The Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia

The Gifford Lectures On the Ancient Egyptian and Babylonian Conception of the Divine Delivered in Aberdeen



ARCHIBALD HENRY SAYCE

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The Religions of

Ancient Egypt and Babylonia

The Gifford Lectures on the Ancient Egyptian and Babylonian Conception of the Divine

Delivered in Aberdeen

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Preface.

The subject of the following Lectures was "The Conception of the Divine among the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians," and in writing them I have kept this aspect of them constantly in view. The time has not yet come for a systematic history of Babylonian religion, whatever may be the case as regards ancient Egypt, and, for reasons stated in the text, we must be content with general principles and fragmentary details.

It is on this account that so little advance has been made in grasping the real nature and characteristics of Babylonian religion, and that a sort of natural history description of it

has been supposed to be all that is needed by the student of religion. While reading over again my Hibbert Lectures, as well as later works on the subject, I have been gratified at finding how largely they have borrowed from me, even though it be without acknowledgment. But my Hibbert Lectures were necessarily a pioneering work, and we must now attempt to build on the materials which were there brought together. In the present volume, therefore, the materials are presupposed; they will be found for the most part either in my Hibbert Lectures or in the cuneiform texts which have since been published.

We are better off, fortunately, as regards the religion of ancient Egypt. Thanks more especially to Professor Maspero's unrivalled combination of learning [pg vi] and genius, we are beginning to learn what the old Egyptian faith actually was, and what were the foundations on which it rested. The development of its dogmas can be traced, at all events to a certain extent, and we can even watch the progress of their decay.

There are two facts which, I am bound to add, have been forced upon me by a study of the old religions of civilised humanity. On the one hand, they testify to the continuity of religious thought. God's light lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and the religions of Egypt and Babylonia illustrate the words of the evangelist. They form, as it were, the background and preparation for Judaism and Christianity; Christianity is the fulfilment,

not of the Law only, but of all that was truest and best in the religions of the ancient world. In it the beliefs and aspirations of Egypt and Babylonia have found their explanation and fulfilment. But, on the other hand, between Judaism and the coarsely polytheistic religion of Babylonia, as also between Christianity and the old Egyptian faith,—in spite of its high morality and spiritual insight,—there lies an impassable gulf. And for the existence of this gulf I can find only one explanation, unfashionable and antiquated though it be. In the language of a former generation, it marks the dividing-line between revelation and unrevealed religion. It is like that "something," hard to define, yet impossible to deny, which separates man from the ape, even though on the physiological side the ape may be the ancestor of the man.

A. H. Sayce.

October 1902.

[pg 001]

Part I. The Religion Of Ancient Egypt.

Lecture I. Introduction.

It was with a considerable amount of diffidence that I accepted the invitation to deliver a course of lectures before this University, in accordance with the terms of Lord Gifford's bequest. Not only is the subject of them a wide and comprehensive one; it is one, moreover, which is full of difficulties. The materials upon which the lectures must be based are almost entirely monumental: they consist of sculptures and paintings, of objects buried with the dead or found among the ruins of temples, and, above all, of texts written in languages and characters which only a century ago were absolutely unknown. How fragmentary and mutilated such

materials must be, I need hardly point out. The Egyptian or Babylonian texts we possess at present are but a tithe of those which once existed, or even of those which will yet be discovered. Indeed, so far as the Babylonian texts are concerned, a considerable proportion of those which [pg 002] have already been stored in the museums of Europe and America are still undeciphered, and the work of thoroughly examining them will be the labour of years. And of those which have been copied and translated, the imperfections are great. Not infrequently a text is broken just where it seemed about to throw light on some problem of religion or history, or where a few more words were needed in order to explain the sense. Or again, only a single document may have survived to us out of a long series, like a single chapter out of a book, leading us to form a wholly wrong idea of the author's meaning and the object of the work he had written or compiled. We all know how dangerous it is to explain a passage apart from its context, and to what erroneous conclusions such a practice is likely to lead.

And yet it is with such broken and precarious materials that the student of the religions of the past has to work. Classical antiquity can give us but little help. In the literary age of Greece and Rome the ancient religions of Babylonia and Egypt had passed into their dotage, and the conceptions on which they were founded had been transformed or forgotten. What was left of them was little more than an empty and unintelligible husk,

or even a mere caricature. The gods, in whose name the kings of Assyria had gone forth to conquer, and in whose honour Nebuchadrezzar had reared the temples and palaces of Babylon, had degenerated into the patrons of a system of magic; the priests, who had once made and unmade the lords of the East, had become “Chaldæan” fortune-tellers, and the religion and science of Babylonia were remembered only for their connection with astrology. The old tradition had survived in Egypt with less apparent alteration, but even there the continuity of religious belief and teaching was more apparent than real, external rather than internal; and though the [pg 003] Ptolemies and early Roman emperors rebuilt the temples on the old lines, and allowed themselves to be depicted in the dress of the Pharaohs, making offerings to gods whose very names they could not have pronounced, it was all felt to be but a sham, a dressing up, as it were, in the clothes of a religion out of which all the spirit and life had fled.

Both in Egypt and in Babylonia, therefore, we are thrown back upon the monumental texts which the excavator has recovered from the soil, and the decipherer has pieced together with infinite labour and patience. At every step we are brought face to face with the imperfections of the record, and made aware how much we have to read into the story, how scanty is the evidence, how disconnected are the facts. The conclusions we form must to a large extent be theoretical and

provisional, liable to be revised and modified with the acquisition of fresh material or a more skilful combination of what is already known. We are compelled to interpret the past in the light of the present, to judge the men of old by the men of to-day, and to explain their beliefs in accordance with what seem to us the common and natural opinions of civilised humanity.

I need not point out how precarious all such attempts must necessarily be. There is nothing harder than to determine the real character of the religion of a people, even when the religion is still living. We may describe its outward characteristics, though even these are not unfrequently a matter of dispute; but the religious ideas themselves, which constitute its essence, are far more difficult to grasp and define. Indeed, it is not always easy for the individual himself to state with philosophical or scientific precision the religious beliefs which he may hold. Difficult as it is to know what another man believes, it is sometimes quite as difficult to know exactly [pg 004] what one believes one's self. Our religious ideas and beliefs are a heritage which has come to us from the past, but which has also been influenced and modified by the experiences we have undergone, by the education we have received, and, above all, by the knowledge and tendencies of our age. We seldom attempt to reduce them into a harmonious whole, to reconcile their inconsistencies, or to fit them into a consistent system. Beliefs which go back, it

may be, to the ages of barbarism, exist with but little change by the side of others which are derived from the latest revelations of physical science; and our conceptions of a spiritual world are not unfrequently an ill-assorted mixture of survivals from a time when the universe was but a small tract of the earth's surface, with an extinguisher-like firmament above it, and of the ideas which astronomy has given us of illimitable space, with its millions of worlds.

If it is difficult to understand and describe with accuracy the religions which are living in our midst, how much more difficult must it be to understand and describe the religions that have gone before them, even when the materials for doing so are at hand! We are constantly told that the past history of the particular forms of religion which we profess, has been misunderstood and misconceived; that it is only now, for example, that the true history of early Christianity is being discovered and written, or that the motives and principles underlying the Reformation are being rightly understood. The earlier phases in the history of a religion soon become unintelligible to a later generation. If we would understand them, we must have not only the materials in which the record of them has been, as it were, embodied, but also the seeing eye and the sympathetic mind which will enable us to throw ourselves back into the past, to see the world as our forefathers saw it, and to share for a time [pg 005] in their beliefs. Then and then only shall

we be able to realise what the religion of former generations actually meant, what was its inner essence as well as its outer form.

When, instead of examining and describing a past phase in the history of a still existing form of faith, we are called upon to examine and describe a form of faith which has wholly passed away, our task becomes infinitely greater. We have no longer the principle of continuity and development to help us; it is a new plant that we have to study, not the same plant in an earlier period of its growth. The fundamental ideas which form, as it were, its environment, are strange to us; the polytheism of Babylonia, or the animal-worship of Egypt, transports us to a world of ideas which stands wholly apart from that wherein we move. It is difficult for us to put ourselves in the place of those who saw no underlying unity in the universe, no single principle to which it could all be referred, or who believed that the dumb animals were incarnations of the divine. And yet, until we can do so, the religions of the two great cultured nations of the ancient world, the pioneers of the civilisation we enjoy to-day, will be for us a hopeless puzzle, a labyrinth without a clue.

Before that clue can be found, we must divest ourselves of our *modernism*. We must go back in thought and sympathy to the old Orient, and forget, so far as is possible, the intervening ages of history and development, and the mental and moral differences between the East and the West. I say so far as is

possible, for the possibility is relative only. No man can shake off the influences of the age and country of which he is the child; we cannot undo our training and education, or root out the inherited instincts with which we were born. We cannot put back the hand of time, nor can the [pg 006] Ethiopian change his skin. All we can do is to suppress our own prejudices, to rid ourselves of baseless assumptions and prepossessions, and to interpret such evidence as we have honestly and literally. Above all, we must possess that power of sympathy, that historical imagination, as it is sometimes called, which will enable us to realise the past, and to enter, in some degree, into its feelings and experiences.

The first fact which the historian of religion has to bear in mind is, that religion and morality are not necessarily connected together. The recent history of religion in Western Europe, it is true, has made it increasingly difficult for us to understand this fact, especially in days when systems of morality have been put forward as religions in themselves. But between religion and morality there is not necessarily any close tie. Religion has to do with a power outside ourselves, morality with our conduct one to another. The civilised nations of the world have doubtless usually regarded the power that governs the universe as a moral power, and have consequently placed morality under the sanction of religion. But the power may also be conceived of as non-moral, or even as

immoral; the blind law of destiny, to which, according to Greek belief, the gods themselves were subject, was necessarily non-moral; while certain Gnostic sects accounted for the existence of evil by the theory that the creator-god was imperfect, and therefore evil in his nature. Indeed, the cruelties perpetrated by what we term nature have seemed to many so contrary to the very elements of moral law, as to presuppose that the power which permits and orders them is essentially immoral. Zoroastrianism divided the world between a god of good and a god of evil, and held that, under the present dispensation at all events, the god of evil was, on the whole, the stronger power.

[pg 007]
It is strength rather than goodness that primitive man admires, worships, and fears. In the struggle for existence, at any rate in its earlier stages, physical strength plays the most important part. The old instinctive pride of strength which enabled our first ancestors to battle successfully against the forces of nature and the beasts of the forest, still survives in the child and the boy. The baby still delights to pull off the wings and legs of the fly that has fallen into its power; and the hero of the playground is the strongest athlete, and not the best scholar or the most virtuous of schoolboys. A sudden outbreak of political fury like that which characterised the French Revolution shows how thin is the varnish of conventional morality which covers the passions of civilised man, and Christian

Europe still makes the battlefield its court of final appeal. Like the lower animals, man is still governed by the law which dooms the weaker to extinction or decay, and gives the palm of victory to the strong. In spite of all that moralists may say and preach, power and not morality still governs the world.

We need not wonder, therefore, that in the earliest forms of religion we find little or no traces of the moral element. What we term morality was, in fact, a slow growth. It was the necessary result of life in a community. As long as men lived apart one from the other, there was little opportunity for its display or evolution. But with the rise of a community came also the development of a moral law. In its practical details, doubtless, that law differed in many respects from the moral law which we profess to obey to-day. It was only by slow degrees that the sacredness of the marriage tie or of family life, as we understand it, came to be recognised. Among certain tribes of Esquimaux there is still promiscuous intercourse between the two sexes; and wherever Mohammedanism [pg 008] extends, polygamy, with its attendant degradation of the woman, is permitted. On the other hand, there are still tribes and races in which polyandry is practised, and the child has consequently no father whom it can rightfully call its own. Until the recent conversion of the Fijians to Christianity, it was considered a filial duty for the sons to kill and devour their parents when they had become too old for work; and in the royal

family of Egypt, as among the Ptolemies who entered on its heritage, the brother was compelled by law and custom to marry his sister. Family morality, in fact, if I may use such an expression, has been slower in its development than communal morality: it was in the community and in the social relations of men to one another that the ethical sense was first developed, and it was from the community that the newly-won code of morals was transferred to the family. Man recognised that he was a moral agent in his dealings with the community to which he belonged, long before he recognised it as an individual.

Religion, however, has an inverse history. It starts from the individual, it is extended to the community. The individual must have a sense of a power outside himself, whom he is called upon to worship or propitiate, before he can rise to the idea of tribal gods. The fetish can be adored, the ancestor addressed in prayer, before the family has become the tribe, or promiscuous intercourse has passed into polygamy.

The association of morality and religion, therefore, is not only not a necessity, but it is of comparatively late origin in the history of mankind. Indeed, the union of the two is by no means complete even yet. Orthodox Christianity still maintains that correctness of belief is at least as important as correctness of behaviour, and it is not so long ago that men were punished and done [pg 009] to death, not for immoral conduct, but for refusing to

accept some dogma of the Church. In the eyes of the Creator, the correct statement of abstruse metaphysical questions was supposed to be of more importance than the fulfilment of the moral law.

The first step in the work of bringing religion and morality together was to place morality under the sanction of religion. The rules of conduct which the experiences of social life had rendered necessary or advantageous were enforced by an appeal to the terrors of religious belief. Practices which sinned against the code of social morality were put under the ban of the gods and their ministers, and those who ventured to adopt them were doomed to destruction in this world and the next. The *tapu*, which was originally confined to reserving certain places and objects for the use of the divine powers, was invoked for the protection of ethical laws, or to punish violations of them, and the curse of heaven was called down not only upon the enemy of the tribe, but upon the enemy of the moral code of the tribe as well.

Religion thus became tribal as well as personal; the religious instinct in the individual clothed itself with the forms of social life, and the religious conceptions which had gathered round the life of the family were modified and transferred to the life of the community. It was no longer only a feeling of fear or reverence on the part of the individual which made him bow down before the terrors of the supernatural and obey its behests; to this were now added all the ties

and associations connected with the life of a tribe. The ethical element was joined to the religious, and what has been termed the religious instinct or consciousness in the individual man attached itself to the rules and laws of ethical conduct. But the attachment was, in the first instance, more or less [pg 010] accidental; long ages had to pass before the place of the two elements, the ethical and religious, was reversed, and the religious sanction of the ethical code was exchanged for an ethical sanction of religion. It needed centuries of training before a Christian poet could declare: “He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

There is yet another danger against which we must guard when dealing with the religions of the past; it is that of confusing the thoughts and utterances of individuals with the common religious beliefs of the communities in which they lived. We are for the most part dependent on literary materials for our knowledge of the faiths of the ancient world, and consequently the danger of which I speak is one to which the historian of religion is particularly exposed. But it must be remembered that a literary writer is, by the very fact of his literary activity, different from the majority of his contemporaries, and that this difference in the ages before the invention of printing was greater than it is to-day. He was not only an educated man; he was also a man of exceptional culture. He was a man whose thoughts and sayings were considered worthy of being remembered, who

could think for himself, and whose thoughts were listened to by others. His abilities or genius raised him above the ordinary level; his ideas, accordingly, could not be the ideas of the multitude about him, nor could he, from the nature of the case, express them in the same way. The poets or theologians of Egypt and Babylonia were necessarily original thinkers, and we cannot, therefore, expect to find in their writings merely a reflection of the beliefs or superstitions of those among whom they lived.

To reconstruct the religion of Egypt from the literary works of which a few fragments have come down to us, would be like reconstructing the religion of this country [pg 011] in the last century from a few tattered pages of Hume or Burns, of Dugald Stewart or Sir Walter Scott. The attempts to show that ancient Egyptian religion was a sublime monotheism, or an enlightened pantheism which disguised itself in allegories and metaphors, have their origin in a confusion between the aspirations of individual thinkers and the actual religion of their time. There are indeed literary monuments rescued from the wreck of ancient Egyptian culture which embody the highest and most spiritual conceptions of the Godhead, and use the language of the purest monotheism. But such monuments represent the beliefs and ideas of the cultured few rather than of the Egyptians as a whole, or even of the majority of the educated classes. They set before us the highest point to which the individual

Egyptian could attain in his spiritual conceptions—not the religion of the day as it was generally believed and practised. To regard them as representing the popular faith of Egypt, would be as misleading as to suppose that Socrates or Plato were faithful exponents of Athenian religion.

That this view of the literary monuments of ancient Egypt is correct, can be shown from two concrete instances. On the one side, there is the curious attempt made by Amon-hotep IV., of the Eighteenth Dynasty, to revolutionise Egyptian religion, and to replace the old religion of the State by a sort of monotheistic pantheism. The hymns addressed to the solar disk—the visible symbol of the new God—breathe an exalted spirituality, and remind us of passages in the Hebrew Scriptures. “O God,” we read in one of them. “O God, who in truth art the living one, who standest before our eyes; thou created that which was not, thou formest it all”; “We also have come into being through the word of thy mouth.”

[pg 012]
But all such language was inspired by a cult which was not Egyptian, and which the Egyptians themselves regarded as an insult to their national deity, and a declaration of war against the priesthood of Thebes. Hardly was its royal patron consigned to his tomb when the national hatred burst forth against those who still adhered to the new faith; the temple and city of the solar disk were levelled with the ground, and the body of the heretic

Pharaoh himself was torn in pieces. Had the religious productions of the court of Amon-hotep IV. alone survived to us, we should have formed out of them a wholly false picture of the religion of ancient Egypt, and ascribed to it doctrines which were held only by a few individuals at only one short period of its history,—doctrines, moreover, which were detested and bitterly resented by the orthodox adherents of the old creeds.

My other example is taken from a class of literature which exists wherever there is a cultured society and an ancient civilisation. It is the literature of scepticism, of those minds who cannot accept the popular notions of divinity, who are critically contemptuous of time-honoured traditions, and who find it impossible to reconcile the teaching of the popular cult with the daily experiences of life. It is not so much that they deny or oppose the doctrines of the official creed, as that they ignore them. Their scepticism is that of Epicurus rather than of the French encyclopædists. Let the multitude believe in its gods and its priests, so long as they themselves are not forced to do the same.

Egypt had its literary sceptics like Greece or Rome. Listen, for instance, to the so-called Song of the Harper, written as long ago as the age of the Eleventh Dynasty, somewhere about 2500 B.C. This is how a part of it runs in Canon Rawnsley's metrical translation, [pg 013] which faithfully preserves the spirit and sense of the original—[1]

"What is fortune? say the wise.
Vanished are the hearths
and homes;
What he does or thinks, who
dies,
None to tell us comes

Eat and drink in peace to-day,
When you go your goods
remain;
He who fares the last long way,
Comes not back again."

The Song of the Harper is not the only fragment of the sceptical literature of Egypt which we possess. At a far later date, a treatise was written in which, under the thinly-veiled form of a fable the dogmas of the national faith were controverted and overthrown. It takes the form of a dialogue between an Ethiopian cat—the representative of all that was orthodox and respectable in Egyptian society—and a jackal, who is made the mouthpiece of heretical unbelief.[2] But it is clear that the sympathies of the author are with the sceptic rather than with the believer; and it is the cat and not the jackal who is worsted in argument. In this first controversy between authority and reason, authority thus comes off second best, and just as Epicurus has a predecessor in the author of the Song of the Harper, so Voltaire has a predecessor in the author of the dialogue.

Here, again, it is obvious that if only these two specimens of Egyptian theological literature had been preserved, we should have

carried away with us a very erroneous idea of ancient Egyptian belief—or unbelief. Who could have imagined that the Egyptians were a people who had elaborated a minutely-detailed description of the world beyond the grave, and who believed [pg 014] more intensely perhaps than any other people has done either before or since in a future life? Who could have supposed that their religion inculcated a belief not only in the immortality of the soul or spirit, but in the resurrection of the body as well; and that they painted the fields of the blessed to which they looked forward after death as a happier and a sunnier Egypt, a land of light and gladness, of feasting and joy? We cannot judge what Egyptian religion was like merely from the writings of some of its literary men, or build upon them elaborate theories as to what priest and layman believed. In dealing with the fragments of Egyptian literature, we must ever bear in mind that they represent, not the ideas of the mass of the people, but the conceptions of the cultured few.

But there is still another error into which we may fall. It is that of attaching too literal a meaning to the language of theology. The error is the natural result of the reaction from the older methods of interpretation, which found allegories in the simplest of texts, and mystical significations in the plainest words. The application of the scientific method to the records of the past brought with it a recognition that an ancient writer meant what he said quite as much as a writer of to-day,

and that to read into his language the arbitrary ideas of a modern hierophant might be an attractive pastime, but not a serious occupation. Before we can hope to understand the literature of the past, we must try to discover what is its literal and natural meaning, unbiassed by prejudices or prepossessions, or even by the authority of great names. Theologians have been too fond of availing themselves of the ambiguities of language, and of seeing in a text more than its author either knew or dreamt of. Unless we have express testimony to the contrary, it is no more permissible to find parables and [pg 015] metaphorical expressions in an old Egyptian book than it is in the productions of the modern press.

But, on the other hand, it is possible to press this literalism too far. Language, it has been said, is a storehouse of faded metaphors; and if this is true of language in general, it is still more true of theological language. We can understand the spiritual and the abstract only through the help of the material; the words by which we denote them must be drawn, in the first instance, from the world of the senses. Just as in the world of sense itself the picture that we see or the music that we hear comes to us through the nerves of sight and hearing, so all that we know or believe of the moral and spiritual world is conveyed to us through sensuous and material channels. Thought is impossible without the brain through which it can act, and we cannot convey to others or even to ourselves our conceptions of right and

wrong, of beauty and goodness, without having recourse to analogies from the world of phenomena, to metaphor and imagery, to parable and allegory. What is “conception” itself but a “grasping with both hands,” or “parable” but a “throwing by the side of”? If we would deal with the spiritual and moral, we *must* have recourse to metaphorical forms of speech. A religion is necessarily built up on a foundation of metaphor.

To interpret such metaphors in their purely natural sense would therefore land us in gross error. Unfortunately, modern students of the religious history of the past have not always been careful to avoid doing so. Misled by the fact that language often enshrines old beliefs and customs which have otherwise passed out of memory, they have forgotten that a metaphor is not necessarily a survival, or a survival a metaphor. In the hieroglyphic texts discovered in the Pyramids of the [pg 016] sixth Egyptian dynasty, Sahu or Orion, the huntsman of the skies, is said to eat the great gods in the morning, the lesser gods at noon and the smaller ones at night, roasting their flesh in the vast ovens of the heavens; and it has been hastily concluded that this points to a time when the ancestors of the historical Egyptians actually did eat human flesh. It would be just as reasonable to conclude from the language of the Eucharistic Office that the members of the Christian Church were once addicted to cannibalism. Eating and drinking are very obvious metaphors, and there are even languages in which the word “to eat”

has acquired the meaning "to exist".[3] I remember hearing of a tribe who believed that we worshipped a lamb because of the literal translation into their language of the phrase, "O Lamb of God." Theology is full of instances in which the language it uses has been metaphorical from the outset, and the endeavour to interpret it with bald literality, and to see in it the fossilised ideas and practices of the past, would end in nothing but failure. Christianity is not the only religion which has consciously employed parable for inculcating the truths it professes to teach. Buddhism has done the same, and the "Parables of Buddhagosha" have had a wider influence than all the other volumes of the Buddhist Canon.

Survivals there undoubtedly are in theological language as in all other forms of language, and one of the hardest tasks of the student of ancient religion is to determine where they really exist. Is the symbolism embodied in a word or an expression of primary or secondary origin? [pg 017] Was it from the very beginning a symbol and metaphor intended to be but the sensuous channel through which some perception of divine truth could be conveyed to us, or does it reflect the manners and thought of an earlier age of society, which has acquired a symbolical significance with the lapse of centuries? When the primitive Aryan gave the Being whom he worshipped the name of Dyaus, from a root which signified "to be bright," did he actually see in the bright

firmament the divinity he adored, or was the title a metaphorical one expressive only of the fact that the power outside himself was bright and shining like the sun? The Babylonians pictured their gods in the image of man: did Babylonian religion accordingly begin with the worship of deified ancestors, or were the human figures mere symbols and images denoting that the highest conception man could form of his creator was that of a being like himself? The answer to these questions, which it has been of late years the fashion to seek in modern savagery, is inconclusive. It has first to be proved that modern savagery is not due to degeneration rather than to arrested development, and that the forefathers of the civilised nations of the ancient world were ever on the same level as the savage of to-day. In fact the savage of to-day is not, and cannot be, a representative of primitive man. If the ordinary doctrine of development is right, primitive man would have known nothing of those essentials of human life and progress of which no savage community has hitherto been found to be destitute. He would have known nothing of the art of producing fire, nothing of language, without which human society would be impossible. On the other hand, if the civilised races of mankind possessed from the outset the germs of culture and the power to develop it, they can in no way be compared with the savages of the modern world, who [pg 018] have lived, generation after generation, stationary and unprogressive, like the beasts that perish, even though at times they may have been in

contact with a higher civilisation. To explain the religious beliefs and usages of the Greeks and Romans from the religious ideas and customs of Australians or Hottentots, is in most cases but labour in vain, and to seek the origin of Semitic religion in the habits and superstitions of low-caste Bedâwin, is like looking to the gipsies for an explanation of European Christianity. Such a procedure is the abuse, not the use, of the anthropological method. Folk-lore gives us a key to the mind of the child, and of the childlike portion of society; it sheds no light on the beginnings either of religion or of civilisation, and to make it do so is to mistake a will-o'-the-wisp for a beacon-light. It is once more to find "survivals" where they exist only in the mind of the inquirer. So long as civilised society has lasted, it has contained the ignorant as well as the learned, the fool as well as the wise man, and we are no more justified in arguing from the ignorance of the past than we should be in arguing from the ignorance of the present. So far as folk-tales genuinely reflect the mind of the unlearned and childlike only, they are of little help to the student of the religions of the ancient civilised world.

We must, then, beware of discovering allegory and symbol where they do not exist; we must equally beware of overlooking them where they are actually to be found. And we must remember that, although the metaphors and symbolism of the earlier civilisations are not likely to be those which seem natural to the modern European, this is no reason why we

should deny the existence of them. In fact, without them religious language and beliefs are impossible; it is only through the world of the senses that a way lies to a knowledge [pg 019] of the world beyond. The conditions into which we were born necessitate our expressing and realising our mental, moral, and religious conceptions through sensuous imagery and similitude. Only we must never forget that the imagery is not the same for different races or generations of mankind.

Before concluding, I must say a few words in explanation of the title I have given to the course of lectures I have the honour of delivering before you. It is not my intention to give a systematic description or analysis of the ancient religions of Egypt and Babylonia. That would hardly be in keeping with the terms of Lord Gifford's bequest, nor would the details be interesting, except to a small company of specialists. Indeed, in the case of the ancient religion of Babylonia, the details are still so imperfect and disputed, that a discussion of them is fitted rather for the pages of a learned Society's journal than for a course of lectures. What the lecturer has to do is to take the facts that have been already ascertained, to see to what conclusions they point, and to review the theories which they countenance or condemn. The names and number of the gods and goddesses worshipped by the Egyptians and Babylonians is of little moment to the scientific student of religion: what he wants to know is the conception of the deity which underlay these

manifold forms, and the relation in which man was believed to stand to the divine powers around him. What was it that the civilised Babylonian or Egyptian meant by the term “god”? What was the idea or belief that lay behind the polytheism of the popular cult, and in what respects is it marked off from the ideas and beliefs that rule the religions of our modern world? The old Egyptian, indeed, might not have understood what we mean by “polytheism” and “monotheism,” but would he not have already recognised the two [pg 020] tendencies of thought which have found expression among us in these words? Was St. Paul right when he declared that the old civilised nations had sought after the God of Christianity, “if haply they might feel after Him and find Him,” or is there an impassable gulf between the religious conceptions of paganism and those of Christian Europe? Such are some of the questions to whose solution I trust that the facts I have to bring before you may contribute, in however humble a degree.

[pg 021]

Lecture II. Egyptian Religion.

It is through its temples and tombs that ancient Egypt is mainly known to us. It is true that the warm and rainless climate of Upper Egypt has preserved many of the objects of daily life accidentally buried in the ruins of its cities, and that even fragments of fragile papyrus have come from the mounds that mark the sites of its villages and towns; but these do not constitute even a tithe of the monuments upon which our present knowledge of ancient Egyptian life and history has been built. It is from the tombs and temples that we have learned almost all we now know about the Egypt of the past. The tombs were filled with offerings to the dead and illustrations of the daily life of the living, while their walls were adorned with representations of the scenes at which their possessor had been present, with the history of his life, or with invocations to the gods. The temples were storehouses of religious lore, which was sculptured or painted on their walls and ceilings. In fact, we owe most of our knowledge of ancient Egypt to the gods and to the dead; and it is natural, therefore, that the larger part of it should be concerned with religion and the life to come.

We are thus in an exceptionally good position for ascertaining, at all events in outline, the religious ideas of the old Egyptians, and even for tracing their history through long periods of time. The civilisation of Egypt [pg 022]

goes back to a remote past, and recent discoveries have carried us almost to its beginnings. The veil which so long covered the origin of Egyptian culture is at last being drawn aside, and some of the most puzzling inconsistencies in the religion, which formed so integral a part of that culture, are being explained. We have learnt that the religion of the Egypt which is best known to us was highly composite, the product of different races and different streams of culture and thought; and the task of uniting them all into a homogeneous whole was never fully completed. To the last, Egyptian religion remained a combination of ill-assorted survivals rather than a system, a confederation of separate cults rather than a definite theology. Like the State, whatever unity it possessed was given to it by the Pharaoh, who was not only a son and representative of the sun-god, but the visible manifestation of the sun-god himself. Its unity was thus a purely personal one: without the Pharaoh the Egyptian State and Egyptian religion would alike have been dissolved into their original atoms.

The Pharaonic Egyptians—the Egyptians, that is to say, who embanked the Nile, who transformed the marsh and the desert into cultivated fields, who built the temples and tombs, and left behind them the monuments we associate with Egyptian culture—seem to have come from Asia; and it is probable that their first home was in Babylonia. The race (or races) they found in the valley of the Nile

were already possessed of a certain measure of civilisation. They were in an advanced stage of neolithic culture; their flint tools are among the finest that have ever been made; and they were skilled in the manufacture of vases of the hardest stone. But they were pastoral rather than agricultural, and they lived in the desert rather than on the river-bank. They proved no match for the newcomers, with their weapons of [pg 023] copper; and, little by little, the invading race succeeded in making itself master of the valley of the Nile, though tradition remembered the fierce battles which were needed before the "smiths" who followed Horus could subjugate the older population in their progress from south to north.

How far the invaders themselves formed a single race is still uncertain. Some scholars believe that, besides the Asiatics who entered Egypt from the south, crossing the Red Sea and so marching through the eastern desert to the Nile, there were other Asiatics who came overland from Mesopotamia, and made their way into the Delta across the isthmus of Suez. Of this overland invasion, however, I can myself see no evidence; so far as our materials at present allow us to go, the Egyptians of history were composed, at most, of three elements, the Asiatic invaders from the south, and two older races, which we may term aboriginal. One of them Professor Petrie is probably right in maintaining to be Libyan.[4]

We thus have at least three different types of religious belief and practice at the basis of

Egyptian religion, corresponding with the three races which together made up the Egyptian people. Two of the types would be African; the third would be Asiatic, perhaps Babylonian. From the very outset, therefore, we must be prepared to find divergences of religious conception as well as divergences in rites and ceremonies. And such divergences can be actually pointed out.[5]

The practice of embalming, for instance, is one which we have been accustomed to think peculiarly characteristic of ancient Egypt. It is referred to in the Book of [pg 024] Genesis, and described by classical writers. There are many people whose acquaintance with the old Egyptians is confined to the fact that when they died their bodies were made into mummies. It is from the wrappings of the mummy that most of the small amulets and scarabs have come which fill so large a space in collections of Egyptian antiquities, as well as many of the papyri which have given us an insight into the literature of the past. We have been taught to believe that from times immemorial the Egyptians mummified their dead, and that the practice was connected with an equally immemorial faith in the resurrection of the dead; and yet recent excavations have made it clear that such a belief is erroneous. Mummification was never universal in Egypt, and there was a time when it was not practised at all. It was unknown to the prehistoric populations whom the Pharaonic Egyptians found on their arrival in the country; and among the Pharaonic

Egyptians themselves it seems to have spread only slowly. Few traces of it have been met with before the age of the Fourth and Fifth Dynasties, if, indeed, any have been met with at all.

But, as we shall see hereafter, the practice of mummification was closely bound up with a belief in the resurrection of the dead. The absence of it accordingly implies that this belief was either non-existent, or, at all events, did not as yet occupy a prominent place in the Egyptian creed. Like embalming, it must have been introduced by the Pharaonic Egyptians; it was not until the older races of the country had been absorbed by their conquerors that mummification became general, along with the religious ideas that were connected with it. Before the age of the Eighteenth Dynasty it seems to have been practically confined to the court and the official priesthood.

[pg 025]
On the other hand, one at least of the prehistoric races appears to have practised secondary burial. The skeletons discovered in its graves have been mutilated in an extraordinary manner. The skull, the legs, the arms, the feet, and the hands have been found dissevered from the trunk; even the backbone itself is sometimes broken into separate portions; and there are cases in which the whole skeleton is a mere heap of dismembered bones. But, in spite of this dismemberment, the greatest care has been taken to preserve the separate fragments,

which are often placed side by side. An explanation of the dismemberment has been sought in cannibalism, but cannibals do not take the trouble to collect the bones of their victims and bury them with all the marks of respect; moreover, the bones have not been gnawed except in one or two examples, where wild beasts rather than man must have been at work. It seems evident, therefore, that the race whose dismembered remains have thus been found in so many of the prehistoric cemeteries of Egypt, allowed the bodies of the dead to remain unburied until the flesh had been stripped from their bones by the birds and beasts of prey, and that it was only when this had been done that the sun-bleached bones were consigned to the tomb. Similar practices still prevail in certain parts of the world; apart from the Parsi "towers of silence," it is still the custom in New Guinea to leave the corpse among the branches of a tree until the flesh is entirely destroyed.[6]

[pg 026]
Between mummification and secondary burial no reconciliation is possible. The conceptions upon which the two practices rest are contradictory one to the other. In the one case every effort is made to keep the body intact and to preserve the flesh from decay; in the other case the body is cast forth to the beasts of the desert and the fowls of the air, and its very skeleton allowed to be broken up. A people who practised secondary burial can hardly have believed in a future existence of the body itself. Their belief must rather have

been in the existence of that shadowy, vapour-like form, comparable to the human breath, in which so many races of mankind have pictured to themselves the imperishable part of man. It was the misty ghost, seen in dreams or detected at night amid the shadows of the forest, that survived the death of the body; the body itself returned to the earth from whence it had sprung.

This prehistoric belief left its traces in the official religion of later Egypt. The *Ba* or "Soul," with the figure of a bird and the head of a man, is its direct descendant. As we shall see, the conception of the *Ba* fits but ill with that of the mummy, and the harmonistic efforts of a later date were unable altogether to hide the inner contradiction that existed between them. The soul, which fled on the wings of a bird to the world beyond the sky, was not easily to be reconciled with the mummified body which was eventually to lead a life in the other world that should be a repetition and reflection of its life in this. How the *Ba* and the mummy were to be united, the official cult never [pg 027] endeavoured to explain; the task was probably beyond its powers. It was content to leave the two conceptions side by side, bidding the individual believer reconcile them as best he could.

The fact illustrates another which must always be kept in mind in dealing with Egyptian religion. Up to the last it remained without a philosophic system. There were, it is true, certain sides of it which were reduced

to systems, certain parts of the official creed which became philosophies. But as a whole it was a loosely-connected agglomeration of beliefs and practices which had come down from the past, and one after the other had found a place in the religion of the State. No attempt was ever made to form them into a coherent and homogeneous whole, or to find a philosophic basis upon which they all might rest. Such an idea, indeed, never occurred to the Egyptian. He was quite content to take his religion as it had been handed down to him, or as it was prescribed by the State; he had none of that inner retrospection which distinguishes the Hindu, none of that desire to know the causes of things which characterised the Greek. The contradictions which we find in the articles of his creed never troubled him; he never perceived them, or if he did they were ignored. He has left to us the task of finding a philosophic basis for his faith, and of fixing the central ideas round which it revolved; the task is a hard one, and it is rendered the harder by the imperfection of our materials.

The Egyptian was no philosopher, but he had an immense veneration for the past. The past, indeed, was ever before him; he could not escape from it. Objects and monuments which would have perished in other countries were preserved almost in their pristine freshness by the climate under which he lived. As to-day, so too in the age of the Pharaohs, the earliest [pg 028] and the latest of things jostled one another, and it was often difficult to say

which of the two looked the older. The past was preserved in a way that it could not be elsewhere; nothing perished except by the hand of man. And man, brought up in such an atmosphere of continuity, became intensely conservative. Nature itself only increased the tendency. The Nile rose and fell with monotonous regularity; year after year the seasons succeeded each other without change; and the agriculturist was not dependent on the variable alternations of rain and sunshine, or even of extreme heat and cold. In Egypt, accordingly, the new grew up and was adopted without displacing the old. It was a land to which the rule did not apply that "the old order changeth, giving place to new." The old order might, indeed, change, through foreign invasion or the inventions of human genius, but all the same it did not give place to the new. The new simply took a place by the side of the old.

The Egyptian system of writing is a striking illustration of the fact. All the various stages through which writing must pass, in its development out of pictures into alphabetic letters, exist in it side by side. The hieroglyphs can be used at once ideographically, syllabically, and alphabetically. And what is true of Egyptian writing is true also of Egyptian religion. The various elements out of which it arose are all still traceable in it; none of them has been discarded, however little it might harmonise with the elements with which it has been combined. Religious ideas which belong to

the lowest and to the highest forms of the religious consciousness, to races of different origin and different age, exist in it side by side.

It is true that even in organised religions we find similar combinations of heterogeneous elements. Survivals [pg 029] from a distant past are linked in them with the conceptions of a later age, and beliefs of divergent origin have been incorporated by them into the same creed. But it is a definite and coherent creed into which they have been embodied; the attempt has been made to fuse them into a harmonious whole, and to explain away their apparent divergencies and contradictions. Either the assertion is made that the creed of the present has come down unchanged from the past, or else it is maintained that the doctrines and rites of the past have developed normally and gradually into those of the present.

But the Egyptian made no such endeavour. He never realised that there was any necessity for making it. It was sufficient that a thing should have descended to him from his ancestors for it to be true, and he never troubled himself about its consistency with other parts of his belief. He accepted it as he accepted the inconsistencies and inequalities of life, without any effort to work them into a harmonious theory or form them into a philosophic system. His religion was like his temples, in which the art and architecture of all the past centuries of his history existed side by side. All that the past had bequeathed

to him must be preserved, if possible; it might be added to, but not modified or destroyed.

It is curious that the same spirit has prevailed in modern Egypt. The native never restores. If a building or the furniture within it goes to decay, no attempt is made to mend or repair it; it is left to moulder on in the spot where it stands, while a new building or a new piece of furniture is set up beside it. That the new and the old should not agree together—should, in fact, be in glaring contrast—is a matter of no moment. This veneration for the past, which preserves without repairing [pg 030] or modifying or even adapting to the surroundings of the present, is a characteristic which is deeply engrained in the mind of the Egyptian. It had its prior origin in the physical and climatic conditions of the country in which he was born, and has long since become a leading characteristic of his race.

Along with the inability to take a general view of the beliefs he held, and to reduce them to a philosophic system, went an inability to form abstract ideas. This inability, again, may be traced to natural causes. Thanks to the perpetual sunshine of the valley of the Nile, the Egyptian leads an open-air life. Except for the purpose of sleep, his house is of little use to him, and in the summer months even his sleep is usually taken on the roof. He thus lives constantly in the light and warmth of a southern sun, in a land where the air is so dry and clear that the outlines of the most distant objects are sharp and distinct,

and there is no melting of shadow into light, such as characterises our northern climes. Everything is clear; nothing is left to the imagination; and the sense of sight is that which is most frequently brought into play. It is what the Egyptian sees rather than what he hears or handles that impresses itself upon his memory, and it is through his eyes that he recognises and remembers.

At the same time this open-air life is by no means one of leisure. The peculiar conditions of the valley of the Nile demand incessant labour on the part of its population. Fruitful as the soil is when once it is watered, without water it remains a barren desert or an unwholesome marsh. And the only source of water is the river Nile. The Nile has to be kept within its banks, to be diverted into canals, or distributed over the fields by irrigating machines, before a single blade of wheat can grow or a single crop be gathered in. Day [pg 031] after day must the Egyptian labour, repairing the dykes and canals, ploughing the ground, planting the seed, and incessantly watering it; the Nile is ready to take advantage of any relaxation of vigilance and toil, to submerge or sweep away the cultivated land, or to deny to it the water that it needs. Of all people the Egyptian is the most industrious; the conditions under which he has to till the soil oblige him to be so, and to spend his existence in constant agricultural work.

But, as I have already pointed out, this work is monotonously regular. There are no

unexpected breaks in it; no moments when a sudden demand is made for exceptional labour. The farmer's year is all mapped out for him beforehand: what his forefathers have done for unnumbered centuries before him, he too has to do almost to a day. It is steady toil, day after day, from dawn to night, during the larger portion of the year.

This steady toil in the open air gives no opportunity for philosophic meditation or introspective theorising. On the contrary, life for the Egyptian *fellah* is a very real and practical thing: he knows beforehand what he has to do in order to gain his bread, and he has no time in which to theorise about it. It is, moreover, his sense of sight which is constantly being exercised. The things which he knows and remembers are the things which he sees, and he sees them clearly in the clear sunshine of his fields.

We need not wonder, therefore, that the ancient Egyptian should have shown on the one hand an incapacity for abstract thought, and on the other hand a love of visible symbols. The two, in fact, were but the reverse sides of the same mental tendency. Symbolism, indeed, is always necessary before we can apprehend the abstract: it is only through the sensuous symbol that we can express the abstract thought. But [pg 032] the Egyptian did not care to penetrate beyond the expression. He was satisfied with the symbol which he could see and remember, and the result was that his religious ideas were material rather than spiritual. The material

husk, as it were, sufficed for him, and he did not trouble to inquire too closely about the kernel within. The soul was for him a human-headed bird, which ascended on its wings to the heavens above; and the future world itself was but a duplicate of the Egypt which his eyes gazed upon below.

The hieroglyphic writing was at once an illustration and an encouragement of this characteristic of his mind. All abstract ideas were expressed in it by symbols which he could see and understand. The act of eating was denoted by the picture of a man with his hand to his mouth, the idea of wickedness by the picture of a sparrow. And these symbolic pictures were usually attached to the words they represented, even when the latter had come to be syllabically and alphabetically spelt. Even in reading and writing, therefore, the Egyptian was not required to concern himself overmuch with abstract thought. The concrete symbols were ever before his eyes, and it was their mental pictures which took the place for him of abstract ideas.

It must, of course, be remembered that the foregoing generalisations apply to the Egyptian people as a whole. There were individual exceptions; there was even a class the lives of whose members were not devoted to agricultural or other labour, and whose religious conceptions were often spiritual and sublime. This was the class of priests, whose power and influence increased with the lapse of time, and who eventually moulded the official theology of Egypt. Priestly colleges

arose in the great sanctuaries of the country, and gradually absorbed a considerable part of its land and revenues. At first the [pg 033] priests do not seem to have been a numerous body, and up to the last the higher members of the hierarchy were comparatively few. But in their hands the religious beliefs of the people underwent modification, and even a rudimentary systematisation; the different independent cults of the kingdom were organised and combined together, and with this organisation came philosophic speculation and theorising. If Professor Maspero is right, the two chief schools of religious thought and systematising in early Egypt were at Heliopolis, near the apex of the Delta, and Hermopolis, the modern Eshmunên, in Central Egypt. In Hermopolis the conception of creation, not by voice merely, but even by the mere sound of the voice, was first formed and worked out while Heliopolis was the source of that arrangement of the deities into groups of nine which led to the identification of the gods one with another, and so prepared the way for monotheism.[7] If Heliopolis were indeed, as seems probable, the first home of this religious theory, its influence upon the rest of Egypt was profound. Already in the early part of the historical period, in the age of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, when the religious texts of the Pyramids were compiled, the scheme which placed the Ennead or group of nine at the head of the Pantheon had been accepted throughout the country. It was the beginning of an inevitable process of thought, which

ended by resolving the deities of the official cult into forms or manifestations one of the other, and by landing its adherents in pantheism.

