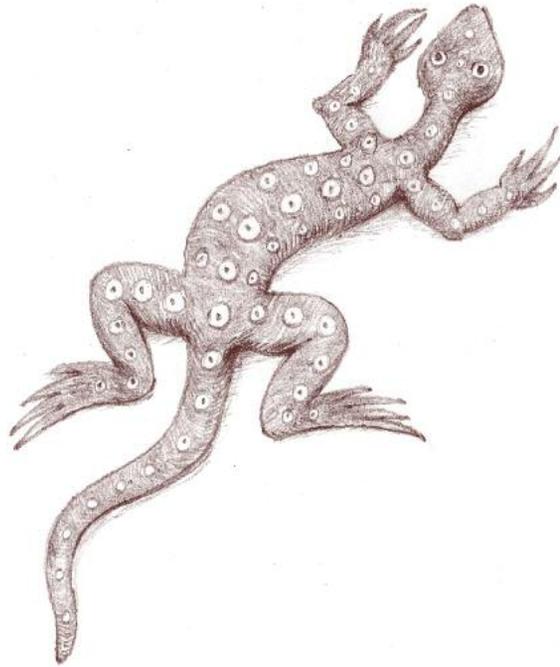


LESSON ONE



THE CREATION

HEARING THE VOICES OF CREATION TEACHER'S PACK
(BACKGROUND TEXTS TO LESSON 1 — HINDUISM AND JUDAISM)

THE DANCE OF CREATION (HINDUISM)

The oldest poem in the world, still in use to this day, is found in The Vedas from which Hindu philosophy and life flow. This hymn from the *Rig Veda* asks those core questions of where does everything come from and why? Faith can be as much about exploring and questioning as it can be about answers and certainty. Just as we think we have been given the answer – that it comes from ‘The One who sees from heaven above, He only knows’ – the poem strips away that certainty with the enigmatic line: ‘Or perhaps he does not know...’

THERE WAS at first no Being –
Nor non-being.

There was no air, nor sky beyond.
What stirred? Where?
In whose protection?
Was water there, deep beyond measure?

There was no death,
Nor deathless state,
No night, no day.

The One breathed without breath
By its own power.
There was nothing else; no, nothing else.

Darkness lay wrapped in darkness,
All was water, all, all over.
Love began.
At first desire was the seed of mind.

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Sages and poets, searching within,
Saw the link of Being in non-Being.

But who really knows? Who can tell?
How it was born or where Creation began?
The gods came later
Along with the creation of this universe.
Who knows whence it all came?

That from which Creation came,
Whether founded well or not,
The One who sees from heaven above,
He only knows.

Or perhaps he does not know...

*Hymn 10:129, 'Creation' from the Rig Veda
translated by Dr Yamini Krishnamurti*

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ALL CREATION PRAISES GOD (JUDAISM)

The Psalms of the Hebrew Bible are poems and hymns of praise to God as Creator and as Defender. In Jewish thought life is the deliberate work of God as Creator and to God all aspects of Creation return praise and glory. Psalm 148 sees the whole panoply of God's Creation rising to praise God and that humanity has a place within this.

At the heart of this song is the refrain: 'Let them all praise the name of the Lord.'

Psalm 148

LET HEAVEN praise the Lord:
praise him, heavenly heights,
praise him, all his angels,
praise him, all his armies!
Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, shining stars,
praise him, highest heavens,
and waters above the heavens!
Let them all praise the name of the Lord,
at whose command they were created;
he has fixed them in their place for ever,
by an unalterable statute.

Let earth praise the Lord:
sea-monsters and all the deeps,
fire and hail, snow and mist,
gales that obey his decree,

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mountains and hills,
orchards and forests,
wild animals and farm animals,
snakes and birds,

All kings on earth and nations,
princes, all rulers in the world,
young men and girls,
old people, and children too!
Let them all praise the name of the Lord,
for his name and no other is sublime,
transcending earth and heaven in majesty,
raising the fortunes of his people,
to the praises of the devout,
of Israel, the people dear to him.

Alleluia.

The Jerusalem Bible