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WORLD LEGENDS
AND
STORIES

**The Sun
and the Moon**

World Legends and Stories
The Sun and the Moon

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I. Folk Legends and Myths

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The Sun and the Moon

Located at the center of our Solar System, with Earth orbiting it 93 million miles away from it, the Sun is the largest object within this system, comprising 99.8% of the system's mass.

Throughout history, human mind invented many stories about the creation of the world, the Sun and the Moon playing a very important part. Such a great part that there are thousands of stories and legends related to the creation and existence of the Sun and the Moon as extremely important figures that influenced and inspired for centuries.

This book is meant to gather as many of the stories produced by humanity, in folklore as well as stories of inspired authors telling their own versions on how the Moon and the Sun were created and lived, and why are they shining up into the sky.

The Moon is our close satellite of which's origins scientists have struggled to learn and tell. It appears now that the moon is actually a twin of the Earth, its mantle in particular, in major elements and isotopic ratios. Through the Apollo missions humanity tested its limits reaching the lunar soil and taking samples to test it and discover the origin of this celestial body that was the inspiration for many myths and legends. But as fascinating and attractive science is, there's still a number of folklore and stories, legends and myths, that create and recreate a world with such a rich significance and of such intense value that we cannot deny its extraordinary contribution to societies and the world of literature and arts.

Sun worship and solar deities can be found throughout history (arts and literature) in multiple forms. Be it named Sol by its Latin name or Helios by its Greek name, Nanahuatzin by its Aztec origin, or Shiho by its Chinese call, Amaterasu, Ra or Malina (Inuit_Greenland) the sun-related legends played an important role in the development of societies and their religions.

"The monthly cycle of the Moon, in contrast to the annual cycle of the Sun's path, has been implicitly linked to women's menstrual cycles by many cultures, as evident in the links between the words for menstruation and for Moon in many resultant languages, though this identification was not universal as demonstrated by the fact that not all moon deities are female. Many well-known mythologies feature female lunar deities, such as the Greek goddess Selene, the Roman goddess Luna, and the Chinese goddess Chang'e." (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_lunar_deities).

To reference to the light of day there is text that refers to God as the Great Creator, Him being the only one who can bring to life Heavens and Earth. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. ..." We may see God here as the Great Force of Creation, in mysterious ways working with the power of the word. We can see the Light as the sun. Then again, the Universe is vast and nowadays we know that there are many suns that light celestial bodies all over it. How many suns out there we don't know but we keep searching and studying the fascinating world we all live in.

I. Folk Legends and Myths

European

The Celts

“For the Celts, who lived in central Europe, Lugh was a Sun god”, portrayed as a warrior, a king, a master craftsman and a savior. “He is associated with skill and mastery in multiple disciplines, including the arts, with oaths, truth and the law.” Balor, the underworld god and leader of the Fomorii (the evil people that lived in the underworld), was his grandfather.

“According to a prophecy, Balor was to be killed by a grandson.” To prevent the prophecy from happening, Balor tried to kill his grandson, but Lugh miraculously survived.”

Secretly raised by the god of the sea, Manannan, Lugh became an expert warrior. “When he reached manhood, he joined the peoples of the goddess Dana, named the Tuatha De Danaan, to help them in their struggle against the Fomorii and Balor.” But Balor had an evil eye capable of killing whomever looked at it so Lugh threw a magic stone ball into Balor’s eye, and killed Balor.