To a certain extent, therefore, the general incapacity for abstract thought which distinguished the Egyptians did not hold good of the priestly colleges. But even among the priests the abstract was never entirely dissociated [pg 034] from the symbol. Symbolism still dominates the profoundest thoughts and expressions of the later inscriptions; the writer cannot free himself from the sensuous image, except perhaps in a few individual cases. At the most, Egyptian thought cannot rise further than the conception of "the god who has no form"—a confession in itself of inability to conceive of what is formless. It is true that after the rise of the Eighteenth Dynasty the deity is addressed as *Kheper zes-ef*, "that which is self-grown," "the self-existent"; but when we find the same epithet applied also to plants like the balsam and minerals like saltpetre, it is clear that it does not possess the abstract significance we should read into it to-day. It simply expresses the conviction that the god to whom the prayer is offered is a god who was never born in human fashion, but who grew up of himself, like the mineral which effloresces from the ground, or the plant which is not grown from seed. Similarly, when it is said of him that he is "existent from the beginning,"—*kheper em ḥat*,—or, as it is otherwise expressed, that he is "the father of

the beginning," the phrase is less abstract than it seems at first sight to be. The very word *kheper* or "existent" denotes the visible universe, while ḥ*at* or "beginning" is the hinder extremity. The phrase can be pressed just as little as the epithet "lord of eternity," applied to deities whose birth and death are nevertheless asserted in the same breath. Perhaps the most abstract conception of the divine to which the Egyptian attained was that of "the nameless one," since the name was regarded as something very real and concrete, as, in fact, the essence of that to which it belonged. To say, therefore, that a thing was nameless, was equivalent to either denying its existence or to lifting it out of the world of the concrete altogether.

There was a moment in the history of Egypt when [pg 035] an attempt was made to put a real signification into the apparently abstract terms and phrases addressed to the gods. The Pharaoh Khu-n-Aten, towards the close of the Eighteenth Dynasty, appears suddenly on the scene as a royal reformer, determined to give life and meaning to the language which had described the supreme deity as "the sole and only god," the absolute ruler of the universe, who was from all eternity, and whose form was hidden from men. But the impulse to the reform came from Asia. Khu-n-Aten's mother was a foreigner, and his attempt to engraft Asiatic ideas upon Egyptian religion, or rather to substitute an Asiatic form of faith for that of his fathers, proved a failure. The worship of the one supreme deity, whose visible

symbol was the solar disc, though enforced by persecution and by all the power of the Pharaoh himself, hardly survived his death. Amon of Thebes and his priesthood came victorious out of the struggle, and the pantheistic monotheism of Khu-n-Aten was never revived. Symbolism remained, while the abstract thought, to which that symbolism should have been a stepping-stone, failed to penetrate into Egyptian religion. The Egyptian continued to be content with the symbol, as his father had been before him. But in the priestly colleges and among the higher circles of culture it became less materialistic; while the mass of the people still saw nothing but the symbol itself, the priests and scribes looked as it were beyond it, and saw in the symbol the picture of some divine truth, the outward garment in which the deity had clothed himself. What constituted, however, the peculiarity of the Egyptian point of view was, that this outward garment was never separated from that which it covered; it was regarded as an integral part of the divine essence, which could no more be dissociated from it than the surface of a statue can be dissociated from the stone of which it [pg 036] is made. The educated Egyptian came to see in the multitudinous gods of the public worship merely varying manifestations or forms of one divine substance; but still they were manifestations or forms visible to the senses, and apart from such forms the divine substance had no existence. It is characteristic that the old belief was never disavowed, that images were actually animated by the gods or

human personalities whose likeness they bore, and whom they were expressively said to have “devoured”; indeed, the king still received the *Sa* or principle of immortality from contact with the statue of the god he served; and wonder-working images, which inclined the head towards those who asked them questions, continued to be consulted in the temples.[8] At Dendera the soul of the goddess Hathor was believed to descend from heaven in the form of a hawk of lapis-lazuli in order to vivify her statue;[9] and the belief is a significant commentary on the mental attitude of her worshippers.

One result of the Egyptian's inability or disinclination for abstract thought was the necessity not only of representing the gods under special and definite forms, but even of always so thinking of them. The system of writing, with its pictorial characters, favoured the habit; and we can well understand how difficult the most educated scribe must have found it to conceive of Thoth otherwise than as an ibis, or of Hathor otherwise than as a cow. Whatever may have been the origin of the Egyptian worship of animals, or—which is something very different—of the identification of certain individual animals with the principal gods, its continuance was materially assisted by the sacred writing of the scribes [pg 037] and the pictures that adorned the walls of the temples. To the ordinary Egyptian, Thoth was indeed an ibis, and the folk-lore of the great sanctuaries accordingly described him as such.[10] But to

the cultured Egyptian, also, the ibis was his symbol; and in Egypt, as we have seen, the symbol and what is symbolised were apt to be confounded together.

The beast-worship of Egypt excited the astonishment and ridicule of the Greeks and Romans, and the unmeasured scorn of the Christian apologists. I shall have to deal with it in a later lecture. For the present it is sufficient to point out how largely it owed its continued existence to the need for symbolism which characterised Egyptian thought, in spite of the fact that there was another and contradictory conception which held sway within Egyptian religion. This was the conception of the divinity of man, which found its supreme expression in the doctrine that the Pharaoh was the incarnation of the sun-god. It was not in the brute beast, but in man himself, that the deity revealed himself on earth.

The origin of the conception must be sought in the early history of the country. Egypt was not at first the united monarchy it afterwards became. It was divided into a number of small principalities, each independent of the other and often hostile. It is probable that in some cases the inhabitants of these principalities did not belong to the same race; that while in one the older population predominated, in another the Pharaonic Egyptians held absolute sway. At all events the manners and customs of their inhabitants were not uniform, any more than the religious beliefs they held and the rites they practised. The

god who was honoured in one place [pg 038] was abhorred in another, and a rival deity set over against him.

True to its conservative principles, Egypt never forgot the existence of these early principalities. They continued to survive in a somewhat changed form. They became the nomes of Pharaonic Egypt, separate districts resembling to a certain degree the States of the American Republic, and preserving to the last their independent life and organisation. Each nome had its own capital, its own central sanctuary, and its own prince; above all, it had its own special god or goddess, with their attendant deities, their college of priests, their ceremonies and their festivals. Up to the age of the Hyksos conquest the hereditary princes of the nomes were feudal lords, owning a qualified obedience to the Pharaoh, and furnishing him with tribute and soldiers when called upon to do so. It was not till after the rise of the Eighteenth Dynasty that the old feudal nobility was replaced by court officials and a bureaucracy which owed its position to the king; and even then the descendants of the ancient princes were ever on the watch to take advantage of the weakness of the central authority and recover the power they had lost. Up to the last, too, the gods of the several nomes preserved a semblance of their independent character. It was only with the rise of the new kingdom and the accession of the Eighteenth Dynasty that that process of fusion set in to any real purpose which identified the various deities one with

another, and transformed them into kaleidoscopic forms of Amon or Ra. The loss of their separate and independent character went along with the suppression of the feudal families with whom their worship had been associated for unnumbered generations. The feudal god and the feudal prince disappeared together: the one became absorbed into the supreme god of the Pharaoh and his [pg 039] priests, the other into a functionary of the court. It was only in the hearts and minds of the people that Thoth remained what he had always been, the lord and master of Hermopolis, and of Hermopolis alone.

The principalities of primitive Egypt gradually became unified into two or three kingdoms, and eventually into two kingdoms only, those of Upper and Lower Egypt. Recent discoveries have thrown unexpected light on this early period of history. At one time the capital of the southern kingdom was Nekhen, called Hierakonpolis in the Greek period, the site of which is now represented by the ruins of Kom el-Ahmar, opposite El-Kab. Here, among the foundations of the ancient temple, Mr. Quibell has found remains which probably go back to an age before that of Menes and the rise of the united Egyptian monarchy. Among them are huge vases of alabaster and granite, which were dedicated by a certain king Besh in the year when he conquered the people of Northern Egypt. On the other hand, on a stela now at Palermo a list is given of kings who seem to have reigned over Northern Egypt while the Pharaohs of Nekhen were reigning

in the south.[11]

For how many centuries the two kingdoms existed side by side, sometimes in peaceful intercourse, sometimes in hostile collision, it is impossible to say. The fact that Egypt had once been divided into two kingdoms was never forgotten; down to the last days of the Egyptian monarchs the Pharaoh bore the title of "lord of the two lands," and on his head was placed the twofold crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. Nekhen was under the protection not only of Horus, the god of the Pharaonic Egyptians, but also of Nekheb, the tutelary goddess of the whole of the southern land. From the Cataract northward her dominion extended, but it was [pg 040] at El-Kab opposite Nekhen, where the road from the Red Sea and the mines of the desert reached the Nile, that her special sanctuary stood. Besh calls himself on his vases "the son of Nekheb"; and even as late as the time of the Sixth Dynasty the eldest son of the king was entitled "the royal son of Nekheb."[12]

Nekheb, the vulture, was the goddess of the south, in contradistinction to Uazit, the serpent, the goddess of the north. But in both the south and the north the same dominant race held rule, the same customs prevailed, and the same language was spoken. The Pharaonic Egyptians, in their northern advance, had carried with them a common legacy of ideas and manners. Their religious conceptions had been the same, and consequently the general form assumed by the religious cult was similar. In spite of local

differences and the self-centred character of the numerous independent principalities, there was, nevertheless, a family likeness between them all. Ideas and customs, therefore, which grew up in one place passed readily to another, and the influence of a particular local sanctuary was easily carried beyond the limits of the district in which it stood.

One of the most fundamental of the beliefs which the Pharaonic Egyptians brought with them was that in the [pg 041] divine origin of certain individuals. The prince who led them was not only the son of a god or goddess, he was an incarnation of the god himself. The belief is one of the many facts which link the Pharaonic civilisation with the culture of primitive Babylonia. In Babylonia also the king was divine. One of the early kings of Ur calls himself the son of a goddess, just as Besh does at Nekhen; and the great conquerors of primeval Asia, Sargon of Akkad and his son Naram-Sin, give themselves the title of “god” in their inscriptions; while Naram-Sin is even invoked during his lifetime as “the god of the city of Agadê” or Akkad. For many generations the Babylonian kings continued to receive divine honours while they were still alive; and it was not until after the conquest of Babylonia by a tribe of half-civilised foreigners from the mountains of Elam that the old tradition was broken, and the reigning king ceased to be a god. Like the doctrine of the divine right of kings in England, which could not survive the fall of the Stuarts, the

doctrine of the divine nature of the monarch did not survive in Babylonia the fall of the native dynasties.

In Babylonia also, as in Egypt, the king continued to be invoked as a god after his death. Chapels and priests were consecrated to his memory, and stated sacrifices and offerings made to him. It was not necessary that the deified prince should be the supreme sovereign, it was sufficient if he were the head of a feudal principality. Thus, while Dungi, the supreme sovereign of Babylonia, receives in his inscriptions the title of "god," his vassal Gudea, the high priest and hereditary prince of the city of Lagas, is likewise worshipped as a deity, whose cult lasted for many centuries. Gudea was non-Semitic in race, but most of the Babylonian kings who were thus deified were Semites. It is therefore possible that the [pg 042] deification of the ruler was of Semitic origin, and only adopted from them by the older Sumerian population, as in the case of Gudea; it is also possible that it was one of the consequences of that fusion of the two races, Sumerian and Semitic, which produced the later population and culture of Babylonia. However this may be, the apotheosis of the Babylonian king during his lifetime can be traced back as far as Sargon and Naram-Sin, 3800 B.C. Sargon incorporated Palestine, "the land of the Amorites," as it was then called, into his empire, while Naram-Sin extended his conquests to Mâgan or the Sinaitic Peninsula, thus bringing the arms and civilisation of

Babylonia to the very doors of Egypt. The precise nature of the connection which existed between the Babylonian and the Egyptian belief in the divinity of the ruler must be left to future research.

In the Egyptian mind, at all events, it was a belief that was deeply implanted. The Pharaoh was a god upon earth. Like the Incas of Peru, he belonged to the solar race, and the blood which flowed in his veins was the ichor of the gods. The existence of a similar belief in Peru shows how easy it was for such a belief to grow up in regard to the leader of a conquering people who brought with them a higher culture and the arts of life. But it presupposes religious conceptions which, though characteristic of Babylonia, are directly contrary to those which seem to underlie the religion of Egypt. Among the Babylonians the gods assumed human forms; man had been made in the likeness of the gods, and the gods therefore were of human shape. The converse, however, was the case in Egypt. Here the gods, with few exceptions, were conceived of as brute beasts. Horus was the hawk, Nekheb the vulture, Uazit of Buto the deadly uræus snake.

There is only one way of explaining the anomaly. [pg 043] The conception of the gods which made them men must have come from outside, and been imposed upon a people whose gods were the brute beasts. It must have been the Pharaonic invaders from Asia to whom the leader they followed was an incarnate god. Hence it was just this leader

and no other who was clothed with divinity. Hence, too, it was that the older worship of animals was never really harmonised with the worship of the Pharaoh. The inner contradiction which existed between the new religious conceptions remained to the end, in spite of all the efforts of the priestly colleges to make them agree. Religious art might represent the god with the head of a beast or bird and the body of a man, the sacred books might teach that the deity is unconfined by form, and so could pass at will from the body of a man into that of a beast; but all such makeshifts could not hide the actual fact. Between the deity who is human and the deity who is bestial no true reconciliation is possible.

We must therefore trace the deification of the Pharaoh back to Asia, and the Asiatic element in the Egyptian population. The Pharaonic conquerors of the valley of the Nile were those “followers of Horus” who worshipped their leader as a god. It was a god in human form who had led them to victory, and Horus accordingly continued to be represented as a man, even though the symbolism of the hieroglyphs united with the creed of the prehistoric races of Egypt in giving him the head of a hawk.

At first the ruler of each of the small kingdoms into which prehistoric Egypt was divided, was honoured as a god, like Gudea in Babylonia. When the kingdoms became, first, vassal principalities under a paramount lord, and then nomes, the old tradition was still

maintained. Divine titles were given to the nomarchs even in the later times of the united monarchy, and after their [pg 044] death worship continued to be paid to them.[13] Christian writers tell us how at Anabê particular individuals were regarded as gods, to whom offerings were accordingly brought; and Ptah, the tutelary deity of Memphis, was pictured as a man in the wrappings of a mummy, while to Anhur of This the human figure was assigned.

With the coalescence of the smaller principalities into two kingdoms, the deification of the ruler was confined within narrower bounds. But for that very reason it became more absolute and intense. The supreme sovereign, the Pharaoh as we may henceforth call him, was a veritable god on earth. To his subjects he was the source, not only of material benefits, but of spiritual blessings as well. He was “the good god,” the beneficent dispenser of all good things.[14] The power of life and death was in his hand, and rebellion against him was rebellion against the gods. The blood that flowed in his veins was the same as that which flowed in the veins of the gods; it was even communicated to him from time to time by his divine brethren; and the bas-reliefs of a later age, when the traditional belief had become little more than a symbolical allegory, still depict him with his back towards the statue of the god, who is transfusing the ichor of heaven through his veins.[15]

Menes, the king of Upper Egypt, first united

under one sceptre the two kingdoms of the Nile. The divinity which had hitherto been shared between the Pharaohs of Upper and Lower Egypt now passed in all it fulness to him. He became the visible god of Egypt, just as [pg 045] Sargon or Naram-Sin was the visible god of Akkad. All the attributes of divinity belonged to him, as they were conceived of by his subjects, and from him they passed to his successors. Legitimacy of birth was reckoned through the mother, and through the mother accordingly the divine nature of the Pharaoh was handed on. Only those who had been born of a princess of the royal family could be considered to possess it in all its purity; and where this title was wanting, it was necessary to assume the direct intervention of a god. The mother of Amon-hotep III. was of Asiatic origin; we read, therefore, on the walls of the temple of Luxor, that he was born of a virgin and the god of Thebes. Alexander, the conqueror of Egypt, was a Macedonian; it was needful, accordingly, that he should be acknowledged as a son by the god of the oasis of Ammon.[16]

But such consequences of the old Egyptian belief in the incarnation of the deity in man are leading us away into a field of investigation which will have to be traversed in a future lecture. For the present, it is sufficient to keep two facts steadily before the mind: on the one side, the old Egyptian belief in the divinity of the brute beast; on the other, the equally old belief in the divinity of man. The two beliefs are not really to be

harmonised one with the other; they were, in fact, derived from different elements in the Egyptian population; but, with his usual conservative instinct and avoidance of abstract thought, the Egyptian of later days co-ordinated them together, and closed his eyes to their actual incompatibility.

[pg 046]

Lecture III. The Imperishable Part Of Man And The Other World.

It has sometimes been asserted by travellers and ethnologists, that tribes exist who are absolutely without any idea of God. It will usually be found that such assertions mean little more than that they are without any idea of what we mean by God: even the Zulus, who saw in a reed the creator of the world,[17] nevertheless believed that the world had been created by a power outside themselves.

Modern research goes to show that no race of man, so far as is known, has been without a belief in a power of the kind, or in a world which is separate from the visible world around us; statements to the contrary generally rest on ignorance or misconception. The very fact that the savage dreams, and gives to his dreams the reality of his waking moments, brings with it a belief in what, for the want of a better term, I will call "another world."

This other world, it must be remembered, is material, as material as the "heavenly Jerusalem" to which so many good Christians have looked forward even in our own day. The savage has no experience of anything else than material existence, and he cannot, therefore, rise to the conception of what we mean by the spiritual, even if he were capable of forming so abstract an idea. His [pg 047] spiritual world is necessarily materialistic, not only to be interpreted and apprehended through sensuous symbols, but identical with those sensuous symbols themselves. The Latin *anima* meant "breath" before it meant "the soul."

This sensuous materialistic conception of the spiritual has lingered long in the human mind; indeed, it is questionable whether, as long as we are human, we shall ever shake ourselves wholly free from it. The greater is naturally its dominance the further we recede in history. There is "another world," but it is a world strangely like our own.

Closely connected with this conception of "another world" is the conception which man forms concerning his own nature. There are few races of mankind among whom we do not find in one shape or another the belief in a second self. Sometimes this second self is in all respects a reflection and image of the living self, like the images of those we see in our dreams; and it is more than probable that dreams first suggested it. Sometimes it is a mere speck of grey vapour, which may owe its origin to the breath which issues from the mouth and seems to forsake it at death, or to the misty forms seen after nightfall by the savage in the gloom of the forest and by the edge of the morass. At times it is conceived of as a sort of luminous gas or a phosphorescent flash of light, such as is emitted by decaying vegetation in a damp soil. Or, again, it may be likened to the bird that flies to heaven, to the butterfly which hovers from flower to flower, or even to insects like the grasshopper which hop along the ground. But however it may be envisaged, it is at once impalpable and material, something that can be perceived by the senses and yet eludes the grasp.

The Egyptian theory of the nature of man in the historical age of the nation was very complicated. Man was made up of many parts, each of which was capable [pg 048] of living eternally. The belief in his composite character was due to the composite character of the people as described in the last lecture, added to that conservative tendency which prevented them from discarding or even

altering any part of the heritage of the past. Some at least of the elements which went "to the making of man" were derived from different elements in the population. They had been absorbed, or rather co-ordinated, in the State religion, with little regard to their mutual compatibility and with little effort to reconcile them. Hence it is somewhat difficult to distinguish them all one from another; indeed, it is a task which no Egyptian theologian even attempted; and when we find the list of them given in full, it is doubtless to secure that no component part of the individual should be omitted, the name of which had been handed down from the generations of old.

There were, however, certain component parts which were clearly defined, and which occupied an important place in the religious ideas of Egypt. Foremost amongst these was the *Ka* or "Double." Underneath the conception of the Ka lay a crude philosophy of the universe. The Ka corresponded with the shadow in the visible world. Like the shadow which cannot be detached from the object, so, too, the Ka or Double is the reflection of the object as it is conceived of in the mind. But the Egyptian did not realise that it was only a product of the mind. For him it was as real and material as the shadow itself; indeed, it was much more material, for it had an independent existence of its own. It could be separated from the object of which it was the facsimile and presentment, and represent it elsewhere. Nay, more than this, it was what

gave life and form to the object of which it was the image; it constituted, in fact, its essence and personality. Hence it was sometimes interchanged with the "Name" which, in the eyes of the Egyptian, was the [pg 049] essence of the thing itself, without which the thing could not exist. In a sense the Ka was the spiritual reflection of an object, but it was a spiritual reflection which had a concrete form.

The "ideas" of Plato were the last development of the Egyptian doctrine of the Ka. They were the archetypes after which all things have been made, and they are archetypes which are at once abstract and concrete. Modern philosophers have transformed them into the thoughts of God, which realise themselves in concrete shape. But to the ancient Egyptian the concrete side of his conception was alone apparent. That the Ka was a creation of his own mind never once occurred to him. It had a real and substantial existence in the world of gods and men, even though it was not visible to the outward senses. Everything that he knew or thought of had its double, and he never suspected that it was his own act of thought which brought it into being.

It was symbolism again that was to blame. Once more the symbol was confused with that for which it stood, and the abstract was translated into the concrete. The abstract idea of personality became a substantial thing, to which all the attributes of substantial objects were attached. Like the "Name," which was a

force with a concrete individuality of its own, the Ka was as much an individual entity as the angels of Christian belief.

Between it and the object or person to which it belonged, there was the same relation as exists between the conception and the word. The one presupposed the other. Until the person was born, his Ka had no existence; while, on the other hand, it was the Ka to which his existence was owed. But once it had come into being the Ka was immortal, like the word which, once formed, can exist independently of the thought which gave [pg 050] it birth. As soon as it left the body, the body ceased to live, and did not recover life and consciousness until it was reunited with its Ka. But while the body remained thus lifeless and unconscious, the Ka led an independent existence, conscious and alive.

This existence, however, was, in a sense, quite as material as that of the body had been upon earth. The Ka needed to be sustained by food and drink. Hence came the offerings which were made to the dead as well as to the gods, each of whom had his Ka, which, like the human Ka, was dependent on the food that was supplied to it. But it was the Ka of the food and the Ka of the drink upon which the Ka of man or god was necessarily fed. Though at first, therefore, the actual food and drink were furnished by the faithful, the Egyptians were eventually led by the force of logic to hold that models of the food and drink in stone or terra-cotta or wood were as efficacious as the food and drink themselves.

Such models were cheaper and more easily procurable, and had, moreover, the advantage of being practically imperishable. Gradually, therefore, they took the place of the meat and bread, the beer and wine, which had once been piled up in the dead man's tomb, and from the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards we find terra-cotta cakes, inscribed with the name and titles of the deceased, substituted for the funerary bread.

The same idea as that which led to the manufacture of these sham offerings had introduced statues and images into the tomb at an early date. In the tombs of the Third and Fourth and following Dynasties, statues have been found of a very high order of art. No effort has been spared to make them speaking likenesses of the men and women in whose tombs they were placed; even the eyes have been made lifelike with inlaid ivory and obsidian. Usually, too, the statues are carved out of the [pg 051] hardest, and therefore the most enduring, of stone, so that, when the corpse of the dead was shrivelled beyond recognition, his counterpart in stone still represented him just as he was in life. But the statue had its Ka like the man it represented, and if the likeness were exact, the Ka of the statue and the Ka of the man would be one and the same. Hence the Ka could find a fitting form in which to clothe itself whenever it wished to revisit the tomb and there nourish itself on the offerings made to the dead by the piety of his descendants. And even if the mummy perished, the statue

would remain for the homeless Ka.[18]

It was probably on this account that we so often find more than one statue of the dead man in the same tomb. The more numerous the statues, the greater chance there was that one at least of them would survive down to the day when the Ka should at last be again united to its body and soul. And the priests of Heliopolis discovered yet a further reason for the practice. From time immemorial Ra the sun-god had been invoked there under the form of his seven birdlike “souls” or spirits, and double this number of Kas was now ascribed to him, each corresponding with a quality or attribute which he could bestow upon his worshippers.[19] Symbols already existed in the hieroglyphics for these various qualities, so that it was easy to regard each of them as having a separate and concrete existence, and so being practically a Ka.

The funerary statue and the ideas connected with it seem to have been characteristic of Memphis and the school of theology which existed there. At all events, [pg 052] no similar statues have been discovered at Abydos in the tombs of the first two (Thinite) dynasties; they make their appearance with the rise of Memphite influence under the Third Dynasty. And with the disappearance of the old Memphite empire, they too tend to disappear. The disturbed condition of Egypt after the fall of the Sixth Dynasty was not favourable to art, and it was probably difficult to find artists any longer who could imitate with even approximate accuracy the features

of the dead.

But under the Theban dynasties another kind of image becomes prominent. This was the Ushebti or “Respondent,” hundreds of which may be seen in most museums. They are usually small figures of blue or green porcelain, with a mattock painted under each arm, and a basket on the back. The name and titles of the deceased are generally inscribed upon them, and not unfrequently the 6th chapter of the Egyptian funerary ritual or Book of the Dead. The chapter reads as follows: “O these *ushebtis*, whatever be the work it is decreed the Osirified one must do in the other world, let all hindrances to it there be smitten down for him, even as he desires! Behold me when ye call! See that ye work diligently every moment there, sowing the fields, filling the canals with water, carrying sand from the West to the East. Behold me when ye call!”

The chapter explained what the *ushebti*-figures were intended for. Before the dead man, justified though he had been by faith in Osiris and his own good deeds, could be admitted to the full enjoyment of the fields of paradise, it was necessary that he should show that he was worthy of them by the performance of some work. He was therefore called upon to cultivate that portion of them which had been allotted to him, to till the ground and water it from the heavenly Nile. Had he [pg 053] been a peasant while on earth, the task would have been an easy one; had he, on the contrary, belonged to the wealthier classes, or been

unaccustomed to agricultural labour, it would have been hard and irksome. Thanks to the doctrine of the Ka, however, means were found for lightening the obligation. The relatives of the dead buried with him a number of *ushebti*-figures, each of which represented a fellah with mattock and basket, and their Kas, it was believed, would, with the help of the sacred words of the Ritual, assist him in his work. Sometimes, to make assurance doubly sure, the images were broken; thus, as it were, putting an end to their earthly existence, and setting their Kas free.

When once the tomb was closed and the mummy hidden away in the recesses, it was necessary to find a way by which the Ka could enter the abode of the dead, and so eat and drink the food that had been deposited there. For it must be remembered that the Ka from its very nature was subject to the same limitations as the person whom it represented. If there was no door it could not enter. Where it differed from the living person was in its existing in a world in which what are shams and pictures to us were so many concrete realities. Consequently all that was needed in order to allow the Ka free entrance into the tomb was to paint a false door on one of its walls; the Ka could then pass in and out through the Ka of the door, and so rejoin its mummy or its statue when so it wished.

This false door, in front of which the offerings to the dead were originally laid, must go back to a primitive period in Egyptian history.

Professor Flinders Petrie has shown that it is presupposed by the so-called Banner name of the Egyptian Pharaohs.[20] Ever since the first days of hieroglyphic decipherment, it has been known [pg 054] that besides the name or names given to the Pharaoh at birth, and commonly borne by him in life, he had another name not enclosed in a cartouche, but in something that resembled a banner, and was surmounted by the hawk of the god Horus. It actually represented, however, not a banner, but the panel above the false door of a tomb, and the name written within it was the name of the Ka of the Pharaoh rather than of the Pharaoh himself. It was accordingly the name by which he was known after death, the name inscribed on the objects buried in his tomb, and also the name under which he was worshipped whether in this life or in the next. As the Horus or deified leader who had subjugated the older inhabitants of Egypt and founded the Pharaonic dynasties, it was right and fitting that he should be known by the name of his Ka. It was not so much the Pharaoh that was adored by his subjects, as the Ka of the Pharaoh, and the Pharaoh was god because the blood of Horus flowed in his veins.

The earliest monuments of the Pharaohs yet discovered give almost invariably only the Ka-name of the king. The fact is doubtless due in great measure to their general character. With few exceptions they consist of tombstones and other sepulchral furniture. But the objects found in the foundations of the temple of

Nekhen are also examples of the same fact. The fusion was not yet complete, at all events in the south, between the Pharaoh as man and the Pharaoh as god; it was his Ka that was divine, rather than the bodily husk in which it sojourned for a time.

The Ka accordingly occupies a prominent place in the names of the Pharaohs of the Old Empire, while the sacred art of the temples continued the ancient tradition down to the latest times. Horus and the Nile-gods, for instance, present the Ka of Amon-hotep III. along with [pg 055] the infant prince to the god of Thebes; and at Soleb the same Pharaoh is represented as making offerings to his own double.[21] Indeed, it is not unfrequent to find the king and his Ka thus separated from one another and set side by side; and at times the Ka becomes a mere symbol, planted like a standard at the monarch's back.

It was the Ka, therefore, which in the early days of Egyptian religious thought was more especially associated with the divine nature of the king. The association of ideas was assisted by the fact that the gods, like men, had each his individual Ka. And in the older period of Egyptian history the Ka of the god and not the god himself was primarily the object of worship. The sacred name of Memphis was Ḥa-ka-Ptaḥ, “the temple of the Ka of Ptaḥ,” which appears as *Khikuptakh* in the Tel el-Amarna letters, and from which the Greeks derived their *Aiguptos*, “Egypt.” Even in the last centuries of Egyptian independence the prayers addressed to the bull-god Apis are still

made for the most part to his Ka.

The Ka, in fact, was conceived of as the living principle which inspired both gods and men. Its separation from the body meant what we call death, and life could return only when the two were reunited. That reunion could take place only in the other world, after long years had passed and strange experiences had been undergone by the disembodied Ka. The 105th chapter of the Book of the Dead contains the words with which on the day of resurrection the Ka was to be greeted. “Hail,” says the dead man, “to thee who wast my Ka during life! Behold, I come unto thee, I arise resplendent, I labour, I [pg 056] am strong, I am hale, I bring grains of incense, I am purified thereby, and I thereby purify that which goeth forth from thee.” Then follow the magical words by which all evil was to be warded off: “I am that amulet of green felspar, the necklace of the god Ra, which is given unto them that are on the horizon. They flourish, I flourish, my Ka flourishes even as they, my duration of life flourishes even as they, my Ka has abundance of food even as they. The scale of the balance rises, Truth rises high unto the nose of the god Ra on the day on which my Ka is where I am (?). My head and my arm are restored to me where I am (?). I am he whose eye seeth, whose ears hear; I am not a beast of sacrifice. The sacrificial formulæ for the higher ones of heaven are recited where I am.”

As might be expected, the Ka is often represented with the symbol of life in its

hands. At the same time, it is important to remember that, though under one aspect the Ka was identical with the principle of life, in the mind of the Egyptian it was separate from the latter, just as it was separate from consciousness and from the divine essence. These were each of them independent entities which were possessed by the Ka just as they were possessed by its human counterpart. Life, consciousness, and relationship to the gods were all attributes of the Ka, but they were attributes, each of which had a concrete and independent existence of its own.

At the outset, doubtless, the Ka was practically identical with the vital principle. Primitive man does not distinguish as we do between the animate and the inanimate. He projects his own personality into the things he sees about him, and ascribes to them the same motive forces as those which move himself. He knows of only one source of movement and activity, and that source is life. The stars which travel through the [pg 057] firmament, the arrow that flies through the air, are either alive or else are directed and animated by some living power. Movement, in fact, implies life, and the moving object, whatever it may be, is a living thing.

The old belief or instinct is still strong in the child. He revenges himself upon the ball or stone that has struck him as though it too were a living being. In the Mosaic law it is laid down that “if an ox gore a man or a woman that they die, then the ox shall be surely stoned”; and similar penalties were

enforced against animals which had injured man, not only in the Middle Ages, but even in the eighteenth century. Thus a pig was burned at Fontenay-aux-Roses, in 1266, for having devoured a child; and in 1389 a horse was brought to trial at Dijon for the murder of a man, and condemned to death. In Brazil, in 1713, an action was brought against the ants who had burrowed under the foundations of a monastery, and, after counsel had been heard on both sides, they were solemnly condemned to banishment by the judge; while, in 1685, the bell of the Protestant chapel at La Rochelle was first scourged for having abetted heresy, then catechised and made to recant, and finally baptized.[22]

The early Egyptians were not more enlightened than the orthodox theologians of La Rochelle. For them, too, action must have implied life, and the distinction between object and subject had not yet been realised. Hence the belief that objects as well as persons had each its Ka, a belief which was strengthened by the fact that they all alike cast shadows before them, as well as the further belief that the nature of the Ka was in either case the same. Hence it was, moreover, that the *ushebti*-figures and other sepulchral furniture were broken in order that their Kas might be released from them, and so accompany [pg 058] the Ka of the dead man in his wanderings in the other world. As life and the power of movement deserted the corpse of the dead man as soon as his Ka was separated from it, so too the Ka of the *ushebti*

passed out of it when its form was mutilated by breakage. The life that was in it had departed, as it were, into another world.

It is even possible that the very word *Ka* had originally a connection with a root signifying "to live." At any rate, it was identical in spelling with a word which denoted "food"; and that the pronunciation of the two words was the same, may be gathered from the fact that the Egyptian bas-reliefs sometimes represent the offerings of food made to the dead or to the gods inside the arms of the symbol of the Ka[23]. When we remember that *vivande* is nothing more than the Latin *vivenda*, "the things on which we live," there arises at least the possibility of an etymological connection between the double and the principle of life which it once symbolised.[24]

Now, in my Hibbert Lectures on the *Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, I pointed out that the early Sumerian inhabitants of Babylonia held a belief which is almost precisely the same as that of the Egyptians in regard to the Ka. In Babylonia also, everything had its Zi or "double," and the nature of this Zi is in no way distinguishable from that of the Egyptian Ka. As in Egypt, moreover, the gods had each his Zi as well as men and things, and, as in Egypt, it was the Zi of the god rather than the god himself which was primarily worshipped. So marked is the resemblance between the [pg 059] two conceptions, that in working it out on the Babylonian side, I could not resist the conviction that there must have been

some connection between them. That was sixteen years ago. Since then discoveries have been made and facts brought to light which indicate that a connection really did exist between the Babylonia and the Egypt of the so-called prehistoric age, and have led me to believe, with Hommel, de Morgan, and others, that Babylonia was the home and cradle of the Pharaonic Egyptians. In Sumerian the word Zi signified "life," and was denoted by the picture of a flowering reed. It was the life on which was imprinted the form of the body that was for a time its home, and its separation from the body meant the death of the latter. The Sumerians never advanced to the further stage of making the vital principle itself a separable quality; perhaps the original signification of the word which it never lost would have prevented this. But they did go on to transform the Zi into a spirit or demon, who, in place of being the counterpart of some individual person or thing, could enter at will into any object he chose. Even in Egypt, traces of the same logical progress in ideas may perhaps be found. If Professor Maspero is right in his interpretation of certain passages in the Pyramid texts and Ptolemaic papyri, "The double did not allow its family to forget it, but used all the means at its disposal to remind them of its existence. It entered their houses and their bodies, terrified them, waking and sleeping, by its sudden apparitions, struck them down with disease or madness, and would even suck their blood like the modern vampire[25]." Such a [pg 060]

conception of the Ka, however, if ever it existed, must have soon passed away, leaving behind it but few vestiges of itself.

I have dwelt thus long on the doctrine of the Ka or double on account both of its importance and of the difficulties it presents to the modern scholar. Its discovery by Professor Maspero and Sir P. Le Page Renouf cleared away a host of misconceptions, and introduced light into one of the darkest corners of Egyptian religion[26]. And however strange it may seem to us, it was in thorough accordance with the simple logic of primitive man. Given the premisses, the conclusion followed. It was only when the Egyptian came to progress in knowledge and culture, and new ideas about his own nature were adopted, that difficulties began to multiply and the theory of the Ka to become complicated.

Among these new ideas was that of the Khu or "luminous" part of man. On the recently discovered monuments of the early period, the Khu holds a place which it lost after the rise of Memphite influence with the Third Dynasty. We find it depicted on the tombstones of Abydos embraced by the down-bent arms of the Ka. The Khu, therefore, was conceived of as comprehended in the human Ka, as forming part of it, though at the same time as a separate entity. It was, in fact, the soul of the human Ka, and was accordingly symbolised by the crested ibis[27]. It may be that it was in the beginning nothing more than the phosphorescent light emitted by

decaying vegetation which the belated [pg 061] wayfarer took for a ghost; the *ginn* (*jinn*) of the modern Egyptian fellah are similar lights which flash up suddenly from the ground. But the earliest examples of its use on the monuments are against such an ignoble origin, and suggest rather that it was the glorified spirit which mounted up like a bird in the arms of its Ka towards the brilliant vault of heaven. It is not until we come to the decadent days of the Greek and Roman periods that the Khu appears in a degraded form as a malignant ghost which enters the bodies of the living in order to torment them. No traces of such a belief are to be found in older days. The Pyramid texts speak of "the four Khu of Horus," "who live in Heliopolis," and were at once male and female, and of the Khu who brandish their arms and form a sort of bodyguard around the god of the dead. They are identified with the fixed stars, and more especially with those of the Great Bear, and in the euhemeristic chronicles of Egyptian history they become the "Manes" of Manetho, the semi-divine dynasty which intervened between the dynasties of the gods and of men.[28]

The Khu thus forms a link between men and the gods, and participates in the divine nature. It is the soul regarded as a godlike essence, as coming down from heaven rather than as mounting up towards it. It is not only disembodied, but needs the body no longer; it belongs to the Ka, which still lives and moves, and not to the mummified corpse from which

the vital spark has fled. It waits on the god of the dead, not on the dead themselves.

It seems probable, therefore, that in the part of Egypt in which the doctrine of the Khu grew up, mummification was not practised; and the probability is strengthened by the fact that, before the rise of the Third Dynasty, [pg 062] embalming was apparently not frequent in Upper Egypt, even in the case of the kings. But, however this may be, one thing is certain. The conception of the Khu cannot have originated in the same part of the country, or perhaps among the same element in the population, as a parallel but wholly inconsistent conception which eventually gained the predominance. According to this conception, the imperishable part of man which, like the Ka, passed after death into the other world, was the Ba or "soul." Like the Khu, the Ba was pictured as a bird; but the bird is usually given a human head and sometimes human hands.[29] But, while the Khu was essentially divine, the Ba was essentially human. It is true that the Ba, as well as the Khu, was assigned to the gods—Ra of Heliopolis was even credited with seven; but whereas man possessed a Khu or luminous soul because he was likened to the gods, the gods possessed a Ba because they were likened to men.

The relation between the two is brought out very clearly in the philosophy of the so-called Hermetic books, which endeavoured to translate the theology of Egypt into Greek thought. There we are told that the Khu is the

intelligence (νοῦς), of which the Ba or soul (ψυχή) is as it were the envelope. As long as the soul is imprisoned in the earthly tabernacle of the body, the intelligence is deprived of the robe of fire in which it should be clothed, its brightness is dimmed, and its purity is sullied. The death of the body releases it from its prison-house; it once more soars to heaven and becomes a spirit (δαίμων), while the soul is carried to the hall of judgment, there to be awarded punishment [pg 063] or happiness in accordance with its deserts.[30] The Khu, in other words, is a spark of that divine intelligence which pervades the world and to which it must return; the Ba is the individual soul which has to answer after death for the deeds committed in the body.

The plover was the bird usually chosen to represent the Ba, but at times the place of the plover is taken by the hawk, the symbol of Horus and the solar gods. That the soul should have been likened to a bird is natural, and we meet with the same or similar symbolism among other peoples. Like the bird, it flew between earth and heaven, untrammelled by the body to which it had once been joined. From time to time it visited its mummy; at other times it dwelt with the gods above. Now and again, so the inscriptions tell us, it alighted on the boughs of the garden it had made for itself in life, cooling itself under the sycamores and eating their fruits. For the Ba was no more immaterial than the Ka; it, too, needed meat and drink for its sustenance, and looked to its

relatives and descendants to furnish them.

But, as Professor Maspero[31] has pointed out, there was a very real and fundamental difference between the idea of the Ka or double, and that of the Ba or soul. The Ka was originally nourished on the actual offerings that were placed in the tomb of the dead man; it passed into it through the false door and consumed the food that it found there. But the soul had ascended to the gods in heaven; it lived in the light of day, not in the darkness of the tomb; and it is doubtful if it was ever supposed to return there. To the gods accordingly was committed the care of the Ba, and of seeing that it was properly provided for. By the power of prayer and [pg 064] magical incantation, the various articles of food, or, more strictly speaking, their doubles, were identified with the gods, and communicated by the gods to the soul. Long before the days when the Pyramid texts had been compiled, this theory of the nourishment of the soul was applied also to the nourishment of the Ka, and the older belief in the material eating and drinking of the Ka had passed away. All that remained of it was the habitual offering of the food to the dead, a custom which still lingers among the fellahin of Egypt, both Moslem and Copt.

Besides the double and the two souls, there was yet another immortal element in the human frame. This was the heart, the seat both of the feelings and of the mind. But it was not the material heart, but its immaterial double, which passed after death into the

other world. The material heart was carefully removed from the mummy, and with the rest of the intestines was usually cast into the Nile. Porphyry[32] tells us that in his time, when the bodies of the wealthier classes were embalmed, the Egyptians "take out the stomach and put it into a coffer, and, holding the coffer to the sun, protest, one of the embalmers making a speech on behalf of the dead. This speech, which Euphantos translated from his native language, is as follows: 'O Lord the Sun, and all ye gods who give life to man, receive me and make me a companion of the eternal gods. For the gods, whom my parents made known to me, as long as I have lived in this world I have continued to reverence, and those who gave birth to my body I have ever honoured. And as for other men, I have neither slain any, nor defrauded any of anything entrusted to me, nor committed any other wicked act; but if by chance I have committed any sin in my life, [pg 065] by either eating or drinking what was forbidden, not of myself did I sin, but owing to these members,'—at the same time showing the coffer in which the stomach was. And having said this, he throws it into the river, and embalms the rest of the body as being pure. Thus they thought that they needed to excuse themselves to God for what they had eaten and drunken, and therefore so reproach the stomach."[33]

Now and then, however, the heart and intestines were replaced in the mummy, but under the protection of wax images of the

four genii of the dead—the four Khu of the Book of the Dead. More often they were put into four vases of alabaster or some other material, which were buried with the dead.[34] Though the latter practice was not very common, probably on account of its expense, it must go back to the very beginnings of Egyptian history. The hieroglyphic symbol of the heart is just one of these vases, and one of the two names applied to the heart was ḥ*ati*, "that which belongs to the vase." After ages even endeavoured to draw a distinction between *ab* "the heart" proper, and ḥ*ati* "the heart-sack."[35]

From the time of the Twelfth Dynasty[36] onwards, the place of the material heart in the mummy was taken by an amulet, through the influence of which, it was supposed, the corpse would be secured against all the dangers and inconveniences attending the loss of its [pg 066] heart until the day of resurrection. The amulet was in the form of a beetle or scarab, the emblem of "becoming" or transformation, and on the under side of it there was often inscribed the 30th chapter of the Book of the Dead, to the words of which were ascribed a magical effect. The chapter reads as follows: "O heart (*ab*) of my mother, O heart (ḥ*ati*) of my transformations! Let there be no stoppage to me as regards evidence (before the judges of the dead), no hindrance to me on the part of the Powers, no repulse of me in the presence of the guardian of the scales! Thou art my Ka in my body, the god Khnum who makes strong my limbs.

Come thou to the good place to which we are going. Let not our name be overthrown by the lords of Hades who cause men to stand upright! Good unto us, yea good is it to hear that the heart is large (and heavy) when the words (of life) are weighed![37] Let no lies be uttered against me before God. How great art thou!"

Meanwhile the immaterial heart, the "Ka" of it, which is addressed in the words just quoted, had made its way through the region of the other world, until it finally reached the place known as "the Abode of Hearts." Here in the judgment-hall of Osiris it met the dead man to whom it had formerly belonged, and here, too, it accused him of all the evil words and thoughts he had harboured in his lifetime, or testified to the good thoughts and words of which he had been the author. For the heart, though the organ through which his thoughts and words had acted, was not the cause of them; in its nature it was essentially pure and divine, and it had been an unwilling witness of the sins it had been forced to know. Eventually it was weighed in the balance against the image of Truth, and only if the [pg 067] scales turned in favour of the dead man could it rejoin its former body and live with it for ever in the islands of the Blest.

