themselves reminds us of our own situation, or because our calculations reveal a future situation in which this person may be of help to us. All of these cases are unique and not entirely the same as with our "loved ones," and this is not extended to all strangers.

D. Words alone mean nothing

You want to receive help, but why should you give it to others? Words like "solidarity" or "justice" are not enough; people say them with an underlying insincerity, without conviction. They are "tactical" words that are often used to get collaboration from others, but without giving it to them. This can go even further, for example with other tactical words such as "love," "kindness," etc. Why should we love someone who is not one of our loved ones? The statement "I love someone I do not love" is contradictory, and it is redundant to say "I love someone I love." Moreover, the feelings these words seem to represent are constantly changing, and I can verify that at times I have more love, or less love, for the same loved one. Finally, the layers of this love are diverse and complex. This is evident in phrases such as: "I love X, but I can't stand them when they don't do what I want."

E. Applying the Golden Rule from other positions

If someone says: "Love your neighbor as yourself, because of your love of God," at least two difficulties arise:

1. We must assume that one can love God and accept that this "love" is human; in which case the word love is inadequate. Or, that we love God, but with a love that is not human; in which case the word love is still inadequate; and 2. You love your neighbor only indirectly, by way of your love for God. Double problem: using a word that does not adequately represent this relationship with God, we must translate it into human feelings.

From other positions people say things such as: "We struggle for class solidarity," "we struggle for human solidarity," "we struggle against injustice to free the human being." Here we are still left without a firm basis. Why should I struggle for solidarity, or in order to liberate others? If solidarity is a necessity, it's not a matter on which I can choose, in which case it is of little importance whether I do it or not, since it does not depend on my choice. If, on the other hand, it is a choice, then why do I have to choose that option?

Others say even more extraordinary things, such as, "loving our neighbor, we fulfill ourselves," or "loving my neighbor sublimates the instincts of death." What can we say about this, when the word "fulfilled" is not clear if the objective is not presented; when the words "instinct" and "sublimate" are metaphors from a mechanistic Psychology which is by now clearly insufficient?

And then there are always the most brutish who preach: "You cannot do anything outside the established Justice system, which exists so that we are all mutually protected." In this case, one cannot ask from this "Justice system" any moral position that is beyond it.

Finally, there are some who talk about a biological Natural Morality, and still others who, defining the human being as a "rational animal," claim that morality derives from the operation of reason in said animal.

In all of these cases the Golden Rule does not fit very well. We cannot agree with them even when they tell us that we are saying the same thing, but with different words. It is clear that we're not saying the same thing.

What have all those felt who, among different peoples and historical periods, have made the Golden Rule their moral principle par excellence? This simple formula, from which a complete morality can be derived, **springs simply and sincerely from the depths of the human being.** Through this principle, we discover ourselves in others. ***The Golden Rule does not impose any behavior; it offers an ideal and a model to follow, at the same time that it allows us to progress in knowledge of our own life.*** Nor should the Golden Rule be turned a new instrument for hypocritical moralizing, useful for measuring the behavior of others. When a "tablet of morality" serves to control others instead of helping, to oppress instead of liberating, it must be broken. **Beyond any tablet of morality, beyond the values of "good" and "bad," human beings and their destiny soar, ever unfinished and ever growing.**

Silo, Mendoza, Argentina
December 17, 1995

Part Two: Seminars and Retreats

1. Seminar on the Configuration of One's Internal Guide

The seminar lasts one day and participants arrive in the morning.

Ceremony of the Service

Framing of the Work – Objectives, form of working, attitude, practices

The objective of our work is to enter into the theme of the Internal Guide and, in the best of cases, to configure our own Internal Guide, or to deepen our relationship with him or her if it already exists. We will work with practices of reflection and guided experiences, interchange in groups, and personal reflection.

As always, the best way to work together is with friendly relations and communication. This is a full day retreat, and the best approach is to relax, to forget about all other matters, and to open ourselves to the theme of this retreat.

Introduction

We all know that we are living in a time of intense crisis in our world, which is in a stage of great change toward a future different from what we know. We are experiencing this in our own lives and in the lives of those close to us. In such situations of great need, all people seek the orientation of true guides, and Silo's Message leads us to look within ourselves. For this reason, the work of configuring an Internal Guide is an important and valuable personal work that will help us deepen and advance toward our aspirations of a coherent and meaningful life, based on internal integration and expansion toward the world of other people, with the best of human qualities: wisdom, kindness, and strength.

On May 7, 2005 Silo said:

"...To move away from contradiction is the same as to overcome hatred, resentment, and the desire for revenge. To move away from contradiction is to cultivate the desire to reconcile with others and with oneself. To move away from contradiction is to forgive and to make amends twice-over for every wrong that you have inflicted on others.

This is the appropriate attitude to cultivate. Then, in the measure that time passes you will understand that what is most important is achieving a life of internal unity. This will bear fruit when what you think, feel, and do go in the same direction. Life grows thanks to its internal unity and it disintegrates because of contradiction. It happens, then, that what you do does not simply remain inside of you, but also reaches others. Therefore, when you help others to overcome pain and suffering you make your life grow and you contribute to the world. Conversely, when you increase the suffering in others, you cause your own life to disintegrate and you poison the world. And who should you help? First, those who are closest to you, but your action will not end with them.

We know that our internal qualities do not simply remain within ourselves, in our own internal landscape. These qualities are transmitted to all who are around us through our actions, our ideas,

and our feelings. In other words, the expression of our internal world is manifested in our human landscape, affecting others. The human landscape is a continuous and mutual influencing and mixing of the internal landscapes of each one. Very often we feel the impact of violence and incoherence within ourselves and in those around us. How can we advance in a world that we did not choose but that we have inherited? We recognize our need for orientation, we recognize our desire to help others, and we aspire for our influence in the world to be positive. Because of all this, the relationship with our Internal Guide is a great resource to be able to carry forward this aspiration.

First work: in groups

Reading of texts related to the Internal Guide:

1. *The Internal Landscape, Chapters XVI and XVII, in Humanize the Earth.*

These texts clarify the difference between the internal guide and the profound "models" that operate within us. An Internal Guide is something possible to configure and perfect, and this is what we will work on.

XVI. Models

- 1. In your internal landscape there is an ideal man or woman that you search for in the external landscape. Through so many relationships your ideal remains always just out of reach – like two fragments of flint that do not quite strike except for that brief moment when perfect love dazzles us with its spark.*
- 2. All human beings, in their own ways, launch their lives toward the external landscape, seeking to complete their hidden models.*
- 3. But the external landscape continues imposing its own laws, and as time goes by, your once most cherished dream becomes only an image before which you now experience shame or even less, as this dream is reduced to a faded memory. Nevertheless, within the human species profound models exist, sleeping, biding their time. These models are the translation of impulses that your body sends to the space of representation.*
- 4. We are not discussing the origin or consistency of these models, or the complexity of the world in which they are found. We are simply noting that they exist and pointing out that their function is to compensate needs and aspirations which, in turn, motivate human activities toward the external landscape.*
- 5. Entire peoples and cultures also have their own particular ways of responding to the external landscape, responses always colored by internal models, which history and their own bodies continue to define.*
- 6. Wise are those who know their profound models, and wiser still are those who can place them at the service of the best of causes.*

XVII. The Internal Guide

1. *Who do you so admire that you would like to have been that person?*
2. *Let me ask you in a more gentle fashion: Whom do you consider so exemplary that you wish you could find some of that person's virtues in yourself?*
3. *Perhaps there have been moments when in sorrow or confusion you have appealed to the memory of someone who, whether existing or not, came to your aid as a comforting image?*
4. *I am speaking of those particular models that we could call internal "guides," which at times coincide with real people.*
5. *Those models, which you have wanted to follow from the time you were very young, have changed only in the most external layers of your daily awareness.*
6. *I have seen how children talk and play with their imaginary companions and guides. I have seen people of all ages connect with these guides in prayers offered in sincere devotion.*
7. *The more strongly these guides were called, the further away they responded from and the better the signal they sent. Because of this I knew that the most profound guides are the most powerful. But only a great need can awaken them from their millennia of lethargy.*
8. *Such a model "possesses" three important attributes: strength, wisdom, and kindness.*
9. *If you want to know yourself better, observe the characteristics of the men and women you admire. Notice how the qualities you most value in them are also at work in the configuration of your own internal guides. Consider that even though your initial references may have disappeared with the passage of time, they have left "traces" within you that continue to motivate you toward the external landscape.*
10. *And if you want to understand how diverse cultures interact with each other, in addition to studying their modes of producing objects, study as well the methods by which they transmit their models.*
11. *It is important, then, to direct your attention to the best qualities in others, because you will project into the world those qualities you have managed to configure in yourself.*

Break

Second Work: The Condition

Brief Meditation. Take notes (without interchange).