“Lugh corresponds to the Welsh god Lleu and the Gallic Lugos. From Lugh’s name derives the names of modern cities such as Lyon, Laon and Leyden. Today, people remember the figure of Lugh with a festival which commemorates the beginning of the harvest in August.” (<https://www.windows2universe.org/mythology/lugh.html>)

As for the Moon and its Goddess, “Cerridwen is, in Celtic mythology, the keeper of the cauldron of knowledge. Giver of wisdom and inspiration, and as such is often associated with the moon and the intuitive process, Cerridwen is a goddess of the Underworld, often symbolized by a white sow,” which represents both her fecundity and fertility and her strength as a mother. She is both Mother and Crone; many modern Pagans honor Cerridwen for her close association to the full moon.” (source: <https://www.learnreligions.com/lunar-deities-2562404>)

Belenus

“Belenus (also Belenos, Belinus, Bel, Beli Mawr) was a sun god from Celtic mythology and, in the 3rd century, the patron deity of the Italian city of Aquileia.” He was one of the most ancient and most-widely worshiped Celtic deities, also called the “Fair Shining One” (or “The Shining God”), and is associated with the ancient fire festival and modern Sabbat Beltane. “He was associated with the horse (as shown by the clay horse figurine offerings at Belenos’s Sainte-Sabine shrine in Burgundy) and also the wheel. Perhaps like Apollo, with whom he became identified in the Augustan History, Belenos was thought to ride the Sun across the sky in a horse-drawn chariot.” (source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belenus>)

Rhiannon

As a lunar a lunar Welsh goddess of inspiration Rhiannon is very known. “Her name means “Great Queen,” and serves as a muse for poets, artists, and royalty. She is also a goddess of transformation, easing the dead into the afterlife

and carries their souls upon her white horse. She is a shapeshifter, and will often appear as a bird, animal, or through a song.” (source: <https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/555561304006762674/>)

folk-tale Why The Sun Chases the Moon

“Tell me the story about how the Sun loved the Moon so much he died every night just to let her breath.”

“There once was a moon, as beautiful as can be, only the stars could fathom, but the sun could not see. The sun so radiant, he burns so bright. The moon so luminous, but only showed her face during the night. She was untouchable, surrounding herself with a blanket of darkness. The sun would give anything to catch a glimpse of the Moon illuminating the beautiful night sky.

Until one day when the Sun was sliding out of the heavens, he caught a glimpse of her. She was peeking up, a rare side of her being exposed to the light. And while the Sun could shine, he knew the Moon could glow.

Just as the Stars were wandering into the night, the Sun fell in love like a snowball hurdling down a mountain. How he wished to see her move than the fleeting moments he shared with her at both dawn and dusk. But they were a world apart.

“Go,” she whispered to him one of those nights, her voice as sweet and sorrowful as the last light of morning. “Go and let me breathe, for you and I have decided fates. You illuminate the day, and I cast a glow on the night. We will never be. Our connection would go against what all the people believe, all they know” During the summer he would stay a little longer just in case she would change his mind. It was no use.

“Don’t you dare abandon your blessing of light for my darkness.” And those were the last words the Moon was strong enough to speak to the Sun.

The Sun could feel her peaceful soul and it soon became clear. He would die each and every night to let his true love breathe, for it would put an end to all her misery.” (source: <https://michellemontague.com/2017/05/the-story-of-the-sun-and-moon-an-inspiration/>)

Scandinavia

Freyr

Among the most venerated divinities amongst the heathen Norse and Germanic people, Freyr is a god who belongs to the Vanir tribe of deities, also an honorary member of the other Norse tribe, Aesir. Legend has it that he arrived at Aesir fortress, Asgard, as a hostage towards the end of the Asir-Vanir war. There is one Old Norse poem calling him “the foremost of the gods” and “hated by none.” On his benevolence the prosperity of the people depended. Unsurprisingly, “Freyr was a frequent recipient of sacrifices at various occasions, such as the blessing of a wedding or the celebration of a harvest. During harvest festivals, the sacrifice traditionally took the form of his favored animal, the boar.” (source: <https://norse-mythology.org/>)

Born of Father Njord and mother Nerthus (presumably), sister of Njord, Freyr has been the lover of many goddesses and giantesses, including his own sister Freya.

Although among historical Germanic people incest was unacceptable, the Vanir tribe allowed such practice. Alfheim, the homeland of the elves, is Freyr's residence. "On land, Freyr travels in a chariot drawn by boars." (source: Snorri Sturluson. The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning 48.)

