

# THE ENUMA ELISH

## THE BABYLONIAN EPIC OF CREATION

*Long poem written ca. 1200 BCE to celebrate the city of Babylon. It recounts the creation of the universe and the events that lead up to the building of Babylon, home for the gods. It evolved from Sumerian myths and the text that it is taken from is Assyrian, an empire that followed the Sumerian.*

*The almost complete text is set out on seven tablets with about 150 lines on each tablet. It was written probably to be sung at festivals in honour of the gods and Babylon. In its original language, it is written with no rhyme or alliteration but with some assonance that lends it a hypnotic sound. It probably sounded similar to Georgian chants in being sung by several voices.*

*The poem was translated by N. K Sandars.*

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[Epilogue](#)



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### TABLET I

When there was no heaven,  
no earth, no height, no depth, no name,  
when Apsu was alone,  
the sweet water, the first begetter; and Tiamat  
the bitter water, and that  
return to the womb, her Mummu,  
when there were no gods-

When sweet and bitter  
mingled together, no reed was plaited, no rushes  
muddied the water,

the gods were nameless, natureless, futureless, then  
from Apsu and Tiamat  
in the waters gods were created, in the waters  
silt precipitated,

Lahmu and Lahumu,  
were named; they were not yet old  
not yet grown tall  
when Anshar and Kishar overtook them both,  
the lines of sky and earth  
stretched where horizons meet to separate  
cloud from silt.

Days on days, years  
on year passed till Anu, the empty heaven,  
heir and supplanter,  
first-born of his father, in his own nature  
begot Nudimmud-Ea,  
intellect, wisdom, wider than heaven's horizon,  
the strongest of all the kindred.

Discord broke out among the gods although they were brothers, warring and jarring in the belly of Tiamat,  
heaven shook, it reeled with the surge of the dance; Apsu could not silence the clamour, their behavior  
was bad, overbearing and proud.

But still Tiamat lay inert till Apsu, the father of gods, bellowed for that servant who clouds his judgment,  
his Mummu,  
'Dear counselor, come with me to Taimat.'  
They have gone, and in front of Tiamat they sit down and talk together about the young gods, their first-  
born children; Apsu said,

'Their manners revolt me, day and night without remission we suffer. My will is to destroy them, all of their  
kind, we shall have peace at last and we will sleep again.'

When Tiamat heard she was stung, she writhed in lonely desolation, her heart worked in secret passion,  
Tiamat said,  
'Why must we destroy the children that we made? If their ways are troublesome, let us wait a little while.'

Then Mummu advised Apsu, and he spoke in malice,  
'Father, destroy them in full rebellion, you will have quiet in the daytime and at night you will sleep.'

When Apsu heard, the die was cast against his children, his face flamed with the pleasure of evil;; but  
Mummu her embraced,  
he hung on his neck, he sat him down on his knees and kissed him.

The decision was known to all their children; confusion seized them and after, a great silence, for they  
were confounded.

The god who is the source of wisdom, the bright intelligence that perceives and plans, Nudimmud-Ea, saw through it, he sounded the coil of chaos, and against it devised the artifice of the universe.

He spoke the word that charmed the waters, it fell upon Apsu, he lay asleep, the sweet waters slept, Apsu slept, Mummu was overcome, Apsu lay drowned, undone.

Then Ea ripped off his flaming glory coat and took his crown, he set on himself the aureole of the king. When Ea has bound Apsu he killed him, and Mummu, the dark counselor, he led by the nose and locked away.

Ea has defeated his enemies and trodden them down. Now that his triumph was completed, in deep peace he rested, in his holy palace Ea slept. Over the abyss, the distance, he built his house and shrine and there magnificently he lived with his wife Damkina .

In that room, at the point of decision where what is to come is predetermined, he was conceived, the most sagacious, the one from the first most absolute in action.

In the deep abyss he was conceived, MARDUK was made in the heart of the apsu, MARDUK was created in the heart of the holy apsu. Ea begot him and Damkina bore him, father and mother; he sucked the paps of goddesses, from his nurses he was fed on the terrible leness that filled him.

His body was beautiful; when he raised his eyes great lights flared; his stride was majestic; he was the leader from the first.

When Ea who begot him saw him he exulted, he was radiant, light-hearted, for he saw that he was perfect, and he multiplied his godhead, the one to be first and stand highest.

His limbs were immaculate, the making a fearful mystery beyond comprehension; with four eyes for limitless sight, and four ears hearing all; when his lips moved a tongue of fire burst out. Titanic limbs, standing so high he overtopped the tallest god; he was strong and he wore the glory of ten, and their lightnings played round him.

'My son, my son, son of the sun, and heaven's sun!'

Then Anu begot winds and brought them from the four quarters, to be the can and to command the ranks and he brought the tornado, a wild surf to worry Tiamat.

