

LONELINESS

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I became aware that a grain of sand was separate from the grains of sand surrounding it. Then another grain of sand became my focus of attention, and it, too, was separate from all those grains surrounding it. My attention then flew to another grain, and it shared the same fate as the other two grains. Suddenly I realized that every grain of sand was distinct, separate, apart, and isolated, from every other grain of sand. The billions of grains of sand on this beach were all separate from one another.

The surf gently bubbled over the beach. I looked at a bubble. I looked at all the bubbles. Each one was separate. The surf that gently bubbled over the beach simply bubbled over it and was part of another world--a world of bubbles. The bubbles were not of the grains of sand, and the grains of sand were not of the bubbles. Everything was isolated from everything else.

Then the rocks on the shore caught my attention, and even "one" rock was composed of so many miniscule parts, although sharing some physical proximity to each other, they were again distinct, with very hard, sharp, well-defined boundaries--boundaries which allowed no intruders.

The trees on the bluff were, each one, alone. The sky was above and alone. The distant hills, remote and alone.

Wider and deeper, this isolation. Wider and deeper.

Then the humans entered and they were the loneliest of all. Each one alone. Some sensing the isolation and suffering from it; some angry because of the frustration in not being able to burst through it; some aching because of knowing it; some aching for others who know even more of it; some, so dulled by it, ceasing to sense it, but simply being it and not knowing it. Everyone with it.

The past ages began to creep into my consciousness--all the humans who have travelled on this shore, touched these waters, lived on this beach. And I knew each one's hollow separation from himself and from his fellowman.

Timeless. Eternities of it.

My awareness spread over the here-and-now land to all the people of the earth. All of humanity was suffering from isolation. Each human who breathed was alone and his cry came from that loneliness. His anger, fear, self-importance, arrogance, tears, pain, sorrow, despondency, grief, all of his madness--all were his cry of being alone. Then I knew that loneliness and I heard my own cry.

Silence.

Out of that isolation formed a bridge--a bridge that leapt out of every manifestation of being to join with every other manifestation of being. From the loneliness of each individual came forth a bond, and this bond was a bridge to every man. Not in spite of, but because of this isolation, is man able to leave his isolation and to journey to another's soul. Becoming aware of one's own isolation is the beginning of the journey to unity. The only road to another man's heart is this knowing of separateness. Each must walk alone on this path. Each must become profoundly knowing of his isolation from his fellow man, which is himself. Only through isolation can one know oneness. The paradox of truth.

And what of this fear of my fellowman? I saw that man's behavior--rejecting, reaching, arrogant, withdrawn, solicitous, threatening--is simply an expression of his loneliness and his attempt to do something about that loneliness--as I attempt to do something about mine. My awareness of my loneliness forms a bond with every human I meet. I no longer need so much to judge him, to compare myself with him, to feel more important than he, to envy him, nor to ponder his behavior. I can share myself more readily with him, and when I can, my isolation is lessened, the pain of loneliness is gone, the cold hollowness disappears and warmth fills my being. And in those moments when he can share himself with me and I, myself with him, the bridge is complete, we merge, and we love.