

# SUN CODE

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*The History of the Sun in Cultures: From Aten to the Solar  
Information Transfer Hypothesis*

A Companion Paper to The Reflected Code (Moonlight Paper)

*From The Code of the Coconut*

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*Every civilization that endured long enough asked the same question:*

*What is the sun doing to us?*

*The best ones answered: it is writing us.*

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## **I. Introduction: The Universal Obsession**

No celestial body has commanded more sustained intellectual, spiritual, and architectural investment across human civilizations than the sun. Every literate culture on record developed a solar theology, a solar calendar, or both. Temples were oriented to solstice axes. Priesthoods derived authority from solar observation. Agricultural cycles, legal codes, medical systems, and cosmological narratives were anchored to the sun's behavior. The conventional modern reading frames this as primitive energy worship—people revering the obvious source of warmth and crop growth. This paper argues that several ancient traditions went considerably further, articulating intuitions that map with surprising precision onto the Solar Information Transfer (SIT) hypothesis developed in *The Code of the Coconut*.

SIT proposes that direct sunlight carries a spectrally and temporally structured information stream—a light code—that biological decoders parse across multiple channels to regulate gene expression, development, circadian integration, and physiological state. The sun is not merely an energy source. It is a *broadcaster*. The organism is not merely a photon absorber. It is a *reader*. The question this paper explores is: which ancient cultures intuited some version of this relationship? Which ones treated the sun not just as a god to be appeased or a lamp to be grateful for, but as a source of structured information that actively shapes living systems?

The answer, examined across Egyptian, Vedic, Zoroastrian, Mesoamerican, Japanese, Greek, and Indigenous Australian traditions, is that the broadcaster-decoder intuition is far older than modern photobiology—and that one tradition in particular, the Aten theology of Amarna-period Egypt, came remarkably close to the SIT formulation nearly thirty-four centuries before the identification of melanopsin.

## II. Egypt: From Ra to Aten — The Closest Ancient Approximation

### A. The Ra Tradition: Sun as Sovereign

Egyptian solar theology spans more than three millennia, beginning with the Predynastic period and persisting through Ptolemaic syncretism. The dominant framework centered on Ra (also Re), the sun god who traversed the sky in a solar barque by day and navigated the underworld (Duat) by night, defeating the chaos serpent Apophis to ensure cosmic continuity. Ra was the supreme deity of the Heliopolitan Ennead, and pharaonic legitimacy derived from identification with him: the king was “Son of Ra,” the living solar proxy on earth.

The Ra tradition treated sunlight as divine presence—the physical manifestation of a god’s attention. Temples at Heliopolis and Karnak were engineered to channel solar light into inner sanctuaries at precise calendrical moments. The obelisk (*tekhenut*) was conceived as a petrified sunbeam, a conduit between the solar source and the terrestrial receiver. Funerary texts (the Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, and Book of the Dead) describe the deceased’s journey toward solar reunion—absorption into the light, not merely proximity to it.

From the SIT perspective, the Ra tradition captures the *authority* of the solar signal—its primacy as the organizing force of all life—but frames it as governance rather than information transfer. Ra rules. He does not instruct at the molecular level. The conceptual leap from sovereign to broadcaster had not yet occurred.

### B. Akhenaten and the Aten Revolution: Sun as Direct Code

The closest any ancient civilization came to the SIT formulation was the Aten theology promulgated by Pharaoh Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV, reigned c. 1353–1336 BCE) during the Amarna period. Akhenaten dismantled the Amun-Ra priesthood, closed traditional temples, relocated the capital to a purpose-built city (Akhetaten, modern Amarna), and declared Aten—the solar disc itself, not an anthropomorphic deity—as the sole god.