The internal condition to begin to search for or encounter a Guide: The **Need** to contact a guide, which translates not into a tension or compulsion but rather into a recognition of one's own limitations; the **Sincerity** of the search, which has to be open, without haste, with respect for this work, and a certain **Faith** or **Trust** that one will be able to make contact with one's Internal Guide.

Practice: Reflection

Clarification of the registers of Need, Sincerity, and Faith.

I ask myself in silence...

Why do I need an Internal Guide...? I repeat: Why do I need an Internal Guide...?

What is the attitude that will guide my search...?

Where is my faith that my internal guide can be discovered...?

(Repeat this reflection, if needed).

Each person takes notes.

Third practice: The Three Qualities

Brief meditation, take notes, and interchange.

Practice: Personal Reflection

Pause at the dots (...). This will allow the participants to connect and feel the words being said.

What is Strength, Kindness, and Wisdom for me? Connect internally with each of these words, one by one...

What is Strength for me...? Is it the immense strength of the gods...? Is it the water that wears away the rock...? Exactly what kind of Strength do I aspire to...? Who do I know who has this quality...?

Who has Wisdom...? How is this wisdom expressed...?

What is Kindness for me...? Who has treated me with kindness...?

Each person takes notes.

Group interchange

Lunch (1 hour)

Fourth Work: Configuration of the Internal Guide (2 hours)

The Internal Guide as a synthetic image

In our work to configure an Internal Guide, we see that we use our memory to find previous references of the attributes that we are looking for; the images translated from our senses give form to these attributes (in a cenesthetic presence, sounds, visual images, etc.), and our imagination works with them. All of this mixes together into a new form. The Guide is a new

synthesis of a multitude of registers that we have distributed throughout our "internal archives." We bring all of this together into one image that has great meaning for us, and whose power grows as our relationship with this image becomes deeper through repeated communication with it.

We know that internal images can be configured as signs, symbols, or allegories. Following what is said in *Psychology Notes*, Psychology II, concerning allegories, "*Allegories are agglutinations of diverse contents in just one representation... they are transformed narratives in which the diverse is fixed... where the abstract is made concrete....*" We could say that a well-configured internal guide is an allegory for the consciousness, it makes concrete certain specific attributes: kindness, wisdom, and strength.

One's Internal Guide is very personal. It could be one's god; it can have a religious or sacred context, or not. It can be a holy person; it can be someone one knows or has known in one's life; it can be a historical figure; it can be an inspiring presence, an inspiring force, an inspiring image... it can be many things, but more than anything it is personal, and it is not for anyone to judge the Internal Guide of another.

While each person configures a guide with their own personal landscape, there are common elements to a well-configured image: it is an image that has "its own life," that has movement and mobility, precision and brilliance; an image that has depth, and always appears in the same form. Contact with this image "fits" well, with a positive commotion inside me, with psychic meaning for me. Clearly, it is not important if the image is visual, a presence, a sound, etc. What is important is that as the relationship grows with my guide, I register the impact of these qualities in my internal development; *I register protection, orientation, sensitivity to others, and increasing coherence in my expression in the world.*³

Practice: Experience of Peace and Configuration of the Internal Guide

These two experiences should be read slowly and without stopping between them.

Experience of Peace

1. Completely relax your body and quiet your mind. Then, imagine a transparent and luminous sphere that descends toward you until it comes to rest in your heart. In that moment you will recognize that the sphere ceases to appear as an image and transforms into a sensation within your chest.
2. Observe how the sensation of the sphere slowly expands from your heart toward the outside of your body, while your breathing becomes fuller and deeper. When the sensation reaches the limits of your body you may stop there and register the experience of internal peace. You may remain there as long as you feel is appropriate. Then, reverse the previous expansion (arriving, as in the beginning, at your heart) and finally release the sphere and conclude the exercise calm and renewed.

³ *Psychology Notes in Silo: Collected Works*, Vol II.

Guided experience: Configuration of the Internal Guide

I find myself in a luminous landscape, a place where I have felt a great happiness. ()*

I can see the sun, and it is growing larger. I can look at it without any harm or discomfort. Remarkably, two rays come down from it, one gently reaching my head, and the other reaching my heart.

I begin to feel very light, and feel myself being drawn toward the sun. Following the luminous rays, I move upward toward the sun.

I feel the soft and beneficial warmth of the enormous disc of the sun, which becomes a gigantic sphere as I draw nearer.

I enter the sun, and once inside, I breathe in and out, fully and deeply. The light that surrounds me enters my body with the rhythm of my breathing, filling me with more energy with each breath I take.

I feel peaceful and radiant. Then, with my best feelings, I ask for my inner guide to appear before me, in whatever manner is best. ()*

My guide responds, "I represent your inner Force, your energy, and if you know how to use me, you will have direction in life, you will have inspiration, and you will have protection. But you must make an effort to see me very clearly, or to feel my presence strongly." ()*

I ask my guide to place their hands on my forehead, and to leave them there for a few moments.

I begin to feel that starting from the center of my chest, a transparent sphere is growing outward, until it contains both of us. ()*

I ask my guide for a profound feeling of love for everything that exists to be reborn within me, and to accompany me in life, giving me joy and peace. ()*

I ask about the meaning of life, and wait for my guide's answer. ()*

I ask about the value of my life, and wait for my guide's answer. ()*

I ask what death really is, and wait for my guide's answer. ()*

In a reflective way, I ask about some special situation in my life, and wait for my guide's answer. ()*

I ask my guide always to be with me in moments of doubt and distress, and also to accompany me in moments of joy.

Now my guide moves away from me, and transforms into a large flower whose open petals contrast with the luminous background of the sun's disc. Then the flower continues to change in shape and colors, as though it were a harmonious kaleidoscope. And I realize that my guide will answer all my requests.

I begin to move away from the brilliant sun, filled with life and strength.

I descend, following the two luminous rays back down to the beautiful landscape, recognizing that within me there is a great kindness that seeks to express itself in the world of people. ()*

Each person takes notes.

Interchange in groups of 3 or 4.

Interchange among all participants, comments and/or testimony about experiences with the Guide.

Break (30 minutes)

Closing Ceremony of the Service.

Seminar ends with shared refreshments.

Clean up and farewell.

Bibliography

- * Book: *Silo's Message*
- * Book: *Psychology Notes, Psychology II, in Silo: Collected Works Vol II*

2. Seminar on The Force I

The seminar lasts one day and participants arrive in the morning.

Ceremony of the Service

Framing

The experience of the Force is the central pillar of the Experience in *Silo's Message*. It is the paramount theme of the descriptions in the *Inner Look* and it can be experienced in the Ceremonies of Experience of the Service, Laying on of Hands, Well Being, and Assistance. The theme of the Force merits study and reflection, relating one's own experience with the diverse explanations and descriptions found in the writings of Silo. This activity is highly recommended, something to be carried out calmly when the need to understand arises in oneself.

While a seminar of one day dedicated to the Force limits our possibilities to study this theme in depth, we can surely advance in our experience and understanding, and likely increase our store of questions as well. The interest of this seminar is not to reach at any technical conclusions, but rather 1. to let our internal experience go into the realm of personal inspiration and experimentation; and 2. to gain greater context for our understanding of the Force through studying selected passages from Silo's works.