Daniel McCoy is featuring a few details about this myth: "Another one of Freyr's signature possessions is his ship, *Skíðblaðnir*, which always has a favorable wind and can be folded up and carried in a small bag." (source: Snorri Sturluson. The Prose Edda. Gylfaginning 43). This mythological feature was reflected in historical rituals: "priestesses and/or priests of Freyr traveled throughout the country on a chariot which contained a statue of the god." (Flateyjarbók). "When the chariot reached a village or town, the people laid down their arms and "every iron object" and enjoyed a period of peace and joyful festivities, reveling in the deity's kind presence." (source: Tacitus, Cornelius. 1948. *Germania* 40. In *The Agricola and Germania*. Translated by Harold Mattingly. p. 134-135.)

Freyr is not an actual name. It carries though great significance, freyr meaning Lord. It is more of a title than a proper name, expressing the great importance of the character in the Norse and Germanic people's lives. In various illustrations depicting the god, Freyr is represented with the sun in the back at a side - usually to his left back or in the very center.

A little love-story is provided to us, regarding Freyr's adventure in getting Gerd, the giantess to marry him. And the story goes like this: "On a journey to the underworld, Freyr saw and fell in love with the giantess Gerd. He sent his servant, Skirnir, on a journey to convince Gerd to marry him. Freyr also gave Skirnir a magic sword to use. Skirnir, however, could not convince Gerd to marry his master. It wasn't until he threatened her with the magic sword that Gerd agreed to meet Freyr in a grove of trees to become his bride." (source: https://www.windows2universe.org/?page=/mythology/freyr_sun.html)

Romania

Zamolxex

An old legend of the Realm of Luana (the Carpathian Curvature) describes life on a land of light, the Realm of the Sun, the great indo-european divinity inherited from the Great Gods, the Great future god of the geto-dacians, Zamolxes (also Zamolxe or Zamolxis), the one who offered safety to his lands by guarding it constantly. Hovering above a haughty citadel sustained by walls that would touch the sky, Zalmoxes was the Guardian of the City of Sun, a healer and the owner of springs.

A very known ballad is the one describing the love between the Sun and his sister, the Moon, an incestuous as well story that has been rewritten by Vasile Alecsandri and creatively altered.

Legend has it that the sun fell in love with his sister, the moon and he asked her to marry him. As this was presumably wrong in Moon's views, she refused the Sun's proposal but he didn't give up, insisting on proposing to her. She then asked him to build a bridge of Iron over the Black Sea with a monastery at one end and a stairway at the other. In one slap of hand the Sun creates the bridge as told then asks again the Moon to marry him. But this time the Moon asks him to build a bridge of brass.

He executes this second one as well, with the same ease. In other versions the bridges are actually crops she asks to surround and fill the country with. The Sun proposes again, still, the Moon does not accept his proposal. Seeing that there is no way to convince the Moon to take him as husband, the Sun climbs into the skies to ask advice from Adam and Eve. They open the consoling pictures of Heavens and the terrible one of Hell, demonstrating that the end would be a dark and damnable one, as marrying a co-sanguin would attract only bad times for the two. Despite this demonstration the Sun insists on his idea.

As she walked towards the monastery at the end of the Iron Bridge, The Sister of the Sun (the Moon) throws herself into the water (other versions tell that she was thrown into the water by divine wrath) and she is turned into a barbell (by the Lord). The sun calls for trawlers to catch her and they do but the saints descend, take off her scales and throw her into the skies. It is then when she is named by Adam and Iova (Eve) with the term Moon. In popular folklore, this character is also known as Ileana Sîmzeana or Cosânzeana, being also attributed the name of Iana (the feminine version of Ianus, solar divinity) or simply Sister of the Sun.

