

## Life-forces

tibet

### General

"Concepts such as "life force" and "élan vital" existed from antiquity and emerged from the debate over [vitalism](#) in the 18th and 19th centuries with Mesmer and the magnetism. They continued to be discussed in the 20th century by some thinkers and practitioners in the modern [New Age](#) movement.<sup>[1][2]</sup>" (Source [Wikipedia](#))

"The concept is mostly linked to the idea of a [subtle body](#), which is one of a series of psycho-spiritual constituents of living beings, according to various [esoteric](#), [occult](#), and [mystical](#) teachings." (Source [Wikipedia](#))

*But this article is not about the subtle body, which is linked to the believes in Asian religions about [Chakras](#). The life forces described here, relate more to the history of the Genesis and how the Sufis and Philosophers explain the subtle energies that drive our lives.*

### Life-forces in the Genesis

"The [Genesis creation narrative](#) is the [creation myth](#) of both [Judaism](#) and [Christianity](#).<sup>[1]</sup> The narrative is made up of two stories, roughly equivalent to the first two chapters of the [Book of Genesis](#). In the first, [Elohim](#) (the Hebrew generic word for [God](#)) creates the heavens and the Earth in six days, then rests on, blesses and sanctifies the [seventh](#). In the second story, God, now referred to by the personal name [Yahweh](#), creates [Adam](#), the first man, from dust and places him in the [Garden of Eden](#), where he is given dominion over the animals. [Eve](#), the first woman, is created from Adam and as his companion." (Source [Wikipedia](#))

Before creation was nothing.

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters

(Source Genesis 1:1-2: [Wikipedia](#))

A shorted list view of what happens each day, according the holy books looks like this (Source [Wikipedia](#)):

Day.	According Genesis (Days)	Bible text
1	<b>Light</b>	And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light.
2	<b>Rāqīa</b> , the word translated as firmament	'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.'
3	<b>Earth</b> , dry land	'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear.'
4	<b>Time</b> , Night and day?	'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years;
5	<b>Animals</b>	'Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.'
6	<b>Man</b>	'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.'
7	<b>Divine rest</b>	And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.

If one takes into account that the Old Testament creation story comes from very old sources, one can better understand that the story lacks logic and is scientifically inconsistent. In the Qur'an on the other hand, the creation story lacks many details in comparison to the Bible, but makes scientifically much more sense. For instance, "the Old Testament relates the story about God creating the earth and man in six days (Genesis, 1) and that God took a rest on the seventh day (Genesis, 1-3). The Qur'an also mentions that the Creation takes place within "six days" but never says that God had to take a rest on the seventh day. (Al-Sajdah: 4, Al-A'raf: 54).

In contrast to the Bible, the Qur'an does not have any contradiction with established sciences and common human sense. What appears to be fundamental importance in the matter is that the Holy Qur'an does not mention specifically the sequence of Creation or the manner in how God created the world. In Sura' Yassin, verse 33, we are told that God gave life to the earth that is dead, without mentioning on which day it had happened." ([Source](#))

Another important point about the story in the Bible is that it is somehow given, that it describes the creation of the physical world, which is basically problematic from a scientific point of view. But if the creation process would refer to the [seven heavens](#), the whole story would gets much more plausible. The concept of the seven heavens, derived, as the creation myth, from ancient Mesopotamian religions and can be found in the Abrahamic religions such as Islam, Judaism and Christianity; a similar concept is also found in some Indian religions such as Hinduism.

Another strong indices that the creation process describes the creation of the heavens, lies in the simple fact, that before there was nothing and then God created the heaven and the earth. But how the [seven heavens](#) have been created is nowhere mentioned in the bible. Of course it could be argued about the divergence between the later introduced concepts about life-forces and the description of the seven heavens in the holy books. But on the other hand the qualities that are described in the holy books about the seven heavens and those about the life-forces have so many similarities, that probably the same is described but in different ages. The differences in naming and content could simply be a (cultural) language or translation issue over time.

## Life-forces according Neo-Platonism -Sufism

If ones starts to examine the writings about different life-force concepts after the writings in the Bible and in the Qur'an it starts to be puzzling, there exists so many concepts, some of them have a lot in common others not. When we consider that concepts about subtle energies are concepts for our mind on a subject that is beyond our normal understanding, we should be humble enough to accept that none of these concepts is THE TRUTH, but rather approximations.

Starting from the [seven heavens](#) which are more or less detailed explained in all of the [Abrahamic religions](#), we can find similar concepts in [Platonism](#) and especially in [Neoplatonism](#). Many of the later introduced concepts had a strong influence from [Neoplatonism](#).

