

Don't Trust Your Feelings

Ram (James Swartz)

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Zack: Dear Ram, I'm having trouble with the idea of the body-mind. It's taken me a lot of brainstorming to come up with a concise question. Why does it seem like I am the body and the mind? Why can I only feel and experience this mind?

Ram: You are identified with the body-mind, so this is what you experience. As a body-mind you can only experience the body-mind.

Zack: I know everything is me but I feel so different from everything, so apart, so much an individual, especially because I can only be aware of this mind and this body.

Ram: Not true. You are aware of the one who is aware. Think about it. You cannot be what you are aware of. You are the one who is aware of the body-mind. It appears in you, in awareness. You are just so conditioned to take the object as the subject that you superimpose the idea of experience on awareness. Experience does not belong to awareness. It belongs to the body-mind.

There are only two factors in experience, the subject – awareness – and the object – the body-mind. Your questions come because you are identified with the object, not the one who knows the object. The one who knows the object does not “feel” like anything, nor does it “feel” anything. You can't expect it to feel something because it is free of the body-mind. It is not an entity. It does not experience because it has no sense organs. This is who you are.

Zack: Even when I experience the self as *sattvic* energy, it is happening in awareness but it definitely feels like it's inside of this body.

Ram: You cannot trust your feelings. They are not always right. Where in the body is it? Can you pinpoint it? Close your eyes and put your hand on a table. Now try to tell where the table begins and the hand ends. Your thoughts tell you that the table and the hand are two different things, but you cannot find the boundary between them. It is the same with the self and the body-mind. You think they are different but the body-mind is only made out of your thoughts and your thoughts are made out of awareness, and there is no gap between you and awareness. It is something to contemplate. You will see it.

Zack: Any other examples get me to the same question. Why do I feel limited when awareness is limitless? I know awareness must incorporate limitedness, as it is non-dual, but even if I feel unlimited, won't I feel unlimited from this mind and this body?

Ram: No, definitely not. You will feel limited if you identify with them because they

are limited. Awareness is too subtle for the mind-body to experience it. It only experiences itself and illumines objects.

Zack: I guess this is *maya* at its best, but I can't seem to get my head round it.

Ram: One definition of *maya* is this: *maya* is what makes the impossible possible. It makes what is unreal to seem to be real. It makes what is real to seem unreal.

Zack: Whatever happens will happen from the standpoint of this mind and this body and I cannot escape that, even if I am everything around me.

Ram: As the body-mind you can't escape it, but there is no need to escape it because as awareness you are always free of it.

Zack: Awareness is watching itself from these eyes, but these eyes particularly in the example of this body and mind. Without this body-mind, I couldn't experience awareness. Even though awareness is all there is and I am it. My goodness, this is confusing.

Ram: Your statement that you can't experience awareness without the body-mind is not correct. You cannot experience awareness with the body-mind. You, awareness, knows the body-mind. Can you say that you do not exist? You do exist because you experience yourself to exist. When you sleep at night you do not cease to exist. The body-mind does not exist then, but you certainly do. You enjoy yourself as bliss and limitlessness.

Zack: I hope you can shed some light on this; it's making me run around in circles.

Ram: Think about these words. It will make sense and remove your confusion.

Zack: Thank you very much for the previous replies.

Ram: My pleasure.