



THE SECRETS OF THE SOUL

Part 2

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The Secrets of the Soul

An integral approach to life, death and consciousness

Part 2

including an annexe for therapists

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Esoteric meditation

Life is an exercise

By moving a lot, small children develop their motor skills and their physical bodies. Their emotional bodies, too, develop as they gradually learn to exercise some control over their emotions. And when they go to school and learn to read and write, they start to train their mental bodies. So by exercising the *physical body*, the *emotional body* and the *mental body*, they systematically develop the corresponding levels of consciousness.

Most of what we learn is not new to us. We tend to repeat the skills we practised in previous incarnations. Much of what we learnt at an earlier stage has a place in our subconscious as latent knowledge, and whenever we land in similar situations we activate our old qualities. We can see this in school where some pupils learn quite easily while others have a lot more trouble with the teaching material. Some draw from skills acquired in previous incarnations while others are still struggling to pick them up. We can view life as a succession of situations that provide us with the opportunity to reactivate old talents and develop new ones. The ultimate goal of all that physical, emotional and mental training is contact with our soul and an increase in soul consciousness.

Soul consciousness cannot be developed in a direct, unmediated way. The necessary experiences must be accumulated on a physical, emotional and mental level. You might say that throughout a great many incarnations we are engaged in the construction, brick by brick, of a block of flats. Our physical body is the foundation. Next up are the floors occupied by our emotional and mental bodies. Finally, the top floor, the penthouse, is our causal body, our soul. It boasts a roof terrace that looks out across an entirely new landscape. But before we can make use of that observation point, we need to finish all the lower floors. In other words, we must first work on our physical, emotional and mental qualities. Even if we dedicate ourselves fully to this task, it remains to be seen whether we will arrive at soul consciousness during this incarnation. All those lower floors, which we have painstakingly constructed over the course of many incarnations, are littered with experiences, desires and memories. It is quite possible that, as we climb our building, we end up lingering or residing on one of the intermediate floors for a longer period of time. The law of personal freedom allows us to determine our own priorities. If we want to, we can cling to our emotional and mental patterns, but if we opt for our soul we will have to try, upon completion of the underlying floors, to move up without getting sidetracked.

Taken together, our bodies form a structure with a great many floors made of different materials, and the higher we get, the more delicate the materials we need to use. Our physical body represents the coarsest matter, while our emotional and mental bodies, with their many different sub-levels, are increasingly subtle. The top floor of our building, the causal body, has the finest structure accessible to man.

We experience the substance from which our physical organism is made as tangible matter, and the material that makes up our envelopes primarily as energy and consciousness. Our soul represents the most subtle forms of that energy and consciousness. Rather than as a concrete, palpable entity, we perceive the soul as something like a soft voice calling us from afar. We can only hear that voice by listening very attentively, and even then it is audible only if we manage to quieten the din around us. In order to perceive the whisperings of our soul, we must calm the noise of our physical and emotional desires and also silence our thinking. This then creates the necessary room for soul consciousness. To hear the soul properly, we must occupy a position high up in the

building, close to our roof terrace. We can only experience the vibrations of the soul when we function on a high-emotional or a high-mental level.

Attention to the soul

Meditation is the practice of learning to listen attentively to the voice of our soul, while intuition is the ability to acquire a better understanding of its message. During meditation we focus on causal vibrations and frequent practice will strengthen our connection with the soul and improve the absorption of the causal energies. This enables us to take possession of our roof terrace from where we will develop a different take on the world. When we retreat in silence to listen to the voice of our soul, we will also become aware of other sounds that continue to clamour for our attention from the lower floors. Our physical body tells us it is hungry and thirsty, in pain and discomfort. The same is true of our emotional body, which wants to be entertained or demands attention in compensation for all those times it felt short-changed. Likewise, our mental body clamours for attention with a never-ending stream of thoughts. There is nothing wrong with engaging with these things, but it does not bring us closer to our soul. Whatever happens on those other floors is not by definition bad for us. On the contrary, unless we pay attention to all of those floors we cannot construct a stable roof terrace. Nothing may be skipped, which is why we need so many incarnations before we get round to the top floor. But eventually all of those lower floors will have to be vacated again or else our soul journey will grind to a halt.

To liberate ourselves from the desires of our lower floors we need a strong will. Developing that will is a prerequisite for focusing on our ultimate goal on earth, i.e. the development of our soul consciousness. It feels as if, when climbing our building, seductive voices call out to us on every floor, inviting us in and encouraging us to forget all about that boring roof terrace for now. Our emotional and mental vibrations will only lose their grip on us if we lavish less attention on them. When, in due course, their din subsides, the voice of our soul will become more resonant.

Consciousness and matter

As we develop our physical, emotional and mental bodies, we create ever higher levels of consciousness. In the process, the *material* of which the successive floors are constructed changes as does the *consciousness* we experience on each floor. The bottom levels have a coarse structure, and the lower we are in the building the more egocentric and cold-hearted our behaviour will be. The upper floors are made up of increasingly fine matter, and the higher we climb the more loving we become. The floor which is most familiar to us and where we feel most comfortable represents the average level of consciousness on which we function. Consciousness development is the constant moving on to a higher level. But for this we have to first construct that floor and this is done by cultivating the feelings, thoughts and behaviours that correspond with that higher level. We can only experience consciousness on the levels we have already activated. More than just consciousness experiences, emotions and thoughts also represent matter and as such they form the building blocks with which we construct our envelopes. And so we keep working on our dwelling. Harnessing our attention, we select the raw materials that determine the appearance of the house of our consciousness and the position we occupy in it. When we focus on lower emotions we reinforce the bottom floors, whereas loving feelings help build the upper storeys. The same applies to our thinking. The loftier our thoughts, the subtler the mental material we accumulate with each thought. By being selective about what we admit into our consciousness, we can gradually transform our building and our position in it.

Increasing vibrations

Each thought and each emotion activates a certain frequency pattern, attracts corresponding matter and thus influences the composition of our envelopes. So if we want to refine these we need to direct our attention, where possible, to positive energies, dwell on our good experiences and ignore the bad ones. When we focus our attention on the highest levels of consciousness – those just within reach – these will be activated, while the lower levels will subside and lose their significance. The average level we occupy is made up of a combination of positive and negative qualities. Development means an increase in the positive qualities and a decrease in the negative ones. Spiritual growth does *not* require the suppression of our ‘lower urges’. By focusing on our ‘higher’ qualities, we will, over time, automatically lose our interest in the ‘lower’ things.

Through meditation we can replace the coarse material of our bodies with increasingly fine matter and become more susceptible to the higher vibrations. As the contact with our soul improves in this way, we will eventually begin to perceive its signals as clear information that can provide an orientation for our everyday lives. Likewise, when we draw inspiration from beauty or goodness, we ally ourselves to positive qualities and purify our own vibrations. We can also devote ourselves to the development of a mindset that represents a particular attribute of the soul for us, such as compassion, patience or sincerity. This is not about pretending to be holier than we really are, but about tuning into the qualities of the soul. Initially we may feel as though we are playing a role, but over time this role will come more easily to us and the new vibrations we generated artificially at first will start to feel more natural. We then gradually *become* our soul.

We can also project an ideal future image of ourselves. Who or what could or would I like to be? How would I like to develop? We can then orientate ourselves on this ultimate ‘self’ like on a beacon. How does it feel to be this better ‘self’? What kind of behavior does it call for? Over time the new vibrations will begin to feel increasingly natural to us until, eventually, we become this new ‘self’. At that point we let go of our lower identity and connect with a higher version of ourselves. It will feel so natural that it seems as though we were never any ‘other’.

Ideals are not the only means through which we can increase our vibrations. We can also tune into a higher frequency by enjoying art or music. Physical splendour, the beauty of a flower, a landscape, the grandeur of the starry sky – these are all experiences that help us transcend ourselves and that put us in touch with a purer version of ourselves. The people we associate with also make an important contribution to our orientation. We all possess a unique frequency pattern that we transmit to our surroundings and through which we influence others. And we in turn are influenced by the people around us. If they have a bright aura they will lift us. If, on the other hand, we spend a lot of time in the company of people with a low frequency, it can have repercussions for our own energy levels.

Nothing boosts our energy more effectively than feelings of love and infatuation. They lift us effortlessly to a higher level of functioning, thereby enabling us to transcend ourselves. Infatuation brings us into contact with higher emotions, while love introduces us to the level of essential consciousness (46). Unfortunately, love is not always a given, infatuations do not last forever and sometimes we are simply very unlucky in our relationships. Fortunately, there are other methods that can help us increase our consciousness, such as meditation.

The esoteric approach to meditation

In the esoteric form of meditation we concentrate, preferably at a set time daily, on a positive thought or an inspiring idea. For example, we can start the day by thinking, for 10 minutes, of an

ideal we would like to realize. By concentrating on this subject and visualizing it as vividly as possible, we create internal images in the emotional and mental worlds. After we have finished meditating, the generated patterns will settle in our subconscious from where, like small transmitters, they will continue to activate our goal. This can be a certain mission or vocation in life, aimed at helping mankind. By committing ourselves to this goal, we link the mental concept with the driving force of our emotions. According to the law of activation, everything we focus on will, in some way and at some point in time, take shape in our reality. Since many other laws of life are involved, the end result may not be quite what we had imagined, but the consistent, targeted attention to a higher goal will always have positive consequences for us.

In order to calm bewildering energies on the emotional and mental levels as much as possible, we are advised to conclude every meditation session with a few minutes of inner silence and use them to tune into a loving universe and express our gratitude for everything we have received. Not only does this help us to let go of thoughts and feelings, it also encourages us to concentrate on our soul, so that the objectives we set ourselves remain in harmony with our soul's desire.

The daily and relaxed reiteration of the same theme will, after a while, produce a stable inner pattern. By focusing on positive thoughts and feelings, we will fill our body with higher vibrations. And by simultaneously ignoring the negative vibes from our surroundings as best we can, we will purify the material of which our bodies are composed.

The essence of esoteric meditation is *attention*. Through attention we attract a specific energy, and because our orientation also activates the corresponding reality it enables us to shape our future. If the energies with which we connect are at odds with the cosmic patterns around us, our efforts will cause friction and feel like a struggle. But when our desires are in harmony with the vibrations at the level of the soul they will resonate in unison with the cosmic energies and be reinforced by them. In other words, we can influence the way our reality unfolds. This form of meditation need not last very long. Starting every day with mindful attention to a constructive theme or an ideal is all it takes to have a shining beacon in our subconscious for the rest of the day. But we must be wary of creating anxiety. Meditation is not meant to be forced, cause headaches or make us feel restless. Energies that are too powerful for us to handle will destabilize our system and perhaps even cause damage. Meditation is supposed to be a relaxing experience, so caution and the right dosage are paramount.

Everything we desire and focus on is activated in our consciousness and will eventually influence our reality. But we must bear in mind that everything comes at a price and that we are responsible for what we receive. The sole purpose of our possessions is to increase consciousness, both ours and others'. If we use our talents to boost our ego, to feel special or to differentiate ourselves from others, we will block our cosmic nourishment. But when we let ourselves be guided by our soul, we tune into a higher truth. By resonating with this energy, we will increase our own vibrations and leave behind our selfish desires.

Therapy

When we quieten our day-to-day activities, stop seeking non-stop distraction in radio, television and social contacts and instead make regular retreats into silence to tune into our soul, we automatically allow all kinds of hidden feelings to surface from our subconscious. All of the frustrations and irritations we had so carefully suppressed may emerge then, and this is absolutely crucial if not always immediately obvious to us. Perhaps unbeknownst to us, our suppressed emotions have a big effect on our lives. Coloring our perceptions and influencing our behavior, they can prevent us from having a harmonious relationship with our environment. This is why it is good to eliminate them

from our system. When we meditate for the first time there is a chance that instead of hearing the soft voice of our soul, we will hear the cries of our unresolved problems clamouring for attention. So instead of calm we will encounter mostly agitation. This is why many people stop meditating and seek distraction instead, away from all those distressing feelings. And yet it is good to admit this agitation. By establishing contact with our hidden traumas, we actually begin to clear them up. But here, too, moderation is called for. Because the sudden confrontation with those suppressed problems can be frightening and cause new traumas, it is important to properly dose the agitation that surfaces from our subconscious. The stream of unwelcome internal images can be curbed with the help of concentration exercises. While meditating, we can focus on a flower or a burning candle, for instance. Or we can use music or repeat a mantra to ourselves. In this way we can avoid being deluged with negative thoughts and emotions.

We expect meditation to bring us peace and quiet, but initially it will only trigger our inner unrest and generate negative feelings. Unfinished business we left behind on the lower floors will clamour for our attention and force us to deal with all of our suppressed problems and frustrations before we can find peace and quiet. If we want to develop our consciousness, we cannot just reach for the subtle worlds – that would be a flight from everyday reality – we must also purify our thoughts and feelings, since all inner patterns that are out of harmony with the soul can impede our growth. Meditation is a method for tuning into the higher regions as well as an effective means of identifying old issues and thereby coming to terms with them.

The rubbish left behind on the lower floors can create quite a bit of turmoil for anyone taking up meditation. But the difficulty here is not just the scars we have sustained in this life and that demand our attention. There is another problem. Over the course of numerous incarnations, our consciousness has been built up from the lower levels. As a consequence, it still contains patterns that belong to those lower levels. Feelings of anger and greed and the fear of missing out originate in those levels. These are the convictions of our ‘former self’, which no longer suit our ‘new self’ which is intent on connecting with the soul. Old outlooks on life resurface during meditation, while continuing to exert a major influence on our day-to-day lives, especially when we go through life without really thinking much. Those primitive patterns will then come to the surface and cause confusion. This continues until we finally clear them up once and for all. All of these old, dissonant patterns in our emotional and mental bodies block our causal consciousness. They must be transformed before we can develop any further.

The turmoil and confusion we experience during meditation are signs that we are processing negative energy patterns by removing them from our subconscious. This is a delicate procedure that calls for a cautious approach. By tapping into old energy patterns and experiencing them we can release the blocked energies and resolve the trauma. This may sound simple enough, but it is not. We may come up against major issues. Persistent traumas can trouble us for days, months, perhaps even years before they are fully resolved. In that case it may be advisable to call in the help of an experienced therapist.

If all we do is ‘look’ at our problems, but never really feel them, there will be no release of those energies. In fact, all we do is feed them with fresh attention, making them bigger not smaller. Relatively insignificant memories can be blown up out of all proportion. We can end up intensifying unpleasant, nearly forgotten memories to such an extent that we acquire a post-traumatic stress disorder. Working with traumatic events from the past is certainly no child’s play. Handling them requires the right balance between *observing*, *feeling* and *letting go*. Most of the problems we encounter are ones we can clear up ourselves, simply by taking enough time for them and not rushing anything. But when we feel that we cannot do it under our own steam we must not hesitate to seek help.

Living on the level of soul consciousness

The building we inhabit, and which we have built over the course of many incarnations, consists of a great number of floors. The bottom floors represent our rougher, survival-oriented qualities as well as our selfish thoughts and emotions. The upper floors are full of loving feelings and clear insights. We always identify with the level on which we function at a certain moment in time and we are more or less selfish or altruistic depending on the floor on which we have settled. The worldview that goes with this level is our 'truth'.

Meditation is a tool that can lift us to higher levels. In the process we will attract increasingly fine matter and experience increasingly subtle feelings and ideas. Ultimately, we will arrive at the top floor of our building, our causal body. When we do eventually settle there, we will identify with our soul.

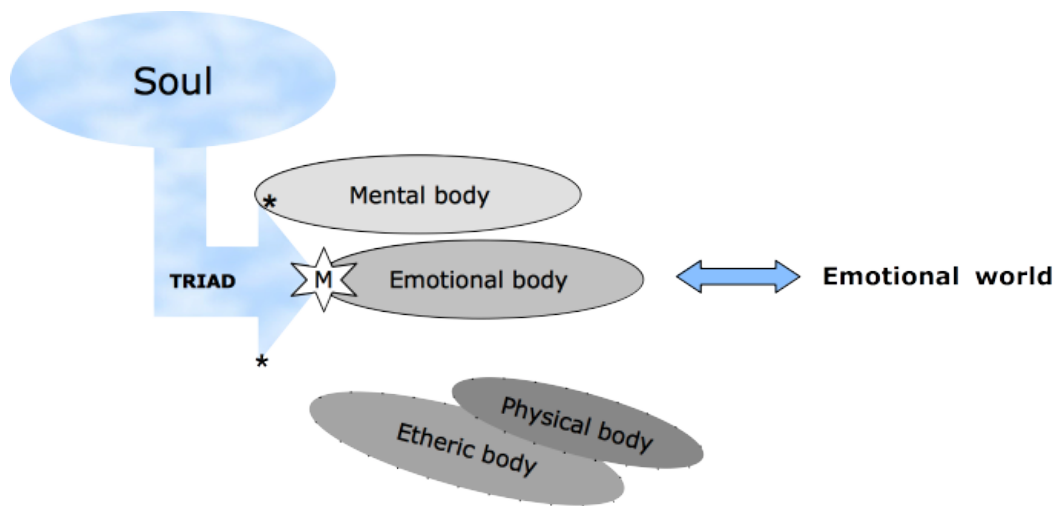
But while we live on the lower floors, they will determine our worldview, one that is based on a fear of mortality. All those who identify with their lower bodies can be hurt, but as soon as we start identifying with our soul we stop worrying so much about our needs, feelings and thoughts. Once we get to the level of the soul, we become relatively invulnerable as well as unconcerned about our personal living conditions. We can develop a stoic attitude to life and stop lavishing unnecessary attention on discomfort or setbacks or caring about the approval of others. And as we no longer need to suppress any thoughts or feelings, they lose their grip on us. Living on the level of the soul, we are no longer governed by our emotional or mental confusion, since we have abandoned our identification with the lower-emotional and the lower-mental bodies. Our goals in life are now no longer determined by our vulnerable and mortal ego, but by a taste of immortality, and therefore no longer confined to this one incarnation alone. The soul derives its wisdom from cosmic inspiration, giving us access to an alternative reality which we cannot enter through thinking and which in fact we cannot think up. Meditation helps us put all thoughts and feelings into perspective. It points us towards a causal truth that encompasses and at the same time transcends those thoughts and feelings.

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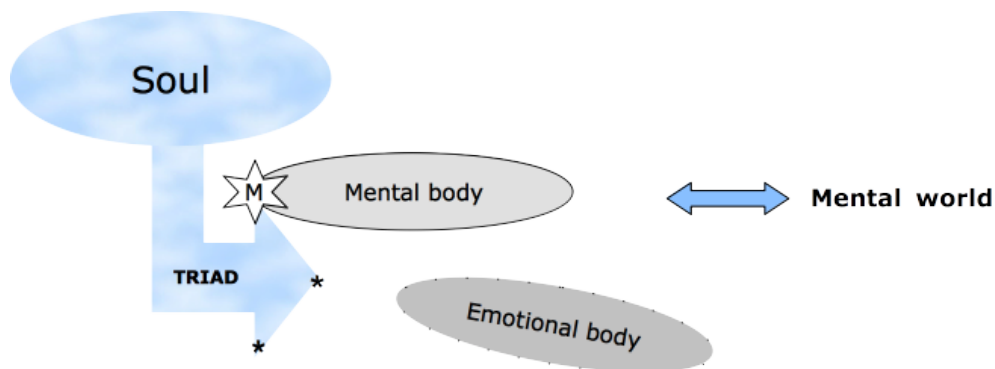
Our journey through ‘death’

Life, death and ongoing life

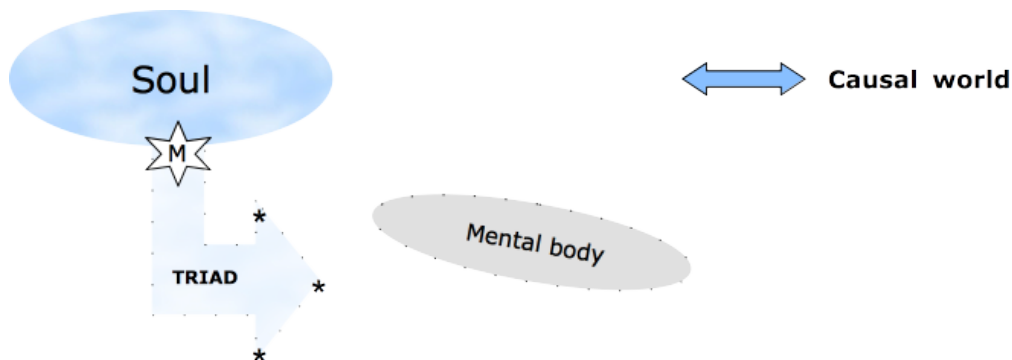
In life we primarily identify with our physical body. It provides the basis from which we orientate on the physical world. This is why many people think they ‘are’ their body and that its death equals their own death, the definitive end of everything. They are in for a big surprise! Although death marks the end of our physical body and with it our earthly existence, our subtle envelopes remain intact and give us access to a new world. At the moment of our passing, the link between our physical body and our other envelopes is broken. At that point both the organism with which we identified in life and the etheric envelope will disintegrate, because they are no longer linked to the soul. Together with the monad, our remaining envelopes will continue to exist, and our emotional envelope will now bring us to the emotional world. In other words, ‘life’ goes on, except that we now find ourselves in a different world. (A more detailed description of this process will follow later.)



We live on in the emotional world until our emotional body too is ‘worn out’, falls apart and ‘dies’. This is our ‘*second death*’.



Once we have also lost our emotional envelope, our identification undergoes another shift. As we acquire consciousness within our mental envelope, we end up in the mental world. There will come a time when this body, too, ceases to exist, and this marks our *third death*. Once all of our mortal bodies (physical, emotional and mental) have been lost, the triad will have completed its task. Its content will then be transferred to the large causal envelope, the soul, where our monad will stay until the next incarnation.



If we learnt to function on the level of the soul during our life on earth, we will have a more or less conscious experience of the causal world. If not, we will pass our time here sleeping.