While we can study the phenomena of the Force from many different angles, we will follow what is described in the introductory page of *Silo's Message*:

"The Experience is expressed through eight ceremonies capable of providing spiritual inspiration and producing positive changes in daily life."

We will celebrate several ceremonies of Experience today and also study and interchange about texts from *The Inner Look* in *Silo's Message*, which are related to the Force and the Principles of Valid Action.

We know that free interpretation is one of the main pillars of the Message, and this should guide our work. Open and fluid communication among us, freely expressing our own experience and having the opportunity to listen to others, is what enriches our understanding as a whole.

Part One: The Force and *The Inner Look* (2 hours)

The Inner Look deals with the conversion of non-meaning into meaning. Among the 20 chapters that comprise it, 11 are directly related to descriptions of the Force. The first chapters deal with the correct attitude in this search and descriptions of Non-meaning. Chapter V begins the Intimation of Meaning, and in Chapter VII we enter the theme with the Presence of the Force, followed by Control of the Force, Manifestations of the Energy and, in Chapter X, reaching affirmation in Evidence of Meaning, and Chapter XI with the Luminous Center. Chapter XII, The Discoveries, marks a change, with descriptions of the circulation of the energy and the nature of the Force and its relationship with historical evidence of the sacred. The following chapters consider procedures, the projection, and diverse actions of the Force, and the different mental situations described in *The Guide to the Inner Road*, the Principles, the Internal States, and Internal Reality.

Clearly, we relate our own experiences with the Force to the descriptions, reflections, and orientation that we find in *The Inner Look*. Its style of poetic prose enables us to find the appropriate internal attitude in relation to its theme of internal evolution.

From this book we will study here Chapter XV, The Experience of Peace and the Passage of the Force, and Chapter XVIII, Action and Reaction of the Force.

Reading and reflection on each part in groups.

Paragraphs 1 and 2. Experience of Peace.

Paragraphs 3 through 7. Experience of the Force.

Paragraph 8. General considerations.

Paragraph 9. Relation of the experience of the Force with daily life.

Each group writes a summary of its reflections on the readings.

Reading of group summaries. Interchange.

Brief break

Internal Situation

To begin with, as in all things, we have to consider our internal situation previous to the experience of the Force. We make contact with the Force through the Ceremonies, and in this way a “ceremonial attitude” arises in us, which is vital for the Experience. We are not here to make a precise definition of what the “ceremonial attitude” is, but we know that we celebrate ceremonies, and “celebrate” has a connotation of something special, something inspirational, open and beneficial – a positive event, whether for ourselves or others. In the first paragraph of Chapter XIV, Guide to The Inner Road, there is a very good description of this:

“If you understand what I have explained so far, you can, through a simple exercise, readily experience the manifestation of the Force.

It is not the same, however, to search for the correct mental position (as if this were a question of approaching a technical task) as it is to enter the kind of emotional tone and openness that poetry inspires.”

We celebrate our ceremonies with others, and our relationship with those “others” is fundamental to the experience. We know that positive and affectionate relations such as those found among friends, family members, and loved ones, give strength to the Force. It is not difficult to understand why these relations of human warmth set an appropriate internal situation for internal opening and well being. It is also not at all difficult to feel and to project this connection to *all* the others who share with me the celebration of any ceremony, and this is in fact the central feeling found in the ceremony of Laying on of Hands.

Service

Lunch (1 hour)

Relationship of the Force to internal unity (2 hours)

Let us see some examples from *The Inner Look* relating internal unity with the experience of the passage of the Force.

Chapter X, Evidence of Meaning, says:

“The real importance of an awakened life became evident to me.

The real importance of eliminating internal contradictions convinced me.

The real importance of mastering the Force in order to achieve unity and continuity filled me with joyful meaning.”

And later on, the last paragraph of Chapter XV says:

“Even if you have followed these recommendations, you may still have been unable to produce the passage of the Force. This should not become a source of concern, however. Simply take it as an indicator of a lack of internal “letting go” which may reflect excessive tensions or problems with the dynamics of the images – in sum, a fragmentation of emotional behavior – something that will, moreover, also be present in your daily life.”

We will take the opportunity we have today to investigate the experience of the Force, in order to share and to reflect together on our behavior in everyday life (with both ourselves and others), and its possible relationship with our experience of the Force. For this we studied The Principles in Chapter XIII, which “can help you in your search for internal unity.”

Reading and Interchange in groups of three of Chapter XIII, The Principles.

Interchange on reflections with the whole group.

Break

Comments

In Chapter XVIII, Action and Reaction of the Force, another procedure is explained, that of “thanking.” We are familiar with the Asking, with contact with our internal guide or internal god, or an inspiring image, when we are in need of orientation or protection. But there are also moments when we experience the need to direct and express the experience of our thankfulness and consciousness of our “good fortune.”

Reading and interchange

Chapter XVIII, Action and Reaction of the Force.

Closing Ceremony: The Laying on of Hands

Brief break

General comments and closing remarks with the whole group.

Closing with shared refreshments.

Bibliography

* Book: *Silo's Message*

3. Seminar on Reconciliation

The seminar lasts one day and participants arrive in the morning.

Ceremony of the Service

A. Introduction

This seminar aims first – even before thinking of reconciliation – at meditating on the experience of reconciliation, trying to transcend the psychological to place it on a level of profound spirituality. This is not a minor challenge, because it defines the necessary condition of the mental placement for a good work of reconciliation. It also proposes creating a personal aphorism that concentrates a great positive emotional charge to facilitate the process of progressive reconciliation.

We begin with the video of Silo's speech at Punta de Vacas on May 5, 2007. The participants take notes of those parts of the talk they consider important.

Note: The total duration of the work will be about 7 hours, depending on the number of participants. The ideal approach is not to set times for each part of the seminar, so that each person will be able to adjust this according to their needs.

Exercise 1 – Work in groups

Form groups of three. Read and study the talk, with a copy for each participant.

Exercise 2 – Individual work

Write a summary and synthesis of the discourse.

B. Framing of personal placement with respect to reconciliation as a profound spiritual experience

After reading and studying the material in small groups, each person makes an individual attempt to carry out an initial reflection about *reconciliation as a profound spiritual experience*. This includes searching for a register of an internal disposition that strongly moves our whole being, connecting with our most heartfelt aspirations and needs for internal liberty, and the great coherence this implies. In other words, this reflection is done from and for what is deepest in our hearts, with an elevated spirit of internal letting go, without reservations, in order to reach an adequate internal depth, and preventing possible resistances from arising from hidden resentments or skeptical rationalisms that could relativize this or any other profound spiritual experience.

Exercise 3 – Individual work

Reflection on the dimension of reconciliation as a profound spiritual experience, connecting with that interiority which is most moving. Take notes.

Exercise 4 – Guided practice, whole group

I sit comfortably and relax my external muscles, trying to dissolve all my tensions, both localized and general... .. I continue inside my body, letting myself go into the warmth of the sensations, and relaxing any tensions... .. moving from my throat down to the bottom of my trunk, passing through all of my organs... .. then, I gradually relax my head, from the top, moving down and inside... .. repeating this several times... .. now, I try to feel my reconciliation as if it were a migrating bird that travels thousands and thousands of miles, tirelessly, knowing where it must go... .. knowing what it must do... .. I am guided by my rebellion against suffering... ..

Exercise 5 – Individual work

I search for related registers and experiences between Exercise 3 and Exercise 4. I take notes.

Exercise 6 – Work in groups

Interchange about the experiences of Exercise 3 and Exercise 4. Write down conclusions in each group.

Exercise 7 – Whole Group work

Interchange about the conclusions of each group.

C. Framing a personal aphorism for reconciliation

We would like to propose that we define internally an aphorism that will help us sustain a progressive work of reconciliation, a work that will help us uproot all resentment, in order to transform our lives.

Exercise 8 – Individual work

Reflection on positive, mobilizing images that can be reduced to an aphorism. Work by making a list of possible hopes, certainties, or powerful guiding ideas, until finding a word or brief phrase that fits. We can also use an image that moves us.