But now the other gods had no rest any more, tormented by storms, they conspired in their secret hearts and brought to Tiamat the matter of their plot. To their own mother they said,

'When they killed Apsu you did not stir, you brought no help to him, your husband. Now Anu has called up from the four quarters this abomination of winds to rage in your guts, and we cannot rest for the pain; Remember Apsu in your heart, your husband, remember Mummu who was defeated; now you are all alone, and thrash around in desolation, and we have lost your love, our eyes ache and we long for sleep. 'Rouse up, our Mother! Pay them back and make them empty like the wind.'

Tiamat approved it, she said,

'I approve this advice: we will make monsters, and monsters and gods against hods will march into battle

together.'

Together they jostle the ranks to march with Tiamat, day and night furiously they plot, the growling roaring rout, ready for battle, while the Old Hag, the first mother, mothers a new brood.

She loosed the irresistible missile, she spawned enormous serpents with cutting fangs, chock-full of venom in stead of blood, snarling dragons wearing their glory like gods. (Whoever sees this thing received the shock of death, for when they heave those bodies up they never turn them back.)

She made the Worm  
the Dragon  
the Female Monster  
the Great Lion  
the Mad Dog  
the Man Scorpion  
the Howling Storm  
Kulili  
Kusariqu

There was no pity in their weapons, they did not flinch from battle for her law was binding, irrevocable.

Eleven such monsters she made, but she took from among the gods the clumsy laborer

KINGU

one of the first generation to be her Captain, War-leader, Assembly-leader , ordering the supplies, leading the van to battle.

SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE WARS

All this she gave him when she raised their Company, she said.

'Now it is in your hands, my spell will hold them bound, they must obey my will. You are supreme, my one husband, your word will hold the rebel hordes.

She gave him the Tables of Fate and fastened them on to his breast,

'Now and for ever more your word is irrevocable, your judgments will last! They will quench the fire and the swinging mace will fail of its power.'

When Kingu had received the authority, that belonged before to Anu, in their several natures they confirmed the brood of monsters.

## TABLET II

When her labor of creation was ended, against her children Tiamat began preparations of war. This was the evil she did to requite Apsu, this was the evil news that came to Ea.

When he had learned how matters lay he was stunned, he sat in black silence till rage had worked itself out; then he remembered the gods before him. He went to Anshar, his father's father, and told him how Tiamat plotted,

'She loathes us, father, our mother Tiamat has raised up that Company, she rages in turbulence and all have joined her, all those gods whom you begot,

'Together they jostle the ranks to march with Tiamat, day and night furiously they plot, the growling roaring rout, ready for battle, while the Old Hag, the first mother, mothers a new brood.

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So Kingu has received the authority that belonged before to Anu, they have confirmed in their several natures the brood of monsters.'

When Anshar heard how the Tiamat-tempest was rising he struck his groin, bit his lip, restless, gloomy and sick at heart, he covered his mouth to stifle his groans.

At last he spoke, urging Ea on to the fight,  
'Once you made a snare of words, now go and try it out. You killed Mummu, killed Aspu; kill Kingu who marches in front of Tiamat!'

The sagacious counselor of all the gods, Nudimmud-Ea, answered Anshar...

[break of eight lines partially reconstructed]

'I will meet Tiamat and calm her spirit, when her heart brims over she will hear my words, and if not mine then yours may appease the waters.'

Nudimmud took the short toad, went the direct way to Tiamat; but when he saw her whole strategy he could not face her, but he came back cringing.

So Anshar called his son Anu,  
'This is the true hero, an irresistible onslaught, a strong god. Go, and face Tiamat, and calm her spirit; when her heart brims over she will listen to you, but if she remains unreconciled my word may appease the waters.'

Anu obeyed his father's orders, he took the short toad, went the direct way to Tiamat; but when he had come so close that he saw her whole strategy, he could not face her, he came back cringing to his father Anshar.

He spoke as though he saw Tiamat still,  
'My hands are too weak, I cannot conquer her.'

Anshar was dumb; he stared at the ground and his hair stood on end. He shook his head at Ea, all the Anunnaki, the host of gods gathered into that place tongue-tied; they sat with mouths shut for they thought,

'What other god can make war on Tiamat? No one else can face her and come back.'

Then the Lord, the father of gods, Anshar rose to his feet majestically. Having considered everything he spoke to the Anunnaki,

'Which one of us is impetuous in battle? The hero Marduk! Only he is strong enough to avenge us.'

Then Ea called Marduk into a secret place and gave him subtle advice out of his deep mind,  
'You are the dear son who warms my heart, Marduk. When you see Anshar go straight to him as you

would go into battle. Stand up when you speak, and when he sees you he will grow calm.'

Lord Marduk exulted, he strode forward and stood facing Anshar. When Anshar saw him his heart swelled with joy, he kissed him on the lips and shook off despair.

'Anshar, break your silence, let your words ring out for I will accomplish what you long for most in your heart. What hero has forced the battle on you? Only a female thing, only Tiamat flies at you with all her contrivance. You shall soon straddle Tiamat 's neck.'

