

Questions for Reflection
Series 9 Talk 5

Here are some ideas for your reflection during the week:

1) First: To stay in samsara we need karmic consciousness that creates ignorance. We need ignorance to stay in samsara to help all beings. This is the bodhisattva path. Being a bodhisattva, however, is not everybody's path. You may feel that you don't want to stay in samsara. Many people, including many of Shayamuni's disciples, attain enlightenment for themselves not to help all beings. These two approaches are separate paths. Consider carefully which is the right one for you.

2) Second: The word "ignorance" today is highly charged. None of us want to think of ourselves that way. But in Buddhism ignorance is not stupidity; it carries a much heavier weight. Just having been born means that we have this kind of ignorance and that all of our thinking is burdened by it until we find a way to greater understanding. Though inherently they are of the same nature, empty, we still need to relieve ourselves of self-clinging behaviors so that wisdom may arise in us. Please state precisely what the difference is between ignorance or avidya and "true form" or the "true reality of all beings" in Buddhism.

3) Third: Self-clinging is not something we usually think about and especially we don't usually think that most of our behaviors arise from this. To increase your consciousness around it, name five behaviors of yours that actually arise from self-clinging, even though that's not how you ordinarily look at them. It can be things like the desire to be beautiful, or smart or enlightened, or to be thought of well or to be a star. List five of your own.

4) Fourth: Since *zazen* itself is the true reality of all beings, in a way there is nothing more important that we do. Unfortunately, we will have a whole day in which we either don't do it at all or fight for ten minutes in which to do it. Now that we see how critical this activity is, I wonder if you could try at least to double what you are already doing. If you are doing ten minutes, try to increase say, a minute at a time, to twenty minutes. Or to do ten minutes twice a day. The more you do the more you will want to do.