To construct this aphorism it is essential to consider that our reconciliation must be founded on an aspiration with a positive, emotionally moving charge, which could be, for example, a longed-for flood of kindness toward ourselves and others. Only in this way, it seems, can reconciliation reach the point of becoming a profound spiritual experience. Take notes.

D. Framing: what to reconcile with

The reconciliation we seek may have to do with accepting the frustrations we have lived through, admitting our failures, acknowledging our mistakes, weaknesses, or deficiencies. It is also related with incoherent actions that we may have done, provoking suffering in others, and with mistreatment by others that has hurt us deeply. This process can also allow us to reflect on the mood of hopelessness at the grave world situation, so charged with violence and intolerance, so

that we can change our look, betting on the process of humanizing the Earth and the liberation of the spirit.

Exercise 9 – Individual work

I sit comfortably and relax my external muscles, trying to dissolve all my tensions, localized and general... .. I continue moving inside my body, letting myself go into the warmth of the sensations and relaxing any tensions... .. moving from my throat down to the bottom of my trunk, passing through all my organs... .. then, I gradually relax my head, from the top, moving down and inside... .. repeating this several times... .. now, I search for that look of understanding... .. this look that recognizes in my greatest mistakes, the piling up of factors that overcame my ability to respond, and I try to admit that my ignorance... .. my inability... .. and the weight of circumstances... .. could scarcely have allowed me to overcome that interplay of adverse forces which unleashed situations of suffering... .. I go over those situations that have caused the most resentment in me... .. and I make an effort to humbly admit my inability to give better responses so that others would not suffer... .. my ignorance in overcoming suffering and conflicts... .. in the same way, I seek to accept the ignorance and the fears of those who have caused me suffering... .. now, I try to recognize in myself those invaluable moments of hope... .. of getting things right... .. of coherence, that I have lived... .. I try to recognize in those moments the states of internal fulfillment and liberty that I have experienced... .. in this way, I try to balance the scale of my life, to endow it with the luminous meaning I aspire to... .. and, with this, to transform the environment that I live in... ..

Exercise 10 – Work in groups

Interchange in groups of three about the previous individual work. Take notes.

Exercise 11 – Individual summary and synthesis

Write a summary and synthesis of all the personal work you have carried out.

Exercise 12 – Whole group interchange

Free interchange in the group about the day's work.

Closing

In the Hall (if at a Park), we give thanks for the understandings we have reached and we ask for progressive reconciliation.

Closing with shared refreshments.

Bibliography

- * Video and text, "Reconciliation," Silo, Punta de Vacas, May 5, 2007

4. Seminar on Profound and Essential Change

The seminar lasts one day and participants arrive in the morning.

Ceremony of the Service

Framing

This work is put together with questions based on the main ideas in Silo's letter responding to David Roberts, which circulated in January of 2008. These questions aim to create a condition of deep individual reflection and group interchange on the issue of profound and essential change. These questions can be answered through reason or through intuition. Next, we will try to formulate a personal intention, meditating and taking as a connecting reference the theme of "The five states of meaning in life," an excerpt from Note 4 of the original *Book of the Community*.

The letters and the Note are below so that all participants will have the text study.

Exercise 1 - Individual written work

Profound and essential change, the change of mental conditions,⁴ is possible through an intention of human consciousness.

1. What do I understand or intuit by *profound and essential change*?
2. What would not be a profound and essential change, or what could be "disguised" as essential change?
3. What do I understand or intuit by a *change of mental conditions*?
4. What would not be a change of mental conditions?

Essential change is not possible without a clear intention in that direction.

5. What do I understand or intuit by *an intention of the human consciousness regarding itself*?
6. What do I understand or intuit by a *clear intention in this direction*?

Converting one's life according to a profound mental change.

7. What does it mean to me to *convert my life in accordance with a profound mental change*?
8. What do I understand or intuit by *deciding through necessity to convert my life in that direction*?

⁴ One way of approaching an understanding of my "mental conditions" is to reflect on the principal direction of my existence. It's like asking: What are the things that most interest me and to which I dedicate the most energy? I can also delve into this theme by observing my mental habits, that is, seeing what things I am most psychologically and physically occupied with.

Exercise 2 - Work in groups of three

Interchange about individual work. Take notes.

Exercise 3 – Work with the whole group

Open interchange about the theme in relation to the individual and group work. Take notes.

Exercise 4 - Formulating personal intentions

First, one should try to meditate about the internal "place," that is, from where one should formulate intentions for profound and essential change, if they are not clear. In this sense, we must consider that the most deeply felt aspirations that move us toward that Conversion are not born from illusory compensations, which could subtly and unnoticed be conditioning us. Take notes.

Second, it is recommended to study Note 4 (below) from the original *Book of the Community* in order to reflect and be more clear about the internal state one may currently be in with respect to meaning in life. Take notes.

Exercise 5 – Work in groups of three

Interchange about the individual work.

Exercise 6 – Work with the whole group

Interchange about comprehensions gained in the individual and group work.

Exercise 7 – Individual summary and synthesis

Write a summary and synthesis of all the personal work carried out.

Closing

In the Hall (if at a Park), we give thanks for the understandings we have reached, and we ask for progressive reconciliation.

Closing with shared refreshments.

Excerpt of Note 4 from the original *Book of The Community*

...7. The recognition that not everything ends with death, or what is the same, of transcendence beyond death, admits the following positions:

- A. The unquestionable evidence (although not demonstrable or transferable to others) of one's own experience;*
- B. Simple belief through education or environment, as if this were an unquestionable datum of reality;*
- C. The desire to have the experience or belief;*
- D. The intellectual suspicion of the possibility of survival after death, without experience, belief, or desire to have them.*

8. These four positions and a fifth, which denies all possibility of transcendence, are called "the five states of meaning in life." Each state, in turn, allows different degrees of depth or definition. Both the states and the degrees are variable, but in any given moment of life they allow one to define the coherence or contradiction of one's own existence, and therefore the level of freedom from or being subject to suffering. This is, moreover, a practical point, because you can examine any moment of your life and locate it in the corresponding state, verifying how your life has been organized in accordance with this state. Logically, this examination can be used for understanding the present moment.

9. Whatever state and degree a person finds themselves in, they can advance or deepen in it through sustained work in the direction the Doctrine proposes.

Summary: The doctrine of the Community explains that true meaning of life is related to the affirmation of transcendence beyond death; that the discovery of this meaning transforms life, influencing it through the three pathways of suffering, and that every person can reach or perfect this meaning, no matter what state and degree they find themselves in with respect to it.

Letters from David and Silo (Negro)

January 14, 2008

Hello Negro,

I send you a warm greeting from Sacramento.

I am writing to you today because something is troubling me about comments that I had heard that you had made recently. As it was reported, these comments were made around 10 days ago. And since nothing of clarification has circulated, to my knowledge, I thought I'd ask you directly.

The matter is that, I was told (albeit second hand) that in a certain conversation you had with a few people – I believe it was at a dinner in Manantiales – that you had said that human being could not (really) change. And that you made a few statements to that effect which negated the possibility of

"true change" within humans. I took this to mean that you had reached a NEW conclusion in which you now say that Humans are not capable of an essential and deep level of change. How different it is to think this! And such a departure from what has been our current of thought over many years.

Well, I suppose you did say what was reported... but what I wonder is WHAT DID YOU MEAN? And how am I/we to understand?

Thinking to myself I say that if I must face the fact – if it is a fact – that we humans are not capable of the type of truly Humanizing Change (transformation) – a situation which we have all worked to propagate over many years... then this makes me STOP ... and search and wonder what is it then that I am working for (for others) and what is it that I am to have faith in?

Since I have heard this and thought about it, I have put all of my projects on hold including my "Siloisms" series until I am able to UNDERSTAND. We all rely on your thinking and on your judgment to a very big degree and so I must ask you if the whole Narrative/Story has changed (?)

Thanks, Negro, for considering my questions..... and just to say once again that you are always in my thoughts.

a big hug,

David

Hi David,

Yes, approximately 10 days ago there were some wonderful dinners in Manantiales, and at one of them we touched on this theme, which seems to me important to consider.

