

Tools of Transcendental Living 1:
SIWEB - Dimensions of Experience

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Transcendental Living refers to that mode of living which is directed at *Phronesis* - practical wisdom. This comes *embodied* in the figure of the *Phronimos* - one who has internalised and realised excellence in practical wisdom. The goal of Transcendental Living is to develop a state of approaching life as a Phronimos, an autonomous spiritual being. Abbahjí is an inspiration for Transcendental Living with his extensive formulation of suggestions and tools for realising the Natural State. He calls this set of tools the *Abbahi Way*.

In this series, we will treat some of the suggestions and tools, one by one, seeking to illuminate them and sensitise for how they can be brought to practise. The logical first tool to discuss is *SIWEB*, also known as the *Web of Dimensions*, which are *Dimensions of Experience*.

SIWEB: Primacy of Perception

The original meaning of SIWEB is Self-I Web, although this meaning has evolved over time. The essence of SIWEB is grounded in the concepts of **experience** and **perception**. The vantage point is that the human being - *you* as a human subject - consists solely of experience, solely *is* perception. This is the stuff you are made of, the mode of your *being-in-the-world*. Experience is the totality of what you are, everything about you is experience. One may see as an analogy a physics viewpoint, that as a living creature you are an assembly of energy, as in frequencies, particles and waves - which in their intrinsic interplay create what you are.

You perceive a reality, a world. The point of SIWEB is that you are not a subject perceiving a world which is separate from you. You are not a separate entity, apart from your perception. Your perception *and* the reality you are perceiving is all *you*. Everything you perceive is a mirror of what you are. This *phenomenological* understanding transcending any duality between subject and object, embracing them as their *intertwining* mirror image, is essential to SIWEB.

In your configuration of experience, you are like a crossroads where experience comes together, you figure as an *assemblage point* of multiple dimensions of perception. In a natural way, this is just happening to you. It has started happening to you from the moment you came to this world.

Initially, you may not be very conscious of the process in which experience is shaping you, is shaping your perception of yourself, the other, the situations and events of the world - and feeds the way you are setting out the course of life.

Transcendental Living implies developing a broader consciousness of your configuration of experience, so that you can actively take up managing this experience and the way your perception evolves. It helps to set your life on a course you may intent it to have, stirring that course.

Methodology of Layers in Experience

SIWEB makes a distinction between different layers of experience. This highlights its multipolar quality. One may also refer to these layers as ‘levels’, ‘fields’ or ‘dimensions’ of experience.

SIWEB distinguishes four dimensions. The point with SIWEB is not that actually there *are* four of these layers in an objective sense. The distinction of these layers is methodological, as it appears to be a very functional distinction to make. SIWEB is not a model of reality, it is a method with which to analyse and manage one’s lifeworld of experience, helping to a more sophisticated insight of the way in which one’s world evolves. It is about knowing yourself.

Another aspect to reckon is that these four dimensions are always there, always present, always active in the totality of your everyday experience. It may depend on the kind of situation that one dimension is more pertinent than another, but they are always interacting, shaping your experience. SIWEB demonstrates that in these different dimensions, different **languages** are ‘spoken’. It is very significant to see that you are a configuration in which different layers are speaking different languages. This is very relevant for understanding communication and especially mis-communication.

Body Experience

The first layer is probably the most obvious one, as we witness it so clearly. If you will, it is the most external dimension of one’s existence, the physical, material layer. We experience life through having a body. With this body we are witness to a physical universe, through seeing, hearing, tasting, acting. The most refined levels of the physical universe, such as those studied by quantum

science, but also our natural ecology, are part of this universe. The language this level of experience speaks is one of *doing*, acting, behaving.

Mind Experience

The second layer of experience manifests itself through our faculty of *reflection*. We are able to reflect on the world around us, by entertaining thoughts, conducting analyses, calculating and reaching conclusions. Through this layer, we witness a reality by *becoming conscious* of it. Consciousness evolves and mindfulness flows through this layer. All our reflecting is this dimension of Mind experience. The language of mind is *thought*.

