

26 LOGICAL
REASONS
I AM A
THEIST &
ATHEIST

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**A WISHY-WASHY
AGNOSTIC**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRO

1	BEING AGNOSTIC STINKS	9
2	COSMIC CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE	19
3	DEFINING THEISM AND ATHEISM	33

THEISM

4	FREE WILL (REASON 1)	57
5	QUALIA (REASON 2)	71
6	CONJOINED TWINS (REASON 3)	81
7	SOUL ENERGY (REASON 4)	95
8	GHOSTS (REASON 5)	111
9	NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES (REASON 6)	129
10	PAST LIVES (REASON 7)	157
11	KIDS (REASON 8)	177
12	QUANTUM QUANDARIES (REASON 9)	193
13	KARMA (REASON 10)	213
14	MIRACLES (REASON 11)	225
15	ESP (REASON 12)	237
16	ASTROLOGY (REASON 13)	253
17	ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS (REASON 14)	265

CONCLUSION

18 CONCLUSION TO THEISM	281
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ATHEISM

19 MUTATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS (REASON 15)	291
20 REINCARNATION GAPS (REASON 16)	307
21 NO PERMANENT HEAVEN (REASON 17)	325
22 CONTRADICTIONS WITH CONSCIOUSNESS (REASON 18)	335
23 THE PROBLEM OF EVIL (REASON 19)	349
24 REPLICATING SENTIENT BEINGS (REASON 20)	363
25 SOUL SABOTAGE (REASON 21)	379
26 INCUBUS PHENOMENON (REASON 22)	389
27 CELLULAR MEMORY (REASON 23)	397
28 FROZEN EMBRYOS (REASON 24)	407
29 UNGODLY GOD PEOPLE (REASON 25)	415
30 NO PROOF (REASON 26)	431

CONCLUSION

31 I REMAIN WISHY-WASHY BUT TILT TOWARDS . . .	441
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- ch 7 -

SOUL ENERGY

REASON 4

It is common for people to suggest that we humans embody a non-secular type of energy:

*All life is **ENERGY** and we are transmitting it at every moment . . .
like radio frequencies . . . OPRAH WINFREY*

*I believe we're a field of **ENERGY**, dancing for itself . . . clusters
of tetrahedrons moving around together . . . JIM CARREY*

*This creep is giving off a weird **ENERGY** . . . ME*

Obviously, these quotes are not referring to the biological or chemical kind of energy that drives us—sourced from food, water, oxygen, and sunlight—but to the kind that makes us intelligent and enables us to think, feel, and create. We frequently use the word *energy* to describe our behavior, it's taken for granted as applicable spiritually. But is it being misappropriated by theists, or is it a fitting analogy?

Deepak Chopra has often been criticized for twisting quantum and classical science, and regurgitating it as spiritual “mumbo-jumbo.” Are those of us who refer to ourselves as possessing a non-secular type of energy doing the same?

We all understand the use of the term on a looser, macro level, but let's take a look at the technical parameters involved in defining *energy* within the realm of science.

DEFINING SOUL ENERGY

So that we don't get mixed up between the different types of energy hopping around in the universe, let's give this special kind of existential energy we will be analyzing its own unique name. We will call that something we are analyzing *soul energy* for now.

While I've been using the words *sentience*, *consciousness*, *soul*, and *free will* interchangeably, here I'm deliberately choosing to emphasize the word *soul* for a reason. Everyone may not agree with my interpretation, but to me, *sentience* is the ability to feel pain, pleasure, emotions, or other sensations. *Consciousness* usually refers to the awareness of one's existence. (So animals might be considered sentient, but not conscious.) *Free will* is the ability to exercise choice or make decisions. A *soul* is that which encompasses all of the above—an awareness of sensations and itself, as well as the ability to exercise free will. It is also something to which I ascribe spiritual wisdom, karma points, ethics, negative and positive vibes, and perhaps auras or chakras (if those concepts are real, I am not sure).

I almost imagine the soul to be the carrying case or bulletin board to which all of these various properties are pinned.



I realize that you may have an altogether different view of how these terms should be used, but as long as you follow the logic of what I am saying, you can always substitute your own words.

