

# BEYOND THE EGO



The text of this e-Book was originally published as a small booklet, with limited distribution, in 1996. Most of the little sayings and observations date from that time, and some from maybe a year or two earlier.

In this e-Book version, I have added, here and there, some photographic illustrations, which I feel complement the words. And the words .... they are merely light little observations of life - not to be taken too seriously, but still, I feel, containing sufficient inspirational quality to be worthy of re-publishing. Only minimal ammendments have been done to the original text.

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It is good to stand back and look at life. Consider all the effort, the struggling after money, property, possessions, pleasure, security and love - and all the pain and suffering that comes an individual's way during the course of a lifetime. Then consider this vast effort, this struggle, multiplied several billion times. Consider all the war, the violence, the poverty, the hunger, the infinite, eternal struggle of humankind throughout history. Consider the fact that everything and everyone around you, including yourself, are on a one way journey. In one hundred years from now you will almost certainly not be here standing on this earth. Everything and everyone you cherish will have also passed away into the vast, eternal ocean of dreams. Name and form pass away. Individual life arises and subsides. We cannot hang onto dreams. As long as we focus only on that which fades away, we shall remain bound and limited by our physical identity. When we loosen our psychological attachments and open ourselves to a more fluid relationship with life, we will begin to realize that we were never born, that we were never separated from the One Being of the universe, and that we can therefore never die. We are not who we think we are!



If you start walking up a mountain, be prepared to go to the top. If you stop half-way, you do not get the beautiful view. If the mountain is too difficult to climb, take the cable-car or a helicopter. On the spiritual mountain, don't struggle too much. Letting go of the ego is the cable-car to the beautiful view. Complete surrender of the ego leads to the beautiful view. Everything else adds to the struggle.



The purpose of self-enquiry is to discover the true nature of things. One cannot discover the true nature of things if one is living in avoidance. Wisdom only comes to those who have the courage, and the strength, to look directly at life - at the dark as well as the light.



Before you were born, the universe was there and millions of human beings had already lived on this planet. After you have gone, the universe will continue. What you achieve and the problems you encounter in this life are of little consequence from the universal perspective. Knowing all this, how can you still continue to strut and fret your brief hour upon this stage?



An inflexible mind leads in only one direction - towards the grave. That which does not bend eventually breaks. The ego may pretend that it has the power to stand with an iron will against all. But no ego has ever survived. Death washes away the old, the stale and the deluded.



Discrimination and common sense are essential to a spiritual approach to life. Having a spiritual approach to life is not about living in a fantasy world - it is about facing reality head-on. However, in order to be able to face reality head-on, one must have open eyes, an open mind and an open heart.



We are all looking for love in our lives. We are all looking to be touched at our deepest centre. But then we close up and block the path to our deepest centre. Openness is the only way to fully experience love. Without complete openness, there is resistance and contraction. Love is total expansion - total letting go. Love is when self is not.



The ego struggles hard to not let go. Letting go arouses fear in the ego. So, in relationships, it tries to take control and dominate - it tries to impose its wants and needs. It resists any move to loosen it up, because it is so scared of letting go. Resistance is the shadow of the ego.



It is easy to hold grand, idealistic beliefs - as long as they are not put to the test. It is easy to be quiet and relaxed in a protected environment. But when you find yourself under pressure, can you still stay calm and centred - or do you fall apart and revert to more basic human reactions?



Who can be certain that they will wake up tomorrow morning? Hiding behind the false securities of property, money and possessions, it is easy to believe in the permanence of the ego. But life is uncertain. After all, the difference between life and death is but a single breath.



We are surrounded by opportunities in our lives and we either take advantage of them or else we overlook them. This is down to choice. If we want to, we can bemoan our fate - or we can get up and make things happen. At every juncture in our lives, we make a choice to go one way or another - and reap the consequences accordingly. Therefore, we should learn how to live fully in the moment in order to be able to make wise choices. However, ultimately, there is no choice. What we are able to do, is all that we are blessed to be able to do.



