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Creator deity

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A **creator deity** or **creator god** (often called the **Creator**) is a *deity* or *god* responsible for the creation of the **Earth**, **world**, and **universe** in human religion and mythology. In **monotheism**, the single **God** is often also the creator. A number of **monotheistic** traditions separate a secondary creator from a primary *transcendent* being, identified as a primary creator.^[1]

Monotheism [edit]

Atenism [edit]

See also: ***Atenism***

Initiated by Pharaoh **Akhenaten** and **Queen Nefertiti** around 1330 BCE, during the **New Kingdom period** in ancient Egyptian history. They built an entirely new capital city (**Akhetaten**) for themselves and worshippers of their sole creator god on a wilderness. His father used to worship **Aten** alongside other gods of their polytheistic religion. Aten, for a long time before his father's time, was revered as a god among the many gods and goddesses in Egypt. Atenism faded away after the death of the pharaoh. Despite different views, Atenism is considered by some scholars to be one of the frontiers of monotheism in human history.

Abrahamic religions [edit]

Further information: ***Abrahamic religions*** and ***Genesis creation narrative***

See also: ***Ex nihilo*** and ***Logos (Christianity)***

The Abrahamic creation narrative is made up of two stories, roughly equivalent to the two first chapters of the **Book of Genesis**.^[2] The first account (1:1 through 2:3) employs a repetitious structure of divine fiat and fulfillment, then the statement "And there was evening and there was morning, the [xth] day," for each of the six days of creation. In each of the first three days there is an act of division: day one divides the darkness from light, day two the "waters above" from the "waters below", and day three the sea from the land. In each of the next three days these divisions are populated: day four populates the darkness and light with sun, moon, and stars; day five populates seas and skies with fish and fow; and finally, land-based creatures and mankind populate the land.^[3]

The first (the **Priestly story**) was concerned with the cosmic plan of creation, while the second (the **Yahwist story**) focuses on man as cultivator of his environment and as a moral agent.^[2] The second account, in contrast to the regimented seven-day scheme of Genesis 1, uses a simple flowing narrative style that proceeds from God's forming the first man through the **Garden of Eden** to the creation of the first woman and the institution of marriage. In contrast to the **omnipotent** God of Genesis 1 creating a god-like humanity, the God of Genesis 2 can fail as well as succeed. The humanity he creates is not god-like, but is punished for acts which would lead to their becoming god-like (Genesis 3:1-24) and the order and method of creation itself differs.^[4] "Together, this combination of parallel character and contrasting profile point to the different origin of materials in Genesis 1:1 and Gen 2.4, however elegantly they have now been combined."^[5]

An early conflation of Greek philosophy with the **narratives** in the Hebrew Bible came from **Philo of Alexandria** (d. AD 50), writing in the context of **Hellenistic Judaism**. Philo equated the Hebrew creator-deity **Yahweh** with **Aristotle's Unmoved Mover (First Cause)**^{[6][7]} in an attempt to prove that the Jews had held **monotheistic** views even before the Greeks.^[*citation needed*]

A similar theoretical proposition was demonstrated by **Thomas Aquinas**, who linked Aristotelian philosophy with the Christian faith, followed by the statement that God is the First Being, the First Mover, and is **Pure Act**.^[8]

The **deuterocanonical 2 Maccabees** has two relevant passages. At chapter 7, it narrows about the mother of a **Jewish proto-martyr** telling to her son: "I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them: and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also";^{[9][10]} at chapter 1, it refers a solemn prayer hymned by **Jonathan**, **Nehemiah** and the **Priest of Israel**, while making sacrifices in honour of God: "O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, who art fearfull, and strong, and righteous, and merciful, and the only, and gracious king".^[11] The *Prologue to Gospel of John* begins with: "In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was with God, and the Word was God. / 2 The same was in the beginning with God. / 3 All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."^[12]

Christianity affirms the creation by God since its early time in the **Apostles' Creed** ("I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.", 1st century AD), that is symmetrical to the **Nicene Creed** (4th century AD).

