

What Is a Human Being?

Ram (James Swartz)

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Don: Dear James, thanks again for meeting with me in New York. That meeting has had quite an impact. Among other things, my sensitivity to attention has increased. As a result I have several questions for you (if the email format is not conducive to answering these questions, please let me know).

For a while now I've had the sense that there is a focal point of awareness. Question: Is there a focal point of awareness and if so, is it attention?

James: Yes. A human being is awareness focused on gross and subtle objects.

Don: In your main chart, is the small *Om*, in the center of the subtle body, attention?

James: No. It is the self, awareness, associated with the subtle body, or the mind sheath. The mind sheath is reflected awareness, or attention.

Don: When "I" attend to attention, and this goes on for a while, it becomes apparent that attention only attends to one thing at a time. Example: attention EITHER attends to discursive thinking OR sensory input and can shift incredibly fast between the two. Is this true? – or can attention attend to more than one thing at a time as is generally considered to be true?

James: The mind cannot think of more than one thing at a time. Thoughts – bursts of attention – come one after another with a small gap in between. Multi-tasking is rapid switching between objects, not doing many things at once.

Don: If there is anything else related to my questions that you feel is useful to say, it is most welcome.

James: These are good, practical questions, particularly the first one about focused awareness. Awareness is panoramic and multi-dimensional – "formless" is the word used in scripture. When it flows through a conscious being it becomes attention and can only cast a small penumbra of light.

~ James