When you are not living in your head, you are more open and relaxed. When you are living fully in your 'feeling' nature, there is an incredible lightness of being - a natural ease about everything you do and say. In this natural state of being, you see everything clearly, with an intuitive insight. Life flows more freely when you are not locked inside your head.



Impermanence is a fact of life. In a world where people are always looking to what may happen tomorrow, the fact of impermanence is deliberately, unconsciously, overlooked. If you can't face reality, it may appear nicer to live in a dream. But, eventually, all such dreams get shattered. Tomorrow comes and goes, and life slips away. So much effort for nothing!

Never look back with regret. Always move on. Always view your mistakes as opportunities for learning. Life is not static. In not hanging on to the past, a more positive outlook is available. What is possible is only limited by your vision ... or lack of it.



When you are truly in touch with your feelings, you will see anger as it arises, before it gets expressed. Then you may not go through with it, because once seen in this way, it loses its power. Its power lies in its invisibility, and its ability to shock all of a sudden - arising from the depths of your dissatisfaction. When you are more in touch with your feelings, your dissatisfaction will be more visible to you, thus offering the possibility of change. What you are not aware of, you can do nothing about.



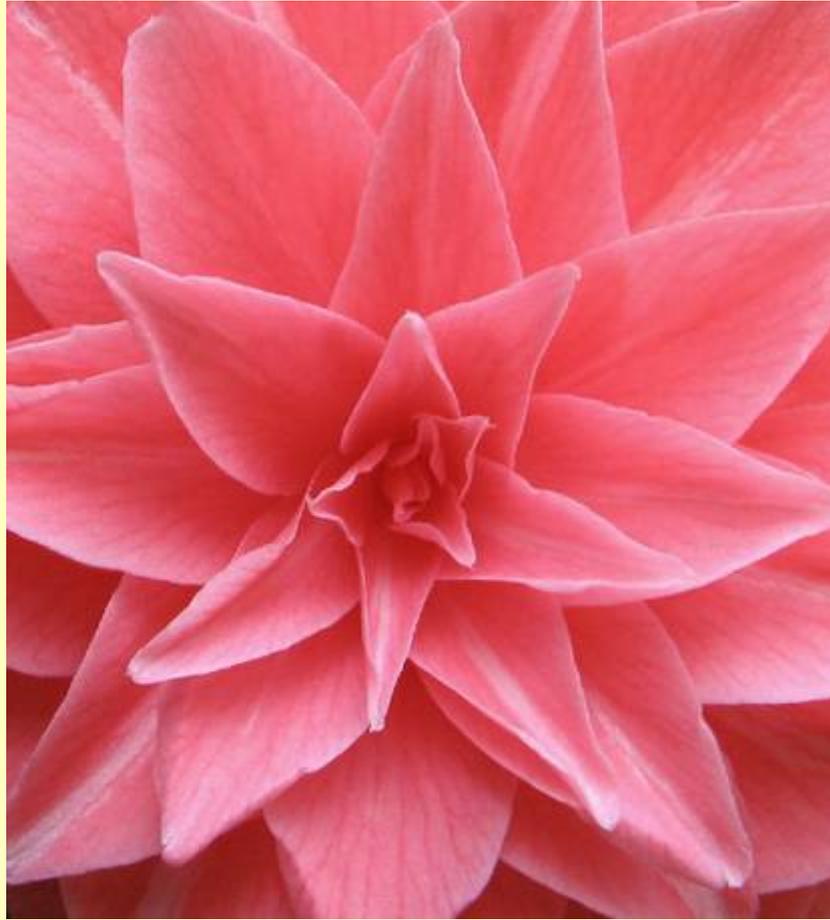
How can an enlightened teacher regard himself as anything special? How could he see himself as an object, to be put on a pedestal? He teaches from the absolute, from the impersonal. He sees only the One, and teaches the essential facts of life that need to be understood in order for ignorance to be dispelled. We must always question carefully those who allow us to put them on a pedestal.