"Neoplatonism had an enduring influence on the subsequent history of philosophy. In the [Middle Ages](#), neoplatonic ideas were studied and discussed by [Muslim](#), [Christian](#), and [Jewish](#) thinkers. In the Islamic cultural sphere, neoplatonic texts were available in Arabic and Persian translations, and notable thinkers such as [al-Farabi](#), [Solomon ibn Gabirol](#) (Avicebron), [Avicenna](#), and [Moses Maimonides](#) incorporated neoplatonic elements into their own thinking.<sup>[3]</sup> Latin translations of late ancient neoplatonic texts were first available in the Christian West in the ninth century, and became influential from the twelfth century onward. [Thomas Aquinas](#) had direct access to works by [Proclus](#), [Simplicius](#) and [Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite](#), and he knew about other Neoplatonists, such as [Plotinus](#) and [Porphyry](#), through secondhand sources.<sup>[4]</sup> The mystic [Meister Eckhart](#) (c. 1260 – c. 1328) was also influenced by neoplatonism, propagating a contemplative way of life which points to the Godhead beyond the nameable God.

Neoplatonism also had a strong influence on the [Perennial philosophy](#) of the Italian Renaissance thinkers [Marsilio Ficino](#) and [Pico della Mirandola](#), and continues through nineteenth-century [Universalism](#) and modern-day [spirituality](#) and [nondualism](#)." (Source [Wikipedia](#))

life forces as in neo platonism, Pico dela Mirandola

Especially [Marsilio Ficino](#) had a great influence on many philosophers of his and later times and he was one of the first western thinkers, which modeled kind of life-forces into their own cosmology.

"Ficino ties in with the Neoplatonist Plotinus, for whom all creation presents itself as an emanation, an outflow of the primordial one, of the divine. So everything lower flows out of the higher, and the lowest level forms matter. The human soul takes part in this a middle position, which for Plotinus does not mean much more than a sober localization. For Ficino, however, the middle position is the decisive factor. Like Janus, the human soul is double-faced. Through its bond it unites everything that the lower forms of being contain. But she also participates in the higher ones, provided that her mind is a scintilla mentis superioris, "a spark of the higher mind". The human soul participates in the life of animal and plant souls, as it participates in the life of angels and in the life of God. From the middle position of man Ficinus deduces his unheard-of dignity. He is the victarius Dei "the representative of God" on earth. He is the master of the animals, the plants of the substances. It is independent and free, free for good and free for evil. If, however, as a microcosm it includes the whole big world - plant, animal, angel and God - in its self, it rises to the divine rank, since it unites the divine powers like those of all other beings into one another "(quot in Stützer, HA (1977). The Italian Renaissance. Cologne: Du Mont. P.20, German)

If ones try to synergies the concepts from antiquity, holy books, neoplatonism and sufism into one chart it can be puzzling again. The benefit of doing this, is to boil it down to the most simplified model, that's still acceptable in comparison of the essence of all of it, and of course the scientific model of Charon.

Dens.	According Neo Sufism (Life-forces)	According Judaism Talmud	According Islam	According Ficino
1	Sphere of the Creator	Araboth: under the leadership of Cassiel, is the holiest of the seven heavens because it houses the Throne of God	The seventh heaven, which borrows some concepts from its Jewish counterpart, is depicted as being composed of divine light incomprehensible to the mortal man	<i>not in detail, but Ficino relates the higher sphere to the angels</i>
2	Sphere of the Creator	Zebul: falls under the jurisdiction of Sachiël	The sixth heaven is described as being composed of gold (alternatively garnets and rubies); Moses can be found here	<i>not in detail, but Ficino relates the higher sphere to the angels</i>
3	True human sphere (eternal)	Makon: is under the administration of Samael	The fifth heaven is described as being made of silver; Aaron and the "Avenging Angel"[who?] hold court over this heaven.	<i>not in detail, but Ficino relates the higher sphere to the angels</i>
4	Normal human sphere	Maon: is ruled by the Archangel Michael	The fourth heaven is described as being made of brass (alternatively white gold); Idris (conventionally identified with Enoch) and the "Angel of Tears" resides there.	Human sphere
5	Animal sphere	Shehaqim: under the leadership of Anahel, serves as the home of the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life	The third heaven is described as being made of iron (alternatively pearls or other dazzling stones);	Animal sphere
6	Vegetable sphere	Raqia: is dually controlled by Zachariël and Raphael	The second heaven is described as being made of white pearls and is the home of Yahya (John the Baptist) and Isa (Jesus).	Vegetable / Plant sphere
7	Material sphere	Vilon: Governed by Archangel Gabriel, is the closest of heavenly realms to the Earth	The first heaven is described as being made of water and is the home of Adam and Eve, as well as the angels of each star	Material sphere (substances)

## Life-forces in the 20th century

In the 20th century concepts about life-force kind of classification of subtle energies did arise from different people and philosophies. Starting with [Alice Bailey \(Theosophy\)](#) to [Gurdjieff](#) a whole bunch of similar concepts has been introduced. That includes more prominent thinkers as Rudolf Steiner, but also many other who don't know much about. To round up the picture we will only include in the following chart some more prominent examples.

