

Not taking knowledge seriously

Martin:

Last night I could hear my neighbor banging doors and I had the usual emotional reaction: irritation, distress, feeling trapped. I realized that although I *know* I am the awareness in which all this is arising, that it's all an illusion, that there is no separate me or her or noise, that they are all 'arisings' in awareness (I've worked through Greg Goode's The Direct Path again), the emotional reaction still occurs. It's as if one part of me knows the truth, but the other part still thinks and behaves as if the body-mind is real. It was very obvious last night that one part of me doesn't take the knowledge seriously, but carries on with the same old belief that I am this body and that there is another body causing noise that causes me distress, that it shouldn't be happening, that I can't live with it, etc.

Tan:

You are the awareness that witnesses the part that knows and the part that seems not to know. How else would you know both parts?

The body-mind is not real in the sense that it is not constant such as you-awareness, but it is existing. Not real does not mean it does not exist. Emotional reactions will not disappear, when the knowledge is firm. They can occur and have nothing to do with you.

Let us inquire into the mechanism of what is happening:

The sounds are hitting the sense instrument "ear" in the Gross Body. The sense organs for hearing in the Subtle Body send that to the mind.

The mind's job is to doubt.

An old *vasana* creates doubt in the mind when a loud unexpected sound is perceived. This doubt makes sense because it supported the physical body to successfully survive for millennia (for example from a sudden saber tooth tiger attack).

In that sense it is meaningful that the first initial reaction is "irritation" or doubt. So it is a healthy reaction to check out what this sound means.

After your intellect/mind has checked that there is no danger or no action required, it should be satisfied, but other *vasanas* in you create the feeling of being trapped and in distress.

These are the *vasanas* that need to be investigated further.

It is a fact that the slamming of the door does not pose a threat to your survival. You are safe. There is no need for angst or anxiety. But it seems that there are still doubts about that fact.

Bringing them up to the light of the “waking state” and analyzing the usefulness of the *vasana* is what is usually done in various psychological therapies.

But here are also some actions possible to reduce the *vasana* load:

- Apply the opposite thought to the stress reaction such as: I am peaceful and unconcerned
- Relax your body and mind and take the sound of the door as an object that comes and rises in you. this should enable you to use the sound of the door as any other meditation object such as the breath or a meditation gong

In addition you can also look at this from the viewpoint of dharma. If the sound is abnormally loud or your neighbor wakes you up at 5 am by slamming the door, it is in line with dharma to tell her politely that these sounds awaken you and you would be very grateful if she could avoid doing that. Take the results of that request with the *karma yoga* attitude as *prasad*.

If there is no change and you cannot take that result yet as *prasad* you can also check what the house rules (house dharma) are saying about that. If the sound is so irritable you can act according to the dharma of the household rules.

Taking something as *prasad* does not mean playing the victim and putting up with adharmic behavior, if this is really such one case.

Martin:

How can I make this more real? I suspect it has something to do with the *vasanas*....

Love,

Martin

Tan:

Yes it is the *vasanas* and you can reduce them by constantly applying the karma yoga attitude or the opposite thought or taking a stand in awareness.

Ignorance is unfortunately hardwired and it has to be broken by constant vigilance. Let me know how things go.

Love

Tan