We have devoted a considerable part of our life to the construction and maintenance of our various bodies. The quality of our daily diet has helped shape the quality of our physical body and something similar applies to the emotional and mental bodies. With our thoughts and emotions, we have accumulated building materials for our emotional and mental envelopes, which have come to reflect who we are. With heartless, aggressive or indifferent behaviour, we add lower-emotional material to our emotional envelope, while with loving and caring behaviour, we introduce higher-emotional material. Our mental envelope is nourished in a similar way, depending on the quality of our thinking. But in a process that mirrors the construction and eventual demise of our physical body, all of these envelopes will gradually begin to display signs of wear and tear and die, eventually leaving nothing but our causal envelope. We will inhabit this causal body, either waking or sleeping, until we reincarnate.

We are mistaken in thinking that death robs us of something. In fact, death frees us from an organism that no longer functions properly. Death *gives* us something, i.e. the chance of a fresh start. In each incarnation we develop a little further, so each life brings us a little closer to our own consummation. We can be confident that our next life will be better than our previous one in many respects. In other words, we have every reason not to worry about leaving this life and to be hopeful about the new one.

Victory over death

At the start of our human evolution we are largely unaware of ourselves and of the world around us. But over time our consciousness will gradually increase. This happens as a result of the interaction between our monad and our physical, emotional and mental envelopes. We are aware of our existence by the grace of these bodies, so it should not come as a surprise that we identify with them. We know no better than that we 'are' our bodies, and because of their limited lifespan, we experience our own existence as temporary and limited as well. At the start of each new incarnation,

when we have new bodies at our disposal, it feels as if we are alive for the first time, because we have no memories of a previous life. This is why we experience each new incarnation as a one-off and accidental event. But the situation changes as soon as we acquire soul consciousness. When that happens we gain access to our permanent – causal – envelope which remains intact, incarnation after incarnation. Not only do we now have access to the wisdom stored in our soul, we can also move from one incarnation to the next with a ‘waking consciousness’ and thus connect our successive lives. This continuity of consciousness effectively means victory over death.

Sleeping and dying

While we are sleeping, our organism and its etheric envelope are in bed recovering from a hectic day. Our other envelopes are not tired and require no rest. So while we are asleep they leave the physical body to explore the emotional world. They remain connected to the organism through an energy cord, the Sutratma, and generally stay fairly close by so they can return at the first sign of unrest. Only the subtle bodies of more highly developed individuals can move further from the physical body and travel near-limitless distances to carry out special tasks somewhere in the emotional world. Our waking consciousness is generally oblivious to those activities.

Something entirely different happens when we die. Upon death, the etheric envelope detaches itself from the organism. Once this separation is complete – a process that takes approximately twenty-four hours – the other envelopes can free themselves from the etheric body. Both the organism and the etheric body will then disintegrate, while the monad stays behind with the remaining envelopes. Throughout this process a great deal of information is transferred, first from the organism to the etheric envelope and from there to the causal envelope. So as not to disrupt this process too much, it is advisable to grant the dying person peace and quiet until roughly twenty-four hours after the official time of death, and to treat the body of the deceased as if he or she had not yet died. During this time the monad (encased by the emotional, mental and causal envelopes) lingers near the organism and is capable of observing everything that happens around it. Since the deceased, freed from his physical body, now experiences the world through the emotional envelope he has become much more sensitive to the emotions of the people around him. After all, his emotional experiences are no longer cushioned by the physical body. Violent expressions of sorrow or despair can confuse him and prevent him from devoting himself to his new existence. In fact, it is good for the deceased if those who stay behind express their love and gratitude and wish him a good journey, so he can depart without feeling too upset.

The process of dying

There are no hard and fast rules with respect to the process of dying. The entire procedure can be completed within minutes, but it can also take many, many hours. Subsequently, the deceased will embark on his journey through the hereafter. Upon arrival he will be met by friends or relatives who have died before him or others who can show him around his new environment. People who have had a near-death experience talk about meeting a loving, luminous figure there. This is Augoeides greeting his protégé after death. Sometimes the deceased will linger a while in the immediate vicinity of his physical body. People who are susceptible to this will be able to ‘see’ the deceased walking around at his own funeral.

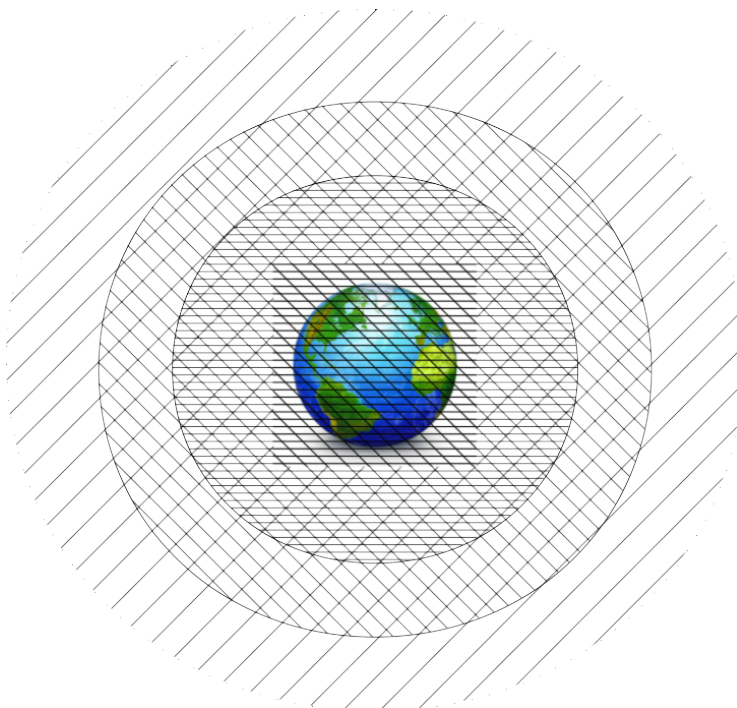
Following the death of the organism, the deceased will find himself in a transitional phase that can be extremely confusing. By orientating on the light and thanks to the help of his guides, he will generally ease into the emotional world. However, if the deceased always emphatically denied the possibility of life after death it will be difficult for him to reconcile himself with the new

situation and there is a chance that he will not be able to accept his death. After all, as far as he is concerned he is not dead; fully conscious, he is still among living people who, strangely enough, no longer react to his presence. Likewise, if somebody has died very suddenly, the new surroundings he now finds himself in can be extremely confusing. The emotional world he experiences around him looks so much like the old familiar physical reality and is so intricately tied up with it that the deceased may refuse to accept his death for quite some time. He may be convinced that he is still in the physical world, because he keeps encountering familiar people. He can sense their emotions and experience his connectedness with them. The main difference, and the big problem for him, is that these (living) people ignore him and that he cannot get through to them. This state of confusion will continue until the deceased becomes aware of his situation and is persuaded by his guides to say goodbye to the physical reality. Only then can he enter the emotional world. Once there, the deceased will be looked after and escorted. He is also given the opportunity to evaluate his past life under the guidance of Augoeides. This is a loving process during which the deceased can review and appraise his own life. In response to his experiences he can then decide to adopt specific tasks in a subsequent life which will enable him to learn special lessons and to rectify mistakes.

Different worlds

What are we to make of these emotional, mental and causal worlds in which we end up after death? They are nothing other than the earth's envelopes!

All natural forms, such as stones, plants, animals and people, serve as a body for a developing monad. The same is true of stars and planets and therefore also of our earth. Mother earth is nothing other than the physical body of a monad (and in this case we are talking about a highly developed collective of monads) with a consciousness on *level 43*. Like us, the earth has a physical body as well as an emotional, mental and causal envelope. But it also possesses a number of higher envelopes on *levels 46-43*. In other words, what we call earth, the globe, is only the 'hard core' of a much bigger collection of bodies. The subtle bodies that form our aura can extend to a few meters beyond our organism. Earth's emotional, mental and causal envelopes are obviously much bigger, extending to many thousands of kilometers beyond its organism. The earth's higher envelopes (*46-43*) reach so far into space that they touch the sun and the other planets. By this mechanism all the planets are always connected, so that the 'empty' space between the sun and the planets is not empty at all, but filled with the envelopes of all of these celestial bodies.



The earth's physical body forms the physical world as we know it. Likewise, the earth's emotional, mental and causal envelopes form our emotional, mental and causal worlds. The emotional world we end up in after death is nothing other than the earth's emotional envelope. Because the higher worlds penetrate and envelop the lower ones, the emotional, mental and causal worlds are not only on the earth's surface, but also above and below it. In the same way that the element of air belonging to the physical earth can be found mainly in the higher spheres and less so in the earth's core, so too are the various envelopes concentrated in particular places. The bottom levels of the earth's emotional body (48: 6,7) are situated underneath the earth's surface. The subsequent levels (48: 4,5) more or less overlap with that surface, while the higher-emotional levels (48: 1-3) extend far into space. After death, when we have lost our physical body, we end up in the emotional world that stretches geographically from deep below the earth's surface to far above it. The mental and causal worlds, where we will arrive later on our journey, reach much further into space.

After death our first port of call is that part of the emotional world that overlaps with the earth's surface (*level 48: 4,5*). This bears great resemblance to the life we are familiar with and thus minimizes our confusion upon our first encounter with death. Depending on our destination, we continue to travel onwards. When we move on to the lower-emotional areas (48: 6,7), we end up on the levels that are situated primarily below the earth's surface, the so-called underworld. But when our journey takes us to the higher-emotional areas, or to the mental and causal levels, we make our way to worlds that extend far into space. All these levels are not strictly separated, these worlds penetrate one another in the same way as fluid saturates a sponge.

Living in the emotional world

What is it like to be dead? Our arrival in the emotional world will almost always feel like a release after the often slow and painful process of dying. But even after the euphoria of the moment has subsided and everyday life in the emotional world sets in, we will generally be quite happy. As a rule, life there is far more pleasant than in the physical world, primarily because we have been delivered from our physical body. On earth the physical body always demands the most attention. We have to eat and drink and we have all kinds of other physical needs. Besides, our organism is susceptible to pain, illness and accidents. Many of our emotional problems are tied up with our efforts to preserve our physical body. What is more, our feelings of fatigue originate in our physical body. Once we have cast off this body, we need no longer worry about food and drink, although we are free to relive the emotional experiences of eating and drinking as often as we like. We will never be tired again. In fact, we could simply keep going here if we wanted to. As soon as the care for our physical body has fallen away, most of our problems have been solved. And once we have risen above the lower emotions too, we will have moved beyond all the areas where negative experiences are possible.

Once the deceased has cast off his physical body, his emotional body gives him access to the emotional world, and the composition of his envelope determines where exactly he will end up and how long he can stay there. During our life on earth we choose our friends and we like to associate with people who, one way or another, are compatible with us. There is, as it were, an inner resonance that indicates where and with whom we feel comfortable. The same attunement

determines where we will go in the emotional world. Although we are free to go where we please, not all areas are equally accessible to us. The vibration patterns we activated during our physical existence, and which we used to construct our emotional body, determine the place in the emotional world that we feel attracted to.

Our emotional body is made up of various kinds of (emotional) matter that we have accumulated throughout our life. Someone who has nourished mainly lower emotions will have stored mainly lower-emotional material in his envelope by the end of his life. Someone who has had mostly loving feelings, on the other hand, will have built up a body that consists primarily of higher-emotional material. Our focus, during our life on earth, determines the *kind* of material; the intensity of the experienced feelings determines the *quantity*. Someone who has lived an intensely emotional life will therefore have accumulated a great deal more emotional matter than someone who has had a predominantly mental approach.

Similar to our own emotional body, the emotional world is made up of different kinds of material, and the composition of our envelope determines on which level of the emotional world we will end up. Our first port of call is that area of the emotional world that resonates with the lowest material of our emotional envelope and the quantity of that material determines the length of our stay there. This means that, after our initial reception, we will be transferred to an area that corresponds to our lowest emotions. We will stay there until all of this material has been used up. This is where we face up to our 'low' characteristics. For the vast majority of people this will not be particularly traumatic, but for those who have spent their life focused on hatred and violence, this experience, in which they will be confronted with what they have done to others, will be difficult. Fortunately, our sojourn here is only temporary. Like our physical body, our emotional body will also die after a while. During our sojourn in the emotional world the matter that makes up our emotional envelope will gradually dissolve. We lose the coarsest emotional matter first before, layer after layer, the higher material decomposes too. As the lower-emotional matter disappears, the deceased will automatically ascend to the subtler areas with more positive feelings. He will feel as though he is travelling to increasingly beautiful regions inside the emotional world where he also starts feeling increasingly happy. What he does not realize is that he himself is changing, as layer after layer of his emotional envelope disappears. Given that his identification is shifting to higher levels, he too is lifted to ever more luminous areas.

A dead person who has accumulated (a great deal of) low-emotional material (48: 6,7) in his emotional body will end up in that part of the emotional world that represents these feelings. There he will find himself surrounded by others who, like himself, harbour malicious and violent sentiments. What is more, he will experience these emotions far more intensely here than he did back in the physical reality. In this new world, emotional vibrations are not cushioned by the physical body, as they are during our life on earth. Beautiful experiences will be far more intense in the emotional world, just as sombre and fearful experiences will be much more powerful. Because hatred belongs to the bottom level of the emotional world, this area is also called '*hell*' or the '*underworld*'. These emotional layers are situated underneath the earth's surface, and to get there we will have to literally descend into the underworld.

We only end up in 'hell' after we die if our emotional body possesses enough low-emotional matter to connect us with that level. So to all intents and purposes, it has been our own choice to tune into this level. Nobody forced us to come here and nobody is keeping us here against our will. As soon as we distance ourselves from these low energies, by focusing on higher vibrations, we can free ourselves from these areas. Everyone can get the necessary help for this. In fact, asking for help is an act of tuning into positive vibrations through which the doors of this prison will automatically open up.

But the vast majority of people will be spared a sojourn in this low-emotional reality. Most of us never accumulated enough negativity for an orientation on the lowest levels and will therefore start in the more moderate areas. These are the levels that, as far as their emotional experience is concerned, bear the closest resemblance to our everyday, earthly reality. When, after a while, this layer of our emotional body has dissolved, we may move on to the higher-emotional levels where we will experience positive, mystical and even ecstatic feelings. These are also described as the paradisiacal worlds (*level 48: 1-3*). These high levels have no direct relation with physical structures, which is why, once we get to these areas, we have no more contact with either the physical reality or the individuals living there. The world here consists of patterns that originate in our personal or collective imagination. Here we find everything we have created with the help of our positive emotions, including the manifestations of our cultural and religious convictions. Although none of this represents an objective truth, our experiences here are so convincing that we will not doubt their authenticity for a second. It can be compared to reading an exciting book or watching a film. The experiences feel real. But in the case of a book or a film we will be aware that there is another – physical – reality to which we can return from time to time. In the emotional world that physical reality is absent. Life here consists of illusions which we can indulge in as much as we like.

Yet we need not worry about getting lost here. There are guides and teachers on all levels of the emotional world to help people get their bearings. They concentrate *first and foremost* on those in the lowest regions, in the underworld, who would struggle to free themselves without help. *In the second instance* their attention is extended to a large group of people whose interests on earth were restricted to material goods. Their emotional qualities are therefore primitive and underdeveloped, making it difficult for them to function in the emotional reality. *Thirdly*, the occupants of the higher regions also receive the necessary help. They can gradually rise above their emotional experiences by shifting their focus to their mental consciousness, thus minimizing their stay in the emotional world and preparing for the mental world.

The emotional reality gives us the opportunity to process our experiences in the physical world, for example by going through all of our life experiences again –from our own perspective as well as from that of the others involved. This enables us to get a sense of our impression on others and what we may have done to them. It is also a pleasant period of rest and relaxation after an intensive life. Our stay in the emotional world does not contribute a great deal to the development of our consciousness. The guides assisting us in the emotional world are not great masters or top teachers. These are only found on the higher levels, from *level 46* onwards. In the emotional world we tend to be accompanied by other deceased persons who know their way around here by now. Their wisdom is limited, but it suffices to assist anybody who needs help here.

Living in the mental world

Once all of the layers of our emotional body have fully dissolved, our identification shifts to our mental body through which we then live on in the mental world. People who have lived a mentally rich life, and who have a well-developed mental envelope as a result, will be able to express all of their ideas during their lengthy stay here. But for those who were never very well-developed mentally, their stay here will be short; in fact, they will be barely aware of this world. In other words, the duration of our stay can vary widely, depending on the condition of our mental envelope. We can only experience the mental world subjectively, like an internal experience, and all of our mental experiences will be positive because there is no such thing as an ‘underworld’ here. We have already worked through the lower-mental ideas that were entangled with our lower emotions while we were in the emotional world.

While here, we can indulge in all of our ideas and convictions and these need not be in any way related to an objective and verifiable reality. We can imagine ourselves to be divine beings and have all the corresponding experiences. This is why the mental worlds are something described as the 'lower heaven' (and the causal world as the 'higher heaven').

The reality we create in this way in the mental world is not only accessible to us, but to everybody (both dead and alive) capable of resonating with these vibrations. People on earth, for example, can develop convictions that are inspired by patterns from the mental world. They may think that these are lofty ideas, but in actual fact they are merely illusions. Such patterns can form the breeding ground for political convictions, scientific and religious dogmas and the collective beliefs of entire nations.

In everyday reality these convictions are often difficult to refute. We can only tell truth from illusion through constant reference to the physical reality. Those deceased persons who have no more access to the physical world and who are aware only of the mental world cannot possibly verify the truth; they lack an objective frame of reference. In that case only an incipient causal insight can help, because this rests on the objective truth of the soul consciousness.

Living in the causal world

When, finally, our mental body has gone too, all we are left with is our causal envelope, which gives us access to the causal world (47: 1-3). We can only have a conscious experience of that world if we have soul consciousness. If not, we will spend our time here 'unconscious' until our next incarnation.

If, however, we are capable of observing the causal world, we will discover an immense wealth of insight. It is an amorphous world, without structures as we know them from the emotional and mental worlds. In the causal world we experience 'flashes of insight' that are characterized by an objective truth. Whereas the emotional and mental worlds are shaped by our own convictions and desires, the causal world consists of thoughts which originate in much higher levels of reality and which, as a consequence, show great stability and constitute a sublime truth. As such, what we experience there is not fantasy but reality, an *objective causal reality* that far surpasses our *objective physical reality*. It enables us to study the causes and effects of our experiences and to examine both our past and future. This gives us the chance to develop further during our stay in the causal world, something that is practically impossible in the emotional and mental worlds.

Reincarnation

When the time has come for a new incarnation, Augoeides starts looking for a suitable environment for us, selecting our parents and the foetus in which we will incarnate. He then connects our causal envelope with this body, so we can begin to experience the human world again. Incarnation is not a personal choice. Death and rebirth are subject to forces that we are largely unaware of. After all, our personal consciousness development is part of a much greater cosmic process. Besides, we are members of a group, a clan of kindred souls that all incarnate more or less communally. Both our incarnation and the situation we find ourselves in are therefore contingent on the individuals we are linked to. We do not develop for ourselves alone. We also contribute to the group, which in turn is part of an all-encompassing cosmic whole that is beyond our imagination. But that is not to say that there are no individual opportunities or that we have no influence on our development.

All human qualities, physical, emotional as well as mental, must be acquired during our physical incarnations, and more specifically through our own efforts. We can only learn by having

experiences in the physical world. We amass knowledge not through speculation but through linking our ideas to the material reality. Philosophical reflections may be fascinating, but that does not mean that they represent the truth. They are mental patterns without actual meaning. Ideas become truth only when they are based on an objective reality, when they are linked to facts in the physical world. And for this we have to incarnate. In each life we are given the chance to learn new things and to develop our consciousness a little further. Our theoretical concepts about reality are lost at the end of our life, but the results of lived experience are stored in our soul and will be at our disposal again in a subsequent incarnation. In fact, the level of consciousness we have built up in previous incarnations forms the starting point for our next life. It determines our basic attitude, our talents and whether or not we have a certain 'innate' wisdom. Everything we add to that is the result of hard-won struggles with our life experiences, because we can only grow by making an effort. All of our problems are exercises that enable us to convert theories into practical experiences. This is the only way we can claim new wisdom. Once acquired, it will never be lost, even if it lies dormant in our subconscious throughout several incarnations.

Each life is the result of previous incarnations and a preparation for the next, but we have to reactivate our qualities in each one. Each life repeats old lessons, so the familiar wisdom will become more easily accessible to us and will also come to feel more natural. And so we develop, life after life, until we have learnt all of our lessons and we have completed all of our tasks. Our incarnation is largely determined by the law of development and the law of destiny. To get to our final destination, we have to live through as many different situations as possible. But we must remember that reincarnation is not just an individual learning process. It is a *group-based process* as well. We also incarnate, life after life, to restore former contacts, to settle old debts and to help others. Since we are part of a nuclear family, a wider family and a community, we also go through a joint development process. Once we have learnt everything there is to learn and we have settled our karmic debts, we can draw a line under our human experiences. There is no more need to incarnate on this earth. We can, however, opt to return voluntarily, for example to help others or to undertake special tasks.

By the end of our human existence we will have had thousands of lives. We will have been male and female a roughly equal number of times. We will have belonged to all races and cultures, will have adhered to all imaginable religions and philosophies and will have held the most diverse positions. In short, by the time we draw a line under our human evolution, we can look back on a wide range of human experiences.

All of our incarnations are geared towards a single goal: the development of our consciousness. Our life is not a coincidence. We are not born into a random family, or in a random country. Our birth is the outcome of careful planning on the higher levels, which requires a great deal of attention and energy and which is aimed at giving us the best possible chance for growth. Unfortunately, we leave many of the opportunities unused. We tend to assume that life is about doing as many fun things as possible, so that by the end of our incarnation we will have learnt few new lessons. This attitude does not reflect unwillingness but ignorance. Once we realize that we are born with a mission and that we keep coming back until we have fulfilled it properly, we will adopt a different attitude. Our life will seem meaningless while we focus exclusively on the material reality and we fail to grasp its deeper meaning. We need to realize that everything we do has consequences, for our current life as well as our future incarnations, before we can discover the meaning of life.

