1. Introductory Summary

The religious texts of the ancient East and India, i.e. the hieroglyphic writings of ancient Kemet (Egypt), the cuneiform writings of ancient Sumer (Chaldea/Mesopotamia), and the Sanskrit writings of ancient India, record the history of God as a divine Black man. According to these texts, God was originally a luminous, formless essence hidden within a primordial* substantive darkness called ‘waters’. At some point, this divine luminosity concentrated itself within the darkness and produced the atom or first particle of distinct matter, the ‘golden egg’ of ancient myth*. From this first atom there emerged many atoms, which the God used to build up his own luminous body. This body was anthropomorphic and thus this God was the first man in existence, a self-created man. This was a brilliantly luminous man, represented by the so-called ‘sun-gods’ of ancient myth. Indeed, the sun in the sky was said to be only a sign of the luminous anthropomorphic body of the creator-god.

This God’s initial attempts at creation proved unsuccessful, as the brilliant luminosity of the divine form scorched material creation. As a solution the God veiled his luminosity with a body made from that same primordial dark substance from which he initially emerged. This divine black body refracted the divine light as it passed through the hair pores covering the body. This black body is therefore referred to in later literature as God’s ‘shadow’ as it shades creation from the scorching heat of the ‘sun’ or luminous body of God. As the light passed through the hair pores of this divine black body it produced a dark-blue iridescence or glow. The ancients symbolized this visual effect by the semiprecious stone sapphire or lapis lazuli, which was a dark blue stone with golden speckles throughout. The God’s body at this stage was thus depicted dark blue and said to be made of sapphire/lapis lazuli. Veiled in this (blue-)black body, the God successfully produced the material cosmos. The creator-gods of ancient myth were thus often painted dark blue.

Animals were used by the ancients to represent or symbolize various characteristics or attributes of the gods. The so-called ‘attribute animal’ of this black-bodied creator-god was the black bovine,* usually a bull. The bull symbolized the strength and fecundity of the creator-god. It also associated the God with the primordial dark waters, which the bull was believed to personify. As the God’s black body was made from this primordial darkness, the black hide of the bull represented the black skin of the creator-god. This black
body of God symbolized by the black bull was at the center of the ‘mystery of God’ in the ancient Mystery Systems. In ancient Kemet (Egypt), for example, the greatest mystery concerned the union of the sun-god Ra, i.e. the luminous body of God, with the black god Osiris, the personification of the divine black body.

2. The Black God in Antiquity

Godfrey Higgins, in his still prodigious work, Anacalypsis, observed:

We have found the Black complexion or something relating to it whenever we have approached the origin of nations. The Alma Mater, the Goddess Multimammia, the founders of the Oracles, the Memnon of first idols, were always Black. Venus, Jupiter, Apollo, Bacchus, Hercules, Astarte, Adonis, Horus, Apis, Osiris, and Amen: in short all the deities were black. They remained as they were first...in very ancient times.¹

Though made over a century ago, current History-of-Religions scholarship only confirms Higgins’ observation. The major deities of Egypt, India, Asia, the Near East, Greece and Central and South America were indeed black. Of special note we may mention, in addition to those listed above, Min of Egypt,² Vishnu and Krishna, Buddha of Asia,¹ II/EI/Al of the Near East,² and Quetzalcoatl of the early Americas.⁹ The blackness of these deities did not necessarily indicate that they were chthonic (associated with death and the underworld) or in any way malevolent. Indeed, in the various ancient traditions, it was the king of the gods, the creator deity himself, who was black.² The blackness of the creator deity, that is to say the creator deity’s black body—how it originated, of what substance(s) it was composed, why it was black, etc.—was at the center of the ‘mystery of God’ in ancient Egypt, India, and Sumer/Akkad. We will analyze this “mystery of the black god” and explore its relation to biblical myth and theology.

³ On Vishnu and Krishna see below.
⁵ Werner Daum, Ursemittische Religion (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1985) and below.
⁷ See below.
3. The Black God and his Black Bull

In antiquity various aspects of the gods were represented zoomorphically. That is to say, different animals were used to symbolize distinct characteristics or attributes of a deity,8 who was otherwise anthropomorphic. The paramount ‘attribute animal’ of the black creator-god was the black bovine*, usually a bull. The bull represented potency, fecundity, and primordial materiality, all essential characteristics of the creator-god.9 The color of the bull was not arbitrary. As René L. Vos pointed out, “Color reflected the nature of a god” and thus the skin color “constituted the vehicle of the divine nature of a sacred animal.”10 Over against the golden lion or falcon, which symbolized morning/midday sunlight, the black bovine symbolized night and materiality.11 The black bovine was associated with the black primordial waters from which the creator-god emerged;12 it thus came to symbolize the black material body that the...
creator-god will form for himself, the black skin of the bovine signaling the black skin of the deity. Thus, the hide of the sacrificial bull of ancient Sumer/Akkad, which was required to be ‘black as asphalt (Figure 10),’ was ritually identified with the skin of the Sumerian/Akkadian creator-god Anu.

This association between divine and bovine skin is explicitly articulated, for example, in the Indic scripture Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa with regard to the black tārpya garment worn by the king during the Indic royal consecration ceremony called Rājāsūya. During this ceremony the king ritually impersonated the creator-god and divine king Prajāpati-Varūṇa. The black tārpya garment worn by the king represented the body of the royal creator-god (Prajāpati-Varūṇa) whom the king impersonated here.