Now if we were to try and discipline ourselves to analyze this through the lens of science, and match soul energy against the definition of all energy, what would that look like? Let's look at the two requirements that all energy must meet in order to be defined as such:

(1) Energy is defined as a *fundamental* **FORCE** of nature that is transferred between parts of a **SYSTEM**, resulting in some *physical change to the system*, and usually regarded as the *capacity for doing* **WORK**.

(2) Energy is defined as a force that can *neither be created nor destroyed*.

DEFINITION: PART 1 OF 2

Let's look at the first part of the definition, where energy is defined as a FORCE that causes a SYSTEM to do WORK, and see how *soul energy* might fit in. If I were to chart the types of energy we normally see day to day, it might look something like this:

Physical System	Force	Work
Microwave	Heat Energy	Warm things up
Vacuum	Mechanical Energy	Clean things up
Rocket	Chemical Energy	Send things up
Bomb	Nuclear Energy	Blow things up
Sailboat	Wind Energy	Speed things up
Television	Electrical Energy	Liven things up

I'm being a bit cutesy here. But basically, we can see familiar types of energy operating on a physical system and causing it to do some kind of work. Different energy types are responsible for different types of work.

Solar energy involves heat and keeps us warm. Chemical energy enables processes to occur in the body. Sound energy helps us to speak and communicate via vibrations that travel through the air.

In the same way, I envision *soul energy* causing the body to do work like *think, feel, adopt ethics, make decisions, write brilliant books*, and any of the other intangible things we do as humans.

Physical System	Force	Work
Human Body	Soul Energy → Chemical Energy →	Think, Feel, Create Walk, Breathe

In fact, we know that all types of energy are, in the end, a form of *kinetic* or *potential* energy. Nuclear, sound, electrical, light, chemical, heat, magnetic—all of it is kinetic of some kind when in motion, or potential when at rest. For example, a magnet has potential energy when it is just sitting there, chilling, simply by way of its ability to attract another object with its magnetic field. When another magnet is attracted or repulsed by it, that is kinetic energy in motion. Similarly, it would take more kinetic energy to separate an object from a magnet and restore it back to its state of potential energy, where it is free to attract something else again.

In the same way, soul energy can be seen as both a potential and kinetic type of energy. It has potential energy in that it carries with it the intelligence and ethics that evolved from spiritual growth, as

well as the potential to exercise free will, ready to be deployed at the appropriate time. There are times when that intelligence, moral code, or free will may be at rest, perhaps when we are sleeping dreamlessly, or between avatars as we float around waiting to be born again. Once in active mode, kinetic motion becomes evident through the steps that we take stemming from the deployment of our intelligence, ethics, preferences, and free will, which drive our behavior and tell us what to do.

In fact, I would argue that soul energy is the most motion-y, the most kinetic-y of all the kinetic energies. It's the kinetikiest. (Since I'm making up energy types, I might as well make up words to go along with it!) This is because the other kinds of energy—solar, wind, light, chemical—appear to be more passive and random, even when in motion. In other words, they are not self-determiners of where they go next. Nuclear energy doesn't dive into a tightly wound atom on its own and sit crouching there, waiting to pounce on unsuspecting civilians when unleashed. Kinetic nuclear energy becomes active when the universe or external factors cause the atom to split. Or when humans are being their usual asshole-selves and greedily bombing each other to smithereens for a sliver of land.

Similarly, when the sun warms a lake, the heat is not thinking to itself *I'm sick of these hot flashes—I need a quick dip*. The heat is just doing what nature is prompting it to do.

Soul energy—if it exists—is actively deciding on what motions to pursue—shopping, eating, driving, smirking, twerking—or perhaps what avatar to jump into next. It's an intelligent, sentient kind of energy, unlike the others, which appear non-intelligent and non-sentient. It's one of a kind, which is why it may take extra effort to discover and prove.

Of course, there is no evidence that anything other than the configuration of our brains and the firing of synapses is what causes us to think, feel, and create. With the chemical energy that we use, we know it comes to us in the form of calories in food, oxygen, and carbon molecules in the air, or heat energy from the sun. When we are first conceived as little zygotes, we draw this sustenance from our mother and the umbilical cord.

Where would soul energy be arriving from? Does it fly into our bodies at the time of fertilization, when egg meets sperm? When we start kicking in the womb? Or does it become infused in us at the moment of birth? Does it stay and grow within us as we gain knowledge from childhood to adulthood?