What distinguishes Aten theology from all prior and subsequent solar worship is its **mechanistic specificity**. The Great Hymn to the Aten, attributed to Akhenaten himself (preserved in the tomb of Ay at Amarna), describes the sun’s rays not as symbolic blessings but as the *direct physical*

*agent* through which life is created, sustained, and differentiated. Key doctrinal elements include:

**Rays as active, structuring force.** The Hymn describes Aten's rays reaching into the womb to shape the embryo, differentiating tissues, assigning form, and initiating breath at birth. This is not metaphorical vitalism. It is a description of light as a developmental instruction set—a morphogenetic signal. The Hymn states that the chick in the egg receives the breath of life from Aten while still in the shell; that skin color, language, and physical form are determined by the quality of light received. This is, in functional terms, a pre-scientific articulation of photic morphogenesis.

**Specificity of the signal.** Aten does not merely illuminate. The Hymn describes different effects at different times: dawn awakens and activates; midday sustains; sunset initiates a qualitatively different state (vulnerability, danger, cessation of growth). The nocturnal world is explicitly described as diminished—not evil, but informationally impoverished. Without Aten's rays, creatures revert to dormancy, confusion, or predatory desperation. This maps directly onto the SIT concept of signal presence versus signal absence as the primary axis of biological regulation.

**Universality across species.** The Hymn applies the Aten's creative rays to humans, animals, birds, fish, and plants without distinction of mechanism. All living things are formed and sustained by the same solar signal. This is a statement of a universal decoder architecture—the same broadcast, read by every organism, producing species-appropriate output. Modern photobiology confirms this: melanopsin in mammals, phytochrome and cryptochrome in plants, and opsins across the animal kingdom all respond to the same solar spectrum through homologous decoder mechanisms.

**Elimination of intermediaries.** Akhenaten's most radical theological move was removing the priesthood as mediator between sun and organism. In the Aten system, the rays reach every living thing directly. There is no intercessory ritual required for the signal to arrive. This is structurally identical to the SIT framework's insistence that light-code processing is a direct biophysical event—photons striking decoder molecules—not a process requiring cultural, spiritual, or institutional mediation.

The Aten theology was suppressed within a generation of Akhenaten's death. His successor Tutankhamun restored the Amun priesthood, Akhetaten was abandoned, and the pharaoh's name was chiseled from monuments. The tradition that came closest to describing the sun as an

information broadcaster was erased by the institutions that had the most to lose from its implications.

### **C. SIT Alignment Score: Egypt**

The Ra tradition captures solar primacy (high alignment) but frames it as divine governance rather than physical information transfer (moderate alignment). The Aten theology captures the sun as a direct, structuring, morphogenetic signal reaching all organisms without intermediary—the highest alignment with SIT of any pre-modern tradition examined in this survey. The Hymn’s description of rays shaping embryonic development, differentiating phenotype, and regulating behavioral state across species is functionally a qualitative version of the SIT hypothesis, expressed in the language available to a 14th-century-BCE court.

## **III. Vedic and Hindu Traditions: Surya as Cosmic Intelligence**

The Vedic corpus (c. 1500–500 BCE) treats the sun (Surya) as one of the three principal deities of the natural world alongside Agni (fire) and Indra (storm). The Rigveda contains the Surya Sukta and multiple solar hymns that praise the sun as the eye of the gods—the organ through which cosmic intelligence observes and sustains the created world.

The Gayatri Mantra (Rigveda 3.62.10), the most recited verse in Hinduism, is explicitly a solar invocation. Its literal meaning—“We meditate on the radiant light (*bhargo*) of Savitar (the solar deity); may it stimulate (*prachodayāt*) our intellect (*dhiyo*)”—articulates a direct causal claim: the sun’s radiance actively drives cognitive function. This is not a prayer for blessing. It is a description of photic activation of the mind. The verb *prachodayāt* (to impel, to set in motion, to stimulate) implies mechanism—light doing something specific to neural architecture.

The later Upanishadic and Puranic traditions elaborated solar theology into the doctrine of *Aditya Hridayam* (the Heart of the Sun), a hymn in the Ramayana that describes Surya as the source of all vital energy (*prana*), the regulator of seasons, and the architect of biological cycles. The Surya Namaskar (sun salutation) practice—a sequence of twelve physical postures performed at dawn facing the sun—encodes the principle that the body must orient itself toward the solar signal at the precise moment of its strongest morning broadcast to receive maximum benefit.

