

74.8 (“The Legend of Creation”)

© 2012 Matthew Block

Endnotes and most Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

Source for 74.8

- (1) Harold **Peake** and Herbert John **Fleure**, *Apes & Men (The Corridors of Time, Volume I)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)

Matthew Block
11 September 2014

Work-in-progress Version 10 August 2013
 © 2013, 2014 Matthew Block
 Revised 11 Sept. 2014

PAPER 74 — ADAM AND EVE

8. THE LEGEND OF CREATION

74:8.1 The story of the creation of Urantia in six days was based on the tradition that Adam and Eve had spent just six days in their initial survey of the Garden. This circumstance lent almost sacred sanction to the time period of the week, which had been originally introduced by the Dalamatians. Adam's spending six days inspecting the Garden and formulating preliminary plans for organization was not prearranged; it was worked out from day to day. The choosing of the seventh day for worship was wholly incidental to the facts herewith narrated.

[See 66:7.17.]

74:8.2 The legend of the making of the world in six days was an afterthought, in fact, more than thirty thousand years afterwards.

[Compare 57:7.7.]

One feature of the narrative, the sudden appearance of the sun and moon, may have taken origin in the traditions of the onetime sudden emergence of the world from a dense space cloud of minute matter which had long obscured both sun and moon.

74:8.3 The story of creating Eve out of Adam's rib is a confused condensation of the Adamic arrival and the celestial surgery connected with the interchange of living substances associated with the coming of the corporeal staff of the Planetary Prince more than four hundred and fifty thousand years previously.

I. THE ORIGIN OF MAN (Peake & Fleurel 1)

74:8.4 The majority of the world's peoples have been influenced by the tradition that Adam and Eve had physical forms created for them upon their arrival on Urantia.

[contd] Curiosity is deeply implanted in the human mind, and there are few peoples so backward that they have never asked themselves how mankind came into being. The replies to such questions are manifold, but may be divided into two groups: the first series conceives of man as having been derived, usually by divine intervention, from other animals or sometimes even from plants, while the other type relates how the creators made man, sometimes in their own image, from red clay or the dust of the earth (P&F1 1).

The belief in man's having been created from clay

was well-nigh universal in the Eastern Hemisphere; this tradition can be traced from

The Bila-an, a primitive tribe living in Mindanao, one of the Philippine islands, tell this tale [of soil being used to create the first human beings], according to Mr. Fay-Cooper Cole, who visited them (P&F1 5).

the Philippine Islands

The Shilluks, who live on the White Nile, say that Juok, the creator, moulded all men out of earth, and that while doing so he wandered about. [Etc.] (P&F1 6)

These beliefs are simple, and in some ways childish, yet the stories told by more civilized peoples to account for their origin are often scarcely more profound. For instance, the ancient Egyptians related that Khnumu, the father of the gods and the deity of the Nile cataracts, moulded men out of clay on his potter's wheel. The Greeks, on the other hand, believed that Prometheus had moulded the first men out of clay at Panopeus in Phocis, and some of the clay left over might be seen in later days beside a ravine (P&F1 6-7).

[THE GREEKS FORESEE THE GRADUAL RISE OF MAN (chapter title), Henry Fairfield Osborn, *Man Rises to Parnassus* (1927), p. 3.]

Many primitive peoples altogether discard the idea of the special creation of man, and believe that men in general and their own tribesmen in particular were descended from lower animals.

around the world to Africa.

And many groups accepted this story of man's clay origin by some form of special creation

in the place of the earlier beliefs in progressive creation—evolution.

74:8.5 Away from the influences of Dalamatia and Eden, mankind tended toward the belief in the gradual ascent of the human race.

The fact of evolution is not a modern discovery; the ancients understood the slow and evolutionary character of human progress.

The early Greeks had clear ideas of this despite their proximity to Mesopotamia.

Although the various races of earth became sadly mixed up in their notions of evolution, nevertheless,

many of the primitive tribes believed and taught that they were the descendants of various animals.

This view is especially prevalent among totemic tribes, some of whom believe that their ancestors sprang from the animals and plants which they call their 'totems' (P&F1 1).

[contd] For instance, some of the American Indians of California believe that they are descended from Coyotes or prairie wolves ... The cray-fish clan of the Choctaw Indians considers the cray-fish as their common ancestor, while the Osage Indians believe that they sprang from the progeny of a pair of beavers.

Such cases may be multiplied on the American continent, and we meet the same idea in Africa, where the Wanika tribe in East Africa look upon the hyaena as an ancestor;

in the Malay peninsula, where some of the tribes believe themselves to be descended from the babacoote, a large lemur;

and in New Guinea, where the Bukana consider themselves derived from sea-fish, white parrots, and other beasts (PF&F1 1-2).

In Babylonia we get a somewhat more developed account, but not altogether unlike those already given (P&F1 7).

Primitive peoples made a practice of selecting for their "totems" the animals of their supposed ancestry.

Certain North American Indian tribes believed they originated from beavers and coyotes.

Certain African tribes teach that they are descended from the hyena,

a Malay tribe from the lemur,

a New Guinea group from the parrot.

74:8.6 The Babylonians, because of immediate contact with the remnants of the civilization of the Adamites, enlarged and embellished the story of man's creation;

Then three of the gods, Anu, Ea, and Marduk, met together, and the two former praised the deeds of Marduk, but complained that the earth was uninhabited, and that there were no men there to build temples and worship the gods. To this Marduk replied that he would take his blood and bone and make men to dwell upon the earth and worship the gods.... A more recently published version states, however, that Ea and Marduk cut off the head of Kingu, the first-born of Tiamat, and made men from his blood (P&F1 8).

they taught that he had descended directly from the gods.

