

The Mayan Creation Story



At the beginning of time, before the world had a true form, there was no land or sky, no animals or plants. There was only silence and stillness all around: a complete void.

Two Mayan gods saw that all around them was dark: Tepeu, the creator, and Gucumatz, the feathered spirit with feathers of sparkling sapphire and emerald. They came together to create the world: their spirit and power giving energy to form the Earth.

Thoughts passed through their minds and then came into being. When the gods thought of the 'Earth', land slowly formed from darkness. They now had space to create life.

They dreamt of mountains and valleys, seas and skies. All of these things came to be the moment they thought of them.

Huge trees were formed, their roots penetrating deep into the nine levels of the Mayan underworld and their branches reaching up to the thirteen levels of the upper world.

Tepeu and Gucumatz decided that they needed creatures to care for their new world and to praise their names as their creators.

So they created all of the animals, from the hopping frog to the stomping elephant, from the slithering snake to the soaring eagle.

Every creature, which filled the planet, was created in an instant.



The two gods commanded that creatures praise their name.

"Praise us! We are your creators. Praise our names."

But all the animals could do in response was bark, howl, tweet and hiss. The creatures tried as hard as they could to speak and praise the gods but they just could not do it. They chirped and squawked at the top of their lungs until the sound was so deafening that the gods demanded they stop at once.

Disappointed with their creations, the gods decided they needed to create an even better creature, which would be able to worship them properly.

They made a race of man from wet clay and the gods gave them life. The first men tried to speak but instead they crumbled as soon as they tried. The gods knew they needed to make a stronger race of men, if they were to survive.

The second race of men were made from solid wood. These men were much stronger and were able to walk and talk, but these men had no minds of their own and their hearts were empty.



They had no memory of their creation and when they spoke aloud; their words were empty and meaningless.

They were still unable to praise the gods.

So Tepeu and Gucumatz sent a great flood to destroy them all. The gods demanded that the animals attack any remaining survivors, but a few managed to escape and became monkeys. The creators let them be, as an example to the future race of men.

The gods thought long and hard about how they would make a race of men that would be perfect. Nothing seemed to work and no material seemed good enough.

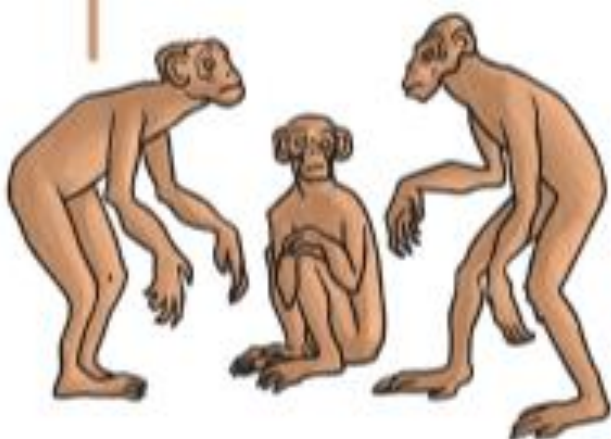
Eventually, some of the animals brought the gods a stack of white corn, which grew on the far side of the Earth. The gods ground this material into paste and from this formed four individual men.

This new race of men seemed to be perfect. They were strong enough to last and their minds were full of thoughts and feelings. After their creation, the men immediately began to worship Tepeu and Gucumatz and thank them for their lives. This pleased the gods greatly.

“What can you see?” the gods asked the corn men.

“We can see forever. We can see through rocks, trees, rivers and mountains. We can see to the ends of the Earth and beyond. We can see everything you have created- every plant, animal and tree. We see and understand all. Thank you.”

Tepeu and Gucumatz were confused.



“Perhaps we made these creatures too perfect. They can see and understand even more than we do. This cannot be.”

The creators decided to remove some of the men's vision so they would only be able to see and understand those things that were close to them. They were no longer able to see and understand as they once did.

However, the men could still worship and praise their creators as intended and then were able to settle down to a new life. Feeling content, Tepeu and Gucumatz then made four women to be companions for the men.

These special men and women were the ancestors of all people today. Even today, man's sight and understanding of the world is not perfect.

