

# CREATION STORIES

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## NORSE CREATION:

### **THE NINE WORLDS**

*Twas the earliest of times // When Ymir lived; // There was no sand nor sea // Nor cooling wave. // Earth had not been, // Nor Heaven on high, // There was a yawning void // And grass no where*

IN THE MORNING OF TIME THERE WAS NO SAND, no sea, and no clouds. There was no heaven, no earth, and no grass. There was only a region of icy mist called Nifheim, a region of fire called Muspell, and a great yawning empty void between them called Ginnungagap.

Over time, the flames of Muspell warmed the frozen vapors of Nifheim, and ice melted into water and began to drip. Quickened with life, the water dripped into the void and formed into two gigantic creatures.

The first was a wicked frost-giant named Ymir. The second was a huge cow named Audumla. As Ymir drank Audumla's milk, he grew bigger and stronger. One night as Ymir slept, a troll with six heads grew from the soles of his feet, and a male and a female frost-giant sprung from Ymir's warm armpit.

The ice cow also brought about life. As she licked salty ice blocks, she slowly licked a new creature into being. The first day hair came forth; on the second day came a head – and finally, on the third day, the body of a new giant emerged. This giant was a good giant whose name was Buri. His sons and grandsons became gods instead of giants, and they stood for all that was good and honorable.

The greatest of Buri's grandsons was the god Odin. Odin led his brothers against the wicked frost-giant Ymir. They killed Ymir, and ever after that time, the gods and giants were deadly enemies.

After Odin and his brothers had slain the frost-giant, they dragged his enormous body into the void. Ymir's flesh became the earth. His blood became the sea. His bones became mountains; his hair, trees; and his teeth, stones.

Then Odin and his brothers discovered worms living in the earth that was Ymir's flesh, and they turned them into dwarves and dark elves and sent them to mine the ore beneath the mountains and hills. The world of the dwarves was called Nidavellir; and the world of the dark elves was called Svartalfheim.

The gods also discovered lovely creatures in the soil. They called them light elves and placed them in a world called Alfheim.

The blood that flowed from Ymir's veins became the sea, and it drowned all the frost-giants. Only two escaped in a boat and began a new race of giants. From this race came all warlocks, enchanters, ogres, and witches, including a witch in the woods who gave birth to all the wolves of the world.

Then Odin set Ymir's skull over the earth and called it the sky. He spread the giant's brains throughout the sky and called them clouds. At the four corners of the sky, he placed four dwarves named Nordri, Sudri, Austri, and Vestri - or North, South, East, and West.

Odin and his brothers caught sparks from the fires of Muspell and turned them into stars. They put a girl named Sun and a boy named Moon into two chariots of fire and placed them in the sky. From then on, Sun and Moon were continuously chased by a ferocious wolf named Moon-Hound.

Odin also gave chariots to a goddess named Night and her son Day. Night rode behind a horse called Frosty-Mane; the foam from his mouth became the dew of early morning.

Then Odin and his kin took Ymir's eyebrows and turned them into a land called Midgard. They made two humans from trees – a man from an ash and a woman from an elm. They gave the

humans spirit, life, speech, hearing, sight, clothing, temples, and shrines.

Then the gods left their human friends in Midgard and crossed over a flaming rainbow bridge to a world called Asgard. There, they built golden halls -- one for the gods and one for the goddesses, for the goddesses were no less important than the gods.

Odin, the greatest of the gods, was the god of War and Death. After a battle ended, warrior maidens called Valkyries, picked up the dead and carried them to Odin's palace, Valhalla, Hall of the Slain.

Odin's wife, Frigg, sat on the throne next to him. She was the goddess of knowledge and knew all that happened in the worlds. Frigg could look into the future and see the fates of gods and men, but she kept all her visions a secret, never sharing them with anyone.

Odin had many sons. With Frigg, he had twin boys, Balder and Hod. Balder, their favorite, was like the sun. He was the most gentle and beautiful of all the gods. Hod was blind and ruled the black hours of night.

