

The Place of No Concern

by Bob Fergeson

In the winter of 2000, something happened to me that answered my questions as to who I am and my relationship to life and death, the questions that had somehow haunted me, consciously or not, for most of my adult life. Soon after this event, I wrote in my notes, "I was taken beyond myself into the place of no concern." The years of wandering, of alternating between pleasure and misery, came to an end, along with the searching and longing it generated. Paradoxically, I saw that in all that time I had never really moved. Rather, I simply woke up.

At the time of this occurrence, I was participating in an online confrontation group, my interest in spiritual matters being at a peak. A period of despair had thankfully passed, in which I had mostly given up hope of ever finding anything more than a little peace of mind, and perhaps something to do to pass the years. The online group helped provide the tension needed to push my spiritual interest back to the forefront.

I had been getting glimpses of how the mind works in dividing the personality into opposites, such as the parent/child, ego1/ego2, and God/Charlie Brown, and was determined to somehow transcend this trap. One of the members of the group artfully confronted me, suggesting that something I should look at was how I was in love with my self, the very thing I was trying to separate from. Realizing I was being fooled again, trapped in yet another duality, I came to a dead end. I can't remember the details of the exchange, but it dropped like a depth charge into my mind. Acting as a catalyst, it soon caused a change. This change was something I could not have foreseen, for it was a total change in being, rather than in thought.

I remember sitting on my bed, looking toward the mirror in the bathroom, and suddenly noticing I was no longer the same. It's still very difficult to explain this. It was not a change in thought or feeling, but rather a change in place or perspective. I was no longer "in the world," but back beyond some inner boundary separating the formal from the informal. It was not traumatic, but rather curious. One of the first things I noticed was that I could see "Bob," but he could not see me. I thought this strange, and wrote in my notes that he seemed to be asleep or hypnotized, so involved in the world that he could not look back. I soon discovered that he was entirely of the world, being solely the product of experience, and thus incapable of seeing anything else. (The poem below, *The Little Man*, came to me at the time in an attempt to describe this first event).

This state continued unabated for a couple of weeks. I spent the time watching Bob, the Little Man, as he went about his day-to-day business, marveling at my newfound lack of concern or worry, though Bob clung to his with his usual fervor. There was no change in the field of emotion coming directly from this change, or answers to any questions, only an interest in how strange it was to find myself completely unattached to thought, emotion, the world, and anything else one might call existence, even though it was all there for the seeing. My attention had been freed from its fixation on and in the personality, though its direction was still outward turned, only. This too, was about to change.

One day off a couple of weeks later, I was out cross-country skiing. I was climbing a long ridge. The slow, easy ascent would take a couple of hours, freeing my thoughts to go where they may. I was relaxed, being in familiar territory where I felt safe, free from worry or concern. As I continued up the hill, I felt that something was trying to get my attention, that perhaps there was someone behind me. I turned around, but was alone on the hill. Still, I could not shake the feeling. It grew steadily though quietly. I soon came to see that it was not in the surroundings, but somewhere within the inner field of the mind. It was as if a still voice were saying, “turn round and look within, and all you seek will be answered.” So, I did. As I looked within at whatever this silent prodding was, a dam burst, and my long pent up questioning could no longer be contained. Over the next couple of hours, all my questions were answered, as my attention was now free to go into the mysterious unknown source within from which all springs.

I saw, without a shadow of a doubt, that whatever looked out from my eyes, was the same in all men. There was no individual, but only Universal Man. Now this was traumatic. It ran counter to the dualistic belief I held that I was either better than, or worse than, everyone else. Not only was I the same, I didn’t even exist! As the stream of false notions I took as my “self” came to the surface, they were burned away in the light of truth that was so obviously present, but had been hidden within. I became more and more shaken, and soon found myself laying in the snow, weeping. I came to see that everything was in the same place, at the same time. That everything is One, contained in Nothing. All was possible, all was available, depending on what the Heart desired, and the Heart desired nothing but Itself. Nothing was separate, for no things existed.