Roughly the naming according Neo Sufism has also been used from [Reshad Field](#) and [Pak Subu](#), founder of Subud and others.

Dens.	According Neo Sufism (Life-forces)	According <a href="#">Gurdjieff (Law of Seven)</a>	According Rudolf Steiner ( <a href="#">Wesensglieder</a> )
1	Sphere of the Creator	The Absolute (1)	--
2	Sphere of the Messengers	All Worlds (3)	--
3	True human sphere (eternal)	All Suns (6)	--
4	Normal human sphere	Sun (12)	Human life
5	Animal sphere	All Planets (24)	Animal life
6	Vegetable sphere	Earth (48)	Plant life
7	Material sphere	The Moon (96)	Physic sphere

The colors in the right column 'Density' indicates the class, which the life-force belongs to. The brown points to the so called lower forces, which are referred in the Sufi terminology as [Nafs](#). The Normal Human sphere is seen as a kind of neutral, or as in between the lower and higher (magenta) forces. The lower forces, including the Normal Human sphere, are connected to the earth and our heart and mind. Without the existence of the True Human Body they cannot exist after our death.

Beside of the seven forces than form the universe there are two [auxiliary forces](#) involved, first the holy spirit and second the force or sphere of the angels. According [Pakh Subuh](#), this two forces are Gods tools to communicate with his creation.

## Comparison of Life-forces with Charon & Gebser

Dens.	According Neo Sufism (Life-forces)	According <a href="#">Charon (psychic-forces)</a>	According <a href="#">Gebser</a>
3	True human sphere	Love	Integral
4	Normal human sphere	Knowledge	Archaic
5	Animal sphere	Action	Magic
6	Vegetable sphere	Experience	Mythic
7	Material sphere	Reflection	Mental / Rational

Table 2: Comparison Charon / Gebser / Life-forces (OSL View)

## References

1. Stenger, Victor J (Spring-Summer 1999). "[Bioenergetic Fields](#)". *The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine*. 3 (1). Archived from [the original](#) on 2016-05-08. Retrieved 2017-04-20.
2. Smith, Jonathan C. (2010). *Pseudoscience and Extraordinary Claims of the Paranormal: A Critical Thinker's Toolkit*. Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 268-74. ISBN 9781405181228.
3. [Schopenhauer](#) wrote of this neoplatonist philosopher: "With Plotinus there even appears, probably for the first time in [Western philosophy](#), idealism that had long been current in the [East](#) even at that time, for it taught ([Enneads](#), iii, lib. vii, c.10) that the [soul](#) has made the [world](#) by stepping from [eternity](#) into [time](#), with the explanation: 'For there is for this [universe](#) no other place than the soul or [mind](#)' (neque est alter hujus universi locus quam anima), indeed the ideality of time is expressed in the words: 'We should not accept time outside the soul or mind' (oportet autem nequaquam extra animam tempus accipere)."[\[21\]](#)  
Similarly, professor Ludwig Noiré wrote: "For the first time in Western philosophy we find idealism proper in Plotinus ([Enneads](#), iii, 7, 10), where he says, "The only space or place of the world is the soul," and "Time must not be assumed to exist outside the soul."[\[22\]](#)It is worth noting, however, that, like Plato, but unlike Schopenhauer and other modern philosophers, Plotinus does not worry about whether or how we can get beyond our ideas in order to know external objects.
4. Morewedge: "The greatest cluster of Neoplatonic themes is found in religious mystical writings, which in fact transform purely orthodox doctrines such as creation into doctrines such as [emanationism](#), which allow for a better framework for the expression of Neoplatonic themes and the emergence of the mystical themes of the ascent and mystical union."[\[57\]](#)

## See also

1. [Psychic forces, Life-forces \(OSL Wiki\)](#)
2. [Consciousness \(OSL Wiki\)](#)
3. [Patterns of Human Evolution \(OSL Wiki\)](#)