

Dawn Pie Dialogue 3

Q. I don't understand God's unconditional love, and if God loves unconditionally, why do awful things keep happening.?

A. What is "unconditional?" That is a place to start. It means nothing of space or time, no behavior, no limitation by conditions. As love, it is uncaused, not relative to, or determined by, anything. We have no influence on it, we cannot achieve it, we cannot separate from it. Love that has this quality is *BEING* love. Or, it is a love which is the essential and unconditional being of a thing. It is not love as a cause, or love as a capacity or activity which determines choice of beneficial or pleasing results without fail. Love as a cause, directed through choice to achieve certain ends, is conditional love.

Just incidentally in this consideration is our hang-up that if we are loved unconditionally everything will be good as we define that. In reality, we may be loved unconditionally, or live and have our being from unconditional love, and find that everything is not good by our definition. Such an idea is hard to accept, which is a signal that what we are really interested in, and want directed to us, is conditional love, our desires and our self understanding being the condition.

Q. But I thought God caused everything and is responsible for everything that is and happens - all that is good or bad.

A. Of course. That is the thought that makes such a problem of the existence of evil. The thought is that if God loves unconditionally nothing bad, in our feeling or understanding, could happen. But evil happens. So either God is not loving in that way, or God is not all powerful. If God was, all the good that I would want for myself and others would just happen. God cannot be all loving and all powerful at once, considering the horror in my life and the world.

Maybe God loves unconditionally, in the matter of wanting all the best that we want, but just makes mistakes, or forgets or neglects the good we want. So then we would understand that God is not omniscient. Or maybe we could have the adventurous idea that what we want and intend as good, is not what God wants or intends. That God sees the value of awful occurrences for something - acceptance of our mortality, or awareness of the disastrous consequences of much of what we want for ourselves, or understanding of nature and our place in it - where we do not. Some people take this idea very far, asserting that disasters punish us for our evil ways, and that, ultimately, punishment, whether we understand our guilt or not, is good for us, mainly to help us see the omnipotence of God.

Q. Yes, but if we think God is the cause of everything, and if God isn't, then what do we do with ideas of God's omnipotence, omniscience and unconditional love? What kind of God idea can we have?

A. That is the great question. Maybe no idea. Or maybe we need a revelation of God, a direct infusion of being rather than an idea. Revelation of God is a self-revealing through feeling, an image, and even transformation of our being. Theology, we could say, is an all night wrestle by the river with the **rubricsRubix?** Cube of **presumed** conceptual attributes of God. And spirituality is an all night wrestle with ourselves, to question, decimate and dissolve the great contamination of ego talk, and survival talk, and conditional rationalism in our theology so that we are awake and available for a revelation.

Q. How do I begin to be available to revelation?

A. Maybe a little thought would help as the first step. The little thought is about the difference between saying "God causes..." and "God creates..." The first means God makes something happen, and the happening is a condition in the world. To change the world, God as Causer must work with that condition. This is a horizontal, or linear mode of action. See immediately that if we think about God as Causer, we are talking about a conditional God, and all the previous problems come up. Think about God as Creator. This is a vertical concept, meaning all that is arises now, and just now vanishes. Myriad states of life arise and vanish. To give a fancy expression, unbounded creative being manifests itself eternally, as no manifestation or state is complete, nor a condition for the next state. Every moment there is the creation of all, and the dissolution of all - a complete birth, and a perfect disaster. Creation is the self revelation of God. Creation is not about God, nor caused by God, nor God's kind or mean manipulation of us for the sake of humility or better theology.

Creation is the revelation of God, the eternal, unconditional unfolding of the being of God, the utterly actual presence of God. In this God is obviously omni-free. This freedom of God in self-revelation, if we can feel and know it, is the great liberator from our theological rat's nest.

Q. And how do I get in touch with this freedom, which, by the way, terrifies me.

A. By meditation. That is what meditation is for. To live in self trust, or to practice freedom from self criticism, self limitation, or self conditioning, so that we begin to sense and finally realize the great clarity that Life, God, we ourselves, are freedom. We are not free as causers. We are free as the present revelation of the Creator. In our being, not in our thought, or will, or action, we are just as free as God. We are God's freedom.

Jerry Hanna

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