'My son, my wise son, confuse Tiamat with charged words, go quickly now, the storm is your chariot, they will never deflect you from Tiamat, but having done with her, then return.'

The Lord exulted, with racing spirits he said to the father of gods,  
'Creator of the gods who decides their destiny, if I must be your avenger, defeating Tiamat, saving your lives,

'Call the Assembly, give me precedence over all the rest; and when you sit down to pass your decrees, cheerfully sit in Ubshukinna, the Hall of the Synod; now and for ever let my word be law;

'I, not you, will decide the world's nature, the things to come. My decrees shall never be altered, never be annulled, but my creation endures to the ends of the world.'

### **TABLET III**

Words broke from the lips of Anshar; he said to his counselor Kaka,  
'You are the counselor in whom my heart finds its happiness, the one who judges truly and persuades fairly; go to Lahmu and Lahamu, I am sending you down to primeval sediments, call together the generations of the gods.

'Let them speak, let them sit down to banquet together, they shall eat the feast and drink the new-drawn liquor and then they shall all confirm in his destiny the avenger, Marduk! Kaka go off, stand in front of them and repeat what I say.

'''I am sent here by your son Anshar, I am charged to tell you his secret thoughts,

'''She loathes us, our mother Tiamat has raised up that Company, she rages in turbulence and all have joined her, all those gods whom you begot,

''' Together they jostle the ranks to march with Tiamat,. Day and night furiously they plot, the growling roaring rout, ready for battle, while the Old Hag, the first mother, mothers a new brood.

'''She has loosed the irresistible missile, spawned enormous serpents with cutting fangs, chock-full of venom instead of blood, snarling dragons wearing their glory like gods. (Whoever sees this thing receives the shock of death, for when they heave those bodies up they never turn them back.)

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"There is not pity in their weapons, they do not flinch from battle for her law is binding, irrevocable.  
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one of the first generation to be her Captain, War-leader, Assembly-gatherer, ordering the supplies,  
leading the van to battle

SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE WARS

All this she gave him when she set up their Company, she has said,

"Now it is in your hands, my spell will hold them bound, they must obey my will. You are supreme, my  
one husband, your word will hold the rebel horde.'

"She has given to him the Tablets of Fate and fastened them on to his breast,  
"Now and for ever more your word is irrevocable, your judgments will last! They will quench the fire and  
the swinging mace will fail of its power.'

"So Kingu has received the authority that belonged before to Anu, they have confirmed in their several  
natures the brood of monsters.

"I sent Anu but he could not face her, Nudimmud came flying back in terror, then Marduk stood up, a  
wise god, one of your lineage, his heart has compelled him to set out and face Tiamat but first he said  
this,

"Creator of the gods who decides their destiny, if I must be your avenger, defeating Tiamat, saving your  
lives,

"Call the Assembly, give me precedence over all the rest; and when you sit down to pass your decrees,  
cheerfully sit in Ubshukinna, the Hall of the Synod, now and for ever let my word be law;

"I, not you, will decide the world's nature, the things to come. My decrees shall never be altered, never  
annulled, but my creation endures to the ends of the world.

"Come soon and confirm the destiny of Marduk and the sooner he is off to meet the Great Adversary."

He left and took his way down to Lahmu and Lahamu, stooping he kissed the primeval sediments, bowed  
to the ground at their feet and delivered the message to old gods,  
'I have been sent here by your son Anu, I am charged to tell you his secret thoughts.



'She loathes us, our mother Tiamat has raised up that Company, she rages in turbulence and all have joined her, all those gods whom you begot.

'Together they jostle the ranks to match with Tiamat, day and night furiously they plot, the growling roaring rout, ready for battle, while the Old Hag, the first mother, mothers a new brood.

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"Come soon and confirm the destiny of Marduk and the sooner he is off to meet the Great Adversary."

When Lahmu and Lahamu heard this they muttered together, all the gods moaned with distress, 'What a strange and terrible decision, the coil of Tiamat is too deep for us to fathom.'

Then they prepared for the journey, all the gods who determine the nature of the world and of things to come came in to Anshar, the filled Ubshukinna, greeted each other with a kiss.

In the Hall of the Synod the ancestral voices were heard, they sat down to the banquet, they ate the feast, they drank the new-drawn liquor and the tubes through which they sucked dripped with intoxicating wine.

Their souls expanded, their bodies grew heavy and drowsy; and this was the state of the gods when they settled the fate of Marduk.

## **TABLET IV**

They set up a throne for Marduk and he sat down facing his forefathers to receive the government.

'One god is greater than all great gods,  
a fairer fame, the word of command,  
the word from heaven, O Marduk,  
greater than all great gods, the honor  
and the fame, the will of Anu, great  
command, unaltering and eternal word!

Where there is action the first to act,  
where there is government the first to govern;  
to glorify some, to humiliate some,  
that is the gift of the god,  
Truth absolute, unbounded will;  
which god dares question it?  
In their beautiful places a place  
is kept for you, Marduk, our avenger.

