



## *Excerpt from Autumn #23*

---

A thousand egos.

“Be a light unto yourselves,” Buddha said...entering my mind as I lay head to pillow. Then, identification with the source, the mind, the original mind...struck me—be the light, light your way, be an active participant in your life and actively guide its destinies and tribulations, trials, and crises into a stance...light all of these from within, illuminating from within the world by the brightness more powerful than the sun.

You do, you experience the light, learn to glow and make it flow out into others that you reach out of the deepest, most original part of your being. You touch light generator to light generator. Beliefs are irrelevant, are spiritual enemies; rigidities are what kills civilization, and I see it all around me and wish them well as I am no longer with them. Hoe out of the earth the seeds long ago planted in my young life: exile in my own country.

What earth encrusted beliefs and cement mixed ferocities of eternities cling to me while I forget I built them here?

Lorne Ladner, western psychologist and Buddhist meditator of the Tibetan lineage, opens up the lotus position, where you feel the mud and muck, cannot shake its wrath and wreath, up the waters of the spine where you must live to learn to walk upright, and then know as a gene and RNA and DNA know what sequence to do next, what chemical to emit and be in blossom.

He states in [The Lost Art of Compassion](#) in a long, but well pedaled, encapsulated summary of what we face:

At the heart of narcissism is grandiosity, a gross overestimation of our own importance in the universe. Terrified of our true situation as tiny, fragile beings in an infinitely vast universe filled with countless other beings, we grasp strongly at a superficial, idealized image of ourselves. The narcissistic self-image is always false; it is an illusion that we make up to comfort ourselves. Emphasizing appearance over substance, we hold onto our idealized image and simply deny or repress contradictory evidence of our fragility, impermanence, and interdependence. To feed this delusion, we compulsively build up fantasies of unlimited success, beauty, brilliance, or love. Wanting infinite gain or wealth, we deny the inevitability of loss; wanting infinite power and health, we deny the truth of illness and weakness; wanting infinite respect and praise, we deny the truth of impermanence and death. We distance ourselves psychologically from the sufferings of others, which remind us of the things we wish to deny, so that even as we speak of suffering we don't feel its reality empathically. There is even a serious danger of our using fantasies of unlimited compassion, spiritual virtue, or enlightenment to feed our narcissistic delusions, if we grasp at some image of these things rather than do the hard work of developing them in our lives. The

practice of taking and giving works directly against all these aspects of narcissism. It cuts through the illusory security blanket in our hearts and works against our delusions and defenses.

*(Ladner, The Lost Art of Compassion, pp. 254-255.)*

In the first two sentences of this quote resides one source of the human's yearning to dance the emotion into image on the screen of the imagination creating spiritual worlds to satisfy the yearning, then freezing the grandiosity into religious beliefs and rituals to keep the overwhelming from overwhelming. Jung emphasized that the ego would not sacrifice itself its grandiosity, willingly.

Let us follow the yearning for grandiosity on the part of the ego to be the universe, when, to paraphrase Rumi in "Love Dogs," the yearning is the answer. Let us look at the insignificant human from the universe's point of view instead of from the view from its terror shoes. Zen master Dogen, according to Ladner, would quote an ancient Buddhist verse, part of which went as follows:

The entire universe is the gate of liberation. The entire universe is the eyes of Vairochana. The entire universe is the dharma body of the self.

Ladner comments on the eyes of Vairochana:

Vairochana is the name of a Buddha. So this verse asserts that the entire universe can be identified with the vision or the awareness of the Buddha. In commenting on this verse, Dogen refers to the thousand eyes of Avalokitesvara, Buddha of Compassion. He says, 'A Buddha may have one thousand eyes.... It is not mistaken to say that the eye [of Vairochana] is one of the many eyes of a Buddha, just as it is not mistaken to understand that a Buddha has only one eye.' Seeing the divine—in this case the Buddha—everywhere becomes inseparable from seeing the universe through eyes of compassion. Dogen also taught that by practicing Zen well, one essentially could bless the world or transform the environment so that even the 'voices and figures of streams and the sounds and shapes of mountains' would join with you in teaching the path to enlightenment to all beings. As compassion is the Buddha's nature, seeing the divine everywhere and in everything naturally means that you're also seeing and experiencing compassion everywhere. If you practice seeing the divine in yourself and everywhere else, then you become inseparable from divine, enlightened, compassionate awareness. Thus the sound of the Buddha's compassionate voice is not experienced as different from your own voice or the voice of the rivers and mountains.

