

The Nature of Ego

So, what exactly is the ego, and how does it manifest and regenerate in the world today?

As we discussed in the sections on Memory and The Unbelievable Ancestors of Self, ego is an entity born by way of the development and existence of the subconscious mind, an environment that formed through repeated inputs of interpretation by humans since the first days of reflection off the Creation. Essentially, this subconscious, intermediate world is a world of past, and it is home to the ego. The self, or ego, was born there, lives from there and draws its energy from this place to sustain itself and perpetuate its own existence and expansion. It is a living entity or energy field and, like any living entity, or identity, it wants to survive.

In practice, the way that ego survives and grows is by getting the body it operates through to help generate and substantiate the world of past from which it comes and that it is tethered. And this happens in two ways; first, the ego encourages a person to continue interpreting and naming existence so that it feeds and nurtures the subconscious, and second, it then attempts, or *tempts*, that person to identify with those things to form some kind of *self-image*.

The two are related and are dependent upon each other to have the desired effect. In other words, if the survival of ego was dependent only upon the continuation of interpreting and naming things, then it could not endure, because essentially there is nothing wrong with naming. In fact, naming is very helpful, as it forms the basis of language, communication, and the opportunity for greater cooperation and creativity. It is only when there is *identification* and *attachment* to those things that ego can develop. If there were no 'things' for the ego to identify with, and attach to, it could not exist, so it must encourage this behaviour of naming—it has a vested interest.

Ego, therefore, is an entity that exists only as a function of identification with, and attachment to, things; anything, either physical or conceptual. Nothing is spared. From this, self-image then arises as a specific collection of identifiable things, behaviours and attitudes. Here is a somewhat exaggerated example of how ego might express through a person and appear to others;

'Hi, my name is Jill. I am the CEO of *A Very Important Company*, and I don't have much time for you right now because I am extremely busy. I live in a large house next to some famous people, and I drive a very expensive car. I am also an expert mountain climber,

and let me tell you some amazing stories about the things I have done. I eat most foods, and I think that meat is a necessity in a person's diet; in fact, there is scientific evidence to prove it. I don't believe in a God of any kind, and I think that people who do are weak and misguided. I believe that the government should devote more resources to science, because that is where we will find the answers to the meaning of life. I am highly intelligent and I think that I am a good person, but the problem with the world today is that religion has divided us from one another'.

Of course, as I said, I have exaggerated and had a bit of a joke here with this example. But this demonstrates the essence of self-image—ego—speaking. Identification with position, place and associations, likes and dislikes, beliefs and disbeliefs, continual references to the past (personal story), judgement and blame of other people and things.

Of course, I have exaggerated and had a bit of a joke here, but this is the essence of self-image—ego—speaking. Identification with position, place, associations, and purpose, likes and dislikes, beliefs and disbeliefs, continual references to the past (personal story), judgement and blame of other people and things.

Self-image doesn't have to be overly positive and apparently confident either. It could be something like this, 'Hi my name is Jack. I am only a cleaner at the school—I could never be anything more than that. I am not very smart, and life has treated me unkindly. Let me tell you my sad story and you will understand my position. I don't expect that anything great will ever happen for me now. But I *am* healthy. I am a vegetarian, and I am also a Buddhist. The problem with the world today is that greedy corporations are ruining it for everyone. I believe that crystals have the power to transform humanity and the Earth, but I don't believe in aliens'.

Again, I have exaggerated a little to demonstrate the point, but you get the idea. To the degree there is ego in us there is also some kind of self-image running—the two are inseparably entwined. Self-image is the 'who' we think we are, and it separates us from each other and from the truth that we unconsciously seek. Without awareness of this we will remain stuck, and worse, we will then be moved to put considerable energy into maintaining and building the charade of who we think we are, or are trying to become.

The motivating force behind this behaviour, although entirely misdirected, is born of something quite pure. It is born of our desire to be God-like, because despite the vast and varied filters of ego through which most people operate, essentially, we are still the God that we seek. At an unconscious level, deep within, we know this. We know that creative power, joy, and the possibility for unlimited experience is our birth right.