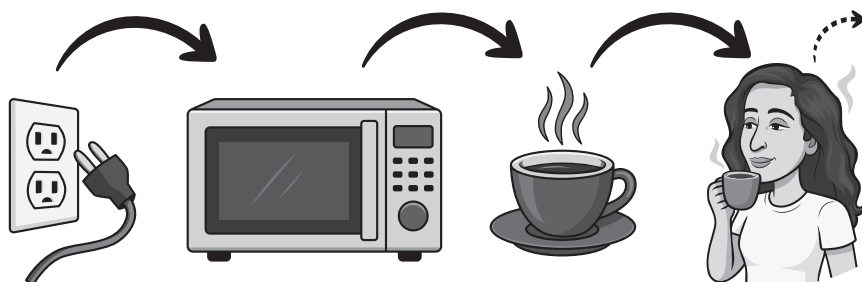
TV antennas will be tuned into a specific frequency when the viewer wants to watch a particular program. The antenna—a metal rod or dish—receives electromagnetic waves from a broadcast tower, and converts them into various electrical signals that the TV can interpret via a process called electromagnetic induction. Perhaps our brains are like antennas, tuned into a particular soul-energy frequency that is our own, receiving the signal that tells us what to do. Maybe that is what theists mean when they refer to auras or chakras?

I'm just throwing darts out there with my haphazard conjecturing. I'm not exactly sure of the vehicle through which soul energy enters us, and when dissected closely on a micro level, it seems hard to pin things down. Hence, the tendency of wary atheists to swat down such an unproven cliché. But to me, at a macro level, soul energy most definitely feels like it fits the first part of the definition of energy: *A force that causes a physical system to do some kind of work.*

DEFINITION: PART 2 OF 2

It's interesting to note that soul energy may also satisfy the second part of the definition: *Energy can neither be created nor destroyed.*

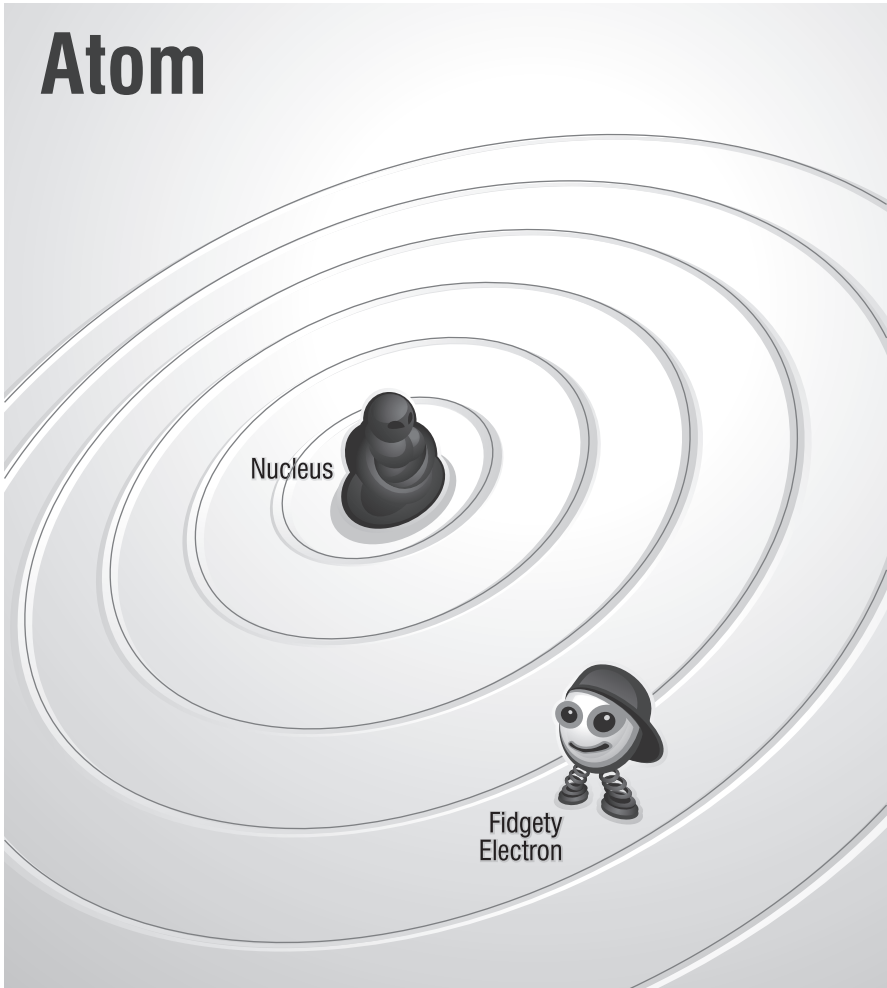
When a microwave is used while making tea, the electric energy from running the microwave converts to heat energy—which in turn warms the cup of water—which in turn transfers to our body as we drink it—and is then processed from caloric or chemical energy to kinetic energy as we move—and finally may dissipate back into the air as heat energy again in the form of sweat. The energy in this process is converted from one form to another, but is never destroyed.



