

[Triloka: The Three Worlds](#)

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We speak of one world and one God, but the Vedic rishis described three intertwined dimensions of existence: the physical world, the world of our ancestors and the light-filled world of the Gods.

Where Did This Universe Come From?

Supreme God Siva created the world and all things in it. He creates and sustains from moment to moment every atom of the seen physical and unseen spiritual universe. Everything is within Him. He is within everything. Aum.

God Siva created us. He created the earth and all things upon it, animate and inanimate. He created time and gravity, the vast spaces and the uncounted stars. He created night and day, joy and sorrow, love and hate, birth and death. He created the gross and the subtle, this world and the other worlds. There are three worlds of existence: the physical, subtle and causal, termed Bhuloka, Antarloka and Sivaloka. The Creator of all, Siva Himself is uncreated. As supreme Mahadeva, Siva wills into manifestation all souls and all form, issuing them from Himself like light from a fire or waves from an ocean. Rishis describe this perpetual process as the unfoldment of thirty-six tattvas, stages of manifestation, from the Siva tattva-Parashakti and nada-to the five elements. Creation is not the making of a separate thing, but an emanation of Himself. Lord Siva creates, constantly sustains the form of His creations and absorbs them back into Himself. The Vedas elucidate, "As a spider spins and withdraws its web, as herbs grow on the earth, as hair grows on the head and body of a person, so also from the Imperishable arises this universe."

What Is the Nature of the Physical Plane?

The physical plane, or Bhuloka, is the world of gross or material substance in which phenomena are perceived by the five senses. It is the most limited of worlds, the least permanent and the most subject to change. Aum.

The material world is where we have our experiences, manufacture karma and fulfill the desires and duties of life in a physical body. It is in the Bhuloka that consciousness is limited, that awareness of the other two worlds is not always remembered. It is the external plane, made of gross matter, which is really just energy. The world is remarkable in its unending variety and enthralling novelty. Mystics call it the unfoldment of prakriti, primal nature, and liken it to a bubble on the ocean's surface. It arises, lives and bursts to return to the source. This physical world, though necessary to our evolution, is the embodiment of impermanence, of constant change. Thus, we take care not to become overly attached to it. It is mystically subjective, not objective. It is dense but not solid. It is sentient, even sacred. It is rocks and rainbows, liquid, gas and conflagration, all held in a setting of space. The Vedas affirm, "The knower, the author of time, the possessor of qualities and all knowledge, it is He who envelopes the universe. Controlled by Him, this work of creation unfolds itself-that which is regarded as earth, water, fire, air and ether."

What Is the Nature of the Subtle Plane?

The subtle plane, or Antarloka, is the mental-emotional sphere that we function in through thought and feeling and reside in fully during sleep and after death. It is the astral world that exists within the physical plane. Aum.

The astral plane is for the most part exactly duplicated in the physical plane, though it is of a more intense rate of vibration. Beings in the higher Antarloka are trained in technology, the arts and increments of culture to take up bodies in the Bhuloka, to improve and enhance conditions within it. It is in this more advanced realm that new inventions are invented, new species created, ideas unfolded, futures envisioned, environments balanced, scientists trained and artists taught finesse. We function constantly, though perhaps not consciously, in this subtle plane by our every thought and emotion. Here, during sleep and after death, we meet others who are sleeping or who have died. We attend inner-plane schools, there to advance our knowledge. The Antarloka spans the spectrum of consciousness from the hellish Naraka regions beginning at the patala chakra within the feet, to the heavenly realm of divine love in the vishuddha chakra within the throat. The Vedas

recount, "Now, there are, of a truth, three worlds: the world of men, the world of the fathers, and the world of the Gods. The world of the Gods is verily the best of worlds."

What Is the Nature of the Causal Plane?

The causal plane, or Sivaloka, pulsates at the core of being, deep within the subtle plane. It is the superconscious world where the Gods and highly evolved souls live and can be accessed through yoga and temple worship. Aum.

The causal plane is the world of light and blessedness, the highest of heavenly regions, extolled in the scriptures of all faiths. It is the foundation of existence, the source of visions, the point of conception, the apex of creation. The causal plane is the abode of Lord Siva and His entourage of Mahadevas and other highly evolved souls who exist in their own self-effulgent form-radiant bodies of centillions of quantum light particles. Even for embodied souls, this refined realm is not distant, but exists within man. It is ever-present, ever-available as the clear white light that illumines the mind, accessed within the throat and cranial chakras-vishuddha, ajna and sahasrara-in the sublime practices of yoga and temple worship. It is in the causal plane that the mature soul, unshrouded of the physical body's strong instinctive pulls and astral body's harsh intellectual stranglehold, resides fully conscious in its self-effulgent form. The Sivaloka is the natural refuge of all souls. The Vedas intone, "Where men move at will, in the threefold sphere, in the third heaven of heavens, where are realms full of light, in that radiant world make me immortal."

Does the Universe Ever End? Is It Real?

The universe ends at mahapralaya, when time, form and space dissolve in God Siva, only to be created again in the next cosmic cycle. We call it relatively real to distinguish it from the unchanging Reality. Aum.

This universe, and indeed all of existence, is maya, Siva's mirific energy. While God is absolutely real, His emanated world is relatively real. Being relatively real

does not mean the universe is illusory or nonexistent, but that it is impermanent and subject to change. It is an error to say that the universe is mere illusion, for it is entirely real when experienced in ordinary consciousness, and its existence is required to lead us to God. The universe is born, evolves and dissolves in cycles much as the seasons come and go through the year. These cycles are inconceivably immense, ending in mahapralaya when the universe undergoes dissolution. All three worlds, including time and space, dissolve in God Siva. This is His ultimate grace-the evolution of all souls is perfect and complete as they lose individuality and return to Him. Then God Siva exists alone in His three perfections until He again issues forth creation. The Vedas state, "Truly, God is One; there can be no second. He alone governs these worlds with His powers. He stands facing beings. He, the herdsman, after bringing forth all worlds, reabsorbs them at the end of time."