The scales and judgment-hall, however, belong to the religious conceptions which gathered round the name of Osiris, like the Paradise which the risen mummy looked forward to enjoy. It was only after the worship of Osiris had become universal

throughout Egypt, and the older or local ideas of the future life had been accommodated to them, that it was possible for an Egyptian to speak of meeting his disembodied heart, or of the testimony it could give for or against him before the judges of the dead. The fact that the use of the scarab does not seem to extend further back than the age of the Memphite or Theban dynasties, may imply that it was only then that the Osirian beliefs were officially fitted on to earlier forms of faith. However this may be, the worship of Osiris and the beliefs attaching to it must be left to another lecture, and for the present we must pass on to the mummy itself, the last part of man which it was hoped would be immortal.

The mummy or Sâḥu has to be carefully distinguished from the Khat or natural body. The latter was a mere dead shell, seen by the soul but not affording a resting-place for it. The mummy, on the other hand, contained within itself the seeds of growth and resurrection. It could be visited by the soul and inspired by it for a few moments with life, and the Egyptian looked forward to a time when it would once more be reunited with both its heart and its soul, and so rise again from the dead.

It is impossible to say how far back in the history of the Egyptian religion this belief in the immortality of the mummy may go. It can hardly have originated in the same circle of ideas as the doctrine of the Ka, though the doctrine of the Ka could easily be reconciled [pg 068] with it. On the one hand, it seems

connected, as we shall see, with the cult of Osiris; but, on the other hand, there are no traces of mummification in the prehistoric graves, and it is doubtful whether there are any in the royal tombs of Negada and Abydos which belong to the age of the First and Second Dynasties. At all events, the scarab, which accompanied embalmment, first appears at a much later date, and perhaps had a Memphite origin. There are, however, indications that the process of embalming first arose among the pre-Menic rulers of Nekhen, in the neighbourhood of El-Kab. The soil of El-Kab literally effloresces with the natron, which, it was discovered, preserved the bodies buried in it; and even as late as the time of the Pyramid texts of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties, when the northern sources of natron were known, it was still necessary for ceremonial purposes that the materials used by the embalmer should contain some of the natron of El-Kab.[38]

What was difficult to harmonise with the belief in the resurrection of the mummy was the belief which made the risen man an "Osiris," identified, that is to say, in substance with the god Osiris, and not his old material self. In the days, therefore, when Greek philosophy took it in hand to systematise and interpret the theology of Egypt, the risen mummy drops out of sight. The Khu, as we have seen, becomes the divine intelligence, which for a time is enshrouded in the human soul; and this again needs the envelope of the spirit, which sends the breath of life through

the veins before it can tabernacle in the body of man. The Hermetic books tell us [pg 069] that while body, spirit, and soul are common to man and the beasts, the divine intelligence is his alone to possess, stripped, indeed, of its native covering of ethereal fire, but still the veritable spirit of God. Ever is it seeking to raise the human soul to itself, and so purify it from the passions and desires with which it is inspired by the body. But the flesh wages continual war against it, and endeavours to drag the soul down to its own level. If the soul yields, after death the intelligence returns to its original state, while the soul is arraigned before the judgment-seat of heaven, and there being accused by its conscience, the heart, is condemned to the punishment of the lost. First it is scourged for its sins, and then handed over to the buffetings of the tempests, suspended between earth and sky. At times in the form of an evil demon it seeks alleviation of its torments by entering the body of a man or animal, whom it drives to murder and madness. But at last, after ages of suffering, the end comes; it dies the second death, and is annihilated for ever.

The good soul, on the other hand, which has listened in life to the voice of the divine intelligence, and struggled to overcome the lusts and passions of the flesh, obtains after death its reward. Guided by the intelligence, it traverses space, learning the secrets of the universe, and coming to understand the things that are dark and mysterious to us here. At length its education in the other world is

completed, and it is permitted to see God face to face and to lose itself in His ineffable glory.

I need not point out to you how deeply this Hellenised philosophy of Egypt has affected the religious thought of Christian Alexandria, and through Alexandria of Christian Europe. It may be that traces of it may be detected even in the New Testament. At any rate, [pg 070] much of the psychology of Christian theologians is clearly derived from it. We are still under the influence of ideas whose first home was in Egypt, and whose development has been the work of long ages of time. True or false, they are part of the heritage bequeathed to us by the past.

[pg 071]

Lecture IV. The Sun-God And The Ennead.

In my last lecture, when speaking of the form under which the soul of man was pictured by

the Egyptians, I mentioned that it was often represented by a hawk, the symbol of the sun-god. Why the hawk should have thus symbolised the sun is a question that has often been asked. The Egyptians did not know themselves; and Porphyry, in the dying days of the old Egyptian faith, gravely declares that it was because the hawk was a compound of blood and breath! One explanation has been that it was because the hawk pounces down from the sky like the rays of the sun, which, like the eagle, he can gaze at without blinking; and a passage in the *Odyssey* of Homer (xv. 525) has been invoked in favour of this view, where the hawk is called "the swift messenger of Apollo." But if there is any connection between the Homeric passage and the Egyptian symbol, it would show only that the symbol had been borrowed by the Greek poet. Originally, moreover, it was only the sun-god of Upper Egypt who was represented even by the Egyptians under the form of a hawk.

This was Horus, often called in the later texts "Horus the elder" (Hor-ur, the Greek Aroêris), in order to distinguish him from a wholly different god, Horus the younger, the son of Isis. His symbol, the hawk, is found on the early Pharaonic monuments which recent excavations have brought to light. Sometimes the hawk stands [pg 072] on the so-called standard, which is really a perch, sometimes on the crenelated circle, which denoted a city in those primitive days. The standard is borne before the Pharaoh, representing at once his

own title and the nome or principality over which he held rule; and its resemblance to the stone birds perched on similar supports, which Mr. Bent found in the ruins of Zimbabwe, suggests a connection between the prehistoric gold miners of Central Africa and the early inhabitants of Southern Egypt. On one of the early Egyptian monuments discovered at Abydos, two hawks stand above the wall of a city which seems to bear the name of "the city of the kings,"[39] and a slate plaque found by Mr. Quibell at Kom el-Aḥmar shows us on one side the Pharaoh of Nekhen inspecting the decapitated bodies of his enemies with two hawks on standards carried before him, while, on the other side, a hawk leads the bridled "North" to him under the guise of a prisoner, through whose lips a ring has been passed.[40] In the first case, the hawks may represent the districts of which the god they symbolised was the protecting deity;[41] in the second case, the god and the king must be identified together. It was as Horus, the hawk, that the Pharaoh had conquered the Egyptians of the north, and it was Horus, therefore, who had given them into his hand.

If Dr. Naville is right, Horus the hawk-god is again represented on the same plaque, with the symbol of "follower," above a boat which is engraved over the bodies of the decapitated slain.[42] Countenance is given [pg 073] to this view by a drawing on the rocks near El-Kab, in which the cartouches of two kings of the Fourth Dynasty, Sharu and Khufu, are carried in boats on the prows of which a hawk is

perched, while above each name are two other hawks, standing on the hieroglyph of "gold," and with the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt on their heads. The title "follower of Horus" would take us back to the earliest traditions of Egyptian history. The "followers of Horus," according to the later texts, were the predecessors of Menes and the First Dynasty of united Egypt, the Pharaohs and princes of the southern kingdom whose very names were forgotten in after days. Nevertheless, it was remembered that they had founded the great sanctuaries of the country; thus an inscription at Dendera declares that in the reign of king Pepi of the Sixth Dynasty there was found in the wall of the palace a parchment on which was a plan of the temple drawn upon it in the time of "the followers of Horus." The legends of Edfu told how these followers of Horus had been smiths, armed with weapons of iron, and how they had driven the enemies of their leader before them until they had possessed themselves of the whole of Egypt.[43] [pg 074] But many hard-fought battles were needed before this could be accomplished. Again and again had the foe been crushed—at Zadmit near Thebes, at Neter-Khadu near Dendera, at Minia, at Behnesa and Ahnas on the frontier of the Fayyûm, and finally at Zaru on the Asiatic borders of the Delta. Even here, however, the struggle was not over. Horus and his followers had to take ship and pursue the enemy down the Red Sea, inflicting a final blow upon them near Berenicê, from whence he returned across the desert in triumph to

Edfu.

In this legend, which in its present form is not older than the Ptolemaic period, echoes of the gradual conquest of Egypt by the first followers of the Pharaohs have probably been preserved, though they have been combined with a wholly different cycle of myths relating to the eternal struggle between Horus the son of Isis and his twin brother Set. But the confusion between the two Horuses must have arisen at an early time. Already a king of the Third Dynasty, whose remains have been found in the ruins of Nekhen, and who bore the title of him "who is glorified with the two sceptres, in whom the two Horus gods are united," has above his name the crowned emblems of Horus and Set.[44] The titles of the queens of the Memphite dynasties make it clear that by the two Horuses are meant the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt, and we must therefore see in Horus and Set the symbols of the South and North.[45]

In the rock drawing, south of El-Kab, to which I have alluded a few minutes ago, the two Horus hawks stand on the symbol of "gold," the one wearing the crown of Southern Egypt, the other that of the North. The "Golden Horus" was, in fact, one of the titles assumed [pg 075] by the Pharaoh at an early date. Whether the epithet applied to the god represented originally the golden colour of the wings of the sparrow-hawk, or whether, as is more probable, it denoted the Horus-hawk of gold who watched over the destinies of the kings of Upper Egypt in their ancient

capital of Nekhen, it is now impossible to say.[46] Later ages explained it as referring to the golden rays of the morning sun.

In the time of the Fourth Dynasty the title was attached indifferently to the Ka or death name given to the Pharaoh after his death, and to the living name given to him at his birth into this world. The Horus-hawk, without the symbol of “gold,” surmounted, so far as we know, only the Ka name. It was the double of the Pharaoh, rather than the Pharaoh himself, in whom the god had been incarnated. Horus brings the captive northerner to the king, and presides over his kingdom; but it is only over the royal Ka that he actually watches.

At Nekhen, the Horus-hawk, to whom the city was dedicated, was represented under the form of a mummy. It was here, perhaps, that the natron of El-Kab was first employed to preserve the dead body from decay, and that Horus was supposed to be entombed, like Osiris at Abydos. At any rate, there is clearly a connection between the dead and mummified Horus and the Horus who stands above the name of the Pharaoh's double. It is probable, therefore, that the identification of Horus with the kings of Upper Egypt originated at Nekhen. The Horus-hawk was the token under which they fought and ruled; it was Horus who had led them to victory, [pg 076] and in whose name the Pharaonic Egyptians, with their weapons of metal, overcame the neolithic population of the Nile.

That Horus, accordingly, in one shape or

another, should have become the patron god of so many principalities in Southern Egypt, is in no way astonishing.[47] He represented the Pharaonic Egyptians; and as they moved northward, subduing the older inhabitants of the country, they carried his worship with them. At Heliopolis he was adored as Hor-em-Khuti or Harmakhis, “Horus issuing from the two horizons,” and identified with Ra, the sun-god, the patron of the city. His image may still be seen in the sphinx of Giza, with its human head and lion's body. At Edfu, where the Pharaonic invaders appear to have first established themselves, he was worshipped as Hor-beḥudet under the form of a winged solar disc, a combination of the orb of the sun with the wings of the hawk.[48] A legend inscribed on the walls of the temple, which is a curious mixture of folklore and false etymologising, worked up after the fashion of Lemprière by the priests of the Ptolemaic period, [pg 077] knows exactly when it was that this emblem of the god came into existence. It was in the three hundred and sixty-third year of the reign of Ra-Harmakhis on earth, when he fled from the rebels who had risen against him in Nubia and had landed at Edfu. Here Hor-beḥudet, the local deity, paid homage to his suzerain and undertook to destroy his enemies. But first, he flew up to the sun “as a great winged disc,” in order that he might discover where they were. Then in his new form he returned to the boat of Harmakhis, and there Thoth addressed Ra, saying: “O lord of the gods, the god of Edfu (*Beḥudet*) came in the shape of a

great winged disc: from henceforth he shall be called Hor-beḥudet." It was after this that Horus of Edfu and his followers, "the smiths," smote the foe from the southern to the northern border of Egypt.

The legend, or rather the prosaic fiction in which it has been embodied, has been composed when the original character of Horus had long been forgotten, and when the sun-god of Heliopolis had become the dominant god of Egypt. It belongs to the age of theological syncretism, when the gods of Egypt were resolved one into the other like the colours in a kaleidoscope, and made intangible and ever-shifting forms of Ra. But it bears witness to one fact,—the antiquity of the worship of Horus of Edfu and of the emblem which was associated with him. The winged solar disc forms part of his earliest history.

The fact is difficult to reconcile with the view of Professor Maspero, that Horus was originally the sky, and is in favour of the general belief of Egyptologists, that he was from the outset the sun-god. Such, at all events, was the opinion of the Egyptians themselves in the later period of their history. In the Pyramid texts Horus already appears as a solar deity, and it is only as the sun-god that his identification with the Pharaohs can [pg 078] be explained. It was not the sky but the sun who watched over the names of their doubles. It is true that the two eyes of Horus were said to be the sun and the moon, and that a punning etymology, which connected

his name with the word *her* or “face,” caused him to be depicted as the face of the sky, the four locks of hair of which were the four cardinal points. But the etymology is late, and there is no more difficulty in understanding how the solar and lunar discs can be called the eyes of the sun-god, than there is in understanding how the winged disc was distinguished from him, or how even in modern phrase the “eye” may be used as a synonym of the whole man. When we speak of “the eye of God,” we mean God Himself.[49]

There is, however, one newly-discovered monument which may be claimed in support of Professor Maspero's theory. Above the Horus-hawk which surmounts the name of the Third Dynasty king found at Nekhen, is the hieroglyph of the sky. But the explanation of this is not difficult to find. On the one hand, the hieroglyph embraces the hawk as the sky does the sun; on the other hand, it gives the pronunciation of the name of Horus, the sky in Egyptian being *her* or *hor*, “the high” and uplifted. And the name of Hor-em-Khuti or Harmakhis, “the Horus who issues from the two horizons,” must be quite as old as the monument of Nekhen. What the two horizons were is shown us by the hieroglyph which depicts them. They were the twin mountains between which the sun came forth at dawn, and between which he again passes at sunset.

[pg 079]
The hieroglyph belongs to the very beginning of Pharaonic Egyptian history. It may have been brought by the Pharaonic immigrants

from their old home in the East. It is at least noticeable that in the Sumerian language of primitive Babylonia the horizon was called *kharra* or *khurra*, a word which corresponds letter for letter with the name of Horus. The fact may, of course, be accidental, and the name of the Egyptian god may really be derived from the same root as that from which the word for "heaven" has come, and which means "to be high." But the conception of the twin-mountains between which the sun-god comes forth every morning, and between which he passes again at nightfall, is of Babylonian origin. On early Babylonian seal-cylinders we see him stepping through the door, the two leaves of which have been flung back by its warders on either side of the mountains, while rays of glory shoot upward from his shoulders. The mountains were called Mas, "the twins," in Sumerian; and the great Epic of Chaldæa narrated how the hero Gilgames made his way to them across the desert, to a land of darkness, where scorpion-men, whose heads rise to heaven while their breasts descend to hell, watched over the rising and the setting of the sun. It is difficult to believe that such a conception of the horizon could ever have arisen in Egypt. There the Delta is a flat plain with no hills even in sight, while in the valley of Upper Egypt there are neither high mountains nor twin peaks.

Horus himself is, I believe, to be found in the Babylonian inscriptions. Mention is occasionally made in them of a god Khar or

Khur, and in contracts of the time of Khammurabi (B.C. 2200) we find the name of Abi-Khar, “my father is Khar.” But the age of Khammurabi was one of intercourse between Babylonia and Egypt, and the god Khar or Horus is therefore probably [pg 080] borrowed from Egypt, just as a seal-cylinder informs us was the case with Anupu or Anubis.[50]

But though the name of Khar or Khur is and must remain Egyptian, Horus has much in common with the Babylonian sun-god Nin-ip. They are both warrior-gods; and just as the followers of Horus were workers in iron, so Nin-ip also was the god of iron. One of his titles, moreover, is that of “the southern sun”; and on a boundary-stone the eagle standing on a perch is stated to be “the symbol of the southern sun.”[51]

The goddess with whom Horus of Nekhen was associated was Nekheb with the vulture's head. Her temple stood opposite Nekhen at El-Kab on the eastern bank of the Nile, and at the end of the long road which led across the desert from the Red Sea. It was at once a sanctuary and a fortress defending Nekhen on the east. But Nekheb was the goddess not only of Nekhen, but of all Southern Egypt. We find her in the earliest inscriptions on the sacred island of Sehêl in the Cataract, where she is identified with the local goddess Sati. We find her again at Thebes under the name of Mut, “the mother.” Her supremacy, in fact, went back to the days when Nekhen was the capital of the south, and its goddess accordingly

shared with it the privileges of domination. When Nekhen fell back into the position of a small provincial town, Nekheb also participated in its decline. Under the Theban dynasties, it is true, the name of Mut of Karnak became honoured throughout Egypt, but her origin by that time had been forgotten. The Egyptian who brought his offering to Mut never [pg 081] realised that behind the mask of Mut lay the features of Nekheb of Nekhen.

Mut, however, continued to wear the vulture form, and the titles assumed by the king still preserved a recollection of the time when Nekheb was the presiding goddess of the kingdom of the south. From the days of Menes onward, in the title of "king of Upper and Lower Egypt," while the serpent of Uazit symbolised the north, the vulture of Nekheb symbolised the south. At times, indeed, the uræus of Uazit is transferred to Nekheb; but that was at an epoch when it had come to signify "goddess," as the Horus-hawk signified "god." From the earliest ages, however, the plant which denoted the south, and formed part of the royal title, was used in writing her name. She was emphatically "the southerner," the mistress of the south, just as her consort, the mummified Horus, was its lord.

The euhemerising legends of Edfu made Horus the faithful vassal of his liege lord Ra Harmakhis of Heliopolis. But from a historical point of view the relations between the two gods ought to have been reversed, and the legends themselves contained a reminiscence

that such was the case. In describing the victorious march of Horus and his followers towards the north, they tell us how he made his way past Heliopolis into the Delta, and even established one of his “forges” on its easternmost borders. The Horus kings of Upper Egypt made themselves masters of the northern kingdom, introducing into it the divine hawk they worshipped and the Horus title over their names.

The sun-god of Heliopolis was represented, like the gods of Babylonia, as a man and not as a hawk. He was known as Tum or Atmu, who, in the later days of religious syncretism, was distinguished from the other forms of the sun-god as representing the setting sun. [pg 082] But Tum was the personal name of the sun-god; the sun itself was called Ra. As time went on, the attributes of the god were transferred to the sun; Ra, too, became divine, and, after being first a synonym of Tum, ended by becoming an independent deity. While Tum was peculiarly the setting sun, Ra denoted the sun-god in all his forms and under all his manifestations. He was thus fitted to be the common god of all Egypt, with whom the various local sun-gods could be identified, and lose in him their individuality. Ra was a word which meant “the sun” in all the dialects of the country, and its very want of theological associations made it the starting-point of a new phase of religious thought.

It was not until the rise of the Twelfth Dynasty that a special temple was built to Ra

in Heliopolis.[52] Up to that time Ra had been content to share with Tum the ancient temple of the city, or rather had absorbed Tum into himself and thus become its virtual possessor. But his religious importance goes back to prehistoric times. The temple of Heliopolis became the centre of a theological school which exercised a great influence on the official religion of Egypt. It was here that the sun-worship was organised, and the doctrine of creation by generation or emanation first developed; it was here, too, that the chief gods of the State religion were formed into groups of nine.[53]

The doctrine of these Enneads or groups of nine was destined to play an important part in the official creed. From Heliopolis it spread to other parts of Egypt, and eventually each of the great sanctuaries had its own [pg 083] Ennead, formed on the model of that of Heliopolis. At Heliopolis the cycle of the nine supreme gods contained Shu and Tefnut, Seb and Mut, Osiris and Isis, Set and Nebhât, the four pairs who had descended by successive acts of generation from Tum, the original god of the nome. We owe the explanation and analysis of the Ennead to Professor Maspero, who has for the first time made the origin of it clear.[54]

Tum, who is always represented in human form, was the ancient sun-god and tutelary deity of Heliopolis. To him was ascribed the creation of the world, just as it was ascribed by each of the other nomes to their chief god. But whereas at the Cataract the creator was a

potter who had made things from clay, or at Memphis an artist who had carved them out of stone, so it was as a father and generator that Tum had called the universe into being. In the Book of the Dead it is said of him that he is "the creator of the heavens, the maker of (all) existences, who has begotten all that there is, who gave birth to the gods, who created himself, the lord of life who bestows upon the gods the strength of youth." An origin, however, was found for him in Nu, the primeval abyss of waters, though it is possible that Professor Maspero may be right in thinking that Nu really owes his existence to the goddess Nut, and that he was introduced into the cosmogony of Heliopolis under the influence of Asiatic ideas. However this may be, Shu and Tefnut, who immediately emanated from him, apparently represented the air. Later art pictured them in Asiatic style as twin lions sitting back to back and supporting between them the rising or setting sun.[55] But an old [pg 084] legend described Shu as having raised the heavens above the earth, where he still keeps them suspended above him like the Greek Atlas. A text at Esna, which identifies him with Khnum, describes him as sustaining "the floor of the sky upon its four supports" or cardinal points; "he raised Nut, and put himself under her like a great column of air." Tefnut, his twin sister, was the north wind, which gives freshness and vigour to the world.

The next pair in the Ennead of Heliopolis were Seb and Nut, the earth and the

firmament, who issued from Shu and Tefnut. Then came Osiris and Isis, the children of the earth and sky, and lastly Set and Nebhât, the one the representative of the desert land in which the Asiatic nomads pitched their tents, the other of the civilised Egyptian family at whose head stood *Neb-hât*, "the lady of the house." Upon the model of this Ennead two other minor Enneads were afterwards formed.

But it was only its first father and generator who was the god of the nome in which the temple of Heliopolis stood. The deities who were derived from him in the priestly cosmogony were fetched from elsewhere. They were either elementary deities like Shu and Seb, or else deities whose worship had already extended all over Egypt, like Osiris and Isis. The goddess Nebhât seems to have been invented for the purpose of providing Set with a sister and a consort; perhaps Tefnut, too, had originally come into existence for the same reason.

The Ennead, once created, was readily adopted by the other nomes of Egypt. It provided an easy answer to that first question of primitive humanity: what is the [pg 085] origin of the world into which we are born? The answer was derived from the experience of man himself; as he had been born into the world, so, too, it was natural to suppose that the world itself had been born. The creator must have been a father, and, in a land where the woman held a high place in the family, a mother as well. Though Tum continued to be pictured as a man, no wife was assigned him;

father and mother in him were one.

It is impossible not to be reminded of similar supreme gods in the Semitic kingdoms of Asia. Asshur of Assyria was wifeless;[56] so also was Chemosh of Moab. Nor does the analogy end here. Creation by generation was a peculiarly Semitic or rather Babylonian doctrine. The Babylonian Epic of the Creation begins by describing the generation of the world out of Mummu or Chaos. And the generation is by pairs as in the Ennead of Heliopolis. First, Mummu, the one primeval source of all things; then Lakhmu and Lakhamu, who correspond with Shu and Tefnut; next, Ansar and Kisar, the firmament and the earth; and lastly, the three great gods who rule the present world. Of one of these, Ea, the ruler of the deep, Bel-Merodach the sun-god was born.

Between the Babylonian and the Egyptian schemes the differences are slight. In the Ennead of Heliopolis, Tum, the offspring of Nu, takes the place of Mummu, the watery chaos; but this was because he was the god of the State, and had therefore to be made the creator and placed at the head of the gods. It merely interposes another link in the chain of generation, separating Nu from the two elemental deities which in the Babylonian scheme proceeded immediately from it. For Nu was [pg 086] the exact equivalent of the Babylonian Mummu. Both denote that watery chaos out of which, it was believed, all things have come. And what makes the fact the more remarkable is, that though the conception of a

primeval watery chaos was natural in Babylonia, it was not so in Egypt. Babylonia was washed by the waters of the Persian Gulf, out of which Ea, the god of the deep, had arisen, bringing with him the elements of culture, and the waves of which at times raged angrily and submerged the shore. But the Egyptians of history lived on the banks of a river and not by the sea; it was a river, too, whose movements were regular and calculable, and which bestowed on them all the blessings they enjoyed. So far from being an emblem of chaos and confusion, the Nile was to them the author of all good. I do not see how we can avoid the conclusion that between the Ennead of Heliopolis with its theory of cosmology, and the cosmological doctrines of Babylonia, a connection of some sort must have existed.[57]

Indeed, the native name of Heliopolis is suggestive of Asiatic relations. It is the On of the Old Testament, and was called On of the north to distinguish it from another On, the modern Erment, in the south. It was symbolised by a fluted and painted column of wood,[58] in which some have seen an emblem of the sun-god, like the sun-pillars of Semitic faith. But the name of On was not confined to Egypt. There was another Heliopolis in Syria, called On of the Beka'a by Amos (i. 5), where the sun-god was worshipped under the form of a stone. And in Palestine itself Beth-el, “the house of [pg 087] God,” was known in earlier ages as Beth-On. It is true that the name of On may have been carried into Asia in the days

when the Hyksos dynasties ruled over Egypt, but it is more probable that both Beth-On and the On near Damascus go back to an older date. In any case they testify to some kind of contact between the sun-worship of Heliopolis in Egypt and that of Syria and Palestine.[59]

Between Tum, the sun-god of Northern Egypt, and Horus, the sun-god of the South, there was one notable difference. While Horus was a hawk, Tum was a man. In this respect, again, he resembled the gods of Babylonia, who are always depicted in human form. It is difficult to find any other Egyptian deity who was similarly fortunate. Osiris, indeed, was originally a man, but at an early date he became confounded with his symbol, the ram, in his title of "lord of Daddu." Professor Maspero thinks that Khnum at the Cataract may also have been originally a man; but if so, he too became a ram before the beginning of history. Ptaḥ of Memphis and Anher of This are the only other gods who appear consistently in human shape, and Ptaḥ is a mummy, while Anher, like Tum, was the sun.[60]

With the adoption of the Ennead and the cosmological ideas it embodied, a new element entered into the theology of the Egyptian temples. This was the identification of one god with another, or, to speak more exactly, the loss of their individuality on the part of the gods. The [pg 088] process was begun when the priests of Heliopolis took such of the divinities as were recognised throughout Egypt, and transmuted them into

successive phases in the creative action of their local god. It was completed when other religious centres followed the example of Heliopolis, and formed Enneads of their own. In each case the local god stood of necessity at the head of the Ennead, and in each case also he was assimilated to Tum. Whatever may have previously been his attributes, he thus became a form of the sun-god. A dual personality was created, which soon melted into one.

But it was not as Tum that the sun-god of Heliopolis thus made his way victoriously through the land of Egypt. It was under the more general and undefined name of Ra that he was accepted in the Egyptian sanctuaries. Tum remained the local god of Heliopolis, or else formed part of a solar trinity in which he represented the setting sun. But Ra became a divine Pharaoh, in whom the world of the gods was unified.

The kings of the Fifth Dynasty called themselves his sons. Hitherto the Pharaohs had been incarnations of the sun-god, like the earlier monarchs of Babylonia; henceforward the title of Horus was restricted to their doubles in the other world, while that of “Son of the Sun” was prefixed to the birth-name which they bore on earth. The same change took place also in Babylonia. There it was due to the invasion of foreign barbarians, and the establishment of a foreign dynasty at Babylon, where the priests refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of a king who had not been adopted as son by the sun-god Bel-Merodach.

Perhaps a similar cause was at work in Egypt. The Fifth Dynasty came from Elephantinê, an island which was not only on the extreme frontier of Egypt, but was inhabited then as now by a non-Egyptian race; it may be that the price of [pg 089] their acknowledgment by the priests and princes of Memphis was their acceptance of the title of "Son of Ra." It narrowed their pretensions to divinity, and at the same time implied their submission to the god of the great sanctuary which stood in such close relations with Memphis. As we have seen, the first monument on which the winged solar disc is found is that of a king of the Fifth Dynasty; it there overshadows his figure and his two names; but though the hawk of Horus stands above the name of his double, his birth-name is without the title of "Son of Ra."

When once the principle had been adopted that the leading gods of Egypt were but varying forms of the sun-god, it was easy to construct Enneads, whatever might be the number of the deities it was wished to bring into them. Thus at Heliopolis itself Horus the son of Isis was introduced, his confusion with the sun-god Horus facilitating the process. At This, Anher was identified with Shu; at Thebes, Amon was made one with Tum and Ra, with Mentu and Mut. Where a goddess was at the head of the local Pantheon the process was the same; she interchanged with the other goddesses of the country, and even with Tum himself. At all events, Horapollo (i. 12) states that Nit of Sais was at once male

and female.

One result of all this kaleidoscopic interchange was the growth of trinities in which the same god appears under three separate forms. At Heliopolis, for example, Harmakhis became identified with Tum, and the trinity of Tum, Ra, and Harmakhis grew up, in which Harmakhis was the sun of the morning and Tum of the evening, while Ra embodied them both. From one point of view, in fact, Harmakhis and Tum were but different aspects under which Ra could be envisaged; from another point, Ra, Tum, and Harmakhis were three persons in one god.

[pg 090]
I believe that Professor Maspero is right in holding that the Egyptian trinity is of comparatively late origin and of artificial character.[61] He points out that it presupposes the Ennead, and in some cases, at least, can be shown to have been formed by the union of foreign elements. Thus at Memphis the triad was created by borrowing Nefer-Tum from Heliopolis and Sekhet from Latopolis, and making the one the son of the local god Ptaḥ, and the other his wife. The famous trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, which became a pattern for the rest of Egypt, was formed by transferring Nebhât and Anubis, the allies of Osiris, to his enemy Set, and so throwing the whole of the Osirian legend into confusion. The trinity of Thebes is confessedly modern; it owed its origin to the rise of the Theban dynasties, when Thebes became the capital of Egypt, and its god Amon necessarily

followed the fortunes of the local prince. Mut, “the mother,” a mere title of the goddess of Southern Egypt, was associated with him, and the triad was completed by embodying in it Ptaḥ of Memphis, who had been the chief god of Egypt when Thebes was still a small provincial town. At a subsequent date, Khonsu, the moon-god, took the place of Ptaḥ.[62]

We can thus trace the growth of the Egyptian trinity and the ideas and tendencies which lay behind it. It was the culminating stage in the evolution of the religious system which took its first start among the priests of Heliopolis. First creation by means of generation, then the Ennead, and lastly the triad and the trinity—such were the stages in the gradual process [pg 091] of development. And the doctrine of the trinity itself reached its highest point of perfection in that worship of Osiris of which I shall speak in a future lecture.

But the Ennead had other results besides the Egyptian doctrine of the trinity. Generation in the case of a god could not be the same as in the case of a man. The very fact that Tum was wifeless proved this. It was inevitable, therefore, that it should come to be conceived of as symbolical like the generation of thought, all the more since the deities who had proceeded from Tum were all of them symbols representing the phenomena of the visible world. Hence the idea of generation passed naturally into that of emanation, one divine being emanating from another as

thought emanates from thought. And to the Egyptian, with his love of symbolism and disinclination for abstract thought, the expression of an idea meant a concrete form. Seb and Nut were the divine ideas which underlay the earth and the firmament and kept them in existence, but they were at the same time the earth and the firmament themselves. They represented thought in a concrete form, if we may borrow a phrase from the Hegelian philosophy.

The principle of emanation was eagerly seized upon by Greek thinkers in the days when Alexandria was the meeting-place of the old world and the new. It afforded an explanation not only of creation, but also of the origin of evil, and had, moreover, behind it the venerable shadow of Egyptian antiquity. It became the basis and sheet-anchor of most of the Gnostic systems, and through them made its way into Christian thought. From another point of view it may be regarded as an anticipation of the doctrine of evolution.

The work of the priestly college of Heliopolis was [pg 092] accomplished long before the Pyramid texts were written under the kings of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. The Ennead appears in them as a long established doctrine, with all its consequences. The solar faith had laid firm hold of Egyptian religion, and gained a position from which it was never to be dislodged. Henceforward Egyptian religion was permeated by the ideas and beliefs which flowed from it, and the gods and goddesses of the land assumed a solar

dress. Under the Nineteenth Dynasty, if not before, a new view of the future life obtained official sanction, which substituted the sun-god for Osiris and the solar bark for the Osirian paradise. But I must leave an account of it to another occasion, and confine myself at present to the last and most noteworthy development of solar worship in Egypt.

It is perhaps hardly correct to apply to it the term development. It was rather a break in the religious tradition of Egypt, an interruption in the normal evolution of the Egyptian creed, which accordingly made but little permanent impression on the religious history of the nation. But in the religious history of mankind it is one of the most interesting of episodes. Like Mosaism in Israel, it preached the doctrine of monotheism in Egypt; but unlike Mosaism, its success was only temporary. Unlike Mosaism, moreover, it was a pantheistic monotheism, and it failed accordingly in its struggle with the nebulous polytheism of Egypt.

One of the last Pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty was Amon-hotep IV. Since the conquest of Syria by his ancestor Thothmes III., and the establishment of an empire which extended to the banks of the Euphrates, Asiatic manners and customs had poured into Egypt in an ever-increasing flood, and with them the ideas and religious beliefs of the Semitic East. Amon-hotep III., the father of Amon-hotep IV., had maintained the older [pg 093] traditions of the Egyptian court, so far at least as religion was concerned, though his

mother and wife had alike been foreigners. But his son appears to have been young at the time of his father's death. He was accordingly brought up under the eye and influence of his mother Teie, and his temperament seems to have seconded the teaching he received from her. His features are those of a philosophic visionary rather than of a man of action, of a religious reformer rather than of a king. He flung himself eagerly into a religious movement of which he was the mainspring and centre, and for the first time in history there was persecution for religion's sake.

For numberless centuries the Egyptian had applied the title of “the one god” to the divinity he was adoring at the moment, or who presided over the fortunes of his city or nome. But he did not mean to exclude by it the existence of other deities. The “one god” was unique only to the worshipper, and to the worshipper only in so far as his worship for the moment was addressed to this “one god” alone. When with the growth of the solar theory the deities of Egypt began to be resolved into one another, the title came to signify that attribute of divinity which unified all the rest. But to the Egyptian, it must be remembered, the attribute was a concrete thing; and though in one sense Amon and Khnum and Horus denoted the attributes of Ra, in another sense they were distinct personalities with a distinct history behind them. The result was what I have called a nebulous polytheism, in which the individual deities of the Egyptian Pantheon had melted

like clouds into one another; they had lost their several individualities, but had not gained a new individuality in return. The conservative spirit, which forbade the Egyptian to break with the traditions of the past and [pg 094] throw aside any part of his heritage, prevented him from taking the final step, and passing out of polytheism into monotheism.

It was just this step, however, that was taken by Amon-hotep IV. and his followers, and which at once stamps the non-Egyptian character of his religious reformation. Henceforward there was to be but one God in Egypt, a God who was omnipresent and omniscient, existing everywhere and in everything, and who would brook no rival at his side. He was not, indeed, a new god, for he had already revealed himself to the generations of the past under the form of Ra, and his visible symbol was the solar disc. But Ra had been ignorantly worshipped; unworthy language had been used of him, and he had been confounded with gods who were no gods at all. The new and purified conception of the supreme divinity needed a new name under which it could be expressed, and this was found in Aten, “the solar disc,” or Aten-Ra, “the disc of the sun.”

It was not probable that Amon of Thebes and his worshippers would bow their heads to the new faith without a struggle. It was Amon who had led the fathers of Amon-hotep IV. to victory, who had given them their empire over the world, and upon whose city of

Thebes the spoils of Asia had been lavished. A fierce contest broke out between the Theban priesthood and the heretical king. The worship of Amon was proscribed, his very name was erased from the monuments on which it was engraved, and a shrine of the rival deity was erected at the very gates of his ancient temple. The Pharaoh changed his own name to that of Khu-n-Aten, “the glory of the solar disc,” and thereby publicly proclaimed his renunciation of the religion of which he was the official head.

But in the end the priests of Amon prevailed. Khu-n-Aten was forced to leave the capital of his fathers, [pg 095] and, carrying with him the State archives and the adherents of the new faith, he built a new city for himself midway between Minia and Siût, where the mounds of Tel el-Amarna now mark its site. Here, surrounded by a court which was more than half Asiatic in blood and belief, he raised a temple to the new God of Egypt, and hard by it a palace for himself. The new creed was accompanied by a new style of art; the old traditions of Egyptian art were thrown aside, and a naturalistic realism, sometimes of an exaggerated character, took their place. The palace and temple were alike made glorious with brilliant painting and carved stone, with frescoed floors and walls, with columns and friezes inlaid with gold and precious stones, with panels of pictured porcelain, and with statuary which reminds us of that of later Greece.[63] Gardens were planted by the edge of the Nile, and carriage roads constructed in the

desert, along which the king and his court took their morning drives. Then, returning to his palace, the Pharaoh would preach or lecture on the principles and doctrines of the new faith.

It was officially called “the doctrine,” which, as Professor Erman remarks, shows that it possessed a dogmatically-formulated creed. Its teachings are embodied in the hymns inscribed on the walls of the tombs of Tel el-Amarna. The God, whose visible symbol is the solar disc, is He, as we learn from them, who has created all things, “the far-off heavens, mankind, the animals and the birds; our eyes are strengthened by his beams, and when he reveals himself all flowers grow and live; at his rising the pastures bring forth, they are intoxicated before his face; all the cattle skip on their feet, and the birds in the marshes flutter with joy.” It is he “who [pg 096] brings in the years, creates the months, makes the days, reckons the hours; he is lord of time, according to whom men reckon.”[64] Beside Him, “there is no other” God.

“Beautiful is thy setting,” begins another hymn, “O living Aten, thou lord of lords and king of the two worlds! When thou unitest thyself with the heaven at thy setting, mortals rejoice before thy countenance, and give honour to him who has created them, and pray to him who has formed them in the presence of Khu-n-Aten, thy son, whom thou lovest, the king of Egypt who liveth in truth. All Egypt and all lands within the circle that thou treadest in thy glory, praise thee at thy

rising and at thy setting. O God, who in truth art the living one, who standest before our eyes, thou createst that which was not, thou formest it all; we also have come into being through the word of thy mouth."[65]

[pg 097]
The solar disc was thus, as it were, the mask through which the supreme Creator revealed himself. And this Creator was the one true living God, living eternally, brooking the worship of no other god at his side, and, in fact, the only God who existed in truth. All other gods were false, and the followers of Aten-Ra were accordingly called upon to overthrow their worship and convert their worshippers. At the same time, Aten was the father of all things; he had called all things into existence by the word of his mouth, men equally with the beasts and birds, the flowers and the far-off heaven itself. If, therefore, men refused to worship him, it was because they had been led astray by falsehood and ignorance, or else were wilfully blind.

Whatever measure of success the reforms of Khu-n-Aten attained among the natives of Egypt, they must have possessed in so far as they represented a reformation, and not the introduction of a new and foreign cult. There must have been a section of the people, more especially among the educated classes, whose religious ideas were already tending in that direction, and who were therefore prepared to accept the new "doctrine." The language often used of the gods, if strictly interpreted, implied a more or less modified form of

monotheism; the Egyptian deities, as we have seen, had come to be resolved into manifestations of the sun-god, and the symbol of the new faith enabled it to be connected with the ancient worship of Ra. The old sun-worship of Heliopolis formed a bridge which spanned the gulf between Amon and Aten. Indeed, the worship of the solar disc itself was not absolutely strange. An Egyptian, for instance, who was buried at Kom el-Aḥmar, opposite El-Kab, in the reign of Thothmes III., speaks of being "beloved by the beams of the solar disc" (*Aten-Ra*); and though no determinative of divinity is attached [pg 098] to the words, it was but a step forward to make the disc the equivalent of the sun-god.

Nevertheless, between the "doctrine" of Khu-n-Aten and the older Egyptian ideas of the sun-god there was a vast, if not impassable, distance. The "doctrine" was no result of a normal religious evolution. That is proved not only by the opposition with which it met and the violent measures that were taken to enforce it, but still more by its rapid and utter disappearance or extermination after the death of its royal patron. It came from Asia, and, like the Asiatic officials, was banished from Egypt in the national reaction which ended in the rise of the Nineteenth Dynasty.

The god of Khu-n-Aten, in fact, has much in common with the Semitic Baal. Like Baal, he is the "lord of lords," whose visible symbol is the solar orb. Like Baal, too, he is a jealous god, and the father of mankind. It is true that Baal was accompanied by the shadowy

Baalat; but Baalat, after all, was but his pale reflection, necessitated by the genders of Semitic grammar; and in some parts of the Semitic world even this pale reflection was wanting. Chemosh of Moab, for instance, and Asshur of Assyria were alike wifeless.

On the other hand, between Aten and the Semitic Baal there was a wide and essential difference. The monotheism of Khu-n-Aten was pantheistic, and as a result of this the god he worshipped was the god of the whole universe. The character and attributes of the Semitic Baal were clearly and sharply defined. He stood outside the creatures he had made or the children of whom he was the father. His kingdom was strictly limited, his power itself was circumscribed. He was the "lord of heaven," separate from the world and from the matter of which it was composed.

But Aten was in the things which he had created; [pg 099] he was the living one in whom all life is contained, and at whose command they spring into existence. There was no chaos of matter outside and before him; he had created "that which was not," and had formed it all. He was not, therefore, a national or tribal god, whose power and protection did not extend beyond the locality in which he was acknowleged and the territory on which his high places stood; on the contrary, he was the God of the whole universe; not only Egypt, but "all lands" and all peoples are called upon to adore him, and even the birds and the flowers grow and live through him. For the first time in history, so

far as we know, the doctrine was proclaimed that the Supreme Being was the God of all mankind.

The fact is remarkable from whatever point of view it may be regarded. The date of Khu-n-Aten is about 1400 B.C., a century before the Exodus and the rise of Mosaism. More than once it has been suggested that between Mosaism and the "doctrine" of Aten there may have been a connection. But in Mosaism we look in vain for any traces of pantheism. The Yahveh of the Commandments stands as much outside His creation as the man whom He had made in His own image; His outlines are sharply defined, and He is the God of the Hebrews rather than of the rest of the world. The first Commandment bears the fact on its forefront: other nations have their gods whose existence is admitted, but Yahveh is the God of Israel, and therefore Him only may Israel serve.

[pg 100]

Lecture V. Animal Worship.

St. Clement of Alexandria thus describes the religion of his Egyptian neighbours (*Pædag.* iii. 2): "Among (the Egyptians) the temples are surrounded with groves and consecrated pastures; they are provided with propylæa, and their courts are encircled with an infinite number of columns; their walls glitter with foreign marbles and paintings of the highest art; the sanctuary is resplendent with gold and silver and electrum, and many-coloured stones from India and Ethiopia; the shrine within it is veiled by a curtain wrought with gold. But if you pass beyond into the remotest part of the enclosure in the expectation of beholding something yet more excellent, and look for the image which dwells in the temple, a *pastophorus* or some other minister, singing a pæan in the Egyptian language with a pompous air, draws aside a small portion of the curtain, as if about to show us the god; and makes us burst into a loud laugh. For no god is found therein, but a cat, or a crocodile, or a serpent sprung from the soil, or some such brute animal ... and the Egyptian deity is revealed as a beast that rolls itself on a purple

coverlet."

St. Clement was a Christian philosopher and apologist, but the animal worship of the Egyptians was quite as much an object of ridicule to the pagan writers of Greece and Rome. "Who has not heard," says Juvenal (*Sat.* [pg 101] xv.),—"who has not heard, where Egypt's realms are named—

> "What monster gods her frantic
> sons have framed?
> Here Ibis gorged with well-grown
> serpents, there
> The crocodile commands
> religious fear;...
> And should you leeks or onions
> eat, no time
> Would expiate the sacrilegious
> crime;
> Religious nations sure, and blest
> abodes,
> Where every orchard is o'errun
> with gods!"