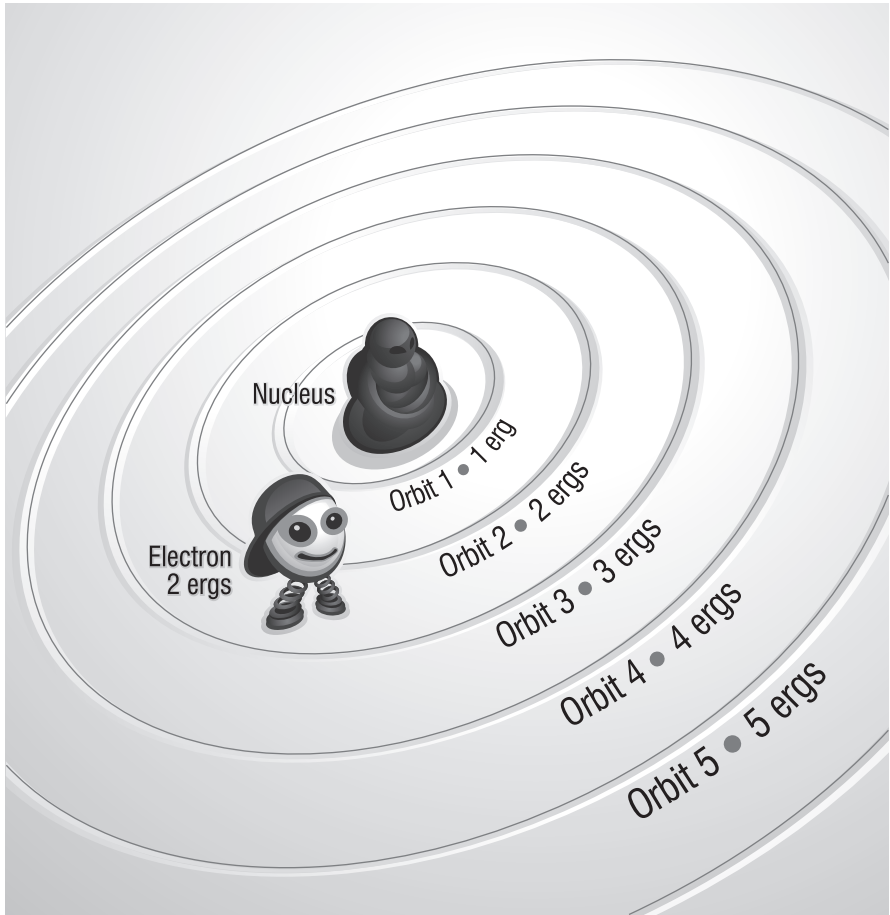
In the same way, if soul energy were to conform to the two-part definition of energy, then it would continue on once we die in some other form. My guess is that it would carry on as a sentient, intelligent, active type of energy, one that remains fully distinct from all the other passive energy types. This sentient energy—able to make free will decisions and think, create, and emote—would keep its properties intact and bounce from one avatar to the next, in a cycle of rebirth.

If we were to take the Dalai Lama's metaphor from his book, *The Universe in an Atom*, and compare an atom to the way the universe works, we would note that in an atom, there is a core nucleus at the ground state.