However, because ego is separated and lost through its attachment to mind-sets and the manifest world, its only course of action is to seek power there. Consequently, the ultimate goal of ego, it could be said, is 'to own and control everything in existence', because the God that we are, to use the same words, *is* in control and owns everything in existence.

To the degree that we are aligned with ego, we have no choice but to seek power in the world in this way, which means that we must attempt to control one another and secure as much as we can. This impulse aligns neatly with the evolved animal instinct to survive—survival of the fittest. Altogether, this then pits us against each other; to fight for what we believe in, force others to be like us, defend our position vehemently, and compete for and secure as much of what appears to be a scarcity of the resources required. The result? Surely I need not say.

The behaviour of identifying with and attaching to things to build self-image is fuelled enormously by the collective ignorance of our times, which is, of course, an extension of ego itself, so it becomes a very difficult trap to escape. For each of us it begins at birth. We are born into the world in a fresh, new body, and that body is completely innocent to begin with, as much as it can be nowadays. Remember, the physical world is thicker and more substantial now due to the existence of the intermediate world within it, so a body at birth is as pure as this psychic substance allows. The inhabiting soul carries with it an intention for the life ahead, something formed from the previous life/death experience that will help it on its long journey back home. Apart from any expression of specific interest, talent, or skill, it will always carry an energy that will somehow help it purify as a function of its own karma.

This might now help us see the answer to one of humanity's most challenging philosophical questions. Do we have free will or is the universe ultimately deterministic? Is there such a thing as fate or destiny, and what is the difference? And the answer to this is that it depends upon how much *past* you carry, how much karma you are adjusting in this lifetime.

Your life will always be guided by your intentions for incarnating, which in turn is a function of your desire for unique expression and experience, coupled with your karma. Accordingly, there will always be an element of predetermination in how life plays out for you, which relates specifically to your own karmic adjustment. This is fate.

However, no matter how much substance of past you carry, you are still a free and creative Consciousness always, and consequently have free will in the moment-to-moment actions that you take. This in-the-moment free will, in combination with your

intention for a unique experience in this incarnation, combine to represent what becomes your destiny.

Nonetheless, underpinning all this is the fact that everything in the Universe is 'controlled' by Consciousness, in this here and now moment, where the reality of life is, and where the next moment of experience is determined. When we are completely clear of our past—which is what enlightenment is—we become powerful co-creators aligned with this Consciousness and then the idea of fate and destiny disappears entirely—it no longer has any meaning. Immediate alignment with the Consciousness that creates us is a creative space of 'making it up as we go along', so to speak. It is the ultimate state of being where we know ourselves to be supremely free, deeply engaged, and completely responsible for every moment of our existence.

Because of the mechanism of karma operating in life, what we might want to see and judge as 'bad things' happening for some people may be an important part of their life unfolding, and therefore entirely necessary. For us to interfere might only serve to hold them back in their development. Of course, it can be extremely difficult to know, sometimes, when to intervene in a person's life and when not to. This is another reason why it is so important for us to stay present and be moved by the energy of our natural Being, the intelligence of the Earth and its greater knowing, rather than by our own egoic reactions. Only in this way can we be guided correctly, and by correctly, I mean in a way that brings about the highest and most enjoyable outcome for all in the shortest period of time.

One of the main contributing factors to the survival of the ego entity is that we are living in a world of ignorance, in the sense that it is extremely rare for a child to be informed in truth, and encouraged to stay present in life. This, of course, is unavoidable to the degree that the parents and teachers of the child do not know themselves. But it is in this way that the biblical principle of 'the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children' is perpetuated.

Ego, and the related dysfunction it generates, is kept alive and well through every act by others that does not come from an alignment with the natural guidance system, with God. The specific ways in which such acts manifest are numerous, but essentially two basic behaviours are involved. The first is the encouragement of self-image, and the second is inadequate presence to help a child manage their responses to challenging or disturbing experiences. Once again, the two are related, but ultimately only presence of being is required anywhere, anytime, to help quash the development of ego and bring forward healthy beings and a functional world. Let me explain what I mean.

