

# How the World Began

## Creation Stories from

### Different Religions

Christianity

Hinduism

Islam



Judaism

Chinese

Australian  
Aborigine

# Hindu Creation Story

There is more than one creation story in Hinduism. This is one of them.

**C**an you imagine no Earth or sky, no space, no stars – only a deep, dark, surging sea? Well, this is how it was before the world began. But things were going to change. For on the surface of the sea there floated an enormous cobra. He lay in comfort and contentment, but he was not alone. For the Lord Vishnu rested among his winding coils.

Vishnu did not stir. He slept soundly, protected by the mighty snake. He had no fears. He had no dreams. Then all of a sudden, there came a rumbling sound. It swelled and spread, humming and trembling with a restless energy. Something was about to happen!

Dawn broke and Vishnu awoke to find a beautiful lotus flower growing from his stomach. In the middle of the flower sat Brahma, Vishnu's servant. Brahma sat quite still until Vishnu said, 'The time has come. Everything must begin.'

Brahma bowed in readiness.

'Brahma! Create the world!' ordered Vishnu. And it was the last thing that he said. For all at once, a fierce wind leapt upon the waters. It picked them up and tossed them all around. Vishnu and the giant cobra vanished in the storm.

But the lotus blossom cradled Brahma in its petals. Together, Brahma and the flower bobbed and swayed on the angry waves. But Brahma had serious work to do. First, he flung his arms above the storm to calm it. The wind and the waves soon slowed, rolling gently back and forth.

Then Brahma split the lotus blossom into three pieces. He thrust the first piece far into nothingness to create the heavens. Then with the second piece, he moulded the Earth. With the third piece, he designed the skies.

Brahma looked all around him. It just didn't look finished. The Earth was bare and lifeless. So he created tall trees, bright flowers and rustling grasses. And all this plant life was allowed to feel the world around it. Then Brahma created animals and birds, insects and fish. And all this wildlife was allowed to see, to feel, to hear and to move around the Earth that Brahma had created.

The world soon throbbed with living things. Flowers nodded, bees hummed, trees swayed in the breeze. Creatures leapt on the land, weaved in the water, swooped across the skies. Brahma's job was done.



## Tell the story

Cut out the story cards and put them into the correct order. Glue them onto card and then draw a picture for each part of the story.

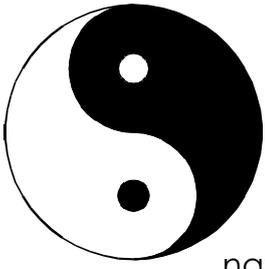
Brahma made the heavens, the Earth and the skies.

Vishnu told Brahma to create the world.

Finally, Brahma made animals and birds, insects and fish.

Then Brahma made the trees, flowers and grass.





**Read this story which is one version of a Chinese creation story, then, answer the questions that follow.**

Traditional Chinese belief is based on the **yin** and **yang**, the dark and the light, as being the creative power which sustains all life and being. Yin and yang are not gods or deities but are the natural forces behind nature and even the gods, such as P'an Ku, are creations of the yin and yang. Here is one version of how the world came to be.

There was a time when there was nothing but chaos, and it was like a mist and full of emptiness. Suddenly, there came a great colourful light and from this light all things that exist, came to be. Then the mist shook and separated, that which was light, rose up to form heaven and that which was heavy sank and became solid and formed the earth.

Then strong forces came from heaven and earth and these forces combined to produce yin and yang. Think of yang like a dragon - hot, fiery, male, full of energy. Think of yin as a cloud - moist, cool, female, slowly drifting. Each force has great power, alone they would destroy the world and chaos would return but together they balance each other and keep the world in harmony.

From yin and yang come everything. The sun is of yang and the moon, yin. The four seasons - winter, spring, summer and autumn - and the five elements - water, earth, metal, fire and wood - all these things sprang from them as did all kinds of living creatures.

So there was the earth, a featureless ball floating like a jellyfish on water. Then the forces of yin and yang created the giant figure P'an Ku, the Ancient One. P'an Ku, never stopped growing during every year of his long life and he set to work to put the earth in order. He dug the river valleys and piled up the mountains. Over many thousands of years he shaped and created the folds of our earth.

But such work took its toll and even mighty P'an Ku could not escape death and, worn out by his long life of work, he collapsed and died. His body was so vast that when he fell to the ground his body became the five sacred mountains, his hair became the plants and his blood the rivers. From his sweat came the rain and from the parasites living on his body came forth human beings.

