

Reasons to Stay

May 31, 2014

Okay, let's sit with the breath for a few minutes.

You want to make the breath your home. The Pali term for this is *vihara-dhamma*. It's a quality that you feel at home in, the way your mind tends to settle. Some people settle on greed, some people settle on anger. We want to have the mind find a better place to settle down. Make the breath your dwelling. Have a sense of ease here, so that the mind isn't just the house, it really is a home. It's a place where you can stay and feel at ease, feel comfortable. It's your shelter when things outside get difficult.

When people are yelling at you, you can stay right here and this can be your space. You don't have to let their energy invade your space. When they're criticizing you, you listen: Is there anything worth listening to here, is there anything worth taking to heart? You take that to heart and let the rest of the energy go. You don't want your body to be invaded by anybody else's energy. You want to fill it with your own good energy.

This is why we settle down here, because the mind has its best energy when it's still. It's as if it's spinning around in one place and can create a good magnetic field that fills the body with good energy. If your mind is zipping off here and zipping off there, there's no real field here. There's no real protection.

So try to stay centered right here. This is your place of safety. This is your place of comfort. This is a place where you gather your strength. The less you have to leave it, the better. In other words, when you're dealing with the world, you can still be aware of the world, you can still talk, you can still think up things to say, but you can also still be aware of the breath at the same time.

The more you stay right here, the safer you are. And the better you'll be able to see what's actually going on. If you're running around all over the place, you can't even see the people sitting right in front of you. You may see them but you can't see inside them. If you want to see inside, you have to be here, go into yourself and then you can start understanding inside other people, too.

So there are lots of reasons to want to stay here. As for the reasons that pull you away, you have to ask, "Why? Where? What's going to come of this?" Nine times out of ten you find that it's not really worth going. You may become a quiet person as a result, but there's nothing wrong with being a quiet person. After all, when you do speak, you want your words to be words worth treasuring, words worth listening to. Those kind of words come from a good place, a quiet place.

So when you're listening to others, this is a good place to stay. When you're speaking with others, this is the place to stay.

It's not that much different from meditating and being here with your eyes closed. It's just that your eyes are open and part of your mind is dealing with the world. But you're rooted here inside.

And that makes huge difference.