Nowadays, theologians debate whether the Bible itself teaches if this creation by God is a creation *ex nihilo*. Traditional interpreters^[13] argue on grammatical and syntactical grounds that this is the meaning of **Genesis 1:1**, which is commonly rendered: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." However, other interpreters^[14] understand creation *ex nihilo* as a 2nd-century theological development. According to this view, church fathers opposed notions appearing in *pre-Christian creation myths* and in **Gnosticism**—notions of creation by a **demiurge** out of a primordial state of matter (known in religious studies as *chaos* after the Greek term used by **Hesiod** in his *Theogony*).^[15] Jewish thinkers took up the idea,^[16] which became important to Judaism.

According to **Islam**, God, known in Arabic as **Allah**, is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator, Sustainer, Ordainer, and Judge of the universe. Creation is seen as an act of divine choice and mercy, one with a grand purpose: "And We (*Royal we*) did not create the heaven and earth and that between them in play."^[17] Rather, the purpose of humanity is to be tested: "Who has created death and life, that He may test you which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving."^[18] Those who pass the test are rewarded with Paradise: "Verily for the Righteous there will be a fulfillment of (the heart's) desires."^[19]

According to the Islamic teachings, God exists above the heavens and the creation itself. The **Quran** mentions, "He it is Who created for you all that is on earth. Then He Istawa (rose over) towards the heaven and made them seven heavens and He is the All-Knower of everything."^[20] At the same time, God is unlike anything in creation: "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing."^[21] and nobody can perceive God in totality: "Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives [all] vision; and He is the Subtle, the Acquainted."^[22] God in Islam is not only majestic and sovereign, but also a personal God: "And indeed We have created man, and We know what his jugular vein (by Our Knowledge)."^[23] Allah commands the believers to constantly remember Him ("O you who have believed, remember Allah with much remembrance"^[24]) and to invoke Him alone ("And whoever invokes besides Allah another deity for which he has no proof - then his account is only with his Lord. Indeed, the disbelievers will not succeed."^[25]).

Islam teaches that God as referenced in the Quran is the only god and the same God worshipped by members of other *Abrahamic religions* such as Christianity and Judaism.

Sikhism [edit]

Main article: ***Sikh beliefs***

One of the biggest responsibilities in the faith of **Sikhism** is to worship God as "The Creator", termed ***Waheguru***, who is shapeless, timeless, and sightless, i.e., **Nirankar**, **Akal**, and **Alakh Niranjan**. The religion only takes after the belief in "One God for All" or **Ik Onkar**.

Bahá'í [edit]

In the **Bahá'í Faith** God is the imperishable, uncreated being who is the source of all existence.^[26] He is described as "a personal God, unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation, eternal, **omniscient**, **omnipresent** and **almighty**".^{[27][28]} Although *transcendent* and inaccessible directly, his image is reflected in his creation. The purpose of creation is for the created to have the capacity to know and love its creator.^[29]

Monolatrism [edit]

See also: ***Brahma***

Monolatristic traditions would separate a secondary creator from the primary *transcendent* being, identified as a primary creator.^[1] According to **Gaudiya Vaishnavas**, **Brahma** is the secondary creator and not the supreme.^[30] **Vishnu** is the primary creator. According to **Vaishnava** belief Vishnu creates the basic universal shell and provides all the raw materials and also places the living entities within the material world, fulfilling their own independent will. Brahma works with the materials provided by Vishnu to actually create what are believed to be planets in Puranic terminology, and he supervises the population of them.^[31]

Monism [edit]

Main article: ***Monism***

Monism is the philosophy that asserts oneness as its fundamental premise, and it contradicts the dualism-based theistic premise that there is a creator God that is eternal and separate from the rest of existence. There are two types of monism, namely spiritual monism which holds that all spiritual reality is one, and material monism which holds that everything including all material reality is one and the same thing.^[32]

