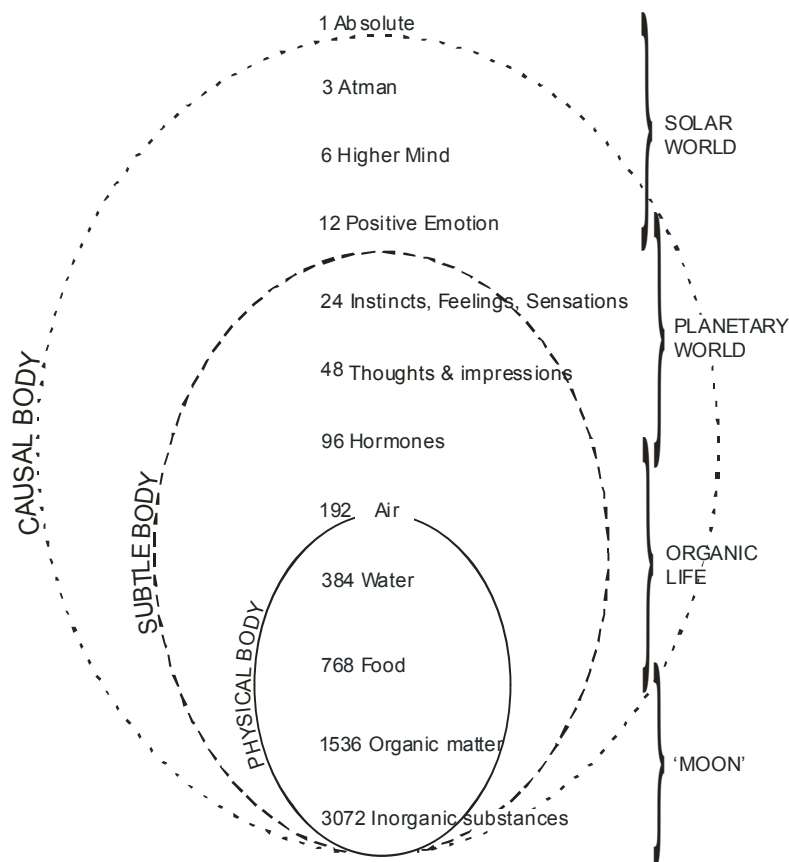


## OUR WORLD

## Part 5. The human endowment

Someone said at last weeks' meeting something like, "I'd rather have an 'in my body' experience than an 'out of body' one." This is an excellent observation of our usual state. We are fundamentalist 'bodycentrics', just as the primitive astronomers were geocentric. Whatever flights of fancy our intellect may consider from time to time, we are in practice unshakably convinced that all our experience arises from the body, and that the world revolves around us.

We need to feel, as well as occasionally to think, that almost all our functions are caused by influences that arise outside our bodies, and that we are indeed the mechanical being, the automaton, that both the Western System and the Advaita teaching describe.



The last few papers have described how we are part of a Divine process, our brain function and endocrine system which mediate almost all our responses being permanently connected to and controlled by cosmic forces of which we have no knowledge. The diagram here shows the different energies that make up our human existence and their sources in the levels of the cosmic scale we have been discussing. This is the Ray of Creation on the human scale, showing on the right hand side the corresponding levels in the solar system. It also shows the three bodies, physical, subtle and causal, of Advaita, as holons, or worlds within worlds. In the ordinary state of consciousness the physical body is fixed and objective; the subtle world fluid, ever-changing and subjective; the causal body simply an inference, unknown except in rare moments of increased awareness. This constitutes the 'bottom-up' or upside down view of reality.

What is so amazing is that the sense of ‘I’ is so powerful that it renders this extraordinary knowledge almost useless. For in our ordinary life the ego identifies, or restricts itself to the range of energies between 768 and 24, and, despite what we are told, we seem to find it impossible to realise that the true nature of this ‘I’ is in fact identical to that of the Absolute itself.

How does this happen? We need to remember Nature’s most potent device—identification—which keeps us in our place, serving *her* best interests and not our own. Identification means we become what we desire or perceive. That precious feeling of ‘I’ literally assumes the form of whatever it desires and some force, seemingly beyond our control, makes sure those desires keep on coming so that the body, with its imperative pains and sensual delights, remains the base-level of reality that captivates the feeling of ‘I’ from birth to death. The physicality of the body’s needs keeps our view fixed firmly in a downwards direction. Like the animals, we rarely look up.

But the story goes that this ‘I’ has in fact been born with the freedom to become ‘identified’ with any level within the whole of creation. From the most limited and temporal to the infinite and eternal. Saint Augustine said: *“A man becomes what he loves. If he loves a stone he becomes a stone; if he loves mankind, he becomes a Man, and if he loves God . . . I dare not say more, for you might stone me.”*<sup>1</sup> It is simply that we imagine ourselves to be whatever we are identified with at the time—and guiding all our experience is the seemingly incontrovertible fact that ‘I am my body’.

If this is this case, what will remain when we die? How much of a bodycentric experience can survive the demolition of its whole foundation? The point is—if we are genuinely interested in the meaning of esoteric teaching—we have to begin to *experience* something else. And the first milestone on that journey is to understand that expectation of any particular experience can lead only to further layers of illusion.

The only genuinely practical possibility is to give up all our usual experience and simply wait for something else. All we have to do is to ‘do’ nothing. In our usual state, which revolves around the levels of 96–48–24 it is clear we cannot know, or even conceive, what the truth of our highest possibilities actually is. And if we do want to be something more than as we habitually find ourselves, we have to be prepared to give up, abandon some of the illusions we hold most precious, in order to make room for the realisation that we are in truth a much greater being.

I said to my soul, be still and wait without hope  
For hope would be a hope for the wrong thing; wait without love  
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there *is* yet faith, but  
The faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.  
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought;  
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

T.S. Eliot. East Coker, III.

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<sup>1</sup> St Augustine perhaps meant “*really* love God then you become God”, and several other mystics say the same—so some might say that this was not in fact identification. But if we remember that similar energies at different levels assume quite different forms we may enquire whether identification itself is a form of ‘real’ love or ‘positive emotion’ manifesting at a lower level.