XV

Towards a new attitude to life

Spiritual living

As human beings we must learn to become autonomous and self-aware individuals, and for this we need the courage to free ourselves from prevailing ideas and our need for other people's approval. We have a long and often lonely road ahead of us as we set about developing the individual qualities that distinguish us from others. The big risk in all this is that we lose our way and get caught up in our own illusions. We are well-advised therefore to always cast a critical eye over everything we do. The merest hint of fanaticism in our conduct or a loss of respect for others with a different opinion should be taken as an indication that we are on the wrong track. Fortunately, we can rely on the support of Augoeides, our guardian angel, who assists us during our voyage of discovery. As long as we live by our lower emotions with their selfish desires, such as the need for prestige and success, that assistance will be limited. But as soon as we stop identifying with our lower levels of consciousness, Augoeides' guidance becomes more tangible. At that point we will also be able to receive help from other guides whose aim is to coordinate human development from the higher worlds.

When we stop identifying with our lower emotions, the vibrations from the bottom levels of our emotional body will no longer influence our monad. This feels as if we have raised ourselves above the violent waves of anger, sadness and frustration. Not because we no longer have those feelings – they do return from time to time – but because they lose their grip on us when we can put them into perspective. The further we retreat from those bottom emotional layers, the more peaceful and loving our lives will become. Our experiences will be calmer, so we can function on the level of higher thinking and later on the level of the soul as well. Then we can accept everything that happens to us, both good and bad, in the knowledge that all of our experiences are in keeping with cosmic laws. Nothing happens without a reason and all actions have consequences. We need to be aware of the laws of life in order to experience harmony in our life. Although we may have little influence on the problems life throws at us (because we simply have to complete our karmic tasks), we do have some control over the way we handle them. As soon as we manage to stop identifying with the lower emotions, we can begin to accept adversity with equanimity and to settle our karmic debts without taking on new burdens.

'*Spiritual*' living, which involves trying to orientate ourselves on the higher levels of consciousness, is no different from '*ordinary*' living. We simply do what we have to do and at least outwardly our conduct will appear largely unchanged. The main difference will be in our mindset, in the way we deal with our experiences. We label events differently. What most people will view as a setback, a disappointment or unfair treatment becomes instead an exercise that will make us stronger, a challenge to continue in the face of adversity and to retain the right focus. Once we refuse to be distracted by the vibrations of our lower envelopes, we can begin to focus on the information we receive from the soul.

Working in the subtle worlds

When the end of our human development is in sight, our interest in the physical reality will gradually decrease. We will shift our focus to the subtle worlds and begin to fulfil our tasks in those. Those distinct realities all react quite differently to our attention. The physical world is massive and sluggish, because it consists of heavy matter, most of which is subject to forces outside us. The emotional and mental worlds, on the other hand, are much less stable. Since they are made up of

volatile materials that obey each and every random thought or emotion, they are just as mobile as our attention. If we want to get anything done in those worlds, we will have to learn to get our thoughts straight, keep our emotions under control and focus our attention. As long as we continue to be governed by emotional and mental confusion we cannot do anything on the subtle levels. If our thoughts ever wander in the physical reality, it will have few if any consequences. Not so in the subtle worlds. In here every thought takes shape, so the result would be chaos if we failed to focus our attention. We must therefore start by developing our *will*, the energy aspect of our monad, the force that enables us to focus our attention. A strong will enables us to concentrate on a single goal, to the exclusion of all others. We can then decide to sacrifice our lower needs in favour of higher ones. By making that sacrifice we free ourselves from the dominance of the lower worlds and we make contact with the higher ones and its corresponding energies. This releases an inner strength that enables us to actually implement our higher goals. As long as we are in two minds about something, distracted by emotions and unsure about what we really want, we will only create chaos and will definitely not be in a position to realize our ideals. But as our willpower increases, so too does our scope to influence the subtle worlds. At the same time our responsibility for everything we activate increases. It requires strict obedience to the laws of life for this process to pass off safely. Every violation of these laws has consequences and the more power we have, the greater those consequences will be. As a result, the room for error becomes smaller, the price we pay for our transgressions greater, and the path we walk narrower. This ‘middle path’, as Buddhism teaches us, is ultimately no wider than a single hair. We can walk it only when we surrender all selfish motives and commit ourselves exclusively to the wellbeing of others and to unity.

Meditating

All forms of meditation are essentially methods through which we can improve our focus on the subtler levels of consciousness. As we do so, we concentrate on light and love or on other positive qualities and thus activate the corresponding frequency patterns in our bodies. Meditation is not just a mental orientation but also a *ritual* in which we choose a particular posture and perhaps also a mantra or an affirmation to support our intentions. This ritual can help us maintain our attention on a particular goal. As we meditate more frequently and gradually become more focused, our outlook on life will alter. Over time, the effects of meditation will make themselves felt in our day-to-day lives and we will even begin to experience our everyday activities in this light. It lends those activities a meditative character so that they too become ritual actions that reinforce our connection with the higher energies, interweaving us more and more closely with a reality that far transcends our isolated self. Every thought and every action this inspires will improve our contact with the higher levels of consciousness. As the connection becomes more solid and more tangible, this new reality will come to dominate our everyday lives. Gradually, the doors of that new world will open up to us, and when that happens we will merge with our soul and be deluged with new insights.

As each higher level of consciousness brings us to a new vision, it transpires that everything we always held to be true may no longer be relevant. Long-held convictions no longer satisfy us, making us wonder why we ever adhered to them in the first place. So with each step towards soul consciousness, we change, as does our take on reality. Insight into the meaning of life is, by definition, impossible in the physical, emotional and mental worlds. This is why we do not realize that those worlds have no intrinsic value, but serve only to develop our soul consciousness and to foster the growth of our ‘self’, the monad. Everything we worry about right now will seem trivial when viewed from a higher perspective. This earthly reality is merely a source of experiences, practice material for our monad. Once we have learnt everything it has to offer, we can leave this

world behind. We will have completed our human evolution. But as long as it keeps us in thrall, it holds us captive, and we obviously have more to learn. When we no longer want anything for ourselves, when we have no more needs and we can devote ourselves fully to others, then we have learnt all of our lessons and we need no longer return to this earth.

When we begin to bring our human incarnations to a close, our qualities will be put to the test. This is why our last couple of lives on earth, despite all the wisdom we will have accumulated by now, will not be easy. In fact, they give us the chance to prove ourselves. Perhaps we will be born under difficult circumstances or we will have our talents denied. The multitude of problems we experience in those lives can only be solved by putting all the lessons from previous incarnations into practice. By coming to grips with our setbacks we settle the last remnants of karmic debt. And once we have shown to possess the required qualities and we pass our exams, we will be admitted to the next levels of consciousness. Once there, we will experience both ourselves and others in an entirely different way. The physical reality, which had always been of paramount importance to us, will have lost its significance then. Possessions will have no more value, since our monad no longer focuses on the material aspect of reality, but on the consciousness aspect. At that point we no longer live for ourselves but for others, and our development will be commensurate with our contribution to the development of humanity as a whole.

The attainment of new levels of consciousness always requires a deliberate and sustained effort, but fortunately we need not worry about accumulating the necessary life lessons. Augoeides, our guardian angel, makes sure we get the right experiences while the Planetary Hierarchy watches over us with every means at its disposal. All we need to do is concentrate on fulfilling the tasks they present us with, the problems that life throws at us at this moment in time. But we should not become dependent, in any way, on our helpers. On the contrary, their task is to help us grow into autonomous and independent individuals. The tasks ahead of us provide us with the opportunity to further develop our qualities and talents. We are tested on our commitment to serve, our drive, our reliability, our perseverance and our willingness to cooperate. Rather than judging or condemning, this test gives the cosmic forces in charge of our evolution the chance to assess our level and offer us the challenges needed for ongoing growth. It is our task to do everything in our power, irrespective of the circumstances and without considering the outcome of our actions. No efforts are wasted. We are not given well-defined assignments, just opportunities to undertake something and it is up to us to make the most of those. We have to create our own tasks, do what we think is necessary. And it is not up to us to judge whether or not we are successful. If we are explicitly targeting success then we are still thinking of ourselves, and it is precisely this 'self' that we must learn to let go. Fanaticism and dogmatism are obstacles to further growth and the same is true of all of our other negative traits. We develop by cultivating the right attitude to life, one with pure motives, and by wholeheartedly accepting others and learning to see their good sides. In other words, the idea is not to meditate and retreat *from the world* but to get to work *in the world*.

A new outlook on ourselves and the world

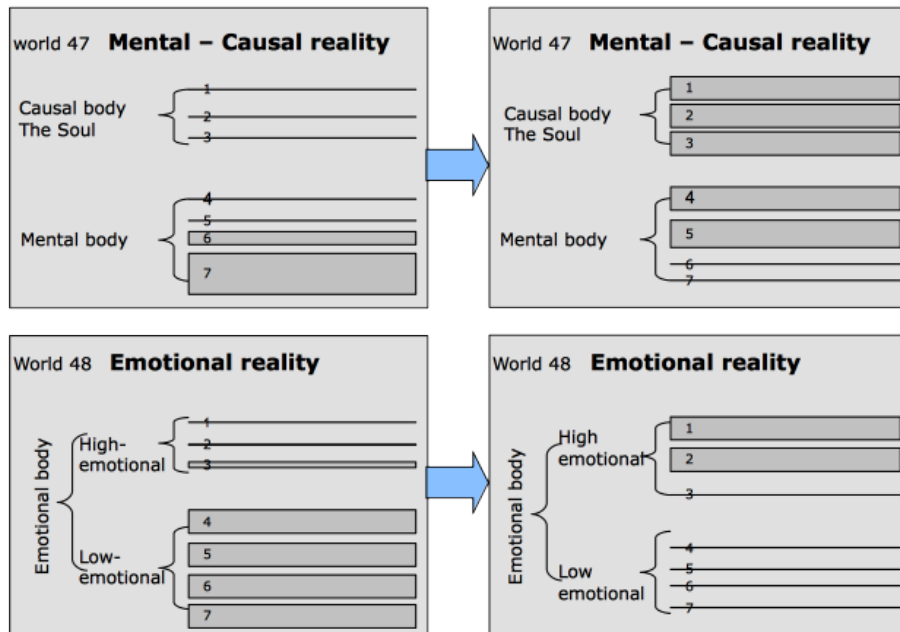
As we learn to integrate more positive qualities in ourselves, we will begin to experience feelings of security, courage and lightheartedness. We will then gain a 'divine indifference' to our own situation, and realize that we are not the victims of chance events, but that each experience flows from previous actions and is intended to generate new wisdom. During this process we will discover that there is no such thing as failure. Each experience is a lesson and nothing happens to us by accident. This life is the outcome of our previous lives and the precursor to subsequent incarnations. We need not worry about the future or regret the past, and we can rest assured that our current

situation is the best possible one for our ongoing development. Once we stop worrying about our personal well-being, we can calmly submit to the greater plan of life. When doing so, we can always be ourselves, take our own decisions and free ourselves from complexes, from guilt and shame, from a bad conscience, shyness and feelings of inferiority. We can then complete our tasks confidently and to the best of our ability, without aiming for fame or success, without pride and ambition and without getting carried away by our emotions. We appreciate what we have and accept setbacks without losing heart. We are respectful and tolerant of others and treat them as our equals. Consciousness development is not something that we work on every now and again when we read a spiritual book or attend a course. We learn our most important lessons at moments when life puts us to the test and we come face to face with unresolved issues. The struggle with these situations results in consciousness growth. Each day anew provides practice and a test. If we can fully accept life, do not lose ourselves in our problems and do all tasks as best we can, we will automatically grow towards ever higher levels of consciousness.

XVI Unity

Structure of envelopes in **low consciousness development**. The higher levels have not yet been activated.

Structure of envelopes in **high consciousness development**. The higher levels have been activated, the lower ones have been abandoned.



Consciousness

Transcending our 'self'

The development of consciousness, throughout all of our incarnations, results in the activation of the higher parts of our envelopes, those devoted to our connection with others. The lower levels, which are all about separation, will gradually fade in the process. During our final incarnations on earth, our emotional body will contain only the very subtlest emotional material (48: 1,2), with the result that our emotions calm down. This enables us to carry out our tasks without getting distracted by selfish considerations. A similar process takes place in our mental body. Lower thinking will fade and make way for higher thinking (47: 4,5). This puts us in a position to formulate clear insights without the interference of confusing emotions or personal preferences.

The activation of our higher emotions and our higher thinking will give us access to our soul consciousness (47: 1-3), which in turn gives us access to the next level up: unity consciousness (46). Access to these two higher worlds rests on two pillars, the *devotion* of our higher emotions and the *wisdom* of higher thinking. Devotion is rudderless if it lacks wisdom, and wisdom is hard and cold without devotion. Both are necessary and we cannot achieve complete soul consciousness (47:1) unless we possess both qualities. With them we become complete human beings and conclude an important phase in our development. But soul consciousness is merely our *provisional* goal. Reaching it may mark the conclusion of our human development, but it is not the end of our journey. Far from it. From there we go on to the essential level (or unity consciousness), where we experience unity with everything and everyone.

Our causal envelope, our soul, has isolated us from others and has thrown us upon our own resources to develop our identity and self-awareness. But at the same time this isolation hampers our growth, because in order to grow we actually need to connect with others. This is why, at some point, we will have to say goodbye to this causal wrap, exchange it for an essential envelope (*at*

level 46) and thereby transcend the level of human existence. When we do so, the content of our soul is not lost, but transferred to our new envelope. This accommodates not just the contents of our own soul, but also those of a number of other people. The wisdom of several individuals is combined, which means we can share each other's consciousness without losing our sense of identity. But for this our self-awareness must have reached an adequate level of maturity and that does not happen until we have completed our soul development.

While praying or meditating, mystics on the highest levels of emotional consciousness (48:1,2) can make contact with the lowest level of the essential world (46:7). There they encounter unity consciousness, an overwhelming insight that enables them to experience the mystical unity of all things, the '*Unio Mystica*'. On that level we are no longer an individual who is part of a greater whole, but we have actually become that greater whole. It is an indescribable experience of wholeness and connectedness, which is directly related to the emotional reality and can therefore be accessed from the highest emotions. But although a mystic can experience unity consciousness while meditating, he cannot take any action on this level. For this he has to complete his mental and causal development first.

Essential consciousness is an experience of unity in which all duality has dropped away. There is no more difference between object and subject, between you and me. Both have now become one in a way that can only be fully grasped once we have reached this level ourselves. Within the essential reality we share each other's consciousness. We experience the other's consciousness as if it was our own, and, vice versa, the other experiences us as 'himself'. The contents of our envelopes have become freely accessible to the members of the group, so that everybody has access to the wisdom that others have contributed while retaining their distinct identities. Even in unity consciousness, the monad of each individual still possesses its own unique character because everybody has evolved in his or her own way. But our sense of 'personality' (our ego) is something we will lose. It is based on the contents of our emotional and mental envelopes and the more they empty out, the more we cast off our personality. In the end, our isolated 'self' loses its significance to us, because there is no longer any discrepancy between you and me. The essential experience of 'self' has become an experience of 'everything', and 'everything' is now experienced as 'self'. Until we actually possess unity consciousness we cannot really imagine this, but something similar happens in a well-functioning family. The father and mother dedicate themselves to the whole family. Rather than acting out of self-interest, they act in the best interest of the family without feeling in any way short-changed. After all, they *are* the family and everything they do for the family they ultimately do for themselves.

Now it becomes clear why it is so important that we dedicate ourselves to others. Viewed from the essential level, we *are* those others. And this is a fact, even though at present, on the lower levels of consciousness, we are unaware of it. The truth exists, even when we do not yet recognize it as such. If we want to experience those higher insights, we have to connect with others. To do so, we must learn to let go of our ego and to accept the other fully and unconditionally. As long as we have any kind of reservation or aversion, unity consciousness will be out of our reach. Now we also understand why the lower material of our envelopes must be replaced by higher material. Lower emotions and lower thoughts cause us to focus on ourselves, on our own benefit, and to pass judgement on others. Unity consciousness not only requires that we focus on unity, but also that we empty our lower envelopes and let go of the corresponding *personality*. That is not the same as our *identity*. We derive our identity from our monad, which is immortal.

Essential love

The most distinctive experience on the essential level is unconditional love. This does not compare to the emotional (or sentimental) love we know here on earth and which is only a pale imitation of essential love. When experienced through the *lower emotions*, love is primarily selfish. We want to be loved or admired or cared for. The other is supposed to be there for us, or else we will no longer love him or her. But when experienced through the *higher emotions*, we want to give love, and this can assume the form of infatuation, admiration or dedication.

Essential love is of an entirely different order. It is *not* an emotion. On this level love manifests itself as 'will'. It is the force that provides the orientation for our consciousness and it is experienced here as a connecting essence that is no longer focused on itself, as is often the case in emotional love. Even before we start functioning on the essential level we can get some sense of what unity consciousness is all about. This happens when we discover that essential love does not ask anything for itself, that it just wants to help the other without getting anything back. It is unconditional love in which we disregard our own needs. Forgetting ourselves means forgetting the desires of our temporary bodies, and we can only do this when they stop clamouring for our attention. The unqualified acceptance of the other is possible only when we have conquered our fears and desires. This then paves the way for essential love. Becoming one with the other requires identifying with the other, and for this we have to admit that person's consciousness without distortions. We can only do so once we have emptied out the contents of our own emotional and mental envelopes. There is no room for the other while we remain full of ourselves. Only somebody whose lower envelopes have calmed down is capable of giving unconditional love and of connecting with the essential level.

All is one

Essential consciousness is an experience of unity. The whole universe is part of that unity, and that includes not only the consciousness aspect but also matter and energy. All is one! The extent to which we can experience this depends on the level of our development and this in turn depends on our attitude towards that unity. The more we focus on unity, the more we will be able to develop that sense of unity inside ourselves. All is one, but we need to attain the level of essential consciousness (46) to experience that unity.

One of the consequences of this unity is that we share our consciousness with others. But that is not all. All matter becomes communal property too. Everything belongs to everyone and even what we 'possess' and consider to be our personal property is still part of that collective unity. We only experience it as our *personal* property because we feel distinct from the other. But this is an illusion, as is our personal property. Nothing truly belongs to us; everything belongs to everybody, the whole universe is ours collectively. All of our material possessions, as well as all the inspiration, insight and wisdom we have received are only on loan to us. It is up to us to use them properly. These things have been entrusted to us, in the hope that we handle them responsibly. We must manage our talents and material possessions to the best of our ability. They are not evidence of our superiority. Rather, their purpose is to support evolution and to contribute to the development of both our own and other people's consciousness. We can extend the familial analogy here. The family, too, forms a unity, whether its members are aware of it or not. If one of the parents were to use the family budget for themselves, with the excuse that they happen to be the named bank account holder, they would short-change the family. When we claim more than a fair share of our collective riches for ourselves, we violate the law of unity. When, in whatever way, we come to possess more means than others or happen to have special talents, this also carries special responsibilities. That is not to say that we should simply give away all of our possessions. Such a move could prevent others from taking responsibility for their lives. Unless we are scrupulous

enough, our assistance can actually activate negative and destructive forces. In other words, we must support positive developments and we are responsible for the way we handle our qualities and our riches. Everything has karmic consequences. Living in comfort or having certain talents is a challenge, a test, set to us to see if we can handle these things properly. Others may lose their possessions for the exact same reason. Growth means letting go and any kind of attachment to material acquisitions can be an obstacle to the development of our consciousness. For the time being the unity consciousness that we aspire to is only a mental concept, an idea. Although we cannot actually experience that unity until we reach the essential level, we can try and behave in accordance with it before we get there.

Matter and consciousness on the essential level

As long as we identify with our physical body we live in the physical world, where material possessions form our main point of reference and give us a sense of security. On the essential level we no longer focus on physical matter. Instead we live our lives according to the consciousness aspect. This shift in orientation first reveals itself when we start experiencing reality on the higher-emotional levels. At that stage we stop identifying others with their physical body, and start seeing them first and foremost as individuals with different character traits. On the level of the soul this shift from matter to consciousness continues until finally, on the essential level, the material reality loses all significance and becomes completely subordinate to consciousness. Once we have reached this level we need no longer incarnate as human beings. Matter has lost its meaning here and is important only as the carrier of consciousness. On the essential level matter has no fixed shape or rigid structure, because it is entirely at the service of consciousness.

XVII

The twelve labours of Hercules

Orientation

If we want to reach the causal and essential levels of consciousness, meditation alone is not enough. It is important that we cultivate specific skills by carrying out our tasks in everyday life. So if we want to complete our human development, we will have to buckle down to work! Henry Laurency passed down a list of what he considers to be the twelve essential qualities. He calls them '*The twelve labours of Hercules*', because working on these qualities is an almost superhuman task, which can indeed lift us above human level. These twelve labours render our consciousness growth more concrete. They help us tune into the vibration patterns associated with the level of the soul and the essential level (47: 1-3 and 46: 1-7). By developing these qualities we gain access to these worlds. Fortunately, we need not have full command of them for the time being. According to Laurency, it is enough to hone some of them to perfection and to partially implement the others (for at least fifty percent). We describe them here in random order.

1. Have faith in life

We can devote ourselves to life, secure and confident in the knowledge that there is no such thing as failure. Every situation is a lesson and even if we do not achieve our goals, our efforts will still yield experience. We can take comfort from the thought that we can learn more from mistakes and setbacks than from successes. Something that comes easily to us must be something we were already familiar with, so it cannot offer much fresh insight. Something that takes a great effort yields the greatest results. All the worldly wisdom we have amassed so far is the outcome of earlier efforts, either in this life or in previous incarnations. This means that all the effort we put in today will generate future wisdom. Every now and then we may feel that we are falling short, we may even lose heart, but at those moments we can really surpass ourselves. Those problems enable us to transform our personality, our life and our consciousness.

We can have faith in life. It brings us to new experiences and higher wisdom. But the cultivation of that faith is a difficult task. It demands that we learn to recognize a greater plan of which all of our experiences are a part. In the process, our attention will gradually shift from our personal interests to the common good. We acquire faith when we stop identifying with our separate 'I'. We can then grow towards an attitude of 'divine indifference' and view our actions, failures, successes, shortcomings and the apparent injustices done to us with a certain detachment, secure in the knowledge that the universe means well by us.