13 See e.g. the black skin of the Egyptian deity Min (Figure 14), the ‘creator god per excellence,’ and his black bovines (H.Gauthier, Les fêtes du dieu Min 2 vols. [Le Caire, 1931; IFAO. Recherches d’Archéologie] 2:55-57; DDD s.v. “Min,” 577 by K. van der Toorn; Veronica Ions, Egyptian Mythology [Middlesex: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., 1968] 110; G.A. Wainwright, “Some Aspects of Amûn,” Journal of Egyptian Archaeology 20 [1934]: 140 [art.=139-53]), the black-skinned Osiris and the black bull Apis (Vos, “Varius Coloribus Apis,” 716; idem, “Apis,” DDD 70) as well as the Indic Yamā with his black skin and black buffalo [P. van Bosch, “Yama-The God on the Black Buffalo,” in Commemorative Figures [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982] 21-64]. In contrast, but making the same point, see the white-skinned Siva and his white bull Nandi.

14 In one description of the Babylonian kalû-ritual the slaying and skinning of the black bull is mythologized as the god Bēl’s slaying and flaying of the god Anu, whose characteristic attribute animal was the black bull. See Daum, Ursemütische Religion, 204; E. Ebeling, Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der Babylonier 2 vols. (Berlin-Leipzig, 1931) 1:29; C. Bezold, Babylonisch-assyrisches Glossar (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1926) 210 s.v. sugugalu; Georgina de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, Hamlet’s Mill: An essay on myth and the frame of time (Boston: Gambit, Inc., 1969) 124. On Anu see further Herman Wohlstein, The Sky-God An-Anu (Jericho, New York: Paul A. Stroock, 1976).

15 I will use ‘Indic’ throughout this work to refer to the traditions of ancient India, as opposed to ‘Indian,’ which is popularly, though erroneously, associated with the indigenous groups of the early Americas.


17 See Heesterman, Ancient Indian Royal Consecration on the somatic significance of the ritual garments. Specifically, the black antelope skins represent the black skin of the divine king Varūṇa who personifies the primordial waters. On the black skinned Varūṇa see Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 11.8.1. On Varūṇa and the black sacrificial garments see further Alfred Hillebrandt, Vedic Mythology, trans. from the German by Sreramula Rajeswara Sarma, 2 vols. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999; reprint) 2: 41, 44-45. On
Ancient seal depicting the Sumerian/Akkadian creator-god Enki/Ea (enthroned), the “black bull of the Apsû (primordial fresh-waters)”

Image of Sacrificial Bull, “black as asphalt” used to represent the Sumerian/Akkadian king of the gods, An/Anu

Regarding the tārpya garment and by implication its divine counterpart, Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa 3, 1, 2, 13-17 notes:

it (i.e. the tārpya garment) is indeed his (i.e. king’s) own skin he thereby puts on himself. Now that skin which belongs to the cow was originally on man. The gods spake, ‘Verily, the cow supports everything here (on earth); come, let us put on the cow that skin which is now on man; therewith she will be able to endure rain and cold and heat. Accordingly, having flayed man, they put that skin on the cow, and therewith she now endures rain and cold and heat. For man was indeed flayed; and hence wherever a stalk of grass or some other object cuts him, the blood trickles out. They then put that skin, the (tārpya) garment, on him; and for this reason none but man wears a garment, it having been put on him as his skin…Let him, then, not be naked.
in the presence of a cow. For the cow knows that she wears his skin, and runs away for fear lest he should take the skin from her.20

In explaining the relation between the black ritual garment and the black cow skin, it is here recalled that the latter actually was once man’s own skin, who lost it to the cow (man was ‘flayed’). This black bovine skin apparently once covered man’s fleshy skin as an exterior layer, according to this mythical account. In place of this lost exterior layer, man was given the black târpya garment. Now whenever the cow sees a naked man it flees in fear of trying to retrieve his original ‘garment,’ the black skin that now protects the cow from inclement weather. It must be kept in mind that the Vedas are the literary work of the invading Indo-Aryan tribes, and this description of the flaying of man’s black skin reflects the actual experience of the indigenous ‘black, snub-nosed’ Dasyus tribes who were indeed flayed by the Aryan hordes. This historical flaying is mythologized in the Rg Veda (I. 130-8) where the Aryan deity Indra is described as tearing off the black skin of the Asura, the gods of the pre-Aryan black tribes.21 In this Rājasītya or consecration ritual the human king is impersonating the divine king, God, whose skin is represented by the bovin skin. The black garment/bovine skin represents the black skin of the pre-Aryan black gods. Asko Parpola has demonstrated that both the târpya garment and its divine analogue, the ‘sky garment’ of the gods (i.e. the divine body), are associated with the skin of the mythic ‘bull of heaven.’22