The people, at first, lived in caves but soon the Heavenly Emperor came to teach them how to make tools and houses. The people also learnt how to build boats, to fish, to plough and plant, and to prepare food. This is how it all began.'

The belief in the balancing forces of yin and yang lies at the heart of the Chinese philosophy and influences the way the Chinese people treat their environment.

**Read the questions carefully – you can find the answers in the story. Remember to always answer using sentences.**

**About the story**

1. What came into chaos at the beginning?

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2. When the light rose, what did it form?

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3. What keeps the world in harmony?

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4. The story tells us about the things created by yin and yang – how many can you list?

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5. After his death what did P'an Ku become?

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6. Who came to teach the people how to build boats and to fish?

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**Find the nouns and verbs!**

Underline the nouns and circle the verbs in the following sentences.

1. Think of yang like a dragon - hot, fiery, male, full of energy. Think of yin as a cloud - moist, cool, female, slowly drifting
2. He dug the river valleys and piled up the mountains. Over many thousands of years he shaped and created the folds of our earth.
3. From his sweat came the rain and from the parasites living on his body came forth human beings.

**What do they mean?**

Look up the meanings of the following words.

chaos \_\_\_\_\_

elements \_\_\_\_\_

parasites \_\_\_\_\_

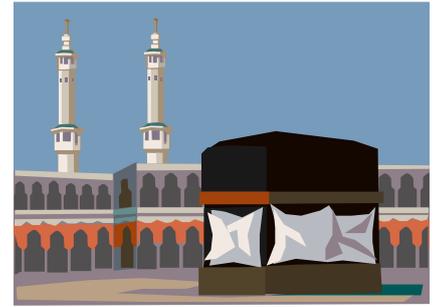
combined \_\_\_\_\_

balance \_\_\_\_\_

harmony \_\_\_\_\_

# Islam

Select the correct word from the word box below so the following information about the Islamic creation story makes sense.



In the time before time, God was. And when God wants to create something, all he needs to say is "Be", and it becomes.

So it was that God \_\_\_\_\_ the world and the heavens. He made all the creatures, which walk, swim, crawl and fly on the face of the earth. He made the angels, and the \_\_\_\_\_, moon and the stars to dwell in the universe. And consider, as the Qur'an says, how God poured down the rain in torrents, and broke up the soil to bring forth the corn, the grapes and other \_\_\_\_\_; the olive and the palm, the fruit trees and the \_\_\_\_\_.

Then God ordered the angels to go to the earth, and to bring seven handfuls of soil, all of \_\_\_\_\_ colours, from which he could \_\_\_\_\_ man. God took the seven kinds of earth and moulded them into a model of a man. He \_\_\_\_\_ life and power into it, and it immediately sprang to life. And this first man was called \_\_\_\_\_. God took Adam to live in Paradise. In \_\_\_\_\_, God created Eve, the first woman, from out of Adam's side. God taught Adam the names of all the creatures.

God placed the couple in a beautiful garden in Paradise, telling them that they could \_\_\_\_\_ whatever they wanted except the fruit of on forbidden tree, But the evil one tempted them to disobey God, and eat the \_\_\_\_\_. When God knew that Adam and Eve had \_\_\_\_\_ him, he threw them out of Paradise and sent them to earth. But God is merciful. The earth was created to give food, drink and shelter to the human race. The sun, moon and stars give \_\_\_\_\_. It is a good world, where everything has been created to serve people. And people, the Qur'an teaches, should serve God and obey his will. For those who submit to the will of God will be \_\_\_\_\_, and taken to live \_\_\_\_\_ in Paradise.

The Muslim creation story is found in the Qur'an. Muslims believe there is only one God who created everything. God's world is a good world, and when people obey or submit to God then life is good. Although God made humans \_\_\_\_\_ to the rest of creation, Muslims believe that this means humans have been given everything on earth to care for and look after. The world is not ours to do with as we want.

saved	disobeyed	model	Paradise		
	light	forever	created		
superior	vegetation	eat	different		
	sun	Adam	fruit	breathed	grass

# Christian Creation story

In the very beginning, a long long time ago, there was nothing but darkness. Everything was covered in deep water and all was quiet.

Then God said 'Let there be light!'. All of a sudden there was a bright glow. Everything shone brightly. God divided this light from the darkness, which he called Night. And so the first day was created. God made sure that it was good.

On the second day God created the sky above the waters. He called the sky Heaven.

On the third day, dry land rose up from the waters. God called the land Earth and the waters Sea. He ordered the Earth to make plants with fruits and seeds. God made sure that everything turned out right.