## ***SIT Alignment***

The Vedic tradition captures two critical SIT elements: (1) the sun's light as an *active agent* that stimulates biological function (not merely a symbol of divinity), and (2) temporal specificity—dawn as the optimal reception window. The Gayatri Mantra's claim that solar radiance “impels” cognition is a pre-scientific statement of photic neuromodulation. The tradition does not reach the Aten level of morphogenetic specificity (rays shaping embryos), but it goes further than most in describing the sun as a functional input to the organism's operating system.

## **IV. Zoroastrianism: Light as Ontological Information**

Zoroastrianism (founded c. 1500–1000 BCE, possibly earlier) is organized around the duality of Ahura Mazda (Lord of Wisdom, associated with light) and Angra Mainyu (Destructive Spirit, associated with darkness). This is sometimes reduced to a simple good-versus-evil binary, but the theological structure is more precise than that. In the Avesta and later Pahlavi texts, light is not merely the *symbol* of truth and order (*asha*)—it is the *medium* through which truth propagates.

The sacred fire (*Atash*) in Zoroastrian temples is maintained as a living representative of the solar principle. Fire is not worshipped as a deity; it is understood as the accessible manifestation of the same force that the sun broadcasts at cosmic scale. The Yasna liturgy describes fire as the “son of Ahura Mazda,” carrying the same informational essence in concentrated form. The Zoroastrian insistence on maintaining fire perpetually—never allowing it to be extinguished—encodes the principle that the signal must not be interrupted.

The Hvar Khshaeta (Radiant Sun) is praised in the Khurshed Nyayesh as the deity whose light dispels not just physical darkness but ignorance, disease, and moral corruption. The text describes sunlight as actively purifying—not metaphorically, but functionally. Exposure to sunlight is prescribed as a health practice. Darkness is pathologized: creatures of darkness (*khrafstra*) are inherently aligned with Angra Mainyu because they exist outside the solar signal. Nocturnal life is, in the Zoroastrian framework, life operating on corrupted or absent input—a formulation that anticipates the SIT/Moonlight Paper's treatment of night-phase decoder mismatch.

## ***SIT Alignment***

Zoroastrianism's unique contribution is the treatment of light as *ontological information*—the medium through which truth, order, and health propagate through the world. This is not energy worship. It is a cosmology in which the presence or absence of the solar signal determines the quality of existence itself. The pathologization of darkness and nocturnal life as “corrupted” states aligns directly with the SIT model of decoder degradation under signal absence. Zoroastrianism does not describe the spectral structure of the signal, but it correctly identifies the binary axis—signal present versus signal absent—as the primary determinant of biological and moral quality.

## **V. Mesoamerica: The Sun as Computational Engine**

### **A. Aztec: Tonatiuh and the Five Suns**

Aztec cosmology organized world history into five “suns” (*soles*)—sequential cosmic eras, each governed by a different solar deity and each terminated by catastrophe. The current era, the Fifth Sun (Nahui Ollin, “Four Movement”), is governed by Tonatiuh. The critical theological feature is that each sun produced a *different kind of life*. The beings of the First Sun were giants; the Second Sun's creatures were transformed into monkeys by wind; the Third Sun's inhabitants became birds and butterflies. Each solar regime generated a distinct biological output.

This is, in SIT terms, a mythological encoding of the principle that *different solar conditions produce different decoder outputs*. The Aztec cosmologists did not describe spectral variation, but they captured the deeper structural insight: the sun is not a static lamp. It is a variable signal, and when the signal changes, the organisms it shapes change with it. The Five Suns doctrine is a narrative version of the prediction that altering the solar code's parameters (spectrum, intensity, temporal structure) would alter developmental trajectories.

Tonatiuh required sustenance (human blood and hearts) to continue his traversal—a theology that, stripped of its sacrificial literalism, encodes the concept that the solar broadcast is not guaranteed. It requires conditions to be maintained. The sun can fail. The signal can stop. This anxiety is absent from most solar theologies and suggests a deeper engagement with the sun as a *system* rather than an eternal given.