4. The Blue-Black Creator-God

In his Praparata Evangelica (III, 115a, 7) the fourth century church historian Eusebius of Caesarea quoted from Porphyry’s (ca. 233-309) lost work, Concerning Images, a note on an Egyptian view of the Creator: “The Demiurge (creator-god), whom the Egyptians call Cneph, is of human form, but with a skin of dark blue, holding a girdle and a scepter, and crowned with a royal wing on his head.”23 While we have by now come to expect the divine human form, the dark blue skin requires some explanation. Indeed, the leading gods of the ancient Near East were not just black, but blue-black. This dark ‘blueness’ of the divine body had profound significance. It was not just any blue, but sapphire blue.24 In biblical tradition and in ancient and medieval texts generally the term ‘sapphire’ denoted the semiprecious stone lapis lazuli.25

Considered the “ultimate Divine substance,” sapphire/lapis lazuli possessed great mythological significance.
in the ancient Near East.\textsuperscript{26} In its natural state lapis lazuli is dark blue with fine golden speckles\textsuperscript{27} recalling the “sky bedecked with stars”\textsuperscript{28}; thus the visible heaven is often said to be sapphiric.\textsuperscript{29}

This sapphiric heaven, called the ‘sky- garment’ of the gods,\textsuperscript{30} was associated with the divine body,\textsuperscript{31} ‘garment’ being an ancient and widespread metaphor for body.\textsuperscript{32} Thus, the leading deities of the ancient


\textsuperscript{28} See Irwin, “Lāṭ Bhairo,” 332.

\textsuperscript{29} Exod. 24:10; Ez. 1:26 (LXX); William Brownlee notes “This dome (of heaven) was thought of as sapphire in color, and as crystalline and transparent,” \textit{Ezekiel 1-19} (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 13. Nut, the ancient Egyptian sky goddess, “glistens like lapis lazuli.” See Assmann, \textit{Liturgische Lieder}, 314ff. text III 4. The association of the heavens with precious stones is found in Babylonian cosmologies as well, which may have influenced biblical cosmology. According to W.G. Lambert, the Babylonians associated their three heavens (upper/middle/lower) with stones, the lower deriving its blue from the jasper stone (“The Cosmology of Sumer and Babylon,” in Carmen Blacker and Michael Loewe (edd.), \textit{Ancient Cosmologies} [London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975] 58). In rabbinic literature, the firmament is often made of crystal, whench the heavens derive their light (See Louis Ginzberg, \textit{The Legends of the Jews} [7 vols; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1911, 1939], vol. 1, 13).

\textsuperscript{30} See especially Parpola, \textit{Sky-Garment}; idem, “Harappan ‘Priest-King’s ‘Robe’”; Oppenheim, “Golden Garments.” This designation arises from the golden star-like ornaments or appliqué work sewn into the garment recalling the star-spangled night sky.

Near East had sapphiric-blue bodies. This is particularly the case with deities associated with fecundity or creation. In Egypt, “The traditional colour of (the) god’s limbs (was) the dark blue lapis lazuli.” The ancient Near Eastern cult statue, which was considered the earthly body of the deity, was ideally made of a wooden core plated with red gold or silver, overlaid with sapphires, all of which signified substances from the body of the deity: “his (i.e. Rē’s) bones are silver, his flesh is gold, his hair genuine lapis lazuli.” But the hair too was a metaphor for rays of light emanating from the hair-pores covering the body and lapis lazuli was considered ‘solidified celestial light’. The deity’s whole body was therefore depicted blue.

called Spihr, which is associated with both the blue firmament and a blue garment: see R.C. Zaehner, Zurvan, A Zoroastrian Dilemma (Oxford, 1955; rep. 1972), 11f. 122. The stars covering the garment signified rays of celestial light emanating from the hair-pores of the divine skin (see below). Thus, in some depictions of this ‘sky-garment,’ the garment itself is missing and the stars are painted on the very skin of the anthropos. See e.g. the golden statue found in Susa and published by R. de Meckquenem, Offrandes de fondation du temple de Chouchinak, (Paris, 1905) vol. II, Pl. XXIV 1a. See also Oppenheim, “Golden Garments,” 182 Fig. 2.


38 When King Nabu-apla-iddina of Babylon (ca. 887-855 BC) restored the image (gâlma) of the god Shamash, it was made of “red gold and clear lapis lazuli.” L.W. King, Babylonian Boundary-Stones and Memorial-Tables in the British Museum: With Atlas of Plates (London: British Museum, 1912) 120-127, #36 IV 20. Lugal-zagesi, ensi (governor) of Umma, during his sack of Lagash (ca. 2340 B.C.E.) is said to have plundered the temple of the goddess Amâqênit and robbed her “of her precious metal and lapis lazuli, and threw her in the well.” H. Steible, Die altsumerischen Bau- und Weihinschriften (Freiburger Altorientalische Studien 5; Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1982); Ukgagina 16:6:11-76. The reference is likely to the goddesses cult statute. See Michael B. Dick, “The Mesopotamian Cult Statue: A Sacramental Encounter with Divinity,” in Walls, Cult Image, 49. See also the lament of Ninshubur on the occasion of Inanna’s ‘Descent to the Netherworld” (II. 43-46):

O Father Enlil, let no one in the Netherworld kill your child!
Let no one smelt your fine silver along with crude ore! (on the translation of this line see A.R. George, “Observations on a Passage of Inanna’s ‘Descent’,” JCS 37 [1985]: 109-13):

Let no one cleave your fine lapis lazuli along with the lapidary’s stones!
Let no one cut up your boxwood along with the carpenter’s timber!
Let no one in the Netherworld kill the young woman Inanna!