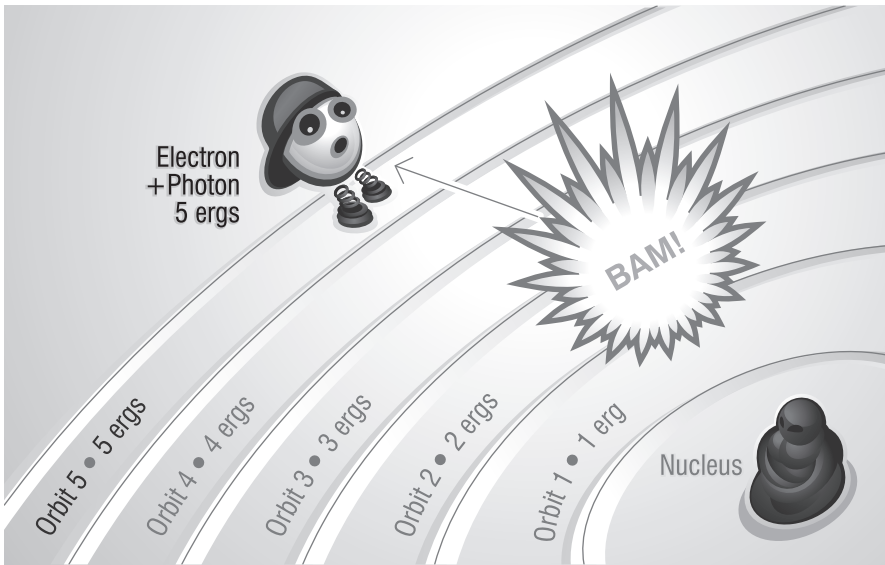
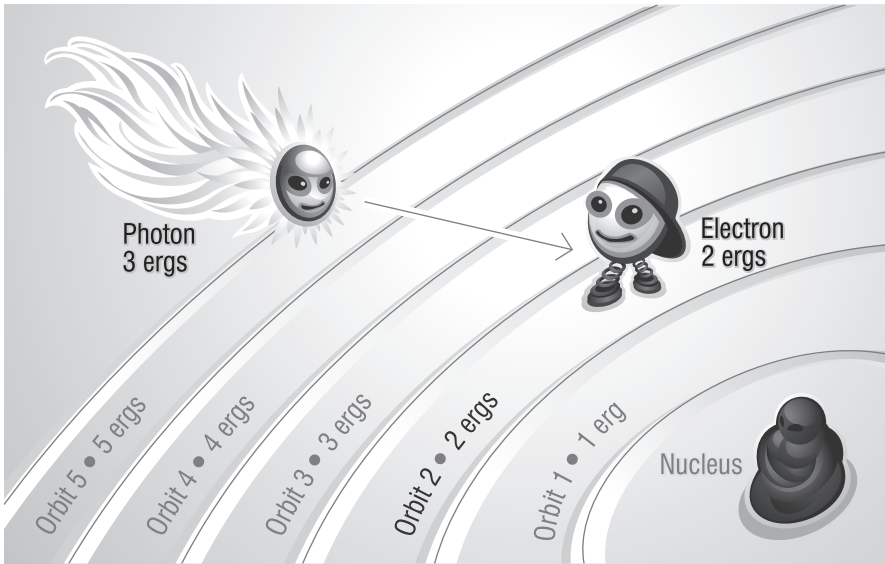
While ascending, there are various orbitals circling the nucleus, each requiring more and more energy for an electron in the atom to reach. The electron is, in a sense, fidgety, because it is rarely still in just one energy state.



The amount of energy in an electron is measured by units of ergs, which are equal to 10^{-7} joules.