Is profound and essential change possible in the human being? Yes, I believe it is, but I distinguish between that undeniable but slow change that began in the first hominids, and the possibility of essential change that is not due to simple evolutionary mechanics, or to "natural" accidents, but to a direction, an intention of the human consciousness regarding itself.

The point is that peripheral changes are making a lot of people believe that those are the changes that must be aspired to. We have to go beyond Science and Justice in order to understand this change. Indeed, as we have pointed out on several occasions, whoever works for the advance of Science and Justice is making the best of efforts to promote the overcoming of pain and suffering, facilitating the conditions for change. But it is clear that today even Justice and Science are being twisted into a pressured parabola in which the search for change is being oriented objectally, ignoring what is most important in essential change. This forgetting of self, this ignorance of the overcoming of one's mental mechanics, leads us to question the possibilities of change...

And here we arrive at the point of this disquieting but healthful evening, in which we were able to say: Essential change is not possible without decisively moving in that direction. And the epoch is closing the horizon of that mental direction.

Whoever has followed our trajectory over the years has observed that our works have been oriented in the direction of "simultaneous change" [personal and social], and in Humanism this took on great strength. However, the effort toward changing our mental conditions has sometimes been weak and sometimes intermittent.

I put the arguments in a way that is somewhat harsh: Everything that has been done up to this moment has great meaning, but it will not be enough until the people (even the nicest and most kind) decide to Convert their lives, realizing the need for a profound mental change. It is of this that our work speaks in its last phase; it is of this that the Message speaks.

I believe that in the current situation in which Humanity is living (and of course ourselves), if we do not work to overcome all censure and censorship, including what is self-imposed, throwing ourselves into the meanings and works of the Message, then essential change will not be possible. The direction must be toward the Profound of the consciousness, to connect with the meanings that have been slowly driving forward the evolution of the human being. Now it is urgent and we have no other way to make this impulse known.

When we spoke at that dinner of the difficulties that the human mind is facing, disheartenment blew like an icy wind through those present. The sensation remained, that as things are, submerged in our humanity, we are not penetrating into the Profound, and if that doesn't happen, Change is not possible. That was the saddest part of that talk, to which people responded with a certain stoicism: "...What you say is not very hopeful!"

However, beyond the anecdote I believe that we have some inner connection that can be communicated, and this is possible because in each of us is the unfathomable source of the Profound, from whose waters we must drink.

My dear David, I believe that many grasped the gravity of the current moment, and your letter is a reflection of that which happened and has not yet stopped.

I send you a most affectionate hug,

Negro

5. Seminar on Direction and the Aphorisms

The seminar lasts one day and participants arrive in the morning.

Ceremony of the Service

First Part: Introduction (1 hour)

Plan of Work: We will work with the text of the Aphorisms (*The Book of the Community*) and some guided reflections. This work is organized to help us experiment with each of the Aphorisms and, from our own personal experience, understand the differences between them. We are going to concentrate on forming a personal Aphorism that corresponds to the basic direction of our lives.

The best way to work together is to be relaxed and in theme, with a focus on the work we are doing. The appropriate attitude is that of a “researcher,” trying to understand, paying attention, and without expectations. This is a simple work, carried out with liking.

What are “The Aphorisms” and why are we going to work with them?

We know that when we are going to do something that is important to us we need to have clarity in our thoughts and images, have faith and conviction that what we are doing will turn out well, and carry out all the tasks that are necessary to achieve what we want. This “something” we are doing can be very internal. It could be looking for a job; it could be helping another person; it could be a project that includes others; it could be setting in motion a new Community of the Message; it could be the general construction of my life. Whatever it is, we need the maximum coherence among our thoughts, feelings, and actions. The Aphorisms work precisely on these points.

Our Aphorisms are formulated in three levels of depth. They are:

(1) Thoughts produce and attract actions.

(2) Thoughts with faith produce and attract stronger actions.

(3) Thoughts repeated with faith produce and attract the maximum strength in one's actions.

A Personal Aphorism is a phrase, an image, or a simple mental construction that directs my thoughts, feelings, and actions in a certain direction. The function and power of an Aphorism is exactly this: that of clarifying and transforming my ideas and feelings into actions that are conscious and intentional. This Aphorism creates energy and it creates future. An Aphorism can be personal or collective. In all cases, the indicators that this Aphorism is well constructed and corresponds to an inner truth are that the future opens and personal coherence grows. In this sense, the internal work with the Aphorisms can be considered a step toward a clearer understanding of our internal functioning.

A personal Aphorism can obviously also be something more immediate, and not necessarily only a work about the central part of my life. Here we are exploring and learning about the Aphorisms, and have taken *the direction of our life* as our object of study. If we go deeply into this work we will surely incorporate a new personal tool that will be useful in many situations, and possibly fundamental for the construction of the life to which we aspire.

Direction

The positive energetic potential of a personal Aphorism is found in its closeness to the central direction or meaning that my life has. This is important because in the measure that my daily actions coincide (or do not coincide) with my mental direction, my life will grow in coherence or in suffering, both for myself and those around me. There is a direction within me that pushes me forward, or that guides me one way and not another (regardless of how things have sometimes turned out). This can be felt as a sort of magnet in the future that attracts me, or an internal motor that propels me... in different ways, but in any case it is there, operating.

For some reason, our lives have taken us here to be together today. Even though the details of our lives may be very different, there is something in common in our direction. Each of us may feel this "something" in a different way, expressed in a different manner, but somehow the aspirations of Silo's Message coincide with our own aspirations for our lives and what we desire for others.

There is an internal image operating here that has certain common characteristics: on one hand there is a search that impels us toward the profound and sacred in ourselves; and on the other there is centrifugal direction that goes out toward others, an interest that opens communication and goes beyond discrimination and violence. There is a suspicion or certainty that life does have a meaning, that not everything ends with death, and this determines how I build my life. There is a desire to overcome suffering in myself and in others. This direction is what is important to us, and this could be thought of as the rudder of a vessel. You don't see the rudder, but it is what enables the ship to reach its destination. Without a rudder the ship just goes around in circles, at the mercy of the tides and the currents, of external forces. Our interest is to understand this rudder, to make it explicit for ourselves and evident in our lives.

Aspirations

How can we know what our real aspirations are? Surely we have many different things that we want, desire, and need operating at the same time, from the most mundane to the most exalted. Some of these lead us in a valid direction and others lead us to suffering. The key to discovering our deep aspirations has to do with the **positive emotional commotion** that is felt when we make contact with them. There are many things that we want or would like to have happen, but without this emotional connection they are just reveries, good ideas, but they lack the profundity of something important for our lives.

In the measure that I feel that my internal coherence and unity are growing, that my life is taking on a valid meaning (at least for myself), then I know that I am on a path of profundity and truth within myself. There is an experience of recognition in the contact with this profound aspiration that is operating, even though it may not be fully clear, manifest, or explicit.

Our interest in this work with Aphorisms is to try to get close to this internal aspiration – which is like an underground current that is operating in me, guiding my life in a certain direction – so as to then be able to guide my daily actions with greater coherence.

First Work - Personal Aphorism (1 hour)

A. Reflection: Guided external and internal relaxation... .. I look for images that have a register of something that I aspire to... .. ideas or images of people and situations that mobilize me... .. I look for meanings... .. What do I feel when I make contact with that aspiration?... .. Can I feel that this aspiration grows without limits?... .. Can I recognize this feeling in other moments of my life?... .. In different situations of my life?... I sift through the different moments and situations of my life with this register, guided by this feeling... ..

Write your conclusions (without interchange).

Take notes on your experience. If you do not feel you have made contact with this emotion, try working with an inspiring register.

B. Reflection: I feel myself relaxing... .. again I get in touch with this feeling... .. With this feeling I reflect upon my thoughts and actions... .. I search throughout my life, seeing the moments where this feeling was more evident... .. I see the moments when this feeling was absent... .. I remember the thoughts and actions in my life in the times when this feeling was absent... .. I get in touch again with the feeling of my aspiration... .. I remember the thoughts and actions that were related with this feeling in those moments... .. I see my future... ..

