

- **Train Home**

I was once taking a train from my hometown of Galway in Ireland to Dublin. I joined the queue that had formed as far as the ticket master who hadn't started to let people through to board the train yet. As more people joined the queue people automatically started shuffling forward, making the queue tighter but since the gate was still closed no one was going anywhere.

I noticed that a young man two people ahead of me hadn't shuffled with everyone else. He had a big set of headphones on and seemed to be engrossed in the music he was listening to. A woman who stood directly in front of me and behind him began to shift from side to side and cough intermittently, clearly frustrated about the gap that was opening up on front of her. He was oblivious to her annoyance and as he was to the ever widening gap, after all, they were still not letting anyone on the train so what difference did it make?

The woman's annoyance seemed proportional to the width of the gap and my amusement grew in equal measure. I expect she was ready to tap him on the shoulder when finally they started boarding the train and we all surged forward moving again towards our destination. I thought I could hear a sigh of relief from her, the offensive gap no longer open like an abyss on front of her, no-thing inviting her to fall into it.

So we boarded and left (on time!) bound for Dublin. It stuck me that the whole non-event was a lovely metaphor for life as it appears to an apparently separate individual. When we feel as separate individual selves in a world that lies outside of us, we feel as though we are continually moving forward towards a destination. Sometimes this destination seems to be concrete like the capital city, Dublin, but on arrival we find we haven't really arrived at all as it is only a stop on the way to another destination.

All our movement is in hopeful anticipation as the energy of being a separate 'me' is a continuous rejection of what is in favour of what could be, it is a living in hope of something better than what is. Our arrival is always temporal and fleeting. In other words we experience ourselves as moving in time and space towards a destination where we never seem to arrive at or if we do the feeling of having arrived doesn't last, nothing does. We live in total transience and we struggle against it like children trying to save a sandcastle from the encroaching tide.

We take for absolute granted that we are somebody in the world and we move in time and space, we have control over our lives and things happen (or don't) as a result of the efforts, or lack of effort that we make. There is cause and effect and life has meaning. It is knowable and the more I know it, the better I can negotiate it and cut a better deal for myself. These concepts form the bedrock of our reality as separate selves and are reflected in what seem like logical and helpful adages such as 'You have only one life' and you should really 'live life to the full' etc.

This agreed reality comes from the central tenant of 'me', the apparently undeniable fact that you are a separate individual who has a life. The apparently undeniable fact also that life is made up of a myriad of separate objects that relate to one another in some sort of meaningful way and interact to bring about consequences.

That is a story. It is only real in its' appearance, it is only apparently real. The seeing of that, the shift out of or dropping of the contracted sense that I am a separate individual, is the biggest shift that could ever 'happen' to someone (it is not really a happening). It is infinitely beyond any experience I could have as an individual and paradoxically is totally and utterly ordinary. It is beyond thought and concept and has nothing whatsoever to do with understanding or knowing. It is energetic. Now there is a message that speaks clearly of the dream of separation, an energetic invitation out of a sense of someone who wants to live life to the full to see that they are already all that is and all that is, is already full (and empty). An invitation to see that you never had a life, you are life, and life is both full and empty, nothing and everything.

The communication describes how once there is a feeling of being a separate self, there is a yearning to not be separate, and there is a yearning and a longing for wholeness. Therefore every apparent individual is searching for the same thing in infinitely different and unique ways, they are simply looking for the wholeness, which they feel and experience that they have lost. Paradoxically, yearning to be a together and spiritual person who has no need for worldly things is the same as yearning to be a millionaire. In the story, one is more noble or better then the other. Every effort that the apparent individual makes to be complete is only the energy of the individual moving in the closed loop that is individuality. In other words, any efforts that 'I' make to be complete can only serve to reinforce the sense that there is an "I" there, a separate individual, who can bring about a desired result, usually a concept of what it is they are looking for.