Encouragement of self-image occurs every time we excite or stimulate our children with things, either physical or conceptual, rather than simply *being* with them in the presence of love and the unfolding of their lives. It happens every time we influence them to like or dislike things in the world, and to form opinions about what is 'good' and what is 'bad', what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'. This of course does not mean that we let our children run amok and do what they want, which is often the 'wrong end of the stick' interpretation of what I am saying. It means that we must guide them with our own realised Love and Intelligence, because that too is the essence of what the children are, and that is all and everything they ever want and need from us.

Self-image develops every time we encourage our children to identify with, and 'own' anything. It happens every time we ask them to *believe* in anything, or to formulate their own beliefs about things, rather than asking them to simply see the beauty in what is—as a mirror of their true essence—and guide them in the unfolding of their own discovery and expression.

Of course, it is extremely difficult for parents and teachers to do this today, as our entire education system—although beginning to change ever-so-slowly in some places—is still largely geared towards brainwashing our children so that they might fit into, and be capable of operating in, this mad world we have generated. And by no means is it my intention to appear judgmental by this comment—I am merely describing the situation so that there is a possibility for a greater understanding to emerge.

All events in a child's life—especially the disturbing ones—are interpreted by their developing mind and make strong impressions upon them. If the child does not have enlightened parents and teachers around them to help them see things for what they are, there is a high chance that the energy of an event will become a powerful, negative interpretation about the world, and who they are. And so, because of the paucity of aware or enlightened adults in the world, to the greater part our children begin to shrink and separate from their natural power and expression.

For example, if a young child in early school is asked to stand and read out aloud from a book, and they stumble over the words or say some incorrectly, the whole class might laugh at them. Without a wise and conscious teacher present to help them see that it was just a mistake, and to help the other children see how hurtful their behaviour was, the child who was reading might feel completely humiliated and shut down. Their interpretation might be that they are useless or not very smart, and that might become a strong belief that affects them for the rest of their lives. The pain of the event links together with their developing sense of self, and whenever a similar event looms in their

life thereafter, it triggers the same thoughts and emotions. They will feel disturbed, and react.

All this energy gathers together in the subconscious where all beliefs and emotions dwell, and it strengthens the substance of ego. If left unresolved, it will affect the child's entire life and at death it will become a burden upon the soul to work out in future incarnations.

This, of course, is one example of an unlimited number of events that can, and do, occur for us as humans, especially when we are young. Consequently, most people have buried emotional pains and associated mindsets within them that impact upon their wellbeing and determine the nature of their experiences.

Because ego, by its very definition and nature, is pinched off from Source, the vital energy of love *now*, then it must somehow get energy from wherever else it can be found. This is usually in the form of controlling or manipulating other people in some way, but it can also take the form of comparison with others, or putting down of others, which helps justify its position. The specific way in which this happens will be related somehow to the karmic body and any additional childhood wounds, but no matter the way, the primary goal of the behaviour is to get attention from other people, because a person's attention is their energy.

In its mildest form, for example, this might amount to a person forcing a seemingly innocent story, or 'important' information, upon you, demanding your attention as an audience, often against your will. Another behaviour might be that someone sulks a lot, hurts themselves, or is overly aloof, so that the ego operating through them gets some attention from you, because you might show concern and want to help. Or it might be that the ego must assert itself and its position—therefore energise itself—through the judgement of, attack on, or comparison with, other people.