Write down your conclusions.

C. Meditate internally and begin to construct a personal Aphorism of how this aspiration can be expressed in your life. This Aphorism can be a phrase, an image, a way of expressing this sentiment just **for yourself**. This is like an internal affirmation, created in an intuitive way more than a logical way. It may not exactly reflect your aspiration but it could come close. The point is that when you make contact with this phrase or image you feel the *strength of this sentiment*.

D. Reflection: I relax my tensions... .. I feel this Aphorism operating... .. and gaining life within me... .. gaining life within me... ..

Interchange in groups of three (1 hour)

Break - Lunch (one hour)

Part Two: The Aphorisms (*The Book of the Community*) (2 hours)

1. "**Thoughts produce and attract actions.**"

What does this mean, thoughts "produce actions?" It means simply that I act in life according to what I feel now, what I remember from the past, and what I imagine about the future. Any activity that I carry out will depend on what I have done previously, and on having a clear image or plan of what to do. If my thoughts are confused, it is very likely that my actions will be confused, and so on.

In regard to how thoughts "attract actions," it is clear that if I have produced confused actions, this

will create confusion in my activities and in the people toward whom my actions are directed. Then, as a consequence I will receive the same type of confused actions in return. For example, if my thoughts are resentful and I act in this way, surely I will create resentment and attract those actions from others in return. All a person has to do is to believe in their "bad luck" for their actions and those of the people around them to end up producing these "unlucky situations."

Reflection: I relax my tensions... .. I connect with my personal Aphorism... .. I feel my Aphorism... .. I see the images that appear... .. Where am I in the images?... .. What are my thoughts?... .. What are my actions?... .. Where do my actions lead, where do they end?

Write down your thoughts and actions. What actions were produced, and what actions were attracted? Consider the consequences of these actions.

Comments by the participants.

2. "Thoughts with faith produce and attract stronger actions."

By "faith" we mean a conviction, strong feeling, or confidence that something is the way a person believes it to be. It is not at all the same to think something with doubts as it is to think something with strong emotions. When you see how much a strong feeling like love can do, you can understand what we are saying.

Reflection: I relax my tensions... .. I breathe deeply... .. Now again I focus on the same images and my Aphorism... .. the same feelings... .. I see them clearly... .. I see my thoughts... .. I see my actions... .. I feel this emotion inside me... .. I strengthen this feeling... .. I make this feeling deeper... .. I put faith and certainty in this feeling... .. what are my thoughts... .. what are my actions... .. I continue increasing my faith in my Aphorism... ..

Take notes on your experience. What differences do you observe with your thoughts from Aphorism 1? What were your actions and what were their consequences?

Comments by the participants.

3. "Thoughts repeated with faith produce and attract the maximum strength in one's actions."

The more you repeat an action or a thought, the more it is engraved in your memory, the stronger your habits will be, and the more it will predispose you to repeat future actions in the same direction. If a person continuously thinks with faith that they are sick, it is more likely that they will actually become sick than if they only think this a little, or without conviction. The same holds true with the projects that I have in my life. I must think them out clearly, with faith, and I must think about them over and over again. Then, my actions will go in this direction, and they will also create positive responses from my environment and from the people around me in the direction that is of interest to me.

How do I repeat with faith my personal Aphorism? With daily meditation, with intention, making it central to each day, incorporating it into the activities of each day. If I have an Internal Guide, I can ask the Guide to strengthen my Aphorism.

The Guide and the Asking: If I have an Internal Guide, then the best approach will be to incorporate my Guide (with their Strength, Wisdom, and Kindness) into the work with my Aphorism. I can call upon my Guide to accompany me, to strengthen and guide my Aphorism, to ask advice on how to best advance in different situations. In this way I "infuse" my Aphorism with the attributes of my Guide. I incorporate the strength of the Asking with my Guide into my thoughts and my actions.

Reflection: I again see the same images and my Aphorism with faith... .. I see myself in daily life... .. I see my activities... .. I see my thoughts... .. I keep repeating internally this contact with my Aphorism... .. I am connecting profoundly with this internal truth... .. I observe my thoughts.... .. I see the strength of my actions.... .. I see the consequences of my actions... ..

Take notes on your images, your thoughts, your actions, and their consequences.

Interchange in groups of three.

Write your personal conclusions and synthesis.

Final interchange among the participants.

Short break

Ceremony of the Service

Closing with shared refreshments.

Bibliography

- * *The Book of the Community*

6. Seminar on the Asking

The seminar lasts one day and participants arrive in the morning.

Ceremony of the Service

Framing

This seminar is dedicated to work with the Asking, complemented by personal reflection, and study and interchange in groups. We will also celebrate ceremonies.

Firs Part – Personal reflection and interchange (1½ hours)

Our first reflection will be of a personal kind, reflecting on our internal growth as we have faced the difficulties of life in recent times. We will take a few minutes to meditate about those difficult moments, and later we will interchange in groups of three.

Second Part – Study (1½ hours)

Ceremony of Well-Being. “Commentaries on Silo’s Message.”

Study in groups. Each participant writes their personal reflections and comprehensions.

A third ceremony is known as “Well-Being.” It is carried out at the request of the participants. This ceremony involves adopting a mental position in which participants evoke one or more people, trying to remember as vividly as possible their presence and their most characteristic affective tone. We seek to comprehend, in the most intense possible way, the difficulties they may be experiencing at this moment. From there, we go on to focus on an improvement in their situation so that they can experience a corresponding register of relief.

This ceremony highlights a mechanism of “best wishes” or “good intentions,” with which we often express ourselves almost spontaneously. We say, “Have a good day,” “Happy birthday to you, and many more,” “I hope your test goes well,” or “I hope everything turns out well,” etc. It is clear that in this ceremony the “Asking” is done with a good mental disposition, where the emphasis is on intense affective registers. This “Asking” for benefit for others, performed in the best conditions, places us in a mental position where we are predisposed to give needed help; moreover, it also improves our mental direction, strengthening in us possibilities of communication with others.

A very important point to consider in relation to the “Askings” is to carry them out so that others can overcome their difficulties and reestablish their best possibilities. There should be no confusion about this. Let us consider an example. One might assume that in the case of someone who is dying, an Asking for the recovery of their health is the most appropriate thing, since we are trying to diminish the person’s pain and suffering. But we must be careful how we focus the Asking, because it is not a question of asking for what is best for ourselves, who want to keep that person in good health and close to us. The correct Asking should aim at what is best for the dying person and not what is best for us. In this situation, where we are emotionally attached to that person who is suffering and dying, perhaps we should also consider that the person may wish to leave that situation, reconciled and at peace with him or herself. In this case, the Asking is for “the best for the affected person” and not what is best for me, who wants to hold on to that person at all costs. So, in Asking for others I must consider what is best for them, and not for me.

This ceremony ends with the opportunity, for those present, who so wish, to feel the presence of loved ones who, “although not present here, in our time and in our space,” are related to us, or have related to us, in an experience of love, peace, and warm joy.

Finally, this ceremony attempts to create a current of well-being among all those present, who are oriented in the same direction.

Reading of notes in each group and interchange.

Brief break

Ceremony of the Service

Ceremony of Well-Being

Lunch (1 hour)

Third part – The Asking (2 hours)

For us, the Asking is a transforming attitude and a procedure through which we can clarify our needs and concentrate our energy on the achievement of our aspirations. Obviously, “my needs” are not limited to my own personal situation but also extend to my “world,” including my loved ones and all those whose presence exists within me and who contribute to the shaping of my internal world.

In our Ceremonies there are many instances when we ask explicitly, such as in Well-Being, Protection, the Service, the Laying on of Hands; and there are other Ceremonies where our best wishes for the fulfillment of the aspirations of others are implicit, such as Assistance, Marriage, and Death.

The Asking implies two moments: one in which we meditate on what we truly need, and another moment in which we ask for the fulfillment of these needs.