2. Have faith in your 'Self'

It is not easy to be and remain ourselves at all times. But once we realize that we are entirely unique and that it is up to us to give expression to that uniqueness, we may find it easier to accept our singularity. After all, life is all about our specific contribution to the evolution of the universe. But before we can make such a contribution we will have to free ourselves of our fears and complexes, our bad conscience, our sense of guilt, our shame, our feelings of inferiority and our dependence on others. Harnessing our purest intentions, we can reach out to the world around us from the highest possible level. Instead of worrying about the future or regretting the past, we can happily accept everything life has to offer *now*. Our isolated human perspective may suggest otherwise, but we are never alone. We are always surrounded by other, higher forms of consciousness that watch over us and ensure that we have the experiences we need for our development.

Life is essentially fair. We are not the helpless victims of arbitrary situations. The pain we experience furthers our growth, even when its deeper meaning escapes us for the moment. If we perform our current tasks to the best of our ability, without seeking affirmation or acknowledgement, we can rest assured that this is the best way to support our own development.

3. Obey the laws of life

We are not at the mercy of blind coincidence. The entire universe and everything that happens in our lives is subject to laws. By obeying these laws, which mark out our route and will eventually lead us to our destination, we can smooth our path in life. If we accept them as a guiding principle we cannot get lost. In fact, we will realize that we are carried by the current of life. Here is a reminder of the seven principal laws of life:

1. *The law of personal freedom.* We can only achieve genuine freedom by obeying the laws of life, as these give us the information we need to make responsible choices in life.
2. *The law of unity.* Although we are largely unaware of it, there is really only one consciousness that encompasses everything and everyone.
3. *The law of development.* This law of life forces everything and everyone, slowly but irrevocably, towards ever greater consciousness.
4. *The law of self-realization.* All people will one day achieve a fully developed cosmic consciousness. We choose our own route and will only reach our final destination by making a concerted effort.
5. *The law of destiny.* We are all subject to forces and situations that offer us the opportunity to grow and we are given the experiences that may help us reach our destination.
6. *The law of karma.* This is the law of cause and effect at the level of our consciousness. It says that we are responsible for everything we do and do not do and that we must bear the consequences of our behaviour.
7. *The law of activation.* By harnessing our consciousness, we can deliberately focus our attention on something. If we direct our attention to fear, we activate fear. If we direct our attention to fun, we activate fun. When our attention wanders aimlessly, we will experience aimlessness and confusion. Alternatively, if we want to reinforce the connection with our soul, we can achieve this as well.

4. Be sincere

By seeking to transcend our human shortcomings, we prepare to function in a higher reality. But before we are capable of meeting the highest standards we must first develop sincerity. By developing this trait we show what we stand for.

5. Be impersonal

By acting impersonally, we let go of our ego. Instead of acting as a person eager to achieve prestige or success, we become an extension of divine providence. A willingness to serve is paramount and that means doing things because they need doing and not because they benefit us. An impersonal basic attitude makes us invulnerable. When our ego is not involved, we cannot be insulted or hurt. Instead we are at the service of the greater good and carry out our tasks regardless of our own interests or the end result.

6. Be magnanimous

With magnanimity we free ourselves from greed, selfish desires and compulsive needs. We should live simply and consider the interests of others in everything we do. Altruism demands that we

subordinate our own needs to those of others, but without doing so slavishly or effacing ourselves in the process.

We must not feed other people's egos, but give them what they need to develop their consciousness without making them dependent on us and hindering their growth. In doing so, we prioritize spiritual values and we emancipate ourselves from our own emotional needs. If we are magnanimous or willing to make sacrifices, we are able to let go of the things we are attached to. We can help others while simultaneously giving ourselves the chance to develop further. We must pass on what we were given and let go of what we have outgrown. It is like climbing a ladder: we can only climb up if we have the courage to let go of the rung we are standing on. All attachment to matter must be relinquished before we can move on. This looks harder than it really is, because sooner or later we will lose everything that is ephemeral anyway. Outward beauty, health, prestige and power are all things we are bound to lose. But our inner achievements are timeless and ours to keep forever. We can take the qualities of the soul with us, even after death. The same is true of our relationships at the level of the soul; these too transcend the ephemeral and will live on forever.

7. Be reliable

By bringing the utmost sincerity and integrity to bear on our lives, we can be a beacon to others as they develop their consciousness. When we do so, we follow the path Buddhists call "the middle way". It keeps us from overly carefree behaviour on the one hand and an extremely fanatical approach on the other. The longer we follow this path, the narrower it becomes, and the more we come to take the highest standards for granted.

8. Exercise restraint

When we put ourselves at the service of mankind, we really ought to keep a low profile. We should be silent when we have to and refrain from unnecessary criticism, gossip and negative emotions. At the same time we ought to be free from moralism. We ought to try to accept life as it comes, without judgement, and quietly do whatever is needed to help others develop. This restrained approach shows that we respect the individual and unique process of growth that each one of us goes through.

The concept of working from the higher levels of consciousness is not universally understood. The great majority of the population has eyes only for the surface of things and not the underlying, structuring force. Only the tangible reality exists for them. As such, it is not a good idea to mention that hidden reality at every opportunity and to force unwanted insights on others. It will arouse resistance rather than understanding in many, and it is more likely to hinder than stimulate their development. In many cases, reticence is the most fruitful approach, as it allows the fragile seedlings of the higher consciousness to develop in peace and quiet. With likeminded people, on the other hand, it may be useful, and indeed even necessary, to discuss our inner experiences. It can stimulate them and gives us a chance to engage in critical (self) reflection and thereby reduce the risk of losing ourselves in personal illusions.

9. Generate a zest for life

As self-aware human beings we try to be joyous and optimistic under all circumstances, because we know that everything will be all right in the end. Our whole life is aimed at development and, secure in the knowledge that ultimately everybody will reach his goal, we can devote ourselves wholeheartedly to living that life. We accept all setbacks as temporary obstacles on our path and appreciate what we have. We realize that this incarnation is valuable and we make the most of our chances. If we radiate joy it has an effect on our environment and on evolution as a whole.

10. Be goal-oriented

The ultimate goal in life is the development of consciousness. By always keeping this at the back of our mind and by referencing this in everything we do, we can achieve the best possible result. For this we need enough rest and relaxation, but pointless activities and ‘killing time’ out of boredom chip away at the challenges offered to us. This life is a gift offering us unprecedented opportunities, but if we do not use them we short-change ourselves.

11. Strive for wisdom

We need to take action to reach our final goal. It is the only way we can develop wisdom. Not only do we have to amass knowledge, insight and understanding, we will ultimately have to put everything we have learnt into practice in order to verify its truth. This then gives rise to the experiences that help us to become wise men and women. Our own shortcomings can help us to go easy on the limitations of others. We are all moving towards our goal. Some happen to be further than we are, while others lag behind. Since our level of development and the wisdom we possess are related to the age of our soul, we should neither brag about them nor be ashamed of them. Instead we ought to be generous towards ourselves and others and free from pride, dogmatism and moralism. We all have our lessons to learn, all in our own way, and in this we receive the support of those who are ahead of us. It is our duty, therefore, to help those who lag behind. If we want to grow we need to acquire new insights and to do so we have to distance ourselves from old, ossified convictions. No insight is permanent and must certainly not be imposed on others.

12. Strive for unity

People are social animals. We need each other to learn and to develop. If we focus only on the physical, emotional or mental qualities of the other, we connect with his or her personality. The relationship we then enter into will inevitably be informed by the identification with our own ego, with our ideas, desires and fears.

A relationship on the level of the soul is of an entirely different order. In such a relationship we seek to contribute to the happiness of the other, and this renders any imperfections on a personal level of secondary importance. Since soul connections do not depend on the bodies in which we incarnate they can continue life after life. They are full of love and free from self-interest. In those relationships we are not focused on ourselves but on the other, aiming to support their happiness and consciousness development. The ultimate goal of all this is universal unity consciousness. Ultimately every human being will be a part of that unity and experience a loving connection with everybody else. This *essential love* is unselfish and unconditional. With all selfishness gone, it has an impersonal quality. The other is experienced as one's self, making love for the other a transformed love of the self as it were. When all is one, we ultimately give all love to ourselves.

XVIII

Practice makes perfect

Esoteric lessons

Our whole life is an opportunity to learn and the esoteric wisdom from this book can play a role in this. In order to fully integrate this wisdom, we must see it in its proper context and familiarize ourselves with a number of basic principles. On his website www.hylozoik.se, under the title ‘School’, Lars Adelskog lists the following points for consideration:

- The *first esoteric lesson* is that everything we have believed, thought and taken to be true up until this point could be incorrect or at the very least incomplete.
- The *second esoteric lesson* is that all the knowledge we receive is intended to make us better instruments for the development of humanity. The insights we acquire are not meant to satisfy our curiosity or make us feel important.
- The *third esoteric lesson* is that the accumulation of wisdom is not child’s play, but hard and laborious work without end. A process of development that normally takes millions of years cannot be accelerated without immense effort.
- The *fourth esoteric lesson* is that knowledge also involves responsibility, for our current life as well as for future incarnations. The privilege of receiving these insights ought to be a source of gratitude and humility to us. The correct application of our knowledge will generate new wisdom, but if handled improperly, the corresponding energies will stagnate and potentially destabilize our lives.

Our life is an education and all of our experiences are exercises that contribute to our ongoing development. To make the most of our practice material we need to interpret it properly and observe everything that happens to us with a certain degree of objectivity. We ‘are’ not our experiences. Our experiences are external patterns that we can associate with for a longer or shorter period of time. That does not mean that we need not take them seriously or that we must not become genuinely involved. Rather, we ought not to get completely carried away.

- If we completely lose ourselves in our experiences, we lose all sense of perspective and become incapable of focusing on a greater reality.
- If all we do is observe our life experiences from a distance – without truly associating ourselves with them – the lessons will escape us.

Temporary identifications are useful and necessary for learning our lessons. That said, we do need to distance ourselves from each situation in order to process and integrate what we have learnt. Development is a process of identification and letting go. Step by step, we will connect with increasingly subtle aspects of our envelopes and let go of the lower ones. And as we climb our consciousness ladder and reach the higher levels, it will become easier for us to put our experiences into perspective. The right balance is paramount. *Without identifications* we cannot learn anything, but with *a surplus of identifications* we become blocked and lose sight of the greater reality. The right attitude to life requires a balance between observing our life and identifying with our experiences. This is the only way we can make the most of life without becoming trapped by it.

Learning materials

We can undergo our consciousness development fairly passively or actively support it. If we opt to do the latter we must practise experiencing the higher consciousness levels. The twelve labours of Hercules can help us do this. An effective approach is to meditate on one particular labour for 5 to 10 minutes every day for a month. To begin with, we can select the quality that appeals to us most. The idea is that we take the core concepts set out on the next few pages as our starting point and add our personal insights to them. Post-meditation, we take it all on board in our everyday lives.

Tuning into these qualities will activate an inner experience that ties in with a specific experience of reality. While meditating, we can work out what else goes with this quality: what posture, what sound, clothing or conduct, what movements and what feelings. These are not mental considerations – rather than ‘think’, we ought to ‘experience’. How does it feel to possess this particular quality and how does it feel to be this new person? How can we give expression to this new identity in our everyday lives?

After a month we can select a new quality until, in the course of a year, all twelve labours of Hercules have been explored.

1. Faith in life

Core concepts:

- Security
- Carefreeness
- Courage

- Trust
- Freedom from fear and jealousy
- Reflection on the structure underlying the course of our life: where has it taken us so far? What have we learnt?
- Identification of a wider perspective.

Personal reflections:

2. Faith in oneself

Core concepts:

- Authority
- Self-confidence
- Self-determination and the freedom to choose
- Freedom from dependence on others
- Freedom from embarrassment, guilt and shame
- Freedom from self-criticism and remorse over past mistakes
- Inner peace and calm

Personal reflections:

3. Obedience to the laws of life

The law of personal freedom

The law of unity

The law of development

The law of self-realisation

The law of destiny

The law of karma

The law of activation

Core concepts:

- Honesty
- Fairness
- Perseverance
- Moderation
- Freedom from obstinacy, intransigence and fanaticism
- Surrender to the patterns unfolding in our life
- Acceptance of the things we cannot change

Personal reflections:

4. Sincerity

Core concepts:

- Truth
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Self-knowledge
- Courage

Personal reflections:

5. Impersonality

Core concepts:

- Carefreeness
- Invulnerability
- Indifference to other people's opinions
- Tolerance
- Freedom from pride and any need for acknowledgement
- Selflessness
- Willingness to help
- Simplicity
- Spontaneity
- 'Divine indifference'

Personal reflections:

6. Magnanimity

Core concepts:

- Altruism
- Freedom from pride, greed and selfish ambition
- Renouncement of power and glory
- Detachment
- Satisfaction
- Gratitude
- Willingness to make sacrifices

Personal reflections:

7. Reliability

Core concepts:

- Loyalty
- Stability
- Gratitude
- Dedication
- Honesty
- Steadfastness
- Faithfulness
- Honesty
- Compassion

Personal reflections:

8. Restraint

Core concepts:

- Respect for everybody's individuality
- Attention to others
- Reticence
- Concentration
- Freedom from negativity, criticism and gossip
- Thoughtfulness
- Modesty
- Self-control

Personal reflections:

9. A zest for life

Core concepts:

- Happiness
- Carefreeness
- Surrender to life
- Freedom from bitterness, regret and hard feelings
- Freedom from self-torment
- Freedom from complexes and inhibitions
- Freedom from moralism
- Capacity for enjoyment
- Gratitude
- Enthusiasm

Personal reflections:

10. Goal-orientedness

Core concepts:

- Willpower
- Efficiency
- Stability
- Steadfastness
- Faith in one's own abilities
- Courage
- Determination
- Concentration

Personal reflections:

11. Wisdom

Core concepts:

- Knowledge
- Insight
- Understanding
- Humility
- Acceptance
- Freedom from prejudice
- Freedom from moralism, dogmatism and pride
- Common sense
- Openness
- Flexibility

Personal reflections:

12. Unity

Core concepts:

- Love
- Goodness
- Cooperation
- Dedication
- Willingness to help
- Sympathy
- Tolerance
- Acceptance
- Patience
- Forgiveness
- Compassion

Personal reflections:

Summary in Diagrams

The following diagrams outline the picture of reality as described by Laurency. Not only do they illustrate the contents of this book, but as a supplement to the text they can also be read in their own right.

Diagram 1

Who am I?

I am a core of consciousness, a monad.
This monad is indestructible and that is why I am immortal

We can only be aware of ourselves and of the world
around us with the help of the bodies (or envelopes)
that enclose our monad.

We possess:
A physical body
An emotional body
A mental body
A causal body

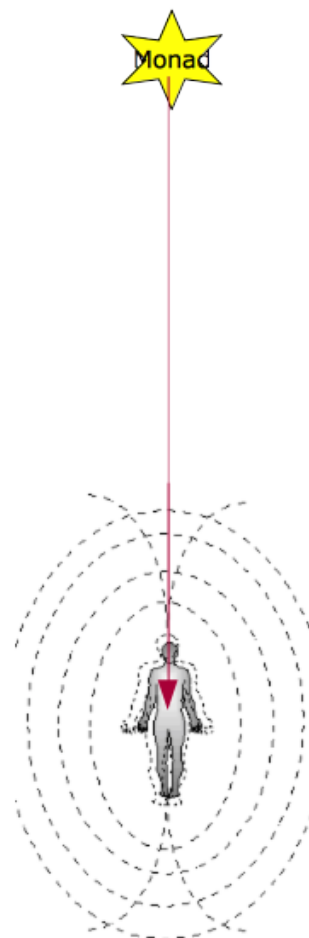
Our physical body consists of a coarse organism
and a fine etheric (energy) body.
They help us to experience the physical/etheric
world and function in it.

Our emotional body consists of emotional matter.
It helps us to experience emotions and to function
in the emotional world.

Our mental body consists of mental matter.
It helps us to think and to function in the mental world.

Our causal body, our soul, consists of causal matter.
It helps us to receive inspiration and to function in
the causal world.

The subtle bodies penetrate and envelop the coarse
organism. Taken together, they form our aura.



Monad – The physical organism
and the subtle bodies that
together make up 'man'

Diagram 2

The Monad



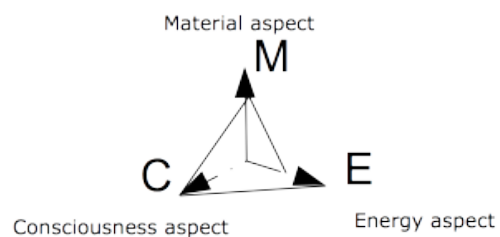
Each one of us is essentially an immortal core of consciousness, a monad.
Our sense of identity is linked to this.

The purpose of all successive incarnations is the development of the monad's consciousness.
Everything we go through in life is therefore an exercise in support of this development.

At any one time, each monad has three aspects:

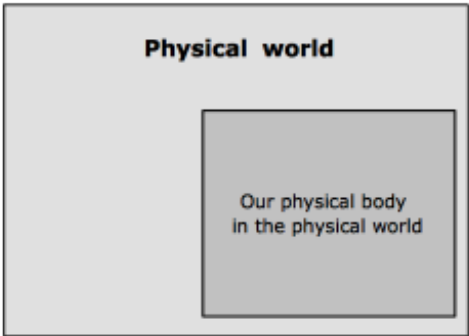
- a material aspect
- a consciousness aspect
- an energy aspect

The development level of each of these aspects determines the way in which the monad expresses itself.

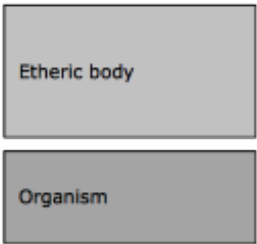


Our physical body in the physical world

The physical world encompasses more than just the tangible.

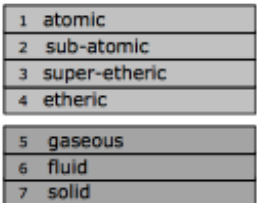


With our physical body we occupy the physical world.

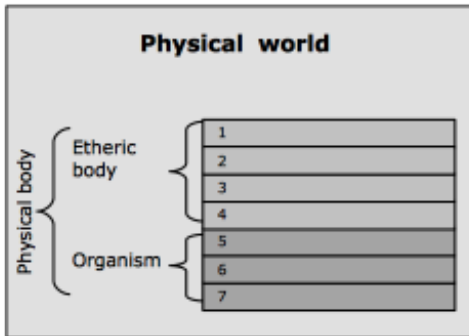


Our physical body is made up of two elements

- 1 The **etheric body** or etheric envelope through Which we experience our vitality.
- 2 The **organism**, the coarse-material body as we know it. This is visible and tangible.



Both our etheric body and our organism are subdivided into successive levels. Together they form the seven sub-levels that constitute the physical reality.

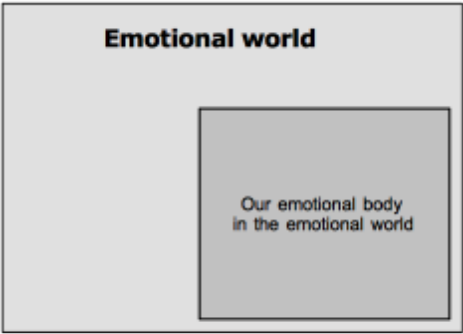


Our physical / etheric body occupies the physical world and enables us to function in that world.

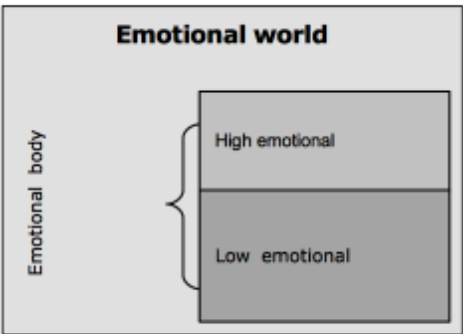
Diagram 4

Our emotional body in the emotional world

The emotional world is the world in which emotions take shape.



Like our physical body, our emotional body (or emotional envelope) consists of matter. This matter is so fine that we cannot actually see it. We can only 'experience' it subjectively, as emotions. Thanks to our emotional body we function in the emotional world and perceive the emotions from the world around us.



Like the physical body, the emotional body can be subdivided into two levels:

- 1. Our high-emotional body enables us to experience positive emotions. These are full of love and connect us with others.
- 2. Our low-emotional body enables us to experience negative emotions, such as anger and fear. These distance us from others.

Both the higher and lower parts of our emotional body can be further subdivided into a total of seven layers.