39 On lapis lazuli as “solidified celestial light” see Robins, “Color Symbolism,” 56. On rays of light emanating from the divine hair pores see for example Satapatha-Brâhmana 10, 4, 4; 1-2: “When Prajâpati was creating living beings, Death, that evil, overpowered him. He practiced austerities for a thousand years, striving to leave evil behind him. 2. Whilst he was practicing austerities, lights went upwards from those hair-pits of his; and those lights were those stars; as many stars as there are, so many hair-pits there are.” Translation by Eggeling. See also below. On ancient Near Eastern parallels see Parpola, Sky-Garment, 74.
Mediating between the gold flesh and lapis lazuli ‘hair’ of the creator deity is the divine black skin signified by the bull hide. The black bull, Ad de Vries informs us, “mediated between fire (gold) and water (lapis lazuli), heaven and earth” (inserts original).41 The light of the ‘golden flesh’ passing through the hair-poses of the divine black skin therefore produced a sapphiric ‘surrounding splendor.’42

4.1. The Self-Created Blue-Black Creator

Before creating the cosmos, according to ancient Near Eastern tradition, the black god created himself, or, rather, his body: “O Rē who gave birth to righteousness, sovereign who created all this, who built his limbs, who modeled his body, who created himself, who gave birth to himself.”43 Ancient Indic and ancient Egyptian tradition give fairly detailed mythic accounts of the self-creation of the black god.44 Most amazing is the remarkable similarity of these accounts. While one nation deriving its account from the other is improbable, it is likely that the similarities evince a widespread ancient Near Eastern mythic tradition concerning a self-created black creator-deity.45

According to this mythic tradition there was in the beginning only darkness, material darkness universally described as ‘water.’46 Hidden within this dark primordial water was the deity in a formless,

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42 See e.g. A. Massy, Le Papyrus de Leiden I 97 (Ghent, 1885) 2 where an Egyptian deity is described as “robed in brilliance and wrapped in turquoises.” See further Meeks, “Divine Bodies,” 57.
luminous state. This primordial ‘water’ was characterized by what the Indic texts call jāmi, the unproductive state of non-differentiation of its constituent elements. All potential dualities (e.g. light/darkness, spirit/matter, male/female), which are a prerequisite to the generative process, lay undistinguished and negatively homogeneous; the ancient Egyptians called it the “state in which did not yet exist ‘two things’.” Creation begins with the distinguishing and separation of these elements. How long this primeval, homogenous mass with its hidden divine luminosity existed is not indicated. At some point, however, God’s luminosity concentrated itself within the primordial waters into a single point, producing the first distinguishable particle of luminous matter, the mythical ‘golden germ’ or fiery a-tom, the quark of modern-day quantum physics. This soon developed into an atom, described mythically as the ‘golden egg’.

4.1.1. The Cosmogonic Egg and the Primordial Atom

Ancient tradition described the primordial atom, in which everything (including God) was originally contained and out of which everything (including God) emerged, as an egg. This ‘Cosmogonic’ or ‘Mundane’ Egg symbolized the key to the mystery of Origins. Manley P. Hall, world-renowned scholar of the Occult, in his book MAN: The Grand Symbol of The Mysteries, observes:

The whole mystery of origin and destiny is concealed in the symbolism of that radiant gold egg... It was declared that such as understood this mystery had risen above all temporal limitations.

47 For example the spiritual and featureless Brahman (neuter), which existed within the Indic primordial waters, was “brilliant, without body, sinlessless”: see E. Osborn Martin, The Gods of India: A Brief Description of their History, Character & Worship (London and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. And New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1914) Chapter 1; T.S Maxwell, The Gods of Asia: Image, Text, and Meaning (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 30; Kurian Mathothu, The Development of the Concept of Trimurti in Hinduism (Pali, India, 1974) 31-42. S.S. Dange, “Rgvedic Accounts,” in Dange, Myths of Creation, 10 notes: “In all the mythical accounts of Creation in the Rig Veda, Water and Heat (i.e. a ‘ray of light’) seem to be the basic principles.”


49 Dunand and Zivie-Coche, Gods and Men in Egypt, 51 note: “Matter was already in Nun, waiting to be coagulated to a point where the dry contrasted with the unformed matter.”

50 In Indic tradition the Hiranyagarbha or ‘Golden Germ’; see e.g. Rg Veda 10.121.7; Atharva Veda 10.7.28; Matyasattva 2.25ff.


52 On the relation of the a-tom (quark) and the atom see sources cited above n. 502.


54 Manley P. Hall, MAN - The Grand Symbol of the Mysteries, 1972, 69.
Madame H.P. Blavatsky, Matriarch of Theosophy, says also:

The ‘Mundane Egg’ is, perhaps, one of the most universally adopted symbols...Whence this universal symbol? The Egg was incorporated as a sacred sign in the cosmogony of every people on the Earth, and was revered both on account of its form and its inner mystery...It was known as that which represented most successfully the origin and secret of being. The gradual development of the imperceptible germ within the closed shell; the inward working, without apparent outward interference of force, which from a latent ‘nothing’ produced an active ‘something,’ needing naught save heat; and which, having gradually evolved into a concrete, living creature, broke its shell, appearing to outward senses of all a self-generated and self-created being—must have been a standing miracle from the beginning.”