## **B. Maya: Solar Calendrics as Decoder Synchronization**

The Maya developed the most computationally sophisticated solar observation system in the pre-modern world. The Haab' (365-day solar calendar), the Tzolk'in (260-day ritual calendar), and the Long Count were interlocking systems that tracked solar position with extraordinary precision. The 260-day Tzolk'in cycle, whose astronomical basis remains debated, may correspond to the human gestational period—a remarkable encoding if correct, linking the solar counting system directly to biological development.

Maya architecture was engineered for solar signal reception. The Castillo at Chichén Itzá produces a shadow-serpent on its north staircase during the equinoxes—a precision alignment demonstrating that the Maya calibrated monumental construction to solar-cycle events measured to sub-degree accuracy. The E-Group observatories tracked solstice and equinox positions to synchronize ritual, agricultural, and civic life with the solar calendar.

From the SIT perspective, the Maya contribution is not theological but *computational*. They did not describe the sun as a broadcaster in doctrinal terms, but they built the most precise receiver-synchronization infrastructure in the ancient world. Their calendrical systems function as decoder-alignment tools: mechanisms for ensuring that human activity is temporally synchronized with the solar signal's annual and multi-annual structure. The obsessive precision of Maya solar tracking implies an intuition that *timing of reception matters*—that the same organism receiving the same signal at different phase positions will produce different outcomes.

## **VI. Japan: Amaterasu and the Withdrawal Experiment**

The central solar myth of Shinto is the withdrawal of Amaterasu Ōmikami (the Great Divinity Illuminating Heaven) into the Ama-no-Iwato (Heavenly Rock Cave). Offended by her brother Susanoo's violence, Amaterasu retreated into the cave and sealed it with a boulder. The world was plunged into darkness. Crops failed. Disorder erupted among the gods. Evil spirits proliferated. The eight hundred myriads of deities assembled to devise a strategy to lure her back; the goddess Ame-no-Uzume performed an ecstatic dance that provoked laughter, and Amaterasu's curiosity drew her to the cave entrance, where a mirror (Yata no Kagami) reflected her own radiance back to her. She emerged, and the world was restored.

This myth is structurally a *signal-withdrawal experiment*. The narrative describes, in mythological encoding, exactly what happens when the solar broadcast ceases: biological collapse (crops fail), behavioral disorder (gods lose coordination), and proliferation of pathological states (evil spirits). The restoration of the signal restores order. No other ancient solar myth so cleanly isolates the *absence* of the signal as the causal variable and demonstrates its effects through controlled removal and reintroduction.

The mirror element adds a secondary SIT resonance. Amaterasu is drawn out not by external force but by seeing her own light reflected. In decoder terms, the system responds to its own output signal bounced back through a reflective medium—a mythological parallel to the moonlight problem explored in the companion paper. The reflected signal is not identical to the source; it is mediated by a physical intermediary (mirror/moon) that alters its properties.

### ***SIT Alignment***

The Amaterasu myth captures signal-dependence (high alignment), signal-withdrawal effects (high alignment), and the reflected-signal problem (moderate alignment). It does not describe the sun as a morphogenetic agent with the specificity of the Aten Hymn, but its narrative structure constitutes the cleanest ancient thought experiment on what happens when the decoder loses its primary input.

## **VII. Greece: Helios, Apollo, and the Platonic Light**

Greek solar theology bifurcated into two figures: Helios, the Titan who physically drove the solar chariot across the sky, and Apollo, the Olympian associated with light, reason, music, healing, and prophecy. Helios was the mechanism; Apollo was the meaning. Neither, in the standard mythological corpus, articulated a broadcaster-decoder relationship with the specificity of Aten or the Gayatri Mantra.

The more relevant Greek contribution comes from philosophy rather than mythology. Plato's Allegory of the Cave (Republic, Book VII) describes prisoners who perceive only shadows on a wall—distorted projections of real objects illuminated by a fire behind them. The philosopher who escapes the cave ascends toward the sun, which represents the Form of the Good—the ultimate source of intelligibility and truth. Plato explicitly identifies the sun as the source of both visibility (physical light) and knowability (intellectual illumination). The sun does not merely reveal objects; it makes

them *comprehensible*. Light is the medium of information, not merely the medium of sight.