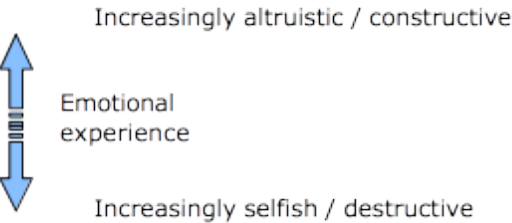
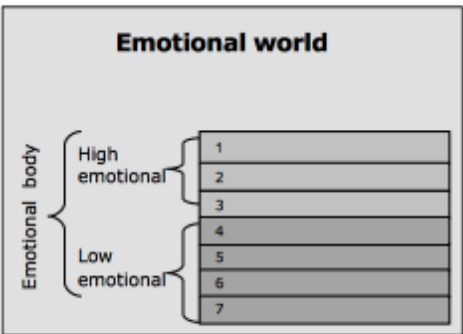
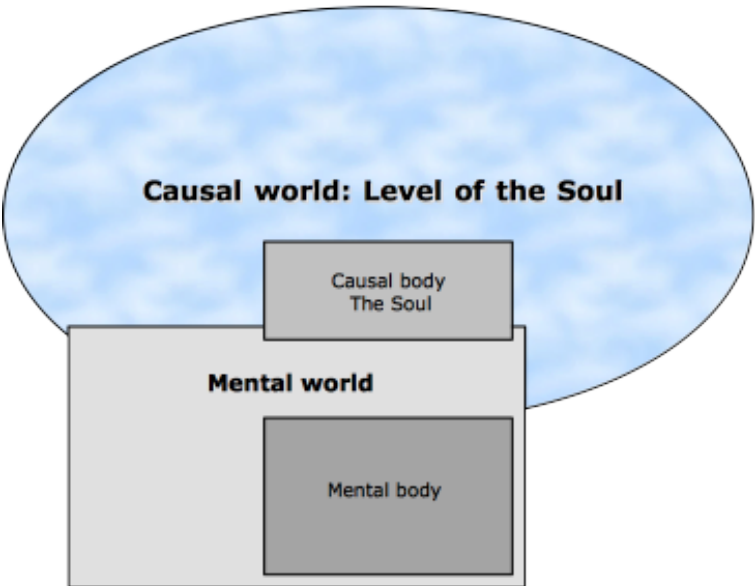
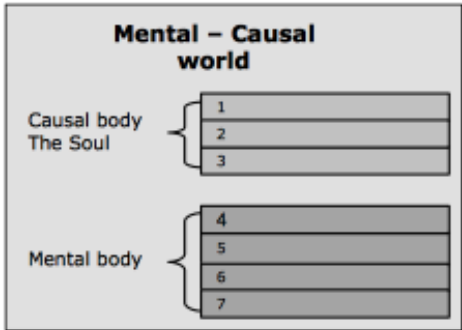


Diagram 5

Our causal body in the causal world
Our mental body in the mental world

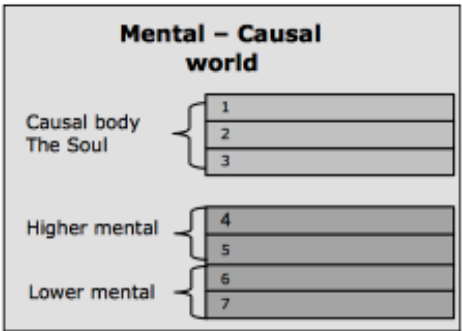


Our causal body is made up of causal matter.
Our mental body is made up of mental matter.



The causal body can be subdivided into three levels. We experience soul consciousness as a sudden insight.

The mental body has four levels. Consciousness on this level is experienced in the form of thoughts.



The soul feeds us with inspiration.

Higher-mental thinking enables us to translate the inspiration of the soul into practical action.

Lower-mental thinking enables us to fulfil emotional desires.

Diagram 6

Consciousness development

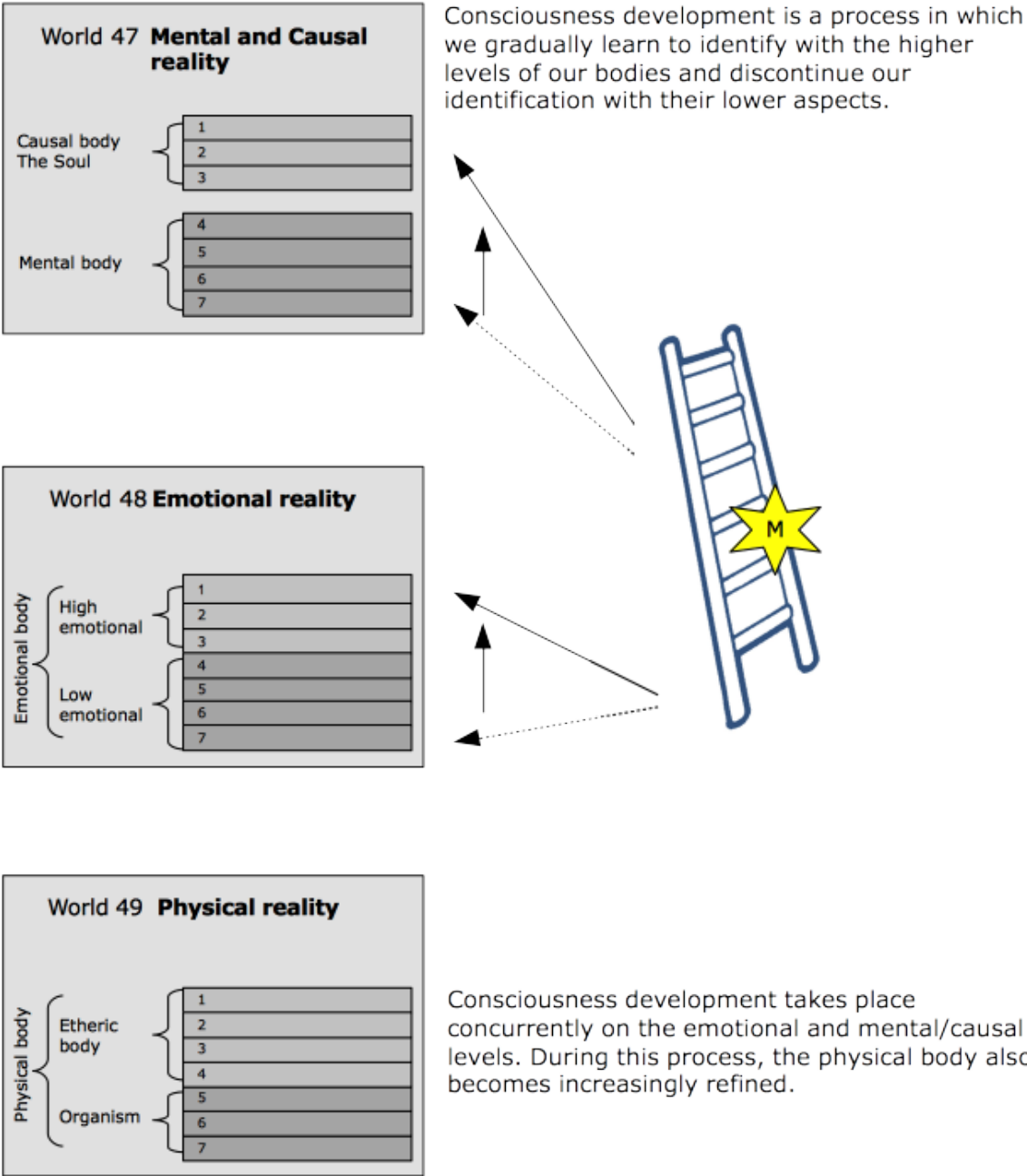


Diagram 7

The development of our envelopes

Structure of envelopes in low development Structure of envelopes in average development Structure of envelopes in high development

Development is a process in which we activate the higher levels of our envelopes by lavishing more attention on them, while reducing our attention to the lower levels.

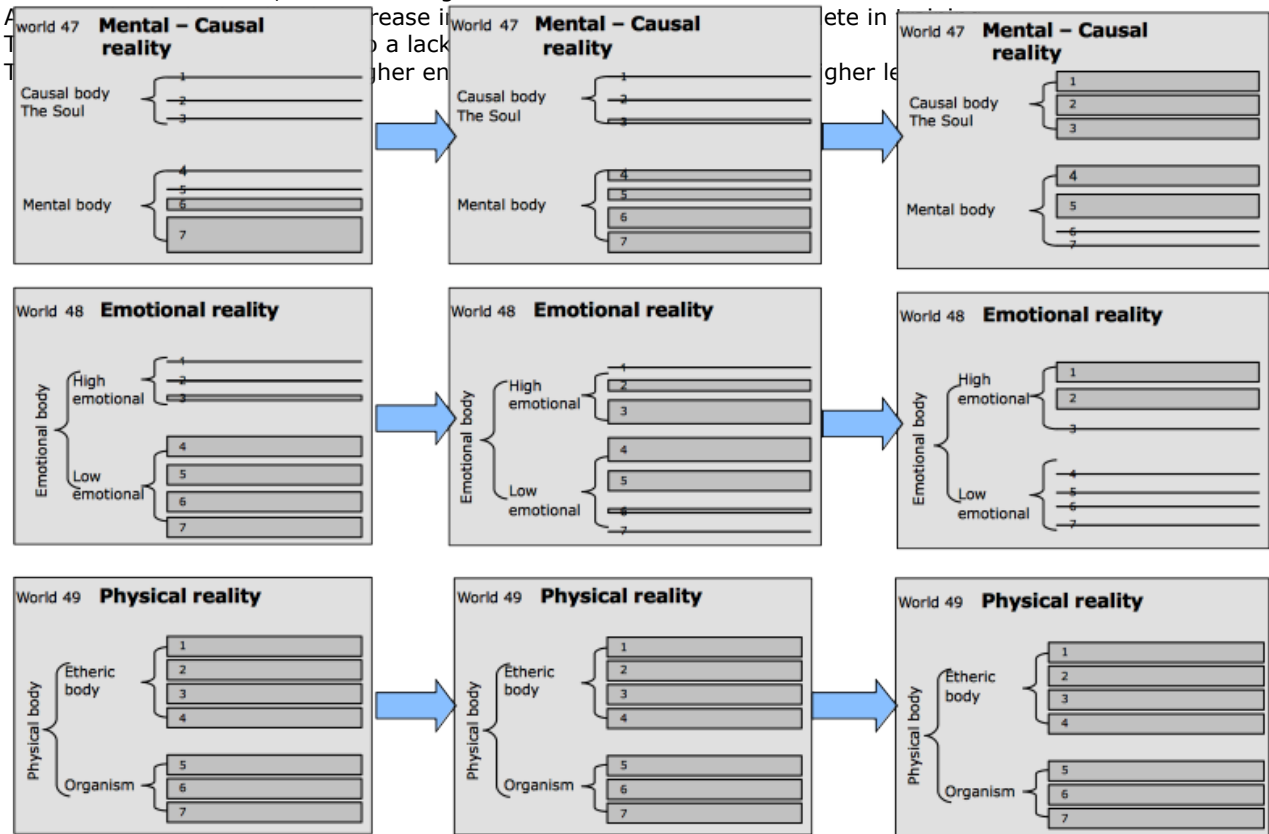


Diagram 8

Overview consciousness levels

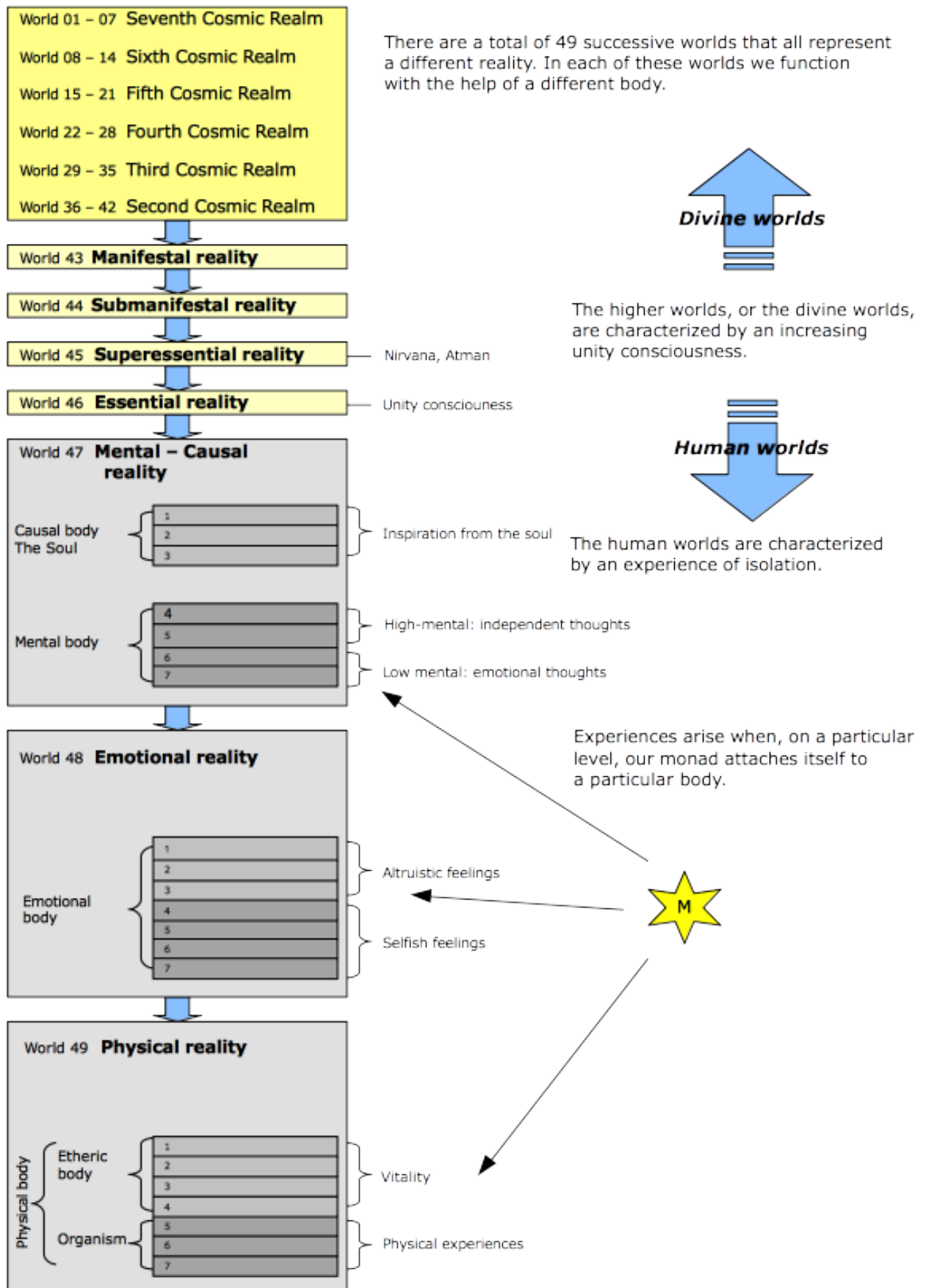
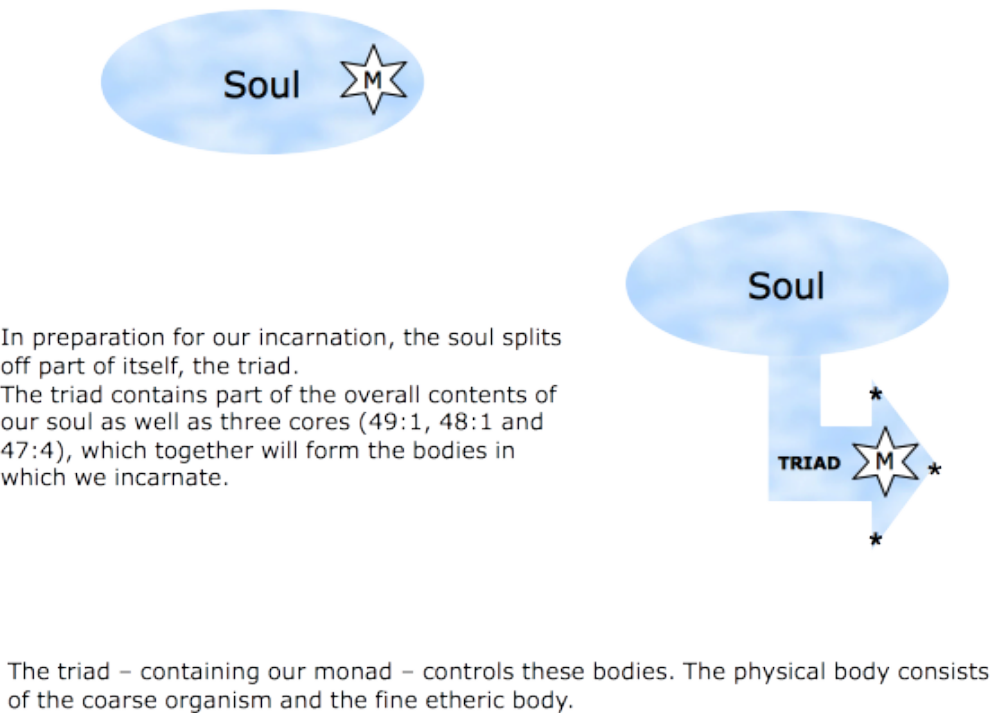


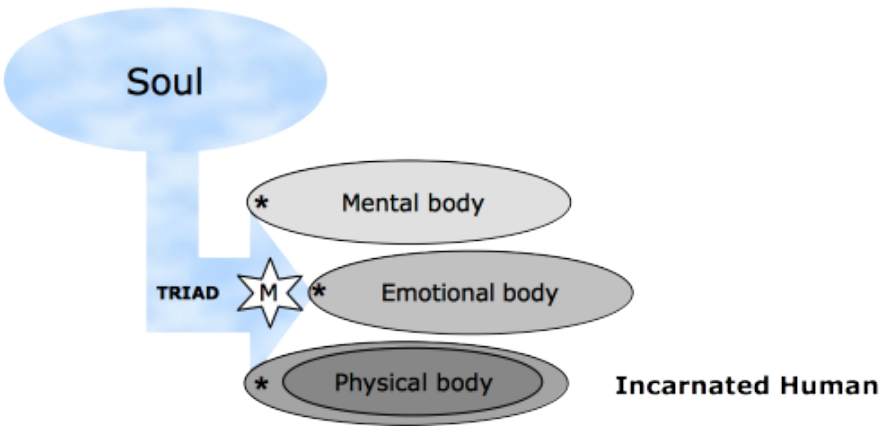
Diagram 9

The Soul and the Triad

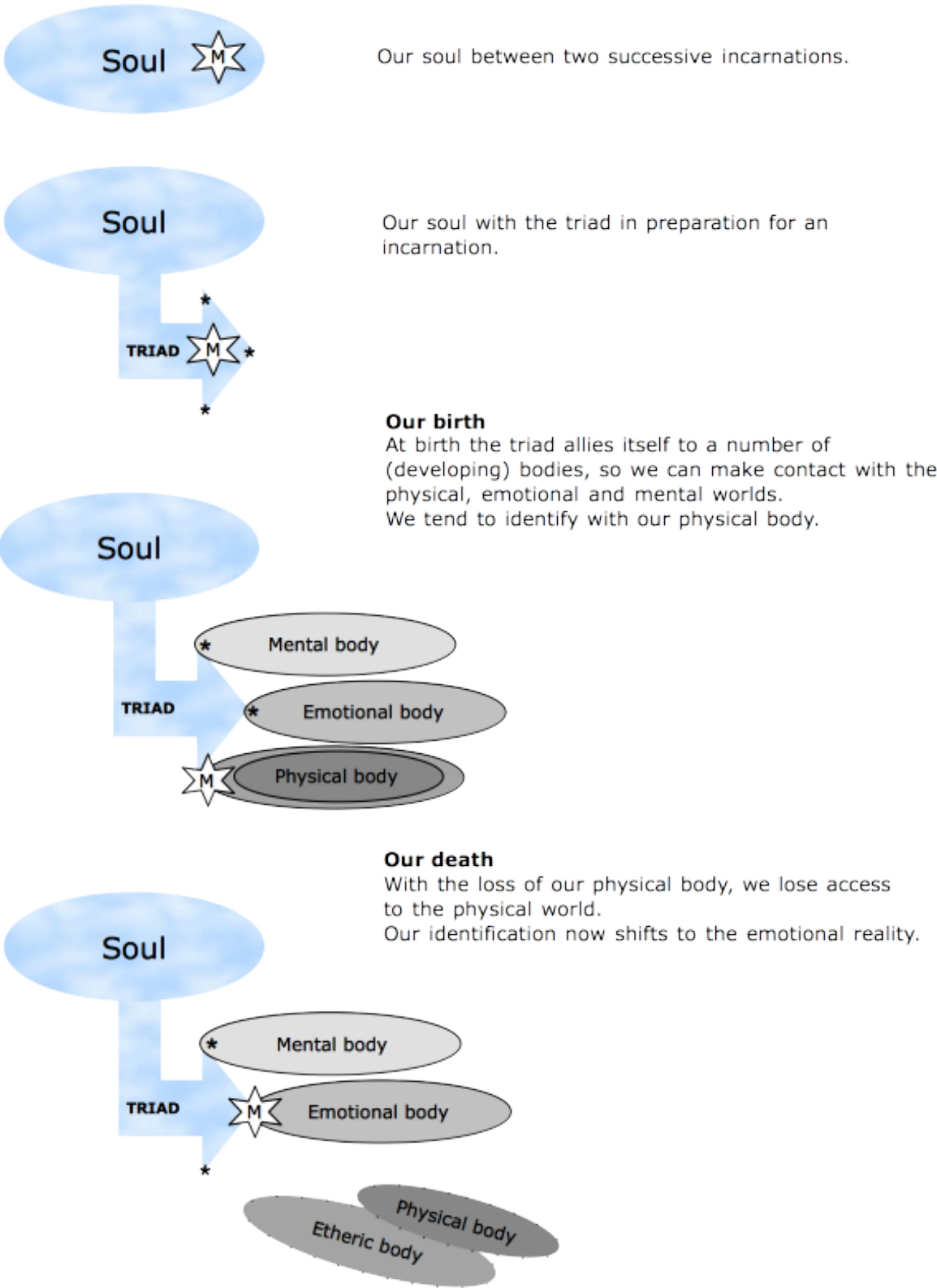
When we are not incarnated, our monad is located in the causal envelope, our soul.