'We have called you here to receive the scepter, to make you king of the whole universe. When you sit down in the Synod you are the arbiter; in the battle your weapon crushes the enemy.

'Lord, save the life of any god who turns to you; but as for the one who grasped evil, from that one let his life drain out.'

The conjured then a kind of apparition and made it appear in front of him, and they said to Marduk, the first-born son,

'Lord, your word among the gods arbitrates, destroys, creates: then speak and this apparition will disappear. Speak again, again it will appear.'

He spoke and the apparition disappeared. Again he spoke and it appeared again. When the gods had proved his word they blessed him and cried,

'MARDUK IS KING!'

They robed him in robes of a king, the scepter and the throne they gave him, and matchless war-weapons as a shield against the adversary.

'Be off. Slit life from Tiamat, and may the winds carry her blood to the world's secret ends.'

The old gods had assigned to Bel what he would be and what he should do, always conquering, always succeeding;

Then Marduk made a bow and strung it to be his own weapon, he set the arrow against the bow-string, in his right hand he grasped the mace and lifted it up, bow and quiver hung at his side, lightnings played in front of him, he was altogether an incandescent.

He netted a net, a snare for Tiamat; the winds from their quarters held it, south wind, north, east wind, west, and no part of Tiamat could escape.

With the net, the gift of Anu, held close to his side, he himself raised up

IMHULLU

the atrocious wind, the tempest, the whirlwind, the hurricane, the wind of four and the wind of seven, the tumid wind worst of all.

All seven winds were created and released to savage the guts of Tiamat, they towered behind him. Then the tornado

ABUBA

his last great ally, the signal for assault, he lifted up.

He mounted the storm, his terrible chariot, reins hitched to the side, yoked four in hand the appalling team, sharp poisoned teeth, the Killer, the Pitiless, Trampler, Haste, they knew arts of plunder, skills of murder.

He posted on his right the Batterer, best in the mêlée; on his left the Battle-fury that blasts the bravest, lapped in this armor, a leaping terror, a ghastly aureole; with a magic word clenched between his lips, a

healing plant pressed in his palm, this lord struck out.

He took his route towards the rising sound of Tiamat's rage, and all the gods besides, the fathers of the gods pressed in around him, and the lord approached Tiamat.

He surveyed her scanning the Deep, he sounded the plan of Kingu her consort; but so soon as Kingu sees him he falters, flusters, and the friendly gods who filled the ranks beside him- when they saw the brave hero, their eyes suddenly blurred,

But Tiamat without turning her neck roared, spitting defiance from bitter lips,  
'Upstart, do you think yourself too great? Are they scurrying now from their holes to yours?'

Then the lord raised the hurricane, the great weapon he flung his words at the termagant fury, 'Why are you rising, your pride vaulting, your heart set on faction, so that sons reject fathers? Mother of all, why did you have to mother war?

'You made that bungler your husband, Kingu! You gave him the rank, not his by right, of Anu. You have abused the gods my ancestors, in bitter malevolence you threaten Anshar, the king of all the gods.

'You have marshaled forces for battle, prepared the war-tackle. Stand up alone and we will fight it you, you and I alone in battle.'

When Tiamat heard him her wits scattered, she was possessed and shrieked aloud, her legs shook from the crotch down, she gabbled spells, muttered maledictions, while the gods of war sharpened their weapons.

Then they met: Marduk, that cleverest of gods, and Tiamat grappled alone in singled fight.

The lord shot his net to entangle Tiamat, and the pursuing tumid wind, Imhullu, came from behind and beat in her face. When the mouth gaped open to suck him down he drove Imhullu in, so that the mouth would not shut but wind raged through her belly; her carcass blown up, tumescent,. She gaped- And now he shot the arrow that split the belly, that pierced the gut and cut the womb.

Now that the Lord had conquered Tiamat he ended her life, he flung her down and straddled the carcass; the leader was killed, Tiamat was dead her rout was shattered, her band dispersed.

Those gods who had marched beside her now quaked in terror, and to save their own lives, if they could, they turned their backs on danger But they were surrounded, held in a tight circle, and there was no way out.

He smashed their weapons and tossed them into the net; they found themselves inside the snare, they wept in holes and hid in corners suffering the wrath of god.

When they resisted he put in chains the eleven monsters, Tiamat's unholy brood, and all their murderous armament. The demoniac band that has marched in front of her he trampled in the ground;

But Kingu the usurper, he chief of them, he bound and made death's god. He took the Tables of Fate, usurped without right, and sealed them with his seal to wear on his own breast.

When it was accomplished, the adversary vanquished, the haughty enemy humiliated; when the triumph of Anshar was accomplished on the enemy, and the will of Nudimmud was fulfilled, the n brave Marduk tightened the ropes of the prisoners.

He turned back to where Tiamat lay bound, he straddled the legs and smashed her skull ( for the mace was merciless), he severed the arteries and the blood streamed down the north wind to the unknown ends of the world.

When the gods saw all this they laughed out loud, and they sent him presents. They sent him their thankful tributes.