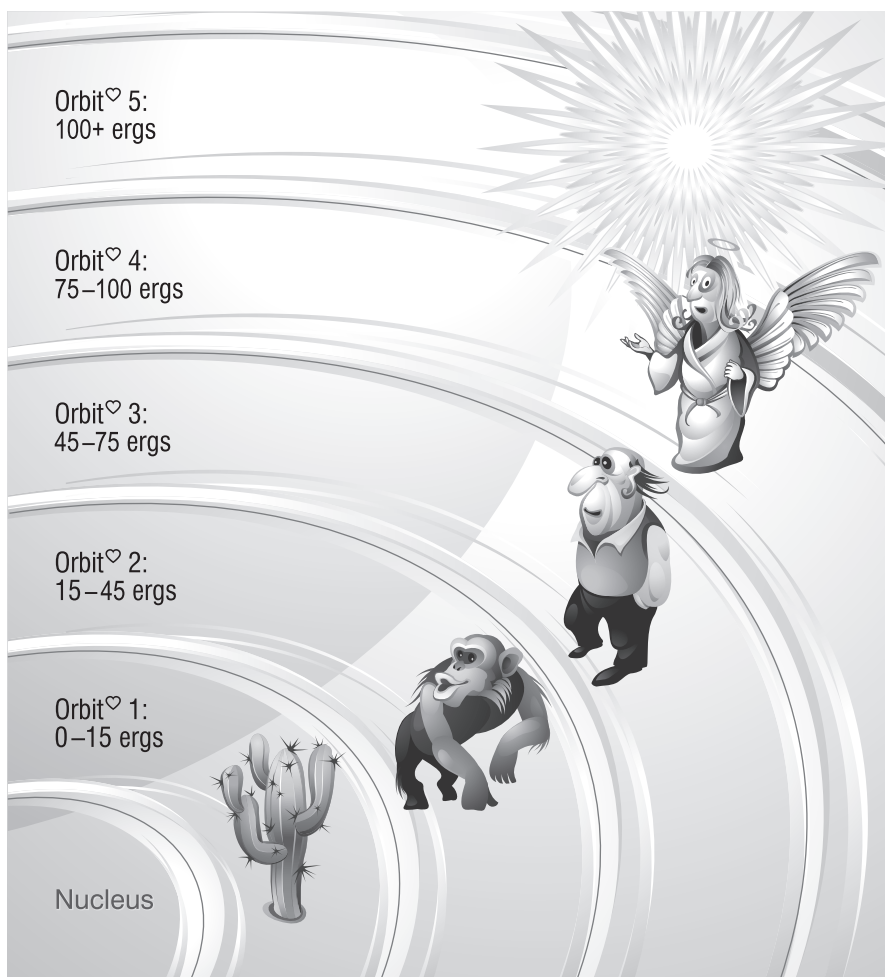


For an electron to jump from a lower orbital to a higher one, and resist the electromagnetic pull of the nucleus, it must absorb more energy—usually in the form of photons, or light—and then make the leap.



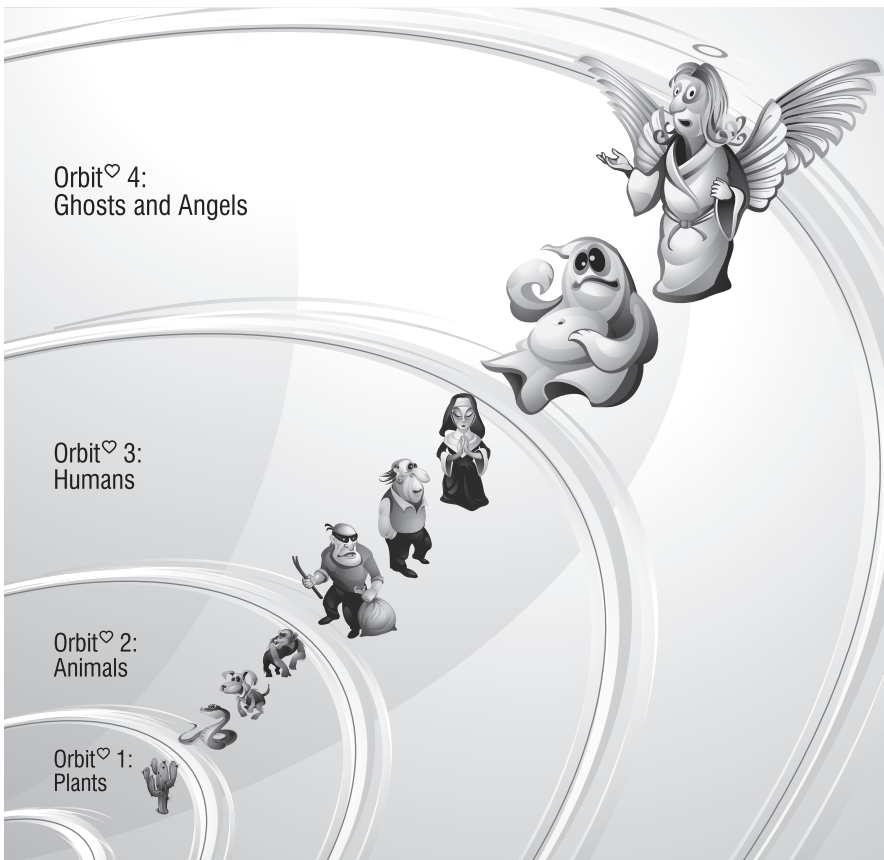
The more energy the electron absorbs and the higher it goes, the harder it is to maintain that excited state and resist the pull of the nucleus. Electrons in excited states are easily prone to losing packets of light, or photons, and tumbling back down to lower orbitals.