Non-creationism [edit]

Buddhism [edit]

See also: ***Creator in Buddhism***

Buddhism denies a creator deity and posits that mundane deities such as **Mahabrahma** are misperceived to be a creator.^[33]

Jainism [edit]

Main article: ***Jainism and non-creationism***

Jainism does not support belief in a creator deity. According to Jain doctrine, the **universe** and its constituents - soul, matter, space, time, and principles of motion have always existed (a **static universe** similar to that of **Epicureanism** and **steady state cosmological model**). All the constituents and actions are governed by **universal natural laws**. It is not possible to create matter out of nothing and hence the sum total of matter in the universe remains the same (similar to law of **conservation of mass**). Similarly, the *soul* of each living being is unique and uncreated and has existed since beginningless time.^{[34][35]}

The Jain theory of **causation** holds that a cause and its effect are always identical in nature and therefore a conscious and immaterial entity like God cannot create a material entity like the universe. Furthermore, according to the Jain concept of divinity, any soul who destroys its karmas and desires achieves liberation. A soul who destroys all its passions and desires has no desire to interfere in the working of the universe. Moral rewards and sufferings are not the work of a divine being, but a result of an innate moral order in the *cosmos*; a self-regulating mechanism whereby the individual reaps the fruits of his own actions through the workings of the karmas.

Through the ages, *Jain philosophers* have adamantly rejected and opposed the concept of creator and omnipotent God and this has resulted in Jainism being labeled as ***nāstika darsana*** or **atheist philosophy** by the rival **religious philosophies**. The theme of non-creationism and absence of omnipotent God and divine grace runs strongly in all the philosophical dimensions of Jainism, including its ***cosmology***, ***karma***, ***moksa*** and its moral code of conduct. Jainism asserts a religious and virtuous life is possible without the idea of a creator god.^[35]

Polytheism [edit]

In polytheistic creation, the world often comes into being organically, e.g. sprouting from a primal seed, sexually, by **miraculous birth** (sometimes by **parthenogenesis**), by **hieros gamos**, violently, by the slaying of a **primeval monster**, or artificially, by a divine **demiurge** or "craftsman". Sometimes, a god is involved, wittingly or unwittingly, in bringing about creation. Examples include:

- Sub Saharan African contexts:
 - Mbombo** of **Bakuba** mythology, who vomited out the world upon feeling a stomach
 - Unkulunkulu*** in **Zulu mythology**
- American contexts:
 - Nanabozho*** (Great Rabbit), *Ojibwe* deity, a *shape-shifter* and a cocreator of the world^{[36][37]}
 - Coātlīcue*** in ***Aztec mythology***
 - Chiminigagua*** (and/or Bague) in *Muisca mythology*
 - Viracocha*** in *Inca mythology*
 - A *trickster deity* in the form of a **Raven** in *Inuit mythology*
- Near Eastem contexts:
 - Egyptian mythology***
 - Atum** in **Ennead**, whose semen becomes the primal component of the universe
 - Ptah** creating the universe by the **Word**
 - Neith**, who wove all of the universe and existence into being on her **loom**.
 - ʿĒl*** in **Canaanite religion**
 - Marduk*** killing ***Tiamat*** in the Babylonian ***Enūma Eliš***
- Asian contexts:
 - Esege Malan*** in Mongolian mythology, king of the skies
 - Kamiuy*** in ***Ainu mythology***, who built the world on the back of a trout
 - Izanagi*** and ***Izanami-no-Mikoto*** in ***Japanese mythology***, who churned the ocean with a spear, creating the islands of Japan
 - In Hinduism, its Vedic scriptures call the unchanging eternal reality as **Brahman**. The **Nasadiya Sukt**a of the **Rig Veda** expresses doubt whether there is or is not any creator deity, and whether even gods know who or what created the universe.
- European contexts:
 - The sons of ***Borr*** slaying the primeval giant ***Ymir*** in ***Norse mythology***
 - Rod*** in ***Slavic mythology***
 - Imil*** or ***Radien-Ándi*** (Radien Father) in ***Sámi mythology***
- Oceanic contexts:
 - Makemake***, creator of humanity, the god of fertility and the chief god of the "***Tangata manu***" or "bird-man" cult of **Rapa Nui mythology**.
 - Ranginui***, the Sky Father, and ***Papatūānuku***, the Earth Mother in ***Māori mythology***