Silo referred to this first moment of brief meditation in his speech at the dedication of La Reja Park on May 7, 2005:

“...And since in some celebrations people exchange presents, I would like to give you a gift. Then, certainly, it will be up to you to decide whether it merits your acceptance. It consists, in fact, of the easiest and most practical recommendation I am able to offer. It is almost like a recipe from a cookbook, but I trust that you will be able to go beyond simply what is indicated by the words...

In some moment of the day or night inhale a breath of air, and imagine that you bring this air to your heart. Then, ask with strength for yourself and for your loved ones. Ask with strength to move away from all that brings you contradiction; ask for your life to have unity. Don't take a lot of time with this brief prayer, this brief asking, because it is enough that you interrupt for one brief moment

what is happening in your life for this contact with your interior to give clarity to your feelings and your ideas.

To move away from contradiction is the same as to overcome hatred, resentment, and the desire for revenge. To move away from contradiction is to cultivate the desire to reconcile with others and with oneself. To move away from contradiction is to forgive and to make amends twice-over for every wrong that you have inflicted on others.

*This is the appropriate attitude to cultivate. Then, in the measure that time passes you will understand that **what is most important is achieving a life of internal unity**. This will bear fruit when what you think, feel, and do go in the same direction. Life grows thanks to its internal unity and it disintegrates because of contradiction. It happens, then, that what you do does not simply remain inside of you, but also reaches others. Therefore, when you help others to overcome pain and suffering you make your life grow and you contribute to the world. Conversely, when you increase the suffering in others, you cause your own life to disintegrate and you poison the world. And who should you help? First, those who are closest to you – but your action will not end with them.*

Learning does not stop with this “recipe.” Rather, it begins. This recipe says that you have to ask – but whom do you ask? That depends on what you believe. It may be your internal god, or your guide, or an inspiring and comforting image. Finally, if you don't have anyone to ask, you will also have no one to give to, and so my gift will not merit your acceptance.“

Interchange about the text in groups of three.

Interchange among the whole.

Break

Personal Reflection

In silence, each of us meditates internally on what we really need. Of course, “what I want” and “what I would like to have happen,” are not the same as “what I truly need.”

Here, the context of the expression “what I truly need” is very clear, and also to whom one asks, and each person carries out this Asking in their own way.

The “procedure” of Asking has to do with concentrating this wish in our heart. It is there, in our heart, where we connect with the Force. That is where the energy is, produced by the strong feelings so intimately intertwined with our real needs and capable of spurring their fulfillment. It is in our hearts that we find the Force capable of meeting our real needs.

Again in Silo's speech we find the following: “...*In some moment of the day or night inhale a breath of air, and imagine that you carry this air to your heart.*” How do I bring this breath to my heart? I take in a deep breath of air and I keep concentrating it, pushing the air “toward the inside of my heart.” I can help myself by placing one hand on my heart, feeling it beating. Then, I keep

concentrating my Asking, repeating it in my “inner voice” or out loud, concentrating the Asking in my heart. It is recommended that this be done briefly and with the Force.

Practice

Take a few moments so that each person can meditate on what they truly need.

Then, everyone standing... .. My mind is restless (the group repeats)... .. my heart is troubled (the group repeats)... .. my body is tense (the group repeats)... .. I relax my body, my heart, and my mind (the group repeats)... ..

(Asking) Take in a deep breath of air, and direct it to your heart... .. Press the air into your heart... .. Gently press your hand over your heart... .. Make contact with your Guide, and ask with strength... .. Ask with strength for what you truly need... .. Ask with strength, with your inner voice, or out loud... .. Ask for what you truly need... ..

Repeat the Asking three or four times, without stopping in between.

Break

Closing Ceremony of the Service

The seminar ends with shared refreshments.

Bibliography

- * Book: *Silo's Message*
- * Words of Silo at the dedication of La Reja Park, May 7, 2005
- * “Commentaries on Silo’s Message”

7. Seminar on the Golden Rule and Transforming Actions

The seminar lasts one day and participants arrive in the morning.

Ceremony of the Service

Framing

This day of work will be dedicated to studying, reflecting on, and interchanging about the Golden Rule and transformative actions in the world, which have repercussions on the people closest to us and in ourselves, and whose influence is never ending. Today we will investigate through our own experience, study, reflection, and interchange the Golden Rule in our personal lives, and also how this Principle of Valid Action is translated in orienting our social action with Silo's Message. For this work we will carry out some of our ceremonies of Experience and we will study the Formative Theme on The Golden Rule.

First Work

Reading and interchange in groups: Formative Theme on the Golden Rule.

Break

Second Work

The Golden Rule

The guiding ethical principle for our actions is the one that says: "*Treat others as you want them to treat you.*" For us, there is no higher moral principle able to guide human conduct, both personal and social. When we apply it consciously, we immediately locate ourselves as a peer of the other, neither above nor below. This mental placement is what allows true solidarity and the equality necessary for coexistence. "I" am not the center of the world; "we" exist, and in this mental atmosphere it is difficult for violent behavior in any of its forms to put down roots. This principle orients our aspiration for personal coherence, uniting our thoughts, feelings, and actions. It allows us to surpass our personal contradictions and opens the way for new thoughts, new feelings, and new actions, whether in the area of personal relations or at a social level. It entails a moral position in facing life, and its universal justification is the register of internal unity that all people experience when their actions are truly oriented by this understanding.

In Silo's Message we have the opportunity to deepen our internal experience through the ceremonies, and through free interpretation and interchange with others about subjects as diverse as death, immortality, the sacred, and the meaning of life, among others. These experiences seem to form a sort of "internal atmosphere," a new way of experiencing ourselves and life in general, and it is from our own internal world that our actions spread out and reach others. Some of our ceremonies, such as the Service and the Laying on of Hands, are directly related to internal experience. Others such as Well Being, Protection, Marriage, Assistance, and Death are social and have to do with our way of treating others. In turn, the Ceremony of Recognition consists of a

personal experience of declaration of principles, but this declaration also has to do with a social commitment to the world to which we aspire.

The Golden Rule is a clear orientation in our relationship with others. If I am interested in “transforming actions” then I will have to consider that all of the actions that I carry out toward others are configured in my internal world – a world that is colored by my mental atmosphere. In this sense, in accordance with how my thoughts and feelings are, so will my actions be configured and expressed in a certain way the world, exercising their influence upon those who are the “receivers” of these actions. My way of treating others reaches and ends in them, benefitting them or not, and in turn their actions reach still others, and so on. I myself also experience my actions toward others, and this register remains in my memory, influencing this mental atmosphere that I am always building, in a form that may be positive, or negative. It seems that we all influence and are influenced by others. This is something important to consider. Inasmuch as our actions do not end in themselves but continue in others and within ourselves, it is not a matter of indifference how we carry out our lives.

In the Ceremony of Death this is very clear. Here we are, the life of our loved one has ceased to act in their body. That body will not carry out any more “actions,” yet we can still feel and recognize the living influence of their actions in ourselves. Let us try to imagine this situation.

Experience: Let’s close our eyes. Let us remember a loved one who has departed.

(without a break) Reading of the Ceremony of Death.

An opportunity is given for interchange among those who wish to speak.

Comments

Here we can see how the way this departed person treated us and the treatment we experienced have changed us and continue to act in us, transforming our actions toward others. In this sense we can see how History, that great accumulator and transformer of the actions carried out by all those who have preceded us, continues in us today. Understanding this can awaken in us a new compassion and tolerance. And just as *no one* should be held guilty for today’s widespread misfortune, each person will, or will not, take personal responsibility for helping to transform the destructive processes into forces that favor life.

Ceremony of Well Being

Lunch (one hour)

Third Work

We have seen the Principle of Solidarity or Golden Rule which says: *Treat others as you want them to treat you.* We have seen that what has to do with *actions* is a complex world, and how their influence has no end, but continues in the human landscape in constant transformation. We have also seen how there are actions that benefit others in the best sense, and others that do not. In Silo’s Message this Principle is translated and elevated into a shared affirmation of experience,

ideals, attitudes, and procedures. This can be observed in the ceremony of Recognition, and in light of our interest it is very appropriate to study it.