At the other end of the spectrum would be the control of people through fear of lack, pain, or death. This kind of behaviour is rife in the world, and has been for many millennia through the likes of cruel and powerful dictatorships or even governments that threaten to take away our freedom—or our lives—if we do not comply with their rules and dictates. No matter where it occurs on the scale, it is essentially the same thing—taking energy from others—which the ego must do in order to survive. Another version of this, and a very subtle and sinister behaviour it is too, is for someone or some organisation to provide for a person's basic needs (food and shelter, and then later purpose and belonging) when for whatever reason that person cannot provide for themselves. Or, certain people or organisations appeal to a person's need to be

successful, rich, or famous (desire to be God-like), and can lure them into a hierarchical structure of power and control. This is a very effective and manipulative tool, because people who feel 'saved', or have had their needs met, naturally feel indebted in some way to their 'saviour'. Of course, behaviour of this kind could also come genuinely from a person who cares in the spirit of looking after another through hard times, helping them get back on track in life or encouraging them to greater heights. But the difference is that the former comes with a price, whereas the latter is simply done as *service*, a right course of action in love, with no obligation attached.

The price of being saved, or provided for, is most often that the person must then pledge allegiance to the 'Cause'—either financially or emotionally—supporting it with their devotion, and gathering others to the fold. This describes the essential nature of cults; they are entirely ego-driven structures that may offer some good in the world, but largely only serve to keep ego alive. Perhaps in the greater scheme, structures of this nature do their best work by default, whereby there may eventually be the possibility for those who have been lured in to see how subtle, powerful, and manipulative ego can be.

What sustains organisations of this nature are strict rules and beliefs—mindsets—and any behaviours or rituals that might support them. The intensity or severity of those mindsets are always indicators of how loving or how manipulative a person or organisation really is. In the state of true love, there is no necessity for rules and beliefs. It is a self-regulating system, and the only requirement is to *be* the love that you are. Honesty to this presence of being then determines your behaviour which will be in accordance with that love and in harmony with the Earth.

Although there is a place for firm rules in our world (for example, road rules are helpful in keeping us safe when driving, and certain rules might be helpful when raising our children), for the greater part they are used to control one another towards self-needy ends. If we take a closer look at what rules really are, we will see that they are guidelines or regulations that are grounded in the past. They originate from the experience of living, and therefore must be based in the past. As such, rules can only ever be 'the past imposed upon the present', and are often not appropriate in the context of what is happening in the moment. Strong alignment with specific rules may hinder the expansion of love and cause unnecessary conflict in any situation at hand.

Beliefs, rules, and the rituals that support them, are all mindsets that help bind people together in a cause, and although this generates powerful energy, it is not necessarily an energy that is aligned with love. An extreme example of the uniting power and devastating effect that mindset can generate and impose upon others would be the Nazi regime. This horrific and powerful movement was based upon the ego-driven ends

of one man and his ability to brainwash an entire nation. The only reason he could build such a powerful structure was through the establishment and forceful implementation of firm mindsets and hierarchies, whilst playing on people's innate need for belonging and power.

Strong alignment with beliefs, practices, rules, rituals, and anything else that helps bind people together as anything other than the human animals that we are, is ultimately divisive, not loving. The adherence to, and imposition of them is a powerful tactic and game of the ego that might appear to serve, but ultimately is a form of control geared to energise and perpetuate the world from where it all comes—the past.

The nature of ego, therefore, is an entity informed by the substance of the past. It is born of the past and sustains itself by keeping the past alive in any way it can. It is a troublemaker in existence, and at some stage it must cease to be if you are to free yourself and evolve. To be successful in this undertaking is to enlighten yourself.

In the next section we look at what enlightenment is, and the curious relationship between it and death. But first, please check to see what you are feeling now? Close your eyes and go into your body. Tune in. What is going on in there? Are you feeling good? Is there any resistance or pain in you? Reach for what feels good in there. Focus on it. Breathe into it. If there is emotion or disturbance of any kind, then just let it be there. Don't try and get rid of it. But don't focus on it either. Be aware that emotion in you will always want your attention. It will always try to get you thinking, because that is its food for survival. But you cannot make it stop by force. Give your attention only to what is good in you. As you do, it will expand and this expansion will dissolve the emotion and inform your life with new energy, new direction.