Platonic demiurge [edit]

Main article: ***Demiurge***

Further information: ***Neoplatonism*** and ***Gnosticism*** and ***Great Architect of the Universe***

Plato, in his dialogue ***Timaeus***, describes a creation myth involving a being called the **demiurge** (δημιουργός "craftsman"). **Neoplatonism** and **Gnosticism** continued and developed this concept. In Neoplatonism, the demiurge represents the second cause or **dyad**, after the **monad**. In **Gnostic dualism**, the demiurge is an imperfect spirit and possibly an evil being, transcended by divine Fullness (**Pleroma**). Unlike the Abraham God, Plato's demiurge is unable to create **ex-nihilo**.

Hinduism [edit]

Main article: ***Hindu views on evolution***

Hinduism is a diverse system of thought with beliefs spanning **monotheism**, **polytheism**, **panentheism**, **pantheism**, **pandeism**, **monism**, and **atheism** among others.^{[38][39][web 1]} and its concept of creator deity is complex and depends upon each individual and the tradition and philosophy followed. Hinduism is sometimes referred to as **henotheistic** (i.e., involving devotion to a single god while accepting the existence of others), but any such term is an overgeneralization.^[40]

The ***Nasadiya Sukt***a (*Creation Hymn*) of the ***Rig Veda*** is one of the earliest texts^[41] which "demonstrates a sense of metaphysical speculation" about what created the universe, the concept of god(s) and The One, and whether even The One knows how the universe came into being.^{[42][43]} The *Rig Veda* praises various deities, none superior nor inferior, in a henotheistic manner.^[44] The Hymns repeatedly refer to One Truth and Reality. The "One Truth" of Vedic literature, in modern era scholarship, has been interpreted as monothelism, monism, as well as a deified Hidden Principles behind the great happenings and processes of nature.^[45]

The post-Vedic texts of Hinduism offer multiple theories of *cosmogony*, many involving *Brahma*. These include *Sarga* (primary creation of universe) and *Visarga* (secondary creation), ideas related to the Indian thought that there are two levels of reality, one primary that is unchanging (**metaphysical**) and other secondary that is always changing (**empirical**), and that all observed reality of the latter is in an endless repeating cycle of existence, that cosmos and life we experience is continually created, evolved, dissolved and then re-created.^[46] The primary creator is extensively discussed in Vedic cosmogonies with ***Brahman*** or ***Purusha*** or ***Devī*** among the terms used for the primary creator.^{[46][47]} while the Vedic and post-Vedic texts name different gods and goddesses as secondary creators (often Brahma in post-Vedic texts), and in some cases a different god or goddess is the secondary creator at the start of each cosmic cycle (*kalpa*, aeon).^{[48][46]}

Brahma is a "secondary creator" as described in the ***Mahabharata*** and ***Puranas***, and among the most studied and described.^{[49][50][51]} born from a lotus emerging from the navel of **Vishnu**, Brahma creates all the forms in the universe, but not the primordial universe itself.^[52] In contrast, the **Shiva**-focussed **Puranas** describe Brahma and Vishnu to have been created by **Archanarishvara**, that is half Shiva and half Parvati; or alternatively, Brahma was born from **Rudra**, or Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma creating each other cyclically in different aeons (*kalpa*).^[48] Thus in most Puranic texts, Brahma's creative activity depends on the presence and power of a higher god.^[53]