On the fourth day, God made the Sun to shine brightly during the day. He then made the Moon and placed it in

the night sky. He surrounded it with sparkling stars.

On the fifth day, God commanded the air to come alive with birds. He then filled the sea with fish to swim through the waters.

On the sixth day, God made animals to live on the land. From big elephants to tiny ants, the Earth was covered with new life. God was pleased with the result. But there was still something missing...

And so God made a man and a woman. The man was called Adam and the woman was called Eve. God placed them gently down onto the land. He told them to love one another and take good care of all the animals he had created.

God had been working very hard for six days. He was very tired now. So on the seventh day, God decided to rest.



## Creation - sequencing

Day 4	Day 6	Day 1	Day 7	Day 3	Day 5	Day 2
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Can you remember what God did each day?  
Put the days in the right order on the top line and what happened each day on the line underneath.

ON:						
GOD:						

made the sun, moon and stars 	made dark and light 	made animals and human beings 	rested 	made the sky 	made birds in the sky and fish in the sea 	made the earth, land and sea 
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## Judaism

The Jewish calendar is dated from the supposed year of the Creation. This is indicated by the letter 'AM' after each year - meaning 'Anno Mundi', Year of the World. Judaism sees its origins in the Act of Creation and its own beginnings as being part of the Divine plan.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. God said, "Let there be light". And there was light and God saw that it was good, God divided the light from the darkness, naming them 'day' and 'night'. Evening and morning came - the first day.

The morning came- the second day. God said, "Let the waters be divided". And God made the arch of the sky to hold back the waters from the earth. He placed some above the arch and some below.

Morning came and God said, "Let the waters under heaven come together, and dry land appear". Thus the earth arose, and plants and trees grew, and God saw that it was good.

Morning came - the third day. God said, "Let the great light and the small light appear in heaven to govern day and night. God saw that it was good.

Morning came - the fourth day. God said. "Let the waters fill with creatures and the sky with birds". God saw that it was good, and blessed them.

Evening came and then morning came - the fifth day. God said "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature". God saw that it was good.

Then when all when the earth was ready God said. "Let us take dust and create man, Adam, to be master over all creatures". So Adam was created in God's own image.

God saw that Adam needed a friend - woman. So Lilith was made from the dust, also in God's image. But Lilith would not live with Adam and went her own way. So God made a woman before Adam's eyes, but Adam turned from her. Finally, putting Adam in a deep sleep, God took one of Adam's ribs and made Eve, and placed the couple in Paradise.

On the seventh day, God finished his work and rested.

Paradise was blissful, until Adam and Eve ate fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which God had forbidden them to do. God punished them, and cast them out of Paradise. Through the Covenants with Abraham and Moses, the Jewish people have a close relationship with God; they are to act as a model of the way God wishes people to live and to use the world. The world is full of good things but it is ours on trust and we must care for it as well as use it.

## What's the same and what's different.

*Read the Christian and Jewish creation stories very carefully and then use the table below to note any differences and any similarities that you find.*

**Differences**

**Similarities**

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# Australian Aborigine

The aborigines have lived on the vast island of Australia for over forty thousand \_\_\_\_\_ and are one of the oldest surviving cultures in the world. Each group has its own \_\_\_\_\_ of stories, including Dreamtime (creation) stories, and ceremonies related to their own particular area of land.



During the Dreaming, ancestral spirits came to earth and created the landforms, the animals and \_\_\_\_\_. The stories tell that there was land, but it was a bare, flat, barren plain. No animals ran there. No birds sang overhead, No trees or bushes \_\_\_\_\_. No sound of water could be heard. Nor was there any man or woman. Baiame, or the Maker of Many Things, brought the Dreamtime ancestors from under the ground and over the seas. With them, life came to the barren, flat plain. Some of the Dreamtime \_\_\_\_\_ looked like men or women. Others looked like the animals or creatures, which descended from them. There are explanations about how people learnt languages and dance and how they came to know about \_\_\_\_\_.

The stories tell how the ancestral spirits moved through the land creating \_\_\_\_\_, lakes and mountains. In essence, the Dreaming comes from the \_\_\_\_\_. In Aboriginal society people did not own the land it was part of them and it was part of their duty to respect and look after mother earth.

The Dreaming did not end with the arrival of \_\_\_\_\_ but simply entered a new phase. It is a powerful \_\_\_\_\_ force that must be maintained and cared for.

**Use these words to fill in the missing words in the passage.**

ancestors	fire	
grew	land	plants
years	living	
Europeans	collection	rivers