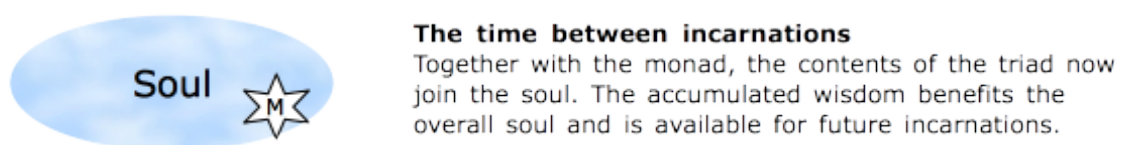
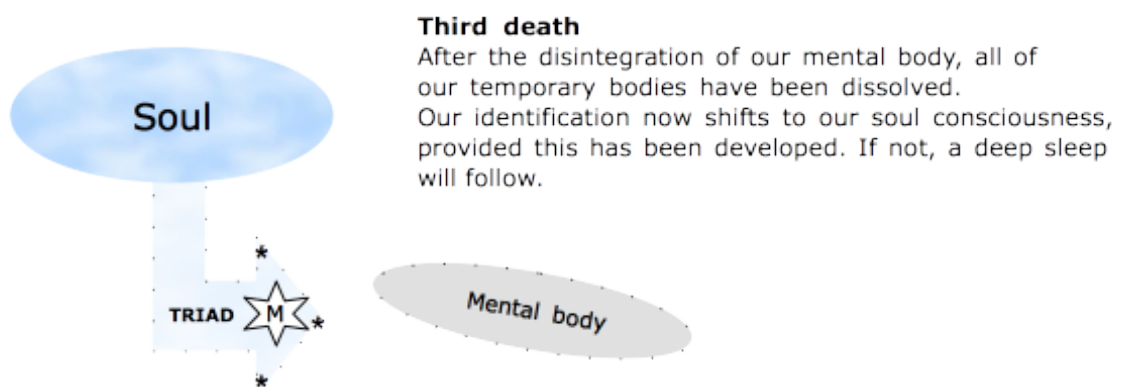
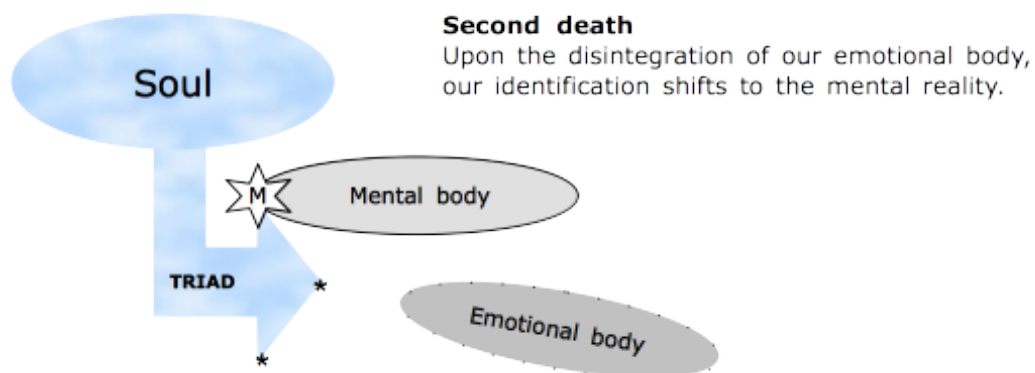
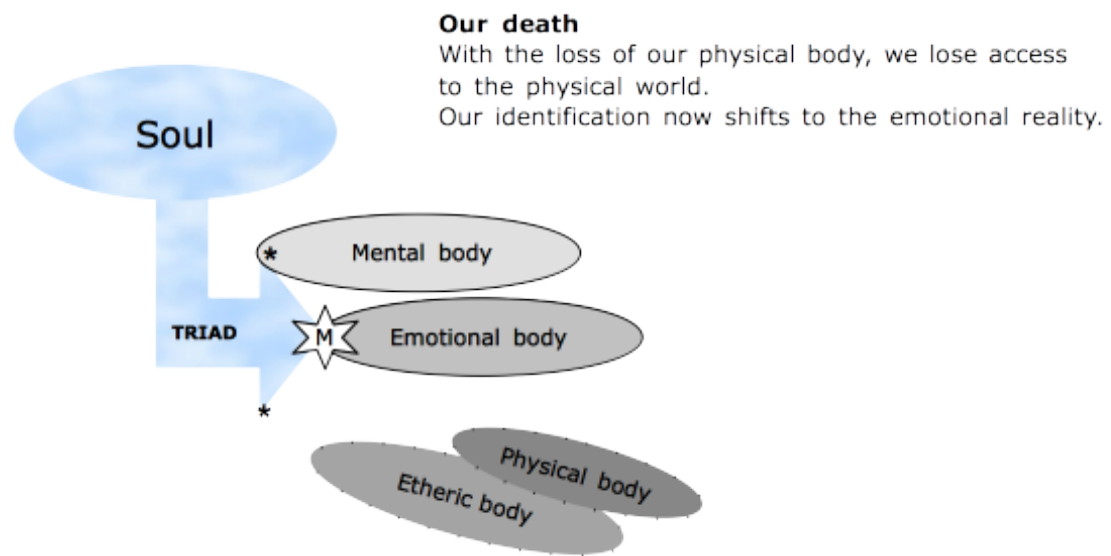
The triad – containing our monad – controls these bodies. The physical body consists of the coarse organism and the fine etheric body.



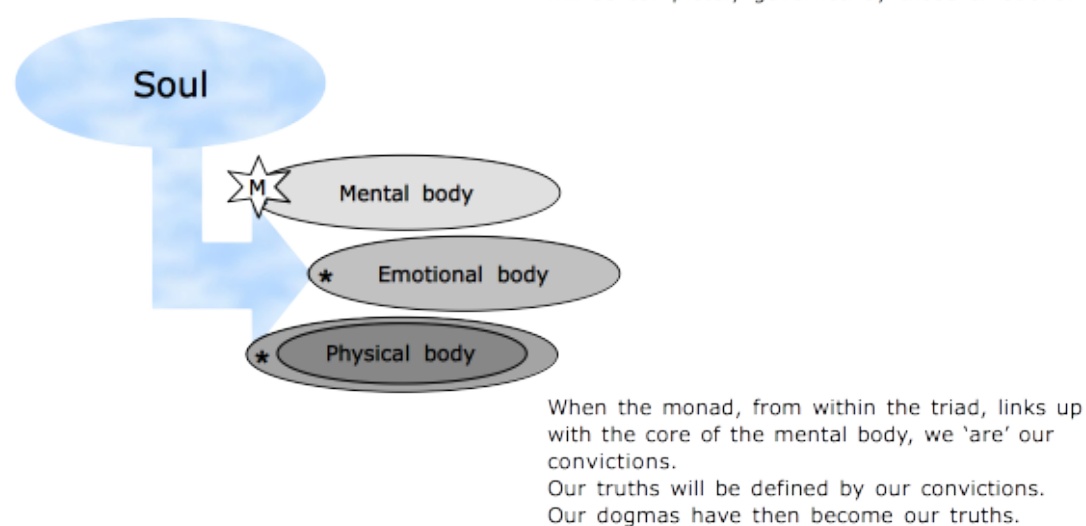
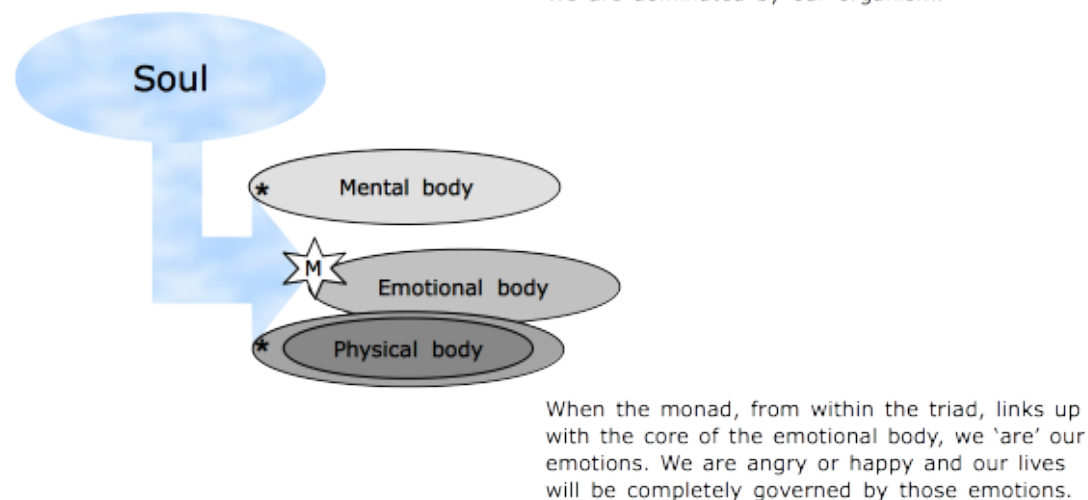
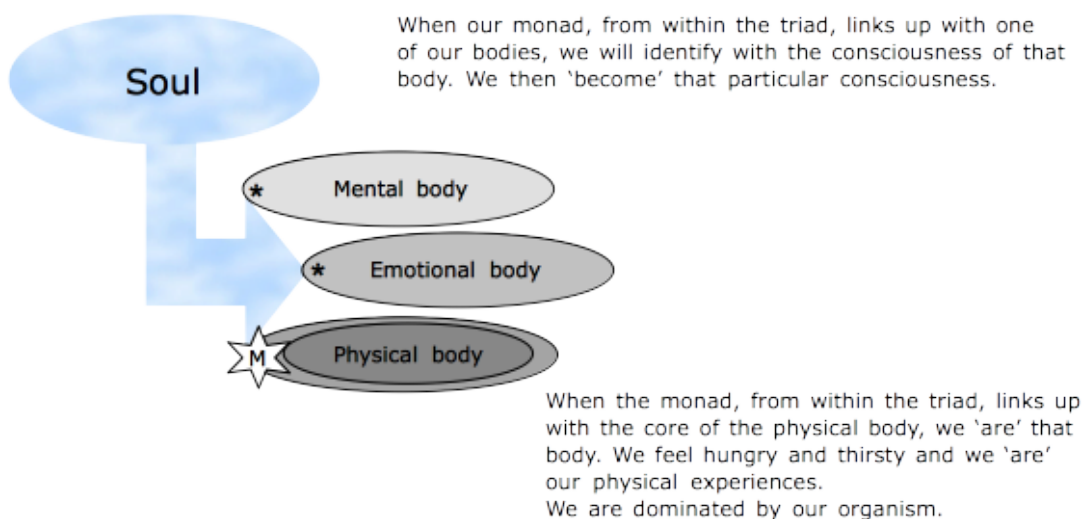
Life and death 1



Life and death 2

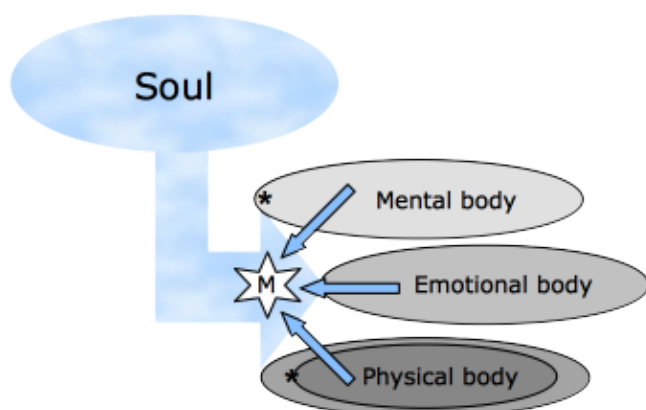


Identifications 1

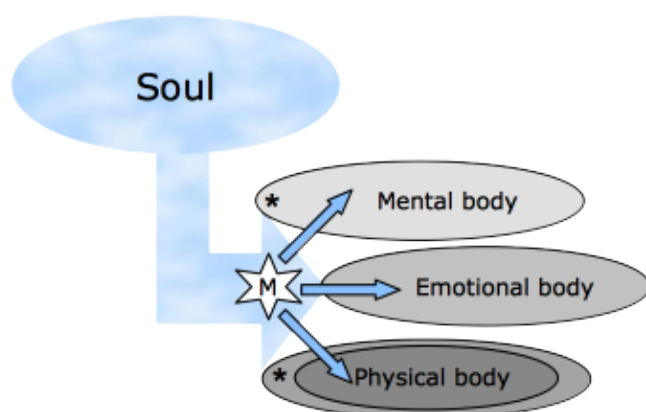


Identifications 2

A 'young' monad will be entirely at the mercy of its bodies' desires. The way a child cannot escape its emotions, the monad is initially incapable of emancipating itself from the tyranny of its bodies' energy patterns.

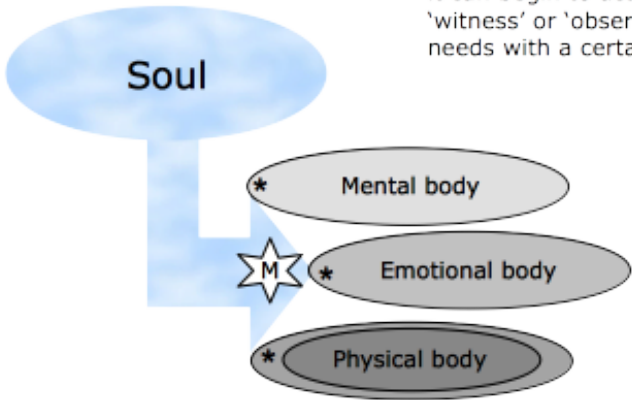


It takes some time and considerable practice before the monad is capable of imposing its will on its bodies. Unlike a small child, an adult is not always at the mercy of its emotional Desires. The monad is then no longer controlled by the impulses of its bodies. Instead it controls them. The bodies have become the tools that the monad can draw on as it sees fit to further its development.

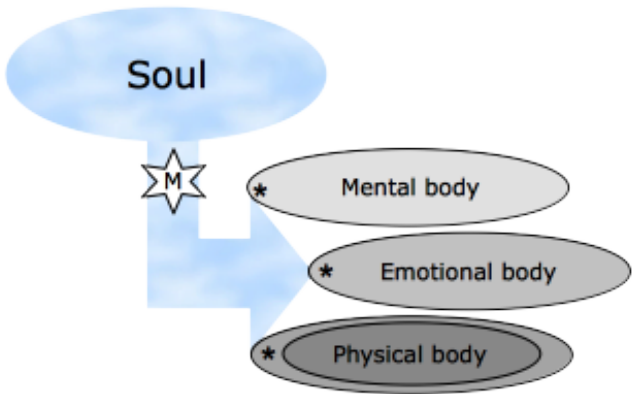


The Witness

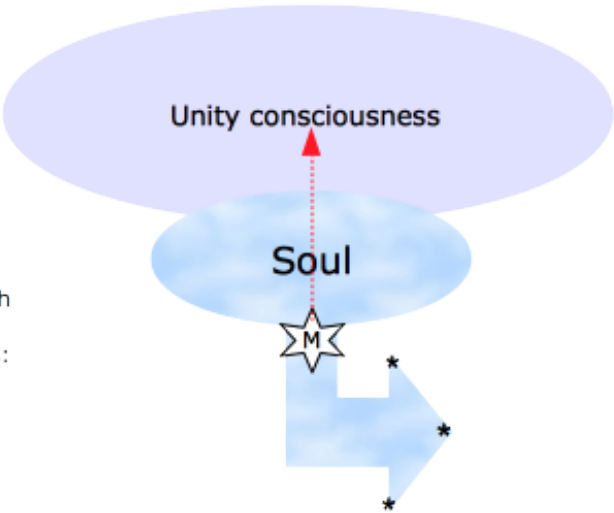
Once the monad has freed itself from the tyranny of its bodies, it can begin to actively control them. Then we become a 'witness' or 'observer'. We can view our behaviour and our body's needs with a certain degree of detachment.



From the position of a witness, when our attention is no longer monopolized by the bodies in which we have been incarnated, we can begin to develop our soul consciousness.



From our position as a witness and through our soul consciousness, we can then experience the next level of consciousness: essential or unity consciousness.



Epilogue

Is Laurency's truth our truth as well?

'Believe nobody, not even me,' Krishnamurti once told his audience. 'Listen to wise men and read the holy books,' Buddha said, 'but then find your own truth.'

According to Laurency, our goal as human beings is to develop into autonomous and independent individuals who do not accept truths on the authority of others. The vision we have presented in this book is therefore not dogma that should be adopted without question. At most, it can serve as the starting point for the search for our own truth.

Laurency addresses people who function on the higher-mental level (47: 4,5) and through his work he seeks to help them grow towards the level of the soul (47: 1-3). He arrived at his insights on the basis of information he received from these higher worlds, through his causal intuition. For most of us these areas of reality are (as yet) out of reach, making it difficult for us to verify their truth.

To our 'common sense', our thinking (47: 4-7), causal intuition (47: 1-3) is peculiar and therefore something that should be treated with a fair bit of scepticism, and rightly so. But while it is good to be sceptical about alleged causal insights, we should also be critical of our so-called common sense. Once upon a time the same common sense taught us that the earth was flat and that the sun revolved around it. It was a self-evident truth, plain for everybody to see, but it nevertheless proved to be untrue. Likewise, we have had to abandon the notion that only what we can see or hold is true. When, around 1850, the physician Ignaz Semmelweis claimed that many new mothers died in childbed as a result of invisible germs, he was relieved of his function because his claims were held to be unscientific: after all, common sense told us that what is invisible cannot possibly exist.

And now once more we are asked to accept something which may seem implausible at first glance.

How do we know whether something is true or not?

Feeling good about a certain idea is not enough. No matter how fine and lofty our convictions may seem, they will not represent the truth until we can find confirmation of them in the physical world. Einstein's general theory of relativity, for example, could not be accepted as true until the light bending he predicted was actually observed during a solar eclipse in 1919. At present physical reality is our only reliable source of the truth and all theories are no more than working hypotheses until experimentally proven. The same is true of Laurency's vision; it will have to prove its validity in practice.

The image of mankind that Laurency holds up to us can serve as an explanatory model for human behaviour. We can apply it in psychotherapy where it turns out to yield surprisingly good results in the treatment of people with psychological problems. The annexe at the back of this book illustrates how Laurency's ideas can be incorporated in a therapeutic approach. The name we can give this approach is *integral psychotherapy or Transpersonal Traumatherapy*.

Sources

Sources – an explanatory note

This book is based on the work of Henry T. Laurency. During his lifetime two of his books were published by The Henry T. Laurency Publishing Foundation, Skövde, Sweden.

The Philosopher's Stone (1985), originally in Swedish (1949)

The Knowledge of Reality (1979), originally in Swedish (1961)

The other works we have drawn on were compiled by Lars Adelskog on the basis of the notes that Laurency left behind. These are:

The way of man

Knowledge of life one

Knowledge of life two

Knowledge of life three

Knowledge of life four

Knowledge of life five

All of these works have been published on the website www.laurency.com. Our work is based on the publications which, at the time of writing in the middle of 2008, were available in English. For that reason, *Knowledge of life four* was not included in our study.

Finally, we also drew on the information on Lars Adelskog's personal website: www.hylozoik.se.

We never set out to summarize Laurency's complete works. Our book is meant to be an introduction to his main ideas, and it goes without saying that we accept full responsibility for any shortcomings in our presentation. For a complete understanding of Laurency's work we would like to refer the reader to the aforementioned publications and websites. The diagrams and drawings in this book are our personal interpretation of his vision. Likewise, the therapeutic applications, as described in the 'Annexe for therapists', are the product of the authors' personal interpretation.

Terminology

In this book the terms 'body' and 'envelope' are used interchangeably to indicate our physical, emotional, mental and causal body. In everyday parlance the term 'body' is most commonly used, but Laurency prefers the term 'envelope'. He refers to the coarse physical body as 'the organism'.

Many of the concepts used by Laurency are also used in other esoteric literature, where they often have a different meaning. When Alice Bailey, for example, uses the concept 'monad' she refers to what Laurency describes as the consciousness structures of levels 45:1, 44:1 and 43:4. When reading and comparing different esoteric publications, these distinctions must be kept in mind. On this subject, see also: Lars Adelskog, *Some problems of human consciousness development in Alice A. Bailey's presentation of esoterics and their Hylozoic solution*. (This publication can be found on www.hylozoik.se)

Integral psychotherapy and Transpersonal Traumatherapy

Annexe for therapists, clients and mentors

Integral psychotherapy and Transpersonal Traumatherapy

Psychological problems

Henry Laurency's vision, discussed at length in *The Secrets of the Soul*, offers more than just another philosophy. His view of mankind, which has a great deal in common with the vision put forward by, say, Buddhism, challenges us to look at sickness and health in a different way. It brings us to an entirely different explanation for psychological problems than the one commonly used in mental health care, and a very different treatment method too. At the heart of this approach is the recovery of personal autonomy. It provides reference points for therapists, as well as guidelines for the person affected, parents, relatives and mentors about how to support the healing process. This vision may then prompt new answers to questions about a wide range of issues, including:

- Mental confusion and paranormal perception
- The problems of 'children of the new age'
- Spiritual crisis
- Obsessive-compulsive disorders
- Hearing voices
- Schizophrenia

Let us look at the case study below as a way into this approach and see how it differs from a regular psychotherapeutic approach.

Irma is a 56-year-old woman. Fascinated by World War II, she reads everything she can on the subject. Her parents and grandparents were held in concentration camps, so she is effectively a second-generation war victim. At some point she starts feeling as if she is in a camp herself. Not just in her dreams at night, but also during the day, while awake. This happens more and more often, and for increasingly longer periods of time, and in the end she seems to spend large parts of the day and night in the camp. She experiences all kinds of deprivations. At one point she meets some children who beg her for help. Seeing it as her duty to help them as best she can, she becomes more and more intensely involved in the life of the camp. Her life becomes a living hell from which she can no longer escape.

The conventional diagnosis would be that Irma suffers from delusions and hallucinations. These are caused by a brain disorder for which she will be prescribed psychoactive drugs. Although this medication may solve her symptoms, it is not unthinkable that she will remain dependent on it for the best part of her life and that she will never regain her previous stability.

But there is a different approach.

The *integral approach* posits that the camps that Irma has ended up in represent an existing reality. Her problem is therefore not that she is mentally confused, but that she has become lost in a hidden world. She can put an end to her difficulties by leaving this world again. When viewed from this perspective, Irma is not a powerless victim who is completely dependent on others for her recovery, but someone who can take things into her own hands. By deliberately and repeatedly redirecting her attention to the 'ordinary', everyday reality, she can leave behind the hidden world in which she has become lost and free herself from her problems. And she would be doing it mostly under her own

steam. This may appear to be an over-simplified approach, but we intend to demonstrate that it has the potential to resolve Irma's problems. The same is true of others who find themselves in similar situations and who may be given an alarming psychiatric diagnosis. In those cases, integral therapy can offer an alternative. People who have undergone lengthy treatment with little hope of success can make a surprisingly rapid recovery once they begin to gain an insight into their situation.

