

ANCIENT BABYLONIAN
LEGEND OF THE CREATION.

(FROM CUTHAH.)

TRANSLATED BY
REV. A. H. SAYCE, M.A.

THE following translation is made from an Assyrian copy of an old Babylonian text, belonging to the Library of Cuthah. The account of the Creation contained in it differs wholly from the later syncretistic story of the Creation in seven days, which does not seem earlier than the time of Assurbanipal. The proper names in the following legend, as well as certain expressions, are Accadian, from which we may infer that the legend itself is of Accadian origin. The name Memangab, which means "Thunderbolt," gives a clue to the primitive signification of the myth. Like so many other early Chaldean myths it describes

the struggle between the evil powers of darkness, storm, and chaos, and the bright powers of order and light.

The tablet is unfortunately much injured, and a good deal of it has been lost. What is left, however, contains a reference to those creatures of compound shape which, according to Berosus, the Babylonians believed to have preceded the present creation. The text has not yet been published. A translation has been given by Mr. George Smith in his *Chaldean Genesis*, pp. 102-106.



BABYLONIAN LEGEND OF THE CREATION.

COLUMN I.

[Many lines lost at the beginning.]

- 3 . . . ¹ his lord, the crown of the gods . . . ¹
 4 the spearmen of his host, the spearmen of (his) host
 . . . ¹
 5 Lord of those above and those below, Lord of the
 spirits . . . ¹
 6 who drank turbid waters and pure waters did not drink
 . . . ¹
 7 who (with) his flame as a weapon that host enclosed,
 8 has taken, has devoured.
 9 On a memorial-stone he wrote not, he disclosed not, and
 bodies and produce
 10 in the earth he caused not to come forth; and I ap-
 proached him not.
 11 Warriors (with) the bodies of birds of the desert, men
 12 (with) the faces of ravens,²
 13 these the great gods created;
 14 in the earth the gods created their city.
 15 TIAMAT³ gave them suck.
 16 Their *life* BILAT-ILI (Mistress of the gods) created.
 17 In the midst of the earth they grew up and became
 strong, and
 18 *increased* in number.
 19 Seven Kings, brethren, were made to come as begetters;

¹ Lacunæ.² Literally, "a raven their face."³ "The deep," the principle of chaos and anarchy.

- 20 six thousand (were) their armies.
 21 The god BANINI their father (was) King ; their mother
 22 the Queen (was) MELILI ;
 23 their eldest brother who went before them, MEMANGAB
 (was) his name ;¹
 24 (their) second brother, MEDUDU (was) his name ;
 25 (their) third brother, . . .² PAKH (was) his name ;
 26 (their) fourth brother, . . .² (DA)DA (was) his name ;
 27 (their) fifth brother, . . .² TAKH (was) his name ;
 28 (their) sixth brother,) . . .² (RU)RU (was) his name ;
 29 (their) seventh brother,) . . .² (RARA was) his (name).

¹ Here the original Accadian is preserved.

² Lacunæ.

COLUMN II.

[Many lines are lost.]

- 1 . . . ¹ the evil curse ¹
 2 The man his determination turned . . . ¹
 3 on a . . . ¹ I arranged.
 4 On a (tablet) the evil curse (which) in blood he raised
 5 (I wrote and the children of) the Generals I urged on.
 6 Seven (against seven in) breadth I arranged them.
 7 (I established) the holy (*ordinances*).
 8 I prayed to the great gods,
 9 ISTAR, ¹ ZAMAMA, ANUNIT,
 10 NEBO, . . . ¹ (and) the Sun-god, the warrior ;
 11 the Son of (the Moon-god), the gods that go (before) me
 12 ¹ he did not adjudge, and
 13 thus I said unto my heart,
 14 that, Here I (am) ; and
 15 may I not go ¹ (beneath) the ground
 16 may I not go ¹ may the prayer
 17 go, when ¹ my heart
 18 may I renew, the iron may I take.
 19 The first year in (its) course
 20 one hundred and twenty thousand soldiers I caused to
 go forth, and among them
 21 not one returned.
 22 The second year in (its) course ninety thousand soldiers
 I caused to go forth, and among them not one returned.
 23 The third year in (its) course 60,700 soldiers I caused
 to go forth, and among them not one returned.

¹ Lacunæ.

- 24 They were removed away, they were smitten with sickness; I ate,
25 I rejoiced, I rested.
26 Thus I said to my heart, that Here I (am); and
27 for (my) reign what have I left?
28 I, the King, (am) not the completer of his country;

COLUMN III.

- 1 and (I), the Shepherd, (am) not the completer of his
 army,
 2 since I established corpses, and a desert I left.
 3 The whole of the country (and) men, with night, death,
 (and) plague I cursed it.
 4 With terror, violence, sickness, and famine
 5 (I afflicted them) as many as exist.
 6¹ there descended
 7¹ a whirlwind
 8¹ its whirlwind.
 9¹ all.
 10 The foundations (of the earth were shaken.)
 11 The gods¹
 12 Thou didst bind, and¹
 13 and¹
 14 Thou protectedst¹
 15 A memorial of *spoiling* and¹
 16 in supplication to HEA¹
 17 holy memorial sacrifices¹
 18 holy *terēti*¹
 19 I collected; the children of the Generals (I urged on.)
 20 Seven against seven in breadth I arranged.
 21 I established the holy *ordinances*.
 22 I prayed to (the great) gods,
 23 ISTAR,¹ (ZAMAMA, ANUNIT)
 24 NEBO,¹ (and the Sun-god, the warrior)
 25 the Son (of the Moon-god, the gods who go before me.)

[Lacunæ.]

¹ Lacunæ.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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