In the same way, if we consider the universe our atom, and a planet like Earth—filled with an abundance of sensory temptations to touch, feel, taste, hear, and see—as the gripping nucleus, our souls would be the fidgety electron trying to make its way from one orbit to the other. Our souls can be pulled down towards more material experiences and baser, animal instincts—diving into physical-bodied avatars wanting to be fed, soothed, clothed, massaged, entertained, and pleased. Or they may be able to rise up towards a radiant heaven by absorbing more spiritual light.



As I've mentioned earlier, Hindus believe that all souls must pass through a hierarchy of 8.4 million life forms—including all plant and animal species—whilst accumulating good and bad karma and spiritual wisdom. Only then can they reach the human stage and have a chance at leaving all their physical forms behind through self-actualization. Perhaps we can even escape our atom—the universe—and achieve *moksha*, just like an electron can escape an atom if it gains enough energy.

If we indulge in only selfish pursuits, then instead we may lose some of our positive karmic energy and fall down the sentient totem pole to inhabit one of the lower avatars.



We might not fall all the way back down again to the bottom if we retain some light energy or enlightenment progress. But similar to the electron, we may constantly shift between orbits, not always able to maintain the energy needed for higher planes.

Just like electrons can go up and down orbits in an atom, perhaps soul energy can also go up and down planes in the universe. If electrons need ergs of light to climb an orbit, perhaps soul energy needs ergs of enlightenment or karma to do the same. If chemical or electrical energy can morph into heat or light energy, then perhaps soul energy can morph into different sentient energies as well.

These comparisons don't come off as ludicrous to me—I think there is a sort of logic to it. In fact, there may be more clues hinting at the existence of a supernatural kind of energy, as we will discuss in upcoming chapters. Therefore, my conclusion is that the second part of the definition of energy—*where energy is neither created nor destroyed (but often converted)*—can plausibly be applied to soul energy as well.

CAN WE CONCLUDE THAT SOUL ENERGY EXISTS?

Despite the parallels, I realize this is a lot of speculating, and trying to prove out a non-secular form of energy does feel far-fetched at times. Many atheists will say that I am misappropriating scientific concepts and twisting them into spiritual mumbo-jumbo as well.

But consider the fact that mankind is constantly learning about new types of energy. Coal mining is thought to have started around 200 BC in China. The first windmill was recorded in 644 AD in Iran. The first petrol-powered car was made by Karl Benz in 1885.

Nuclear fission was discovered in 1938, and atomic energy was first used in war in 1945.

As an open-minded agnostic, I can't simply dismiss the prospect of soul energy just because we haven't discovered it yet. Now I realize that lack of discovery does not mean we can make up anything and say it exists. I normally agree with the atheist argument that the person creating the story has the burden to prove it's true. As I said earlier, people can't just conjure up tooth fairies and purple dinosaurs and expect people to believe in them. I understand that it may sound irrational when theists insist there is a magical father figure in the sky, expecting us to perform specific rituals or pray in a certain way. That may be the equivalent of claiming there is a Santa Claus.

But the case of soul energy is special—I think the onus is on *both* sides to prove or disprove it. It's not made up—rather, there are numerous signs that point to the possibility that we do have some kind of soul, consciousness, subjective first-person experience, or free will in this life—and possibly after. And as we just saw, even the official two-part definition appears to be applicable to a sentient, intelligent type of energy.

Therefore, I am somewhat persuaded by the Oprahs, Chopras, and Jim Carreys of the world, who claim that we are fields of energy in a spiritual sense, because I can see how it also fits in a scientific sense. For this reason, *soul energy* earns a spot on my list of theist clues, and my needle points to a respectable 7 on the ISM scale.



26 LOGICAL REASONS I AM A THEIST AND ATHEIST

- (1) Free Will—theISM 6
- (2) Qualia—theISM 7
- (3) Conjoined Twins—theISM 2
- (4) Soul Energy—theISM 7