

CHALDEAN ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION.

 TRANSLATED BY
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THE Cuneiform text of the First and Fifth Creation Tablets, which are the only ones as yet found in a tolerable state of preservation, has been published by the late Mr. G. Smith in *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, Vol. IV. p. 363, and also by Delitzsch in his *Assyrische Lesestücke*, plates 40 and 41. From these my translation has been made.

The discovery of these tablets has greatly raised the reputation of the ancient author Damascius, for it is now seen that his account of the Creation was derived from genuine Babylonian sources. He says (see Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, p. 318, compared with the original), "The Babylonians speak not of *One* origin of all things, for they make two original beings, Tauthe and Apason, making Apason the husband of Tauthe, whom they call the mother of the gods. Their only son (eldest son?) was Moymis. And another race proceeded from them, namely, Dakhe and Dakhos. And again a third race proceeded from the same (parents), namely, Kissaré and Assoros. These had three children, Anos, Illinos,

and Aos. And the son of Aos and Dauké was called Belos, who they say was the Demiurgus or fabricator of the world."

This agrees very nearly with the Babylonian records. Tauthe is Tamti, "the Sea" (a very common word in the inscriptions), exchanging the cognate letters U or V for M. Apason is Apzu or Apzo "the Abyss" (which word occurs continually). Moymis is Mummu, "Chaos," see line 4 of our tablet. Dakhe and Dakhos are conjectured by Mr. Smith to be the Lakhmu and Lakhamu of the tablet. This is very likely, and is due to the carelessness of the copyists in writing a Greek D for L, which only differ by one stroke.

Assor agrees exactly with Assur, the great god of the Assyrians, and Kissaré is the same with the syllable Ki prefixed, and therefore properly transliterated by Kissur. Anos is Anu, named in line 14. The rest of Damascius' names are broken off from the tablet, but Ao is the god usually transliterated as Hea. The sound of his name is doubtful; it is possible that Ao may be the true sound.

Most of this (regarding the testimony of Damascius) has already been pointed out by Mr. Smith, but I could not omit some mention of it here, as it is so closely connected with the interpretation of the tablet.

CHALDEAN ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION.

THE FIRST TABLET.

- 1 When the upper region was not yet called heaven,
 2 and the lower region was not yet called earth,
 3 and the abyss of Hades had not yet opened its arms,
 4 then the chaos of waters gave birth to all of them
 5 and the waters were gathered into one place.
 6 No men yet dwelt together : no animals yet wandered
 about :
 7 none of the gods had yet been born.
 8 Their names were not spoken : their attributes were not
 known.
 9 Then the eldest of the gods
 10 LAKHMU and LAKHAMU were born
 11 and grew up¹
 12 ASSUR and KISSUR were born next
 13 and lived through long periods.
 14 ANU¹

[The rest of this tablet is lost.]

THE FIFTH TABLET.

[This fifth tablet is very important, because it affirms clearly in my opinion that the origin of the Sabbath was co-eval with Creation.]

- 1 He constructed dwellings for the great gods.
 2 He fixed up constellations, whose figures were like
 animals.
 3 He made the year. Into four quarters he divided it.
 4 Twelve months he established, with their constellations,
 three by three.
 5 And for the days of the year he appointed festivals.
 6 He made dwellings for the planets : for their rising and
 setting.

¹ Lacunæ.

- 7 And that nothing should go amiss, and that the course
of none should be retarded,
8 he placed with them the dwellings of BEL and HEA.
9 He opened great gates, on every side :
10 he made strong the portals, on the left hand and on
the right.
11 In the centre he placed luminaries.
12 The moon he appointed to rule the night
13 and to wander through the night, until the dawn of
day.
14 Every month without fail he made holy assembly-days.
15 In the beginning of the month, at the rising of the
night,
16 it shot forth its horns to illuminate the heavens.
17 On the seventh day he appointed a holy day,
18 and to cease from all business he commanded.
19 Then arose the sun in the horizon of heaven in (glory).

[The last word is broken off, and though there are seven more lines, they are so broken that I cannot give a translation of them with any confidence.

It has been known for some time that the Babylonians observed the Sabbath with considerable strictness. On that day the king was not allowed to take a drive in his chariot; various meats were forbidden to be eaten, and there were a number of other minute restrictions. See 4 R, plate 32.

But it was not known that they believed the Sabbath to have been ordained at the Creation. I have found, however, since this translation of the fifth tablet was completed, that Mr. Sayce has recently published a similar opinion. See the *Academy*, of November 27th, 1875, p. 554.

This account falls short of the majesty of the Hebrew Genesis, especially where the writer implies that the heavenly movements might possibly go wrong, and it was therefore necessary that the gods Bel and Hea should watch over them and guard against such a misfortune.]

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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