A Roman soldier who had accidentally killed a cat was torn to pieces by the mob before the eyes of Diodorus, although the Romans were at the time masters of the country, and the reigning Ptolemy did his utmost to save the offender.[66] For the majority of the people the cat was an incarnate god.

This worship of animals was a grievous puzzle to the philosophers of the classical age. The venerable antiquity of Egypt, the high level of its moral code, and, above all, the spiritual

and exalted character of so much of its religion, had deeply impressed the thinking world of the Roman Empire. That world had found, in a blending of Egyptian religious ideas with Greek metaphysics, a key to the mysteries of life and death; in the so-called Hermetic books the old beliefs and religious conceptions of Egypt were reduced to a system and interpreted from a Greek point of view, while the Neo-Platonic philosophy was an avowed attempt to combine the symbolism of Egypt with the subtleties of Greek thought. But the animal worship was hard to reconcile with philosophy; even symbolism failed to explain it away, or to satisfy the mind of the inquirer. Plutarch had boldly denied that the worship of an animal was in any way more absurd than that of an image; the deity, if so he chose, could manifest himself in either [pg 102] equally well. Porphyry had recourse to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. If the soul migrated after death into the body of some lower animal, he urged, it would communicate to the latter a portion of the divine essence. But after all this was no explanation of the worship paid to the animal; the soul had not been worshipped while it was still in the body of its original possessor, and there was therefore no reason why it should be worshipped when it was embodied in another form. Moreover, metempsychosis in the Greek sense was never an Egyptian doctrine. All the Egyptian held was that the soul, after it had been justified and admitted to a state of blessedness, could enter for a time whatever material form it chose; could

fly to heaven, for instance, in the body of a swallow, or return to the mummified body in which it had once dwelt. But such embodiments were merely temporary, and matters of free choice; they were like a garment, which the soul could put on and take off at will.

Modern writers have found it as difficult to explain the animal worship of ancient Egypt as the philosophers and theologians of Greece and Rome. Creuzer declared that it was the result of a poverty of imagination, and that the beasts were worshipped because they embodied certain natural phenomena. Lenormant argued, on the other hand, that it was due to a high spiritual conception of religion, which prevented the Egyptians from adoring lifeless rocks and stones like the other nations of antiquity. Of late the tendency has been to see in it a sort of totemism which prevailed among the aboriginal population of the country, and was tolerated by the higher religion of the Pharaonic immigrants. In this case it would represent the religion of the prehistoric race or races, and its admittance into the official religion would be paralleled by the history of Braḥmanism, which [pg 103] has similarly tolerated the cults and superstitions of the aboriginal tribes of India. Indeed, it is possible to discover an analogous procedure in the history of Christianity itself. The lower beliefs and forms of worship can be explained away wherever needful with the help of symbolism and allegory, while the mass of the people are left in the undisturbed

enjoyment of the religious ideas and rites of their forefathers.

Recent discoveries, however, have cast a new light on the matter. The early monuments of Egyptian history, found in the neolithic graves and among the remains of the first dynasties, have shown that the animal worship of Egypt was only part of a larger system. Slate plaques, on which are represented the actions of Pharaohs who preceded Menes or were his immediate successors, prove that the prevailing system of religion must have been one closely akin to African fetishism. The gods appear frequently, but they always appear under the form of what in later times were regarded as their symbols. Sometimes the symbol is an animal or bird, but sometimes also it is a lifeless object. The human forms, to which we are accustomed in later Egyptian art, are absent;[67] there is nothing to tell us that the religion of the time was in any way distinguished from the fetishism of Dahomey or the Congo.

Thus on a slate plaque from Kom el-Aḥmar (opposite El-Kab[68]) we see the Pharaoh entering the hall in which lie the bodies of his decapitated foes, while four standards are borne before him. On the first two are the hawks of Horus, on the third the jackal of Anubis, on the last [pg 104] an object which may be intended for a lock of hair.[69] On the reverse of the plaque the god is bringing before him the prisoners of the north. But the god is a hawk, whose human hand grasps the rope by which the conquered enemy is

dragged along. On a plaque of equally early date, found at Abydos, five standards are depicted, the foot of each of which is shaped like a hand holding a rope. Above the first two standards are the jackals of Anubis, on the next the ibis of Thoth, then the hawk of Horus, and, finally, the curious object which is the emblem of Min. On a still older plaque from the same locality the names of the cities ruled (or conquered) by the Pharaoh are inscribed, each within its battlemented wall, while above is the animal god by which it is said to be "beloved" or perhaps "destroyed." The last of the cities is "the royal" capital, above which stand the two hawks of Horus, who are perched on the standards of the king; behind it are the names of the other towns under the protection of the scorpion of Selk, the lion of Sekhet, and the hawk of Horus.[70]

But we can trace the standards and the symbols upon [pg 105] them still farther back. M. de Morgan has pointed out that the rude and primitive boats painted on the pottery of the prehistoric graves have their prows ornamented with standards which are precisely the same in shape as the standards that were borne before the Pharaoh. On the top of one is perched a hippopotamus, on another a fish; on another is a flowering branch, on another the sail of a ship.[71] We may conclude, therefore, that both standards and symbols were characteristic of the older population of the country whom the Pharaonic Egyptians found when they entered it. But the symbols had no connection with

any kind of writing; we look in vain, either on the pottery or on any other object of prehistoric art, for hieroglyphic signs. The standard may have been adopted by the invading race from their conquered subjects, and so introduced into their system of writing; originally it was nothing but a primeval flagstaff at the prow of a boat. And, like the flagstaff, the symbol that served as a flag must have been of aboriginal invention.

Such, then, is the conclusion to which we are led by the newly-found monuments of early Egypt. On the Pharaonic monuments of that remote age the gods are not yet human; they are still represented by animals and other fetishes. And these fetishes have been borrowed from the older population of the valley of the Nile, along with the so-called standard on the top of which they were placed.

The standard with the emblem upon it denoted a nome in the historical days of Egypt. The emblem represented the god of the nome, or rather of the chief sanctuary in the nome. Where the god of the nome was Horus, the hawk appeared upon the standard; where two Horus-gods were worshipped, there were two hawks. As the prehistoric boat had been placed under the protection [pg 106] of the deity whose fetish or symbol was planted at its prow, so the nome was under the protection of the god whose emblem was erected on its standard. The standards borne before the Pharaoh on the plaque of Kom el-Aḥmar were the standards of the nomes over

which he claimed rule.

It would seem, then, that the god of a nome was in most instances the god of the aboriginal tribe which originally inhabited it, and that the symbols by which these gods were known were primitively the gods themselves. On the plaque of Abydos it is not Selk or Sekhet who is the protecting deity of the city, but the scorpion and the lion. And by the side of animals and birds, as we have seen, we find also inanimate objects which are on exactly the same footing as the animals and birds. The primitive religion of Egypt must have been a form of fetishism.

But in passing from the older population to the Asiatic immigrants it underwent a change. The same slate plaques which portray Horus as a hawk and Anubis as a jackal, represent the king under the likeness of a bull. It is a literal pictorial rendering of the phrase so often met with in the inscriptions, in which the Pharaoh is described as a bull trampling on his enemies. The animal has ceased to represent the actual reality, and has become a symbol.

And this symbolism, it will be noticed, accompanies the introduction of symbolic writing. The figure of the bull which denotes the Pharaoh, is as much a symbol as the fish which forms part of his name. It is therefore fair to conclude that the hawk which brings the captured enemy to the king is also a symbol. The fetish has become symbolic; the hawk is no longer a god in and for itself, but

because it is the embodiment of the divine Horus.

[pg 107]
It was but a step further to unite the symbol with the human form. The process involved the disuse of inanimate objects; only the living could be fitly joined together. Horus could be depicted as a man with a hawk's head; it was less easy to combine the symbol of Min with a man's limbs. Such anthropomorphising followed necessarily from the deification of the Pharaoh. The race which turned its human leader into a god was bound to represent its gods under human form. In Egypt, however, the older element in the population, with its religious ideas, was too strong to be wholly disregarded by the ruling caste. The compromise, which had transformed the fetish into a symbol, ended by retaining the animal forms of the gods, but in subordination to the form of man. Henceforth, for the State religion, Horus wore merely the mask of a hawk.[72]

That the official figures of the gods were thus a compromise between two antagonistic currents of religious thought, appears very clearly when we compare Egypt with Babylonia. In Babylonia, also, there were symbols attached to the gods, some of them representing animals and birds, others inanimate objects. In Babylonia, moreover, the king was a god, both in his lifetime and after [pg 108] his death. But in Babylonia the figures of the gods of the State religion were all human; it was only the demons of the

popular cult who were allowed to retain the bodies of beasts and birds. The gods themselves were all depicted in human form. The reason of this is simple: in Babylonia the Semitic conception of the deity was predominant; there was no fetishism to be conciliated, no animal worship to be reconciled with a higher faith. The emblems of the gods remained emblems, and the gods of heaven clothed themselves with the same form as the human god on earth.

In the retention of the primitive animal worship, therefore, we must see an evidence not only of the strength of that portion of the population to whom it originally belonged, but also of the conservative spirit which characterised the Egyptians. In this case, however, the conservative spirit was the result of the influence of the conquered race; art continued to represent Horus with the head of a hawk, just because those who believed him to be a bird continued to form an important part of the population. The popular cult and the popular superstitions were too widely spread to be disregarded.

Egyptian orthodoxy found a ready way in which to explain the animal forms of its gods. The soul, once freed from its earthly body, could assume whatever shape it chose, or rather, could inhabit as long as it would whatever body it chose to enter. And what was true of the human soul was equally true of the gods. They too were like men, differing indeed from men only in so far as they were already in the other world, and thus freed

from the trammels and limitations of our present existence. The soul of Ra, which was practically Ra himself, could appear under the form of a bird, if so he willed. Transmigration from one body to another, indeed, [pg 109] never presented any difficulty to the Egyptian mind. It could be effected by the magician by means of his spells; and there were stories, like the folk-tales of modern Europe, which told how the life and individuality of a man could pass into the bodies of animals, and even into seeds and trees. The belief is common to most primitive peoples, and is doubtless due to the dreams in which the sleeper imagines himself possessed of some bodily form that is not his own.

We must then regard the animal worship of Egypt as the survival of an early fetishism. But it is a survival which has had to accommodate itself to the antagonistic conceptions of an anthropomorphic faith. By the side of the deified king the deified animal was allowed to remain, and man and beast were mixed together in religious art. It was parallel to the juxtaposition of pictorial ideographs and phonetically-spelt words in the writing of a later day. And just as it was only the cultivated classes to whom the written characters were symbols with a meaning other than that which they bore to the eye, so too it was only these same cultivated classes to whom the sacred animals were symbols and embodiments of the deity, rather than the deity itself. The masses continued to be fetish-worshippers like the

earlier inhabitants of the country from whom most of them drew their descent.

To this fact we must ascribe the extraordinary hold which the worship of animals had upon the Egyptian people as a whole up to the period of their conversion to Christianity. While the walls of the temple were covered with pictures in which the gods were represented in human or semi-human form, the inner shrine which they served to surround and protect contained merely the beast or bird in which the deity was believed to be incarnated for the time. When the god revealed himself [pg 110] to his worshipper, it was as a hawk or a crocodile. The fact would be inexplicable if the priests alone were privileged to see him, as has often been maintained. Such, however, was not the case. Every Egyptian, whatever might be his rank and station, could follow the processions in the temple, could enter its inner chambers, and gaze upon the incarnated deity, provided only that he had conformed to the preliminary requirements of the ritual and were not unclean.[73] The temple was not the exclusive property of a privileged caste; it was only the foreigner and the unbeliever who was forbidden to tread its courts. It was open to the Egyptian populace, and to the populace the sacred animals were the gods themselves.

We do not know whether the hawk which represented Horus, and in which the soul of the god tabernacled for a time, was distinguished from other hawks by special marks. We know, however, that this was the

case with some of the sacred animals. According to Herodotus (iii. 28), the bull Apis of Memphis was required to be black, with a white triangle on his forehead, an eagle on his back, double hairs in his tail, and a beetle on his tongue; and though the extant figures of the god do not support the precise description given by the Greek writer, they show that certain characteristic marks were really required. In this way the incarnation of the god was separated from other animals of the same species, upon whom, however, some part of his divinity was reflected. Since any bull might have become the habitation of the deity, it was necessary to treat the whole species with respect.

The bull Apis was an incarnation of Ptaḥ, "the new life of Ptaḥ," as he is often called on the votive tablets. We must see in him accordingly the local fetish of the [pg 111] pre-dynastic Egyptians who lived in the district where Memphis afterwards arose. In fact the bull was sacred throughout the whole of this region. In the neighbouring city of Heliopolis the place of Apis was taken by another bull, Ur-mer, or Mnevis, as the Greeks miscalled him. Mnevis was the incarnation of the sun-god, and, like Apis, it was needful that he should be black. Nor was the worship of the bull confined to the north. At Erment also, near Thebes, Mentu, the god of the nome, was incarnated in the bull Bakis.[74] The sanctity of the bull is not difficult to understand among an agricultural people in an early stage of development. In India the

bull is still sacred; and Sir Samuel Baker tells us that the tribes of the Upper Nile still abstain from eating the flesh of the ox. In Phrygia the slaughter of an ox was punishable with death;[75] the first king of the country was supposed to have been a peasant, and his ox-drawn cart was preserved in the temple of Kybelê. Among the Egyptians themselves, as we have seen, the Pharaoh was symbolised under the form of a bull at the very beginning of history.

The bull, then, must have been worshipped in the neighbourhood of Memphis and Heliopolis before it became the incarnation of Ptaḥ or Ra. It follows, moreover, that as yet it was no one particular bull to whom divine honours were paid; there was no one particular bull into whom the soul of one of the gods of the [pg 112] Pharaonic Egyptians had as yet entered, thus setting it apart from all others. The bull was still a fetish pure and simple; it was the whole species that was sacred, and not a single member of it.

That this was indeed the case, is proved by a custom which lasted down to the latest times. Not only was the sacred bull or the sacred hawk mummified after death, but other bulls and hawks also. There were cemeteries of mummified animals, just as there were cemeteries of mummified men. Vast cemeteries of cats have been found at Bubastis, at Beni-Hassan, and other places; so too there were cemeteries of hawks and crocodiles, of jackals and bulls. We are still ignorant of the exact conditions under which

these creatures were embalmed and buried. It is impossible to suppose that a solemn burial was provided for all the individual members of a species which was accounted sacred in a particular nome, much less for all its individual members throughout Egypt, as seems to have been imagined by Herodotus (ii. 41); there must have been certain limitations within which such a burial was permitted or ordained. And sometimes there was no burial at all; the mummy of the sacred animal of Set, for instance, has never been found.

Still the fact remains that not only were the bodies of the Apis or the Mnevis mummified and consigned to a special burying-place, but the bodies of other bulls as well. Doubtless the Egyptian of the Pharaonic period had an excellent reason to give for the practice. Just as the servants of the prince were buried around their master, or as the *ushebti*-figures were placed in the tomb of the dead, so the ordinary bull was interred like the divine incarnations of Ptaḥ and Ra, in the hope that its double might accompany the spirit of the god in the other world. The scenes of country life painted on the [pg 113] walls of the tombs contain pictures of sheep and cattle whose *kas* were, in some way or other, believed to exist in the Egyptian paradise, and a mummified bull had as much right to the hope of a future existence as a mummified man. The very act of embalming implied the possibility of its union with Osiris.

Egyptian logic soon converted the possibility

into a fact. With the growth of the Osirian cult the dead Apis became, like the pious Egyptian, one with Osiris, the lord of the other world. His identity with Ptaḥ paled and disappeared before his newer identity with Osiris. At first he was Osiris-Apis, "the Osirified bull-god," as guardian only of the necropolis of Memphis; then as god also of both Memphis and Egypt in life as well as in death. Under the Ptolemies, Greek ideas gathered round the person of a deity who thus united in himself the earlier and later forms of Egyptian belief, and out of the combination rose the Serapis of the classical age, whose worship exercised so great an influence on the Roman world. In the features of the human Serapis, with his majestic face and flowing beard, it is difficult to recognise the bull-god of primitive Egypt.

The history of Serapis is on a large scale what that of the other sacred animals of Egypt is on a smaller scale. Mnevis was a lesser Apis; as Heliopolis waned before Memphis, so did its divine bull before the rival deity of the capital. They had both started on an equal footing, and had followed the fortunes of the cities where they were adored. At Mendes it was not a bull, but a ram, that was the object of worship, and in which the priests beheld an incarnation of Ra,[76] though the accidental fact that the word *ba* meant alike "ram" and "soul" caused later generations to identify it with the "soul" of Osiris. In the Fayyûm it was the crocodile which naturally became [pg 114] the god Sebek or Sukhos, and at a later

time Pete-sukhos, “the gift of Sukhos.” In the latter name we read the signs of a growing disinclination to see in the animal the god himself or even his soul or double; the Sukhos becomes “the gift of Sukhos,” separate from the god, and bestowed by him upon man.

There were other nomes besides the Fayyûm in which the crocodile was worshipped. It was the sacred animal of Onuphis in the Delta, and of Ombos in the far south of Egypt. But we must not expect to find a Sebek and a sacred crocodile always accompanying one another. There could be cases in which the crocodile was identified with other gods than Sebek,—with Set, for example, as at Nubti, near Dendera. The sacred animal existed before the god whose incarnation he afterwards became. The neolithic races were in the valley of the Nile before the Pharaonic Egyptians, and the deities they adored were consequently also there before the gods of the intruding race. Ptaḥ, with his human figure, would not have been transformed into the bull Apis if the bull had not been already in possession.

The name of the god Thoth is itself a proof of this. Thoth was the god of Hermopolis, the modern Eshmunên, and his patronage of writing and books shows that he must have been the deity of the Pharaonic race. The god to whom the invention of the hieroglyphs was ascribed, could not have been the god of an illiterate population.

Now the Egyptian form of the name Thoth is

Deḫuti (or Zeḫuti), “he who belongs to the ibis.”[77] Thoth, therefore, [pg 115] was not originally the ibis, and, in spite of his bird's head, the human body which he retained was a traditional evidence of the fact. He was merely “attached to the ibis,”—attached, that is to say, to the place where the ibis was the fetish of the aborigines.

According to Manetho, it was not until the reign of the second king of the Second Dynasty that Apis, Mnevis, and Mendes “were adjudged to be gods.” This must mean that it was then that the State religion admitted for the first time that the official gods of Memphis, Heliopolis, and Mendes were incarnated in the sacred animals of the local cults. That the statement is historically correct, may be gathered from the fact that the temples of Memphis and Heliopolis were dedicated to Ptaḥ and Tum, and not to Apis and Mnevis. When they were built the divinity of the bull had not yet been officially recognised. The gods in whose honour they were founded were gods of human form, and gods of human form they continued to be. Down to the last days of Egyptian paganism the sun-god of Heliopolis was not a bull, but a man; and though the mummified Apis watched over the cemeteries of Memphis, the god of its great temple remained a mummified man and not a mummified bull.

One of the legends elaborately concocted in the temples out of old folk-tales and etymological puns explained the animal forms of the gods as the result of the murder of

Osiris by Typhon or Set. The fear of sharing his fate made them hide themselves, it was related, in the bodies of the beasts.[78] But the explanation must belong to an age when the introduction of foreign ideas had thrown discredit on the old worship of animals. In earlier times no explanation was needed. The belief in the power possessed by the soul of migrating from one body into another, and the symbolism of which the hieroglyphic [pg 116] writing was at once the expression and the cause, formed an easy bridge by which the fetishism of neolithic Egypt and the anthropomorphism of historical Egypt could be joined together. Horus is a hawk and the Pharaoh is a bull on the earliest monuments we possess, and such visible symbols necessarily reacted on a people, one half at least of whom already acknowledged the hawk and the bull as their gods. The official recognition of Apis and Mnevis and Mendes was the last step in the process of incorporating the aboriginal superstitions and practices into the State religion, and giving them official sanction. The parallelism with Braḥmanism in India is complete.

But we have still to ask why it was that the bull was worshipped in one district of prehistoric Egypt, the hawk in another? Why was it that a particular fetish was the protecting deity of a particular sanctuary or nome? To this there can be but one answer. A modified form of totemism must once have been known in the valley of the Nile. The sacred animal must have been the last

representative of the totem of the tribe or clan. The emblems borne on the flagstaffs of the prehistoric boats, like the emblems on the standards of the several nomes, must have been the animals or objects in which the clans saw the divine powers which held them together, and from which, it may be, they were derived. The subsequent history of animal worship in Egypt is a continuous drifting away from this primitive totemism. The inanimate objects first fall into the background; then, under the influence of a higher form of religion, the animals become symbols, and assume semi-human shapes, and finally one only out of a species is selected to become the incarnation of a god. But the god of whom he is the incarnation is a very different god from the divinity that was believed to reside in the original fetish. It is a god in the Asiatic and not in the African sense, a god [pg 117] whose nature is spiritual and free from the limitations of our earthly existence, so that he can enter at any moment into whatsoever form he desires. The old fetishes survived, indeed, but it was as amulets and charms; and to these the multitude transferred its faith as the State religion became more and more unintelligible to it. The magic lock of hair and image of a serpent preserved at Saft el-Henna, and said by the priests to have belonged to the sun-god, had doubtless come down from the days of fetishism.

It has often been asserted that besides the bull or the ram or the crocodile, there were other

creatures of a composite or fabulous character which were also accounted sacred by the Egyptians. It is true that the sacred animal and symbol of Set seems to be of this nature. His forked tail and ass-like ears make it difficult to believe that any existing beast ever served for his portrait. But the sphinx, in whom the men of the Eighteenth Dynasty saw the image of Harmakhis, the rising sun, or the phœnix in whom the sun-god of Heliopolis was incarnated, belongs to a different category. They are not sacred animals in the sense in which Apis and Mnevis were so.

The sphinx, like the symbol of Set, is one of those composite creatures which meet us from time to time in Egyptian art. It has been said that such composite creatures were as real to the Egyptian as the cattle and sheep he tended in the fields; that he was quite as much prepared to meet with them in the desert, as the ancient Greek would have been to meet with a satyr in the woods or a Highlander with a kelpie by the waterside. Very possibly that was the case; it will not, however, explain their origin, or the forms that were assigned to them. Why, for instance, should the sphinx of Giza be in the form of a lion with a human head?

[pg 118]
Once more we must look to Asia for an explanation. The sphinx of Giza was the guardian of the tombs of the dead; it protected them from the spiritual foes whose home was in the desert. “I protect thy sepulchral chapel,” it is made to say in an

inscription, “I watch over thy sepulchral chamber, I keep away the stranger who would enter, I overthrow the foe with their weapons, I drive the wicked from thy tomb, I annihilate thy opponents ... so that they return no more.”[79] The sphinx, in fact, performed precisely the same office as the winged bulls that guarded the entrance to an Assyrian palace, or the cherubim who stood at the gates of the garden of Eden.

The winged bulls and the cherubim were composite creatures, and came originally from Babylonia. Babylonia was the primal home, indeed, of all such animal combinations. They were painted on the walls of the temple of Bel at Babylon, and their existence formed an essential part of the Babylonian cosmogony. That cosmogony rested on the doctrine of a contest between the powers of light and darkness, of order and chaos, and on the final victory of the gods of light. There was a world of chaos as well as a world of order; and before the present creation could be evolved with its settled laws and definite boundaries, there had been of necessity another creation in which all things were confused and chaotic. The brood of Tiamat, the dragon of chaos, corresponded with the creatures of the actual world which the gods of light had called into existence; they were abortive attempts at creation, composed of limbs which matched not together, “men with the body of birds, or the faces of ravens.”

This brood of chaos were the demons who were the enemies of Bel-Merodach and his

followers. In order to [pg 119] oppose them successfully, it was needful that there should be similarly composite creatures, who, instead of being on the side of evil, were under the orders of the gods. By the side of the evil demon, therefore, there was the “good cherub,” who protected the pious Babylonian, and barred the way to the spirits of wickedness. The winged bull with his human head defended the approach to a temple or house; men with the bodies of scorpions guarded the gateways of the sun.

This curious similarity in the functions assigned to the images of composite animals both in Egypt and Babylonia, raises the presumption that the composite forms themselves were ultimately derived from a Babylonian source. That such was the case we now have proof.

On the slate plaques and mace-heads of Nekhen and Abydos we find composite forms similar to those of Babylonia. What afterwards became the Hathor-headed column appears as a human face with a cow's ears and horns. Below are two monsters with a dog's body and a lion's head, whose intertwined necks are snakes. What makes the latter representation the more interesting is, that M. Heuzey has pointed out exactly the same figures on an early Babylonian seal now in the Louvre.[80] Like the seal-cylinder, therefore, which distinguishes the early period of Egyptian history, the composite monsters of which the sphinx and the symbol of Set were surviving examples indicate direct

communication with Chaldæa.

And, it must be remembered, it is only in Chaldæa that they find their explanation. Here they originated in the religious and cosmological ideas associated with the physical features of the country. The sphinx of [pg 120] Giza still guards the desert of Giza, because ages ago the flooding waves of the Persian Gulf made the Babylonians believe that the world had arisen out of a watery chaos peopled by unformed creatures of monstrous shape.

The case of the phœnix or *bennu* is somewhat different. Here we have to do not with a fabulous monster, but with an existing bird of which a fabulous story was told. The bird was not an eagle, as Herodotos supposed, but a heron, which at an early date seems to have been confounded with the crested ibis, the symbol of the *khu* or luminous soul. It was, in fact, the spirit of the sun-god, and later legends declared that it stood and sang on the top of a tree at Heliopolis, while a flame burst forth beside it, and the sun rose from the morning sky. With sunset it became an Osiris, whose mummy was interred at Heliopolis, to awake again to life with the first rays of the rising sun. It was thus for Christian writers an emblem of the resurrection, and as such its story is told by St. Clement of Rome:[81] “There is a certain bird which is called the phœnix. This is the only one of its kind, and it lives five hundred years. When the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense and myrrh

and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up the nest in which are the bones of its parent, and, bearing these, it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the city called Heliopolis. And, flying in open day in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and, having done this, it hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the [pg 121] chronological registers, and find that it has returned exactly when the five hundredth year is completed."[82]

The legend of the phœnix has grown up round the belief that the disembodied soul could enter at will into the body of a bird. The phœnix was allied to the hawk of Horus, and probably was originally identical with that primitive symbol of the soul (*khu*), the name of which means literally "the luminous." It will be remembered that the Pyramid texts speak of the "four *khu*" or "luminous souls of Horus" "who live in Heliopolis," and the sun-god of that city was usually invoked by his *bau* or "souls," figured as three birds which appear as three ostriches on objects found in the tomb of Menes.[83] On an early seal-cylinder of Babylonian type the *bennu* or *khu* is termed "the double of Horus."[84]

The story of the phœnix illustrates the influence exercised by the pictorial character of Egyptian writing upon the course of

religious thought. The soul was first symbolised by a bird. It passed out of the corpse and into the air like a bird; it was free to enter whatever body it chose, and the body of a bird was that which it would naturally choose. Even to-day the belief is not extinct in Europe that the spirits of the dead pass into the forms of swallows or doves. But at first it was immaterial what bird was selected to express pictorially the idea of a soul. It was the ostrich when the latter still existed in Southern Egypt; [pg 122] then it became the plover, in consequence, probably, of a similarity in sound between the name of the plover and that of the soul. At other times the favourite symbol was the crested ibis, whose name was identical with a word that signified "light." Around the conception of the soul there accordingly gathered associations with the light, and more especially with the light of the sun. The sun-god, too, had a double and a soul; what could be more fitting, therefore, than that they should be represented by the crested ibis? It was but a step farther to see in the bird an incarnation of the sun-god himself.

The subsequent development of the myth was due to the fact that the god of Heliopolis continued to be depicted as a man. His human form was too stereotyped in religious art to be changed, and the phœnix consequently was never actually identified with him. It was his soul, but it was not Ra himself. The combination of the man and the beast could be tolerated only when both were co-ordinate

survivals from a distant past. The inner contradiction between the human and the bestial god was then obscured or ignored.

With the human god was closely connected the ancestor worship, which was quite as much a characteristic of Egypt as the worship of animals. It was due in the first instance, perhaps, to the belief that the *Ka* of the dead man needed food and nourishment, and that if he did not receive them the hungry double would revenge himself on the living. To this day the Egyptian fellahin, both Moslem and Copt, visit the tombs of their forefathers at certain times in the year, and, after eating and drinking beside them, place a few grains of wheat or some similar offering on a shelf in front of a window-like opening into the tomb. But the belief in the material needs of the *Ka* would not of itself have sufficed to support the long lines of priests who were [pg 123] attached to the cult of the dead, or the prayers that were addressed to them. It was the deification of the Pharaoh which caused "prophets" of Khufu and Khafra to be still consecrated in the days of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty,[85] and prevented the forms of the sacred animals from being pictured on the temple walls. As long as there was a human god on earth, there could also be a human god in heaven; and in the Pyramid texts of the Sixth Dynasty the dead Pepi or Teta is as much a god as any deity in the pantheon.

When the Osirian faith had spread throughout Egypt, and the pious Egyptian looked forward after death to becoming himself an "Osiris,"

there was still greater reason for the divine honours that were paid to the ancestor. In paying them to him the worshipper was paying them to the god of the dead. And the god of the dead was himself one of the ancestors of the Egyptian people. He was a human god who had once ruled on earth, and he still governed as a Pharaoh in the world beyond the grave. As the Pharaoh was a theomorphic man, so Osiris was an anthropomorphic god. In him the cult of the ancestor reached its fullest development.

It was natural that Pharaonic Egypt should have been, so far as we know, the birthplace of euhemerism. Where the gods had human forms, and the men were gods, it was inevitable that it should arise. The deification of the Pharaoh prevented any line being drawn between the living man and the deity he worshipped. As the man could be a god, so too could the god be a man. The gods of Egypt were accordingly transformed into Pharaohs, who lived and conquered and died like the Pharaohs of history. They differed from the men of to-day [pg 124] only in having lived long ago, and on that account being possessed of powers which are now lost. That they should have died did not make them less divine and immortal. The Pharaoh also died like the ancestors who were worshipped at the tombs, but death meant nothing more than passing into another form of existence. It was merely a re-birth under new conditions. The *Ka* continued as before; there was no change in outward shape or in

the moral and intellectual powers.

In fact, the death of the god was a necessary accompaniment of an anthropomorphic form of religion. In Babylonia the temples of the gods were also their tombs, and even among the Greeks the sepulchre of Zeus was pointed out in Krete. The same cult was paid to the dead Naram-Sin or the dead Gudea in Chaldæa that was paid to the dead Khufu in Egypt. We have no need to seek in any peculiarly Egyptian beliefs an explanation of the ancestor worship which, along with the deification of the king, it shared with Babylonia.

The euhemerism of the Egyptian priesthood sounded the knell of the old faith. As the centuries passed, purer and higher ideas of the Godhead had grown up, and between the "formless" and eternal Creator of the world and the man who had become a god, the distance was too great to be spanned. On the one side, the gods of the national creed had been resolved one into another, till no distinctive shape or character was left to any one of them; on the other side, they had been transformed into mere human kings who had ruled over Egypt long ago. The pantheistic Creator and the deified Egyptians of vulgar and prosaic history could not be harmonised together. The multitude might be content with its sacred animals and its amulets, but the thinking portion of the nation turned to Greek metaphysics or a despairing scepticism. Already, in the time of the Eleventh [pg 125] Dynasty, the poet who composed the dirge of

king Antef gives pathetic expression to his doubts[86]—

"What is fortune? say the wise.
Vanished are the hearths
and homes,
What he does or thinks, who
dies,
None to tell us comes.

"Have thy heart's desire, be glad,
Use the ointment while you
live;
Be in gold and linen clad,
Take what gods may give.

"For the day shall come to each
When earth's voices sound
no more;
Dead men hear no mourners'
speech,
Tears can not restore.

[pg 126]

"Eat and drink in peace to-day,
When you go, your goods
remain;
He who fares the last long way
Comes not back again."

Still more hopeless are the words put into the mouth of the wife of the high priest of Memphis at the close of the first century before our era—

"O my brother, my spouse, and
my friend,

High priest of Memphis!
Cease not to drink and to eat,
To fill thyself with wine, and
to make sweet love;
Enjoy each festive day and
follow thy desire,
Let not care enter thy heart
All the years that on earth thou
remainest.
The underworld is a land of
thick darkness,
A sorrowful place for the dead.
They sleep, after their guise,
never to awaken
And behold their comrades.
Their father and their
mother they know not,
No yearning for their wives and
their children do they feel."[87]

[pg 127]

Lecture VI. The Gods Of Egypt.

In the language of ancient Egypt the word *neter* signified "a god." Sir P. le Page Renouf

endeavoured to show that the word originally meant “strong,” and that the first Egyptians accordingly pictured their gods as embodiments of strength.[88] But it has been pointed out[89] that where *neter* is used in the sense of “strong,” it is rather the lustiness of youth that is meant, and that a better rendering would be “fresh and vigorous.” The verb *neter* signifies “to flourish” and “grow up.” Moreover, it is a question whether between this verb and the word for “god” there is any connection at all. It is difficult to understand how the gods could be described as “growths” unless they were conceived of as plants; and of this there is no evidence in ancient Egypt. We must be content with the fact that as far back as we can trace the history of the word *neter*, it meant “god” and “god” only.

But we must also beware of supposing that the Egyptians attached the same ideas to it that we do, or that it had the same connotation at all periods of their history or among all classes of the people. The pantheistic deity of Khu-n-Aten was a very different being from the sun-god of whom the Pharaohs of the Fifth Dynasty had called themselves the sons, and between [pg 128] the divinity which the multitude saw in the bull Apis and the formless and ever-living Creator of the priesthood there was a gulf which could hardly be bridged. But even the conception of the Creator formed by the priesthood is difficult for us to realise. Eighteen centuries of Christianity have left

their impress upon us, and we start from a different background of ideas from that of the Egyptian, to whatever class he may have belonged. It is impossible that we can enter exactly into what the Egyptian meant by such expressions as “living for ever” or “having no form”; even the words “life” and “form” would not have had the same connotation for him that they have for us. All that we can do is to approximate to the meaning that he gave to them, remembering that our translation of them into the language of to-day can be approximative only.

The hieroglyphic writing which preserved memories of a time that the Egyptians themselves had forgotten, represents the idea of a “god” by the picture of an axe. The axe seems originally to have consisted of a sharpened flint or blade of metal hafted in a wooden handle, which was occasionally wrapped in strips of red, white, and black cloth.[90] It takes us back to an age of fetishism, when inanimate objects were looked upon as divine, and perhaps reflects the impression made upon the natives of the country by the Pharaonic Egyptians with their weapons of metal. Horus of Edfu, it will be remembered, was served by smiths, and the shrines he founded to commemorate his conquest of Egypt were known as “the smithies.” The double-headed axe was a divine symbol in Asia Minor,[91] [pg 129] and both in the old world and in the new the fetish was wrapped in cloths. Even at Delphi a sacred stone was enveloped in wool on days of festival.

In the sacred axe, therefore, which denoted a god, we may see a parallel to the standards on the prow of the prehistoric boat or to the symbols of the nomes. It would have represented the gods of those invaders of the valley of the Nile who brought with them weapons of copper, and have been the symbol of the conquering race and the deities it worshipped. As the Pharaonic Egyptians appropriated the fetishes of the older population in their sculptures and their picture-writing, so too would they have appropriated what had become to the neolithic people the sign and emblem of superior power.

We have already dealt with an important class of gods, those which had a solar origin. There were other gods of an elemental character, whose worship does not seem to have been originally confined to one particular locality. Such were Seb, the earth, Nut, the sky, and Nu, the primeval deep. But they played only a small part in the religion of the country. Seb was known in later days chiefly as the father of Osiris; at an earlier epoch he had been the *rpâ*, or "hereditary prince, of the gods," a title which takes us back to the feudal period of Egypt, when as yet there was no Pharaoh who ruled over the whole of the land. The animal sacred to him was the goose, perhaps on account of some similarity in its name; but he was never identified with it, and continued to the last to be depicted in human form. His symbol, however, gave rise to a cosmological myth. The goose became the mother of the

egg out of which the universe was born.

Nut was the wife of Seb, wedded to him as the sky is wedded to the earth. It seems reasonable to see in her the feminine form of Nu, the primeval chaos of waters; and so the Egyptians of the historical period believed, [pg 130] since they identified her with the wife of the Nile, and represented her as sitting in the sycamore and pouring the water of life on the hands of a soul at the foot of the tree. It has been suggested, however, that Nu was of later origin than Nut, who became a Nile goddess with the head of a snake only when Nu himself had been changed into the Nile.[92] But the idea of a watery chaos is not one which would have grown up on Egyptian soil. There it was rather the desert which represented the unformed beginning of things; the Nile spread itself over the already existing land at regular intervals, and was no dreary waste of waters, out of which the earth emerged for the first time. The geographical home of the idea was in Babylonia, on the shores of the ever-retreating Persian Gulf. And from Babylonia we find that the belief in a primeval deep spread itself over Western Asia. The Egyptian Nu is the counterpart of the Babylonian Mummu, the mother of gods, as Nu was their father. Professor Hommel may even be right in identifying the name with the Babylonian Nun or Nunu, the lord of the deep.

But Nu survived only in the theological schools, more especially in that of Hermopolis, the modern Eshmunên. The god

of Hermopolis was Thoth, the Egyptian Deḥuti. Thoth seems to have been at the outset the moon, which was thus, as in Babylonia, of the male sex. A legend, repeated by Plutarch,[93] relates how he gained the five intercalatory days of the Egyptian year by playing at dice with the moon; and he was at times identified with the moon-gods Aah and Khonsu. The first month of the year was his, and he was the measurer of time, who had invented arithmetic and geometry, music and astronomy, architecture and letters. He knew the magic formulæ which could bind the gods themselves, and as [pg 131] minister of the Pharaoh Thamos had introduced writing and literature into Egypt. Henceforward he remained the patron of books and education, on which the culture of Egypt so largely rested. He was, in fact, the culture-god of the Egyptians to whom the elements of civilisation were due.

It is curious that we do not know his true name, for Deḥuti means merely the god "who is attached to the ibis." Was it really Nu? and is Thoth really a compound of a moon-god and a sun-god? At all events the culture-god of Babylonia who corresponded to Thoth was Ea, the deep, and one of the earliest names of Ea was "the god Nun." Moreover, the son of Ea was Asari, the Osiris of Egypt; and just as Asari instructed mankind in the wisdom and laws of Ea, so Thoth acted as the minister of Osiris and adjudged his cause against Seb. Like Ea, too, Thoth wrote the first books from which men derived their laws.[94]

However this may be, Thoth was the creator of the world through the word of his mouth. In the cosmogony of Hermopolis the universe and the gods that direct it are the creation of his word, which later ages refined into the sound of his voice. From Hermopolis the doctrine passed to other parts of Egypt, and under the Theban dynasties tended to displace or absorb the older Heliopolitan doctrine of creation by generation. But the doctrine was known also in Babylonia, where the god whose word is creative was Asari, the Merodach of the Semites. In the Babylonian Epic of the Creation the "word" of Merodach creates and destroys, like the "word" of Yahweh in the Old Testament. I must leave to another lecture the consideration as to how far the [pg 132] Logos of Alexandrine philosophy has been influenced by the theology of Hermopolis.

Whether Thoth were originally Nu or not, Nu at all events forms the second member of the Hermopolitan Ennead. Professor Maspero has shown that it was modelled on the Ennead of Heliopolis.[95] But in accordance with the more abstract character of the cosmogony of which it was a part, the divinities of which it is composed are abstractions that look strangely out of place in the Egyptian Pantheon.

Nu is provided with the feminine Nut, who is not to be confounded with the old goddess of the sky, and from them are derived the successive pairs Ḥeḥui and Ḥeḥet, Kek and Keket, Nini and Ninit, "eternity," "darkness," and "inertia."[96] The whole scheme is Asiatic

rather than Egyptian, but the gods composing it are already mentioned in the Pyramid texts.

The four pairs of abstract deities constituted "the eight" gods after whom Hermopolis received one of its names (Khmunu, now Ashmunên), and who were often addressed as "the god eight," like "the god seven" in Babylonia. Professor Maspero sees in them a philosophical development of the four cynocephalous apes who accompanied Thoth and saluted the first streak of dawn. But the development is difficult to follow, and the apes who are the companions of the god probably had another origin. They certainly must have come from the Sudân; no apes were indigenous in Egypt in historical times. Moreover, it was only the Thoth of Hermopolis in Upper Egypt in whose train they were found; the Thoth of Hermopolis Parva in the [pg 133] Delta, properly speaking, knew them not. But from an early epoch "the five gods"—Thoth and his four ape-followers, whose likeness he sometimes adopted—had been worshipped at Eshmunên. Its temple was called "the Abode of the Five," and its high priest "the great one of the House of the Five."[97]

How the half-human apes of Central Africa came to be associated with Thoth we do not know. Between the baboons who sing hymns to the rising and setting sun and the moon, or the culture-god, there is little or no connection. But a curious biography found in a tomb at Assuan throws light upon it. Herkhuf, the subject of the biography, was

sent by Hor-em-saf of the Sixth Dynasty on an exploring expedition into the Libyan desert south of the First Cataract, and he brought back with him a Danga dwarf "who danced the dances of the god," like another Danga dwarf brought from Punt in the neighbourhood of Suâkim or Massawa in the time of the Fifth Dynasty. The dwarf was evidently regarded by Herkhuf as a species of baboon, if we may judge from the account he gives of the way in which he was treated; even to-day the ape in the zoological gardens of Giza is called by the lower classes at Cairo "the savage man." Travellers have described the dancing and screaming of troops of apes at daybreak when the sun first lights up the earth, and it was natural for primitive man to suppose that the dancing was in honour of the return of the god of day. Dances in honour of the gods have been common all over the world; indeed, among barbarous [pg 134] and savage peoples the dance is essentially of a religious character. Even David danced before the ark, and boys still dance before the high altar in the cathedral of Seville. That dances are represented on the prehistoric pottery of Egypt, has been pointed out by M. de Morgan;[98] and since the Danga dwarf came from the half-mythical country in the south which was known to the Egyptians as "the land of the gods," and where, too, the apes of Thoth had their home, it was reasonable to believe that he knew the dance that would be pleasing to the gods.[99]

I believe, therefore, that the apes of Thoth

were at the outset the dwarf-like apes or ape-like dwarfs who danced in his honour in the temple of Hermopolis. Gradually they were taken hold of by that symbolism which was inseparable from a religion so intimately bound up with a pictorial system of writing; from dancers they became the followers of the god, who sang to the rising and setting sun the hymns which Thoth had composed. But this would have been when the worship of the sun-god of Heliopolis had already spread to Hermopolis, and the cult of Thoth was mingling with that of Ra. The mutual influence of the theories of creation taught by the priests of the two cities shows at what a comparatively early date this would have happened.

It is possible that there was actually a connection between the four baboons and the four elemental gods of Hermopolitan theology. But it was not in the way of development. It was rather that as the gods were four in number, the dancers in their temple were four also. To each god, as it were, an ape was assigned.

The influence of Hermopolis belongs to the pre-Menic age of Egypt; we can hardly any longer call it prehistoric. So, too, does the influence of Nekhen, once [pg 135] the capital of the kingdom of Upper Egypt. In a former lecture I have already spoken of its vulture-headed goddess Nekheb, the consort of the hawk Horus, whose temple at El-Kab guarded the outlet of the road from the Red Sea, and who was known as Mut, “the

mother," at Thebes. She was, in fact, the goddess of all Upper Egypt, whose worship had spread over it in the days when Nekhen was its ruling city. The gods of the Pharaoh followed the extension of his power.

In the early inscriptions of the First Cataract the vulture-headed goddess sitting on her basket is identified with the local divinity Sati (more correctly Suti), "the Asiatic." From her the island of Sehêl received its name, and there her sanctuary stood before Isis of Philæ ousted her from her supremacy. She was symbolised by the arrow, the name of which was the same as that of the goddess, and which was, moreover, a fitting emblem of the hostile tribes of the desert. It already appears on the prehistoric pottery as a sacred fetish on the "flagstaff" or standard at the prow of the boat.

