

Jonathan Livingston Seagull

"We can lift ourselves out of ignorance, we can find ourselves as creatures of excellence and intelligence and skill. We can be free! We can learn to fly!"

"His sorrow was not solitude, it was that other gulls refused to believe the glory of flight that awaited them; they refused to open their eyes and see."

"Jonathan Seagull discovered that boredom and fear and anger are the reasons that a gull's life is so short, and with these gone from his thought, he lived a long fine life indeed."

"For each of them, the most important thing in living was to reach out and touch perfection in that which they most love to do, and that was to fly."

"You didn't need faith to fly, you needed to understand flying."

"It always works, when you know what you're doing...."

"The gull sees farthest who flies highest."

"Your whole body... is nothing more than your thought itself, in a form you can see. Break the chains of your thought, and you break the chains of your body, too..."

"We're free to go where we wish and to be what we are."

"...freedom is the very nature of his being, that whatever stands against that freedom must be set aside, be it ritual or superstition or limitation in any form."

"Why is it, ... that the hardest thing in the world is to convince a bird that he is free, and that he can prove it for himself if he'd spend a little time practicing? Why should that be so hard?"

"The only true law is that which leads to freedom," ... "There is no other."

"Heaven is not a place, and it is not a time. Heaven is being perfect."

("And that isn't flying a thousand miles an hour, or a million, or flying at the speed of light. Because any number is a limit, and perfection doesn't have limits. Perfect speed, my son, is being there.")

"Don't believe what your eyes are telling you. All they show is limitation. Look with your understanding. Find out what you already know and you will see the way to fly."

"You have the freedom to be yourself, your true self, here and now, and nothing can stand in your way".

“Jonathan sighed. The price of being misunderstood, he thought. They call you devil or they call you god.”

“Overcome space, and all we have left is Here. Overcome time, and all we have left is Now.”

“To fly as fast as thought, to anywhere that is, you must begin by knowing that you have already arrived.”

“One school is finished, and the time has come for another to begin.”

“Like everything else ... Practice.”

“Who is more responsible than a gull who finds and follows a meaning, a higher purpose for life? For a thousand years we have scrabbled after fish heads, but now we have a reason to live — to learn, to discover, to be free!”

“Are you saying I can fly?” “I say you are free.”

(“I don’t understand how you manage to love a mob of birds that has just tried to kill you.” “Oh, Fletch, you don’t love that!)

You don’t love hatred and evil, of course. You have to practice and see the real gull, the good in every one of them, and to help them see it in themselves. That’s what I mean by love. It’s fun, when you get the knack of it.”

“Do you have any idea how many lives we must have gone through before we even got the first idea that there is more to life than eating, or fighting, or power in the Flock? A thousand lives, Jon, ten thousand! And then another hundred lives until we began to learn that there is such a thing as perfection, and another hundred again to get the idea that our purpose for living is to find that perfection and show it forth. The same rule holds for us now, of course: we choose our next world through what we learn in this one. Learn nothing, and the next world is the same as this one, all the same limitations and lead weights to overcome.”

“Why, Jon, why?” his mother asked. “Why is it so hard to be like the rest of the flock, Jon? Why can’t you leave low flying to the pelicans, the albatross? Why don’t you eat? Son, you’re bone and feathers!” “I don’t mind being bone and feathers, mom. I just want to know what I can do in the air and what I can’t, that’s all. I just want to know.”

“He was not bone and feather but a perfect idea of freedom and flight, limited by nothing at all.”