Odin's second favorite son was Thor. The strongest of all the gods, Thor was the god of the sky and thunder. His wife, Sif, had long hair made of gold.

The god Heimdall was also a son of Odin. Night and day, he watched the rainbow bridge, keeping out enemies. His sight was so keen, he could see in the dark; his sense of sound was so sharp, he could hear wool growing on sheep.

In the early days, there were two kinds of gods: the Aesir and the Vanir. Odin and his kin were Aesir and lived in Asgard. The Vanir, the gods of nature, lived in Vanaheim.

One day the Aesir and Vanir went to war. The fighting lasted until both grew weary and decided to become friends. Thereafter, the Vanir god Njord lived in Asgard and ruled the wind and seas. His son, Frey, ruled the rain and sunshine. And his daughter, Freya, was the goddess of love.

There was one god who was neither Aesir nor Vanir. His name was Loki, and he was the son of two giants and the foster-brother of Odin. Loki was the most dangerous of all the gods, for sometimes he was a friend and sometimes he was purely evil. No one ever knew when he could be trusted.

From the mighty halls of Asgard, the gods and goddesses ruled all the nine worlds. They were:

**Niflheim**, world of mist and the dead

**Muspell**, world of fire

**Midgard**, world of humans

**Jotunheim**, world of frost-giants

**Alfheim**, world of light elves

**Nidavellir**, world of the dwarves

**Svartalfheim**, world of the dark elves

**Vanaheim**, world of the Vanir gods

**Asgard**, world of the Aesir gods and goddesses

Above all these worlds was a wondrous tree called Yggdrasil, or the World Tree. A wise eagle sat on top of the tree, surveying the universe.

One of the tree's roots grew into Niflheim where a dreadful serpent ceaselessly gnawed on the root. A busy squirrel named Ratatosk scurried up and down the World Tree, carrying insults back and forth between the serpent and the eagle.

Another root of the tree grew into Asgard. Under that root was Urd's Well, whose pure waters helped protect the World Tree, for it suffered terribly from deer and goats eating its leaves.

A third root coiled into Jotunheim. And under that root was Mimir's Well, whose magic waters held all the wisdom and memory of ancient lore.

Hidden in Mimir's Well was a trumpet that belonged to Heimdall, the guardian of Asgard. All the gods knew that one day a blast on Heimdall's trumpet would announce the last bitter battle between the gods and the forces of evil. This final battle, called Ragnarok, would bring about the total destruction of the nine worlds.

## EGYPTIAN CREATIONS

### **1 THE CREATION ACCORDING TO HELIOPOLIS**

This is based on British Museum Papyrus 10188, version B.

In the beginning there was nothing but the watery waste of Nun. There was no light, there was no darkness, there was nothing solid to rest upon. Then in the watery waste of Nun something stirred. It was the god Atum, in his form of Khepre the "Becoming One" who was the rising sun. At first he had nothing to rest upon so he made a solid bank. The Egyptians imagined this to be a muddy island rising out of the watery waste, which resembled the Nile Flood when it was going down leaving small islands in its wake.

Atum realised that he had a great deal to do, so he created two other gods to help him. These were Shu and Tefnut, the God of the Air and the Goddess of Moisture. They were nearly always represented in human form. Shu was represented as a man with a feather on his head and Tefnut though a woman, also shown as a lioness. They were identified with Menhit at Latopolis (Esna), and Nehemauit at Hermopolis (al-Ashmunein). Tefnut was the Goddess of Rain, Dew and the Gentle Winds, not to be confused with the fierce ones that blew in from the desert. Shu and Tefnut were universal Egyptian gods and do not appear to have had any special shrines or places connected with them.