This Platonic formulation—the sun as the source of structured intelligibility, not just photons—is philosophically adjacent to SIT. Plato does not describe biological decoding, but he identifies the core epistemic claim: the sun’s output carries information that structures the receiver’s capacity to process reality. The cave allegory further encodes the degraded-signal problem: the prisoners’ shadows are a corrupted version of the real signal (firelight reflecting objects rather than direct sunlight), producing distorted comprehension—a philosophical analog to the moonlight-as-corrupted-code model.

### ***SIT Alignment***

Greek mythology: low alignment (Helios as charioteer is pure transport metaphor; Apollo as healer is closer but unsystematic). Platonic philosophy: moderate-to-high alignment. The Allegory of the Cave encodes the core SIT insight—light as structured information, corrupted light as degraded comprehension—in philosophical rather than biological terms.

## **VIII. Inca: Inti and the Biological Mandate**

The Inca Empire organized its political, agricultural, and religious systems around Inti, the sun god, from whom the Sapa Inca (emperor) claimed direct descent. Inti worship was not abstract theology; it was state infrastructure. The Coricancha (Temple of the Sun) in Cusco was sheathed in gold—not for decorative opulence but because gold was understood as solar material, the terrestrial substance most resonant with the sun’s nature.

The Inti Raymi (Festival of the Sun), celebrated at the June solstice, was the most important ceremony in the Inca calendar. It served a dual function: renewing the covenant between Inti and the empire, and recalibrating agricultural and civic cycles to the solar minimum. The ceremony was timed to the moment of maximum solar vulnerability (the shortest day in the Southern Hemisphere), encoding the principle that the signal has a periodic structure with minima that require special attention—a recognition of solar temporal variation that parallels the SIT emphasis on broadcast cadence.

Inca agricultural terracing (*andenes*) was engineered to maximize solar exposure at different altitudes, creating controlled micro-environments that captured distinct solar-intensity and spectral conditions. The Moray

agricultural laboratory—a series of concentric terraces at different depths, each with measurably different temperature and light regimes—may represent the most sophisticated pre-modern attempt to experimentally vary solar input and observe differential biological output. If so, it is a physical instantiation of a decoder-variation experiment: same seed stock, different signal conditions, different developmental results.

### ***SIT Alignment***

The Inca tradition captures solar-signal periodicity (high alignment), the principle of variable output under variable input (Moray terraces, high alignment if the agricultural-laboratory interpretation holds), and the biological mandate of solar exposure (moderate alignment). It does not articulate the light-as-information concept verbally, but the engineering suggests an empirical intuition that the sun's effect on organisms varies with reception conditions in ways that can be systematically explored.

## **IX. Indigenous Australian Traditions: The Dreaming as Broadcast Memory**

Aboriginal Australian cosmology is organized around the Dreaming (*Tjukurpa*, *Jukurrpa*, or equivalent terms across language groups)—a continuous, atemporal creative epoch in which ancestral beings shaped the landscape, established biological forms, and encoded behavioral law into country. The sun is a Dreaming ancestor in many traditions, often depicted as a woman carrying a torch of bark across the sky. Her daily journey is not mere transit; it is an ongoing creative act that *maintains* the world in its current form.

The critical SIT-relevant feature of the Dreaming is its ontology of *continuous broadcast*. The Dreaming is not a past event. It is happening now. The ancestral signal is *always being transmitted*, and the landscape, the organisms, and the people are always receiving it. Ceremonial practice (song, dance, painting, walking country) is understood as the human decoder's active participation in receiving and retransmitting the signal. Disruption of ceremony—loss of the songs, neglect of country—is not merely cultural loss. It is described as *signal degradation*: the country “sickens,” species decline, weather patterns destabilize.

This framework does not isolate the sun as the sole broadcaster; the Dreaming is a multi-channel signal embedded in landscape, season, species interaction, and celestial pattern. But it captures something that more sun-

focused theologies miss: the concept of *decoder participation*. In Aboriginal ontology, the organism does not passively receive the signal. It actively processes, maintains, and retransmits it. This is closer to the full SIT model—in which decoder architecture actively parses and responds to the light code, with downstream outputs that feed back into the environment—than any simple stimulus-response framework.