Integral psychotherapy and Transpersonal Traumatherapy

Practitioners in the fields of both psychology and psychiatry tend to work with a biological model based on the premise that we *are* our physical body. With consciousness viewed as a product of the brain, psychological problems suggest an impaired functioning of that brain. Looked at this way, such a disturbance can be resolved by influencing the functioning of the brain, either through medication or through cognitive training. These approaches have been shown to be very effective in recent decades. Many syndromes that used to lead to serious problems have now become much more manageable, enabling a lot of people to function normally again. However, a large number of people continue to have persistent symptoms and they could benefit from an entirely different approach. This new approach starts from the idea that the cause of the disturbance is not a disfunction of the brain but the unresolved emotional issues that make themselves felt from the -un-consciousness. With Transpersonal Traumatherapy these hidden emotional disturbances can be solved.

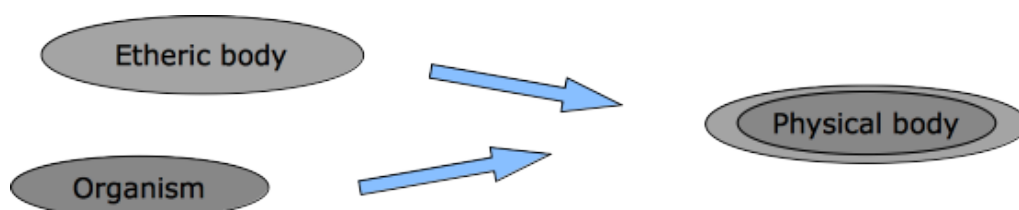
When we start from the idea that we are much more than just our body, we can define psychological problems quite differently and also begin to resolve them differently. This approach could be called *transpersonal*, because it transcends the personal reality, or *integral*, because it brings all aspects of our existence, both the material and immaterial, together in a single model. This view is not necessarily incompatible with the biological approach. It can complement it, especially in those cases where the regular approach does not produce the desired result.

In the remainder of this annexe we shall outline a non-biological model as well as a potential treatment method for a range of symptoms. Given that we are dealing with a variety of clinical pictures, which tend to develop over the course of several years, it is still too early for definitive conclusions. But the results so far suggest that many clients will benefit from it – if necessary in combination with regular treatment

Mental confusion and paranormal perception

To properly understand the integral approach, we must be familiar with the constitution of human nature as described in various esoteric traditions. (For a more detailed description, please see the main body of the text.)

What we refer to as 'our body' in common parlance can be, more accurately, subdivided into a coarse-material part (the organism or our tangible body) and a fine-material part (the etheric body or the energy field that maintains the organism). Together they form the *physical body* as we know it and with which we function in the everyday physical world.



But besides our physical body we have a number of other bodies.

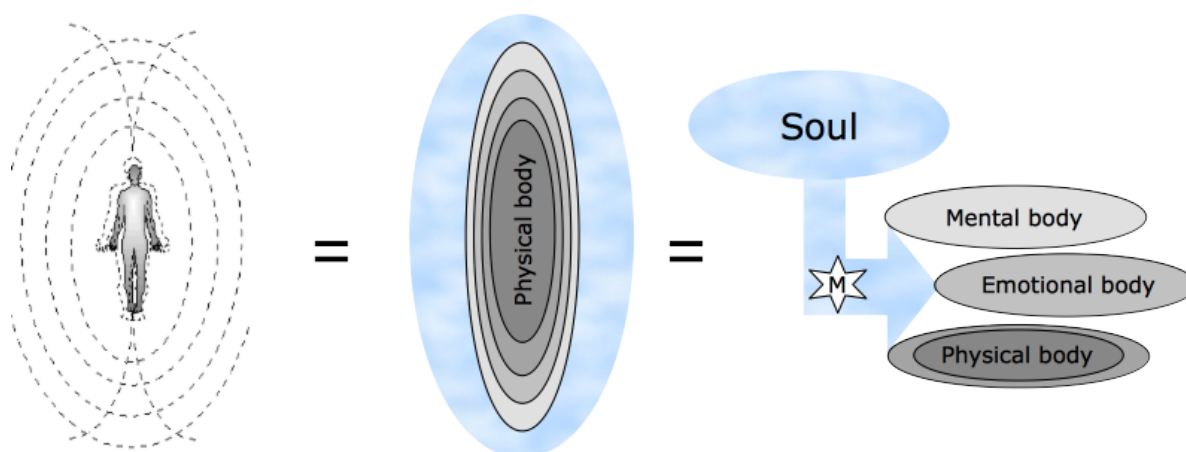
With the help of our *emotional body* we can feel emotions and gain experiences in the emotional world, the world of feelings.

With the help of our *mental body* we can think and gain experiences in the mental world, the world of thoughts.

Our *causal body*, the soul, gathers together our wisdom and gives us access to the causal world, the world of inspiration and intuition.

And so arises the image of our coarse physical body, surrounded by an aura of increasingly subtle bodies enclosing us like envelopes.

The worlds to which these subtle bodies provide access are actual, existing realities even though they are not visible in our everyday physical reality.



As a rule we only identify with our physical body, which we can see and feel. However, we *are* not this body – or indeed any of those other bodies. What we *are* is an immortal core of consciousness that draws on all of these different bodies so it can be conscious of itself and the world around it. With the help of our different bodies, we can function in several worlds at once. All the experiences we gain on a physical, emotional and mental level make us wiser people, who will ultimately be capable of experiencing the subtle vibrations of the soul. In due course, after many lives, this will result in more and more soul consciousness.

So although we are surrounded by different worlds, we can only directly perceive the coarse-material physical world. Since experiences from the other worlds only reach us indirectly, it is easy to forget they exist at all. There are several reasons why we are barely aware of all of these subtle realities.

The *etheric world* forms a unity with our coarse-material world, but our senses are generally not sensitive enough to experience its subtle vibrations. It takes practice to perceive the etheric body. This etheric body forms the link between the organism on the one hand and the subtle bodies (emotional, mental and causal) on the other.¹

We generally experience the *emotional world* as the ‘atmosphere’ of a particular environment. It can be pleasant or frightening, for example. This world is shaped by our own and other people’s emotions. All of our fears and desires, indeed all of our convictions, take shape here. It is also the world where we end up after we die and where – among other things – we can make contact with

¹ See also: L.J. Bendit & P.D. Bendit (1977). *The Etheric Body of Man*. Quest Books.

other deceased people. The direct perception of this reality is tempered by our etheric body, which serves as a bridge between our organism and the other bodies and which effectively blocks all kinds of energies from accessing our consciousness. In this way it protects us from the influx of too many impressions from the emotional (and mental) world.

When the etheric body functions properly, we are barely aware of the emotional world. But physical or emotional problems, stress or drug use can impair the etheric body, preventing it from fulfilling its protective function properly. As a result, the emotional world directly penetrates our brain and our waking consciousness.² When that happens we can see energies or hear voices. Perhaps we can even see deceased people or guides and communicate with them. Like the physical world, the emotional world can manifest itself in an infinite number of ways and everything we perceive there is partly a product of our own expectations and our personal focus. Small children, whose physical bodies (both the coarse and fine ones) are not yet fully developed, and adults, whose etheric body has sustained damage, can face a wide variety of images that originate in the emotional reality.

Many young children can see worlds that ‘non-existent’ for adults and experience the presence of persons invisible to the outside world. For example, they can have contact with deceased relatives or invisible friends. To many parents these are little more than the innocent products of a childish fantasy.

Adults, too, can sometimes perceive the emotional world, although they tend to experience it very differently from children. This phenomenon can occur after a traumatic event, an illness or serious psychological problems, which have left traces in the etheric body. Because these people are often anxious and insecure, they tend to experience frightening energies that originate in the bottom layers of the emotional world. In turn, these images can elicit new negative emotions, potentially landing the person affected in a negative spiral of mounting confusion.

Some people, clairvoyants among them, have developed their contact with the (higher levels of the) emotional world as a special talent. They can perceive it fairly clearly and are also capable of communicating with its occupants. It is by no means certain, however, whether this is a genuine talent. Perhaps it is more of a handicap, since these abilities are all too often based on the improper functioning of the etheric body.³ *A badly functioning etheric body opens a kind of door to another – emotional – world which can be dangerous to people who are not entirely sure what they are doing.* Most of us should steer clear of this reality. There is no true wisdom to be found here and the occupants generally do not have much more to say to us on this level than when they were still in their physical bodies on earth. They have their own tasks in the emotional world and it is generally best not to bother them with our mundane worries. We really ought to leave them alone. When they decide to approach us, we are advised to be friendly but resolute and dismiss them or ignore them altogether. We can make an exception for people who have just died. They usually linger a while in the vicinity of the bereaved in order to say goodbye. Some of those left behind can feel this and derive comfort from it.

Case study: Irma

Taking another look at Irma’s experiences in the concentration camp, we can conclude that the cause of her problem is twofold.

² See also: A.E. Powell (1969). *The Etheric Double*. Quest Books. Chapter XIV, The atomic web.

³ The (paranormal) perception of the etheric and/or causal reality is of a different order and can certainly be described as a talent.

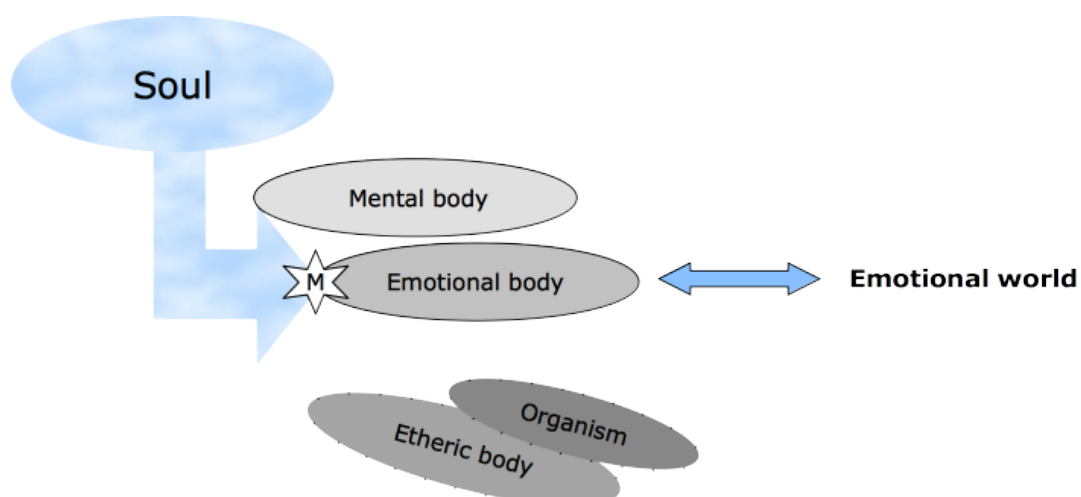
- Traumatic experiences during her youth, a result of her family's wartime past, have left her etheric body vulnerable, making it easier for emotional energies to access her consciousness.
- Concentration camps are an emotionally charged topic, which is why they can be found in the emotional world. By researching her parents' experiences in the camp and wanting to help the children there, Irma settled more or less permanently in this emotional world (through her own emotions). So in effect it has been her own attention that has landed her in this situation.

To extricate herself from this distressing position, Irma had to realize which world she was in and how she had ended up in it. Next she had to make a conscious decision to leave this world again. Through visualisation all the children who were held captive in this world were freed. This set Irma's mind at rest. She then systematically and consistently shifted her attention from the emotional world with all its horrors back to the day-to-day physical reality. By paying less and less attention to World War II and by consistently ignoring all camp-related images and thoughts she could gradually withdraw from the emotional world. Finally, she had to deal with the traumas that were at the heart of her interest in World War II. They had been the cause of the weakening of her etheric body in the first place.

This approach did not view the client's delusions and hallucinations as a disturbance of the brain, but as the experience of an actual – emotional – reality. By handling it in a pragmatic way, the problems were soon resolved. Once Irma saw what she had been doing all this time, she developed an insight into her situation and with that she regained control over her life. Attention is the instrument that determines what we tune into. When we know what our internal floor plan looks like we can use our attention to travel wherever we want, provided that our consciousness is powerful enough to sustain itself in those different worlds. If we lack the willpower or the ability to concentrate and cannot remain focused, in the case of illness or drug use for instance, we are at risk of losing ourselves in the maze of our inner worlds. An essential component of the integral approach is that the person affected stops seeing himself as a helpless victim, passively surrendering to his fate, and starts to see himself as the captain of his ship, actively working towards his own recovery.

Life, death and the problems of 'children of the new age'

We generally identify with our physical body. This is who and what we are, which is why we experience its mortality as our own mortality. But that is an illusion. While we may lose our physical body, and with it our access to the physical world when we die, our emotional, mental and causal bodies live on. With our emotional body we live on in the emotional world, and this is where we stay until our emotional body also wears out and ceases to exist.



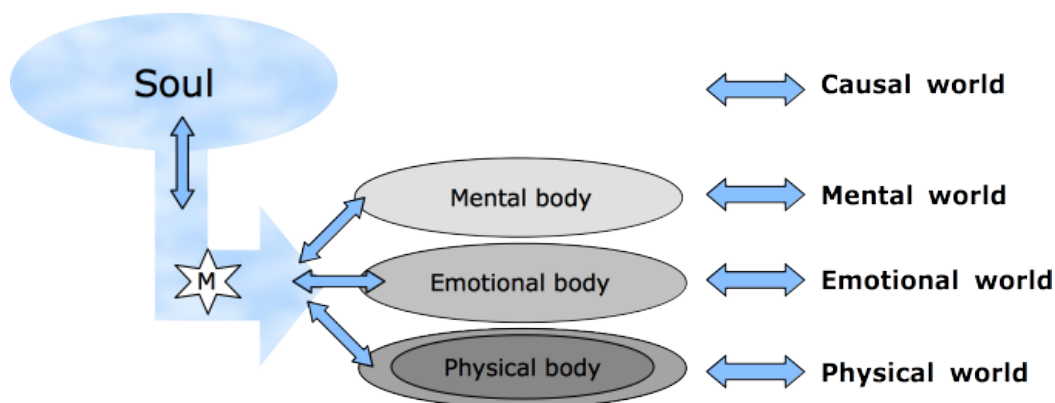
When we no longer have our emotional body at our disposal, we draw on our mental body to move to the mental world where we live on until that body's life comes to an end as well.

When we have lost our physical, emotional and mental bodies and we no longer have access to the physical, emotional and mental worlds, all we are left with is our causal body, in other words *our soul*. This connects us to the causal world.



Whether or not we can actually experience our soul depends on whether or not – during our physical life – we have already developed a greater or lesser degree of soul consciousness. *Without soul consciousness* we will spend our time in the causal world asleep, whereas *with soul consciousness* we will experience a blissful world of wholeness, connectedness and inspiration.

The great majority of people are barely aware of their soul and they will therefore have little or no memory of the world they inhabited between two successive incarnations. They do not wake up until they reincarnate and come back to life in the physical reality. And because they have no memories of the causal world or of previous incarnations, it feels as if they are alive for the first time.



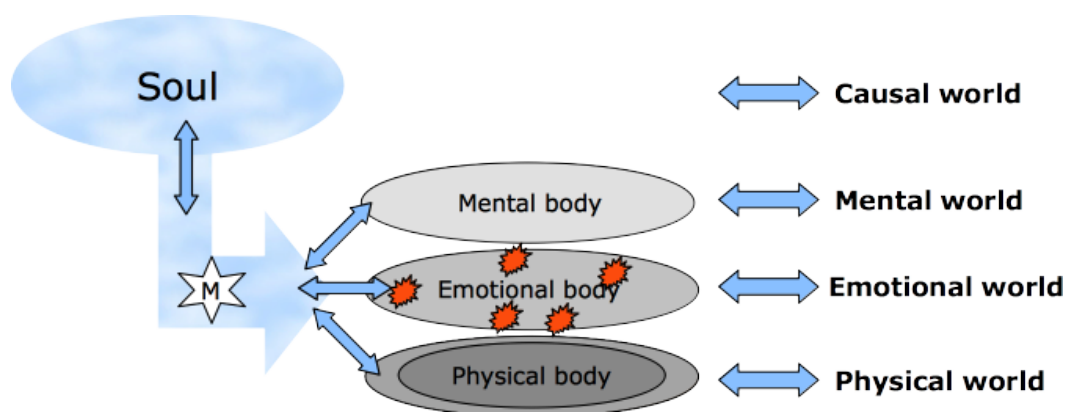
People who do have soul consciousness will return to earth with either vague or vivid memories of the causal world and think back to it with nostalgia. They incarnate in a new physical body, but reluctantly. Their latent memory of the causal reality will affect the way in which they experience life on earth. Vaguely remembered feelings of wholeness and harmony during their sojourn in the causal world will shape the way in which they deal with the earthly reality.

In children who are looked after with tender loving care after birth and who experience no major physical or mental problems, the soul memory tends to slowly sink back into the subconscious. Sometimes they will remember snippets from a previous life, but that will not prevent them from functioning properly on earth. But this is different for children who have difficulties during the first few years of their life, or who – without apparent reason – feel

unwelcome or who simply cannot find their feet in spite of their parents' best efforts. These children feel as if they have been driven out of paradise and, without knowing why, experience an intense sadness. The longing for the sojourn that preceded their birth can be so immense that they never really find their place on earth. They are both here and not here.

It appears that in our time many children are being born who have built up this soul consciousness in previous incarnations. These so-called 'children of the new age' are often rather absent-minded and they struggle to find their feet. They are intuitive and sensitive, and either dreamy or hyperactive. Although talented, many of them function below par because they do not feel motivated to shoulder their tasks here on earth. In school they often get bad marks and they cannot seem to find a goal in life. They feel misunderstood and all those negative experiences only confirm them in their belief that this is not the place for them. This can generate new traumas in their emotional body and compound the problems they already had. They can end up in a negative spiral which sees them feeling increasingly unloved and unhappy and withdrawing more and more from the earthly reality.

Growing up, they will tend to focus more on the higher levels of reality, the causal world they remember with such longing. Many are drawn to meditation, drug use, or various more or less spiritual activities such as yoga, astrology, tarot and shamanism, and there is a risk that while engaging in these practices they lose interest in the physical world altogether.



Some highly developed and highly sensitive children function extremely well, but some derail, and in the worst case they develop psychological disorders. Some of them come into contact with social workers at a very young age. To help these children we need to understand what the fundamental problem is. Since they never incarnated properly, they will need to be coaxed into coming down to earth. For small children, especially, physical contact is extremely important because it helps them experience their body as a safe and enjoyable place. Eye contact is important too, so they know they are being *seen* and realize that there is a place for them here. By listening attentively and showing sympathy for their situation, we can guide these children down to earth. Playing with water, sand and clay can then improve their connection with the earthly reality.

Adults, who may find themselves in similar circumstances and experience similar problems, may find healing in gardening or visiting the sauna. Having never found a purpose in life, some adults may reach the conclusion in later years that the meaning of life has passed them by, that they have lived a meaningless existence. But it is not too late for them to do something. By dealing with the traumas that have prevented them from being fully present, they may eventually come to feel

safe and secure here on earth. They can then integrate the feelings of connectedness and wholeness they experienced in the causal world here on earth instead.

Spiritual crisis

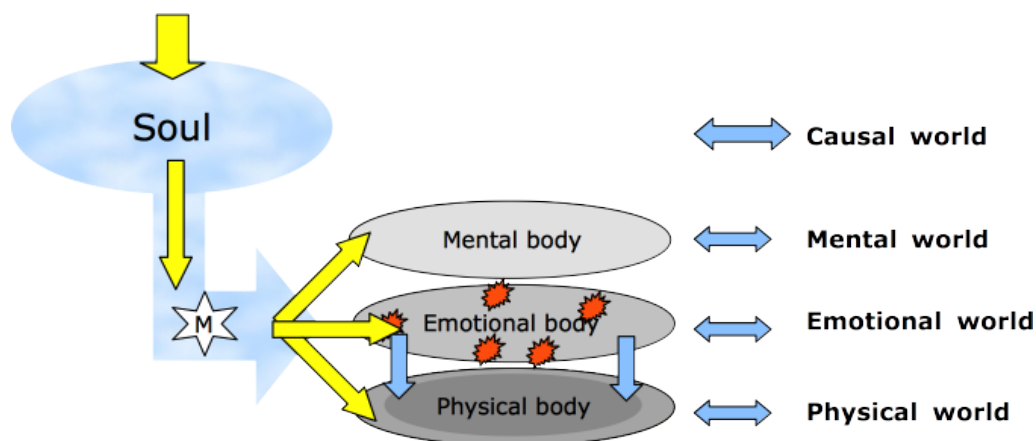
As people develop their consciousness and grow into strong and balanced personalities, they will come to take the signals of the soul for granted and will find it easier to integrate them in their everyday lives. But this process is by no means always straightforward. For those who feel misunderstood, who are unable to find their place in the physical world and who are overwhelmed by all kinds of difficulties, the situation is different. Nostalgic for their soul, they may start focusing on their soul consciousness at the expense of their everyday problems. They may take up meditation, not to balance the 'higher' and the 'lower' aspects of their life but to escape their worries. But along with the attention to the higher levels of consciousness, they activate energies with a higher than usual frequency, and if they lack a sufficiently sound foundation they are at risk of unleashing forces they cannot handle.

A long-term focus on the soul as well as circumstances such as stress, fatigue or drug use can trigger an unexpected influx of causal energy. The effect can be a moment of enlightenment lasting either a mere second or even days. It can provide the person affected with a new and profound insight into his life and the resulting revelation can leave such an impression that it will continue to inspire him for the rest of his life. Such an experience of enlightenment can be the high point of somebody's life, but if he fails to integrate this experience in a balanced way there is a very real danger that his euphoria turns into a terrible hangover. The influx of uncontrolled causal energy can seriously disrupt the functioning of his various bodies.

On a physical level it can cause fatigue, headaches and insomnia.

On an emotional level it can result in anxiety and depression.

On a mental level it can bring about confusion and the inability to focus on everyday reality.