After they had been created, they in turn produced Geb, the Earth God, and Nut, the Sky Goddess. Geb is usually shown as a man wearing either the White Crown or the Atef Crown, or a goose, the bird sacred to him, and whose name is a play upon his. The earth was called the "House of Geb". Again Geb had no particular shrine but was worshipped throughout Egypt though he may have had special connections with Edfu and Dendera, which was known as "the home of the Children of Geb". Both Nut and Geb have strong connections with the Afterworld. Nut, the Sky Goddess was originally only the goddess of the day sky resting upon the mountains of Baki and Manu (the farther mountains of dawn and dusk), but by the Late Period, she represented the sky both by day and by night. The goddess is usually depicted as a woman bearing on her head a vase of water, the hieroglyph with the phonetic value of Nut. Sometimes she is shown as a woman with horns and a disc, usually worn by the goddess Hathor. But more commonly she is shown as a woman or a cow spangled with stars, arched over the body of her husband Geb, or sometimes supported by her father Shu. The sun was thought to have been swallowed by Nut, passing through her body to be reborn every day. This scene is shown in several tombs, and in the Chapel of the New Year at Dendera. Nut was always regarded as friend and protector of the dead. She is frequently referred to as mother Nut, and is supposed to spread herself out over the dead in her name of "Coverer of the Sky". She was expected to supply the dead with food and drink, but because she was also their protector, is often portrayed on the inner side of coffin lids, where she could closely supervise what was happening to the dead person.

Nut had her own sacred tree, the sycamore, situated at Heliopolis and she is sometimes shown as a woman coming forth from a tree. The branches of this tree became a refuge for weary souls resting from the heat of the midday sun, where they could be refreshed by the food on which the goddess also lived. This sycamore was the archetype of the traditional tree under which the Holy Family rested on their flight to Egypt. The skeleton of the last of these sycamores is still to be seen today at Matariah, a suburb of Heliopolis.

Geb and Nut had five children born on the five epagnol days of the year. The story goes that Re cursed Nut, and that according to this curse her children were not to be born on any one day of the year. The ancient Egyptians had a lunar calendar of 360 days, so that the year was always getting out of order. This story accounts for the addition of five days to the traditional year. Thoth, the Moon God and Reckoner of Time, played dice with the official Moon God, Aah, a shadowy being figuring little in Egyptian mythology, and won from him the light of five whole nights, and with his help was able to create five whole days on which the children of Nut were born. These days lay outside the official year so that the curse of Re had no effect, because they were over the official year. Osiris was born on the first day, Horus the Elder on the second day, Seth on the third day, Isis on the fourth day and Nephthys on the fifth day.

Osiris was represented as a mummified man standing upright or seated upon his throne all in white. He wore the Atef Crown (represented by the horizontal horns of *Ovis longipes*, surmounted by a disc and two plumes) and held the crook and flail that were to become the royal emblems.

Horus the Elder was one of the great leader gods of Egypt. He is shown as a man or as a man with the head of a hawk or falcon, sometimes with a sun disc upon his head. He was a sky god and a sun god, and his cult was one of the most ancient in Egypt, going back at least to predynastic times. There are many forms of Horus, but gradually Horus, Hor or Heru absorbed them all. The sun was the right eye of Horus, and the moon the left eye. For moonless nights, a form of the Eyeless Horus was worshipped in the Western Delta. The original home of Horus was in this Western Delta, in the Third Nome, or district of Lower Egypt, at Temait-en-Hor, now Damanhur (the town of Horus). From the beginning he was closely associated with a tree and cow goddess, a form of Hathor, whose name means "House of Horus", and who was originally regarded as his nurse. Naturally as time went on he became confused with Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, though originally they were completely distinct. The four children of Horus were demi-gods whose job it was to guard the canopic jars in which the viscera of the dead were placed. They are usually shown as four small mummified figures, each with a different head - those of a hawk, a man, a jackal and an ape. Horus the Elder's place of worship was transferred to Upper Egypt after the conquest of the North by the South and centred on Edfu, where Horus the Behdt was worshipped. He was a form of Horus the Elder, the harpooner, but again he became hopelessly confused with his counterpart.

