



Watching Volcanoes Explode, by Vimala Thakar

We must become deeply aware of our bondage if we value freedom. We begin to watch our behavior throughout the day; we notice the fear, the anxieties, how much behavior is controlled by acquisitiveness, how we compare ourselves with others and want to become something that we

are not. When we watch our own lives, then there is the pain and agony that the awareness of the bondage creates. If we don't observe this in ourselves, we are only theorizing about freedom. [...]

As long as we cling to the idea that this is "my mind, my own personal mind," we'll have a strong tendency to want to look as good as possible. But if we observe the mind, from a nonpersonal viewpoint, from the perspective of nonownership, simply observe our minds and how

they function, we'll be less trapped by judgments.

To be attentive to the psychological structure doesn't mean we must disappear somewhere and give up all relationships, responsibilities. The aim is to stay within the movement of relationships, to continue with work, to be a responsible citizen and to be attentive to the play of the mind. But we'll have to be very alert, for the mind is subtle, wily, full of tricks.

It's a tremendous thrill to see the beginnings of anger or jealousy or greed, not simply to be caught unawares when the emotion is full-blown and has us in its grasp, but to see the first tiny movements of emotion. Where does it spread, what does it do to our behavior? Just as there is joy in exploring the unknown wildness, there is a delight in exploring the inner territory, in watching the volcanoes explode without any movement of defense, judgment, sense of ownership.

If we have never observed anger in ourselves from subtle beginnings to full explosion, we will always be caught in its force. We may try to suppress the behavior of anger, but still it will do its damage and we will not be free from it.

Attentiveness without any movement of the defense structure has its own intelligence. But the automatic tendency is to bring in defenses, judgments and to move from observation to justification, evaluation. We may say to ourselves, "My mother or my father was an angry person. I can't help it; I've had an unhappy childhood, I am an angry person because of that." [...] All the explanations, justifications may be true, but they prevent direct perception of what it is that anger does to our bodies, to relationships, to the work we do.

- Vimala Thakar, from 'Ego: Emergence and Merging Back of the "I" Process'

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