The lord rested; he gazed at the huge body, pondering how to use it, what to create from the dead carcass. He split it apart like a cockle-shell; with the upper half he constructed the arc of sky, he pulled down the bar and set a watch on the waters, so t hey should never escape.

He crossed the sky to survey the infinite distance; he station himself above apsu, that apsu built by Nudimmud over the old abyss which now he surveyed, measuring out and marking in.

He stretched the immensity of the firmament, he made Esharra, the Great Palace, to be its earthly image, and Anu and Enlil and Ea had each their right stations.

## **TABLET V**

He projected positions for the Great Gods conspicuous in the sky, he gave them a starry aspect as constellations; he measure the year, gave it a beginning and an end, and to each month of the twelve three rising stars.

When he had marked the limits of the year, he gave them Nebiru, the pole of the universe, to hold their course, that never erring they should not stray through the sky. For the seasons of Ea and Enlil he drew the parallel.

Through her ribs he opened gates in the east and west, and gave them strong bolts on the right and left; and high in the belly of Tiamat he set the zenith.

He gave the moon the luster of a jewel, he gave him all the night, to mark off days, to watch by night each month the circle of a waxing waning light.

'New Moon, when you rise on the world, six days your horns are crescent, until half-circle on the seventh, waxing still phase follows phase, you will divide the month from full to full.

'Then wane, a gibbous light that fails, until low down on the horizon sun oversails you, drawing close his shadow lies across you, then dark of the moon- at thirty days the cycle's second starts again and follows

through for ever and for ever.

'This is your emblem and the road you take, and when you close the sun, speak of both of you with justice judgment uncorrupt...

[some lines are missing here]

When Marduk had sent out the moon, he took the sun and set him to complete the cycle from this one to the next New Year.

...He gave him the Eastern Gate, and the ends of the night with the day, he gave to Shamash.

Then Marduk considered Tiamat. He skimmed spume from the bitter sea, heaped up the clouds, spindrift of wet and wind and cooling rain, the spittle of Tiamat.

With his own hands from the steaming mist he spread the clouds. He pressed hard down the head of water, heaping mountains over it, opening springs to flow: Euphrates and Tigris rose from her eyes, but he closed the nostrils and held back their springhead.

He piled huge mountains on her paps and through them drove water-holes to channel the deep sources; and high overhead he arched her tail, locked-in to the wheel of heaven; the pit was under his feet, between was the crotch, the sky's fulcrum. Now the earth had foundations and the sky its mantle.

When god's work was done, when he had fashioned it all and finished, then on earth he founded temples and made them over to Ea;

But the Temples of destiny taken from Kingu he returned as a first greeting to Anu; and those gods who hung up their weapons defeated, whom he had scattered, now fettered, he drove into his presence, the father of the gods.

With the weapons of war broken, he bound to his foot the eleven, Tiamat's monstrous creation. He made likenesses of them all and now they stand at the gate of the abyss, the Apsu Gate; he said, 'This is for recollection for Tiamat shall not be forgotten.'

All the generations of the Great Gods when they saw him were full of joy, with Lahmu and Lahamu; their hearts bounded when they came over to meet him.

King Anshar made him welcome with ceremony, Anu and Enlil came carrying presents; but when his mother Damkina sent her present, then he glowed, an incandescence lit his face.

He gave to her servant Usmu, who brought the greeting, charge of the secret house of Apsu; he made him warden of the sanctuaries of Eridu.

All the heavenly gods were there, all the Igigi fell prostrate in front of him, all that were there of the Anunnaki kissed his feet. The whole order came in together to worship.

They stood in front of him, low they bowed and they shouted

'He is king indeed!'

When all the gods in their generations were drunk with the glamour of the manhood of Marduk, when they has seen his clothing spoiled with the dust of battle, then they made their act of obedience...

He bathed and put on clean robes, for he was their king... A glory was round his head; in his right hand he held the mace of war, in his left grasped the scepter of peace, the bow was slung on his back; he held the net, and his glory touched the abyss...

He mounted the throne raised up in the temple. Damkina and Ea and all the Great Gods, all the Igigi shouted,

'In time past Marduk meant only "the beloved son" but now he is king indeed, this is so!'

They shouted together,

'GREAT LORD OF THE UNIVERSE!

This is his name, in him we trust.'

When it was done, when they had made Marduk their king, they pronounced peace and happiness for him,

'Over our houses you keep unceasing watch, and all you wish from us, that will be done.'

Marduk considered and began to speak to the gods assembled in his presence. This is what he said, 'In the former time you inhabited the void above the abyss, but I have made Earth as the mirror of Heaven, I have consolidated the soil for the foundations, and there I will build my city, my beloved home.

'A holy precinct shall be established with sacred halls for the presence of the king. When you come up from the deep to join the Synod you will find lodging and sleep by night.

'When others from heaven descend to the Assembly, you too will find lodging and sleep by night. It shall be

BABYLON

the home of the gods. The masters of all crafts shall build it according to my plan.'