The Egg symbolized *prima materia*, that ‘primeval substance in creation,’ or ‘progenitive germ,’ from which the world evolved. As Philip Freund pointed out in 1965, this cosmogonic egg is the same as the ‘primordial atom’ of modern scientific theories on the origin of the universe. In fact, the primordial atom, first proposed by Abbé Georges Lemaître, physicist at Louvain University, has since been called by scientists “Lemaître’s Egg” in recognition of its relation to the cosmogonic egg of the ancients. Isaac Asimov, for example, in his *Atom: Journey Across the Subatomic Cosmos*, describes the beginning of the universe from a scientist’s perspective in a way that radically approaches the beginning as described by these ancient religious texts:

there was a time when the matter and energy of the Universe were literally squashed together into one exceeding dense mass. (The Belgian astronomer Abbé Georges Henri Lemaître) called it the cosmic egg...If we consider the situation before the cosmic egg was formed, we might visualize a vast illimitable sea of nothingness...The nothingness contains energy...The Pre-Universe...had energy, and although all of its properties were otherwise those of a vacuum, it is called a false vacuum. Out of this false vacuum, a tiny point of matter appears where the energy, by blind forces of random changes, just happens to have concentrated itself sufficiently for the purpose. In fact, we might imagine the illimitable false vacuum to be a frothing, bubbling mass, producing bits of matter here and there as the ocean waves produce foam.

Here we have a world-renowned scientist describing the pre-cosmic world in terms of a primordial ocean of matter and a cosmogonic egg, language deriving from the ancient mythic tradition.

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57 Hillbom, “Creation Egg,” 64.
58 Freund, *Myths of Creation*, 49.
59 Ibid., 180.
Two different Eggs were recognized in ancient tradition. The first, the Universal Egg, was the black womb of Space in which existed that Primordial Energy – the Supreme All. The Sanskrit Book of Dzyan refers to it as the Eternal Egg. Within this Universal Egg, the Supreme All self-fecundated and produced the Mundane or Golden Egg, called “Golden” because the sparking of the Atom was the first visible manifestation of Light.

Proof that in fact the Golden Egg is a symbol for the A-tom from which the creator-God physically emerged is found everywhere. The Egyptian Ritual speaks of the “egg conceived at the hour of the great one of the Dual Force” (Sec. V., 2,3). The “Dual Force” is no doubt reference to the positive/negative polarity of the Primordial Energy which gave birth to the protons (+) and electrons (-) of the Atom. Occult philosophy depicts this Golden Egg with two poles, a positive on top and a negative on bottom. The ancient Persians depicted two serpents, labeled Good and Evil, contending for the Mundane Egg (Figure 9).

Electricity was commonly symbolized by the serpent because of its motion. Electricity passing between the poles of a spark gap is serpentine in its motion. Force projected through the atmosphere was called The Great Snake. Being symbolic of universal force, the serpent was emblematic of both good (positive) and evil (negative).

The two serpents contending for the Egg are therefore symbolic of the contending protons (+) and electrons (-) within the Atom. The Orphic Mysteries depict the Egg with the Great Serpent coiled around it (Figure 10) like a mother snake coiled around its recently laid egg. This Great Serpent, Hall informs us, represents the “Fiery Creative Spirit,” the God Force from which the Atom or Egg sparked.

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62 Hall, MAN - The Grand Symbol of the Mysteries, 72.
63 Blavatsky, Secret Doctrine, I: 556.
64 Hall, Secret Teachings of All Ages, LXXXVIII.
4.1.2. *The Primordial Atom and the Birth of God*

According to these ancient texts this ‘egg’ or atom (also depicted as a lotus plant)\(^65\) began rotating and moving ‘on the waters,’ which movement originated time.\(^66\) Within this atom the creator-deity now resided and, eventually, from this atom he emerged as a luminous *anthropos* (man),\(^67\) the so-called sun-god: Atum-Rē of Egypt (Figure 13)\(^68\) and Prajāpāti-Brahmā of India (Figure 14).\(^69\)

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\(^65\) See Bosch, *Golden Germ*, 56-57.

\(^66\) On the birth of time in Egyptian cosmogonic tradition see Dunand and Zivie-Coche, *Gods and Men in Egypt*, 64-70.


\(^68\) “there was in the beginning neither heaven nor earth, and nothing existed except a boundless primeval mass of water which was shrouded in darkness and which contained within itself the germs or beginnings, male and female, of everything which was to be in the future world. The divine primeval spirit which formed an essential part of the primeval matter felt within itself the desire to begin the work of creation, and its word woke to life the world, the form and shape of which it had already depicted to itself. The first act of creation began with the formation of an egg out of the primeval water, from which broke forth Rā, the immediate cause of all life upon earth.” Quoted from Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, xcvi. See also Zandee, “The Birth-Giving Creator-God,” 182: “Atum is ‘complete’ as an androgynous god. He unites within himself masculinity and femininity. He possesses all conditions to bring forth the all out of him. He was a Monad and made himself millions of creatures which he contained potentially in himself. He was the one who came into being of himself (*bhr ḏḏ.f*), who was the creator of his own existence, the *causa sui.*” In a New Kingdom royal inscription Atum is described as he “who generates himself within the egg.” See Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion*, 112. Another image used by the Egyptians to depict the primordial atom out of which the creator-god emerged is the primordial mound (*beshen*) that raised out of the primordial waters at the beginning of creation (see Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 105-6). This mound was the “first solid matter”
Indic Creator God Brahmac before emerging out of the Cosmogonic Egg/Primordial Atom (from Manly P. Hall, MAN: Grand Symbol of the Mysteries). The Indic text, The Laws of Manu, relates:

This universe was enveloped in darkness, unperceived, undistinguishable... Then the irresistible, self-existent Lord... seeking to produce various creatures... deposited in them (the primordial waters) a seed (quark). This (seed) became a golden egg (atom), resplendent as the sun, in which he himself was born as Brahmac, the progenitor of the word... Being formed by that first brought from the bottom of the waters and it was identified with Atum himself (Traunecker, Gods of Egypt, 77; Irwin, "Asokan" Pillars," 92. On the Primordial Mound see further idem, "The Sacred Anthill and the Cult of the Primordial Mound," HR 21 [1982]: 339-360; idem, "The Mystery of the (Future) Buddha's First Words," Annali Instituto Orientale di Napoli 41 [1981]: 623-664). It is no coincidence that this primordial atom is identified with and personifies Atum, the god born from that atom.

cause...that [Man (Purusa)] is called Brahmā...This egg, after the creator had inhabited (it) for a thousand years...burst open, and Brahmā, issuing forth by meditation, commenced the work of creation.

The 'bursting forth' of the Creator God out of the egg/atom signifies that the atoms were used to build up the Creator God’s body.

Figure 13

The anthropomorphic creator-god of Egypt, Rê, emerging from the primordial atom, shown here as the mythical Lotus Plant.

Figure 14

The Indic creator-god Prajāpati-Brahmā (white anthropos) emerging from the lotus plant (primordial “seed” or atom). The lotus is emerging from the navel of Viṣṇu (primordial, universal soul) who is reclining on the primordial serpent Śesā (matter), himself resting on the primordial waters. These images represent the birth of the creator-god out of the primordial matter: “The anthropomorphic figure (Viṣṇu), the serpent coils that form his bed, and the water on which this serpent
floats, are triune manifestations of the single divine, imperishable, cosmic substance, the energy underlying and inhabiting all forms of life.”

When the creator-god first emerged, the ancient sources tell us, he lacked the black-body. Indeed, he was light that separated from and emerged out of the darkness. His body, we are told, was originally a body of light described variously as white gold, yellow gold or red gold. The brilliance of this body surpassed that of the sun, which the creator-deity (sun-god) created only as a sign and a ‘vicar.’

This brilliantly luminous body proved lethal to his future creation. His creatures were perishing at the sight of it and his cosmos was being scorched. The creator-deity decided to cloak his luminosity in a bodily “veil,” which he made from the primordial waters out of which he emerged. That primordial matter, black

Ra, emergent Sun-God of Kemet

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71 See Ringgren, “Light and Darkness,” 141-42
73 See Budge, *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, xcvi.
74 See for example the tales in the *Mahābhārata* (O’Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, 38-43) of Prajāpati-Brahmā’s scorching the primordial creation with his ‘fiery energy’ and in the *Mārkandeya Prārāna* (Ibid., 66-70) of the sun-god Vivasvat whose form radiated excessive heat, scorching the three worlds. On Egyptian parallels see below. On the lethality of seeing the god’s luminous body in Egyptian tradition see also Meeks, “Divine Bodies,” 58.
and aqueous, became the substance of his new body, which he wore over the luminous form like a garment, concealing its brilliance.75

But some of this brilliance shown through the hair-pores of the new black body,76 and this produced a dark-blue iridescence or glow. The result was the sapphire body of the creator-deity.77 While the luminous,

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75 The luminous, anthropomorphic Indic creator-deity Prajāpati-Brahmā is said to have, after the initial creation, wrapped himself in the primordial waters (Vāk/Virāj; see G.H. Godbole, “Later Vedic and Brahanical Accounts,” in Dange, Myths of Creation, 13). He then became haritah śyāvah, dark brown (śyāvah, like night, Rg Veda 6.48.6.) with a tint of yellow (a yellow glow, haritah). See Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa 2.3.5.1; Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa 6.2.2.2. On Vāk and the primordial waters see ibid., 6.1.1.9; Pañcaavarnśī-Brāhmaṇa 20.14.2; Rg Veda 10.125.3; Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa 2.252 (Vāk as primordial cow); Bosch, Golden Germ, 52-53. On Vāk as primordial matter see Nagar, Image of Brāhma, viii; Joshi, “Prajāpati.” 113. On Prajāpati-Brahmā’s copulation with Vāk as a metaphor for the reuniting of fire (breath) with water see Mishra, Brahmad-Worship, 11. On the fiery breath (Agni) and the waters see further Kuiper, “Golden Germ,” 27-30; Bosch, Golden Germ, 57-62.