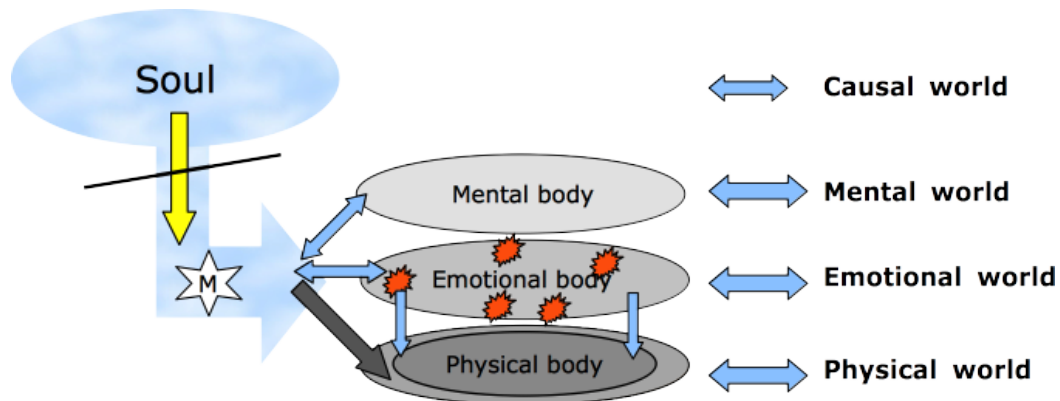


The big influx of powerful energies will also unsettle the etheric body and prevent it from fulfilling its protective function. The potential upshot of this is that energies from the emotional world can penetrate the organism, i.e. the brain, causing the person affected to see strange images, hear voices or get a sense of being surrounded by entities.

Given the fact that he is already fearful and confused, the energies he now connects with are likely to represent mostly negative feelings and increase his inner chaos even further. The delusions and hallucinations he will experience consequently can become so intense as to warrant a diagnosis of *schizophrenia*.

Since the problem was caused by an excessive influx of causal energy, we have to start by containing this influx. This requires a halt, at least temporarily, to meditation and other activities that activate the higher consciousness. Next up, undivided attention must be directed to the physical body and to earthly activities. Bodily consciousness can be enhanced by, for example, massage or grounding exercises as described in bio-energetics. By focusing attention on the earth and by structuring daily life and doing everyday, practical things, the connection with the ordinary world can be restored.

Wholesome food, exercise, contact with nature, clear water and lots of sunlight contribute to the restoration of the etheric body, enabling it to keep out unwanted energies (especially those originating in the emotional body).



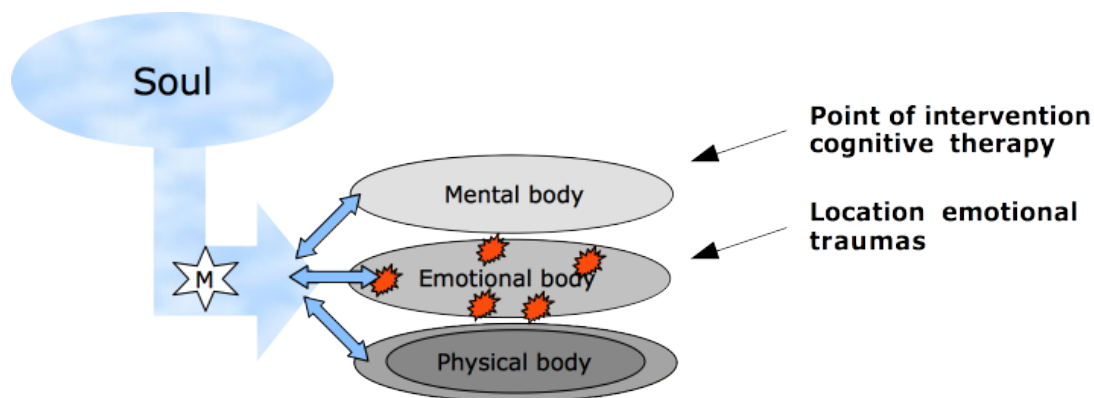
At the same time it is important to put an end to the inner confusion and for this we need mental insight. Once the person affected realizes that his plight is partly his own doing, he will find that there is a way back and that in fact he has some control over it. This will encourage him to reconnect with the physical reality. Finally, once he has regained a degree of stability, he will have to process the traumas that caused him to escape everyday reality in the first place. This will be by far the most difficult task.

Obsessive-compulsive disorders

The importance of coming to terms with unresolved traumas, at whatever stage in life, is illustrated by the following example. Small children who have a mishap or hurt themselves will burst into tears. Five minutes later they will have forgotten all about the incident. But children who, for whatever reason, are not allowed to cry will fare rather differently. They will bottle up their grievances and still remember the occasion twenty years later. Sometimes children find themselves in situations in which they are structurally prevented from expressing their emotions, for example when their parents have frequent, heated arguments that make them feel insecure and powerless. They may end up, perhaps unbeknownst to themselves, with a life-long, deep-rooted sense of insecurity. To compensate for that sense of insecurity, even when they have long since grown up, they could get into the habit of double-checking whether the door is locked at night, the windows are closed and the gas has been turned off. This can create a false sense of security that overrides their internal insecurity.

Over the years these actions can proliferate and eventually develop into a ritual that takes up more and more time, perhaps even several hours a day. Such an obsessive-compulsive disorder can cause so much anxiety as to prevent normal functioning.

The standard method of treatment for obsessive-compulsive behaviour is cognitive behavioural therapy. It helps patients to recognize see that their actions are not functional and then seeks to slowly wean them off. Needless to say, a therapy that focuses primarily on the *mental body* is not necessarily most suited to addressing a problem in the *emotional body*. If we try to convince someone that, from a rational point of view, it does not make sense to keep checking whether the gas has been turned off, he will readily agree, but that does not solve his problem. Far from it. His real problem is the deep-rooted fear that his parents no longer love him and might leave him. Rather than mental confusion, this is an emotional trauma that must be addressed on an emotional level.



Case study: John

Johan is 33 years old. His parents had a troubled relationship and divorced when John was seven. We can identify the following ‘milestones’ in his life, in chronological order:

- 12 – 16 years old: Frequent bullying in school.
- 14: First contact with a psychologist.
- 16: One-year stay at a psychiatric hospital for anxiety.
- 18 – 32: Psychiatric treatment for obsessive-compulsive disorder and ADHD.
- 32: Termination of psychiatric treatment because of ‘untreatability’.
- ‘Lifelong’ medication alongside compulsive behaviour for 1.5 to 2 hours a day.

Alongside the medication, the treatment that John had received to date had been based primarily on cognitive behavioural therapy. But after more than 15 years and despite intensive support, there was little progress. All efforts had been concentrated on curing him of his unwanted – compulsive – behaviour, but in all those years there had never been any attention to the traumatic experiences of his youth and his unfulfilled desire for safety and security. In fact, this client’s compulsive behaviour was not an out-of-control habit but something with a clear function. He was doing it to regain the sense of security he had lost at some point during his younger years. Therapy aimed at depriving him of this surrogate safety could not be successful as long as it offered no genuine safety in its place and for this to be possible the traumas had to be removed from the emotional body. Thus far, doctors had tried to take his only lifeline away from him – something that was doomed to fail. Another approach was needed.

Following eighteen months of integral therapy, aimed at removing the youth traumas, the obsessive-compulsive disorder was cured. John then found a regular, salaried job and after a while he began feeling like a fully-fledged member of society again.

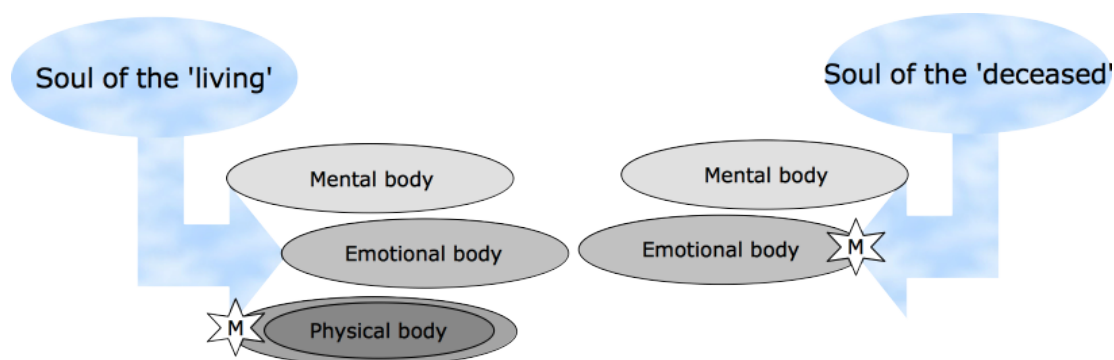
Looking back, he writes:

My therapist soon drew up a plan of action with me, which luckily accommodated those things that were of immediate concern in my life at the time. Leaving aside my day-to-day activities, we looked at my parents' divorce when I was seven and the years of rowing that preceded it. It helped me to understand the origins of my fears and my parents' role in my life. Through assignments with and around my parents and my anxieties I was able to process this trauma after all these years. Suddenly I was no longer at odds with them. We developed a pleasant contact, on an equal footing, without any tension or arguments. I have been feeling much stronger since.

Hearing voices

Many people hear the voices of persons that are not actually here or they see energy patterns that are invisible to others. Sometimes these voices are friendly, but more often than not they are angry or threatening and cause serious disruption in the lives of the people affected. The ability to hear these voices generally arises after a difficult period, perhaps involving illness, divorce or the death of a loved one. Many psychiatric patients hear voices too. The conventional approach sees this as a brain disorder which, in severe cases, must be treated with medication. An integral approach accommodates both another explanation and another solution to this problem.

Our physical body is usually the only body we know and are familiar with. When we die we lose this body as well as our place in the physical world. We then move on to the emotional world. This is where we discover that we are not 'dead' at all, but that we still exist and that we can have contact with 'living' people in the physical world. Both the 'living' and the 'dead' have an emotional body so they can meet in the emotional reality.



As a rule, the deceased person will find his way around in his new surroundings and gradually lose the need for contact with the living.

Other scenarios are conceivable too, especially when someone has died an unexpected or violent death or is struggling to accept his death for some other reason. In that case the deceased may use his emotional body to cling to the living for support.

The following situation could arise. An alcoholic, Mr A, dies and is so confused that he cannot get his bearings in the hereafter. This is why he tries to focus on familiar things, such as a pub (in the physical world) where he liked to go (the emotional experience of which takes place in the emotional reality). In that pub he could come across a drunken man, Mr B. Since this man has the exact same emotions that A is craving, the deceased alcoholic laps up the emotional experiences of the living alcoholic. The fact that it feeds his emotional body is a good reason for the dead Mr A to hook up with B for an extended period of time. Like a parasite, A keeps feeding on B's emotional energy. Since he cannot see the deceased, B is unaware that this is happening. However, he

occasionally experiences emotions that are not his. He has impulses that are out of character and he hears strange voices that others cannot hear.

If the deceased had been a balanced person rather than an alcoholic, this would never have happened. Someone on a higher level of consciousness would respect the autonomy of another and certainly not cause him any harm. Having said that, it is possible that shortly after dying someone will linger in the vicinity of a relative to offer comfort or temporary support.

The situation is quite different when the deceased person is in a confused and negative state of mind. In that case he may want to feed his emotional body with the vibrations of others and he will probably have a preference for anxious or aggressive feelings, since he is most familiar with those. Once he has found someone with such emotions, he will do his best to cultivate them in his victim. It should not come as a surprise that somebody needs such negative vibrations. Just think of the many violent games and horror films that are hugely popular. They give the kind of emotional stimulus that dead people, too, can be addicted to.

Highly developed entities that need high-emotional vibrations will generally not bother us. It tends to be the lesser developed entities with their need for low emotions that feed on the energy of their victims. The latter should meet two criteria:

- They must have a weakened etheric body, so that others can gain access.
- They must generate enough low-emotional vibrations.

People who are comfortable in their own skin and who are strong and self-aware are unlikely to be bothered by parasitic entities. Sick or traumatised people, on the other hand, are suitable candidates and as long as they remain scared and insecure they continue to generate the emotional energies on which lower entities can feed. To shake off such unwanted guests, three measures are needed:

- First of all, the etheric body must be strengthened so it can fulfil its protective function again.
- Secondly, the quality of the emotional energy must be improved.
- Finally, any existing traumas must be dealt with to prevent the occurrence of new attachments.

The condition of the etheric body can be improved through healthy living and by cultivating feelings of authority and autonomy. Such feelings strengthen the etheric body by increasing its vitality. Next up it is a good idea to tune into higher emotions. Beautiful music, the beauty of nature, art and feel-good movies can boost our level of vibration. Likewise, a mental insight in the situation can help reduce anxiety and support the recovery process. If necessary, visualisations can help cleanse the aura and thus remove unwanted energies. And if this still does not yield the desired result, it is also possible to enter into a dialogue with the unwelcome guests. Why are they here? What is it they want to say? They may also be guided towards their own destination.

It should be mentioned here that the voices people hear are not exclusively those of deceased persons. Inanimate energies can also manifest themselves as a 'voice'. In both cases, the solution to the problem calls for a similar approach.

Schizophrenia

One of the hardest to treat conditions is schizophrenia, a virtually incurable disorder characterized by psychotic episodes, delusions and hallucinations. The diagnosis for this illness is always made on the basis of the symptoms experienced by the patient. But because the causes of those symptoms can be extremely diverse, not every case of schizophrenia is the same and the course of the illness can also be quite different. We can differentiate between '*severe schizophrenia*', which involves a process of progressive alienation, and '*milder forms of schizophrenia*', which tends to involve

problems in the patients' day-to-day functioning. On the basis of improved diagnostics, it may be possible to differentiate between the various disorders and to treat them accordingly. Those adhering to the biological perspective view the patient's strange experiences as an effect of impaired brain function which must be treated with medication. When viewed from an integral perspective, the treatment could also be aimed at strengthening the etheric body, although the use of medication – especially in crisis situations – may be inevitable. Let us look at the approach to this illness by considering the experiences of two clients.

Case study: Albert

Albert is a 24-year-old man.

From an early age he has seen 'images' and heard 'voices'.

14 years old: Father's suicide, followed by frequent marihuana use.

18: Diagnosis of paranoia.

19: Admission to psychiatric hospital for 2 months following diagnosis of schizophrenia.

19 – 24: Frequent admissions to various psychiatric hospitals.

Use of antipsychotic drugs for several years.

Albert has been receiving mental health care for several years now and throughout this time his therapists have been treating him like a sick man. They urge him to be cautious and stress his dependence on medication. Slowly but surely, Albert loses any confidence in himself and in his qualities. Over time his circle of friends narrows to fellow patients and his career prospects vanish. All this leads to further hospitalisation and a progressive loss of any sense of autonomy. The one thing he knows is that he is a psychiatric patient before all else, someone who will have to accommodate his illness for the rest of his life.

This approach will sap the energy levels of the person affected and he will increasingly retreat from day-to-day reality. He will function less well and his confidence in his own body will diminish. His attention to the physical reality will wane, unlike his attention to the emotional reality, so that his problem, the perception of strange energies, becomes aggravated over time. The side effects of the medicines further restrict his functioning. They make him passive and listless and severely hamper his ability to focus on the physical reality.

Those of us who adhere to an integral model assume that the delusions and hallucinations experienced by the client originate in the emotional world and that they are the result of a weakening of his etheric body. Treatment is aimed at strengthening this energetic body and for this the patient's autonomy must be stressed. This approach is fundamentally different from the conventional treatment. The patient is stimulated to redevelop his inner authority and encouraged to make plans for the future the way healthy people do. The origins of unusual phenomena, such as seeing energy patterns and hearing voices, are discussed in general terms, thus allowing the person affected to place his experiences in a broader context. He will then realize that the more attention they receive, the more powerful those phenomena become, so he should ignore them as much as possible. The integral approach seeks to return the client to day-to-day realities. By improving his personal stability and convincing him to take little or no notice of confusing experiences, he will gradually break free from their insidious grip. At the same time the client is encouraged to live healthily, and this further strengthens his etheric body. Once a certain degree of stability has been achieved, the client can start dealing with the traumas that landed him in this situation in the first place.

Within a year Albert's symptoms had almost completely disappeared and his medication, in consultation with the psychiatrist, was greatly reduced.

Case study: Gerda

Gerda is 41 years old.

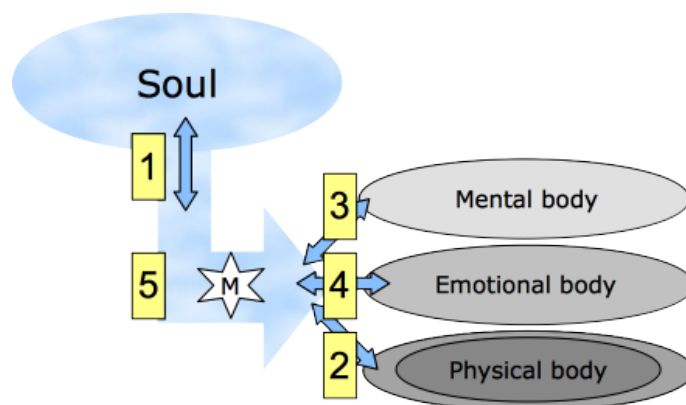
She hears voices and strange noises and claims that she is being watched round the clock by creatures from other planets. In fact, they abducted her once and implanted microchips in her head through which they monitor her and control her thoughts. In an effort to end the observation, she has contacted the police and the judiciary and even NASA, but to no avail. Gerda, too, has been diagnosed with schizophrenia, something she rejects most indignantly.

There is a huge difference between the two patients. Albert knows he experiences strange phenomena and he is able to identify which are 'normal' and which are aberrant. Because he can make this distinction, he can also deliberately focus his attention on the normal reality and ignore the aberrations as much as possible. By strengthening the good experiences and weakening the others, he can keep piloting himself out of his confusion.

Gerda, on the other hand, is incapable of distinguishing between different realities. Because everything she experiences is 'true', she cannot free herself from the emotional world in which she is a prisoner. She is reliant on the biological approach that treats her symptoms with medication.

The essence of integral therapy

integral therapy is extremely practical and is aimed primarily at restoring a person's sense of authority. It is only effective in people who are, to a greater or lesser extent, aware of their situation and who are capable of directing their attention. Drug use and other circumstances that can interfere with the clarity of our consciousness are best avoided. integral therapy is aimed first and foremost at restoring stability and then (or at the same time) at dispelling the traumas that caused the confusion. It can be divided into five tasks that the person affected should carry out to aid his recovery.



1. Reducing the influx of causal energy (where relevant) by stopping meditation and other spiritual practices. Intense mental exertion is also best avoided.
2. Strengthening the physical body (and with it the etheric body) through a healthy lifestyle and by focusing attention on everyday reality. Fostering a sense of self-worth and identity is paramount for the recovery of the etheric body. Massage, sauna, grounding exercises and doing practical things can be useful. It is also advisable to introduce a structure and everyday commitments in order to get a renewed grip on life.
3. Developing a mental insight which creates an internal map to help structure one's experiences.
4. Cleansing the emotional body, with particular emphasis on clearing up childhood traumas.

5. Learning to remain sufficiently detached from everyday problems, without escaping reality.

The integral approach does not suit everyone. The therapy works by the grace of the patient's ability to keep his attention focused on the objective reality. If the illness is so severe that the patient can no longer tell delusion from reality, he will not be able to free himself from his inner confusion. Temporary confusion is not a problem. With good care (and the right medication) it can generally be overcome. But if the patient is structurally incapable of making the distinction, integral therapy cannot help him out. In that case all that remains is the biological approach which can reduce his symptoms.

Summary

Fortunately, many people with serious psychological problems make a good recovery. But if this is not the case, and conventional mental care proves to be ineffective, integral therapy can bring relief. This therapy is based on the idea that, instead of being the result of a brain disorder, a patient's delusions and hallucinations are genuine images from another reality, i.e. from the emotional world. An innate susceptibility, trauma, stress or drug use as well as meditation or concentration exercises can damage or deform the etheric body and take away its protective function. The emotional world can then penetrate the consciousness of the person affected and result in major confusion. Recovery requires the following:

- an explanatory model, which can serve as a useful map for the world in which one has ended up.
- the clarity to find one's bearings in this world.
- the strength to free oneself from this world.

Regaining one's strength tends to be the solution to the problem. A (renewed) sense of one's own strength suggests that the etheric body has been revitalised and that it can once again fulfill its protective function. So the key to the recovery process lies mainly in regaining one's own authority. Everything that reinforces this authority has a healing effect, and everything that undermines it hinders the healing process. The patient's personal autonomy is crucial, for only he can choose where to direct his attention and which reality to activate.

There are people who vigorously defend their confused ideas. It goes without saying that this is not what we mean by *personal authority*. This requires a clear insight into one's situation. As such we can distinguish between:

- People who are aware of their problems and who are in a position to tell 'normal reality' from delusions.
- People who are structurally incapable of distinguishing between the two realities.

Only the first group will benefit from the integral approach.

The main difference between the biological and the integral approach may be their respective emphasis on the patient's autonomy. A small difference in approach can have a major impact on the course of the illness and in turn bring about a totally different outcome. A therapist who is familiar with the integral approach can decide on the best possible course of action, while relatives and others who are directly involved can help the patient find his way out of the labyrinth of confusing

experiences. They can accompany him back to everyday reality and help him regain his self-confidence.

More information on integral therapy can be found at: www.transtrauma.com and on www.transpersoonlijk.nl.

Back cover

For a child watching his mother withdraw money from a cash machine it all seems so easy. Card goes in. Cash comes out. Buy what you want. His mother knows better. Hidden behind the apparent ease of that transaction is a whole world which, starting with her salary, extends to the transfer of money and the banking sector and goes on to encompass the entire global economy.

At first sight, much of what happens around us seems patently obvious because we are blind to the underlying reality. However, beyond the horizon of our perception there are complex structures governed by their own rules and regulations which have a major impact on everything that happens to us.

In this book we go in search of the hidden dimensions of reality, the rules that govern them and the forces that influence our lives.