### ***SIT Alignment***

Aboriginal Australian traditions capture continuous broadcast (high alignment), decoder participation and signal maintenance (uniquely high alignment), and the consequence of signal degradation (high alignment). They do not isolate the solar-spectral channel with the specificity of Aten or the Gayatri Mantra, but they articulate the most complete ancient model of an organism-in-signal-field, including feedback effects.

## **X. Synthesis: The Gradient of Intuition**

Arranged by proximity to the full SIT formulation, the traditions examined here form a gradient:

**Highest alignment — Aten theology (Egypt, c. 1350 BCE).** Describes the sun's rays as a direct morphogenetic signal that shapes embryonic development, differentiates phenotype, regulates behavioral state, and operates universally across species without intermediary. Functionally a qualitative statement of the SIT hypothesis.

**High alignment — Vedic/Hindu tradition (India, c. 1500-500 BCE).** The Gayatri Mantra describes solar radiance as actively impelling cognitive function. Surya Namaskar encodes temporal specificity (dawn reception). The sun is an active agent driving the organism, not merely a deity presiding over it.

**High alignment — Zoroastrianism (Persia, c. 1500-1000 BCE).** Treats light as ontological information—the medium through which truth and health propagate. Pathologizes darkness and nocturnal life as corrupted states. Captures the signal-presence/signal-absence axis as the primary determinant of biological quality.

**High alignment — Aboriginal Australian Dreaming.** Uniquely models continuous broadcast, decoder participation, signal maintenance, and degradation consequences. Closest to the full SIT feedback model, though not solar-specific.

**Moderate-high alignment — Shinto/Japan.** The Amaterasu myth is the cleanest ancient signal-withdrawal experiment: remove the sun, observe system collapse, restore the sun, observe recovery. The mirror element encodes the reflected-signal problem.

**Moderate alignment — Mesoamerican traditions.** The Five Suns doctrine encodes variable signal/variable output. Maya calendrics build the most precise decoder-synchronization infrastructure. Inca terracing may constitute an empirical decoder-variation experiment.

**Moderate alignment — Platonic Greece.** The Allegory of the Cave encodes light as structured intelligibility and corrupted light as degraded comprehension—philosophical rather than biological, but structurally resonant.

**Low-moderate alignment — Ra tradition (Egypt, pre-Amarna).** Captures solar primacy and the sun as supreme cosmic authority, but frames the relationship as governance rather than information transfer.

## **XI. Conclusion: They Were Reading the Broadcast**

The recurring question across thirty-four centuries of solar theology—What is the sun doing to us?—has been answered in different registers by every civilization examined here. The answers range from “governing” (Ra) to “stimulating cognition” (Gayatri) to “writing the organism” (Aten) to “broadcasting the world into existence” (Dreaming). The gradient of intuition tracks with a clear variable: the closer a tradition observed organisms in direct solar relationship—watching crops respond to light shifts, sleeping under open sky, tracking embryonic development in egg and womb—the closer it came to the SIT formulation.

Akhenaten’s Aten theology remains the most remarkable case. Writing in the 14th century BCE, with no microscopy, no spectral analysis, and no molecular biology, the Amarna theologians articulated a model in which the sun’s rays are the direct physical agent of biological form—reaching into the womb, shaping the embryo, differentiating phenotype, sustaining function across all species, operating without intermediary. The model was suppressed within a generation. It would take thirty-three centuries for photobiology to arrive at a comparable formulation in mechanistic terms.

The Solar Information Transfer hypothesis does not claim that ancient sun worshippers understood melanopsin, cryptochrome, or chromatin photonics. It claims that organisms embedded in the solar signal, with decoders

already running, can *intuit the relationship before they can name the parts*. The intuition takes different forms—theological, philosophical, architectural, calendrical, ceremonial—but the underlying signal is the same. The sun writes. The decoder reads. The cultures that watched most carefully described what they saw.

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