The name of Sati, or rather Suti, is remarkable. It was not only the name of the goddess of the First Cataract, it was also the name given by the Egyptians to the nomadic tribes of Asia. But it was not the Egyptians only who used it in this sense. From time immemorial the name Sutê had precisely the same meaning among the Babylonians. The fact cannot be accidental; and as Sutê is of Babylonian origin, we have in it a fresh proof of the relations of the Pharaonic Egyptians with primeval Babylonia.

But the goddess Sati does not stand alone. There was also a god Set (or Sut), the twin-brother and enemy of Osiris, and, like Esau in

Hebrew history, a representative of the desert; while at the Cataract another goddess, Ânuqet by name, is her companion. Now Ânuqet is the [pg 136] feminine of Ânuq, the Ânaq of the Old Testament. The foreign nature of Ânuqet has long been recognised, for she wears on her head the non-Egyptian head-dress of a cap fringed with feathers. It is the same head-dress as that worn by the god Bes, whom the Egyptians derived from the land of Punt on the shores of the Red Sea. A similar cap is worn by the Zakkal on the coast of Palestine, in the near neighbourhood of "the sons of Ânaq," as well as by the Babylonian king Merodach-nadin-akhi, on a monument now in the British Museum.[100] Everything, therefore, points to its having been an Asiatic characteristic; perhaps it was made of the ostrich feathers which are still collected in Arabia and even on the eastern side of the Jordan.

The Greeks identified Ânuqet with Hestia, and Sati with Hêra. This was probably because Sati was the wife of Khnum (or Kneph), the god of the Cataract. As such Sati was also known as Heket, "the frog," which was supposed to be born from the mud left by the inundation of the Nile. It thus became a symbol of the resurrection, and was consequently adopted by the Christians of Egypt. Hence the frequency with which it is represented on lamps of the late Roman period.

Khnum, like the god of Thebes, was a ram, and is accordingly usually depicted with a

ram's head. But he could not originally have been so. Once more the old fetish of the district, the sacred animal of the nome, must have been fused with the god whom the Pharaonic invaders brought with them. For Khnum was a potter, as his name signifies, and at Philæ it is said of him that he was "the moulder (*khnum*) of men, the modeller of [pg 137] the gods."[101] Hence he is called "the creator of all this, the fashioner of that which exists, the father of fathers, the mother of mothers," "the creator of the heaven and the earth, the lower world, the water and the mountains," "who has formed the male and female of fowl and fish, wild beasts, cattle, and creeping things."

In Babylonia, Ea, the culture-god and creator, was also termed the "potter," and it was thus that he moulded the gods as well as men.[102] At the same time, like Khnum, he was a god of the waters. While the Cataract of the Nile was the home of Khnum, the Persian Gulf was the dwelling-place of Ea. The connection between the water and the modeller in clay is obvious. It is only where the water inundates the soil and leaves the moist clay behind it that the art of the potter can flourish.[103]

But was there also a connection between the Babylonian god who was worshipped in the ancient seaport of Chaldæa and the god of the Egyptian Cataract? We have seen that the wife of Khnum was entitled "the Asiatic," the very form of the name being Babylonian. We have further seen that her companion Ânuqet was also [pg 138] from Asia, and that her

traditional head-dress preserved a memory of the fact. There is a road from the Red Sea to Assuan as well as to El-Kab; it may be that it goes back to those prehistoric times when the Pharaonic Egyptians made their way across the desert into the valley of the Nile, as their Semitic kinsfolk did in later days into the tablelands of Abyssinia.

The creator who was worshipped at Memphis, at the other end of the Nile valley, was a potter also.[104] This was Ptaḥ, whose name is derived from a root which means to "open." According to Porphyry, he had sprung from an egg which had come from the mouth of Kneph. But the reference in the name is probably to the ceremony of "opening the mouth" of a mummy, or the statue of the dead man with a chisel, a finger, or some red pebbles, in order to confer upon it the capability of receiving the breath of life, and of harbouring the double or the soul.[105] Ptaḥ was represented as a mummy; he was, in fact, one of the gods of the underworld, who, like Osiris or the mummified Horus of Nekhen, had their tombs as well as their temples. He must have been the creative potter, however, before he became a mummy. Perhaps his transformation dates from the period of his fusion with Sokaris, who seems to have been the god of the cemetery of Memphis.[106] At any rate, Ptaḥ and [pg 139] Khnum are alike forms of the same primitive deity, and the names they bear are epithets merely. At Philæ, Ptaḥ is pictured as about to model man out of a lump of clay, and the Khnumu, or

"creators" who helped him to fashion the world, were his children.[107]

The Khnumu are the Patæki of Herodotos (iii. 37), whose figures, the Greek writer tells us, were carved by the Phœnicians on the prows of their vessels, probably to ward off the evil eye. They were dwarfs, like the Danga dwarf of Herkhuf or the god Bes, with thick heads, bowed legs, long arms, and bushy beards; and their terra-cotta figures have often been met with in the tombs. From the name Patæki we might infer that they had been borrowed by the Phœnicians from Egypt. But it is also possible that both Egypt and Phœnicia derived them from the same source. Dr. Scheil has pointed out that a similar figure occurs on early Babylonian seal-cylinders, where its Sumerian name is given as "the god Nugidda" or "the Dwarf," and it is sometimes represented as dancing before the goddess Istar.[108] Thus far, however, no text has been discovered which associates the god Nugidda with the creator of the world.

When Memphis became the capital of Egypt and the seat of the Pharaoh, its god also became supreme in the Egyptian pantheon. But he was no longer Ptaḥ the creator simply. He was already amalgamated with Sokaris, and probably with Osiris as well. It was not difficult to identify two mummified gods whose domain was among the dead. With the spread of the sun-worship of Heliopolis and the spirit of pantheistic syncretism which accompanied it, the individuality of the old god of Memphis became still further lost. He

was [pg 140] merged into Tanen or Tatunen, a local god of the earth, as well as into Ra. He had already been made into the chief of an Ennead, and now the Ennead was resolved into a trinity. Nofer-Tum, "beautified by Tum," was brought from Heliopolis, and was made into a son of Ptaḥ, afterwards to be superseded, however, by another abstraction, Im-hotep, "he who comes in peace."[109] Im-hotep was reputed the first *kher-heb* or hierophant; he it was who recited and interpreted the liturgy of the dead and the magic formulæ which restored health to the sick and raised the dead to life. The Greeks consequently identified him with Asklêpios.[110] Both Im-hotep and Nofer-Tum were the sons of Sekhet, the lion-headed goddess of Letopolis, from whence she must have been borrowed by the Memphite priests when the ancient potter god had become a generator, and a wife was needed for him.

With the decline of the Memphite dynasties and the fall of the Old Empire, the commanding part played by Ptaḥ in the Egyptian pantheon was at an end. The god of the imperial city had been identified with the gods of the provincial nomes; his temple at Memphis had taken precedence of all others, and the local priesthoods were content that their deities should have found a shelter in it as forms of Ptaḥ. He was even identified with Ḥâpi, the Nile, though perhaps the similarity in sound between the sacred name of the river and that of the bull Apis (Ḥapi) may have assisted in the identification.[111]

[pg 141]
That the Nile should have been worshipped throughout the land of Egypt is natural. The very land itself was his gift, the crops that grew upon it and the population it supported all depended upon his bounty. When the Nile failed, the people starved; when the Nile was full, Egypt was a land of contentment and plenty. It is only wonderful that the cult of the Nile should not have been more prominent than it was. The temples built in its honour were neither numerous nor important, nor were its priests endowed as the priests of other gods. But the cause of this is explained by history. The neolithic population of the country lived in the desert; the Nile was for them little more than the creator of pestilential swamps and dangerous jungles, where wild beasts and venomous serpents lurked for the intruder. The Pharaonic Egyptians brought their own gods with them, and these naturally became the divinities of the nomes. When the river had been embanked and its waters been made a blessing instead of a curse, the sacred animals and the gods of the nomes were too firmly established to be displaced.[112]

But the backwardness of the State religion was made up for by the piety of individuals. Hymns to the Nile, like those which were engraved on the rocks of Silsilis by Meneptah and Ramses III., breathe a spirit of gratitude and devotion which can hardly be exceeded—

"Hail to thee, O Nile!

who manifestest thyself over this land,
[pg 142]
and comest to give life to Egypt!
Mysterious is thy issuing forth from darkness,
on this day whereon it is celebrated!
Watering the orchards created by Ra
to cause all cattle to drink,
thou givest the earth to drink, inexhaustible one!...
Lord of the fish, during the inundation,
no bird alights on the crops.
Thou createst the wheat, thou bringest forth the barley,
assuring perpetuity to the temples.
If thou ceasest thy toil and thy work,
then all that exists is in anguish.
If the gods suffer in heaven,
then the faces of men waste away....
No dwelling (is there) which may contain thee!
None penetrates within thy heart!
Thy young men, thy children, applaud thee
and render unto thee royal homage.
Stable are thy decrees for Egypt before thy servants of the north.
He dries the tears from all eyes,
and guards the increase of his good things....
Establisher of justice, mankind

desires thee,
supplicating thee to answer their prayers;
thou answerest them by the inundation!
Men offer thee the first-fruits of corn;
all the gods adore thee!...
A festal song is raised for thee on the harp,
with the accompaniment of the hand.
Thy young men and thy children acclaim thee,
and prepare their exercises.
Thou art the august ornament of the earth,
letting thy bark advance before men,
lifting up the heart of women in labour,
and loving the multitude of the flocks.
When thou shinest in the royal city,
the rich man is sated with good things,
even the poor man disdains the lotus;
all that is produced is of the choicest;
all plants exist for thy children.
If thou refusest nourishment,
the dwelling is silent, devoid of all that is good,
[pg 143]
the country falls exhausted ...
O Nile, come (and) prosper!
O thou that makest men to live through his flocks,

and his flocks through his orchards!”[113]

The supremacy of Memphis was replaced by that of Thebes, and under the Theban dynasties, accordingly, Amon, the god of Thebes, became paramount in the State religion of Egypt. But before we trace the history of his rise to supremacy, it is necessary to say a few words regarding the Egyptian goddesses. The woman occupied an important position in the Egyptian household; purity of blood was traced through her, and she even sat on the throne of the Pharaohs. The divine family naturally corresponded to the family on earth. The Egyptian goddess was not always a pale reflection of the god, like the Semitic consort of Baal; on the contrary, there were goddesses of nomes as well as gods of nomes, and the nome-goddess was on precisely the same footing as the nome-god. Nit of Sais or Hathor of Dendera differed in no way, so far as their divine powers were concerned, from Ptaḥ of Memphis or Khnum of the Cataract. Like the gods, too, they became the heads of Enneads, or were embodied in Trinities, when first the doctrine of the Ennead, and then that of the Trinity, made its way through the theological schools. They are each even called “the father of fathers” as well as “the mother of mothers,” and take the place of Tum as the creators of heaven and earth.[114]

Nit rose to eminence with the Twenty-sixth Dynasty. Her city of Sais had previously

played no part in history, but both its goddess and its sanctuary were of old [pg 144] date.[115] Of the nature of the goddess, however, we know little. She is represented as a woman with a shuttle as her emblem, and in her hands she carries a bow and arrow, like Istar of Assyria or Artemis of Greece. But the twin arrow was also a symbol of the nome, which was a border district, exposed to the attacks of the Libyan tribes. The Greeks identified her with their Athêna on account of a slight similarity in the names.

Sekhet, or Bast of Bubastis, is better known. Sometimes she has the head of a lion, sometimes of a cat. At Philæ it is said of her that "she is savage as Sekhet and mild as Bast."[116] But the lion must have preceded the cat. The earlier inhabitants of the valley of the Nile were acquainted with the lion; the cat seems to have been introduced from Nubia in the age of the Eleventh Dynasty. In the time of the Old Empire there was no cat-headed deity, for there were no cats. But the cat, when once introduced, was from the outset a sacred animal.[117] The lion of Sekhet was transformed into a cat; and as the centuries passed, the petted and domesticated animal was the object of a worship that became fanatical. Herodotos maintains that when a house took fire the Egyptians of his time thought only of preserving the cats; and to this day the cat is [pg 145] honoured above all other animals on the banks of the Nile. The chief sanctuary of Bast was at Bubastis, where, however, the excavations of

Dr. Naville have shown that she did not become the chief divinity before the rise of the Twenty-second Dynasty.[118]

The goddesses passed one into the other even more readily than the gods. Sekhet developed by turns into Uazit and Mut, Selk the scorpion, and Hathor of Dendera. Pepi I., even at Bubastis, still calls himself the son of Hathor.

Hathor played much the same part among the goddesses that Ra played among the gods. She gradually absorbed the other female divinities of Egypt. They were resolved into forms of her, as the gods were resolved into forms of Ra. The kings of the Sixth Dynasty called themselves her sons, just as they also called themselves sons of the sun-god. She presided over the underworld; she presided also over love and pleasure. The seven goddesses, who, like fairy godmothers, bestowed all good things on the newborn child, were called by her name, and she was even identified with Mut, the starry sky. Her chief sanctuary was at Dendera, founded in the first days of the Pharaonic conquest of Egypt. Here she was supreme; even Horus the elder and the younger,[119] when compelled to form with her a trinity, remained lay figures and nothing more.

She was pictured sometimes as a cow, sometimes as a woman with the head of a cow bearing the solar disc between her horns: for from the earliest days she was associated with the sun. Sometimes she is addressed as

the daughter of Ra;[120] sometimes the sun-god is her son. [pg 146] At Dendera the solar orb is represented as rising from her lap, while its rays encircle her head, which rests upon Bâkhu, the mountain of the sun. In another chamber of the same temple we see her united with her son Horus as a hawk with a woman's head in the very middle of the solar disc, which slowly rises from the eastern hills. When Isis is figured as a cow, it is because she is regarded as a form of Hathor.[121]

The original character of Hathor has been a matter of dispute. Some scholars have made her originally the sky or space generally, others have called her the goddess of light, while she has even been identified with the moon. In the legend of the destruction of mankind by Ra, she appears as the eye of the sun-god who plies her work at night; and a text at Dendera speaks of her as “resting on her throne in the place for beholding the sun's disc, when the bright one unites with the bright one.” In any case she is closely connected with the rising sun, whose first rays surround her head.

Egyptian tradition maintained that she had come from the land of Punt, from those shores of Arabia and the opposite African coast from which the Pharaonic immigrants had made their way to the valley of the Nile. She was, moreover, the goddess of the Semitic nomads of the Sinaitic Peninsula; in other words, she was here identified with the Ashtoreth or Istar of the Semitic world.[122] Now the name of Hathor does not seem to be Egyptian. It is

written with the help of a sort of rebus, so common in ideographic forms of writing. [pg 147] The pronunciation of the name is given by means of ideographs, the significations of which have nothing in common with it, though the sounds of the words they express approximate to its pronunciation. The name of Hathor, accordingly, is denoted by writing the hawk of Horus inside the picture of a "house," the name of which was Hât. A similar method of representing names is frequent in the ideographic script of ancient Babylonia; thus the name of Asari, the Egyptian Osiris, is expressed by placing the picture of an eye (*shi*) inside that of a place (*eri*).

The name of Hathor, therefore, had primitively nothing to do with either Horus or the house of Horus, whatever may have been the speculations which the priests of a later day founded upon the written form of the name. It was only an attempt, similar to those common in the early script of Babylonia, to represent the pronunciation of a name which had no meaning in the Egyptian language. But it is a name which we meet with in the ancient inscriptions of Southern Arabia. There it appears as the name of the god Atthar. But Atthar itself was borrowed from Babylonia. It is the name of the Babylonian goddess Istar, originally the morning and evening stars, who, an astronomical text tells us, was at once male and female. As a male god she was adored in South Arabia and Moab; as the goddess of love and war she was the chief

goddess of Babylonia, the patron of the Assyrian kings, and the Ashtoreth of Canaan. When, with the progress of astronomical knowledge, the morning and evening stars were distinguished from one another, in one part of Western Asia she remained identified with the one, in another part with the other.

Hathor is then, I believe, the Istar of the Babylonians. She agrees with Istar both in name and in attributes. The form of the name can be traced back to that of [pg 148] Istar through the Atthar of South Arabia, that very land of Punt from which Hathor was said to have come. In Egypt as in Babylonia she was the goddess of love and joy, and her relation to the sun can be explained naturally if she were at the outset the morning star.[123] Even her animal form connects her with Chaldæa. Dr. Scheil has published a Babylonian seal of the age of Abraham, on which the cow, giving milk to a calf, appears as the symbol of Istar, and a hymn of the time of Assur-bani-pal identifies the goddess with a cow.[124]

I have left myself but little time in which to speak of the gods who interpenetrated and transfigured Egyptian theology in the period of which we know most. These are the gods of Thebes. For centuries Thebes was the dominant centre of a powerful and united Egypt, and its chief god Amon followed the fortunes of his city.

As the word *amon* meant “to conceal,” the priests discovered in the god an embodiment of a mysterious and hidden force which

pervades and controls the universe, and of which the sun is as it were the material organ. But such discoveries were the product of a later day, when the true meaning of the name had been long since forgotten, and Theban theology had become pantheistic. What Amon really signified the priests did not know, nor are we any wiser.

Amon was, however, the local god of Thebes, or rather of Karnak, and he seems from the first to have been a sun-god. But he had a rival in the warrior deity Mentu [pg 149] of Hermonthis, who also probably represented the sun. At any rate, Mentu had the head of a hawk, and therefore must have been a local form of Horus—of that Horus, namely, of whom the Pharaonic Egyptians were the followers.[125] Like Horus, too, he was a fighting god, and was accordingly identified in the texts of the Nineteenth Dynasty with the Canaanitish Baal, "the Lord of hosts." But he was also incarnated in the sacred bull which was worshipped at Erment, and of which I have spoken in an earlier lecture. He thus differed from Amon, who was identified with the ram, the sacred animal of the aboriginal population, not at Karnak only, but in the whole of the surrounding district.[126]

But Amon was usually of human form, with two lofty feathers rising above his crown. Under the Theban dynasties he became the supreme god, first of Egypt, then of the Egyptian empire. All other gods had to give way before him, and to lose their individuality in his. His supremacy began

with the rise of the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties; it was checked for a moment by the Hyksos conquest of Egypt, but in the end the check proved only a fresh impulse. It was the princes of Thebes, the servants of Amon, who raised the standard of revolt against the Asiatic intruder, and finally drove him back to Asia. Amon had been their helper in the war of independence, and it was he who afterwards gained their victories for them in Syria and Ethiopia. The glory and wealth of Egypt were all due to him, and upon his temple and city accordingly the spoils of Asia were [pg 150] lavished, and trains of captives worked under the lash. The Hyksos invasion, moreover, and the long war of independence which followed, destroyed the power of the old feudal princes, while it strengthened and developed that of the Pharaoh. The influence of the provincial gods passed away with the feudal princes whose patrons they had been; the supremacy of the Pharaoh implied also the supremacy of the Pharaoh's god. There was none left in Egypt to dispute the proud boast of the Theban, that Amon was “the one god.”

But he became the one god not by destroying, but by absorbing the other gods of the country. The doctrines of the Ennead and the Trinity had prepared the way. They had taught how easily the gods of the State religion could be merged one into the other; that their attributes were convertible, and yet, at the same time, were all that gave them a distinct personality. The attributes were to the

Egyptian little more than the concrete symbols by which they were expressed in the picture writing; the personality was little more than a name. And both symbols and name could be changed or interchanged at will.

The process of fusion was aided by the identification of Amon with Ra. The spread of the solar cult of Heliopolis had introduced the name and worship of Ra into all the temples of Egypt; the local gods had, as it were, been incorporated into him, and even the goddesses forced to become his wives or his daughters. The Pharaoh, even the Theban Pharaoh, was still “the son of the sun-god”; as Amon was also his “father,” it was a necessary conclusion that Amon and Ra were one and the same.

In the Theban period, accordingly, Amon is no longer a simple god. He is Amon-Ra, to whom all the attributes of Ra have been transferred. The solar element is [pg 151] predominant in his character; and, since the other gods of the country are but subordinate forms of Amon, in their characters also. Most of the religious literature of Egypt which we possess belongs to the Theban period or is derived from it; it is not astonishing, therefore, if Egyptologists have been inclined to see the sun-god everywhere in Egyptian theology.

The Theban trinity was modelled on the orthodox lines. Mut, “the mother,” a local epithet of the goddess of Southern Egypt, was

made the wife of Amon, while Khonsu, a local moon-god, became his son. But in acquiring this relationship Khonsu lost his original nature.[127] Since the divine son was one with his divine father, he too became a sun-god, with the solar disc and the hawk's head. As the designer of architectural plans, however, he still preserved a reminiscence of his primal character. But he was eventually superseded by Mentu, a result of the decadence of Thebes and the rise of Erment to the headship of the nome. It is needless to say that Mentu had long before become Mentu-Ra.

We can trace the evolution of Amon, thanks to the multiplicity of the texts which belong to the period when his city was supreme. We can watch him as he rises slowly from the position of an obscure provincial deity to that of the supreme god of all Egypt, and can follow the causes which brought it about. We can see him uniting himself with the sun-god, and then absorbing the rest of the Egyptian gods into himself. The theological thought, of which he was the subject and centre, gradually but inexorably passes from a narrow form of polytheism into a materialistic pantheism. There, however, it ends. It never advances further into a monotheism in which [pg 152] the creator is separate from his creation. With all its spirituality, the Egyptian conception of the divine remained concrete; the theologians of Egypt never escaped the influence of the symbol or recognised the god behind and apart from matter. It was through matter that they came to know God, and to

the last it was by matter that their conception of the Godhead was bounded.

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Lecture VII. Osiris And The Osirian Faith.

The legend of Osiris as it existed at the end of the first century is recorded by Plutarch. It has been pieced together from the myths and folk-tales of various ages and various localities that were current about the god. The Egyptian priests had considerable difficulty in fitting them into a consistent story; had they been Greek or Roman historiographers, they would have solved the problem by declaring that there had been more than one Osiris; as it was, they were contented with setting the different accounts of his death and fortunes side by side, and harmonising them afterwards as best they might.

As to the general outlines of the legend, there was no dispute. Osiris had been an Egyptian Pharaoh who had devoted his life to doing good, to introducing the elements of art and culture among his subjects, and transforming them from savages into civilised men. He was the son of the sun-god, born on the first of the intercalatory days, the brother and husband of Isis, and the brother also of Set or Sut, whom the Greeks called Typhon. Typhon had as wife his sister Nephthys or Nebhât, but her son Anubis, the jackal, claimed Osiris as his father.

Osiris set forth from his Egyptian kingdom to subdue the world by the arts of peace, leaving Isis to govern in his absence. On his return, Set and his seventy-two fellow conspirators imprisoned him by craft in a chest, which was thrown into the Nile. In the days when Canaan had [pg 154] become a province of the Egyptian empire, and there were close relations between the Phœnician cities and the Delta, it was said that the chest had floated across the sea to Gebal, where it became embedded in the core of a tree, which was afterwards cut down and shaped into one of the columns of the royal palace. Isis wandered from place to place seeking her lost husband, and mourning for him; at last she arrived at Gebal, and succeeded in extracting the chest from its hiding-place, and in carrying it back to Egypt. But the older version of the legend knew nothing of the voyage to Gebal. The chest was indeed found by Isis, but it was near the mouths of the Nile.

Here it was buried for awhile; but Set, while hunting by night, discovered it, and, tearing open its lid, cut the body inside into fourteen pieces, which he scattered to the winds. Then Isis took boat and searched for the pieces, until she had recovered them all save one. Wherever a piece was found, a tomb of Osiris arose in later days. Carefully were the pieces put together by Isis and Nephthys, and Anubis then embalmed the whole body. It was the first mummy that was made in the world.

Meanwhile Horus the younger had been born to Isis, and brought up secretly at Buto, in the marshes of the Delta, out of reach of Set. As soon as he was grown to man's estate he gathered his followers around him, and prepared himself to avenge his father's death. Long and fierce was the struggle. Once Set was taken prisoner, but released by Isis; whereupon Horus, in a fit of anger, struck off his mother's head, which was replaced by Thoth with the head of a cow. According to one account, the contest ended with the victory of Horus. The enemy were driven from one nome to another, and Horus sat on the throne of his father. But there were others who said that the struggle went on with alternating success, [pg 155] until at last Thoth was appointed arbiter, and divided Egypt between the two foes. Southern Egypt was given to Horus, Northern Egypt to Set.

It is somewhat difficult to disentangle the threads out of which this story has been woven. Elements of various sorts are mixed up in it together. Horus the younger, the

posthumous son of Osiris, has been identified with Horus the elder, the ancient sun-god of Upper Egypt, and the legends connected with the latter have been transferred to the son of Isis. The everlasting war between good and evil has been inextricably confounded with the war between the Pharaonic Egyptians and the older population. The solar theology has invaded the myth of Osiris, making him the son of Ra, and investing him with solar attributes. Anubis the jackal, who watched over the cemeteries of Upper Egypt, has been foisted into it, and has become the servant and minister of the god of the dead who superseded him. The doctrine of the Trinity has been applied to it, and Anubis and Nephthys, who originally were the allies of Osiris, have been forced to combine with Set. Here and there old forgotten customs or fragments of folk-lore have been embodied in the legend: the dismemberment of Osiris, for example, points to the time when the neolithic inhabitants of Egypt dismembered their dead; and the preservation of the body of Osiris in the heart of a tree has its echo in the Tale of the Two Brothers, in which the individuality of the hero was similarly preserved. The green face with which Osiris was represented was in the same way a traditional reminiscence of the custom of painting the face of the dead with green paint, which was practised by the neolithic population of Egypt.

There are three main facts in the personality of Osiris which stand out clearly amid the

myths and theological inventions which gathered round his name. He was a [pg 156] human god; he was the first mummy; and he became the god of the dead. And the paradise over which he ruled, and to which the faithful souls who believed in him were admitted, was the field of Alu, a land of light and happiness.

Sekhet Alu, "the field of Alu," seems to have been the cemetery of Busiris among the marshes of the Delta.[128] The name meant "the field of marsh-mallows,"—the "asphodel meadows" of the *Odyssey*,—and was applied to one of the islands which were so numerous in the north-eastern part of the Delta. Here, then, in the nome of which Osiris was the feudal god, the paradise of his followers originally lay, though a time came when it was translated from the earth to the sky. But when Osiris first became lord of the dead, the land to which they followed him was still within the confines of Egypt.

It would seem, therefore, that Professor Maspero is right in holding that Osiris was primarily the god of Busiris in the Delta. It is the only nome of which he was formally the presiding deity, under the title of Ânz, "the king," and it bordered on Hermopolis, which was dedicated to the ibis-god Thoth, who is so closely connected with the story of Osiris.[129] To the north stood the temple of Isis-Rennet,[130] to the south-west was Pharbæthos (Horbêt), which worshipped Set, while Horus was the god of many of the neighbouring nomes. The whole cycle of Osirian deities is thus to be found within the confines of a

small tract of the Delta.

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The name Busiris means simply “the place of Osiris.” Primitively it had been called Daddu, “the two colonnades,”[131] and Osiris became known as its lord. It was under this title that he was incarnated in the ram of the neighbouring town of Mendes on the eastern boundary of Hermopolis. The ram became his soul; all the more easily since the Egyptian words for “ram” and “soul” had the same or a similar pronunciation. At Dendera it is said that in the ram of Mendes Osiris grew young again; and in the later days of solar syncretism the four souls of Ra and Osiris, of Shu and Khepera, were united in its body. How far back this identification of the god and the sacred animal may reach we do not know. But it is significant that it was not at Daddu itself, but at a neighbouring city, that the animal was worshipped, though a seal-cylinder which belongs to the oldest period of Egyptian history already declares that Daddu was “the city of the ram.”[132]

Nebhât and Anubis had originally nothing to do with the god of Busiris. Nebhât, in fact, is merely a title which has been fossilised into the name of a deity. It is merely the ordinary title of the Egyptian lady as “the mistress of the house,” who thus stands on the same footing as “the lord of the house,” her husband. The title could have been given to any goddess who was conceived of in human form, and was doubtless applied [pg 158] to Isis the wife of Osiris. He was “the lord” of

the city; she, “the lady of the house.” It reminds us of the way in which the deities of Babylonia were addressed. There, too, the god was “the lord,” the goddess “the lady.” The old titles of Osiris and Isis which have thus survived in the Osirian myth are essentially Babylonian.

Nebhât or Nephthys was individualised in order to complete the trinity of Set, of which Set was the central figure. We can tell, accordingly, when she thus developed into a separate goddess. It was when the doctrine of the Trinity first became dominant in the Egyptian schools of theology, and all the chief deities of the country were forced to conform to it. Anubis, the second person in the trinity of Set, must have already been attached to the cult of Osiris. How this came about is not difficult to discover. Anubis the jackal was the god of the underworld. Like his symbol, the jackal, he watched over the tombs, more especially in “the mountain” far away from the cultivated land. His sacred animal already appears mounted on its standard on the early slate plaques of Nekhen and Abydos by the side of the Horus-hawk. He was, in fact, worshipped in many of the nomes, above all at Siût, where he was adored as “the opener of the paths” to the world below. He was the inventor of the art of embalming; he must therefore have been the god of the dead when the Pharaonic Egyptians first settled themselves in Upper Egypt. In one sense, indeed, he was younger than Horus, since “the followers of Horus” had not brought the

art with them from their earlier home; but he was already god of the dead, and the discovery of the art was accordingly ascribed to him.

The acceptance of Osiris as the god of the underworld meant the displacement of Anubis. He had to make [pg 159] way for "the lord of Daddu." The fact is a striking illustration of the influence which the Osirian teaching must have possessed. Osiris was the feudal god only of a nome in the north of the Delta; Anubis had been adored from time immemorial throughout the valley of the Nile. The cities which recognised him as their chief deity were numerous and powerful. Nevertheless he had to yield to the rival god and take a subordinate place beside him. He remained, indeed, in the pantheon, for the Egyptians never broke with their past; but the part he had played in it was taken by another, and he was content to become merely the minister of Osiris and the guardian of the cemeteries of the dead.

Meanwhile Osiris, like the Greek Dionysos, had pursued his victorious march. Wherever his worship extended his temple rose by the side of his tomb like the temples attached to the Pyramids. Like Ptaḥ of Memphis or the mummified Horus of Nekhen, he was a dead god, and it was to a dead god consequently that the offering was made and the priest dedicated. It was at Abydos in Upper Egypt, however, that his fame was greatest. Abydos was the sepulchral temple of Osiris attached to the city of This, and This was not only the

seat of a powerful kingdom, which probably succeeded that of Nekhen, but the birthplace of Menes, the founder of the united monarchy. Around the tomb of the Osiris of Abydos, accordingly, the kings and princes of the Thinite dynasties were buried, and where the Pharaoh was buried his subjects wished to be buried too. From all parts of Egypt the bodies of the dead were brought to the sacred ground, that they might be interred as near as possible to the tomb of the god, and so their mummies might repose beside him on earth as they hoped their souls would do in the paradise of the Blest. Even the rise of the Memphite dynasties did not deprive [pg 160] Abydos of its claim to veneration. Its sanctity was too firmly established; hundreds of Egyptians still continued to be buried there, rather than in the spacious necropolis of the Memphite Pharaohs.[133] Abydos, with its royal memories, threw the older city of Osiris into the shade. He still, it is true, retained his ancient title of “lord of Daddu,” but it was an archaism rather than a reality, and it was as “lord of Abydos” that he was now with preference addressed.

But other sanctuaries disputed with Abydos its claim to possess the tomb of the god of the dead. Wherever a temple was erected in his honour, his tomb also was necessarily to be found. An attempt was made to harmonise their conflicting claims by falling back on the old tradition of the custom of dismembering the dead: the head of the god was at Abydos, his heart at Athribis, his neck at Letopolis. But

even so the difficulty remained: the separate limbs would not suffice for the number of the tombs, and the same member was sometimes claimed by more than one locality. At Memphis, for example, where Osiris was united with Apis into the compound Serapis, his head was said to have been interred as well as at Abydos.

Abydos, at the outset, was the cemetery, or rather one of the cemeteries, of This. And the god of This was the sun-god Anher, who was depicted in human form. In the age which produced the doctrine of the Ennead, Anher was identified with Shu, the atmosphere, or, more strictly speaking, the god of the space between sky and earth was merged into the god of the sun. But it was [pg 161] not only at This that Anher was worshipped. He was also the god of Sebennytos, which adjoined the Busirite nome, and where, therefore, the human sun-god was in immediate contact with the human god of the dead. What the mummy was to the living man, that Osiris was to Anher.[134]

The double relation between Osiris and Anher in both Lower and Upper Egypt cannot be an accident. Osiris became the god of Abydos, because Abydos was the cemetery of This, whose feudal god was Anher. The relation that existed in the Delta, between Anher the sun-god of Sebennytos, and Osiris the god of the dead at Busiris, was transferred also to Southern Egypt.

Whom or what did Osiris originally represent?

To this many answers have been given. Of late Egyptologists have seen in him sometimes a personification of mankind, sometimes the river Nile, sometimes the cultivated ground. After the rise of the solar school of theology the Egyptians themselves identified him with the sun when it sinks below the horizon to traverse the dark regions of the underworld. Horus the sun-god of morning thus became his son, born as it were of the sun-god of night, and differing from his father only in his form of manifestation.[135]

[pg 162]
We have, however, one or two facts to guide us in determining the primitive character of the god. He was a mummified man like Ptaḥ of Memphis, and he was the brother and enemy of Set. Set or Sut became for the later Egyptians the impersonation of evil. He was identified with Apophis, the serpent of wickedness, against whom the sun-god wages perpetual war; and his name was erased from the monuments on which it was engraved. But all this was because Set was the god and the representative of the Asiatic invaders who had conquered Egypt, and aroused in the Egyptian mind a feeling of bitter animosity towards themselves. As late as the time of the Nineteenth Dynasty, the Pharaohs who restored Tanis, the Hyksos capital, to something of its former glory, called themselves after the name of the Hyksos deity. Thothmes III. of the Eighteenth Dynasty built a temple in honour of Set of Ombos, who was worshipped near Dendera; and if we

go back to the oldest records of the united monarchy, we find Set symbolising the north while Horus symbolises the south. Before the days of Menes, Set was the god of Northern Egypt, Horus of Southern Egypt. In the prehistoric [pg 163] wars of the two kingdoms the two gods would be hostile to one another, and yet brethren.

It was the armies of Set that were driven by Horus and his metal-bearing followers from one end of Egypt to the other, and finally overcome.[136] Set therefore represents in the legend the older population of the valley of the Nile. The reason of this is not far to seek. Set or Sut, like Sati, denotes the Semitic or African nomad of the desert, the Babylonian Sutu. He is the equivalent of the Bedâwi of to-day, who still hovers on the Egyptian borders, and between whom and the fellah there is perpetual feud. The same cause which made Horus the brother and yet the enemy of Set must have been at work to place Osiris in the same relation to him. Osiris too must have typified the Pharaonic Egyptian, and like Horus have been the first of the Pharaohs. Hence his human body, and hence also the confusion between himself and Horus, which ended in making Horus his son and in generating a new Horus—Horus the younger—by the side of the older Horus of the Egyptian faith.[137]

The position of Osiris in respect to Anher is now clear. He is the sun-god after his setting in the west, when he has passed to the region of the dead in the underworld. He stands,

therefore, in exactly the same relation to Anher that the mummified hawk stands to the Horus-hawk. The one belongs to the city of the living, the other to the city of the dead. But they are both the same deity under different forms, one of which presides over the city, the other over its burying-ground. Like Horus, Osiris must have been a sun-god of the [pg 164] Pharaonic Egyptians, but a sun-god who was connected for some special reason with the dead.[138]

Now Mr. Ball has drawn attention to the fact that there was a Sumerian god who had precisely the same name as Osiris, and that this name is expressed in both cases by precisely the same ideographs.[139] The etymology of the name has been sought in vain in Egyptian. But the cuneiform texts make it clear. Osiris (As-ar) is the Asari of ancient Babylonia, who was called Merodach by the Semites, and whose ordinary title is "the god who does good to man." The name of Asari is written with two ideographs, one of which denotes "a place" and the other "an eye," and the forms of the two ideographs, as well as their meanings, are identical with those of the hieroglyphic characters which represent Osiris. Such a threefold agreement cannot be accidental: both the name and the mode of writing it must have come from Babylonia. And what makes the agreement the stronger is the fact that the ideographs have nothing to do with the signification of the name itself; they express simply its pronunciation. In the Sumerian of early

Babylonia the name signified “the mighty one.”[140]

Asari was the sun-god of Eridu, the ancient seaport of Babylonia on the Persian Gulf. He was the son of Ea, the chief god of the city, of whose will and wisdom he was the interpreter. It was he who communicated to men the lessons in culture and the art of healing, which [pg 165] Ea was willing they should learn. Just as Osiris spent his life in doing good, according to the Egyptian legend, so Asari was he “who does good to man.” He was ever on the watch to help his worshippers, to convey to them the magic formulas which could ward off sickness or evil, and, as it is often expressed, to “raise the dead to life.”

In this last expression we have the key to the part played by Osiris. Osiris died, and was buried, like Asari or Merodach, whose temple at Babylon was also his tomb; but it was that he might rise again in the morning with renewed strength and brilliancy. And through the spells he had received from his father all those who trusted in him, and shared in his death and entombment, were also “raised to life.” Both in Egypt and in Babylonia he was the god of the resurrection, whether that took place in this visible world or in the heavenly paradise, which was a purified reflection of the earth.

In Babylonia, Asari or Merodach was the champion of light and order, who conquered the dragon of chaos and her anarchic forces,

and put the demons of darkness to flight. In Egypt that part was taken by Horus. But both Anher and Osiris were merely local forms—local names, if the phrase should be preferred—of Horus and the mummified hawk. Anher is sometimes represented, like Horus, with the spear in his hand, overthrowing the wicked; but his figure was eclipsed by that of Osiris, who had come to be regarded as the benefactor of mankind, and to whom men prayed in sickness and death. A god of the dead, however, could not be a conqueror; it was he, and not his foe, who had died, and consequently the victories gained by Horus could not be ascribed to him. But the difficulty was not insoluble; Horus became his son, who was at the same time his father, [pg 166] and the old struggle between Horus and Set was transferred to the Osirian cult.

It is significant, however, that in the recently-recovered monuments of the Thinite dynasties Set is still the twin-brother of Horus. He still represents the north, until lately the antagonist of the south; and a king whose remains have been found at Nekhen and Abydos, and who calls himself "the uniter of the two sceptres" of Egypt, still sets the Horus-hawk and the animal of Set above his name.

Set, as I have already said, is the Sutu or Bedâwi. He was adored elsewhere than in Egypt; the Moabites called themselves his children (Num. xxiv. 17), and in the cuneiform texts Sutu-sar ("Sutu the king") and Nabu-rabê ("Nebo the great") are described as

twins.[141] But in Egypt he represented the population which had been conquered by the Pharaonic Egyptians or continued to live on the desert frontiers of the country, and which was stronger in the Delta than in the south. The old struggle, therefore, between light and darkness, order and confusion, which formed the background of Babylonian mythology, became the struggle which was waged for such long centuries, first between the Pharaonic Egyptians and the neolithic races, then between the kingdoms of the south and north, and finally between the united monarchy and the Bedâwin of the desert or assailants from Asia. Where the foreign element prevailed, Set was an honoured god; where the ruling Egyptian was dominant, his place was taken by his brother and his antagonist.

It has been thought that the struggle between Horus and Set typified the struggle that is ever going on [pg 167] between the desert and the cultivated land. But such an idea is far too abstract to have formed the basis of an Egyptian religious myth. It might have been elaborated subsequently by some theological school out of the contrast between the Sutu of the desert and the god of the agriculturists; but it could never have been there originally. The interpretation is as little justifiable as that which sees in Osiris the seed that is buried in the ground.

It is indeed true that the Egyptians of a later period, when the Osirian doctrine of the Resurrection was fully developed, found an

analogy to it in the seed that is sown in order to grow again. The tomb of Ma-her-pa-Ra, the fan-bearer of Amon-hotep II. of the Eighteenth Dynasty, discovered by M. Loret in the valley of the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes, contains a proof of this. In it was a rudely-constructed bed with a mattress, on which the figure of Osiris had been drawn. On this earth was placed, and in the earth grains of corn had been sown. The corn had sprouted and grown to the height of a few inches before it had withered away. But such symbolism is, like the similar symbolism of Christianity, the result of the doctrine of the resurrection and not the origin of it. It is not till men believe that the human body can rise again from the sleep of corruption, that the growth of the seed which has been buried in the ground is invoked to explain and confirm their creed.

How came this doctrine of the resurrection to be attached to the cult of Osiris and to become an integral part of Egyptian belief? There is only one answer that can be given to this: the doctrine of the resurrection was a necessary accompaniment of the practice of mummification, and Osiris was a mummified god.

We have already seen that old Babylonian hymns [pg 168] describe Asari or Merodach as the god "who raises the dead to life." We have also seen that Osiris was not the only mummified god known in Egypt. Ptaḥ of Memphis was also a mummy; so too was the mummified Horus of Nekhen, who was worshipped even in the Delta in the "Arabian"

nome of Goshen on the borders of Asia. Whether or not the practice of embalming first originated at Nekhen, where it was discovered that bodies buried in the nitrogenous soil of El-Kab were preserved undecayed, it is certain that, like the art of writing, it characterised the Pharaonic Egyptians from the earliest times. In no other way can we explain the existence among them of their mummified gods. But its adoption by the older races who still formed the bulk of the people was but gradual. It did not become universal before the age of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

It was not, however, the bulk of the people, but the ruling classes, who worshipped Osiris, and among whom his cult spread and grew. He became for them Un-nefer, "the good being," ready to heal for them even the pains of death, and to receive them in his realm beyond the grave, where life and action would be restored to them. The sun shone there as it did here, for was not Osiris himself a sun-god? the fields of the blessed were like those of Egypt, except that no sickness or death came near them, that no blight ever fell on fruit or corn, that the Nile never failed, and that the heat was always tempered by the northern breeze.

The "field of Alu," the Elysion of the Greeks, was at first in the marshes of the Delta near the mouths of the Nile, like the paradise of early Babylonia, which too was "at the mouth of the rivers." But it soon migrated to the north-eastern portion of the sky, and the

Milky Way became the heavenly Nile. Here the dead lived [pg 169] in perpetual happiness under the rule of Osiris, working, feasting, reading, even fighting, as they would below, only without pain and eternally.[142]

But, in order to share in this state of bliss, it was necessary for the believer in Osiris to become like the god himself. He must himself be an Osiris, according to the Egyptian expression. His individuality remained intact; as he had been on earth, so would he be in heaven. The Osiris, in fact, was a spiritualised body in which the immortal parts of man were all united together. Soul and spirit, heart and double, all met together in it as they had done when the individual was on earth.

It is clear that the doctrine of the Osiris in its developed form is inconsistent with the idea of the *ka*. But it is also clear that without the idea of the *ka* it would never have been formed. Both presuppose an individuality separate from the person to which it belongs, and yet at the same time material, an individuality which continues after death and manifests itself under the same shape as that which characterised the person in life. The popular conception of the ghost, which reproduces not only the features but even the dress of the dead, is analogous. Fundamentally the Osiris is a *ka*, but it is a *ka* which represents not only the outward shape, but the inner essence as well. The whole man is there, spiritually, morally, intellectually, as well as corporeally. The doctrine of the Osiris thus absorbs, as it were, the old idea of the

ka, and spiritualises it, at the same time confining it to the life after death.

[pg 170]
But if the conception of a double, unsubstantial and yet materialised, underlay the belief in the Osiris, the practice of embalming was equally responsible for it. The continued existence of the double was dependent on the continued existence of the body, for the one presupposed the other, and it was only the mummified body which could continue to exist. As long as the double was believed to haunt the tomb, and there receive the food and other offerings which were provided for it, the connection between it and the mummy presented no difficulties. But when the Egyptian came to look forward to the heaven of Osiris, first on this nether earth and then in the skies, the case was wholly altered. The mummy lay in the tomb, the immortal counterpart of the man himself was in another and a spiritual world. The result was inevitable: the follower of Osiris soon assured himself that one day the mummified body also would have life and action again breathed into it and rejoin its Osiris in the fields of paradise. Had not the god carried thither his divine body as well as its counterpart? and what the god had done those who had become even as he was could also do.