“In mythical Romanian folklore, every form of incest is prohibited. Incest was severely punished, the incestuous couples being excluded from their villages for damaging the customs. The fight against incest is manifested in the legend “The Sun and the Moon” in every cosmic level: the human life level, the astral-human level, the saint-ancestors level. Incest is seen as a mean of disturbance of the cosmic order between celestial-humans, daemons and humans, not only between humans.” (source: Romulus Vulcănescu, *Mitologia...*, 1987, p. 394-395).

Romanian folklore has a great number of stories telling about “the Sons of the Sun”. There are many fascinating folk-stories telling about princes so bright and beautiful as the sun, Beautiful Children with golden hair and traits of a brave god who are sent to the rescue of the kingdom and/or the most beautiful princess whom they eventually marry.

There is also a number of stories related to the Moon, as well as traditions and customs of the old days, some kept today in changed forms, the common traditions varying from area to area. According to traditional Romanian folklore described by Lavinia Fratilă, Full Moon is the perfect moment to transmit your intentions to the Universe. It is time to leave the past behind and start a new love relationship. It is said that when a New Philanderer appears one would dream about The One and for this you have to show yourself to the Moon, bow three times and say: “Moon, dear Moon, Full Moon, give me dew; Moon, dear Moon, my dear, show me my pair!” Another ancient ritual related to Full Moon is to write your wishes on a piece of paper and throw the ashes to the Moon.

Old heathen beliefs describe the moon as the main deity. She is part of every day magic rituals, pagans bathing in the Moon’s waters to wash all bad.

Greece

In the ancient world, the Sun was the most powerful astrological body and was worshipped as the image of God in ancient Greece.

Greek mythology tells about Hyperion who was the Titan of light, the father of the Sun, the Moon and the Dawn, and Helios was his son. “Each morning at dawn, Helios rose from the ocean in the east and rode his chariot, pulled by four horses -

Pyrois, Eos, Aethon, and Phlegon, across the sky to descend at night in the west.”
(source: Solar-Folklore by Deborah Scherrer)

Helios

Usually represented as a youth with a halo, Helios appears to be standing in a chariot, occasionally with a billowing robe. (He is depicted this way in many ancient reliefs).

Apollo

It is also extremely known that in Greek mythology, Apollo (byname Phoebus, in Greco-Roman mythology) is a god of the sun, the ideal of the *kouros* - which means he has a beardless, athletic and youthful appearance - one of the Twelve Olympians, the son of Zeus and the Titan Leto and the twin brother of Artemis, goddess of the hunt. He's usually represented with a laurel wreath about his head, one that he would have worn in honor of his love for Daphne.

A god of healing, medicine, music archery, poetry and the sun, order and beauty, he is the leader of Muses being also a god of prophecy, his Oracle at Delphy carrying great importance. A known attribute for Apollo was the lyre created by Hermes. When traveling, he rode a chariot pulled by swans. “When hymns were sung to Apollo they were called *paean*s.” (source: ekgodsandgoddesses.net)

Ridden by Zeus's son, Apollo, the chariot in which the sun travelled across the sky was driven by fiery horses. Representing the sun in greek culture, he was seen to illuminate the world of music and reason, bringing logic and order to humanity.

Phaeton

Another son of the sun, important figure in Greek mythology, was Phaethon.

Phaethon (/ˈfeɪ.əθən/; Ancient Greek: Φαέθων, Phaéthōn, pronounced [pʰa.é.tʰɔːn], Greek meaning of “Shining” or “Radiant”) - the most influential extant version of the story, found in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, Books I–II - was a name given to different figures in Greek mythology, but the best known was the son of the Oceanid nymph Clymene and either the god Apollo or Helios; both of those gods were associated with the sun. Some sources attribute different characters as his parents.