So the message that I can meditate to become liberated and the message that I will be happy when I get that big job, that big house, are essentially the same and come from the fundamental ignorance that there is someone who can choose to do or not do something to make their lives better. That's a hard pill to swallow for people who have apparently been meditating for many years and feel as though they are only one step from their destination. It will mostly be rejected in favour of a message that in one way or another feeds the hopeful energy of apparently being separate in the world. The world we apparently live in, the story, is full to the brim of messages of hope for a better future, a future that never seems to arrive.

Messages and communications that appeal to the individual are ones that see them as not quite there yet and offer hope that they can get there. This is extremely seductive and appealing as the sense of feeling separate is one of feeling somehow inadequate and unworthy, so being told that they can be made feel worthy and complete through something they do will fill them with hope and feed the energy of a 'Me' that moves forward in hopeful anticipation. It will be better tomorrow (or worse, as these are two sides of the same coin).

Within the story of 'me' is a constant invitation to come home, an invitation to see that you have never been anything other than whole and complete, you've never been anywhere else but home. The story of 'me' will never satisfy as you are being continually invited through the frustration of the story to see that there is no story. The disappointment of not arriving at my destination or my destination not fulfilling as I hoped it might, is the perfect invitation to see that there is no where to get to, there is only this and this is all that is, boundless and complete.

When I experience myself as someone or something, I will only ever see something else. In other words when I am a separate 'Me' I am the centre of the universe, I am the subject that relates to everything outside of me as object. So from this contracted false centre it is only possible to see something. No-thing, nothing, is continually ignored. It is ignored as the seeing of it is the collapse of the false centre of 'me', the end of me as an individual person, leaving only life, only aliveness in total free-fall.

Everything is new again, it is no longer 'my life', there is only life, and it is seen that it was only ever that way, that the separate 'me' which was nourished and protected in a bubble of itself was never even there to begin with. What had always been is what had always been sought. This. This, life, aliveness, is not seen as it really is all the while there is a sense of a separate me that is living in it and experiencing it.

The gap that opened in the queue frustrated the woman who felt she was being delayed in her journey. The mind that moves in an energy of comforting and protecting the apparent individual self will push away frustration and pull in some form of pleasure in the dualistic dance that echoes from the root split of life and my life, me and the world outside of me. It is absolutely stunning that everything you are looking for is already everything that is and whatever form of suffering you seem to be struggling with is already what you look for. In other words frustration is it, as much as pleasure. What you have looked for all your life has never left you, and the invitation to see this is constant, the invitation just isn't what you'd imagine, what you look for isn't anything you could think it is.

The invitation has to be hopeless and will often appear to cause discomfort. It is hopeless as there is nothing better than this, hope is a rejection of what is. It will more often than not be uncomfortable as the energy of me (being a separate individual self) is one that continually attempts to comfort for a loss of wholeness and continually protects itself in a bubble from what it perceives as a sometimes threatening world that lies outside it and in which it negotiates and relates. Bubbles burst and when the contracted energy of being a 'me' releases or expands it's immediately obvious then that it was never there to begin with, it's immediately obvious that what was always looked for is what has always been, you never left the home you yearned to return to.

Then, there's child like wonder again, playing and building sandcastles without a fear that the tide will take them, without a nagging sensation that they could be better sandcastles. Causeless joy is the inherent nature of life, like wetness is to water, the only reason that's not seen is because it feels that you are there trying to see it. When I say causeless joy I don't mean a sense of happiness that excludes pain, discomfort or suffering, I don't mean a state of mind. It's being in love with what is and that excludes nothing.

So I won't tell you to watch for gaps you can fall into or to be mindfully aware whilst standing in queues, I'd have to find you to tell you that and I can't, you're not there. There is only life, only this and life as it appears for you, with all it's disappointments, pain and suffering, is the perfect invitation to see that. There is only liberation, there is only this. There never was an authority, a teacher or a master that knows something you don't, it only seems that people are communicating something you don't know or haven't realized yet but actually a clear uncompromising message comes from nothing and belongs to no one. What you search for cannot be taught and does not need to be, it is simply aliveness, simply this.