

Introduction to the Seven Planes

A “plane” refers to all the matter in the universe that is formed from a particular type of atom. For example, the mental plane is the sum total of all the matter that is formed out of 3-atoms. In contrast, a “world” refers to the portion of matter of a particular plane that is associated with a planet. For example, the mental world is the sphere of mental matter that surrounds and interpenetrates the Earth. This chapter describes the subtle worlds that surround the Earth, but much of the information can also be applied to the subtle planes in general.

Chapter 3 stated that a galaxy is a series of 49 interpenetrating spheres of matter from all 49 planes, and that a solar system is a series of 7 interpenetrating spheres of matter from 7 planes. Continuing along the same lines, a planet is a series of 3 interpenetrating spheres of matter from 3 planes (physical-etheric, emotional and mental-causal).

Like human beings, the Earth has five bodies (or worlds) composed of five types of matter (causal, mental, emotional, etheric and physical). The other visible planets in the solar system are all similarly constructed, but there are also invisible planets that are in the process of “incarnating” and don’t have a “physical body” yet. It is strange to think of planets as living entities but they are; they just belong to a different evolutionary path than ours. The Earth is the only planet in the solar system that is, has been, or ever will be, home to physical life, but all planets (physical and non-physical) are home to subtle life-forms at some time or another – that is why they exist.

When a planet “dies” its bodies dissolve just as ours do. The Moon is a dead planet and the ball of rock we see in the night sky is its dead physical body, which will take billions of years to breakdown. Planets are spherical because their various grades of matter are concentrically arranged around the ensouling monad. Our physical world includes the solid planet, the liquid oceans and the gaseous atmosphere. The subtle worlds interpenetrate the physical world just as water interpenetrates the soil, but each successively higher subtle world also extends further out into space, beyond the atmosphere. The emotional world is known to extend half way to the Moon, and the mental and causal worlds considerably further.

The lower subplanes of the subtle worlds are nearer to the surface of the Earth and the higher subplanes are farther out. The Earth’s subtle bodies are largely contained within its physical body, as are our own. The lowest emotional subplane (2:1) is in alignment with the lowest physical subplane (1:1), which corresponds to solid physical matter. All of the Earth’s solid matter (1:1) is below our feet, and so is most of the 2:1 matter. The lowest emotional subplane (2:1) is known as the “underworld” because it is literally underneath the world. So “hell” is literally inside the Earth – more on that later in the chapter.

Plane / Sub-Plane	Name of Heaven		Life Spans		Bodily Heights				
	Buddhist Term	English Equivalent	Ancient Term	Earth Years	Ancient Term	Miles			
Causal Plane	3:7	Most human causal bodies are filled only with molecular matter (3:5- 3:6) and the lack of atomic matter prevents consciousness on the seventh or atomic subplane	84,000 Kalpas	363 Trillion Years	84,000 Yojanas	382,200 Miles			
	3:6		60,000 Kalpas	259 Trillion Years	60,000 Yojanas	273,000 Miles			
	3:5		Vijnananantya	40,000 Kalpas	173 Trillion Years	40,000 Yojanas	182,000 Miles		
			Aksananantya	20,000 Kalpas	86 Trillion Years	20,000 Yojanas	91,000 Miles		
	3:4		Akanistha	Supreme Heaven	16,000 Kalpas	69.1 Trillion Years	16,000 Yojanas	72,800 Miles	
			Sudarsana	Clear-Sighted Heaven	8,000 Kalpas	34.6 Trillion Years	8,000 Yojanas	36,400 Miles	
			Sudrsa	Beautiful Heaven	4,000 Kalpas	17.3 Trillion Years	4,000 Yojanas	18,200 Miles	
			Atapa	Serene Heaven	2,000 Kalpas	8.64 Trillion Years	2,000 Yojanas	9,100 Miles	
			3:3	Avrta	Effortless Heaven	1,000 Kalpas	4.32 Trillion Years	1,000 Yojanas	4,550 Miles
				Vehapphala/Asannasatta	Great Reward/No Thought Heaven	500 Kalpas	2.16 Trillion Years	500 Yojanas	2,275 Miles
Mental Plane	Human emotional bodies are filled only with molecular matter (2:1- 2:6) and the lack of atomic matter prevents consciousness on the seventh or atomic subplane	Punyapraveva	250 Kalpas	1.08 Trillion Years	250 Yojanas	1,138 Miles			
		Anahraka	Cloudless Heaven	125 Kalpas	540 Billion Years	125 Yojanas	569 Miles		
		Subhaktstna	Universal Purity Heaven	64 Kalpas	276 Billion Years	64 Yojanas	291 Miles		
		Apramanasubha	Limitless Purity Heaven	32 Kalpas	138 Billion Years	32 Yojanas	146 Miles		
		3:2	Parittasubha	Lesser Purity Heaven	16 Kalpas	69.1 Billion Years	16 Yojanas	73 Miles	
			Abhasvara	Light & Sound Heaven	8 Kalpas	34.6 Billion Years	8 Yojanas	36 Miles	
		3:1	Apramanabha	Limitless Light Heaven	4 Kalpas	17.3 Billion Years	4 Yojanas	18 Miles	
			Parittabha	Lesser Light Heaven	2 Kalpas	8.6 Billion Years	2 Yojanas	9.1 Miles	
		3:1	Mahabrahma	Great Brahma Heaven	1 Kalpa	4.32 Billion Years	1 Yojana	4.6 Miles	
			Brahmapurohita	Brahma's Minister's Heaven	0.5 Kalpa	2.16 Billion Years	0.5 Yojana	2.3 Miles	
3:1	Brahmakayika	Brahma's Retinue Heaven	0.25 Kalpa	1.08 Billion Years	0.25 Yojana	1.1 Miles			
	Human emotional bodies are filled only with molecular matter (2:1- 2:6) and the lack of atomic matter prevents consciousness on the seventh or atomic subplane								
Emotional Plane	2:7	Paranimitavasavatin	16,000 years where 1 day is 1,600 earth years	9.22 Billion Years	1.5 Krosas	0.86 Mile			
	2:6	Nirmanarati	8,000 years where 1 day is 800 earth years	2.30 Billion Years	1.25 Krosas	0.71 Mile			
	2:5	Tusita	4,000 years where 1 day is 400 earth years	576 Million Years	1 Krosa	0.57 Mile			
	2:4	Yama	2,000 years where 1 day is 200 earth years	144 Million Years	0.75 Krosa	0.43 Mile			
	2:3	Trayastrimsa	1,000 years where 1 day is 100 earth years	36 Million Years	0.5 Krosa	0.29 Mile			
	2:2	Caturmaharajayika	500 years where 1 day is 50 earth years	9 Million Years	0.25 Krosa	0.14 Mile			
	2:1	Human physical-etheric bodies are composed of molecular matter (1:1- 1:6) and the lack of atomic matter prevents consciousness on the seventh or atomic subplane							
Etheric Plane	1:7	Sadamattas	Always Drunk						
	1:6	Maladharas	Always Celebrating						
	1:5	Karotapanis	Always Hungry						
	1:4	Manusya	Humans						
	1:3	Focus:							
1:2									
1:1									