Happiness is that joyous state of wanting nothing, of being totally satisfied with the way things are right now. Desire seeks nothing more than to arrive at that brief moment of fulfilment when there is no more movement of desire, no longer any striving. No object, pleasure or experience in itself holds the key to happiness. You can neither buy happiness, nor go out and get it. Happiness is not an object to be sought or gained.



The ego is like a prisoner who has long been held in captivity, and lives in fear of life outside of the prison. Released from prison, the ego will do anything to get back into captivity - such is the fear.



When the heart is open there is no room for the ego. Spiritual understanding can never be the property of the ego. When there is spiritual understanding there is humility, born of a deep abiding realisation of the essential emptiness of all things finite, of all human beings, all history, all evolution. Then compassion is born.



Someone who is spiritually awakened lives effortlessly. He has no inclination to struggle and strive to become something other than what he is. He may work hard - but without any psychological effort. He does not cling to the past. He knows that life moves on, and is happy to let things go. Life becomes a natural flow of events for him.

When we are down, the only way is up. When we are up, we should not be blinded by our success. Everything changes. The glory days and the days of despair - all pass away. But there is beauty in the process. The ebb and flow of life is, on one level, pure poetry.



Loneliness and the need for psychological compensation can lead one down many dangerous paths. As long as one lives in the ego there will be a need for psychological compensation, because the ego is a prison - and it is painful to live in the ego. When one lives in the prison of the ego, one is drawn towards each and every escape route that presents itself. But none can deliver freedom for the ego. The ego itself is the great obstacle to freedom.

Everything that the ego does is from a deep and abiding fear - the fear of letting go, of not being in control - the fear of openness and, ultimately, the fear of death - the ending of the ego. The ego builds a wall that it hopes will hold back the tide of life - but life is too vast to hold back, and ego too small. Ego is always defeated in the end. Better to let go now than to continue a losing battle.



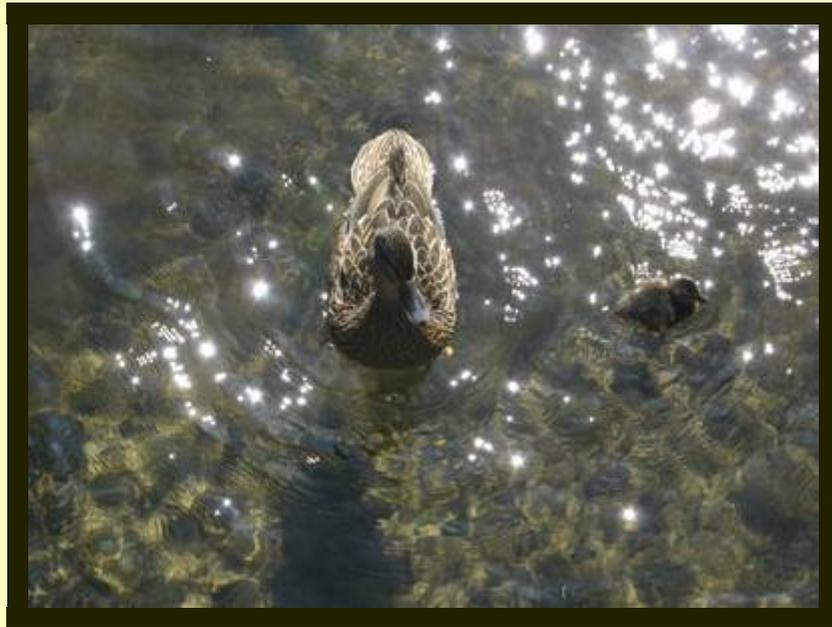
If you do not allow yourself the experience of deep meditation, you will never come to a realisation of who or what you really are. The intellect does not have the facility to comprehend anything beyond its limited field of vision. Meditation is the total letting go of the known, which opens the door to direct insight into the true nature of things.