In Egypt, Rē transforms (ḥpr) his luminous body into a black body symbolized by the gods Atum and Osiris, both of whom had black bulls as their attribute animal; on Atum’s black bull Mnevis see George Hart, The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses [2nd edition; London and New York: Routledge, 2005] 95 s.v. Mnevis; Ions, Egyptian Mythology, 40). On Rē darkening and transforming into Atum see See Ringgren, “Light and Darkness,” 150; Karl W.Luckert, Egyptian Light and Hebrew Fire. Theological and Philosophical Roots of Christendom in Evolutionary Perspective (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991) 73. Most often, Rē’s black body is identified with the black god Osiris (Figure 16), who represents the black primordial waters of Nun; see Chassinat, “Mise a Mort Rituelle.” On black Osiris as the netherworld body of Rē see Hasenfratz, “Patterns of Creation,” 176; Jan Assmann, The Search for God in Ancient Egypt, translated from the German by David Lorton (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2001) 41; idem, Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt, translated from the German by David Lorton (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005) 188; Clark, Myth and Symbol, 158; Martin Lev and Carol Ring, “Journey of the Night Sun,” Parabola 8 (1983): 14-18; Albert Churchward, Signs & Symbols of Primordial Man: The Evolution of Religious Doctrines from the Eschatology of the Ancient Egyptians (Brooklyn: A&B Publishers Group, 1994, reprint ) 63-66, 274-6, 322.

76 See above and also Mahābhārata 5.129.11 which mentions “rays of light, like the sun’s, [shining] from [Kṛṣṇa’s] very pores.”

77 See above and also Mahābhārata 5.12.9.11 which mentions “rays of light, like the sun’s, [shining] from [Kṛṣṇa’s] very pores.” Translated James W. Lane, Visions of God: Narratives of Theophany in the Mahābhārata (Vienna 1989) 134. Now Kṛṣṇa, whose name means ‘black’ (A.L. Basham, The Wonder that was India [London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1954] 305) is in many ways the paradigmatic blue-black god. As David R. Kinsley, The Sword and the Flute: Kali and Krishna, Dark Visions of the Terrible and the Sublime in Hindu Mythology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975) noted, Kṛṣṇa with his blue-black complexion is the “quintessence of divine beauty”: “His appearance is redeeming in itself…Over and over again we read of his luminous dark complexion, large dark eyes, black curly hair. For devotees of Kṛṣṇa the image of their blue lord is the quintessence of divine beauty. The Brahma-varavarta-parāśā…describes Kṛṣṇa as emanating a blinding light…But Kṛṣṇa’s devotees see within that dazzling light to an even more dazzling and redeeming image of their darling…(the) lovely image of Kṛṣṇa located in the center of this light. He is blue like a new cloud.” The “dazzling light” is the light emanating through the hair-pores from the dangerously luminous form within
fiery body was ‘terrible’ and destructive, the blue-black ‘sapphiric’ body was beautiful and auspicious, a mercy to the creatures.78 “Blue as the sky, dark as the rain-cloud…Viṣṇu was the personification of beauty.”79 The act of cloaking the divinely luminous form in a black body was considered a divine sacrifice—80 a sacrifice that resulted in the first human being (Allah The Original Man) and which permitted the creation of the (more densely) material world.81

This blue-black body of the deity was the most arcane secret of the ancient mysteries. In Egypt it was the mystery of the unity of Ṛṣé and his black body Osiris.82 As one text from a New Kingdom royal tomb associated with the mystery rites reveals: “It is a great mystery, it is Ṛṣé and Osiris. He who reveals it will die a sudden death.”83 According to the Book of Gates this is the “Mystery of the Great God.”84 In Vedic India, “the central theme of what can be denoted by no other term than Aryan mysticism”85 is the secret of Agni (fire) hidden in water (Varuna), viz. the mystery of the luminous Prajāpati-Brahmā (creator-god) hidden

the black body (his ‘Universal Form’, viśvarāpaḍarśana; see Bhagavadgītā 11; Lane, Visions of God, 135-141). The description “luminous dark complexion” nicely captures the divine paradox.

71 Thus Viṣṇu (Figure 16) is “dark-hued, cloud-hued, sapphire-hued, gem-hued, ocean and sea-hued” (See S. Settar, “Vishnu-Krishna in Narmalva’s Tiruvayyoli [C.7-8th Cent. A.D.]” in G. Kamalakar and M. Veerender [edd.], Vishnu in Art, Thought, and Literature [Hyderabad: Birla Archæological & Cultural Research Institute, 1993] 225) and Varuna, the “cloud-dark Lord of aquatic creatures,” when he appeared to Arjuna was “the color of lapis lazuli, lighting up every direction” (Mahābhārata 3.42.5-6). The Viṣṇu of the Purānic Trimūrti or Triad is the creator-god (Prajāpati)-Brahmā with the luminous body cloaked within an aquatic body made from the primordial waters. Therefore, as Viṣṇu, (Prajāpati)-Brahmā is called “he who dwells in the [causal] waters, Nārāyaṇa.” By assuming this form (Prajāpati)-Brahmā showed mercy on creation. Thus, in his ‘Viṣṇu’ form he is called auspicious. On Viṣṇu see Daniëluö, Myths and Gods of India, Chapters Eleven through Fourteen; Arvind Sharma, “The Significance of Viṣṇu Reclining on the Serpent,” Religion 16 (1986): 101-114; Nanditha Krishna, The Art and Iconography of Vishnu-Narayana (Bombay, 1980); Kalpana S. Desai, Iconography of Viṣṇu (In Northern India, Upto the Mediæval Period) (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1973); F.B.J. Kuiper, “The Three Strikes of Viṣṇu,” in idem, Ancient Indian Cosmogony, 41-55; Bhattachari, Indian Theogony, Chapter Fourteen; Martin, Gods of India, Chapter Three; J. Gonda, Aspects of Early Viṣṇusū (Utrecht; N.Y.A. Oosthoek’s Uitgevers Mij, 1954). See also Wendy Doniger O’flaherty, “The Submarine Mare in the Mythology of Śiva,” JRAS 1971 9-27 and below.