When the older of the gods had heard this speech they had still one question to ask:

'Over these things that your hands have formed, who will administer law? Over all this earth that you have made, who is to sit in judgment?

'You have given your Babylon a lucky name, let it be our home for ever! Let the fallen gods day after day serve us; and as we enforce your will let no one else usurp our office.'

Marduk, Tiamat's conqueror, was glad; the bargain was good; he went on speaking his arrogant words explaining it all to the gods,

'They will perform this service, day after day, and you shall enforce my will as law.'

H3Then the gods worshipped in front of him, and to him again, to the king of the whole universe they cried aloud,

'This great lord was once our son, now he is our king. We invoked him once for very life, he who is the lord, the blaze of light, the scepter of peace and of war the mace.

'Let Ea be his architect and draw the excellent plan, his bricklayers are we!'

## **TABLET VI**

Now that Marduk has heard what it is the gods are saying, he is moved with desire to create a work of consummate art. He told Ea the deep thought in his heart.

'Blood to blood I join,  
blood to bone I join from an original thing,  
its name is MAN, aboriginal man  
is mine in making.

'All his occupations are faithful service,  
the gods that fell have rest,  
I will subtly alter their operations,  
divided companies equally blest.'

Ea answered with carefully chosen words, completing the plan for the gods' comfort. He said to Marduk, 'Let one of the kindred be taken; only one need die for the new creation. Bring the gods together in the Great Assembly; there let the guilt die, so the rest may live.'

Marduk called the Great Gods to the Synod; he presided courteously, he gave instructions and all of them listened with grave attention.

The king speaks to the rebel gods,  
'Declare on your oath if ever before you spoke the truth, who instigated rebellion? Who stirred up Tiamat? Who led the battle? Let the instigator of war be handed over; guilt and retribution are on him, and peace will be yours for ever.'

The great Gods answered the Lord of the Universe, the king and counselor of gods,  
'It was Kingu who instigated rebellion, he stirred up that sea of bitterness and led the battle for her.'

They declared him guilty, they bound and held him down in front of Ea, they cut his arteries and from his blood they created man; and Ea imposed his servitude.



When it was done, when Ea in his wisdom had created man and man's burden, this thing was past comprehension, this marvel of subtlety conceived by Marduk and executed by Nudimmud.

Then Marduk, as king, divided the gods: one host below and another above, three hundred above for the watchers of heaven, watchers of the law of Anu; five times sixty for earth, six hundred gods between earth and heaven.

When universal law was set up and the gods allotted their calling, then the Anunnaki, the erstwhile fallen, opened their mouths to speak to Marduk:

'Now that you have freed us and remitted our labor how shall we make a return for this? Let us build a temple and call it

## THE-INN-OF-REST-BY-NIGHT

'There we will sleep at the season of the year, at the Great Festival when we from the Assembly; we will build alters for him, we will build the Parakku, the Sanctuary.'

When Marduk heard this his face shone like broad day:

'Tall Babel Tower, it shall be built as you desire; bricks shall be set in molds and you shall name it Parakku, the Sanctuary.'

The Anunnaki gods took up the tools, one whole year long they set bricks in molds; by the second year they had raised its head ESAGILA, it towered, the earthly temple, the symbol of infinite heaven.

Inside were lodgings for Marduk and Enlil and Ea. Majestically he took his seat in the presence of them all, where the head of the ziggurat looked down to the foot.

When that building was finished the Anunnaki built themselves chapels; then all came in together and Marduk set out the banquet.

'This is Babylon, "dear city of the gods", your beloved home!  
The length and breadth are ours, possess it, enjoy it, it is your own.'

When all the gods sat down together there was wine and feasting and laughter; and after the banquet in beautiful Esagila they performed the liturgy from which the universe receives its structure, the occult is made plain, and through the universe gods are assigned their places.

When the Fifty Great Gods had sat down with the Seven who design the immutable nature of things, they raised up three hundred into heaven. It was then too that Enlil lifted the bow of Marduk and laid it in front of them.

He also lifted the net; they praised the workmanship now that they saw the intricacy of the net and the beauty of the bow.

Anu lifted the bow and kissed it, he said before all the gods,

'This is my daughter.'

And this was the naming of the bow-

'One is for Long-wood, two for the Rain-bow, three is for Starry-bow glittering above.' And Starry-bow was a god among gods.

When Anu had pronounced the bow's triple destiny he lifted up the king's throne and set Marduk above in the gods' Assembly.

Among themselves they uttered an execration, by oil and by water, pricking their throats, to abide its fate on pain of death.

They ratified his authority as King of Kings, Lord of the Lords of the Universe. Anshar praised him, he called him ASARLUHI, the name that is first, the highest name.

'We will wait and listen, we bend and worship his name!

His word is the last appeal, his writ will run from the zenith to the pit.

All glory to the son, our avenger!

His empire has no end, shepherd of men,  
he made them his creatures to the last of time,  
they must remember.