No one can make you happy or unhappy. Happiness is entirely your responsibility. It is true that you may feel happy temporarily whilst in someone else's company - but it is your attitude, and not their presence, that makes you happy. True happiness is not dependent on anything outside of yourself.



There is no fundamental difference between the sage and the fool. Both hold within them the same divine essence. But the sage is conscious and therefore not caught up in confusion and suffering, whilst the fool is not fully conscious, and is bound unknowingly to both.

When your heart is full with love, you only know how to give. You are not concerned with making demands for yourself. You are not concerned with controlling or manipulating your beloved. You give, and ask for nothing in return. If your beloved is ungrateful, you are not upset. If your beloved does not reciprocate your love, you are quite accepting. True love is unconditional.



Until you have worked extensively on yourself, all notions and concepts of God exist merely in your imagination. With a narrow, conditioned mind one cannot see the whole picture. The limited and fragile human mind cannot embrace the nameless and formless One. It cannot adequately track the absolute. Until the ego has been eliminated in the fire of spiritual insight, all notions of God are pure fantasy.

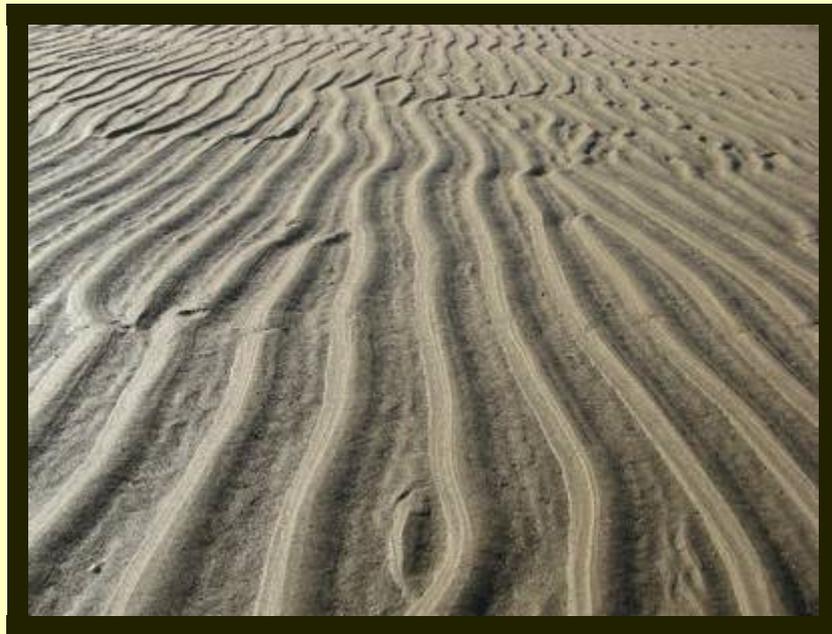


Ultimately, there is no way to satisfy the needs of the ego. Underlying its very existence is a sense of emptiness and isolation. The only foolproof way of never feeling lonely, unhappy or depressed is to not live in the ego.

If you try to change the world before you have first changed yourself, you will almost always end up in a 'them and us' situation - which is merely a repetition of what has made the world the way it is. If a fanatic believes that his anger comes from a pure source and a right attitude, then there is little hope for the situation. Anger always comes from the ignorance of the ego - however well hidden in righteousness.



There is no time like the present, because the present moment is outside of time. When you are living in the 'now' you are neither living in the past nor the future. You can never capture the present moment, because as soon as you even think about it, it is gone. However, in sacrificing the present moment for some imagined future, you are throwing your life down the drain.



Difficulties in your life are evidence that you have things to learn. Difficulties are an opportunity to observe the way that you really are. When you see yourself and your reactions under pressure, you have a chance to change. If you then choose not to, you will find that someday you will be faced with a similar difficulty - and then again - until you have learned what you need to learn.



If you want inner peace, first still your mind. Stilling the mind allows you to live more intuitively and opens the door to more creative possibilities in your life. Crowded out by thoughts, your own inner intelligence has no opportunity to become activated.