In this way the doctrine of the resurrection of the body became an integral part of the Osirian faith. The future happiness to which its disciples looked forward was not in

absorption into the divinity, or contemplation of the divine attributes, or a monotonous existence of passive idleness. They were to live as they had done in this life, only without sorrow and suffering, without sin, and eternally. But all their bodily powers and interests were to remain and be gratified as they could not be in this lower world. The realm over which Osiris ruled was the idealised reproduction of that Egypt which the Egyptian loved so well, with its sunshine and light, its broad and life-bearing river, its fertile fields, [pg 171] and its busy towns. Those who dwelt in it could indeed feast and play, could lounge in canoes and fish or hunt, could read tales and poems or write treatises on morality, could transform themselves into birds that alighted among the thick foliage of the trees; but they must also work as they had done here, must cultivate the soil before it would produce its ears of wheat two cubits high, must submit to the corvée and embank the canals. The Osirian heaven had no place for the idle and inactive.

No sooner, indeed, had the dead man been pronounced worthy of admittance to it, than he was called upon to work. At the very outset of his new existence, before any of its pleasures might be tasted, he was required to till the ground and guide the plough. This was no hardship to the poor fellah who had spent his life in agricultural labour. But it was otherwise with the rich man whose lands had been cultivated by others, while he himself had merely enjoyed their produce. In the

early days of Egyptian history, accordingly, it was the fashion for the feudal landowner to surround his tomb with the graves of his servants and retainers, whose bodies were mummified and buried at his expense. What they had performed for him in this world, it was believed they would perform for him in the world to come. There, too, the Osiris of the fellah would work for the Osiris of the wealthy, whose necessary task would thus be performed vicariously.

But as time went on a feeling grew up that in the sight of Osiris all those who were assimilated to him were equal one to the other. Between one Osiris and another the distinctions of rank and station which prevail here were no longer possible. The old conception of the ka came to the help of the believer. The place of the human servant was taken by the *ushebti*, that little [pg 172] figure of clay or wood which represented a peasant, and whose double, accordingly, was sent to assist the dead in his tasks above. The human Osiris, whatever his lot in this life had been, was henceforth free from the toils which had once awaited him in the fields of Alu; he could look on while the *ka* of the *ushebti* performed his work. The *ushebti*-figures become especially numerous after the expulsion of the Hyksos. The domination of the foreigner and the long war of independence which put an end to it, had destroyed the feudal nobility, and therewith the feudal ideas which regarded mankind as divided, now and hereafter, into two classes.

From thenceforth the Egyptians became the democratic people that they still are. As the Pharaoh on earth ruled a people who before him were all equal, so between the subjects of Osiris, the Pharaoh in heaven, no distinctions of rank were known except such as were conferred by himself.

The same belief which had substituted the *ushebti* for the human peasant had filled the tombs with the objects which, it was thought, would best please the dead man. Besides the meat and drink which had been provided for the *ka* from time immemorial, there was now placed beside the mummy everything which it was imagined he would need or desire in the other world. Even the books which the dead man had delighted in during his earthly existence were not forgotten. It was not necessary, however, that the actual objects should be there. It was the *ka* only of the object that was wanted, and that could be furnished by a representation of the object as well as by the object itself. And so, besides the actual clothes or tools or weapons that are buried in the tombs, we find imitation clothes and tools, like the "ghost-money" of the Greeks, or even paintings on the wall, which, so long as the object was correctly depicted [pg 173] in them, were considered quite sufficient. One of the most touching results of this thorough-going realism has been noticed by Professor Wiedemann.[143] "The soles of the feet (of the mummy) which had trodden the mire of earth were removed, in order that the Osiris might tread the Hall of Judgment with

pure feet; and the gods were prayed to grant milk to the Osiris that he might bathe his feet in it and so assuage the pain which the removal of the soles must needs have caused him. And, finally, the soles" were then placed within the mummy, that he might find them at hand on the day of resurrection, and meantime make use of their *ka*.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body involved also a doctrine of a judgment of the deeds committed by the body. Those only were admitted into the kingdom of Osiris who, like their leader, had done good to men. A knowledge of the Ritual with its divine lore and incantations was not sufficient to unlock its gates. The Osiris who entered it had to be morally as well as ceremonially pure. Osiris was not only a king; he was a judge also, and those who appeared before him had to prove that their conduct in this life had been in conformity with one of the highest of the moral codes of antiquity.

This moral test of righteousness is the most remarkable fact connected with the Osirian system of doctrine. The Egyptian who accepted it was called on to acknowledge that orthodoxy in belief and practice was not sufficient to ensure his future salvation; it was needful that he should have avoided sin and been actively benevolent as well. Unlike most ancient forms of faith, morality—and that too of a high order—was made an integral part of religion, and even set above it. It was not so much what a man believed as what he had done [pg 174] that enabled him to pass the

awful tribunal of heaven and be admitted to everlasting bliss.

The Book of the Dead was the guide of the dead man on his journey to the other world. Its chapters were inscribed on the rolls buried with the mummy, or were painted on the coffin and the walls of the tomb. It was the Ritual which prescribed the prayers and incantations to be repeated in the course of the journey, and described the enemies to be met with on the other side of the grave. Thanks to its instructions, the dead passed safely through the limbo which divides this earth from the kingdom of Osiris, and arrived at last at the Judgment Hall, the hall of the Twofold Truth, where Mât, the goddess of truth and law, received him. Here on his judgment throne sat Osiris, surrounded by the forty-two assessors of divine justice from the forty-two nomes of Egypt, while Thoth and the other deities of the Osirian cycle stood near at hand. Then the dead man was called upon to show reason why he should be admitted to the fields of Alu, and to prove that during his lifetime he had practised mercy and justice and had abstained from evil-doing. The negative confession put into his mouth is one of the most noteworthy relics of ancient literature. “Praise be to thee (O Osiris),” he was made to say, “lord of the Twofold Truth! Praise to thee, great god, lord of the Twofold Truth! I come to thee, my lord, I draw near to see thine excellencies.[144]...

[pg 175]
I have not acted with deceit or done evil to

men.

I have not oppressed the poor.

I have not judged unjustly.

I have not known ought of wicked things.

I have not committed sin.

I have not exacted more work from the labourer than was just.

I have not been anxious. I have not been feeble of purpose.

I have not defaulted. I have not been niggardly.

I have not done what the gods abhor.

I have not caused the slave to be ill-treated by his master.

I have made none to hunger.

I have made none to weep.

I have not committed murder.

I have not caused any man to be treacherously murdered.

I have not dealt treacherously with any one.

I have not diminished the offerings of bread in the temples.

I have not spoiled the shewbread of the gods.

I have not robbed the dead of their loaves and cerecloths.

I have not been unchaste.

[pg 176]
I have not defiled myself in the sanctuary of the god of my city.

I have not stinted and been niggardly of offerings.

I have not defrauded in weighing the scales.

I have not given false weight.

I have not taken the milk from the mouth of the child.

I have not hunted the cattle in their meadows.

I have not netted the birds of the gods.

I have not fished in their preserves.

I have not kept the water (from my neighbour) in the time of inundation.

I have not cut off a water channel.

I have not extinguished the flame at a wrong time.

I have not defrauded the Ennead of the gods of the choice parts of the victims.

I have not driven away the oxen of the temple.

I have not driven back a god when he has left the temple.

I am pure! I am pure! I am pure!”[145]

The negative confession ended, the dead man turned to the forty-two assessors and pleaded that he was innocent of the particular sin which they had been severally appointed to judge. Then he once more addressed Osiris with a final plea for justification: “Hail to you, ye gods who are in the great hall of the Twofold Truth, who have no falsehood in your bosoms, but who live on truth in On, and feed your hearts upon it before the lord god who dwelleth in his solar disc. Deliver me from the Typhon who feedeth on entrails, O chiefs! in this hour of supreme judgment; grant that the deceased may come unto you, he who hath not sinned, who hath [pg 177] neither lied, nor done evil, nor committed any crime, who hath not borne false witness, who hath done nought against himself, but who liveth on truth, who feedeth on truth. He hath spread joy on all sides; men speak of that which he hath done, and the gods rejoice in it. He hath reconciled the god to him by his love; he hath given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothing to the naked; he hath given a boat to the shipwrecked; he hath offered sacrifices to the gods, sepulchral meals to the dead. Deliver him from himself, speak not against him before the lord of the dead, for his mouth is pure and his hands are pure!”[146]

Meanwhile the heart of the dead man—his

conscience, as we should call it in our modern phraseology—was being weighed in the balance against the image of truth. Something more convincing was needed than his own protestation that he had acted uprightly and done no wrong. The heart was placed in the scale by Thoth, who, knowing the weakness of human nature, inclined the balance a little in its favour. Anubis superintended the weighing, while Thoth recorded the result. If the verdict were favourable, he addressed Osiris in the following words: "Behold the deceased in this Hall of the Twofold Truth, his heart hath been weighed in the balance, in the presence of the great genii, the lords of Hades, and been found true. No trace of earthly impurity hath been found in his heart. Now that he leaveth the tribunal true of voice (justified), his heart is restored to him, as well as his eyes and the material cover of his heart, to be put back in their places, each in its own time, his soul in heaven, his heart in the other world, as is the custom of the followers of Horus. Henceforth let his body lie in the hands of Anubis, who presideth over the tombs; let him receive offerings at [pg 178] the cemetery in the presence of (Osiris) Un-nefer (the Good Being); let him be as one of those favourites who follow thee; let his soul abide where it will in the necropolis of his city, he whose voice is true before the great Ennead."[147]

In the judgment-hall of Osiris we find the first expression of the doctrine which was echoed so many ages later by the Hebrew prophets,

that what the gods require is mercy and righteousness rather than orthodoxy of belief. And the righteousness and mercy are far-reaching. The faith that is to save the follower of Osiris is a faith that has led him to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to abstain from injuring his neighbour in word or thought, much less in deed, and to be truthful in both act and speech. Even the slave is not forgotten; to have done anything which has caused him to be ill-treated by his master, is sufficient to exclude the offender from the delights of paradise. Man's duty towards his fellow-man is put on a higher footing even than his duty towards the gods, for it comes first in the list of righteous actions required from him. It is not until the dead man has proved that he has acted with justice and mercy towards his fellows, that he is allowed to pass on to prove that he has performed his duty towards the gods.

And the Osirian confession of faith was not a mere conventional formulary, without influence on the life and conduct of those who professed it. There are already allusions to it in the Pyramid texts, and in the tombs of a later period the deceased rests his claim to be remembered upon the good deeds he had done while on earth. To feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and to deal justly, are duties which are constantly recognised in them. “I loved my father,” says Baba at El-Kab, “I [pg 179] honoured my mother.... When a famine arose, lasting many years, I distributed corn

to the needy." The Egyptian sepulchres contain few records of war and battles; of deeds of kindness and righteous dealing there is frequent mention.[148]

Of the fate of the wicked, of those whose hearts were overweighed in the balance and who failed to pass the tribunal of Osiris, we know but little. Typhon, in the form of a hideous hippopotamus, stood behind Thoth in a corner of the hall, ready to devour their entrails. In the Book of the Other World, of which I shall have to speak in another lecture, the tortures of the lost are depicted quite in medieval style. We see them plunged in water or burned in the fire, enclosed in vaulted chambers filled with burning charcoal, with their heads struck from their necks or their bodies devoured by serpents. But the Book of the Other World is the ritual of a religious system which was originally distinct from the Osirian, and it is probable that most Egyptians expected the final annihilation of the wicked rather than their continued existence in an eternal hell. The divine elements in man, which could not die, were equally incapable of committing sin, and consequently would return to the God who gave them, when the human individuality to which they had been joined was punished for its offences in the flesh. The soul could remain united only to that individuality which had been [pg 180] purified from all its earthly stains, and had become as the god Osiris himself. The individuality which was condemned in the judgment of Osiris perished eternally, and in

the mind of the Egyptian the individuality and the individual were one and the same.

[pg 181]

Lecture VIII. The Sacred Books.

Like all other organised religions, that of ancient Egypt had its sacred books. According to St. Clement of Alexandria, the whole body of sacred literature was contained in a collection of forty-two books, the origin of which was ascribed to the god Thoth. The first ten of these "Hermetic" volumes were entitled "the Prophet," and dealt with theology in the strictest sense of the term. Then followed the ten books of "the Stolist," in which were to be found all directions as to the festivals and processions, as well as hymns and prayers. Next came the fourteen books of "the Sacred Scribe," containing all that was known about the hieroglyphic system of writing, and the sciences of geometry and geography, astronomy, astrology, and the like. These were followed by two books on music and hymnology; and, finally, six books on the science and practice of medicine.[149]

The Hermetic books were written in Greek, and were a compilation of the Greek age. Such a systematic epitome of the learning of ancient Egypt belonged to the period when

Egyptian religion had ceased to be creative, [pg 182] or even progressive, and the antiquarian spirit of Greek Alexandria had laid hold of the traditions and institutions of the past. But they were derived from genuine sources, and represented with more or less exactitude the beliefs and practices of earlier generations. They were, it is true, a compilation adapted to Greek ideas and intended to satisfy the demands of Greek curiosity, but it is no less true that the materials out of which they were compiled went back to the remotest antiquity. The temple libraries were filled with rolls of papyri relating not only to the minutest details of the temple service, but also to all the various branches of sacred lore. Among these were the books which have been called the Bibles of the ancient Egyptians.

Foremost amongst the latter is the Ritual to which Lepsius gave the name of the Book of the Dead. It was first discovered by Champollion in the early days of Egyptian decipherment, and a comparative edition of the text current during the Theban period has been made by Dr. Naville. Papyri containing the whole or portions of it are numberless; the chapters into which it is divided are inscribed on the coffins, and even on the wrappings of the dead, as well as on the scarabs and the *ushebtis* that were buried with the mummy. It was, in fact, a sort of passport and guide-book combined in one, which would carry the dead man in safety through the dangers that confronted him in the other world, and bring

him at last to the judgment-hall of Osiris and the paradise of Alu. It described minutely all that awaited him after death; it detailed the words and prayers that would deliver him from his spiritual enemies; and it put into his mouth the confession he would have to make before the tribunal of the dead. Without it he would have been lost in the strange world to which he journeyed, and hence the need of inscribing at least some portions of it on his tomb or [pg 183] sepulchral furniture, where their ghostly doubles could be read by his ka and soul.

The Book of the Dead was the Bible or Prayer-book of the Osirian creed. Its universal use marks the triumph of the worship of Osiris and of the beliefs that accompanied it. It was for the follower of Osiris that it was originally compiled; the judgment with which it threatened him was that of Osiris, the heaven to which it led him was the field of Alu. The Pyramid texts of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties imply that it already existed in some shape or other; the Osirian creed is known to them in all its details, and the "other world" depicted in them is that of the Book of the Dead.[150]

But the Book of the Dead is a composite work. Not only are the religious conceptions embodied in it composite and sometimes self-contradictory, on the literary side it is composite also. It was, moreover, a work of slow growth; glosses have been added to it to explain passages which had become obscure through the lapse of time; the glosses have then made their way into the text, and

themselves become the subject of fresh commentary and explanation. Chapters have been inserted, paragraphs interpolated, and the later commentary combined [pg 184] with the original text. The Book of the Dead as it appears in the age of the Theban dynasties had already passed through long centuries of growth and modification.[151]

The Pyramid texts show the same combination of the doctrines of the Osirian creed with those of the solar cult as the Book of the Dead.[152] But the combination is that of two mutually exclusive systems of theology which have been brought forcibly side by side without any attempt being made to fuse them into a harmonious whole. They display the usual tendency of the Egyptian mind to accept the new without discarding the old, and without troubling to consider how the new and old can be fitted together. It was enough to place them side by side; those who did not think the Osirian creed sufficient to ensure salvation, had the choice of the solar creed offered them with its prayers and incantations to the sun-god. But it was not an alternative choice; the heaven of the solar bark in its passage through the world of the night was attached to the heaven of Alu with its fields lighted by the sun of day.

It is evident that the chapters which introduce the doctrines of the solar cult are a later addition to the original Book of the Dead. That was the text-book of [pg 185] the Osirian soul, with whose beliefs the doctrines of the solar cult were absolutely incompatible.

While the one taught that the dead, without distinction, passed to the judgment-hall of Osiris, where, after being acquitted, as much on moral as on religious grounds, they were admitted to a paradise of light and happiness, the other maintained that only a chosen few, who were rich and learned enough to be provided with the necessary theological formulæ, were received in the solar bark as it glided along the twelve hours of the night, thus becoming companions of the sun-god in his passage through a realm of darkness that was peopled by demoniac forms. The Osirian and solar creeds issued from two wholly different religious systems, and the introduction of conceptions derived from the latter into the Book of the Dead, however subordinate may be the place which they occupy, indicates a revision of the original work. It was not until the book had gained a predominant position in Egyptian religious thought that it would have been needful to incorporate into it the ideas of a rival theology. But the incorporation had taken place long before the Pyramid texts were compiled, perhaps before the day when Menes united the two kingdoms of Egypt into one.

There are yet other evidences of a composite theology in the Book of the Dead. In one chapter we have the old doctrine of the Ka confined to the dark and dismal tomb in which its body lies; in another we see the soul flying whithersoever it will on the wings of a bird, sitting on the branches of a tree under

the shade of the foliage, or perched on the margin of flowing water. But such theological inconsistencies probably go back to the age when the book was first composed. The conceptions of the Ka and of the soul, however inconsistent they may be, belong to so early a period, that they lay together [pg 186] at the foundation of Egyptian religious thought long before the days when an official form of religion had come into existence, or the Book of the Dead had been compiled.

In some instances it is possible to fix approximately the period to which particular portions of the book belong. Professor Maspero has shown that the 64th chapter, once considered one of the oldest, is in reality one of the latest in date. It sums up the different formulæ which enabled the soul of the dead man to quit his body in safety; and accordingly its title, which, however, varies in different recensions, is a repetition of that prefixed to the earlier part of the work, and declares that it makes "known in a single chapter the chapters relating to *going forth from day*." According to certain papyri, it was "discovered" either in the reign of Usaphaes of the First Dynasty or in that of Men-kau-Ra of the Fourth Dynasty, under the feet of Thoth in the temple of Eshmunên, written in letters of lapis-lazuli on a tablet of alabaster. The details of the "discovery" are not sufficiently uniform to allow us to put much confidence in them; the tradition proves, however, that the Egyptians considered the chapter to be at least as old as the Fourth Dynasty; and the

belief is supported by the fact that on the monuments of the Eleventh Dynasty it is already an integral part of the book. If, then, a chapter which is relatively modern was nevertheless embodied in the book in the age of the earlier dynasties, we can gain some idea of the antiquity to which the book itself must reach back, even in its composite form.[153]

The first fifteen chapters, as Champollion perceived, form a complete whole in themselves. In the Theban texts they are called the "Chapter of going before the [pg 187] divine tribunal of Osiris." In the Saite period this is replaced by the more general title of "Beginning of the Chapter of *going forth from day*."[154] They describe how the soul can leave its mummy, can escape forced labour in the other world through the help of the *ushebti*, can pass in safety "over the back of the serpent Apophis, the wicked," and can acquire that "correctness of voice" which will enable it to repeat correctly the words of the ritual, and so enter or leave at will the world beyond the grave. The 15th chapter is a hymn to the Sun.

The 17th chapter begins a new section. It sums up in a condensed form all that the soul was required to know about the gods and the world to come. But it has been glossed and reglossed until its first form has become almost unrecognisable. The commentary attached to the original passages became in time itself so obscure as to need explanation, and the chapter now consists of three strata of

religious thought and exposition piled one on the top of the other. As it now stands it unites in a common goal the aspirations of the followers of Osiris and of those of the solar cult; the dead man is identified with the gods, and so wends his way to the divine land in which they dwell, whether that be the fields of Alu or the bark of the Sun.

The chapters which follow are intended to restore voice, memory, and name to the dead man. With the restoration of his name comes the restoration of his individuality, for that which has no name has no individuality. Then follows (in chapters xxvi.-xxx.) the restoration of his heart, which is regarded first as a mere organ of the body, and then in the Osirian sense as the [pg 188] equivalent of the conscience. As an organ, the figure of a heart placed in the tomb was sufficient to ensure its return; as the living conscience and principle of life, something of a more mysterious and symbolic nature was needed. This was found in the scarab or beetle, whose name *kheper* happened to coincide in sound with the word that signified “to become.”[155]

In a series of chapters the soul is now protected against the poisonous serpents, including “the great python who devours the ass,” which it will meet with in its passage through the limbo of the other world. As Professor Maspero remarks, the large place occupied by these serpents among the dangers which await the soul on its first exit from the body, make it plain that in the days when the Book of the Dead was first being compiled,

venomous snakes were far more plentiful than they ever have been in the Egypt of historical times. Indeed, the python, whose huge folds are still painted on the walls of the royal tombs of Thebes, had retired southward long before the age of the Fourth Dynasty. To an equally early period we may refer the forty-second chapter, in which the soul is taught how to escape the slaughter of the enemies of Horus, which took place at Herakleopolis [pg 189] during the Osirian wars,—a chapter, however, in which, it may be observed, the elder Horus is already confounded with the son of Osiris.[156]

Chapters xliv. to liii. are occupied in describing how the dead man is thus preserved from "the second death." Illustrations are drawn both from the punishments undergone by the enemies of the sun-god in the story of his passage through the world of night, and from the old beliefs connected with the lot of the Ka. He was neither to be beheaded, nor cast head downwards into the abyss, nor was he to feed on filth like the Ka for which no offerings of food had been provided. The dangers from which he is thus preserved are next contrasted with the joys that await him in the paradise of the Blest (chs. liv.-lxiii.).

The 64th chapter, which sums up the preceding part of the book, and constitutes a break between it and what follows, has already been considered. The ten chapters which succeed it are all similarly concerned with "coming forth from the day." They thus

traverse the same ground as the first fifteen chapters of the book, but they deal with the subject in a different way and from a different point of view. They are a fresh proof of the composite character of the work, and of the desire of its authors to incorporate in it all that had been written on the future life of the soul up to the time of its composition. Professor Maspero believes that they embody the various formulæ relating to the severance of soul and body which were current in the priestly schools.[157]

Equally separate in tone and spirit are the next six chapters (lxxv.-xc.), which have emanated from the school of Heliopolis. They deal with the destiny of the [pg 190] Ba or "soul" rather than with that of the Osirian, and describe the transformations which it can undergo if fortified with the words of the ritual. It may at will transform itself into a hawk of gold, a lotus flower, the moon-god or Ptaḥ, even into a viper, a crocodile, or a goose. But first it must fly to Heliopolis and the solar deities who reside there, and it is in Heliopolis that its transformation into the god Ptaḥ is to take place.

The next chapter, the 91st, transports us into a different atmosphere of religious thought. It deals with the reunion of the soul and the body. But the two which follow forbid the Egyptian to believe that this meant a sojourn of the soul in the tomb. On the contrary, the soul, it is said, is not to be "imprisoned"; while the 93rd chapter "opens the gates of the sepulchre to the soul and the shadow (*khaib*),

that they may go forth and employ their limbs." And the land to which they were to go was a land of sunlight.

From this point onwards the Book of the Dead is purely Osirian in character. But beliefs derived from the solar cult have been allowed to mingle with the Osirian elements; thus the bark of the sun-god has been identified with the bark which carried the Osirian dead to the fields of Alu, and Osiris is even permitted to assign a place to his faithful servants in the boat of Ra instead of in the paradise over which he himself rules. And the Osirian elements themselves belong to two different periods or two different schools of thought. In the earlier chapters the paradise of Osiris is gained like the paradise of Ra, by the magical power of the words of the ritual and the offerings made by the friends of the dead; from the 125th chapter onwards the test of righteousness is a moral one; the dead man has to be acquitted by his conscience and the tribunal of Osiris before he can enter into everlasting bliss.

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The bark which carried the followers of Osiris has been explained by the Pyramid texts. When the dead man had ascended to heaven, either by the ladder which rose from the earth at Hermopolis or in some other way, he found his path barred by a deep lake or canal. According to one myth, he was carried across it on the wings of the ibis Thoth, but the more general belief provided for him the boat of the ferryman Nu-Urru,[158] the prototype of the

Greek Charon. The fusion of the Osirian creed with the solar cult, however, caused the boat of Nu-Urru and the bark of the sun-god to be confounded together, and accordingly three chapters (c.-cii.) have been added to that in which the boat of the Egyptian Charon is referred to, "in order to teach the luminous spirit (*khu*) how to enter the bark among the servants of Ra." In the next chapter, Hathor, "the lady of the west," is the object of prayer.

Two chapters (cv. and cvi.) are now interpolated from the ritual of Ptaḥ. They take us back to the age when offerings were made to the *ka* of the dead and not to the gods, and declare that abundant food should be given it "each day in Memphis." They have little to do with the destinies of the Osirian in the paradise of Alu. These are once more resumed in the 107th chapter: the fields of Alu are described, and the life led by those who enjoy them.

With the 125th chapter we enter the "Hall of the Two Truths," where Osiris sits on his throne of judgment, and the soul is justified or condemned for the deeds it had done in the flesh. It is no longer ceremonial, but moral purity that is required: the follower of Osiris is [pg 192] to be saved not by the words and prayers of the ritual, however correctly they may be pronounced, but by his acts and conduct in this lower world. We are transported into a new atmosphere, in which religion and morality for the first time are united in one: the teaching of the prophet has taken the place of the teaching of the priest.

All the blessings promised to the disciples of other creeds than the Osirian are now granted to the soul who has passed unscathed through the hall of judgment. Not only the fields of Alu are his, but the solar bark as well, to which the school of Heliopolis looked forward; even the old belief which confined the Ka to the narrow precincts of the tomb was not forgotten, and the 132nd chapter instructs the Osirian how to "wander at will to see his house." Like Osiris himself, he can take part in the festival of the dead, and share in the offerings that are presented at it. Free access is allowed him to all parts of the other world: whatever heaven or hell had been imagined in the local sanctuaries of Egypt was open to him to visit as he would.

The later chapters of the Book of the Dead take us back to the earth. They are concerned with the mummy and its resting-place, with the charms and amulets which preserved the body from decay, or enabled the soul to inspire it once more with life. They form a sort of appendix, dealing rather with the beliefs and superstitions of the people, than with the ideas of the theologians, about the gods and the future life.[159]

The order in which I have referred to the chapters of the book are those of the Theban texts as edited by Dr. Naville. But it must not be supposed that it constitutes [pg 193] an integral part of the original work. As a matter of fact there are very few copies of the book, even among those which belong to the Theban period, in which anything like all the

chapters is to be found. Indeed, it is difficult to say how many chapters a complete edition of it ought to contain. Pierret made them one hundred and sixty-five; the latest editors raise them to over two hundred. The reason of this is easy to explain. The separate chapters are for the most part intended for special purposes or special occasions, and each, therefore, has had a separate origin. They have been collected from all sides, and thrown together with very little attempt at arrangement or order. They belong to different periods of composition and different schools of religious thought: some of them mount back to the remotest antiquity, others are probably even later than the foundation of the united monarchy. Hence, as a rule, only a selection of them was inscribed on the rolls of papyrus that were buried with the dead, or on the coffin and sepulchral objects deposited in the tomb; it was only the most important of them that the Osirian was likely to need in the other world. Indeed, in some cases only the semblance of a text seems to have been thought necessary. The copies made for the dead usually abound with errors, and some have actually been found in which the text is represented by a number of unmeaning signs. The Book of the Dead, moreover, was continually growing. The oldest texts are the shortest and most simple, the latest are the longest and most crowded with chapters. As fresh prayers and formulæ for protecting the dead in the other world, or directing them on their journey, were discovered in the local sanctuaries, they were added in the form of

chapters; no precaution, it was felt, should be omitted which might secure the safety of those who had passed beyond the grave.

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The Book of the Dead was thus a growth, and a growth it remained. It never underwent the systematic revision which has been the lot of most other sacred books. We look in it in vain for traces of an individual editor. And on this account its form and even its language were never fixed. The prayers and formulæ it contained were, it is true, stereotyped, for their success depended on their correct recitation; but beyond this the utmost latitude was allowed in the way of addition or change. A Masoretic counting of words and syllables would have been inconceivable to the Egyptian.

In later days, more especially in the Greek period, the Book of the Dead served as a basis for other religious compositions which claimed divine authorship, and the authority due to such an origin. Of these the most popular was the Book of Respirations (*Shâ-n-Sensenu*), which derives its inspiration from chapters liv. to lxiii. of the Book of the Dead, and is ascribed to the god Thoth. In anticipation of the apocalyptic literature of the Jews, the writer describes the condition of the soul in the next world, following closely the indications of the old ritual, and declaring how the “Respirations” it contains were first “made by Isis for her brother Osiris to give life to his soul, to give life to his body, to rejuvenate all his members anew.” The soul of

the Osirian is said to “live” by means of the book that is thus provided for him, for he “has received the Book of Respirations, that he may breathe with his soul ... that he may make any transformation at his will ... that his soul may go wherever it desireth.”[160] We are reminded in these words of the last chapter of the Book of Revelation (xxii. 7, 18, 19).

The Book of the Dead was the oldest of the sacred books of Egypt. It was also in universal use. Whatever [pg 195] other articles of belief he may have held, the Egyptian of the historical age was before all things else a follower of Osiris. It was as an Osirian that he hoped to traverse the regions that lay beyond the tomb, and whose geography and inhabitants were revealed to him in the Osirian ritual. From this point of view, accordingly, the Book of the Dead may be termed the Bible of the Egyptians. But it was not without rivals. We have seen that even in the Book of the Dead the heaven of Osiris is not the only heaven to which the dead may look forward. Osiris has a rival in the sun-god, and a place in the solar bark seems almost as much coveted as a place in the fields of Alu. The solar cult of Heliopolis had indeed to yield to the more popular cult of Osiris, but it was on condition that the cult of Osiris recognised and admitted it. To be a follower of Osiris did not prevent the believing Egyptian from being also a follower of the god Ra.

In the latter part of the Theban period the solar cult received a fresh impulse and

developed a new life. The attempt of Khu-n-Aten to establish a new faith, the outward symbol of which was the solar disc, was but an indication of the general trend of religious thought, and the Asiatic conquests of the Eighteenth Dynasty introduced into Egypt the worship and creed of the sun-god Baal. One by one the gods were identified with Ra; Amon himself became Amon-Ra, and the local deity of Thebes passed into a pantheistic sun-god. It was under these conditions that a new ritual was compiled for the educated classes of Egypt, or at all events was adopted by the religion of the State. This was the Book *Am Duat*, the Book of the Other World.

Copies of it are written on the walls of the dark chambers in the rock-cut labyrinths wherein the kings of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties were laid to rest. [pg 196] In the tomb of Seti I. we find two versions, one in which the text is given in full, another in which the usual plan is followed of giving only the last five sections completely, while extracts alone are taken from the first seven. The text is profusely illustrated by pictures, in order that the dead might have no difficulty in understanding the words of the ritual, or in recognising the friends and enemies he would meet in the other world.

Unlike the Book of the Dead, the Book Am Duat is a systematic treatise, which bears the stamp of individual authorship. It is an apocalypse resting on an astronomical foundation, and is, in fact, a minute and detailed account of the passage of the sun-god

along the heavenly river Ur-nes during the twelve hours of the night. Each hour is represented by a separate locality in the world of darkness, enclosed within gates, and guarded by fire-breathing serpents and similar monsters. As the bark of the sun-god glides along, the gates are successively opened by the magical power of the words he utters, and their guardians receive him in peace. Immediately he has passed the gates close behind him, and the region he has left is once more enveloped in darkness.

But though he is thus able to illuminate for the brief space of an hour the several regions of the other world, it is not as the living sun-god of day that he voyages along the infernal river, but as “the flesh of Ra”—that is to say, as that mortal part of his nature which alone could die and enter the realm of the dead. The river is a duplicate of the Nile, with its strip of bank on either side, its fields and cities, even its nomes, wherein the god, like the Pharaoh, assigns land and duties to his followers. For the followers of Ra have a very different lot before them from that which awaited the followers of Osiris. There was no land of everlasting light and happiness to [pg 197] which they could look forward, nor was their destiny hereafter dependent on their conduct in this life. Their supreme end was to accompany the sun-god in his bark as he passed each night through the twelve regions of the dead, and this could be attained only by a knowledge of the ritual of Am Duat and the mystic formulæ it contained. Few,

however, of those who started with the sun-god on his nocturnal voyage remained with him to the last; most of them were stopped in the regions through which he passed, where fields were granted them whose produce they might enjoy, and where each night for a single hour they formed as it were a bodyguard around the god and lived once more in the light. Even the kings of Upper and Lower Egypt were condemned to dwell for ever in this gloomy Hades, along with Osiris and the Khû or luminous souls of an earlier faith. Those who were happy enough by virtue of their knowledge and spells to emerge with Ra into the dawn of a new day, henceforth had their home in the solar bark, and were absorbed into the person of the god.

But it was not only the friends and followers of Ra who thus accompanied him in his journey through the other world; his enemies were there also, and the horrible punishments they had to endure, as depicted on the walls of the royal tombs, were worthy of the imagination of a Dante. The banks of the infernal river were lined with strange and terrible monsters, some of them the older deities and spirits of the popular creed, others mere creations of symbolism, others creatures of composite form to whose invention the older mythology contributed. Fire-breathing serpents are prominent among them, lighting up the darkness for the friends of Ra, and burning his foes with their poisonous flames.[161]

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The artificial character of this picture of the other world is clear at the first glance. With the pedantic attention to details which characterised the Egyptian, every part of it has been carefully elaborated. The names and forms of the personages who stand on the banks of the infernal river or enter the boat of Ra, as with each successive hour he passes into a new region, are all given; even the exact area of each region is stated, though the measurements do not agree in all the versions of the book. But the best proof of its artificial nature is to be found in a fact first pointed out by Professor Maspero. Two of the older conceptions of the other world and the life beyond the grave, which differed essentially from the solar doctrine, are embedded in it, but embedded as it were perforce. In the fourth and fifth hours or regions we have a picture of the future life as it was conceived by the worshippers of Sokaris in the primitive days of Memphis; in the sixth and seventh, the tribunal and paradise of Osiris.

The kingdom of Sokaris represented that dreary conception of an after-existence which was associated with the ka. Like the mummy, the ka was condemned to live in the dark chamber of the tomb, whence it crept forth at night to consume the food that had been offered to it, and without which it was doomed to perish. Long before the age when the Book of Am Duat was written, this primitive belief had passed away from the minds of men; but the tradition of it still lingered, and had secured a permanent place

in the theological lore of Egypt. It has accordingly been annexed as it were by the author of the book, and transformed into two of the regions of the night through which the solar bark has to pass. But the terms in which the kingdom of Sokaris had been described were too stereotyped to be ignored or altered, and the solar bark is accordingly made to pass [pg 199] above the primitive Hades, the voices of whose inhabitants are heard rising up in an indistinct murmur though their forms are concealed from view. A memory is preserved even of the sandy desert of Giza and Saqqâra, where the inhabitants of Memphis were buried, and over which Sokaris ruled as lord of the dead. The realm of Sokaris is pictured as an enclosure of sand, flanked on either side by a half-buried sphinx.

The author of the Book of Am Duat has dealt with the heaven of Osiris as he has done with the Hades of Sokaris. Osiris and his paradise have been transported bodily to the nocturnal path of the sun-god, and condemned to receive what little light is henceforth allowed them from the nightly passage of the solar bark. Thoth guides the bark to the city which contains the tomb of Osiris, that mysterious house wherein are the four human forms of the god. On the way the serpent Neha-hir has to be overcome; he is but another form of the serpent Apophis, the enemy of Ra, who thus takes the place of Set, the enemy of Osiris. When the sixth region is passed, which is a sort of vestibule to the “retreat” of Osiris in the seventh, other enemies of Osiris—of

whom, however, the Osirian doctrine knew but little—are being put to death in true solar fashion. Perhaps the most noteworthy fact in this description of the kingdom of Osiris is, that not only all the gods of the Osirian cycle are relegated to it, including the hawk Horus, but also the Khû or luminous manes and the ancient kings of Upper and Lower Egypt. The fact points unmistakably to the great antiquity of the Osirian creed. It went back to a time when as yet the Egyptian monarchy was not united, and when the *khû* or luminous soul held the same place in Egyptian thought as had been held at an earlier time by the *ka* and later by the soul or *ba*. So undoubted was the [pg 200] fact that the old Pharaohs of primeval Egypt had died in the Osirian faith, that the author of the Book of Am Duat could not disregard it; he was forced to place the predecessors of a Seti or a Ramses, for whom the book was copied, in one of the murky regions of the other world instead of in the solar bark. They had been followers of Osiris and not of Ra, and there was accordingly no place for them in the boat of the sun-god.

Osiris is thus subordinated to the sun. The god of the dead is not allowed to rule even in his own domains. Such light and life as are graciously permitted to him come from the passing of the solar bark once in each twenty-four hours. He has lost the bright and happy fields of Alu, he has had to quit even the judgment-hall where he decided the lot of man. Osiris and his creed are deposed to make way for another god with another and a

lower form of doctrine.

The fact was so patent, that a second solar apocalypse was written in order to smooth it away. This was the Book of the Gates or of Hades, a copy of which is also inscribed in the tomb of Seti. It differs only in details from the Book Am Duat; the main outlines of the latter, with the passage of the solar bark through the twelve hours or regions of the night, remain unaltered. But the details vary considerably. The gates which shut the hours off one from the other become fortified pylons, guarded by serpents breathing fire. The Hades of Sokaris is suppressed, and the judgment-hall of Osiris is introduced between the fifth and sixth hours. The object of the judgment, however, seems merely the punishment of the enemies of the god, who are tied to stakes and finally burned or otherwise put to death in the eighth hour. Among them appears Set in the form of a swine, who is driven out of the hall of judgment by a cynocephalous ape. As for the righteous, [pg 201] they are still allowed to cultivate the fields of the kingdom of Osiris; but it is a kingdom which is plunged in darkness except during the brief space of time when the bark of the sun-god floats through it. Osiris, nevertheless, is acknowledged as lord of the world of the dead, in contradistinction to the Book Am Duat, which assigns him only a portion of it; and when the sun-god emerges into the world of light at the end of the twelfth hour, it is by passing through the hands of Nut, the sky, who stands on the body of Osiris, “which encircles the

other world." Nor is the serpent Apophis, the enemy of Ra, confounded with Set; his overthrow by Tum takes place in the first hour, before the tribunal of Osiris is reached.

The theology of the two books resembles the Taoism of China in its identification of religion with the knowledge of magical formulæ. The moral element which distinguished the Osirian faith has disappeared, and salvation is made to depend on the knowledge of a mystical apocalypse. Only the rich and cultivated have henceforth a chance of obtaining it. And even for them the prospect was dreary enough. A few—the innermost circle of disciples—might look forward to absorption into the sun-god, which practically meant a loss of individuality; for the rest there was only a world of darkness and inaction, where all that made life enjoyable to the Egyptian was absent. The author of the Book of the Gates gives expression to the fact when he tells us that as the last gate of the other world closes behind the sun-god, the souls who are left in darkness groan heavily. To such an end had the learned theology of Egypt brought both the people and their gods!

We need not wonder that under the influence of such teaching the intellectual classes fell more and more into a hopeless scepticism, which saw in death the loss of all that we most prize here below. On the one side, [pg 202] we have sceptical treatises like the dialogue between the jackal and the Ethiopian cat, where the cat, who represents the old-

fashioned orthodoxy, has by far the worst of the argument;[162] on the other side, the dirge on the death of the wife of the high priest of Memphis, which I have quoted in an earlier lecture—

> "The underworld is a land of
> thick darkness,
> A sorrowful place for the dead.
> They sleep, after their guise,
> never to awaken."

It was better, indeed, that it should be so than that they should awaken only to lead the existence which the Book of Am Duat describes.

How far the doctrines of the solar theology extended beyond the narrow circle in which they originated, it is difficult to say. In the nature of the case they could not become popular, as they started from an assumption of esoteric knowledge. We know that the majority of the Egyptians continued to hold to the Osirian creed up to the last days of paganism—or at all events they professed to do so—and as long as the Osirian creed was retained the moral element in religion was recognised. In one respect, however, the solar theology triumphed. The gods of Egypt, including Osiris himself, were identified with the sun-god, and became forms or manifestations of Ra. Egyptian religion became pantheistic; the divinity was discovered everywhere, and the shadowy and impersonal forms of the ancient deities were

mingled together in hopeless confusion. It seemed hardly to matter which was invoked, for each was all and all were each.

Gnosticism was the natural daughter of the solar theology. The doctrine that knowledge is salvation and [pg 203] that the gods of the popular cult are manifestations of the sun-god, was applied to explain the origin of evil. Evil became the result of imperfection and ignorance, necessarily inherent in matter, and arising from the fact that the creation is due to the last of a long series of æons or emanations from the supreme God. The æons are the legitimate descendants of the manifold deities whom the Egyptian priests had resolved into forms of Ra, while the identification of evil with the necessary imperfection of matter deprives it of a moral element, and finds a remedy for it in the *gnosis* or "knowledge" of the real nature of things. Even the strange monsters and symbolic figures which play so large a part in the solar revelation are reproduced in Gnosticism. Abraxas and the other curiously composite creatures engraved on Gnostic gems have all sprung from the Books of Am Duat and the Gates, along with the allegorical meanings that were read into them. However much the solar school of theology may have been for the old religion of Egypt a teaching of death, in the Gnosticism of the first Christian centuries it was born anew.

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Lecture IX. The Popular Religion Of Egypt.

Thus far I have dealt with the official religion of ancient Egypt, with the religion of the priests and princes, the scribes and educated classes. This is naturally the religion of which we know most. The monuments that have come down to us are for the most part literary and architectural, and enshrine the ideas and beliefs of the cultivated part of the community. The papyri were written for those who could read and write, the temples were erected at the expense of the State, and the texts and figures with which they were adorned were engraved or painted on their walls under priestly direction. The sculptured and decorated tomb, the painted mummy-case, the costly sarcophagus, the roll of papyrus that was buried with the dead, were all alike the privilege of the wealthy and the educated. The grave that contained the body of the poor contained little else than the coarse cere-cloths in which it was wrapped.

Our knowledge, therefore, of the religion of the people, of the popular religion as distinguished from the religion of official orthodoxy, is, and must be, imperfect. We have to gather it from the traces it has left in the religion of the State, from stray references to it in literature, from a few rare monuments which have come down to us, from its survivals in the modern folk-lore and superstitions of Egypt, or from its influence on the decaying faith of the classical age.

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There was, however, a popular religion by the side of the official religion, just as there is in all countries which possess an organised faith. And if it is difficult to understand fully the religion of the uneducated classes in Western Europe to-day, or to realise their point of view, it must be much more difficult to do so in the case of ancient Egypt. Here our materials are scanty, and the very fact that we know as much as we do about the religion of the upper class makes it additionally harder to estimate them aright.

A considerable portion of the fellahin were descended from the earlier neolithic population of Egypt, whom the Pharaonic Egyptians found already settled in the country. In a former lecture I have endeavoured to show that they were fetish-worshippers, and that among their fetishes animals were especially prominent. They had no priests, for fetishism is incompatible with a priesthood in the proper sense of the term. Neither did they embalm their dead; all those

beliefs and ideas, therefore, which were connected with a priesthood and the practice of embalming must have come to them from without; the gods and sacerdotal colleges of the State religion, the Osirian creed, and the belief in the resurrection, must have been for them of foreign origin. And of foreign origin they doubtless remained to the bulk of the nation down to the last days of paganism.

Amon and Ra and Osiris were indeed familiar names, the temple festivals were duly observed, and the processions in honour of the State gods duly attended; and after the age of the Eighteenth Dynasty, when the fusion between the different elements in the population was completed, the practice of mummification became general; but the names of the State gods were names only, to which the peasant attached a very different meaning from that which official orthodoxy demanded. He still worshipped [pg 206] the tree whose shady branches arose on the edge of the desert or at the corner of his field, or brought his offerings to some animal, in which he saw not a symbol or an incarnation of Horus and Sekhet, but an actual hawk and cat.

How deeply rooted this belief in the divinity of animals was in the minds of the people, is shown by the fact that the State religion had to recognise it just as Mohammed had perforce to recognise the sanctity of the "Black Stone" of the Kaaba. As we have seen, the second king of the Second Thinite Dynasty is said to have legalised the worship of the

bull Apis of Memphis, Mnevis of Heliopolis, and the ram of Mendes; and though the official explanation was that these animals were but incarnations of Ptaḥ and Ra to whom the worship was really addressed, it was an explanation about which the people neither knew nor cared. The divine honours they paid to the bulls and ram were paid to the animals themselves, and not to the gods of the priestly cult.