At this point, something inside me stopped the process. At the time I thought that “something” saw that something was about to break, and this must not happen. The journey within was halted. I slowly came back to the senses and noticed I was becoming a bit numb from lying in the snow. I shook myself off, got back on my skis and began the long descent to the highway and town. On the way more energy knots, as I’ve come to call them, were unloosed, as long held beliefs were seen through and discarded. By the time I got home, I was able to reflect on what had happened. I now knew what I was, though I still cannot describe it very well. This “seeing” is still available, though the “oneness with the One” has receded to a faint thread or feel. I can’t see how one could function if it were otherwise. Whenever I return to that place in the woods, something of the feeling of what happened still returns.

In the coming weeks, the two incidents began to make sense. The first, the separation of the attention from its fixation in the personality, was the *becoming*. I had heard this term for years, but always interpreted it as becoming something manifest, some “thing” in the world of thought or mind, such as smarter, bigger, more subtle, wiser; the Big Man. Never would I have seen it for the complete change it was. Never would I have seen that to become, I had first to unbecome, to recede into non-existence. I remember thinking at the time that whatever I had become, it was something unhuman, meaning that I could no longer find *any attributes* in what I now was, other than what might be called awareness.

The second event was the *dissolving* of the emotional attachments, or energy knots, which held the attention tightly bound to the unreal assumptions I had taken as reality. I saw that

I had taken my very meaning, and placed my highest value, on inherited beliefs, from top to bottom. Now, nothing was my own, for there was no longer anyone to claim anything. Thus, I had freedom to simply see and listen. I no longer had to place my very sense of being in the world of thought and mind. I Was, and that was All. Paradoxically, “Bob” is still pretty much the same. Perhaps a bit more relaxed, but still in and of the world, a reaction pattern without any real existence of his own.

In hindsight, I cannot say I know how all this happened in detail, except to say that I had a bit of luck, a few good friends, and could not rest until I knew what I was and had some real understanding of what was going on in terms of life and death. I had a mantra that expressed the inner angst I felt at not being defined: “I don’t know what’s going on, but I’m going to find out.” I also cannot express the gratitude I feel to several persons who were part of this. Nothing in the search is more valuable than those whose honest concern for your long-term peace takes precedence over the pettiness of your ego. As the years go by, I still find that my home is in the Place of No Concern, as is yours. Will you use the life you have as a return ticket?

Bob Fergeson

The Little Man

by
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From early morning coffee
to late night herbal tea,
We lived for near forever,
the Little Man and me.

When first I came to travel
in this classroom wide and grand,
I knew nothing of the coming
of this lonely Little Man.

But parents, teachers, doctors,
the whole damn Helping Herd,
Soon created him inside me,
As their ancestors had insured.
He has no real existence,
None that I can see.
But could and should and would!
Screamed the Little Man in me.

Soon I hid myself in pride,
Found that fear blocked every door.
I was now what I despised!
Just as those that'd gone before.

The hypnosis worked it's magic,
No peace had I, no stand.
Just a mis-identification,
I became the Little Man.
I took him for a person,
Hell, I thought that he was me!
He sure could be convincing,
that Little Man in me.

Then one day it happened,
I know not really why,
I looked out there below me
From some Great Eternal Sky.
He didn't even notice,
So busy as a bee,
He just kept right on sleeping, but
that Little Man ain't me!

One day looking in the mirror,
From my bed as I did stand,
I receded back behind him,
that sleeping Little Man.
He didn't even notice,
Just a grain lost in the sand,
He can't look back and see me,
that lonely Little Man.

I watch him and his pattern,
How he blends right in so well,
That his life and his surroundings
are no different from himself.
He has no greater vision,
Desire and fear are all he sees.
An actor in the TV,
that Little Man in me.

It's a sad but true short story,
I cry a tear, and so does he,
He won't survive, he lives to die,
the Little Man in me.