Soul Experience

In a third dimension, we have feeling, emotions and sentiment. This is soul experience, where also meaning and value evolves. While this dimension is largely subconscious, feeling is a very crucial dimension and is also called the causal field. A field which cannot be accessed through analysis - not even of dreams. It is a field which is much less personal, it is a dimension of sharing in a space.

Though we tend to consider ourselves as rational beings, most of our decisions are not taken rationally, but on the basis of feelings. Sometimes this occurs consciously, with one explicitly doing something, just because it 'feels right'. Very often this occurs unconsciously and our mental input seemingly leading to a decision, is still unwittingly based on feeling. Intuition is of this field. The causal field of soul follows the law of cause and consequence, an impulse in soul will lead to an effect. This may be direct, but a soul impulse may also linger and evolve, before letting its effect be felt. The way one manages this flow of cause and effect is key to managing one's lifeworld of experience. The language of soul is *feeling*.

Spirit Experience

Finally, one dimension in us gives *direction*, which is determining and will-full. This could be seen as the director of all experience, chairman of our configuration. Spirit harbours our will and intent, our beliefs and convictions. As it is of an absolute nature, this layer sets the framework, the scope of our experience. This scope can be wide or it can be narrow. In the process of spiritual opening, the key is to widen the scope of spirit as much as one can, directing a course which induces harmony.

The setting of our experience is created by our belief in the world. One's belief in a certain world, all modes of our experience will be framed according to that reality. In spirit are located our *habitual programmes of perception*. The language of spirit is *intent*.

An Integrative Configuration of Experience

These four dimensions of experience constitute your configuration of being in the world, being alive. One may say that one is embodied in dimensions of experience and this is its holistic setting. While these may set the basic modes of experience, the way these dimensions are filled in, lived through, is really up to your creative niche. One's experience is not fixed, even though all too often external forces and programmed behaviour set us into habitual modes of experience. It is functional to see that while you are these dimensions, they also constitute *instruments* at your disposal. You can use them, once you understand their nature, their mechanism and language.

It is specific to one's individuality that one may be more disposed to certain dimensions of experience, than others. One may identify with one dimension more than with another. A professional athlete will likely have a strong identification with the field of body experience. A scientist will be more disposed to the dimension of mind and an artist be more active in the dimension of soul. A CEO may be disposed to spirit dimension, constantly setting direction. Having said this, it is key to understand that *all* these dimensions are part of what you are and all are active at each moment in every situation. Together they constitute constantly your integrative experience. It is good practise to learn to recognise these fields and their features in your mode of behaviour and communication.

These different dimensions embodying different languages is another key aspect. These languages may not always understand one another. Mind cannot reason away a feeling in soul. It cannot reason away a belief or conviction in spirit either.

Metaphorically, one may take a group of people in a room, they are in a project and each represents a dimension and its language. The spirit chairman will be focused on setting the goals, the results to be obtained and outlining its scope. The mind one will be focused on defining the specific steps to be taking, what kind of methodology to use and how the roles are divided. The soul one may be focused on the atmosphere in the group, on the feeling of working together, the commitment, the

right energy. Finally the body delegate is just motivated to really do some work together, to get down to it and act. These features are constantly in interplay in your configuration.

The point of SIWEB is not about what kind of type you might be. It is about developing your perception. One goal can be to develop oneself in each of these dimensions as fully as possible, employing their functions most optimally. It is about recognising in every situation of communication the dimensions involved and which of the layers to activate more or less, to reach the most optimal communication.

When someone just appreciates if you would help him with a practical chore, it is more optimal to actively help, than to reflect on how eager you are to help. When someone's feelings are hurt, it is more optimal to make the other feel you really care, than to try and convince one of it. When someone needs a piece of information you have, it is more optimal to share that information, than to propose to buy him a drink.

These are just simple examples in the attempt to sensitise for it. One will need to explore the dimensions of SIWEB and their interactive dynamic in order to fully grasp how much added value it can be for managing one's world of experience.