Here and there a few evidences have been preserved to us that such was the fact. In the tomb of Ra-zeser-ka-seneb, for instance, at Thebes, the artist has introduced a picture of a peasant making his morning prayer to a sycamore which stands at the end of a corn-field, while offerings of fruit and bread and water are placed on the ground beside it.[163] The official religion endeavoured to legalise this old tree worship much in the same way as Christianity endeavoured to legalise the old worship of springs, by attaching the tree to the service of a god, and seeing in it one of the forms in which the deity manifested himself. Thus “the sycamore of the south” became the body of Hathor, whose head was [pg 207] depicted appearing from its branches, while opposite Siût it was Hor-pes who took the goddess's place.[164] Like other beliefs and practices which go back to the neolithic population of Egypt, the ancient tree worship is not yet extinct. On either side of the Nile sacred trees are to be found, under which the offering of bread and water is still set, though the god of the official cult of

Pharaonic Egypt, to whom the worship was nominally paid, has been succeeded by a Mohammedan saint. By the side of the tree often rises the white dome of the tomb of a "shêkh," to whom the place is dedicated, reminding us of a picture copied by Wilkinson in a sepulchre at Hû, in which a small chapel, representing the tomb of Osiris, stands by the side of a tree on whose branches is perched the *bennu* or phœnix.[165] The most famous of these trees, however, that of Matarîya, is an object of veneration to the Christian rather than to the Mohammedan. The Holy Family, it is said, once rested under its branches during their flight into Egypt; in reality it represents a sycamore in which the soul of Ra of Heliopolis must have been believed to dwell.

Professor Maspero has drawn attention to certain stelæ in the museum of Turin, which show how, even in the lower middle class, it was the animal itself and not the official god incarnated in it that was the object of worship. On one of them, which belongs to the age of the Eighteenth Dynasty, huge figures of a swallow and a cat are painted, with a table of offerings standing before them, as well as two kneeling scribes, while the accompanying inscriptions tell us that it was to "the [pg 208] good" swallow and the "good" cat, and not to any of the State gods who may have hidden themselves under these animal forms, that flowers were being offered and prayers made. On another stela we find two pet cats, who are sitting on a shrine and

facing one another, and whom their mistresses—two of the women who wailed at funerals—adore in precisely the same language as that which was used of Osiris or Amon.[166] In the quarries north of Qurna is a similar representation of a cow and a cobra, which stand face to face with a table of offerings between them, while a worshipper kneels at the side, and a half-obliterated inscription contains the usual formulæ of adoration.[167] Still more curious is a stela, now in the museum of Cairo, on which an ox is represented inside a shrine, while underneath it is a Greek inscription declaring that the "Kretan" who had dedicated the monument could interpret dreams, thanks to the commandment of "the god." The god, it will be noticed, is not Apis, but an ordinary ox.

But of all the animals who thus continued to be the real gods of the people in spite of priestly teaching and State endowments, none were so numerous or were so universally feared and venerated as the snakes. The serpent was adored where Amon was but a name, and where Ra was looked upon as belonging, like fine horses and clothes, to the rich and the mighty. The prominence [pg 209] of the serpent in Egyptian mythology and symbolism indicates how plentiful and dangerous it must have been in the early days of Egypt, and what a lasting impression it made upon the native mind. When the banks of the Nile were an uninhabitable morass, and the neolithic tribes built their huts in the desert, the snake must indeed have been a

formidable danger. The most deadly still frequent the desert; it is only in the cultivated land that they are comparatively rare. In Egypt, as elsewhere, the cultivation of the soil and the habits of civilised life have diminished their number, and driven them into the solitudes of the wilderness. But when the Pharaonic Egyptians first arrived in the valley of the Nile, when the swamps were being drained, the jungle cleared away, and the land sown with the wheat of Babylonia, the serpent was still one of the perils of daily life. A folk-tale which has been appropriated and spoilt by the priestly compilers of the legend of Ra, tells how the sun-god was bitten by a venomous snake which lay in his path, and how the poison ran through his veins like fire. The symbol of royalty adopted by the earliest Pharaohs was the cobra; it symbolised the irresistible might and deadly power of the conquering chieftain which, like the dreaded cobra of the desert, overcame the inhabitants of the country, and compelled them to regard him with the same awe and terror as the serpent itself.

Down to the last the embalmers and gravediggers and others who had to attend to the funeral arrangements of the dead, and consequently lived in the neighbourhood of the necropolis, were more exposed to the chances of snake-bite than the inhabitants of the cultivated land. The necropolis was invariably in the desert, and the nature of their occupation obliged them to excavate the sand or visit the dark chambers of the dead

where the [pg 210] snake glided unseen. It is not surprising, therefore, that the veneration of the snake was especially strong among the population of the cemeteries. Those who inhabited the necropolis of Thebes have left us prayers and dedications to the goddess Mert-seger, who is represented as a cobra or some equally deadly serpent, though at times she is decently veiled under the name of an official deity. Once her place is taken by two snakes, at another time by a dozen of them. She was, in fact, the tutelary goddess of the necropolis, and hence received the title of "the Western Crest"—that is to say, the crest of the western hills, where the earliest tombs of Thebes were situated. Professor Maspero has translated an interesting inscription made in her honour by one of the workmen employed in the cemetery. "Adoration to the Western Crest," it begins, "prostrations before her double! I make my adoration, listen! Ever since I walked on the earth and was an attendant in the Place of Truth (the cemetery), a man, ignorant and foolish, who knew not good from evil, I committed many sins against the goddess of the Crest, and she punished me. I was under her hand night and day; while I cowered on the bed like a woman with child, I cried for breath, and no breath came to me, for I was pursued by the Western Crest, the mightiest of all the gods, the goddess of the place; and behold I will declare to all, great and small, among the workmen of the necropolis: Beware of the Crest, for there is a lion in her, and she strikes like a lion that bewitches, and she is on the track of all who

sin against her! So I cried to my mistress, and she came to me as a soft breeze, she united herself with me, causing me to feel her hand; she returned to me in peace, and made me forget my troubles by giving me breath. For the Western Crest is appeased when the cry is made to her;—so says Nefer-ab, the justified. [pg 211] He says: Behold, hear, all ears who live on earth, beware of the Western Crest!”[168]

It is clear that Nefer-ab suffered from asthma, that he believed it had been inflicted upon him by the local goddess for some sin he had committed against her, and that he further believed his penitence and cry for help to have induced her to come to him and cure him. And this goddess was a snake. Here, in the necropolis of Thebes, therefore, the snake played the same part as a healer that it did in the worship of Asklêpios. It will be remembered that the first temple raised to Æsculapius at Rome was built after a plague, from which the city was supposed to have been delivered by a serpent hidden in the marshes of the Tiber. The serpent that destroys also heals; by the side of Kakodæmon there is also the good snake Agathodæmon.

Mert-seger, the serpent of the necropolis, did not wholly escape the patronage of the State religion. Like the local cults of aboriginal India over which Braḥmanism has thrown its mantle, the cult of Mert-seger was not left wholly unnoticed by the organised religion of the State. A chapel was erected to her in the orthodox form, and it is from this chapel that most of the stelæ have come which have

revealed the existence of the old worship. In some of them Mert-seger is identified with Mut, or even with Isis; but such an identification was never accepted or understood by her illiterate worshippers. For them she continued to be what she had been to their forefathers, simply a serpent and nothing more. The old faith has survived centuries of Christianity and Mohammedanism in a modified form. Professor Maspero discovered that the local Mohammedan [pg 212] saint, whose tomb is not far from the ancient chapel of Mert-seger, is still believed to work miracles of healing. He has taken the place of the serpent goddess; that is all.[169]

The serpent, however, was not always venerated because it was feared. It lived underground, and was thus, in a special sense, the oldest inhabitant of the land, and the guardian of the soil. The Telmessians told Krœsus that it was "a child of the earth."[170] The harmless snakes that frequent the village houses of modern Egypt are still regarded as the "protectors" of the household. The bowl of milk is provided for them as regularly as it once was in Wales for the fairies, and many tales are told of the punishment a neglect of the household ḥ*arrâs* or "guardian" will entail. For its poison continues to exist, though held in reserve, and is communicable by other means than the fangs. At Helwân near Cairo, for instance, I was told of one of these guardian snakes which once missed its female mate and supposed it had been killed.

Thereupon it crept into the *zîr* or jar in which water is kept, and poisoned the water in it. But the female having soon afterwards made its appearance, it was observed to glide into a basin of milk, then to crawl along the ground so that the clotted dust might adhere to its body, and again to enter the *zîr*. As the dust fouled the water, the people of the house knew that the latter must have been poisoned, and accordingly poured it on the ground. In [pg 213] this case the snake provided the remedy for the mischief it had the power to cause.[171]

But the Agathodæmon or serpent guardian of the house not only still survives among the fellahin of Egypt, serpent worship still holds undiminished sway in the valley of the Nile. In a crater-like hollow of the mountain cliff of Shêkh Herîdî there are two domed tombs, dedicated not to a Christian or a Mohammedan saint, but to a snake and his female mate. Shêkh Herîdî, in fact, is a serpent, and the place he inhabits is holy ground. Pilgrimages are made annually to it, and the festival of the "Shêkh," which takes place in the month that follows Ramadan, is attended by crowds of sailors and other devout believers, who encamp for days together in the neighbourhood of the shrine.

They have no doubt about the miraculous powers possessed by the snake. It is as thick as a man's thigh, and, if treated irreverently, breathes flames of fire into the face of the spectator, who immediately dies. If it is cut in pieces, the pieces reunite of their own accord,

and the blood flowing from them marks a spot where gold is hidden in the ground.

Paul Lucas, in the early part of the eighteenth century, tells us that in his time it was called "the angel," and that shortly before his visit to the Nile it had cured a woman of Ekhmîm of paralysis, from which she had suffered for eight years, by simply crawling up into her litter when she was brought to its dwelling-place. Paul Lucas himself was a witness of its supernatural gifts. It was brought to him by the keeper of the shrine when he was visiting a Bey on the opposite side of the river. Suddenly it disappeared, and was nowhere to be found; but a messenger, who was sent post haste [pg 214] to the shrine, returned with the information that "the angel was already there, and had advanced more than twenty steps to meet the dervish who takes care of it."[172]

Norden, a few years later, has a similar tale to relate. He was told that the serpent-saint "never dies," and that it "cures and grants favours to all those who implore its aid and offer sacrifices to it." The cures were effected by the mere presence of the snake, which came in person to those who desired its help. The Christians, he adds, admit the miraculous powers of the Shêkh equally with the Mohammedans, only they explain them as due to a demon who clothes himself in a serpent's form.[173]

Saint or demon, however, Shêkh Herîdî is really the lineal descendant of a serpent

which has been worshipped in its neighbourhood since the prehistoric days of Egypt. A bronze serpent with the head of Zeus Serapis has been found in the mounds of Benâwît, on the western side of the Nile, which face the entrance to the shrine of the Shêkh; and the nome in which the shrine is situated was that of Du-Hefi, "the mountain of the snake." The serpent of Shêkh Herîdî, with his miraculous powers of healing, must thus have been already famous in the days when the nomes of Upper Egypt first received their names. The old neolithic population of the desert must have already venerated the snake that dwelt in the cleft of the rock above which now rises the sacred "tomb" of Shêkh Herîdî.[174]

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The faith of the people dies hard. The gods and goddesses, the theology and speculations of the official religion of Egypt, have passed away, but the old beliefs and superstitions which were already in possession of the land when the Pharaonic Egyptians first entered it, have survived both Christianity and Mohammedanism. The theological systems of Heliopolis or Thebes are like the sacred trees, which, according to Dr. Schweinfurth,[175] were brought from Southern Arabia along with the deities with whose cult they were associated; when the deities themselves ceased to be worshipped, the trees also ceased to be cultivated, and so disappeared from a soil wherein they had been but exotics. But the religion of the great mass of the people

remained rooted as it were in the soil, like the palm or the acacia. It flowed like a strong current under the surface of the theology of the State, contemptuously tolerated by the latter, and in its turn but little affected by it. The theology of the State might incorporate and adapt the beliefs of the multitude; to the multitude the State theology was a "tale of little meaning, though the words were strong."

If we would know what the bulk of the people thought of those deities whom the higher classes regarded as manifestations of a single ineffable and omnipotent divine power, we must turn to the folk-tales which were taken up and disfigured by the rationalising priests of a later period, when they combined together in a connected story all that had been said about the gods of the local sanctuaries. Each sanctuary came to possess its euhemerising [pg 216] legend of the chief divinity to whom it was consecrated; the divinity was transformed into an earthly king, and his history was concocted partly out of popular tales, associated for the most part with particular relics and charms, partly from forced etymologies of proper names. At how early a date these artificial legends first came into existence we do not know, but we already meet with examples of them in the time of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. They belong, however, to the age when the rationalistic process of resolving the gods into human princes had already begun, —the counter side of the process that had

turned the Pharaoh into a god,—and their artificial character is betrayed by the attempt to extract history from learned but unscientific explanations of the origin of local and other names.

Here, for instance, is one which was compiled for the temple of the sun-god at Heliopolis, and is contained in a Turin papyrus of the age of the Twentieth Dynasty: “Account of the god who created himself, the creator of heaven, of earth, of the gods, of men, of wild beasts, of cattle, of reptiles, of fowls, and of fish; the king of men and gods, to whom centuries are but as years; who possesses numberless names which no man knoweth, no, not even the gods.

“Isis was a woman, more knowing in her malice than millions of men, clever among millions of the gods, equal to millions of spirits, to whom as unto Ra nothing was unknown either in heaven or upon earth.

“The god Ra came each day to sit upon his throne; he had grown old, his mouth trembled, his slaver trickled down to the earth, and his saliva dropped upon the ground. Isis kneaded it with her hand along with the dust that had adhered to it; she moulded therefrom a sacred serpent, to which she gave the form of a spear-shaft. She wound it not about her face, but flung it on [pg 217] the road along which the great god walked, as often as he wished, in his twofold kingdom.

“The venerable god went forth, the (other)

gods accompanied him, he walked along as on other days. Then the sacred serpent bit him. The divine god opened his mouth, and his cry rang to heaven. His Ennead of gods called: 'What is it?' and the gods cried, 'Look there!' He could make no answer, his jaws chattered, his limbs shook, the venom took hold of his flesh as the Nile covers its banks (with water).

"When the heart of the great god was quieted, he called to his followers: 'Come to me, ye children of my limbs, ye gods who have emanated from me! Something painful hath hurt me; my heart perceiveth it, yet my eyes see it not; my hand hath not wrought it, nothing that I have made knoweth what it is, yet have I never tasted suffering like unto it, and there is no pain which is worse.... I went forth to see what I had created, I was walking in the two lands which I have made, when something stung me which I knew not. Was it fire, was it water? My heart is in flames, my limbs tremble, all my members shiver. Let there be brought unto me the children of the gods of beneficent words, who have understanding mouths, and whose power reaches unto heaven.'

"The children of the gods came, full of woe; Isis came with her magic; with her mouth full of the breath of life, whose recipes destroy pain, whose word gives life to the dead. She said: 'What is it, what is it, O father of the gods? A serpent hath wrought this suffering in thee, one of thy creatures hath lifted up his head against thee. Surely he shall be overthrown by beneficent incantations; I will

make him retreat at the sight of thy rays.'

"The holy god opened his mouth: 'I walked along the road, travelling through the two lands of the earth, after [pg 218] the desire of my heart, that I might see what I had created; then was I bitten by a serpent that I saw not. Is it fire, is it water? I am colder than water, I am hotter than fire, all my limbs sweat, I tremble, my eye is unsteady, I see not the sky, drops roll from my face as in the season of summer.'

"Isis replied to Ra: 'O tell me thy name, father of the gods, then shall he live who is released (from pain) by thy name.' But Ra answers: 'I have created heaven and earth, I have set the hills in order, and made all beings that are thereon. I am he who created the water, and caused the primeval ocean to issue forth. I created the spouse of his (divine) mother. I created the heavens and the secrets of the two horizons, and have ordered the souls of the gods. I am he who illuminates all things at the opening of his eyes; if he closes his eyes, all is dark. The water of the Nile rises when he bids it; the gods know not his name. I make the hours and create the days, I send the year and create the inundation, I make the fire that lives, I purify the house. I am Khepera in the morning, Ra at noon, and Tum at evening.'

"The venom departed not, it advanced further, the great god became no better. Then Isis said to Ra: 'Thy name was not pronounced in the words thou hast repeated. Tell it to me and the poison will depart; then

shall he live whose name is (thus) named.'

"The poison glowed like fire; it was hotter than the flame of fire. The majesty of Ra said: 'I grant thee leave that thou shouldest search within me, O mother Isis! and that my name pass from my bosom into thine.'

"So the god hid himself from the (other) gods; his everlasting bark was empty. When the moment arrived for extracting the heart (whereon the name was written), [pg 219] Isis said to her son Horus: 'He must yield up unto thee his two eyes (the sun and moon).'

"So the name of the great god was taken from him, and Isis, the great enchantress, said: 'Depart, O poison, leave Ra: let the eye of Horus go forth from the god and shine out of his mouth. I, I have done it; I throw on the earth the victorious poison, for the name of the great god is extracted from him. Let Ra live and the poison die!' So spake Isis, the great one, the regent of the gods, who knows Ra and his true name."

The writer of the papyrus adds that the recital of this legend is an excellent charm against the poison of a snake, especially if it is written and dissolved in water, which is then drunk by the patient; or if it is inscribed on a piece of linen, and hung around his neck.[176]

The contrast is striking between the introduction to the legend and the euhemeristic spirit that elsewhere prevails in it, and can be explained, even in the case of

such disregarders of consistency as the Egyptians, only on the supposition that the Ra of folk-lore and the Ra of theology were held to be the same merely in name. Not even a pretence is made of regarding Isis as a goddess; she is simply a common witch, who resorts to magic in order to force Ra to hand over his name and therewith his powers to her son Horus. The virtue of the name, and the power conferred by a knowledge of it, are features common to the folk-lore of most countries. They take us back to that primitive phase of thought which not only identifies the name with the person or thing it represents, but makes it a separate entity with an existence of its own.

The legend of the sun-god of Edfu is equally instructive, [pg 220] though in its present form it is not earlier than the Ptolemaic age. This begins as follows: "In the three hundred and sixty-third year of the reign of Ra-Harmakhis, the ever-living, Ra was in Nubia with his soldiers. Enemies, however, conspired (*uu*) against him; hence the country has ever since borne the name of the land of Conspirators (*Uaua*). Then the god Ra went his way in his bark along with his followers, and landed in the nome of Edfu. Here the god Hor-Beḥudet (the winged disc) entered the bark of Ra and said to his father: 'O Harmakhis, I see how the enemy have conspired against their lord.' Then said the Majesty of Ra-Harmakhis to the person of Hor-Beḥudet: 'O son of Ra, exalted one, who hast emanated from me, smite the enemy

before thee forthwith.' Hor-Beḥudet flew up to the sun in the form of a great winged disc; on that account he is ever since called the great god, the lord of heaven. He espied the enemy from the sky, he followed them in the form of a great winged disc. Through the attack which he made upon them in front, their eyes saw no longer, their ears heard no longer, each slew his neighbour forthwith, there remained not one alive. Then Hor-Beḥudet came in a many-coloured form as a great winged disc into the bark of Ra-Harmakhis. And Thoth said to Ra: 'Lord of the gods, the god of Beḥudet (Edfu) has come in the form of a great winged disc: from this day forth he shall be called Hor-Beḥudet (Horus of Edfu).' And he said (again): 'From this day forth the city of Edfu shall be called the city of Hor-Beḥudet.' Then Ra embraced the form of Hor, and said to Hor-Beḥudet: 'Thou makest the water of Edfu (red with blood like) grapes, and thy heart is rejoiced thereat.' Hence this water of Edfu is called (the water of grapes).

"And Hor-Beḥudet said: 'March on, O Ra, and behold thine enemies under thy feet in this land.' [pg 221] When the Majesty of Ra had turned back, and the goddess Astartê with him, he saw the enemy lying on the ground, each extended like a prisoner. Then said Ra to Hor-Beḥudet: 'That is a suitable life.' Hence the seat of Hor-Beḥudet has ever since been called the place of the Suitable Life. And Thoth said: 'It was a piercing (*deb*) of my enemies.' So the nome of Edfu (*Deb*) has been

called ever since by that name. And Thoth said to Hor-Beḥudet: ‘Thou art a great protection’ (*mâk âa*). Great in Protection (*âa mâk*) accordingly has the sacred bark of Horus been ever since called.

“Then Ra spake to the gods who were with him: ‘Let us voyage (*khen*) in our bark on the Nile; we are rejoiced, for our enemies lie on the ground.’ The (canal) in which the great god was has ever since been called the Water of Voyaging (*Pe-khen*).

“Then the enemies of Ra entered the water: they changed themselves into crocodiles and hippopotamuses. But Harmakhis voyaged on the water in his bark. When the crocodiles and hippopotamuses came up to him, they opened their jaws in order to destroy the Majesty of Harmakhis. Then came Hor-Beḥudet with his followers the blacksmiths (*mesniu*); each held an iron lance and chain in his hand, wherewith he smote the crocodiles and the hippopotamuses. Then three hundred and eighty-one of the enemy were brought to the spot, who had been killed in sight of the city of Edfu.

“And Harmakhis said to Hor-Beḥudet: ‘Let my image be in Southern Egypt, since there it is that the victory was gained’ (*nekht âḥ*). So the dwelling-place of Hor-Beḥudet (at Edfu) has ever since been called the Victorious (*Nekht-âḥ*). And Thoth said, when he had seen the enemy lying on the ground: ‘Glad are your hearts, O gods of heaven; glad are your hearts, O gods of [pg 222] earth! Horus the

younger is come in peace; he has wrought wonders in his journey which he undertook in accordance with the Book of the Slaying of the Hippopotamus.' Ever since was there (at Edfu) a forge (*mesen*) of Horus.[177]

"Hor-Beḥudet changed his form into that of a winged solar disc, which remained there above the prow of the bark of Ea. He took with him Nekheb, the goddess of the south, and Uazit, the goddess of the north, in the form of two serpents, in order to annihilate the enemy in their crocodile and hippopotamus bodies in every place to which he came, both in Southern and in Northern Egypt.

"Then the enemy fled before him, they turned their faces towards the south, their hearts sank within them from fear. But Hor-Beḥudet was behind them in the bark of Ra, with an iron lance and chain in his hand. With him were his followers, armed with weapons and chains. Then beheld he the enemy towards the south-east of Thebes in a plain two schœni in size."

Here follows an account of the several battles which drove the enemies of Horus from place to place until eventually all Egypt passed under his sway. The first battle, that which took place south-east of Thebes, was at Aa-Zadmi, so called from the "wounds" inflicted on the foe, which henceforth bore the sacred name of Hât-Ra, "the House of Ra." The second was at Neter-khadu, "the divine carnage," to the north-east of [pg 223]

Dendera; the third at Hebnu, near Minia, in the nome of the Gazelle; and others followed at Oxyrrhynchus or Beḥnesa, and Herakleopolis or Aḥnas, where a twofold Mesen or "Forge" was established. Then the foe were driven through the Delta and defeated at Zaru on its eastern frontier, whence they fled in ships down the Red Sea, but were finally overthrown at Shas-ḥer, near the later Berenikê, at the end of the road that led across the desert from the Nile.

Meanwhile, on the 7th of Tybi, their leader "Set had come forward and cried horribly, uttering curses upon the deed of Hor-Beḥudet in slaying the enemy. And Ra said to Thoth: 'The horrible one cries loudly on account of what Hor-Beḥudet has done against him.' Thoth replied to Ra: 'Let the cries be called horrible from this day forward.' Hor-Beḥudet fought long with Set; he flung his iron at him, he smote him to the ground in the city which henceforward was called Pa-Reḥeḥui (the House of the Twins).[178] When Hor-Beḥudet returned, he brought Set with him; his spear stuck in his neck, his chain was on his hand; the mace of Horus had smitten him, and closed his mouth. He brought him before his father Ra.

"Then Ra said to Thoth: 'Let the companions of Set be given to Isis and Horus her son, that they may deal with them as they will.'... So Horus the son of Isis cut off the head of Set and his confederates before his [pg 224] father Ra and all the great Ennead. He carried him under his feet through the land, with the

axe on his head and in his back."

Set, however, was not slain. He transformed himself into a serpent, and the battles succeeded which ended with the victory at Shas-ḥer in the land of Uaua. After this "Harmakhis came in his bark and landed at Thes-Hor (the Throne of Horus or Edfu). And Thoth said: 'The dispenser of rays who cometh forth from Ra has conquered the enemy in his form (of a winged disc); let him be named henceforward the dispenser of rays who cometh forth from the horizon.' And Ra said to Thoth: 'Bring this sun (the winged disk) to every place where I am, to the seats of the gods in Southern Egypt, to the seats of the gods in Northern Egypt, (to the seats of the gods) in the other world, that it may drive all evil from its neighbourhood.' Thoth brought it accordingly to all places, as many as exist where there are gods and goddesses. It is the winged solar disc which is placed over the sanctuaries of all gods and goddesses in Egypt, since these sanctuaries are also that of Hor-Beḥudet."[179]

The legend is a curious combination of the traditions relative to the conquest of the neolithic population by the Pharaonic Egyptians, of the myth of Osiris, of etymological speculations about the meaning of certain proper names, and of an attempt to explain the origin of the winged solar disc. We may gather from it that the disc was first used as an ornament at Edfu, and that it was believed, like the winged bulls of Assyria, to have the power of preventing the demons of

evil from passing the door over which it was placed. Whether, however, this was one of the superstitions of the older people, or whether it was brought by the conquerors from their [pg 225] Babylonian home, is doubtful; perhaps the fact that the disc was a symbolic and architectural ornament, and was confined, so far as we know, to the temples of the official gods, points in the latter direction. It is otherwise with the temple relics mentioned in a legend which has been preserved on a granite shrine of the Ptolemaic epoch, that long served as a water-trough by the side of the well at El-Arîsh. The temple from which it originally came was that of At-Nebes, the sacred name of the city of Qesem or Goshen, now Saft el-Henna. The legend begins by describing the reign of Shu, who fortified At-Nebes against "the children of Apophis," the Semites of "the red desert," who came from the East "at nightfall upon the road of At-Nebes" to invade Egypt. Here he dwelt in his palace, and from hence he "ascended into heaven," when he had grown old and the time had come for him to die. He was succeeded by his son Seb, who "discussed the history of the city with the gods who attended him, (and they told him) all that happened when the Majesty of Ra was in At-Nebes, the conflicts of the king Tum in this locality, the valour of the Majesty of Shu in this city ... (and the wonders that) the serpent-goddess Ankhet had done for Ra when he was with her; the victories of the Majesty of Shu, smiting the evil ones, when he placed her upon his brow. Then said the Majesty of

Seb: 'I also (will place) her upon my head, even as my father Shu did.' Seb entered the temple of Aart (Lock of Hair) together with the gods that were with him; then he stretched forth his hand to take the casket in which (Ankhet) was; the serpent came forth and breathed its vapour on the Majesty of Seb, confounding him greatly; those who followed him fell dead, and his Majesty himself was burned in that day. When his Majesty had fled to the north of At-Nebes, with the fire of the cobra upon him, behold, when [pg 226] he came to the fields of henna, the pain of his burn was not yet assuaged, and the gods who followed him said unto him: 'Come, let them take the lock (*aart*) of Ra which is there, when thy Majesty shall go to see it and its mystery, and his Majesty shall be healed (as soon as it is placed) upon thee.' So the Majesty of Seb caused the magic lock of hair to be brought to Pa-Aart (the House of the Lock), for which was made that reliquary of hard stone which is hidden in the secret place of Pa-Aart, in the district of the divine lock of the god Ra; and behold the fire departed from the limbs of the Majesty of Seb. And many years afterwards, when this lock of hair was brought back to Pa-Aart in At-Nebes, and cast into the great lake of Pa-Aart, whose name is the Dwelling of Waves, in order that it might be purified, behold the lock became a crocodile; it flew to the water and became Sebek, the divine crocodile of At-Nebes."[180]

Inside the shrine is a picture of the two relics, the cobra which adorned the head-dress of

the Pharaoh, and the *aart* or lock of hair which was supposed to give its name to the temple. They were doubtless preserved at At-Nebes, and shown to the faithful as the veritable objects which had proved the bane and the antidote of the god Seb. They introduce us to a side of Egyptian religion which, though essentially characteristic of the popular faith, had also received the sanction of the official creed. The belief in amulets and charms was too deeply engrained in the popular mind to be ignored; they were consequently taken under the patronage of the gods, and a theory was invented to explain their efficacy. Already the later chapters of the Book of the Dead are concerned with the various amulets which were necessary [pg 227] to the preservation or resuscitation of the body; and even if the latter were regarded as symbolic, they were concrete symbols—symbols, that is to say, which actually possessed the virtues ascribed to them. Just as the name was a concrete entity, expressive of the very essence of the thing to which it was applied, so too the symbol was an entity with a concrete existence of its own. The materialistic tendency of Egyptian thought, added to the fetishism of the earlier stratum of native religion, produced this result. The doctrine of the Ka furnished a theory by which the educated classes could explain the efficacy of the amulet and the active virtues of the symbol. It was the Ka, the spiritual and yet materialised double, of the amulet that worked the charm—that made the scarab, for

instance, a substitute for the living heart, or the *dad*—the symbol of stability—a passport to the other world.[181]

The amulets buried with the dead, the relics preserved in the temples, had originally been the fetishes of the earlier population of Egypt. They hardly changed their character when they became symbols endowed with mysterious properties, or relics of the State gods which still possessed miraculous powers. The peasant might be told in the ritual of Amon: in "the sanctuary of the god clamour is an abomination to him: pray for thyself with a loving heart, in which the words remain hidden; that he may supply thy need, hear thy words and accept thine offering";[182] but it was a teaching that was far [pg 228] above him. When he entered the sanctuary it was to see the processions of the priests and the relics preserved in it, and it was in these relics that he still put his trust. It was not only in Ethiopia that there were moving and speaking statues which elected the king by taking him by the hand; in Thebes itself, under the priestly kings of the Twentieth Dynasty, we find wonder-working statues whose reality was guaranteed by the priesthood. One of them, it was said, was sent to Asia, where it delivered a king's daughter from the demon that possessed her, and afterwards returned in a moment to Thebes of its own accord; while others answered the questions addressed to them by nodding the head, or even pronounced prophecies regarding the future.[183] Indeed, as we have seen, the old

theory of the ka implied that the statue of the dead man could be reanimated in a sense by his spirit; and a text at Dendera speaks of the soul of Hathor descending from heaven as a human-headed hawk of lapis-lazuli, and uniting itself with her image. The peasant, therefore, might be excused if he remained true to the superstitions and traditions of his ancestors, and left the official religion, with its one ineffable god, to those who were cultured enough to understand it. Like the peasant of modern Italy, he was content with a divinity that he could see and handle, and about whose wonder-working powers he had no doubt. Materialism is the basis of primitive religion; the horizon of primitive man is limited, and he has not yet learnt to separate thought from the senses through which alone his narrow world is known to him. The simple faith of a child often wears a very materialistic form.

[pg 229]

Lecture X. The Place Of

Egyptian Religion In The History Of Theology.

In the preceding lectures I have endeavoured to bring before you the more salient points in the religion of the ancient Egyptians, in so far as they illustrate their conception of the divine. But we must remember that all such descriptions of ancient belief must be approximate only. We cannot put ourselves in the position of those who held it; our inherited experiences, our racial tendencies, our education and religious ideas, all alike forbid it. If the Egyptians of the Theban period found it difficult to understand the ritual of their own earlier history, and misinterpreted the expressions and allusions in it, how much more difficult must it be for us to do so. The most ordinary religious terms do not bear for us the same meaning that they bore for the Egyptians. The name of God calls up other associations and ideas; the very word "divine" has a different signification in the ancient and the modern world among Eastern and Western peoples. In fact, the more literal is our translation of an old religious text, the more likely we are to misunderstand it.

And yet in one sense we are the religious heirs of the builders and founders of the Egyptian temples. Many of the theories of Egyptian religion, modified and transformed no doubt, have penetrated into the theology of Christian Europe, and form, as it were, part

of the woof in [pg 230] the web of modern religious thought. Christian theology was largely organised and nurtured in the schools of Alexandria, and Alexandria was not only the meeting-place of East and West, it was also the place where the decrepit theology of Egypt was revivified by contact with the speculative philosophy of Greece. The Egyptian, the Greek, and the Jew met there on equal terms, and the result was a theological system in which each had his share. In Philo, we are told, we find Moses Platonising; but the atmosphere in which he did so was that of the old Egyptian faith. And what was true of the philosophy of Philo was still more true of the philosophy of Alexandrine Christianity.

You cannot but have been struck by the similarity of the ancient Egyptian theory of the spiritual part of man to that which underlies so much Christian speculation on the subject, and which still pervades the popular theology of to-day. There is the same distinction between soul and spirit, the same belief in the resurrection of a material body, and in a heaven which is but a glorified counterpart of our own earth. Perhaps, however, the indebtedness of Christian theological theory to ancient Egyptian dogma is nowhere more striking than in the doctrine of the Trinity. The very terms used of it by Christian theologians meet us again in the inscriptions and papyri of Egypt.

Professor Maspero has attempted to show that the Egyptian doctrine of the Trinity was

posterior to that of the Ennead.[184] Whether this were so or not, it makes its appearance at an early date in Egyptian theology, and was already recognised in the Pyramid texts. Originally the trinity was a triad like those we find in Babylonian mythology. Here and there the primitive triads survived into historical times, like that of Khnum and the two [pg 231] goddesses of the Cataract. But more frequently the trinity was an artificial creation, the formation of which can still be traced. Thus at Thebes the female element in it was found in Mut, "the mother" goddess, a title of the supreme goddess of Upper Egypt; while Khonsu, the moon-god, or Mentu, the old god of the nome, became the divine son, and so took a place subordinate to that of the local god Amon. Sometimes recourse was had to grammar, and the second person in the trinity was obtained by attaching the feminine suffix to the name of the chief god. In this way Amon-t was grammatically evolved from Amon, and even Ra-t from Ra. Elsewhere an epithet of the god was transformed into his son; at Memphis, for example, Imhotep, "he who comes in peace," a title of Ptaḥ, became his son and the second person in the trinity. Other members of the trinity were fetched from neighbouring cities and nomes; Nit of Sais had Osiris as a husband, and Sekhet of Letopolis and Bast of Bubastis were successively regarded as the wives of Ptaḥ.

The triad consisted of a divine father, wife, and son. It was thus a counterpart of the human family, and belonged to the same

order of ideas as that which explained the creation of the world by a process of generation. This was the cosmology of Heliopolis, and it is probable that to Heliopolis also we must ascribe the doctrine of the Trinity. At any rate the doctrine seems to have been solar in its origin. As Tum, the god of sunset, was identical with Khepera, the sun of the morning, and Ra, the sun of the noonday,—all three being but one god under diverse forms,—so the divine father was believed to engender himself in the person of the divine son, and the divine mother to be one with the divine father and son. The divine essence remained necessarily the same, whatever might be the forms or names under which it displayed itself; and the name, it [pg 232] must be remembered, had for the Egyptian a separate and real existence. The father became the son and the son the father through all time, and of both alike the mother was but another form. It was eternal fatherhood, eternal motherhood, and eternal generation. The development of the doctrine was assisted by that identification of the Egyptian deities with the sun-god which ended in solar pantheism, as well as by the old theory of the ka, of a personality distinguishable from that to which it belonged, identical with that of which it was the double, and yet at the same time enjoying an independent existence of its own.

With the spread of the Osirian form of faith the doctrine of the Trinity became universal throughout Egypt. The organisation of the

faith had included the reduction of the cycle of divinities connected with Osiris into a trinity. Thoth and Anubis, Nebhât and Set, were separated from him, and henceforth he was made the head of a triad, in which Isis was the second person, and Horus, the avenger of his father, was the third. How completely the father and son were merged together may be seen from a hymn to Horus which has been translated by Chabas[185]—

> "The gods are joyous at the
> arrival of Osiris,
> the son of Horus, the intrepid,
> the truth-speaking, the son of
> Isis, the heir of Osiris. The divine
> chiefs join him,
> the gods recognise the
> omnipotent child himself ...
> the reign of justice belongs to
> him.
> Horus has found his justification,
> to him is given the title of his
> father;
> he appears with the *atef*-crown
> by order of Seb. He takes the
> royalty of the two worlds,
> the crown of Upper Egypt is
> placed upon his head.
> He judges the world as he likes,
> heaven and earth are beneath his
> eye,
> [pg 233]
> he commands mankind—the
> intellectual beings, the race of
> the Egyptians and the northern
> barbarians.
> The circuit of the solar disc is

under his control;
the winds, the waters, the wood
of the plants, and all
vegetables....
Sanctifying, beneficent is his
name ...
evil flies afar off, and the earth
brings forth abundantly under
her lord.
Justice is confirmed by its lord,
who chases away iniquity.
Mild is thy heart, O (Osiris) Un-
nefer, son of Isis;
he has taken the crown of Upper
Egypt; for him is acknowleged
the authority of his father in the
great dwelling of Seb;
he is Ra when speaking, Thoth
when writing; the divine chiefs
are at rest."

Here Osiris is identified with Horus, and so becomes the son of his own wife.

The Egyptian trinity has thus grown out of the triad under the influence of the solar theology, and of the old conception of a personality which possessed a concrete form. Once introduced into the Osirian creed, it spread with it throughout Egypt, and became a distinguishing feature of Egyptian theology. Along with the doctrines of the resurrection of the body and of a judgment to come, it passed into the schools of Alexandria, and was there thrown into the crucible of Greek philosophy. The Platonic doctrine of ideas was adapted to the Egyptian doctrine of personality, and the three persons of the trinity became Unity,

Mind, and Soul—absolute thought, absolute reason, and absolute energy.[186]

But while, on the one hand, there is continuity between the religious thought of ancient Egypt and the religious thought of the world of to-day, there is also continuity, on the other hand, between the religion of Egypt and that of primitive Babylonia. In the course of these lectures I have more than once pointed to the fact: the Pharaonic [pg 234] Egyptians were of Asiatic origin and they necessarily brought with them the religious ideas of their Eastern home. As we come to know more both of early Babylonian civilisation and of the beginnings of Egyptian history, we shall doubtless discover that the links between them are closer than we at present imagine, and much that is now obscure will become clear and distinct. Meanwhile there is one link which I cannot pass over. Astro-theology once played a considerable part in the religion of the Egyptians. In the historical age it has lost its importance; the stars have been identified with the official deities, who have accordingly absorbed their individual attributes; but echoes of the worship formerly paid to them are still heard in the Pyramid texts. Saḥu or Orion is still remembered as a mighty hunter, whose hunting-ground was the plain of heaven, and whose prey were the gods themselves. When he rises, it is said in the Pyramid of Unas, “the stars fight together, and the archers patrol” the sky which drops with rain; the smaller stars which form his

constellation pursue and lasso the gods as the human hunter lassoes the wild bull; they slay and disembowel their booty, and boil the flesh in glowing caldrons. The “greater gods” are hunted “in the morning,” those of less account at mid-day, the “lesser gods” “at evening, and Saḥu refreshes himself with the divine banquet,” feeding on their bodies and absorbing “their magic virtues.” “The great ones of the sky” launch “the flames against the caldrons wherein are the haunches of the followers” of the gods; the pole-star, “who causes the dwellers in the sky to march in procession round” Orion, “throws into the caldron the legs of their wives.”[187] We are transported to the cannibal's kitchen of some African chieftain, such [pg 235] as that represented on a curious stela found in Darfûr, and now in the museum of Constantinople. The whole description takes us back to a period in the history of Egypt long anterior to that of the Pyramids, when the Pharaonic invaders were first beginning to mingle with the older population of the land and become acquainted with its practices. In the days of Unas the real meaning of the expressions handed down by theological conservatism had been forgotten, or was interpreted metaphorically; but they remained to prove that the age when Orion was still an object of worship superior to the gods of heaven was one which went back to the very dawn of Pharaonic history. The cult of the stars must have been brought by “the followers of Horus” from their Asiatic home.[188]

The fame of Orion was eclipsed in later days by that of Sopd or Sirius. But this had its reason in the physio-graphical peculiarities of Egypt. The heliacal rising of Sirius, the Dog Star, that is to say, its first appearance along with the sun, corresponded with the rise of the Nile in Upper Egypt, and accordingly became a mark of time, [pg 236] and the starting-point of the solar year. Its importance therefore was great, not only for the calendar, but also for those agricultural operations upon which the very existence of Egypt depended. We need not wonder, accordingly, if with the settlement of the Pharaonic Egyptians in the valley of the Nile the worship and name of Orion fell more and more into the background, while that of Sirius became pre-eminent. How far back the pre-eminence of Sirius reaches may be gathered from the fact that the twentieth nome of Northern Egypt—that of Goshen—derived its name from a combination of the mummified hawk of Horus and the cone which, as Brugsch first showed,[189] represents the shaft of zodiacal light that accompanies the rising of Sirius before the dawn of day. Sopd or Sirius is thus identified with the dead Horus who presided over Nekhen in Upper Egypt, and preceded Osiris as the god of the dead.[190]

Of the other stars and constellations we do not know much. The Great Bear was called “the haunch of beef,” and was at times identified with Set, and made the abode of the souls of the wicked. Not far off was the hippopotamus, which Brugsch would identify

with Draco; while among other constellations were to be found the Lion and the Horus-hawk, as well as a warrior armed with a spear.

All over the world the more prominent stars and constellations have received names. But it is only the more prominent and brilliant among them of which this is true. So far as we know, the only people who have ever systematically mapped out the heavens, dividing the stars into groups, and giving to each group a name of its own, were the Babylonians; and it was from the Babylonians that the constellations as known to Greeks and Romans, [pg 237] to Hindus, or to Chinese, were ultimately derived. The inference, therefore, is near at hand, that the primitive Egyptians also were indebted for their map of the sky to the same source. And the inference is supported by more than one fact.

On the one side, the names of several of the constellations were the same among both Babylonians and Egyptians. Of this the Twins, Aquarius, or the Family, are examples, while it can hardly be an accident that Orion in both systems of astronomy is a giant and a hunter. “The Bull of heaven” was a Babylonian star, and Jupiter bore the Sumerian name of Gudi-bir, “the Bull of light”; in the Pyramid texts also we have a “Bull of heaven,” the planet Saturn according to Brugsch, Jupiter according to Lepsius. Still more striking are the thirty-six Egyptian decans, the stars who watched for ten days

each over the 360 days of the ancient Egyptian year, and were divided into two classes or hemispheres, those of the day and those of the night.[191] Not only did the early Chaldæan year similarly consist of 360 days; it too was presided over by thirty-six "councillor" stars, half of which were above the earth, while the other half were below it.[192] Such a coincidence cannot have been accidental; the Babylonian and Egyptian decans must have had the same origin.

But there was yet a further parallelism between the stellar theology of Egypt and that of Babylonia. In [pg 238] both countries the worship of the stars passed into an astro-theology. The official gods were identified with the planets and fixed stars, and the stellar cult of the people was thus absorbed into the State religion. But whereas this astro-theology was characteristic of Babylonia, it has done little more than leave its traces on the historical religion of Egypt. Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars were identified with Horus under different forms, and Mercury with Set, while Venus became "the bark (*za*)[193] of the phœnix" or soul "of Osiris." Sirius was made the star of Isis, Orion the star of Osiris. But, like the cult of the stars itself, this astro-theology belongs to a far-off age in Egyptian history. It is the last faint reflection of a phase of religious thought which had passed away when the monumental records first begin.

It is the same with a curious echo of ancient Babylonian cosmology, to which Prof. Hommel has drawn our attention. The old

Babylonian Epic of the Creation begins with the words—

> "At that time the heaven above
> was not known by name,
> the earth beneath was not
> named,
> in the beginning the deep was
> their generator,
> the chaos of the sea was the
> mother of them all."