Study and interchange in groups: Ceremony of Recognition

Notes of the group

Joint reading and interchange

Break

Ceremony of the Service

Ceremony of Recognition

Seminar ends with shared refreshments

Bibliography

- * Book: *Silo's Message*
- * Formative Theme on The Golden Rule

8. Retreat on the Force II

This retreat lasts three days, and participants arrive the evening before the day it begins.

Evening

Arrival and welcome. Getting settled in the environment. Dinner.

Framing

Explanations are given about the meaning of this Retreat, which is to try to have a profound internal experience with the work of the Force, and also to study, reflect, and interchange on *The Inner Look* and the document “Commentaries on Silo’s Message.”

Recommendations about placement

Here the only theme is our personal work. The appropriate attitude is friendliness, good humor, and internal sincerity. Since this is a retreat about the Force, the way we relate to each other is very important: friendly, light, and open. The important thing is to make contact with oneself and learn from others.

Mental fence

The “mental fence” is our way of generating a different “mental space” in which we can work. The fence works by establishing a boundary in space and time. This boundary concentrates and elevates our attentional level. Only with more attention can we learn more about ourselves and others.

Explanations of how the retreat works

In the retreat we are all working in the same conditions. There are only two roles: that of participant and that of director. We recommend punctuality in beginning all activities, in getting up in the morning and going to bed at night. Free time can be used for taking walks, interchanging, finishing or going over works, etc., but this does not imply going outside the mental fence or getting out of theme. We emphasize that even though the work is concentrated, there will be enough time to do everything in depth and without hurry. It is important to focus well on each one of the works, develop it well, interchange with others, make observations, and draw conclusions.

Review of schedule

Brief break

Group reading

From: “Commentaries on Silo’s Message” and *Silo’s Message*

First part of “Commentaries on Silo’s Message” up to chapter II

Break

Service

Free time

01:00 am The day ends

Day 1

09:00 am Wake up

10:00 Breakfast

11:00 **Explanations about the objective and recommendations for the work of the Retreat**

In this retreat we will try to deepen our personal experience and our understanding of *Silo's Message* by concentrating on two themes: one is the experience of the Force within the ceremonial context of the Service and the Laying on of Hands; the other is reflection on selected chapters of *Silo's Message* and the Commentaries. We understand that this is only a partial and particular interest having to do with *Silo's Message*; nevertheless this is what we will develop during these days.

It is thanks to being in a situation of "retreat," hopefully in a Center of Work, that we have the best conditions to go deeper into ourselves. Here we are far away from our daily routines and obligations, we are not rushed, we have nowhere to go, and we are not interested in efficiency. These are the ideal conditions for this internal work.

The Force

To enter into contact with the Force there is a certain corresponding mental condition and emotional predisposition that is favorable. The ceremonial context of the Service and Laying on of Hands moves us away from the technical, inviting us into a more poetic internal opening with ourselves. While the way this manifests in each of us is personal, what we share in common is a great affection and an inspired interest in our work, and the fact that we do this work among friends increases this mental atmosphere.

In this retreat we will work repeatedly with the Force, and this will give each of us the opportunity to make notes and reflect on our experience. Here perhaps we will understand more about ourselves: how we internally place ourselves when we enter into this work, the ease or difficulty we have at different moments as we follow the indications given. This is not to impose a technical point of view on a ceremonial work; rather, concentrating on and repeating experiences is a rare opportunity that allows us to go deeper, to learn about and become more familiar with the Force. Each of us has energy and Force, and our interest is in making contact with the Experience of the Force.

Perhaps one thing we have in common is that whenever we carry out the Service, our experience with the Force is different. And this is so because we ourselves are constantly changing. Sometimes we are very inspired; at others times we are tired, or full of internal noise; sometimes everything moves together harmoniously; at other times, no. Whatever the case, if we can humbly enter into each experience without expectations (knowing that it is always different), if we can connect internally and follow the phrases being read, we will come out of the experience changed and strengthened internally.

Study, reflection, and interchange

We will study and interchange about *Silo's Message*. In the First Part, the introductory chapters of *The Inner Look* and the chapters that have to do with the Force. In the Second Part of *Silo's Message* we will study the ceremonies of Experience. We will start with the texts, complement them with Silo's observations in the "Commentaries on Silo's Message," and interchange among ourselves. The reflections chosen for the Service will be from the Path. During dinner each day there will be readings from *Universal Root Myths*. Besides these texts, this retreat is an excellent opportunity for personal reflection on all the texts found in *Silo's Message* and the Commentaries. We know that the Message is based on the principle of free interpretation, which offers us the opportunity to respect and learn from others.

11:30 am Coffee

12:00 pm Reading and interchange: *The Inner Look*, Chapters VI and VII.

Service

Personal notes

2:00 pm Lunch

Break

3:30 pm Interchange about the morning's work

The "Commentaries" give the following orientation regarding the experience of the Force:

The themes of the Force, the Luminous Center, the Internal Light, the Double, and the Projection of the Energy, admit two different views. First, we can consider them as phenomena of personal experience, and therefore tend not to discuss them with people who have not registered them, or in the best of cases limit ourselves to more or less subjective descriptions. Secondly, we can consider them within a larger theory that can explain them, without appealing to the test of subjective experience. Such a theory derived from a Transcendental Psychology, is of a complexity and profundity that make it impossible to deal with in these simple "Commentaries on Silo's Message."

Reading and interchange: *The Inner Look*, chapters VIII, IX, X

Service

Personal notes

Short break

Interchange

5:00 pm Coffee

5:30 pm Study in groups: Materials: “Commentaries on Silo’s Message,” *Silo’s Message*

Group 1: Chapters II, III, and IV

Group 2: Chapters V and VI

Group 3: Chapter XIII

Each group studies, interchanges, and writes down its reflections.

Reading in the whole group of what each group has written

Free time

9:30 pm Dinner with reading (a Myth chosen from *Universal Root Myths*)

10:30 pm In the text of the Service we find these phrases:

“Completely relax your body and quiet your mind... Then imagine a transparent and luminous sphere that descends toward you until it comes to rest in your heart... Notice that the sphere begins to transform into an expanding sensation within your chest...”

Here, the visual image of the sphere comes to rest in our heart and begins to transform from a visual into a cenesthetic image, a **sensation** that expands. This transformation from one sense to another is important and is what we will follow with our attention... this **expanding sensation**.

Reading and interchange: *The Inner Look*, chapters XI, XII

Ceremony of the Service

Each person takes notes.

11:30 pm Coffee and interchange

01:00 am End of the first day

Day 2

- 08:30 am Wake up
- 09:30 am Breakfast
- 10:00 am Interchange about the previous day.
- 11:00 am Coffee
- 11:30 am Study: Reading and interchange as a group
Material: "Commentaries on Silo's Message"
Second Part, Introduction
- Break
- Reading and interchange: *The Inner Look*, Chapters XV and XVI
- Service or Laying on of Hands
- Personal notes
- 2:00 pm Lunch
- Break
- 3:30 pm Interchange on the experience and obstacles in working with the Force
- Break
- Reading and interchange: *The Inner Look*, Chapter XVII
- Service
- Personal notes
- 6:00 pm Coffee
- Free time
- 9:00 pm Dinner with reading (a Myth chosen from *Universal Root Myths*)
- 11:00 pm Reading and interchange: *The Inner Look*, Chapter XVIII
- Service with Giving Thanks
- Personal notes
- 01:00 am End of the second day

Day 3

- 09:00 am Wake up
- 10:00 am Breakfast
- 11:00 am Personal work: synthesis of the retreat (discoveries, comprehensions,
and reflections)
Incorporating the questions: Who am I? Where am I going?
- 12:00 noon Free interchange with the whole based on personal synthesis

Break
- 2:00 pm Reading: *The Inner Look*, Chapter XX
Service or Laying on of Hands
- 3:00 pm Lunch of friendship

End of the mental fence
Clean up and departure

Bibliography

- * Book: *Silo's Message*
- * "Commentaries on Silo's Message"
- * Book: *Universal Root Myths, Silo. Silo: Collected Works Vol I*