Calculations:
 1 Cubit = 18 inches
 1 Bow = 4 Cubits = 2 Yards
 1 Krosa = 500 Bows = 1000 Yards
 1 Yojana = 8 Krosa = 4.55 Miles

Key:
 1 Kalpa, Aeon or Day of Brahma = 4.32 Billion Years
 1 Year = 360 Days
 1 Yojana = 4.55 Miles or 7.31 Kilometres
 1 Krosa = 0.57 Miles or 0.91 Kilometres

Figure 10a – The Worlds of Human Endeavour

Figure 10a shows the Buddhist names and characteristics for the subplanes of the physical, emotional and mental planes. I wouldn't take the bodily heights or life-spans too literally, but they do give an idea of the increased spatial dimensions and faster perception of time associated with the higher planes. The word "dhyana" means meditation, indicating that certain advanced beings on the mental plane create and sustain "forms" using the power of their minds. The levels of "focus" (21 to 35) are the terms Robert Monroe used to identify the various subplanes he explored in his out-of-body experiences. There are seven subplanes within each plane, yet only six are accessible to human beings. This is because our subtle bodies only contain molecules (e.g. 2:1–2:6) and not atoms (e.g. 2:7), so we can't perceive the seventh subplane. Consequently, we experience brief periods of unconsciousness when we pass through the seventh subplanes of the etheric and emotional worlds (either during sleep or after physical death). Purgatory, Paradise and Heaven are realms that we pass through after physical death, and these will be explained later in the chapter.

Alternative Names for the Seven Planes or Worlds

The emotional plane (2) is often incorrectly called the "astral plane". The term "astral" was first used in the 19th century to describe the fact that three times as many stars are visible with "higher sight". But night does not exist in the emotional world because emotional-plane light can pass through the Earth unhindered, so no stars are visible. It is etheric sight that allows three times as many stars to be seen, so the "astral" plane actually refers to the etheric plane. The divine plane (6) is often incorrectly called the monadic plane, because Theosophists mistakenly believe the third triad to be the monad. Figure 11b lists some of other names that the seven planes of the solar system are known by. These subtle worlds are not "places" that exist somewhere else; they are all around us, all the time.

	Bladon	Laurency	Theosophy	Kabbalah	Various Eastern Designations				Translation
7	Upper Monadic Lower Monadic	Manifestal	Logoic	Kether Chokmah	Mahaparanirvana	Atala	Satyaloka	Adi	First
6	Divine	Submanifestal	Monadic	Binah	Paranirvana	Vitala	Taparloka	Anupadaka	Parentless
5	Upper Spiritual Lower Spiritual	Superessential	Atmic	Daath Chesed	Nirvana	Sutala	Janarloka	Atma	Spirit
4	Unity	Essential	Buddhic	Geburah		Rasatala	Maharloka	Buddhi	Intuition
3	Causal Mental	Causal Mental	Causal Mental	Tiphereth Netzach	Formless Heavens Form Heavens	Talatala	Svarloka	Manas	Mind
2	Emotional	Emotional	Astral	Hod	Desire Heavens	Mahatala	Bhuvarloka	Kama	Desire
1	Etheric Physical	Etheric Physical	Etheric Physical	Yesod Malkuth		Patala	Bhurloka	Sthula	Coarse

Figure 10b – Various Names for the Seven Planes