In ancient Egyptian tradition see e.g. the famous story of the Withdrawal of Ṛṣé to Heaven. After incinerating most humans with his fiery fury personified as his daughter, the ferocious lioness Sekhmet (who, incidentally, got out of hand). Bēl the villainous primordial water (Grk. Tiamat), became a sacrifice that resulted in the first human being (Allah The Original Man) and which permitted the creation of the (more densely) material world. Therefore, as Viṣṇu, (Prajāpati)-Brahmā is called “he who dwells in the [causal] waters, Nārāyaṇa.” By assuming this form (Prajāpati)-Brahmā showed mercy on creation. Thus, in his ‘Viṣṇu’ form he is called auspicious. On Viṣṇu see Daniëluö, Myths and Gods of India, Chapters Eleven through Fourteen; Arvind Sharma, “The Significance of Viṣṇu Reclining on the Serpent,” Religion 16 (1986): 101-114; Nanditha Krishna, The Art and Iconography of Vishnu-Narayana (Bombay, 1980); Kalpana S. Desai, Iconography of Viṣṇu (In Northern India, Upto the Mediæval Period) (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1973); F.B.J. Kuiper, “The Three Strikes of Viṣṇu,” in idem, Ancient Indian Cosmogony, 41-55; Bhattachari, Indian Theogony, Chapter Fourteen; Martin, Gods of India, Chapter Three; J. Gonda, Aspects of Early Viṣṇusū (Utrecht; N.Y.A. Oosthoek’s Uitgevers Mij, 1954). See also Wendy Doniger O’flaherty, “The Submarine Mare in the Mythology of Śiva,” JRAS 1971 9-27 and below.


73 Siva too has two forms, his fiery form born from the golden egg called his ‘terrible form’ and his aquatic form described as “auspicious.” See Mahābhārata 13.146-4; Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa. See O’flaherty, “Submarine Mare.”


75 According to the cosmogonic account of Berosses, priest of Bēl-Marduk of Babylon, published in Greek ca. 250 BC, after cleaving the villainous primordial water (Grk. Omorka; Baby, Tiamat) and creating the cosmos, Bēl-Marduk’s luminosity was unbearable for living creatures who were therefore perishing. Bēl-Marduk thus ordered a god to cut off his (i.e. Bēl-Marduk’s) head (self-sacrifice); his blood was mixed with earth to form men and animals that could survive. See K.K.A. Venkatachari, “Babylonian, Assyrian and Other Accounts,” in Dange, Myths of Creation, 36-37. See also Brian K. Smith, “Sacrifice and Being: Prajapati’s Cosmic Emission and Its Consequences,” Religion 32 (1985): 71-87; Gonda, “Vedic Gods and the Sacrifice”; idem, “The Popular Prajapati,” HR 22 (1982): 129-149; Joshi, “Prajāpati in Vedic Mythology and Ritual.”

76 This sacrificial ‘incarnation’, if you will, is often represented metaphorically as the creator-god (re-)uniting with his wife/daughter, the celestial ocean (primordial matter) depicted as the primordial cow. When Ṛṣé as Bull begets with the Divine Cow, i.e. Nut-Nun, the material world with its planets and humans could survive. Thus, “we are all cattle” (see G.S. Bedagkar, “Egyptian, Hebrew and Greek Accounts,” in Dange, Myths of Creation, 33). Prajāpati-Brahmā, (re-)uniting with Vāk (primordial water/primordial cow), produced the idam or soran or “phenomenal, material world;” beginning with Manu, the first human, which is only Prajāpati-Brahmā himself in the phenomenal, material world: Śatapatha-Bṛāhmaṇa 6.6.1.19; 9.4.1.12; J. Gonda, “All, Universe and Totality in the Śatapatha-Bṛāhmaṇa,” Journal of the Oriental Institute 32 (1982): 1-17; Joshi, “Prajāpati in Vedic Mythology and Ritual.”

77 According to Jan Assmann “the most secret Arcanum known to the mysteries of the solar journey” is “the nocturnal union of Re and Osiris.” Assmann, Egyptian Solar Religion, 28; Idem, Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt, trans. from the German by David Lorton (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005) 186. On Osiris as the black body of Ṛṣé see above.

78 Assmann, Search for God, 79.

79 Quoted in Assmann, Death and Salvation, 189.

within the black and aqueous body. The Akkadian ‘bull-ritual’ likewise associated the pelt of the black bull with the ‘mystery of Anu, Enlil, Ea(Enki) and of Ninmah,’ i.e. the black gods of Sumer/Akkad.

The Mathematics of the Black God

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