Challenged by Epaphus and his playmates, Phaethon sought assurance from his mother that his father was the sun god Helios (in some sources Apollo). Giving him the requested assurance, she told him to turn to his father for confirmation. He travelled to the east until he came to the palace of the Sun, and asked his father for some proof that would demonstrate his relationship with the sun. The god confirmed his divine origin and promised to grant him whatever he wanted. Phaethon then asked on being allowed to drive the sun chariot for a day. Helios tried to dissuade Phaethon, telling him that even Zeus, the greatest god of all, was not strong enough to steer these horses, but Phaethon insisted. As a promise could not be broken, Helios reluctantly kept his promise. But, as foreseen, placed in charge of the chariot, Phaethon was unable to control the horses. “In some versions, the Earth first froze when the horses climbed too high, but when the chariot then scorched the Earth by swinging too near, Zeus decided to prevent disaster by striking it down

with a thunderbolt.” (source: <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Phaethon>) Phaethon fell to earth at the mouth of the Eridanus, a river later identified as the Po, being killed in the process.

Cycnus of Liguria, good friend or lover of Phaethon, profoundly mourned his death and was turned into a swan. Phaethon also had seven sisters, the Heliades, who also mourned his loss, “keeping vigil where Phaethon fell to Earth until the gods turned the sisters into poplar trees, and their tears into amber.” (source: <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Phaethon> _ “Phaethon in Greek Mythology”. Greek Legends and Myths.)

Icarus

Not presenting a god but a legendary human, the story of Icarus is also related to the sun, wisely teaching on how to respect some boundaries for reasons of safety, if not others.

Icarus (/ˈɪkərəs/; Ancient Greek: Ἴκαρος [iːkaros]) was the son of the famous master craftsman Daedalus in Greek mythology. His father, Daedalus was the creator of the Labyrinth - a huge maze located under the court of King Minos of Crete, where the Minotaur, a half-man half-bull creature lived. The Minotaur was King Minos's wife child with the king's bull, to the conception of which, Daedalus was responsible as he had helped the Queen to mate with the bull.

In order for the secret of the Labyrinth to be kept, and to punish Daedalus for his act of betrayal of natural law, Minos imprisoned Daedalus and Icarus in a tower above his palace. But Daedalus was still a brilliant inventor and managed to create two sets of wings for himself and his son. The wings were made of feathers glued together with wax. He then taught Icarus how to fly, warning him not to fly too high, since that would cause the wax to melt, nor too low, as that would cause the feathers to get wet with sea water. “Together, they flew out of the tower towards freedom.” However, Icarus soon, overwhelmed with the ecstasy of flight, forgot his father's warnings, as he felt like a god, “and started flying higher and higher, until the wax started melting under the scorching sun. His wings dissolved and he fell into the sea and drowned. The area of the sea where he fell took the name Icarian Sea after him, while a nearby island was named Icaria.” (source: <https://www.greekmythology.com/Myths/Mortals/Icarus/icarus.html>)

Selene

Goddess of the Moon, Selene is the representation of the Moon itself to the Greeks. She is often associated with archer goddess Artemis who is also a moon goddess and Hecate.

Selene is a Titan goddess, a divine deity that preceded the Olympian Gods.

Hecate was “considered to be the goddess of magic and witchcraft, often depicted holding two torches or a key. She was the daughter of the Titans Perses and Asteria, and she was honoured in the households as a protective goddess who brought prosperity.” (source: https://www.greekmythology.com/Other_Gods/Hecate/hecate.html)

Daughter of the Titans Hyperion and Theia, Selene had two siblings, Helios and Eos. As the goddess of the moon she drove every night across the skies in a silver

moon chariot which was carried by two snow-white horses.

She had an affair with a mortal named Endymion, whom Zeus had granted the choice of when he would die. Endymion chose to fall into an eternal sleep to remain ageless and deathless.

“According to some sources, Selene was one of Zeus’ lovers and they had a number of children; Pandia, she who is all-bright; Ersa, the dew; Nemea, the nymph of the eponymous place; and Dionysus, although this may be a confusion due to the name similarity between Selene and Semele.” (source: <https://www.greekmythology.com/Titans/Selene/selene.html>)

Roman Empire

Sol

In Roman religion, Sol is the name of two distinct gods at Rome. The original Sol (Sol Indigenes), together with Luna, the moon goddess, had a shrine on the Quirinal, in the Circus Maximus, an annual sacrifice being brought on August 9.