When you think that you are somebody important, you have much to lose and much to hang on to. This gives rise to fear. When you realise the fact of your own unimportance in the cosmic scheme of things, you have absolutely nothing to lose - and nothing to fear.

Anger is always an immature response. Like a small child, you get angry when you don't get your own way, or when your free-flow of energy is blocked. Anger is really only blocked energy. It has no substance or existence of its own. Learn how to release that blocked energy through the reflex of 'letting go' - then there will no longer be a place for anger in your life.



Spiritual awakening involves the bringing up of unconscious thoughts, feelings and tendencies - which give rise to emotions - into conscious awareness. This happens quite naturally as we explore our inner terrain through a moderate amount of meditation, self-enquiry, gentle bodywork and other means. Liberation from suffering is the inevitable result of this process - not to be viewed as a goal in itself, but as a natural blossoming of human potential.



Everyone in this world is seeking happiness in one way or another. But happiness is not an object. You can't go out and get happiness - and the ego can never be happy. The ego can have short-term pleasures. The ego can put itself into a position of power and control. It can accumulate wealth. But it can never find happiness. It will always be isolated. It will always be full of fear. It will never feel at ease wherever it is - because the ego is a complete contraction of the human spirit.



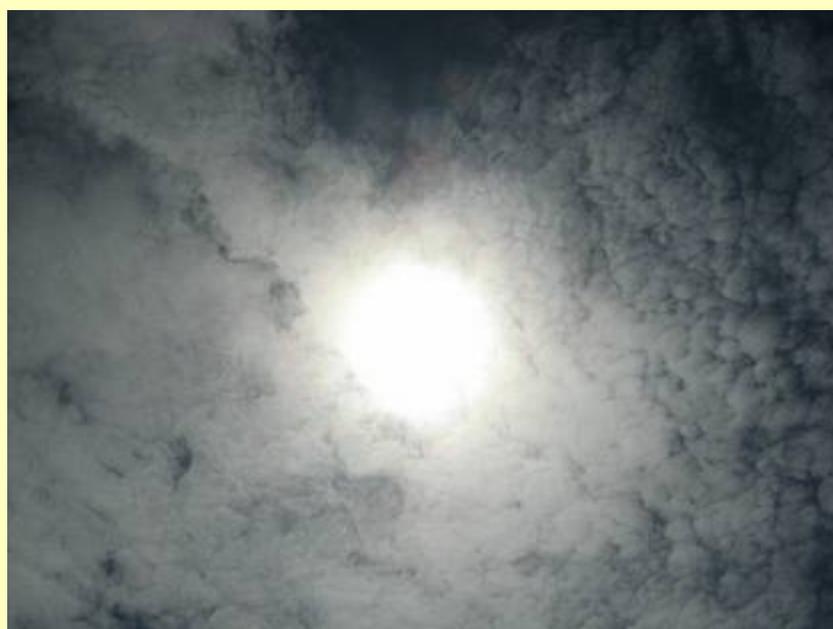
Spiritual transformation can occur only when there is an authentic awakening of the heart. It cannot take place solely on an intellectual level. But, for this awakening of the heart to take place, there must first be clarity of mind. This awakening cannot come to a confused mind. The mind must see its own limitations - and stop trying to grasp what is outside of its reach.



When one strives for enlightenment and liberation, the ego is still involved on some level. What is needed is a letting go of all striving and complete surrender to the moment - to the here and now. Then one will find oneself in one's natural state of receptivity, which is where enlightenment both begins and ends.



Forgiveness is needed only when you have harboured feelings of guilt, blame or hurt. Let go of these feelings, and all talk of the need for forgiveness disappears. Don't take things personally - then there will be no one to forgive and no one to be forgiven.



When one is young, strong, healthy and successful, it is difficult to imagine that this youth, this strength, this health or success will ever end. But, there is no security in the world, there is no certainty that you will be alive in this body tomorrow. So, live lightly, with joy, understanding, sensitivity, passion and compassion.