Seth was a very old deity. His early attributes were very different from his later ones. Originally he was closely associated with Horus and appeared as a friend and helper of the dead. He was initially one of the two gods pouring purified water over the king, but in later scenes he is replaced by Thoth. The significance of the name of Seth is not easy to determine, nor can the animal associated with him be satisfactorily identified. He is a desert god and associated with the night and all dark and frightening things; the opposite in fact of Horus the Sky God. Later he fights with the Younger Horus for the control of Egypt, and is defeated and killed in the form of a great red hippopotamus, as depicted on the walls of the temple at Edfu. A miracle play depicting this event used to be enacted annually on the Sacred Lake at Edfu.

The next to be born was Isis, the Mistress of Magic. She was the sister and wife of Osiris, and mother of the Younger Horus. There is a remarkable Greek inscription which was discovered on two identical texts, one on the island of Ios and the other on the island of Andros, which describes the attributes of Isis. It reads in part.

I am Isis, the Mistress of Every Land  
I was taught by Hermes (Thoth) and by his help I found out demotic script,  
that all things should not be written with the same letter  
I laid down laws for mankind, and I ordained things  
which no one has the power to change (like the goddess Sheshet)  
I am the eldest daughter of Kronos (Geb)  
I am the wife and sister of Osiris the King  
I am she who governs Sothis  
I am she who is called divine among Egyptian women  
For me was built the city of Bubastis  
I divided the earth from the sky  
I marked out the path of the stars  
I prescribed the course of the sun and the moon  
(Inscriptiones Graecae, Vol. XII, fasc. V, Pt. 1)

The last to be born was Nephthys (or Nebt-Het), who like Isis was a goddess of the dead and the sister and wife of Seth. Her name means "Lady of the House" (the house in this case being the sky). She is shown as a woman, or as a kite when mourning Osiris. Her position as protector of the dead seems to have been more important than her position vis-a-vis Seth, and she must originally have been an independent goddess. She is always shown in human form with her symbol (her hieroglyph) on her head, which represents her name. With Isis she stands behind Osiris when the hearts of the dead are weighed. With Isis she laments Osiris. And like Isis she has many forms.

## **2 THE CREATION ACCORDING TO HERMOPOLIS**

*The other great school of religious thought after Heliopolis was Hermopolis in Middle Egypt. Here eight gods and goddesses were worshipped. Nu and Nunet, Amun and Amunet, Heh and Hehut, Ke and Kekut. These eight gods were known as the Ogdoad of Hermopolis and were regarded by some as the oldest gods in Egypt. The original mound from which the land of Egypt developed was supposed to have appeared at Hermopolis. It was here that the Sun God was supposed to have taken his stand having been created by the eight gods. It will be seen later this was not the only creation that the Sun God was supposed to have had.*

Nu and Nunet stood for the primeval abyss out of which the world was created, while Amun and Amunet stood for the Hidden Ones. The others stood for mist and darkness. They were in fact the eight primeval deities from which everything developed. Associated with them was Thoth, the God of Wisdom, called in Egyptian, Djhuti, and in Greek, Hermes. He is a moon god, a reckoner of time, and the Vizier of the Gods. Depicted as an ibis-headed man, his sacred animals are the baboon and the ibis, but this is really because there is a play upon their names in Egyptian. Thoth was thought to have invented writing, and wrote a book in which all the wisdom of the world was entered. One of his tasks was the restoration of the Eye of Re, after it had been stolen by Seth. Hermopolis was known as the City of the Eight, and was a double city. The gods in this group of eight were all frog-headed and the goddesses all serpent-headed. Copies of the Book of Thoth existed in the temples and it was to this that the Greeks referred when they spoke of the Hermetic Books of the Egyptians. In the Judgement scene, it is Thoth who checks the scales, and Thoth who writes down the judgement. He was both the scribe of the Gods and the Vizier acting for Re during his absence, taking over also from Osiris in certain cases. He was also known as the "Twice Great".