*(Ibid., p. 270.)*

The thousand eyes of compassion that the universe that is you, is in you, is the you you face is far more comprehensive and all-inclusive and encompassing than the ego. But the

buoyancy of the ego can be given ballast with the bones breaking of grandiosity of the ego piece by piece into a thousand constituent pieces over many years of practice and meditation and impossible koans and lives so that your ego sees itself in relationship to all the other beings in the universe, as one of thousands, and of those thousands, compassion speaks out of the voices from the inner ear and from the humans and universe with which it has conversation as well as the serial visions it lives in.

Let's look at this grandiosity and the thousand eyes of the universe from the angle of delusion. Looking at it from delusion, let's see into where compassion arises out of the everyday, minuscule, inside of things as they are and truly from the inside where delusion can be wrestled with like the frightening guardian figure telling you bring your fear when you enter the temple, when the enter the temple everyday—when you sleep, when you wake up.(Idea comes from a David Whyte tape.)

Listen to Stephen Batchelor in his Living with the Devil: A Meditation on Good and Evil evolved out of a non-believing mythology, a modern mythology alongside of the theistic mythologies of Christianity and Judaism living in the gaps of godless, selfless, divineless, without preordained universe though

they share the view that a human life is fully intelligible only as part of an immense cosmic drama that transcends it. Both believe hidden powers to be at work—whether of God or karma makes little difference—that have flung us into this world to face the daunting task of redeeming ourselves for the remainder of eternity.

Our cosmic destiny, our grandiose task, lives inside the everyday, inside of the mind, inside that that has no substance and reveals emptiness, and it is only to this world in which we find ourselves can we have recourse to binding ourselves irretrievably to this world, as it is, liberating ourselves in the binding in order to become aware and conscious of the ties the bind and thereby untie the cords one by one and their invisibility cloaks worn by seeming full beings and things of the world. Batchelor states

To live with the Devil is to plunge into this elusive, beguiling, obstructive, giddy, unreliable, bewitching sublimely ephemeral world. To survive in the midst of such dazzling contingency requires that one understand, tolerate, and love this world. For were the world not this way, there would be no path, no awakening, no nirvana, no freedom. Mara and Buddha are entwined with each other. To pretend that either can exist in isolation is to fall prey to Mara's oldest trick: tear a conditioned thing out of the matrix in which it lives and raising it to the status of an unconditioned truth.(Ibid, p. 121)

“Love this world,” are the operative words; cosmic drama takes place in the smallest, most minuscule of creatures and things. Ego cannot live very well in this world, that we know; loving the world is what it never will do left to its own devices. Impermanence, transience, non-

attachment appear out of this very love, not out of the rejection of this world, where rejection is a nihilistic maneuver of the psyche to reject what rejects soul. Psyche lives inside things, creatures, beings and acts engaged in a titanic struggle that, as limited and as glorious as it is, wrestles through the grasses with the stars that dew reflective eyes, and, as it is through and permeates everything, constantly, like a dream, where we open Charlton Heston's chest to reveal the throbbing red insides, that has twice dreamt me, dig into reality for truth of where we are and who we are and are not and find it is not who we are but what we are in relation to everything else that binds us and can let us go if we are willing to peer deeply into the cavities of reality. The heart we find is not the heart we thought we had when we began the journey, and it certainly is not the heart we thought we would find in the most glorious moment. It is even more exquisite, shimmering, insightful, alive and divulging especially when it pens with the imagination to learn and teach you the language of love and survival and glories of feasts and abundance.

“Zen sought to re-conquer Mara,” Batchelor writes, “by rejecting these divisions and affirming Buddha at the heart of the everyday.” He continues,

In the sensuous, painful flux of the here and now, Buddha is neither silent nor alone but in endless conversation with the devil. Mara is not rejected or condemned but embraced and transformed. Buddha accepts his incarnation in the diabolic stuff of existence. He knows that every moment ‘Mara’s stream’ is slipping away and in the end will destroy him. But he neither gets entangled in it nor recoils from it. Thus are fears and desires, frustrations and doubts transformed from hindrances into catalysts of understanding and freedom.(Ibid, p. 125)

What Zen says about this grandiose task, about awakening, is that it is a “piece of shit”, as Te-shan says of the Buddha, that the glories and the other delusions of the mind be wiped by you, by your creatureliness, clean to see the Buddha nature in the other person as in you. No salvation, only constant turmoil and peace, delusion and illusion, nirvana and samsara. Following Jung, we know shit has gold in it, like following the smell of manure in the cow pasture we will eventually venture to the opening in the fence and walk through. When we do, it will be playing with a thousand of egos as we played with dirt and shit when we were children but now conscious of molding the redemption of ourselves in the cosmos, and we bring everyone with us and all of ourselves. We do so without the delusions of consciousness and not as a theological nihilism but as confirmation to the universe that we fully lived, nothing sacred, everything sacred, as creatures, through our consciousness into the existence that gives reality expression.

Luminosity of compassion from the inside out in the 10,000 things.