He shall command hecatombs, for the gods,  
they shall commend food, for the fathers,  
and cherish the sanctuary  
where the odor of incense and whisper of liturgy  
echo on earth the customs of heaven.

Black-headed men will adore him on earth,  
the subjected shall remember their god,  
at his word they shall worship the goddess.

Let offerings of food not fail  
for god and goddess, at his command.

Let them serve the gods, at his command,  
work their lands, build their houses.

Let black-headed men serve the gods on earth  
without remission; while as for us,  
in the multitude of his names  
he is our god.

Let us hail him in his names,  
let us hail him by his fifty names, one god.'

The Hymn of the Fifty Names of Marduk

MARDUK is One,  
he is Son of the Sun,  
he is the first, the sunburst.

Pasture and pool,  
and the byres full,  
torrents of rain that hammered the enemy.

Most shining one,

Son of the Sun,  
the gods are walking always in the flame of his light.

He created man  
a living thing  
to labor for ever, and gods go free,

to make to break  
to love and to save,  
to Marduk all power and praise!

MARUKKA is Two  
hammering out the whole creation  
to ease the gods in tribulation.

MARUTUKKU is Three,  
his praises are heard on every hand,  
the armed child who shields the land.

BARASHAKUSHU is Fourth,  
who stood at need to bridle earth,  
his spirit stoops, his heart is love.

LUGALDIMMERANKIA is Five,  
King of the Cosmos!  
Over the universe he is acclaimed  
by that Great Company his wrath had shamed  
Almighty God!

NARI is Six, the Deliverer,  
he is our conscience, for once  
in our trouble he brought us peace  
and a safe haven;  
Anunnaki, Igigi, from the pit  
and in heaven,  
hearing this name secretly quake.

ASARULUDU is Seven,  
the Great Magician, this title came from Anu;  
in time of peril, their good leader,

By the deadly duel he fetched them rest.

NAMTILLAKU is Eight,  
in the shadow of death he discovered life;  
it was as though they were made  
all new; conjured from death at his word until  
the reckless rout submit to his will.

NAMRU is Nine, the gods go a-walking  
in the furnace of his beauty.

Voices of older days have spoken; Lahmu, Lahamu, Anshar have spoken, each of them uttered three names; they said to the children,  
'Three names he has from each of us, three names he needs from you.'

As once before in Synod in Ubshukinna, at the place of decision, the young gods eagerly talked together,  
'He is the hero, our son, our avenger, we will praise the name of our defender.'

They sat down together to shape his destiny, and all of them chanted his names in the Sanctuary.

## **TABLET VII**

The Hymn, continued.

ASARU cultivates the sown,  
conducts water by small channels  
for seed-time, for shooting green  
and harvest grain.

ASARUALIM, the gods in fear and hope  
at Council turn to him.  
He is the light, ASARUALIM NUNNA,  
light of the glory of his father;  
he is the law of Anu and Enlil and Ea,  
he is fullness and plenty,  
the gods grow fat on his bounty.

TUTU is life renewed  
that sweetens the sanctuary; should wrath  
once more rouse up their company  
he teaches them to repeat the charm  
that lulls to sleep,  
he has no peer in that Assembly.

ZIUKKINNA lives in every god,  
he made the skies their happiness,  
he holds them to their bliss;  
below the clouds dull men  
remember him,

for this is ZIKU the kernel of life,

sweet breath of grace, abundance,  
benevolence, unbelievable wealth  
changing famine to plenty;  
we breathed his sweetness  
in our extremity.

We will speak of the mighty,  
we will sing the song of his glory.

AGAKU, the love and the wrath,  
with living words he quickens the dead,  
he pitied fallen gods,  
remitted the labor laid on the adversary.  
For your relief he made mankind, his words  
endure, he is kind, he has power  
of life, it is in the mouth  
of black-headed men who remember him.

But also this is TUKU,  
they mutter his anathemas  
who overwhelmed evil  
with mysterious words.

As SHAZU he made the heart,  
he sees the marrow,  
no sinner escapes his scrutiny.  
He has formed the Assembly and spread his protection,  
he oversees justice and subdues rebellion,  
he has rooted out malice;  
wherever he goes the wrong and the right  
stand separate.

As one who reads the heart this too  
is ZISI, a name that hushed the rebel horde,  
out of the body of older gods  
drove freezing fear, freeing his fathers, for

SUHRIM is the missile  
that extinguished them,  
the abject band that cringe from him,  
their schemes forestalled, and flying  
in the wind.  
Be glad you gods, be glad!

He is SUHGURIM who can destroy,  
but is an open court to hear all causes;  
old gods created new, the enemy erased  
and to the children's children  
nothing is left of them  
or what they did; his name alone

answers the summons of the world.

ZAHRIM, the destroyer, lives!  
Iniquity is dead, he has found out  
the enemy; when the gods fled  
he brought them home, each  
to his own, and by this name is known.

ZAHGURIM, savior destroyer,  
terrible title, his enemy fallen  
as it were on the field of battle.

