

Does the Body Create Consciousness?

Frank: Well, it does seem like this body is creating the consciousness that is within it; such that wherever this body goes, that consciousness goes along with it.

James: It seems like it because consciousness pervades every atom of it. In deep sleep the body is not there but you, consciousness, are there. This shows that the body and consciousness do not have the same order of reality.

Frank: The truth says there is consciousness and within this consciousness is a body, so that wherever the body goes, consciousness is already there. But the mind asks, if this consciousness is universal and not of the body, then why does it always seem to have the same name, the same thoughts, the same interests, the same unrequited and unremitting love for a non-person, no matter where it goes or what it does?

James: This is a confusion between consciousness and the vehicles through which it functions. When it associates with a given *vasana* bundle it seems to be limited by the *vasanas*. Clear water viewed through a colored glass seems to be colored. It is not actually limited by them, just as it is not connected to the body. Discrimination born of contemplation will remove this doubt.

All beings share the same consciousness, not the same conditioning. It is like life. We are all alive because we are all unique at the same time.

Frank: It does seem like in the everyday experience of this mind/body that the body is creating consciousness but if consciousness creates the body, then there must be a continuous direct experience of that, that is not being recognized.

James: There is, but it is not exactly a 'continuous direct experience of that.' This is experiential language and inaccurate. The self, you, consciousness never ceases to exist. So in that sense it seems to be continuous. But it is out of time so continuity does not apply. If you leave birth and death out of it, you are certainly 'continuous.' A baby body appeared in you. It morphed into a child's body, which morphed into a young man's body etc. etc. The same with your thoughts and feelings. You 'survive' them all. This vehicle cannot be you. You never change, it only changes.

It seems like the body creates consciousness because you have no memory of yourself prior to the birth of this body. And unless you have an epiphany which reveals the relationship between the body and consciousness or you investigate it with the help of scripture, you will think that consciousness depends on the body. This is where the fear of death comes in. When you see that it is the other way around, you no longer fear death.

James