

The universe is supremely elegant in its organisation. Like a seed from which a tree grows, it begins from a fundamental unit. From that one thing that embodies two polar energies, called Shiva/Shakti, grows the diversity of our world. This cosmology, or explanation of the organisation of the universe is called the 'Tattvas', meaning 'that-ness'. Shiva is unmanifested energy – like the ink in a pen. Shakti is the energy that is creation, like the words of the pen writes. The energies steps themselves down in vibration like an electrical transformer, to create the diversity we see all around us. Imagine a family tree with Shiva/Shakti as the first roots.

At the end of the root system of this tree is the physical world, containing five basic elements. Like a pallet of colours, these elements mix and separate to create the diversity we see in nature and in ourselves. These five elements are:

Earth ♥ Water ♥ fire ♥ air ♥ Space

Each element contains quantities that make it unique. Because human beings are a microcosm of the full splendour of the universe, we also contain and embody these five elements.

### Characteristic Qualities of the Five Elements

#### EARTH

Steadiness  
Patience  
Strength  
Endurance  
Stability  
Masculine Energy  
Contraction

#### WATER

Yielding  
Freedom  
Movement  
Relating  
Feminine Energy  
Openness

## FIRE

Determination  
Transformation  
Heat  
Austerity  
Aspiration

## AIR

Spaciousness  
Speed  
Extension  
Change

## SPACE

Encompasses the other four elements. The division between the individual self and the Universal self.

In the Human body, the earth element is predominant from the feet (our literal connection to the earth), up to the knee area. From the knees to the waist, the element of water is strongest. The sine (axel skeleton) embodies the fire element. Air is contained and processed by the lungs in the chest. Space wraps arounds us, contains, and gives us context.