They held to an aristocratic origin for the race which was incompatible with even the doctrine of creation out of clay.

74:8.7 The Old Testament account of creation dates from long after the time of Moses; he never taught the Hebrews such a distorted story. But he did present a simple and condensed narrative of creation to the Israelites, hoping thereby to augment his appeal to worship the Creator, the Universal Father, whom he called the Lord God of Israel.

74:8.8 In his early teachings, Moses very wisely did not attempt to go back of Adam's time, and since Moses was the supreme teacher of the Hebrews, the stories of Adam became intimately associated with those of creation. That the earlier traditions recognized pre-Adamic civilization is clearly shown by the fact that later editors, intending to eradicate all reference to human affairs before Adam's time, neglected to remove the telltale reference to Cain's emigration to the "land of Nod," where he took himself a wife.

[See 148:4.7.]

Several stories of the creation of man seem to have been current at different times among the Hebrews. This people, for several centuries after their arrival in Palestine were ignorant of writing, and their account of the origin of man must have been handed down orally, as is the case with primitive tribes.

During their intercourse with the Philistines, who are thought by some to have been refugees from Minoan Crete, it seems likely that they first learned the use of letters (P&F1 8).

[contd] The first written records of theirs which have come down to us are believed to date from the eighth, or at the earliest, the ninth century before Christ, and among these is an account of the creation of man, relating how Yaweh, better known to us as Jah or Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, or perhaps of the hill tribes of the Judaeian highlands, formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.... This account may be read in the second chapter of the Book of Genesis, beginning at the fourth verse (P&F1 8-9).

74:8.9 The Hebrews had no written language in general usage for a long time after they reached Palestine.

They learned the use of an alphabet from the neighboring Philistines, who were political refugees from the higher civilization of Crete.

The Hebrews did little writing until about 900 B.C.,

and having no written language until such a late date, they had several different stories of creation in circulation,

[contd] Several centuries later, while the Hebrews were living captive in Babylonia, their priests put together their old records into a continuous story, and added many sections describing the events which had led to the ordaining of their ceremonies. This occurred about 500 B.C., and by that time the priests must have been familiar with the Babylonian legends and written histories, and had, perhaps, come into contact with the views of the Zoroastrian Persians.

In the account of the creation as written by the Jewish priests, we find several resemblances to the Babylonian story already given (P&F1 9).

but after the Babylonian captivity they inclined more toward accepting a modified Mesopotamian version.

74:8.10 Jewish tradition became crystallized about Moses, and because he endeavored to trace the lineage of Abraham back to Adam, the Jews assumed that Adam was the first of all mankind. Yahweh was the creator, and since Adam was supposed to be the first man, he must have made the world just prior to making Adam. And then the tradition of Adam's six days got woven into the story, with the result that almost a thousand years after Moses' sojourn on earth the tradition of creation in six days was written out and subsequently credited to him.

74:8.11 When the Jewish priests returned to Jerusalem, they had already completed the writing of their narrative of the beginning of things. Soon they made claims that this recital was a recently discovered story of creation written by Moses. But the contemporary Hebrews of around 500 B.C. did not consider these writings to be divine revelations; they looked upon them much as later peoples regard mythological narratives.

74:8.12 This spurious document, reputed to be the teachings of Moses,

[contd] During their captivity in Mesopotamia the Jewish priests added more and more to this sacred library, and after their return to Jerusalem in the reign of Cyrus, they looked upon this collection of works with the greatest veneration. The Greek king of Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus, was allowed to borrow a copy,

which he caused to be translated by seventy scholars for his new library at Alexandria,

and as time went on the books were considered more and more sacred. The early Christians, appreciating the high moral tone of the series, especially the books of the prophets, adopted the greater number of them, which they attached as a preliminary volume to their own sacred writings, and when these works came to be translated into the vulgar tongue at the Renaissance, the people looked upon them as written by God Himself, or at least verbally inspired by Him, and any further inquiry into the origin of man was deemed not only unnecessary, but actually impious (P&F1 10).

was brought to the attention of Ptolemy, the Greek king of Egypt,

who had it translated into Greek by a commission of seventy scholars for his new library at Alexandria.

And so this account found its place among those writings which subsequently became a part of

the later collections of the “sacred scriptures” of the Hebrew and Christian religions.

And through identification with these theological systems, such concepts for a long time profoundly influenced the philosophy of many Occidental peoples.

74:8.13 The Christian teachers perpetuated the belief in the fiat creation of the human race, and all this led directly to the formation of the hypothesis of a onetime golden age of utopian bliss and the theory of the fall of man or superman which accounted for the nonutopian condition of society. These outlooks on life and man's place in the universe were at best discouraging since they were predicated upon a belief in retrogression rather than progression, as well as implying a vengeful Deity, who had vented wrath upon the human race in retribution for the errors of certain onetime planetary administrators.

74:8.14 The "golden age" is a myth, but Eden was a fact, and the Garden civilization was actually overthrown. Adam and Eve carried on in the Garden for one hundred and seventeen years when, through the impatience of Eve and the errors of judgment of Adam, they presumed to turn aside from the ordained way, speedily bringing disaster upon themselves and ruinous retardation upon the developmental progression of all Urantia.

74:8.15 [Narrated by Solonia, the seraphic "voice in the Garden."]