In other versions of creation, the creator deity is the one who is equivalent to the **Brahman**, the metaphysical reality in Hinduism. In **Vaishnavism**, Vishnu creates Brahma and orders him to order the rest of universe. In **Shaivism**, Shiva may be treated as the creator. In **Shaktism**, the **Great Goddess** creates the Trimurti.^{[49][46][54]}

Other [edit]

Chinese traditional cosmology [edit]

Pangu can be interpreted as another creator deity. In the beginning there was nothing in the **universe** except a formless **chaos**. However this chaos began to coalesce into a **cosmic egg** for eighteen thousand years. Within it, the perfectly opposed principles of **yin** and **yang** became balanced and Pangu emerged (or woke up) from the egg. Pangu is usually depicted as a primitive, hairy **giant** with horns on his head (like the Greek **Pan**) and clad in furs. Pangu set about the task of creating the world: he separated Yin from Yang with a swing of his giant axe, creating the **Earth** (murky Yin) and the **Sky** (clear Yang). To keep them separated, Pangu stood between them and pushed up the Sky. This task took eighteen thousand years, with each day the sky grew ten feet higher, the Earth ten feet wider, and Pangu ten feet taller. In some versions of the story, Pangu is aided in this task by the four most prominent beasts, namely the **Turtle**, the **Qilin**, the **Phoenix**, and the **Dragon**.

After eighteen thousand years^[55] had elapsed, Pangu was laid to rest. His breath became the **wind**; his voice the **thunder**; left eye the **sun** and right eye the **moon**; his body became the **mountains** and extremes of the world; his blood formed rivers; his muscles the fertile lands; his facial hair the stars and milky way; his fur the bushes and forests; his bones the valuable minerals; his bone marrows sacred diamonds; his sweat fell as rain; and the fleas on his fur carried by the wind became **human beings** all over the world.

The first writer to record the myth of Pangu was **Xu Zheng** during the **Three Kingdoms** period.

Shangdi is another creator deity, possibly prior to Pangu; sharing concepts similar to Abrahamic faiths.

Kazakh [edit]

According to **Kazakh** folk tales, **Jasaghnai** is the creator of the world.^[56]

See also [edit]

- Biblical cosmology**
- Cosmological argument**
- Creationism**
- Dating creation**
- Deism**
- Existence**
- Intelligent designer**
- Tzimtzum**

Notes [edit]

- ↑ Ninian Smart (2007). "Polytheism" *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britanica Online. Retrieved 5 July 2007.

