

NOTES ON “HOW TO SEE YOURSELF AS YOU REALLY ARE”

Chapter 13 – Analyzing Oneness

The “I” is not the same as the mind and body, because if it were, then illogical and unacceptable consequences would follow.

This chapter is about “oneness” or “sameness,” specifically between the mind-body complex (MBC) and the “I”. This chapter helps us realize one half of this comparison: namely that the “I” is not the same as the MBC.

This could be considered the first actual emptiness investigation in the whole book. The rest was preparation. If the “I” is not the same as the MBC, and if it is not different, then the “I” doesn’t exist at all in an inherent way. It is a short chapter, but one that you can meditate on over and over for a long time!

The way this works is like this:

The “I” is not the same as the MBC, because if it were, then illogical and unacceptable consequences would follow. The key to getting the full logical force of this is being very clear about what full equality would be. It would be true, complete, total, inherent equality, sort of the way we think of an 8-ball on a pool table as being totally identical with itself (this isn’t true either, but use it as an example for the moment). This is the kind of oneness/sameness that we are refuting. ***We are not refuting the fact that it makes sense to call the “I” and the MBC the same.*** That’s just plain old conventional naming, the kind that doesn’t cause suffering. What we are refuting is something much stronger than that, a kind of intimate, pre-designated, objective identity that doesn’t depend on our naming. It’s a kind of identity that things seem to have.

Consequences if the “I” and the body-mind were equal

If the “I” were the same as the mind-body complex in such an inherent and objective way, then here are some consequences. If “I”=the mind-body complex, then:

- Everything that is true of the “I” would be true of the mind-body complex.
- Everything that is true of the mind-body complex would be true of the “I.”
- Whatever we can say about the “I,” we would also be able to say about the mind-body complex.

- Whatever we can say about the mind-body complex, we would also be able to say about the “I.”
- We wouldn’t need the term “I”.
- No one would question what the “I” really is.
- The “I” and the BMC would not seem different in the slightest way.
- It wouldn’t make no sense to say “**my** body” or “**my** mind.”
- The “I” would be divisible, because the mind-body complex is divisible.
- The mind-body complex would not be divisible, because the “I” is not divisible.
- The “I” would always be changing, because the mind-body complex is always changing.
- We would have to say that the “I” is getting shorter or thinner or fatter, etc.
- The “I” would be constantly changing since the body is constantly changing. Over time, the body is made up of different molecules, different blood cells, etc. There are aging and changes in health conditions. In a sense it is many different bodies though time. But we think it is the **same** “I” undergoing these changes.
- The “I” would be constantly changing since the mind is constantly changing. The mind always has different thoughts and feelings. There is the experience of being reborn with a new mind. But we like to think it is the **same** “I” that this happens to.

For those who accept the idea of rebirth:

- Rebirth of the same “I” in different bodies would be utterly impossible, because a different mind-body complex would necessitate an inherently different “I.” With a conventionally designated “I” there are no problems of this kind.
- Karma would also be impossible. It would never be the case that the same “I” inherits the effects of its own past actions. The inheritor of the effects of actions would always be a different person.

Conclusion

All of the consequences above are not found to be true. Therefore the “I” is not inherently the same as the mind-body complex.

On your own, try to think of more and more consequences that would follow if the “I”=MBC. The fact that these consequences do not follow shows that the “I” and the MBC are not the same.