ENBILULU, health to the gods and wealth!  
He called their names, he called  
for hecatombs roast in flames,  
he planned the pastures,  
sank wells and freed the waters.

He is EPADUN gathering moisture  
from sky and earth to wash down the furrows,  
watering ploughland with sluices  
with dams and dikes in irrigation.

Enbilulu is hymned as GUGAL,  
in the orchards of the gods  
he watches the canals, he fills  
the store-room with sesame, emmer,  
abundant grain.

And he is HEGAL,  
heaping up wealth for all people,  
into the world he sends sweet rain  
and greenness...

As SIRSIR he seized the carcass,  
he carried off Chaos meshed in his snare,  
and heaped on her mountains.  
Overseer of the world and faithful shepherd,  
where his brow is furrowed,  
like a shock of hair the corn  
waves up; where the vast ocean  
rises in anger, he vaults her as a bridge  
thrown over the place where duel was fought.

He is also called MALAH, and many another;  
the sour sea is his skiff who captains the hulk.

A heap of grain is GIL, barley and sesame

doled out for the land's good.

This is GILMA, the unquenchable fire  
that tempers the eternity of their dwelling,  
and for their safety is braced as the hoop holding the barrel.

This is AGILMA,  
who from the tearing surf creates  
over the waters clouds  
to guard the unchanging sky.

ZULUM cuts into clay,  
allots the acres, grants the tithes.

This MUMMU is the creative word,  
the life of the universe.

GISHNUMUNAB, the seed, created  
races of men from the world's quarters.  
From the wreck of Tiamat's rout,  
from the stuff of fallen gods  
he made mankind.

He is LUGALABDUBUR  
who came as king to confront Chaos,  
her forces wither before him for he is steadfast,  
the foundations are firm in every direction.

PAPALGUENNA, Lord of Lords,  
most sublime god, he rules his brothers.

LUGALDURMAH, at the navel of the world  
where heaven and earth are held  
by the cord; where the high gods gather,  
his greatness ranks higher than all.

ARANUNNA< Counselor, with his father EA  
peerless in his sovereign manner,  
he created gods.

DUMUDUKU is the bright mountain,  
Dumuduku, the presence in the temple,  
at the place of decision where nothing is decided  
except with him.

LUGALLANNA, he is strong  
with the charge of heaven,  
conspicuous among gods

even more than Anshar who called him out,  
called one from all.

LUGALUGGA, King Death!

He took them at the crisis, at the maelstrom;  
the encompassing intellect, the mid full-stretched.

IRKINGU, in the battle-fury he bore away the bungler;  
he created law and law now rules creation.

KINMA, advisor and leader,  
his name strikes terror in gods, the roar of the tornado.

ESIZKUR, up there he sits  
in the chapel of prayer, at the Great Festival,  
when the gods all come, presents are given, duties imposed.  
Unless he is by nothing is created  
subtle or beautiful, but when he would  
man was made in the quarters of the world,  
without him the gods  
would not know their hour.

He is GIBIL, the furnace in which the point  
is tempered; lightnings forged  
the weapons[ of war against Tiamat;  
the gods will never sound  
the reaches of his mind.

His name is also ADDU,  
wet weather and the welcome storm,  
the kindly roar of thunder  
hovering over earth.  
After the storm the clouds break up  
at his word, and under heaven  
all people daily have their bread from him.

ASHARU guides the gods of Fate;  
all other gods he guards.

As NEBIRU he projected the stars  
in their orbit, the wandering gods obey  
the laws of passage.  
Nebiru, at the still centre,  
is the god they adore;  
of this starry one they say

'He who once crossed the firmament tirelessly  
now is the nub of the universe,



and all the other gods hold course  
on him; he shall fold  
the gods like a flock  
and conquer Tiamat.  
Let her life be narrow and short,  
let her recede into the future  
far-off from man-kind,  
till time is old, keep her  
for ever absent.'

Because he had molded matter and created the ether, his father, named him  
Bel Matati, Lord of this World.  
With his own name he signed him when the gods of heaven ended the hymn.

Now too Ea having heard rejoiced,  
'The Great Gods have glorified my son, he is Ea, names by my name, he will execute my will and direct  
my rites.'

HANSHA! With fifty names the gods proclaimed him.

HANSHA! With fifty they names him, the one who is first and fares farthest!

## **Epilogue**

Remember the Titles of Marduk!

Rulers will recite them, wise men and sages debate them, father to son repeat them, even shepherds and  
herdsmen shall hear them.

Let men rejoice in Marduk! The prince of the gods. Man and earth will prosper, for his rule is strong, his  
command is firm, none of the gods can alter his will; where his eyes have fixed they do not falter.

There is no god can bear his anger, his intellect is vast and his benevolence; sinners and such trash he  
will blast his presence; not so the wide teacher to whose words we listen; he wrote it down, he saved it for  
time to come.

Let the Igigi who built his dwelling, let the gods speak: this was the song of Marduk who defeated Tiamat  
and attained sovereignty.

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