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- ↑ ^ **²⁰⁰⁴** Sacred Books of the Hindus Volume 22 Part 2: Pt. 2, p. 97, R.B. Vidyamava, Rai Bahadur Srisa Chandra Vidyamava
- ↑ ^ **²⁰⁰⁸** Alter 1981, p. 141.
- ↑ Ruilen 2000, pp. 9-10.
- ↑ Carr 1996, p. 62-64.
- ↑ Carr 1996, p. 64.
- ↑ Yonge, Charles Duke (1854). "Appendices A Treatise Concerning the World (1). But what can be true since this, or more calculated to display the want of true nobility existing in the soul, than the notion of causes, in general, being secondary and created causes, combined with an ignorance of the one first cause, the uncreated God, the Creator of the universe, who for these and innumerable other reasons is most excellent, reasons which because of their magnitude human intellect is unable to apprehend?" *The Works of Philo Judaeus: the contemporary of Josephus*. London: H. G. Bohn. Cornerstonepublications.org. Archived from the *original* on 28 September 2015.
- ↑ Plato Laws Book X, Public Domain-Project Gutenberg. "ATHENIAN: Then I suppose that I must repeat the singular argument of those who manufacture the soul according to their own impious notions; they affirm that which is the first cause of the generation and destruction of all things, to be not first, but last, and that which is last to be first, and hence they have fallen into error about the true nature of the Gods... Then we must say that self-motion being the origin of all motions, and the first which arises among things at rest as well as among things in motion, is the eldest and mightiest principle of change, and that which is changed by another and yet moves other is second."
- ↑ "On the simplicity of God, in "Summa Theologiae", Part I, Question 3"*g*. *Priory of Dominican Order* (in Latin and English). Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benziger Bros. edition, 1947. *Archived* *from the original* on 2 October 2011. Retrieved 6 October 2018. "Ostenium est autem supra quod Deus est primum movens immobile. Unde manifestum est quod Deus non est corpus. Secundo, quia necesse est id quod est primum est, esse in actu, et nullo modo in potentia. Licet enim in uno et eodem quod exit de potentia in actum, prius sit potentia quam actus tempera, simpliciter tamen actus prius est potentia, quia quod est in potentia, non reductur in actum nisi per ens actu. Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus est primum ens. Impossibile est igitur quod in Deo sit aliquid in potentia... Now it has been already proved [Question 12, Article 3], that God is the First Mover, and is Himself unmoved. Therefore it is clear that God is not a body. Secondly, because the first being must of necessity be in act, and in no way in potentiality. For although in any single thing that passes from potentiality to actuality, the potentiality is prior in time to the actuality, nevertheless, absolutely speaking, actuality is prior to potentiality, for whatever is in potentiality can be reduced into actuality only by some being in actuality. Now it has been already proved that God is the First Being. It is therefore impossible that in God there should be any potentiality."
- ↑ "1611 King James Bible, *Second book of Maccabees*, chapter 7, verse 8"*g*. *kingjamesbibleonline.org*. Archived *from the original* on 20 April 2017.
- ↑ "Greek Septuagint and Wiki English Translation: 2 Maccabees 7:58"*g* (in English and Greek). *Archived* *from the original* on 14 September 2016.
- ↑ "1611 King James Bible, *Second book of Maccabees*, chapter 1, verse 24"*g*. *kingjamesbibleonline.org*. Archived *from the original* on 24 December 2012.
- ↑ "Greek New Testament and Wiki English Translation, Gospel of John, chapter 1, verses 1 to 3"*g* (in English and Greek). Archived *from the original* on 21 August 2011.
- ↑ Collins, C. John, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 50ff.
- ↑ May, Gerhard (2004). *Creatio ex nihilo*[*Creation from nothing*]. Continuum International, p. xli. ISBN 978-0-567-08356-6. Retrieved 23 November 2009. "If we look into the early Christian sources, it becomes apparent that the thesis of *creatio ex nihilo* in its full and proper sense, as an ontological statement, only appeared when it was intended, in opposition to the idea of world-formation from unoriginate matter, to give expression to the omnipotence, freedom and uniqueness of God."
- ↑ May, Gerhard (1978). *Schöpfung aus dem Nichts. Die Entstehung der Lehre von der creatio ex nihilo*[*Creation from Nothingness: the origin of the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo*]. AKG 48 (in German). Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, p. 151f. ISBN 3-11-007204-1.
- ↑ Siegfried, Francis (1908). "Creation"*g*. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, volume 4. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved 30 September 2008. "Probably the idea of creation never entered the human mind apart from Revelation. Though some of the pagan philosophers attained to a relatively high conception of God as the supreme ruler of the world, they seem never to have drawn the next logical inference of His being the absolute cause of all finite existence. [...] The descendants of Sem and Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, preserved the idea of creation clear and pure; and from the opening verse of Genesis to the closing book of the Old Testament the doctrine of creation runs unmistakably outlined and absolutely undefined by any extraneous element. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In this, the first sentence of the Bible we see the fountain-head of the stream which is carried over to the "son" order by the declaration of the mother of the Machabees: "And, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them; and consider that God made them out of nothing" (2 Maccabees 7:28). One has only to compare the Mosaic account of the creative work with that recently discovered on the clay tablets unearthed from the ruins of Babylon to discern the immense