

## **12. Everything Arises; Everything Passes Away**

August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

Everything changes. That's one of the fundamental tenets of our practice. In fact it's an underlying principal of life in general. Everything changes. Everything starts somewhere and eventually ends. There... the sound of my voice just ended. And now it started again. It's happening everywhere. It's a conclusion anyone will come to if they stop long enough to watch what's going on at any particular moment. It's happening on a cosmic scale: stars are born and stars die. They change because of changes on the microcosmic scale: atoms bump into each other, electrons move, and different chemicals are created and destroyed. There... The sound of my voice just stopped again.

It's really not a difficult concept to grasp, and it's pretty easy to observe it also. It's sort of mundane, actually. But it can be very beneficial to observe things arising and passing; starting and stopping.

The more we observe it first hand, the more we actually believe it. Now it's easy to believe that the sound of my voice stops... And starts. But for many people, especially those who have never looked carefully, there are some things that are exempted from the list of "Everything." Most people, for example, think that underneath their changing tastes and opinions and personalities there is still something fixed and permanent. A soul, or a self, or something called "me." Or what about emotions? If you've been deeply hurt in your past, it may seem like the pain is permanent. It never goes away. But if you look at it closely enough, you see that it does go away. It ends. It might start up again right away, but that pain is nonetheless constantly arising and passing.

If you spend some time watching starts and stops, arisings and passings, you'll start to see even these apparently permanent things coming and going. This sort of experiential knowledge, this direct insight, is a front door to liberation.

If you continue to take your meditation practice seriously, there will come a time when mostly what you are noticing is arisings and passings. You become hyper-sensitive to starts and stops. After that you start being really aware of passing. Everything, everywhere, passing. Whatever you observe, you notice passing, passing, passing. And this leads into the passing of even those things you've believed to be permanent. The things that define you. Eventually you observe the dissolution of your very self.

When this starts to happen, it'll be helpful to have a technique up your sleeve that you can use to make the most of the opportunity. And you can also watch starts and stops to sensitize yourself to noticing them. Or just do it for fun. You'll discover some interesting things.

There are several techniques you can use to watch arisings and passings. The first one I'll teach tonight is focussing on starts and stops.

[do Starting and Stopping technique]

The second technique we've done before: it's called "Noting Gone."

[do Noting Gone]

Finally, a modification of Noting Gone is "Stay Until Gone." You can do this just with Noting Gone, or you can Note Starts and then Stay Until Gone. Play around with it and see what catches your interest.

[do Stay Until Gone]

[discuss]