There is no creation story of Thoth or of the other gods of Hermopolis, except that it was claimed that the primeval hill from which the whole land came, first appeared here, and that here Re took his stand upon it. Undoubtedly there were disputes between the priesthood of Hermopolis and that of Heliopolis, who had anyway a far more developed story. At some point the priests of Heliopolis gained the mastery, for the temple services carried on throughout Egypt were based on that of Heliopolis.

## **3 THE CREATION ACCORDING TO EDFU (BEHEDET)**

*(This account comes from the texts upon the walls of the temple at Edfu.)*

In the beginning there was the watery waste of Nun. When this subsided as did the annual flood, it left a sandy island. On this island was a perch, and here a falcon, which represented Horus, rested. However, he had an enemy in the form of a snake, and he had to have a protector, in fact two protector gods to prevent him being attacked. These gods also protected Horus with the "Great White One", the ceremonial stone macehead with which Egyptian kings are shown killing their enemies. Horus, "he of the dappled plumage" - for here one is dealing with the elder hawk god, the brother of Osiris - sweeps in from the sky and takes his place in the earliest temple. This was at first made of reeds, and consisted of an enclosure with a small sacred part at one end where the emblems of the gods were kept. As time went on this temple became enlarged, first built of brick and later in its final stages of stone. Horus, whose name Har means the "Distant One", planes through the sky, which is his home, on his powerful wings.

He is closely linked with Re and the other sun gods and his home is with Hathor, whose name Hat-Hor means "House of Horus", and who is another very old sky and cow goddess. At the end of Egyptian history, the various forms of Horus become indistinguishable, and Horus the Elder becomes one with Horus the Younger, the son of Osiris.

The Egyptians envisaged not only the creation of the world, but the end of the world, as described in Chapter 175 of the Book of the Dead thus:

*"This earth will return to the Primeval Water Nun, to the endless flood as it was in the beginning. And in the end there will be no gods and no goddesses. Nothing but Atum the Lord of All who made all mankind and all the gods, and who exists when everything else passes away." Then Atum and Osiris will have become one.*

## AUSTRALIAN VERSION

(ca.1600 CE) Walumba tribe - Northern Australia

*Notes: The Walumba tribe were original inhabitants of Australia who have occupied the continent for at least 40,000 years (or maybe even 60,000 years). The Aborigines arrived either by way of the now-submerged Sahul Shelf or by rafts and canoes, in one or more waves.*

*The people and languages (or dialects) were associated with stretches of territory, and the largest entities recognized by the people were language-named groups. These groups made up smaller, local groups (clans) which consisted not only of men and women but also of several species. A group bore the name of one of these species, its totem. The men of the clan were divided into lodges, with each man custodian of the mythology, ritual, sites, and symbols associated with one or more natural species and with ancestral heroes. Through ritual reenactment, the creative past became operative in the present, and the life of species and man was assured. The myths and rituals constituted the Dreaming, or Dreamtime, which signified the continuity of life unlimited by space and time.*



*In the late 18th century there was an estimated population that ranged from 300,000 to more than 1,000,000, but after contact with Europeans their numbers have been decimated by dispossession, poverty, cultural dislocation, and disease. In the mid-eighties they numbered fewer than 230,000, less than 2 percent of the total population of Australia. [Source: [www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/oceania/aboriginal/articles.html](http://www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/oceania/aboriginal/articles.html)]*

There was sea, land and sky in the beginning. And on the land were animals and plants and trees. But man was not there. Far out to sea there was an island called Bralgu, the Island of Eternal Beings, which later became the Island of the Dead. It was here at Bralgu that the Djanggawul lived. They had many sacred objects, drawings and emblems that they called "dreamings" and they left many of their dreamings on the island as sacred paintings and rituals for the people who were to come.

The Djanggawul were three children of the sun. The two sisters Bildjiuaroja and Miralaldu, had enormous genitals, both male and female combined, so they carried these around in their arms or let them drag along the ground leaving trails in the sand. But Djanggawul-brother had only one gigantic penis, which he hauled along after him.

