

What would YOU do in the following case

part 2 : Dog lovers vs. Dog haters by Masayo Furuki

STATISTICS INDICATE THAT barking is one of the most frequently received complaints regarding dogs. And barking is indeed probably the greatest cause of concern among dog owners living in densely populated neighborhoods, especially for those with more than one dog. While it must be acknowledged that constant barking can grate on the nerves, people with no particular fondness for dogs may even find two or three barks noisy and complain. "Noise," however, is a subjective term: it is defined in acoustics as any undesirable or discomfort-causing sound, and does not necessarily mean loudness. People have been driven to murder by the ear-splitting noise of muffler-less motorcycle and car engines, but to those who drive such vehicles the sound is pleasing. Likewise, classical music can be a bothersome noise to those who don't like it, or are not in the mood to hear it: what do they care if it's Isaac Stern or Kiri Te Kanawa? The same holds true for barking: if such barking is within normal bounds, for dog lovers it can be a sign of playfulness, or simply a form of conversation.

Dogs are living creatures, like human beings, and just as we could not go all day without uttering a sound, neither can they. A certain amount of barking or yelping is only normal, in fact necessary — so if a neighbor complains that your dog is noisy, don't let that fluster or anger you: be calm, and explain the situation matter-of-factly.

In a densely populated country like Japan, a certain amount of friction is inevitable no matter how hard one tries not to disturb one's neighbors, and having a live-and-let-live attitude is the only way to get along. When the disturbance caused you by another is considered acceptable by ordinary standards, you must live with it: legally, such disturbance is referred to as being "within endurable limits," with the limits decided in a court of law. In other words, if two opposing parties cannot come to an agreement, they can turn the matter over to the courts. It might be a good idea, in such cases, to use the free legal advice services offered by your local (municipal) government.

Before that, however, it is necessary to know how much indeed your dog is barking. You can turn to an objective third party for help in this, or monitor yourself how often, for how long, and how loudly your dog barks every day. If you tend to be out of the house a lot, you can set a tape recorder to get a general idea.

If it turns out that your dog is barking all day long, or howling throughout the night, then both you and your dog have a problem, and you must promptly find ways to resolve it. Most dogs are quiet when their needs, both physical and psychological, are met. Excessive barking can always be traced to a cause, such as anxiety, loneliness, fear, anger, physical

discomfort, or stress, and it is imperative that you quickly discover what that is. Since dogs do not speak our language, it is up to their owners to observe them carefully and lovingly to find out what is troubling them. Some breeds, such as beagles and shelties, tend to start barking persistently at even small noises or a stranger's presence, so such dogs should be kept indoors, or if outdoors, as far from the street as possible. People who own several dogs should be mindful of feeding and walking times, and find ways to keep barking at such times to a minimum, in order not to disturb neighbors. Neutering is also important in this regard, as it prevents unnecessary barking during the mating season.

If your dog seems to be barking for no special reason, and is only making noise to get your constant attention, then you will have to give him proper training. Such dogs tend to be spoiled and do not respect their owner as their leader (alpha), so you must be firm with them to show them who is boss. This does not mean yelling at them all the time: first you must establish a relationship based on trust. If the dog does not trust you, scolding him harshly will only make him think you are a bully, and he will either cower away or defy you. If your dog loves and trusts you, however, he will understand upon receiving a scolding that he did something wrong. At such times, it is important that you forgive him quickly and let him know you are no longer angry. Constant reproval does not bring good results. Rather, the next time your dog does what he was told, you must give him lots of praise. In this way, over time he will come to understand what you want, even from a small gesture or just eye contact. Spoiling a dog and treating him lovingly are two entirely different things, as are proper training and mistreatment.

Generally, proper and patient training is sufficient to stop excessive barking, but if your dog persists in ignoring your commands or if neighborhood relations require immediate quiet, you might turn to bark-preventing products as a last resort. Developed in France and sold under the brand name of Aboie-stop, these are sensors that release an unpleasant odor when the dog begins to bark. They can be ordered through ads in the magazine "Peppy," which is available free of charge at most veterinary clinics. (Previous versions of the product gave the dog a mild electric shock, instead of releasing an odor, and these should under no circumstances be used as they may cause death if used improperly.) Although some dog owners have been known to sever their pets' vocal cords to prevent barking, this is obviously a desperate measure which some vets rightly refuse to perform, and we can by no means recommend it. More than anything, the owner's love and consideration, and proper training, are the keys to preventing excessive barking. (Next issue: Rules forbidding pets in multi-family housing)

あなたはこんな時
最後まで保護者に
なってくれますか?

第2回 愛犬家 vs. 嫌犬家

古木 昌代

■トラブルのナンバーワン

統計によると、犬に関するトラブルの中で鳴き声（吠え声）に対する苦情が非常に多いとのこと。たしかに住宅が密集している市街地で犬を飼う時（特に多頭飼いをする場合）飼い主が近隣に対して一番気を遣うのは、やはりこの「鳴き声」に対してでしょう。また犬が好きでない人にとってはこの上なく神経にさわることでしょうし、ワンワンと2～3回鳴いただけでもやかましい、いわゆる騒音だと決めつけて抗議する人もいます。しかし、音響学の上で「騒音」とは聞きたくない音、不快に思う音を指すのであって、それは個人によって違い、決して「やかましい音」という意味ではありません。時には殺人まで引き起こすバイクや改造車のエンジンの爆音も暴走族にとってはこの上なく快音であり、世界的に著名な音楽家が演奏するクラシック音楽も聞きたくない人や聞きたくない時には騒音となるのです。ですから犬の鳴き声についても常識的な範囲なら愛犬家にとっては心強いと感じる場合もあるでしょうし、飼い主とのコミュニケーションタイムの楽しいおしゃべりであるかもしれません。

■犬が鳴くのは自然なこと

犬も生き物、人間と同様に一日中ひとりで暮らさないで暮らすというわけにはいきません。ある程度は吠えたり鳴いたりするのは当然の生理現象です。ですから、鳴き声がかまじいと苦情をいわれてもオロオロしたり、逆に喧嘩腰になったりせず、落ち着いた冷静に対処しましょう。

■トラブル解決の方法

我が国のような過密社会に於ては、気を付けていてもお互いに多少なりとも迷惑をかけあうのはやむを得ないことであり、又それを許容しあって生きて行かざるをえないでしょう。他人から受ける迷惑が常識的に見てこの程度なら我慢しなければならぬ、という範囲を法律では「受忍限度」と言い、その範囲がどの程度かは裁判所が判断を下します。不幸にして当事者間で解決できない場合は司法の手にもゆだねることも出来るわけです。各自治体が行っている無料法律相談などを利用して聞いてみるのもよいでしょう。

■鳴き声の客観判断を

しかし、その前に自分の犬がどの程度の鳴き方をするかを知る必要があります。公平な第三者に意見を求めたり、一日に何回、何分間どの位の大きさで鳴くかを正確に把握することです。留守がちな場合はテープレコーダーをセットしておくとか大抵の様子かわかります。