

# Vasanas Color Our Version of Experience

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**Sreenath:** Dear Ted, I was trying to talk about the concept of *vimarsa* at the level of *jivatman*. I thought that both the self and mind are the same. That's why I used the term self for mind.

**Ted:** I appreciate your intention, but it is important to understand that there is only one self. The selfhood that we attribute to the *jiva*, the apparent individual person who is the relative knower-doer-enjoyer, is nothing more than *ahamkara*, the ego, or I-sense, which is itself nothing more than a thought that lays claim the body-mind-sense complex and the happenings that spontaneously occur in and through it at the behest, so to speak, of the *vasanas* associated with it.

**Sreenath:** I hope I am not disturbing you.

**Ted:** You are not disturbing me at all.

**Sreenath:** These are basic things that I would like to clarify.

1. *Vasanas* play a vital role for the mind to develop a particular impression about an image that can be an emotion, a vision or a cognition. Depending on the *vasanas*, the same image can appear to mind differently.

**Ted:** *Vasanas* color our version of experience. I think you understand this, but just to be clear, *vasanas* are the impressions from our past experiences that are stored in dormant form in the unmanifest realm of the causal body. These seeds sprout into *raga-dveshas* (i.e. likes and dislikes) in the subtle body or mind, and if they become strong enough can even become what we call binding *vasanas*, which are likes and dislikes, desires and fears, that are so compelling that we cannot resist their influence, and thus we basically become slaves to their demands, which have intellectual, emotional and behavioral ramifications. These *vasana*-based likes and dislikes are the foundation of our values, and thus color the way we interpret and evaluate objects, situations, people and experiences. It is in this regard that *vasanas* make the same image – which should be understood as any perception or conception, any sensation, emotion or cognition, essentially any experienceable phenomenon – appear to the mind differently.

**Sreenath:** 2. By understanding and reflecting what the mind feels about a particular image, *vimarsa* is actually helping *jivatman* know about his own consciousness.

~ *Namaste*, Sreenath

**Ted:** In a sense, though *vimarsa* is not the mind itself, nor an entity that understands and reflects. It is the principle of understanding/knowledge/intelligence that informs the mind and makes the intellect capable of understanding and reflecting and knowing both objective phenomena as well as recognizing the truth of itself.

I hope that helps.

~ *Namaste*, Ted