One day they loaded their bark canoe with dreamings and sailed across the ocean from Bralgu to arrive at the shore of the new earth that was still uninhabited by people. The sun's children began their journey inland, and as they traveled, creatures and plants were constantly being created. They made many sacred places and left their dreamings everywhere. At all these places they established their own cult in readiness for the peoples who were to be created from their own offspring.

When night came, the sun-children made a camp, and the two sisters fell asleep by the fire. Djanggawul-brother went hunting. When he returned, he cut off the enormous genitals of the two sleeping sisters leaving only vagina-shaped wounds. The next morning they-carried on creating beings for their world by copulating with Djanggawul-brother. The two sisters had to follow him everywhere and could produce children only when Djanggawul-brother decided. The boys they created were put into the grass so that when they grew up they would have whiskers and hair. The girls they created were hidden under a mat so that they would not grow any hair and would have smooth bodies because girls were sacred. The two sisters remained eternally pregnant as they traveled, following Djanggawul-brother wherever he chose to go. And so it is with all women with their men.

Source: Sarah Bartlett's *The World of Myths & Mythology*, p. 46: Blandford, England, 1998.

## SCIENTIFIC VERSION (BIG BANG)

"Ten or twenty billion years ago, something happened—the Big Bang, the event that began our universe... That it happened is reasonably clear. All the matter and energy now in the universe was concentrated at extremely high density kind of cosmic egg... The entire universe, matter and energy, occupied a very small volume." – Carl Sagan (1980).

"A number of scientists are unhappy with the big bang theory... For one thing, it leaves unanswered the questions that always arise when a precise date is given for the creation of the universe: Where did the matter come from in the first place?" – Krauskopf and Beiser (1973).

"No existing view of the development of the cosmos is completely satisfactory, and this includes the standard model [the Big Bang], which leads to certain fundamental questions and problems." – Victor Weisskopf (1983).

"Coincidence of prediction and observation made the big bang seem the most plausible of cosmological theories. From plausibility it became predominant and then virtually an orthodoxy... but now its decade of total dominance may be starting to close." - Dietrick Thomson (1978).

"You may know the word 'entropy.' It's a word that physicists use when talking about the amount of disorder in a system. It appears to be a basic physical law that, in our universe, entropy always appears to increase as a system evolves. In other words, once you scramble an egg, it stays scrambled; it doesn't turn spontaneously back into a whole egg again. Likewise, tidy rooms get messy; you have to keep cleaning your house over and over again. The idea is, in our universe, when things are left to themselves, they tend toward disorder. That's entropy. Yet, for the last several decades, the most widely believed theory about the birth of the universe says that it began in a Big Bang - a state of unimaginable chaos. Later that chaos had to evolve into the extremely orderly structures we know today: majestically rotating galaxies made of billions of stars; stars that cycle through various predictable [theoretical] stages of evolution; and, last but not least, those most complex of all known organisms: human beings, who contemplate it all. So how can a universe that tends toward disorder, have evolved such orderly structures?"- Star Date radio (1990).

"It is then tempting to go one step further and speculate that the entire universe evolved from literally nothing." - Guth and Steinhardt (1984).

"Where did the substance of the universe come from?... Perhaps in an infinite sea of nothingness, globs of positive and negative energy in equal-sized pairs are constantly forming, and after passing through evolutionary changes, combine once more and vanish. We are in one of these globs in the period of time between nothing and nothing, and wondering about it." - Isaac Asimov (1970).

"It is very hard to realize that this all is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. It is even harder to realize that this present universe has evolved from an unspeakably unfamiliar early condition, and faces a future extinction of endless cold or intolerable heat. The more the universe seems comprehensible (via the big bang), the more it also seems pointless." - Steve Weinberg (1977).

"The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things that lifts human life above the level of farce, and gives it some of the grace of tragedy." - Steve Weinberg (1977).

"Our Universe had its physical origin as a quantum fluctuation of some pre-existing true vacuum or state of nothingness." - Edward P. Tyron (1984).