

The neighbor is Ishvara

Robert [name changed]:

Hi Tan.

After 18 months living without a neighbor, I now have a noisy neighbor in the flat next door.

She woke me up at 5.15am, then again at 7.30 and at 8.15.

This has made me realize, to my horror, that I am completely identified with my body. The reactions I had were visceral: hot, angry flush, panic, anger, feeling trapped, and despair. Knowing they are objects arising in me doesn't seem to help with these very deep, primitive reactions. They just take me over.

Tan:

It seems that in this case you were identified with the Subtle Body or more precisely with the emotional center (*Manas*), since you do not want to „have“ these feelings.

Here you seem to have the assumption, that witnessing will make these feelings go away.

So if witnessing is done to „make the bad feelings go away“, the goal is not knowledge of yourself but making the unwanted feelings go away.

In Vedanta the goal is knowledge of yourself.

This is an example for what is sometimes called the „opaque witness“, because it has in itself the goal to achieve something – for example making unpleasant experiences pleasant.

Robert:

Situations like this make me feel I am light-years away from enlightenment, that I haven't even begun on the path, and that I might as well give up.

Tan:

You – as awareness- are not only light years away from enlightenment. You will never get enlightened. You cannot get enlightened. You are the light. The light cannot get enlightened.

Your intellect may assimilate the knowledge and when it is firm: “Your intellect is enlightened”, which just means free of ignorance about your own true nature.

Robert:

I just thought I'd share this with you as this is the work-face for me, the big test. Knowing is one thing, but dealing with these very early and physiological survival reactions is another thing entirely. This is where, for me, knowledge seems to break down.

Love,

Robert

Tan:

This is nothing dramatic. It just means that the knowledge is not fully firm yet.

This is meant without cynicism. You asked not to be lonely. Ishvara gave you a neighbor.

It is a gift from Ishvara.

Ishvara sent you this neighbor as a gift on the path. This neighbor is your teacher/teaching sent by Ishvara. All is well and will be well.

Love

Tan