“Sol Invictus (“Unconquered Sun”) was though the official sun god of the later Roman Empire and a patron of soldiers. On 25 December AD 274, the Roman emperor Aurelian made it an official religion alongside the traditional Roman cults.” (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol_Invictus)

Luna

In ancient Roman religion and mythology, Luna is the divine embodiment of the Moon (Latin *luna*; cf. English “lunar”), often being presented as the female complement of the Sun, Sol.

Roman art depicts Luna with attributes of the crescent moon and the two-yoke chariot (*biga*). “In the *Carmen Saeculare*, performed in 17 BC, Horace invokes her as the “two-horned queen of the stars” (*siderum regina bicornis*), bidding her to listen to the girls singing as Apollo listens to the boys.” (source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luna_\(goddess\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luna_(goddess)))

Poland and the Slavic world

A preserved myth coming from Poland, the Sieradz Land, was written down in 1898. The story goes like this:

“In the beginning, there was nothing but the sky, the sea, the God who sailed by boat and the devil emerging from the sea foam, who sat down to God.

In the beginning, there was nothing but the sky, the sea, the God who sailed by boat and the devil emerging from the sea foam, who sat down to God. The idea of creating the Earth was suggested to God by the devil, who could not do it by himself alone. The devil immersed himself and brought out a handful of sand from the bottom. God threw it on the water and created the beginning of the Earth so thin that they both barely fit on it. God and the devil inhabited the Earth, the devil thought to push the sleeping God into the water, but he contributed to the expansion of the land from the side of God, from the east and from his own side, from the west. Both creators started a dispute that ended up with God going to heaven and knocking down the devil, who also went there, by lightning into the abyss.

There are versions of this myth in the Ukrainian And the Russian mythologies, differing, slightly. Then there is the myth of the Cosmic Egg and a carol written by Alexander Afanasyev.

“It used to be at the beginning of the world –
Then there was no sky or earth,
No sky nor earth but the blue sea,
And in the middle of the sea on oak
Two pigeons were sitting.
Two pigeons on an oak tree
They held such a council,
Happy debated and cooed:
How can we create the world?
We will fall to the bottom of the sea,
We'll bring out the fine sand
Fine sand, blue stone.
We will sow fine sand,
We will pick up the blue pebble.
From fine sand - black earth,
- icy water, green grass.
From the blue stone - the blue sky,
Blue sky, bright sun,
**Bright sun, bright moon,
bright moon and all the stars.”**

Africa

Egypt

Re

Re or Ra, also spelled Pra, is in ancient Egyptian mythology the god of the sun and creation, of course, the most important of all the gods, being seen as the ruler of the sky, the Earth, and the underworld. Carrying many names such as Amun-Ra, and Ra-Horakht, he was the god of the sun, order, kings, and the sky. “In the Egyptian culture it was said that he was born each morning in the East, and died each night in the West. Also, during the night he traveled through the underworld, and this is why the west side of the Nile was known as the land of the dead. He was the king of the gods.” (source: <https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ra>)

Re's appearance may diverse; he is usually depicted as “a man with a falcon head, which is due to his combination with Horus, another sky god”, or a Hawk with the sun disk above him, but he may also be depicted as a scarab beetle or a man, also pictured as a full-bodied ram, phoenix, heron, serpent, bull, cat, or lion. “Originally most solar gods had falcon form and were assimilated to Horus.” (source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Re>)

Since the sun is “the giver of life”, controlling the ripening of crops which were worked by man, Re was worshipped by the Egyptians. But Re also had enemies, Seth, a god of the desert (including desert storms), thunder, evil, pain and suffering, being sometimes an opponent of Re's. Isis was another enemy of Re's as she had

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