The lines are the introduction to a story of the Creation of which they form an integral part. On the walls of the Pyramid of Pepi I. we read again almost the same words. Pepi, it is said, "was born of his father Tum. At that time the heaven was not, the earth was not, men did not exist, the gods were not born, there was no death."[194] But here the words have been introduced [pg 239] without connection with the context; they cohere neither with what precedes nor with what follows them, and are evidently nothing but an old formula torn from the cosmogony to which they once belonged, and repeated without a clear understanding of what they really meant. The phrases are found again in the later religious literature of Egypt, embedded in it like flies in amber or the fossils in an old sea-beach.[195] To recover their original meaning we must betake ourselves to the clay tablets of Assyria and Babylonia, and the cosmological theories of early Chaldæa. They presuppose that story of a creation out of the chaos of the deep which was indigenous in Babylonia alone.

This deep, which lay at the foundation of Babylonian cosmology, was symbolised in the temples by a “sea” across which the images of the gods were carried in “ships” on their days of festival. In Babylonia such “seas” had a reason for their existence. The Persian Gulf, it was believed, was the cradle of Babylonian culture; it was also the source of that cosmogony which saw in the deep the “mother” of all things. That it should have its mimic representatives in the temples of the country was but natural; it was from the “deep” that the gods had come, and the deep was still the home of the culture-god Ea.[196]

In Egypt, on the other hand, the sea was out of place nay more, it was altogether unnatural. If water were needed, the sacred Nile flowed at the foot of the temple or else there were canals which conducted the waters of the river through the temple lands. There was no primeval deep to be symbolised, no Persian Gulf out of [pg 240] which the culture-god had risen with the gifts of civilisation. If the gods desired to sail in their barks, it was reasonable to suppose that they would do so on the Nile or its tributary canals. And yet the supposition would be wrong. The gods had indeed their sacred “ships” as in Babylonia; but, as in Babylonia, it was on an artificially-constructed lake that they floated, and not, as a rule, on the river Nile. Could anything indicate more clearly the origin of the religious beliefs and practices of the Pharaonic Egyptians? Like the brick tombs of the Old Empire, with their recessed panels

and pilasters, it points to Babylonia and the cosmological theories which had their birth in the Babylonian plain.[197]

The religion of ancient Egypt is thus no isolated fact. It links itself, on the one hand, with the beliefs and religious conceptions of the present, and, on the other hand, with those of a yet older past. But it is a linking only; Egyptian religion is no more the religion of ancient Babylonia than it is modern Christianity. In Egypt it assumed a form peculiar to itself, adapting itself to the superstitions and habits of the earlier inhabitants of the land, and developing the ideas which lay latent within it. It was characterised by the inexorable logic with which each of these ideas was followed to its minutest conclusions, and at the same time by the want of any attempt to harmonise these conclusions one with the other, however inconsistent they might be. It was also characterised by a spirit of creativeness; the Egyptian [pg 241] created new religious conceptions because he was not afraid to follow his premisses to their end.

But he was intensely practical. Abstractions as such had little attraction for him, and he translated them into material form. The symbolism of his system of writing favoured the process: even such an abstract idea as that of “becoming” became for him a “transformation” or “change of outward shape.” In spite, therefore, of the spirituality and profundity of much of his theology, his religion remained essentially materialistic.

The gods might indeed pass one into the other and be but the manifold forms under which the ever-changing divine essence manifested itself, but this was because it was one with nature and the infinite variety which nature displays. Even the supreme god of Khu-n-Aten incorporated himself at it were in the visible orb of the sun.

The incarnation of the deity accordingly presented no difficulty to the Egyptian mind. It followed necessarily from the fundamental principles of his creed. The divinity which permeated the whole of nature revealed itself more clearly than elsewhere in that which possessed life. Egyptian religious thought never quite shook itself free from the influences of the primitive belief that life and motion were the same. Whatever moves possesses life, whatever lives must move;—such was, and still is, one of the axioms of primitive man. And since the deity manifested itself in movement, it could be recognised in whatever was alive. Man on the one side became a god in the person of the Pharaoh, the gods on the other side became men who had lived and died like Osiris, or had ruled over Egypt in the days of old. Even the ordinary man contained within him a particle or effluence of the divine essence which could never die; and the bodily husk in which it was incarnated could, under certain conditions, acquire the properties of that divinity to [pg 242] which it had afforded a home. That the divine essence could thus assume an individual form, was part of the doctrine

which saw, in the manifold varieties of nature, the manifestations of a "single god." The belief in the incarnation of the deity was a necessary consequence of a materialistic pantheism. And it mattered little whether the incarnation took place under a human or under an animal shape; the human and the animal god had alike been a heritage from elements which, diverse though they may have been in origin, combined to form the Egyptian people, and both the man and the beast were alike living and therefore divine. The beast was more mysterious than the man, that was all; the workings of its mind were more difficult to comprehend, and the language it spoke was more unintelligible. But on that very account it was better adapted for the symbolism which literature and education encouraged, and which became an essential part of the texture of Egyptian thought.

If, then, we would understand the conception of the divine formed by the educated Egyptian of the historical age, we must remember the characteristics of Egyptian thought which lay behind it. Materialism and symbolism constituted the background of Egyptian religion. The one presupposed the other, for the symbol presented the abstract idea in a material and visible shape, while the materialism of the Egyptian mind demanded something concrete which the senses could apprehend. The conception of the ka, with which Egyptian religion begins, is characteristic of Egyptian religious thought up to the last. It is like the "materialised spirits"

of modern spiritualism, spirits which are merely matter in an etherialised form. The Egyptian gave not only shape but substance to his mental and spiritual creations; like the "ideas" of Plato, they became sensuous realities like the written symbols which expressed them. Not only were [pg 243] the name and the thing never dissociated from one another, the name was looked on as the essence of the thing, and the name included its expression in both sound and writing. The bird which represented the idea of "soul" became in time the soul itself.

This very fact assisted in spiritualising Egyptian religion. Ideas and their symbols interchange one with the other; the ideas, moreover, develop and pass out of one form into another. The identification, therefore, of the abstract and the concrete, of ideas and substantial existence, made a pantheistic conception of the universe easy. The divinity clothed itself in as many forms as there were symbols to express it, and these forms passed one into the other like phases of thought. The Egyptian was the first discoverer of the term "becoming," and the keynote of his creed was the doctrine of transformation.

Transformation, it must be remembered, is not transmigration. There was no passage of an individual soul from body to body, from form to form; the divine essence permeated all bodies and forms alike, though it manifested itself at a given moment only under certain ones. It was in this power of manifestation that the transformation

consisted. Had the Egyptian not been fettered by his materialistic symbolism, he would doubtless have gone further and concluded that the various manifestations of the divinity were subjective only—existing, that is to say, only in the mind of the observer; as it was, he held them to be objective, and to possess the same substantial reality as the symbolic pictures by which they were denoted.

With all this, however, there was no severe literalism in the interpretation of the symbol. Whatever may have been the case at the outset, the symbol was as much a metaphor in the historical ages of Egyptian history as are the metaphors of our own language. When the Egyptian [pg 244] spoke of "eating" his god, he meant no more than we do when we speak of "absorbing" a subject.[198] The Pyramid texts are full of such faded and forgotten metaphors; the Egyptian was conservative above all other men, and the language of religion is conservative above all others. Doubtless, in some cases, he was the victim of the symbols and metaphors he used; but in this respect he does not stand alone. Where he has no rival is in the magnitude of the part played in his religion by the symbol and its logical development.

It was just this symbolism which enabled him to retain, on the one hand, all the old formulæ with their gross materialism and childlike views of the universe, and, on the other hand, to attain to a conception of the divine being which was at once spiritual and sublime. For Egyptian religion, as we find it in the

monuments of the educated classes before the decay of the monarchy, was, in spite of its outward show of symbols and amulets, full of high thoughts and deep emotions. I cannot do better than quote the words in which it is described by one of its least prejudiced students, Professor Maspero:[199] “When we put aside the popular superstitions and endeavour solely to ascertain its fundamental doctrines, we soon recognise that few religions have been so exalted in their principles. The Egyptians adored a being who was unique, perfect, endowed with absolute knowledge and intelligence, and incomprehensible to such an extent that it passes man's powers to state in what he is incomprehensible. He is ‘the one of one, he who exists essentially, the only one who lives substantially, the sole generator in heaven and earth, who is not himself generated.’ Always the same, always immutable in his immutable perfection, always [pg 245] present in the past as in the future, he fills the universe without any form in the world being able to give even a feeble idea of his immensity; he is felt everywhere, he is perceived nowhere.

“Unique in essence, he is not unique in person. He is father because he exists, and the force of his nature is such that he is eternally begetting, without ever growing weak or exhausted. He has no need to go outside himself for this act of generation; he finds in his own bosom the material of his perpetual fatherhood. Alone in the plenitude of his being he conceives his offspring; and as in

him there can be no distinction between conception and birth, from all eternity ‘he produces in himself another self.’ He is at once the divine father, mother, and son. Conceived of God, born of God, without separating from God, these three persons are God in God, and, far from dividing the primitive unity of the divine nature, they all three combine to constitute his infinite perfection.

“Doubtless the mind of the uneducated classes could neither understand nor rise to such lofty heights. Human intelligence supports with difficulty so pure an idea of an absolute being. All the attributes of divinity—his immensity, his eternity, his independence—place him at an infinite distance from ourselves; to comprehend and participate in them, we must make him think as we think, we must lend him our passions and subject him to our laws. God must take upon him, with human nature, all the weaknesses that accompany it, all the infirmities under which it labours; in a word, the Word must become flesh. The immaterial god must incarnate himself, must come to the land of Egypt and people it with the gods, his children. Each of the persons of the primitive trinity thus became independent and formed a new type, from which, in their turn, other [pg 246] lower types emanated. From trinity to trinity, from personification to personification, that truly incredible number of divinities was soon reached, with forms sometimes grotesque and often monstrous, who descended by almost

insensible degrees from the highest to the lowest ranks of nature. The scribes, the priests, the officials, all the educated world, in fact, of Egyptian society, never professed that gross paganism which caused Egypt to be called with justice 'the mother of superstitions.' The various names and innumerable forms attributed by the multitude to as many distinct and independent divinities, were for them merely names and forms of one and the same being. 'God, when he comes as a generator, and brings to light the latent forces of the hidden causes, is called Ammon; when he is the spirit who embodies all that is intelligent, he is Imhotep; when he is he who accomplishes all things with art and verity, he is Phthah; when he is God good and beneficent, he is Osiris.' What the scribe means by these words is the mysterious infinite which animates the universe, the eternal, impenetrable to eyes of flesh, but perceived vaguely by the eyes of the spirit. Behind the sensuous appearance, behind the manifestation of the divine nature wherein the popular imagination fancied it saw that nature itself, he beheld confusedly a being obscure and sublime, a full comprehension of whom is denied him, and the feeling of this incomprehensible presence lends to his prayer a deep and thrilling accent, a sincerity of thought and emotion, a thousand times more touching than that medley of amorous puerilities, of mystic languors and morbid contrition, which is so often the substitute for religious poetry."

There were two deep-rooted conceptions in the Egyptian mind which had much to do with the purity and sublimity of his religious ideas. One of these was [pg 247] the conception of a divine law which governed the universe, and to which the gods themselves had to submit. The other was that of a moral God, of a "good being" who rewarded—not piety but—uprightness, and punished iniquity. The world was ordered and controlled, not by chance or caprice, but by a fixed law, which was, characteristically enough, impersonated in the goddess Mât. And this law, unlike the blind destiny of the Greek or Roman, was at once divine and moral; it not only represented the order of the universe, against which there was no appeal, but it also represented an order which was in accordance with justice and truth. The law which all must obey under penalty of being cast into outer darkness, was an intelligent and moral law; it commended itself necessarily and instinctively to all intelligent beings whose thoughts, words, and deeds were alike righteous. Only those who had conformed to it could be admitted after death into the paradise of Osiris or into the company of the gods, and the seal of justification was the pronouncement that the dead man had "spoken the truth," and that his confession in the judgment-hall of Osiris had been in agreement with the truth and with the eternal order of the universe.

Of the moral character of the Osirian creed I have already spoken. It is the first official

recognition by religion that what God requires is uprightness of conduct and not ceremonial orthodoxy, the first identification of religion with morality. And the god who required this uprightness of conduct was not a "lord of hosts," who compelled adoration by the display of his power, but Un-nefer, "the good being," who existed in order to do good to men. In the conflict with evil he had apparently been worsted; but though he had died a shameful death, his disciples believed that it had been endured on their behalf, and that for those who followed [pg 248] in his footsteps, and whose lives resembled his, he had provided a better and a happier Egypt in another world, into which sin and pain and death could not enter, and where he ruled eternally over the cities and fields of the blest.

In the Osirian creed, writer after writer has discovered "fore-gleams" of Christianity more striking even than the doctrine of the Trinity, which belongs to the philosophy of faith. But there is nothing wonderful in the continuity of religious thought. One of the chief lessons impressed upon us by the science of the century which has just passed away, is that of continuity; throughout the world of nature there is no break, no isolated link in the long chain of antecedent and consequent, and still less is there any in the world of thought. Development is but another name for the continuity which binds the past to the present with stronger fetters than those of destiny. It is not only the philosophy of Christianity, or the wider and more general doctrines of its

creed, which find an echo in the religion of ancient Egypt; in details also Egypt is linked with the modern world. Long before the Hebrew prophets pictured the kingdom of the Messiah, an Egyptian poet, in the reign of Thothmes III., had said: "A king shall come from the south, Ameni, the truth-declaring, by name. He shall be the son of a woman of Nubia, and will be born in [the south].... He shall assume the crown of Upper Egypt, and lift up the red crown of the north. He shall unite the double crown.... The people of the age of the son of man shall rejoice and establish his name for all eternity. They shall be removed far from evil, and the wicked shall humble their mouths for fear of him. The Asiatics shall fall before his blows, and the Libyans before his flame. The wicked shall wait on his judgments, the [pg 249] rebels on his power. The royal serpent on his brow shall pacify the revolted. A wall shall be built, even that of the prince, that the Asiatics may no more enter into Egypt."[200]

Yet more striking is the belief in the virgin-birth of the god Pharaoh, which goes back at least to the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty. On the western wall of one of the chambers in the southern portion of the temple of Luxor, Champollion first noticed that the birth of Amon-hotep III. is portrayed. The inscriptions and scenes which describe it have since been copied, and we learn from them that he had no human father; Amon himself descended from heaven and became the father of the future king. His mother was still a virgin

when the god of Thebes "incarnated himself," so that she might "behold him in his divine form." And then the hieroglyphic record continues with words that are put into the mouth of the god. "Amon-hotep," he is made to say, "is the name of the son who is in thy womb. He shall grow up according to the words that proceed out of thy mouth. He shall exercise sovereignty and righteousness in this land unto its very end. My soul is in him, (and) he shall wear the twofold crown of royalty, ruling the two worlds like the sun for ever."[201]

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But Amon-hotep III. was not the first of whom it had been said that his father was a god. Fragments of a similar text have been found by Dr. Naville at Dêr el-Bâharî, from which we may gather that queen Hatshepsu also claimed to have been born of Amon. How much further back in Egyptian history the belief may go we do not know: the kings of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties called themselves sons of the sun-god, and the Theban monarchs whose virgin-mothers were wedded to Amon, incarnate in the flesh, did but work out the old conception in a more detailed and definite way.

It was given to the Egyptians to be one among the few inventive races of mankind. They were pioneers of civilisation; above all, they were the inventors of religious ideas. The ideas, it is true, were not self-evolved; they presupposed beliefs which had been bequeathed by the past; but their logical

development and the forms which they assumed were the work of the Egyptian people. We owe to them the chief moulds into which religious thought has since been thrown. The doctrines of emanation, of a trinity wherein one god manifests himself in three persons, of absolute thought as the underlying and permanent substance of all things, all go back to the priestly philosophers of Egypt. Gnosticism and Alexandrianism, the speculations of [pg 251] Christian metaphysic and the philosophy of Hegel, have their roots in the valley of the Nile. The Egyptian thinkers themselves, indeed, never enjoyed the full fruition of the ideas they had created; their eyes were blinded by the symbolism which had guided their first efforts, their sight was dulled by overmuch reverence for the past, and the materialism which came of a contentment with this life. They ended in the scepticism of despair or the prosaic superstitions of a decadent age. But the task which dropped from their hands was taken up by others; the seeds which they had sown were not allowed to wither, and, like the elements of our culture and civilisation, the elements also of our modes of religious thought may be traced back to the “dwellers on the Nile.” We are heirs of the civilised past, and a goodly portion of that civilised past was the creation of ancient Egypt.

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Part II. The Religion Of The Babylonians.

Lecture I. Introductory.

It is now fourteen years ago since I delivered a course of lectures for the Hibbert Trustees on the religion of the ancient Babylonians. The subject at that time was almost untouched; even such materials as were then accessible had been hardly noticed, and no attempt had been made to analyse or reduce them to order, much less to draw up a systematic account of ancient Babylonian religion. It was necessary to lay the very foundations of the study before it could be undertaken, to fix the characteristic features of the Babylonian faith and the lines along which it had developed, and, above all, to distinguish the different elements of which it

was composed. The published texts did not suffice for such a work; they needed to be supplemented from that great mass of unpublished cuneiform documents with which the rooms of our museums are filled. My lectures were necessarily provisional and preliminary only, and I had to content myself with erecting a scaffold on which others might build. The time had not yet come for writing a systematic description of Babylonian religion, and of the phases through which it passed during the long centuries of its existence.

[pg 253]
Nor has the time come yet. The best proof of this is the unsatisfactory nature of the attempts that have recently been made to accomplish the task. Our evidence is still too scanty and imperfect, the gaps in it are too numerous, to make anything of the sort possible. Our knowledge of the religious beliefs of Babylonia and Assyria is at best only piecemeal. Now and again we have inscriptions which illustrate the belief of a particular epoch or of a particular class, or which throw light on a particular side of the official or popular religions; but such rays of light are intermittent, and they penetrate the darkness only to be succeeded by a deeper obscurity than before. All we can hope to do is to discover the leading conceptions which underlay the religion of Babylonia in its various forms, to determine and distinguish the chief elements that went to create it, and to picture those aspects of it on which our

documentary materials cast the most light. But anything like a systematic description of Babylonian religion will for many years to come be altogether out of the question; it must wait until the buried libraries of Chaldæa have been excavated, and all their contents studied. We are but at the beginning of discoveries, and the belief that our present conclusions are final is the belief of ignorance.

As I pointed out in my Hibbert Lectures, the first endeavour of the student of ancient Babylonian religion must be to distinguish between the Semitic and non-Semitic elements embodied in it. And before we can do this we must also distinguish between the Semitic and non-Semitic elements in our sources of information. This was the principal task to which I applied myself, and the failure to recognise the necessity of it has been the main cause of the little progress that has been made in the study of the subject. Since I wrote the means [pg 254] for undertaking the task with success have been multiplied; thanks to the excavations of the French and American explorers, the pre-Semitic world of Babylonia has been opened out to us in a way of which we could not have dreamed; and numberless texts have been found which belong to the early days of Sumerian or non-Semitic culture. We are no longer confined to the editions of Sumerian texts made in later times by Semitic scribes; we now have before us the actual inscriptions which were engraved when Sumerian princes still ruled the land,

and the Sumerian language was still spoken by their subjects. We can read in them the names of the gods they worshipped, and the prayers which they offered to the spirits of heaven. The materials are at last at hand for determining in some measure what is Sumerian and what is Semitic, and what again may be regarded as a mixture or amalgamation of both.

But though the materials are at hand, it will be long before they can all be examined, much less thoroughly criticised. I cannot emphasise too strongly the provisional and imperfect character of our present knowledge of Babylonian literature. Thousands of tablets are lying in the museums of Europe and America, which it will take years of hard work on the part of many students to copy and read. At Tello,[202] M. de Sarzec found a library of more than 30,000 tablets, which go back to the days of the priest-king Gudea; and the great temple of Bel at Nippur in Northern Babylonia has yielded five times as many more to the American excavators. Other excavations by natives or Turkish officials have at the same time brought to light multitudinous tablets from other ancient sites, —from Jokha, near the Shatt el-Hai, [pg 255] and from the ruins of the temple of Nebo at Borsippa. It is true that a large proportion of these tablets are contracts and similar business documents, but they contain much that is of importance not only for the social history of Babylonia, but for its religious history as well. Meanwhile the vast number of

texts which have come from the mounds of Nineveh and Sippara is still but imperfectly known; it is only within the last three years that the catalogue of the Kouyunjik collection of tablets, which have been in the British Museum for almost half a century, has been at last completed in five portly volumes; and there still remain the numberless tablets from Babylonia which line the Museum shelves. And even of what has been catalogued there is much which has not yet been fully copied or examined. The British Museum, moreover, is no longer the sole repository of Babylonian literature. The Louvre, the Berlin Museum, and the American University of Pennsylvania, are equally filled with the clay tablets of the Babylonian scribes; while the collection in the Museum of Constantinople far exceeds those which have been formed elsewhere. Even private individuals have their collections of larger or less extent; that of Lord Amherst of Hackney, for example, would have made the fortune of one of the great museums of the world but a few years ago.

It is evident that it will be long before more than a fraction of this vast and ever-accumulating literature can be adequately studied. And what adds to the difficulty is that it is still increasing year by year. At present there are as many as three exploring expeditions in Babylonia. M. de Sarzec's successor on behalf of the French Government is still carrying on work at Tello, the ancient Lagas, which was begun as far back as 1877; the Americans are continuing their

excavations at Nippur, where, ever since 1888, they have been [pg 256] excavating for the first time on a thoroughly systematic and scientific plan; and now the Germans have commenced work at Babylon itself, and have already fixed the site of the temple of Bel-Merodach and of that palace of Nebuchadrezzar in which Alexander the Great died.[203] Even while I am writing, the news has come of the discovery of a great library at Nippur, which seems to have been buried under the ruins of the building in which it was kept as far back as the Abrahamic age. The mounds in which it has been found lie to the south-west of the great temple of Bel. Already nearly 20,000 tablets have been rescued from it, and it is calculated that at least 130,000 are yet to be disinterred. The tablets lie in order upon the clay shelves on which they were arranged in the days of Khammurabi, the Amraphel of Genesis;[204] and, so far as they have been examined by Professor Hilprecht, it would appear that they relate to all the various branches of knowledge which were known and studied at the time. History, chronology, religion and literature, philology and law, are all alike represented in them. When we remember that the catastrophe which overwhelmed them occurred more than two thousand years before the Christian era, we may well ask what new and unexpected information the future has in store for us, and hesitate about coming to conclusions which the discovery of to-morrow may overthrow. We know but [pg 257] a tithe of what the monuments of

Babylonia have yet to reveal to us, and much that we seem to know to-day will be profoundly modified by the knowledge we shall hereafter possess.

The imperfection of his materials places the student of Babylonian religion at a greater disadvantage than the student of Babylonian history or social life. The facts once obtained in the field of history or of social life remain permanently secured; the theories based upon them may have to be changed, but the facts themselves have been acquired by science once for all. But a religious fact is to a large extent a matter of interpretation, and the interpretation depends upon the amount of the evidence at our disposal as well as upon the character of the evidence itself. Moreover, the history of religion is a history of spiritual and intellectual development; it deals with ideas and dogmas which shift and change with the process of the ages, and take as it were the colour of each succeeding century. The history of religion transports us out of what German metaphysicians would call the "objective" world into the "subjective" world of thought and belief; it is not sufficient to know the literal meaning of its technical terms, or the mere order and arrangement of its rites and ceremonies; we have to discover what were the religious conceptions that were connected with the terms, and the dogmas that underlay the performance of a particular rite. A mere barren list of divine names and titles, or even the assurance that theology had identified certain gods with one another, will

not carry us very far; at most they are but the dry bones of a theological system, which must be made to live before they can tell us what that system actually was.

The study of ancient Babylonian religion is thus beset with many difficulties. Our materials are imperfect, [pg 258] and yet at the same time are perpetually growing; the religious system to which they relate is a combination of two widely different forms of faith, characteristic of two entirely different races; and before we can understand it properly, we must separate the elements of which it consists, and assign to each their chronological position. The very fact, however, that religious texts are usually of immemorial antiquity, and that changes inevitably pass over them as they are handed down in successive editions, makes such a task peculiarly difficult. Nevertheless it is a task which must be undertaken before we have the right to draw a conclusion from the texts with which we deal. We must first know whether they are originally Sumerian or Semitic, or whether they belong to the age when Sumerian and Semitic were fused in one; whether, again, they are composite or the products of a single author and epoch; whether, lastly, they have been glossed and interpolated, and their primitive meaning transformed. We must have a chronology for our documents as well as an ethnology, and beware of transforming Sumerian into Semitic, or Semitic into Sumerian, or of interpreting the creations of one age as if they

were the creations of another. The critical examination of the texts must precede every attempt to write an account of Babylonian religion, if the account is to be of permanent value.

Unfortunately we have nothing in Babylonia that corresponds with the Pyramid texts of Egypt. We have no body of doctrine which, in its existing form, is coeval with the early days of the monarchy, and can accordingly be compared with the religious belief and the religious books of a later time. The Pyramid texts have enabled us to penetrate behind the classical age of Egyptian religion, and so trace the development of many of the dogmas which distinguished the faith of later [pg 259] epochs; it is possible that similarly early records of the official creed may yet be discovered in Babylonia; but up to the present nothing of the sort has been found. We are confined there to the texts which have passed through the hands of countless editors and scribes, or else to such references to religious beliefs and worship as can be extracted from the inscriptions of kings and priests. The sacred books of Babylonia are known to us only in the form which they finally assumed. The Babylonian religion with which we are acquainted is that official theology in which the older Sumerian and Semitic elements were combined together and worked into an elaborate system. To distinguish the elements one from the other, and discover the beliefs and conceptions which underlie them, is a task of infinite labour and complexity. But it

is a task which cannot be shirked if we would even begin to understand the nature of Babylonian religion, and the fundamental ideas upon which it rested. We must analyse and reconstruct, must compare and classify and piece together as best we may, the fragments of belief and practice that have come down to us. Above all, we must beware of confusing the old with the new, of confounding Sumerian with Semitic, or of ascribing to an earlier epoch the conceptions of a later time.

The picture will be at most but a blurred and mutilated one. But its main outlines can be fixed, and with the progress of discovery and research they will be more and more filled in. And the importance of the picture lies in the fact that Babylonian religion exercised a profound influence not only over the lands immediately adjoining the Babylonian plain, but over the whole of Western Asia as well. Long before the days of Abraham, Canaan was a Babylonian province, obeying Babylonian law, reading Babylonian books, and writing in Babylonian characters. Along with Babylonian [pg 260] culture necessarily came also the religion of Babylonia and the theological or cosmogonic dogmas which accompanied it. Abraham himself was born in a Babylonian city, and the religion of his descendants was nurtured in an atmosphere of Babylonian thought. The Mosaic Law shows almost as clear evidences of Babylonian influence as do the earlier chapters of Genesis.

Recent discoveries have gone far towards

lifting the veil that has hitherto covered the beginnings of Babylonian history. We have been carried back to a time when the Edin or "plain" of Babylonia was still in great measure a marsh, and the waters of the Persian Gulf extended 120 miles farther inland than they do to-day. If we take the rate at which the land has grown since the days of Alexander the Great as a basis of measurement, this would have been from eight to nine thousand years ago. At this time there were already two great sanctuaries in the country, around each of which a settlement or city had sprung up. One of these was Nippur in the north, the modern Niffer; the other was Eridu, "the good city,"[205] now marked by the mounds of Nowâwis or Abu-Shahrain, which stood on what was then the shore of the Persian Gulf. Now its site is more than a hundred miles distant from the sea. But it was once the seaport of Babylonia, whose inhabitants caught fish in the waters of the Gulf or traded with the populations of the Arabian coast. Nippur, on the other hand, was inland and agricultural. It was the primitive centre of those engineering works which gradually converted the pestiferous marshes of Babylonia into a fruitful plain, watered by canals and rivers, and protected from inundation by lofty dykes. While Eridu looked seaward, Nippur looked landward, and the [pg 261] influences that emanated from each were accordingly diverse from the very outset.

As I pointed out in my Hibbert Lectures,

Babylon must have been a colony of Eridu. Its tutelary god was a son of Ea of Eridu, and had been worshipped at Eridu long before his cult was carried northward to Babylon. Dr. Peters has since suggested that Ur was similarly a colony of Nippur. The moon-god of Ur was the son of the god of Nippur, and though Ur lay but a few miles from Eridu, it was an inland and not a maritime town. It stood on the desert plateau to the west of the Euphrates, overlooking the Babylonian plain, which at the time of its foundation had doubtless not as yet been reclaimed. But its situation exposed it to Arabian influences. Unlike the other great cities of Babylonia, it was in Arabia rather than in Babylonia, and its population from the outset must have contained a considerable Arabian element. Semitic settlers from Southern Arabia and Canaan occupied it, and it was known to them as Uru, "the city" *par excellence*.[206]

Nippur and Eridu were already old when Ur first rose to fame. They were both great sanctuaries rather than the capitals of secular kingdoms. The god of Nippur was El-lil, "the lord of the ghost-world,"[207] the [pg 262] ruler of the spirits, whose abode was beneath the earth, or in the air by which we are surrounded. He was the master of spells and incantations, of the magical formulæ which enabled those who knew them to keep the evil spirits at bay, or to turn their malice against an enemy. Nippur was peculiarly the home of the darker side of Babylonian religion; the teaching and influences that

emanated from it regarded the spirit-world as a world of night and darkness, peopled by beings that were, for the most part, hostile to man. The *lil* or ghost belonged to the realm of the dead rather than to that of the living, and the female *lilîtu* was the ancestress of that Lilith whom the Jewish Rabbis made a vampire under the form of a beautiful woman, who lived on the blood of the children she slew at night.

Eridu, on the contrary, was the seat of the Chaldæan god of culture. Ea, whose home was in the deep, among the waters of the Persian Gulf, had there his temple, and it was there that he had taught the first inhabitants of Babylonia all the elements of civilisation, writing down for them the laws they should obey, the moral code they should follow, and the healing spells that prevented disease and death. He was the author of all the arts of life, the all-wise god who knew the things that benefited man; and his son and minister Asari, who interpreted his will to his worshippers, received the title of him "who does good to mankind." While El-lil of Nippur was the lord and creator of the spirit-world, Ea was the lord and creator of men. He had made man, like a potter, out of the clay, and to [pg 263] him, therefore, man continued to look for guidance and help.

The character of Ea was doubtless coloured by the position of his city. The myth which spoke of him as rising each morning out of the Persian Gulf to bring the elements of culture to his people, clearly points to that maritime

intercourse with the coasts of Southern Arabia which seems to have had a good deal to do with the early civilisation of Babylonia. Foreign ideas made their way into the country, trade brought culture in its train, and it may be that the Semites, who exercised so profound an influence upon Babylonia, first entered it through the port of Eridu. However this may be, it was at Eridu that the garden of the Babylonian Eden was placed; here was "the centre of the earth"; here, too, the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates were poured out on either side from vases held by the god.[208]

Until Eridu, however, is excavated with the same systematic care as Nippur, we must be content to derive our knowledge of it and of its influence upon the primitive culture and religion of Babylonia from the records which have been found elsewhere. That its sanctuary was at least as old as that of Nippur, we may gather from the fact that it was founded before the coast-line had receded from the spot on which it stood. Its early relations to Nippur must be left to the future to disclose.

That neither Nippur nor Eridu should have been the seat of a secular kingdom, is not so strange as at first sight it appears to be. The priesthood of each must have been too numerous and powerful to surrender its rights to a single pontiff, or to allow such a pontiff to [pg 264] wrest from it its authority in civil affairs. It is difficult for a king to establish himself where a theocratic oligarchy holds absolute sway, and the reverence in which the temples and worship of El-lil and Ea were

held would have prevented the success of any attempt of the kind. It was their sanctuaries which made Babylonia a holy land, wherein all who could were buried after death. Like Abydos in Egypt, Nippur or Eridu continued to be a sanctuary, governed by its own hierarchy and enjoying its own independent existence, while secular kingdoms grew up at its side.[209]

Like Egypt, Babylonia was originally divided into several independent States. From time to time one of these became predominant, and obliged the other States to acknowledge its supremacy. But the centre of power shifted frequently, and it took many centuries before the government became thoroughly centralised. The earlier dynasties which claimed rule over the whole country had at times to defend their claims by force of arms.

Like Egypt, too, Babylonia fell naturally into two halves, Akkad in the north and Sumer in the south. The recollection of the fact was preserved in the imperial title of "king of Akkad and Sumer," which thus corresponds with the Egyptian title of "king of Upper and Lower Egypt." But whereas in Egypt the conquering race moved from south to north, causing the name of Upper Egypt to come first in the royal title, in Babylonia it was the Semites of the northern half who imposed their yoke upon the south. Akkad accordingly takes precedence of Sumer.

[pg 265]
I have said that the veil which has so long

covered the early history of the country is beginning at last to be lifted. Rays of light are beginning to struggle through the darkness, and we can at last form some idea of the process which made Babylonia what it was in later historical times. When the light first breaks upon it, the leading kingdom, at all events in the north, is Kis. Here a Semitic dynasty seems to have established itself at an early period, and we hear of wars carried on by it with its southern neighbours. Towards the south, Lagas, the modern Tello, became the chief State under its high priests, who made themselves kings. But Lagas, like all the other petty kingdoms of the country, had at length to submit to a Semitic power which grew up in the north, and, after unifying Babylonia, created an empire that extended to the shores of the Mediterranean. This was the empire of Sargon of Akkad, and his son Naram-Sin, whose date is fixed by the native annalists at B.C. 3800, and whose importance for the history of religion and culture throughout Western Asia can hardly be overestimated.

Palestine and Syria—the land of the Amorites, as the Babylonians called them—became a Babylonian province; and a portion of a cadastral survey for the purposes of taxation has come down to us, from which we learn that it had been placed under a governor who bears the Canaanitish name of Uru-Malik (Urimelech).[210] Naram-Sin carried his arms even into Magan, the Sinaitic Peninsula, where he wrested from the Egyptians the

coveted mines of copper and malachite. Susa had long been a Babylonian dependency; and as Mesopotamia, including the later Assyria, also obeyed Babylonian rule, the whole of Western Asia became Babylonian or, to use the words of Sargon's Annals, “all countries were formed [pg 266] together into one (empire).” Intercourse was kept up between one part of the empire and the other by means of high roads, along which the imperial post travelled frequently. Some of the letters carried by it, with the clay seals which served as stamps, are now in the museum of the Louvre.[211]

How long the empire of Sargon lasted is still uncertain. But from that day onward the kings who claimed supreme authority in Babylonia itself also claimed authority in Syria; and from time to time they succeeded in enforcing their claim. Erech and Ur now appear upon the scene, and more than one imperial dynasty had its capital at Ur. When the last of these fell, Babylonia passed for a while into a state of decay and anarchy, a dynasty of South Arabian or Canaanitish origin established itself at Babylon; while Elamite princes seized Larsa, and compelled the southern half of the country to pay them tribute. A deliverer finally arose, in the person of Khammurabi or Ammurapi, of the Arabian dynasty; he drove the Elamites out of Babylonia, defeated Arioch of Larsa, captured his capital, and once more united Babylonia under a single head, with its centre at Babylon. From henceforth Babylon remained

the capital of the monarchy, and the sacred city of Western Asia. The national revival was accompanied by a literary revival as well. Poets and writers arose whose works became classical; new copies and editions were made of ancient books, and the theology of Babylonia was finally systematised. Under Khammurabi and his immediate successors we may place the consummation of that gradual process of development which had reduced the discordant elements of Babylonian society and religion into a single harmonious system.

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This theological system, however, cannot be understood, unless we bear in mind that, as in Egypt so too in Babylonia, there was originally a number of small independent principalities, each with its tutelary deity and special sanctuary. The head of the State was the *patesi*, or high priest of the god, his vicar and representative upon earth, and the interpreter of the divine commands to men. At the outset, therefore, Babylonian government was essentially theocratic; and this theocratic character clung to it to the last. It was this which made Babylon a sacred city, whose priests had the power of conferring the right to rule upon whom they would, like the Pope in the Middle Ages. Though the high priest became in time a king, he never divested himself of his sacerdotal mantle, or forgot that he was the adopted son of his god.[212]

The tutelary gods followed the fortunes of the cities over whose destinies they watched. The

rise of a city to power meant the supremacy also of the divinity to whom it was dedicated; its decay involved his decline. The gods of the subject cities were the vassals of the deity of the dominant State; when the kings of Ur were supreme in Babylonia, the moon-god of Ur was supreme as well. Similarly the rise of Babylon brought with it the supremacy of Merodach, the god of Babylon, who henceforward became the Bel or “Lord” of the whole pantheon.

A god who had once occupied so exalted a position could not, however, be easily deposed. Babylonian history preserved the memory of the ruling dynasties [pg 268] whose suzerainty had been acknowledged throughout the country, and Babylonian religion equally remembered the gods whose servants and representatives they had been. A god who had once been supreme over Babylonia could not again occupy a lower seat; it was necessary to find a place for him by the side of the younger deity, whose position was merely that of a chief among his peers. When Babylon became the capital, the older seats of empire still claimed equality with her, and the priestly hierarchies of Ur or Erech or Sippara still accounted themselves the equals of her priesthood. The ancient sanctuaries survived, with their cults unimpaired and their traditions still venerated; and the reverence paid to the sanctuary and its ministers was reflected back upon the god.

Hence it was that at the head of the official

faith there stood a group of supreme gods, each with his rank and powers definitely fixed, and each worshipped in some one of the great cities of the kingdom. But the system of which they formed part was necessarily of artificial origin. It was the work of a theological school, such as was made possible by the existence of the primeval sanctuaries of Nippur and Eridu. Without these latter the organisation of Babylonian religion would have been imperfect or impossible. But from the earliest days of Babylonian civilisation, Nippur and Eridu had alike exercised a unifying influence on the diverse and discordant elements of which the population was composed; they were centres, not only of religion, but of culture as well, and this culture was essentially religious. For unnumbered centuries the gods of Nippur and Eridu were acknowledged as supreme by all the inhabitants of the country, whatever might be their race or the particular local divinities they adored, and the religious teaching of the priests of Nippur and Eridu was accepted as the inspired [pg 269] utterances of heaven. When Babylon became at length the capital of a united monarchy under an Arabian dynasty, the ancient gods of Nippur and Eridu yielded to its *parvenu* deity only under protest; despite the fact that the city of Merodach had been the leader in the national war of independence, Merodach himself had to be identified with the son of Ea of Eridu, and the title of Bel which he wrested from El-lil of Nippur was never acknowledged at Nippur itself. There at least the old “Lord of

the ghost-world" still remained for his worshippers the "Lord" of all the gods.

The title had been given him by the Semites, though the sanctuary in which he was worshipped was of Sumerian or non-Semitic foundation. The fact introduces us to the last point on which I wish to touch in the present lecture. The population of Babylonia was not homogeneous. The Chaldæan historian Berossos tells us how, at the beginning of the world, races of various origin were gathered together in it; and the statement has been fully confirmed by the monuments. Two main races were represented in the country. One of these, usually termed Sumerian, spoke an agglutinative language, and came, perhaps, from the mountainous regions of Elam; the other were the Semites, whose first home was, I believe, in Arabia. The Sumerians were the first in the land. To them were due the elements of Babylonian civilisation; they were the first to drain the marshes and cultivate the soil, to build the temples and cities, and to invent—or at all events to develop—that system of pictorial writing out of which the cuneiform characters gradually arose. They were, too, the first to carry the culture they had created among the neighbouring populations of Western Asia. The result was that their language and script spread far and wide; wherever proto-Chaldæan civilisation extended, the proto-Chaldæan [pg 270] language went with it. And along with the language and literature there went also the theology of primitive Babylonia. The names of

the Sumerian divinities made their way into other lands, and the dialects of the Semitic tribes were profoundly affected by the forms of Sumerian speech. The earliest civilisation of Western Asia was Sumerian.

But a time came when the Sumerian was supplanted by the Semite. It was in Northern Babylonia that the Semite first predominated. Here the empire of Sargon of Akkad grew up, and the cuneiform syllabary became an imperfect means for expressing the sounds of a Semitic language. From Northern Babylonia Semitic influences passed into the south, a mixed Semitic and Sumerian population came into existence, and the Babylonians of history were born. The mixed population necessarily had a mixed language, and a composite culture produced a composite theology. To disentangle the elements of this theology is the first and most pressing task of its historian; but it is a task full of difficulties, which the native theologians themselves not unfrequently failed to overcome.

The union of Sumerian and Semite created the Babylonian with whom we have to deal, just as the union of Kelt and Teuton has created the Englishman of to-day. Other races, it is true, settled in his country in subsequent ages, but their influence was comparatively slight and transitory. At one time non-Semitic Elamites from the east overran both Babylonia and the district of Susa, which up to that time had been a Babylonian province, and founded a dynasty at Babylon which lasted for nearly six hundred years. But, like

the Hyksos dynasties in Egypt, it made but little permanent impression upon the people; in character and religion they remained what they were before. Nor did the irruption of Bedâwin [pg 271] tribes and other more pure-blooded representatives of the Semitic race have a greater effect. They were rather influenced by the Babylonians than the Babylonians by them. Their own culture was inferior, and Babylonia was their teacher in the arts and comforts of life. The wild Bedâwin, who tended the flocks of their Babylonian masters, the Amorite merchants from Canaan, who formed trading settlements in the Babylonian cities, even the South Arabian princes who headed the national revolt against Elamite supremacy and made Babylon the capital of their kingdom, were all alike absorbed into the Babylonian race. They became the children of Babylonian civilisation, and, along with the culture, they adopted the language of the Babylonian people. The mixed race which had produced the civilisation of Babylonia, was destined to retain its individuality unimpaired down to the day when Europe took the place of Asia in the history of the civilised world.

But the fact of the mixture must never be lost sight of. Without it, Babylonian religion, like the Babylonian system of writing, would be a hopeless puzzle. We could, indeed, draw up long lists of obscure deities with unmeaning names, and enumerate the titles which the inscriptions give them, but any attempt to trace their history or discover the religious

ideas of which they are the expression, would be impossible. We must know what is Semitic and what is Sumerian, or what is due to a combination of the two elements, before we can penetrate to the heart of the old Babylonian theology, and ascertain the principles on which it rests. The native writers themselves were aware of this, and fully realised the fact that Sumerian conceptions of the godhead formed the background of the official faith. But their uncritical efforts to solve the problem of the origin of their religion have added only to the complication of it. Just as the [pg 272] English lexicographers of a past generation found a Greek or Latin derivation for the Teutonic words of our language, so the scholars of Babylonia discovered Sumerian etymologies for Semitic words and divine names, or else assimilated them to other words of a different origin. Thus the Semitic word *Sabattu*, "Sabbath," is derived from the Sumerian *sa*, "heart," and *bat*, "to cease" or "rest," and interpreted as "a day of rest for the heart"; while *pardêšu*, "paradise," is explained as the *par* or "domain of the god Ešu."[213] In many cases it is as yet impossible to tell whether a native etymology really rests on a fact of history, or is the invention of learned pedantry or popular etymologising. Marduk or Merodach, for instance, is variously derived from the Sumerian Amar-utuki, "the heifer of the sun-spirit"; and the Semitic Mar-Eridugga, "the son of the city Eridu."[214] The first etymology is certainly false; our present materials do not allow us to

speak so positively in regard to the second. All we can say about it is that it is unlikely in the extreme.

And yet a good deal turns upon the true origin of the name of the patron god of Babylon. If it is Semitic, the foundation of the city and of the temple around which it was built would presumably belong to Semitic days, and the development of the cult of the god would be Semitic from the first. The identification of Merodach, moreover, with Asari the son of Ea of Eridu, would receive substantial support; the "son of Eridu" would naturally be the son of the god of Eridu, and we should have to see in Babylon a colony from the old seaport of the Babylonian plain.

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The divergent etymologies, however, assigned to the name of Merodach by the theologians of Babylonia show that they were quite as much in the dark as we are in regard to its origin and significance. Its derivation had been already lost in the night of time; the worship of the god and the building of his sanctuary went back to ages too remote for the memory of man. And yet Merodach was one of the youngest gods in the Babylonian pantheon. By the side of Ea of Eridu or El-lil of Nippur he was but a child, the offspring of a later day; and even when he became supreme in Babylonia, the fact that he was so was still remembered. If it is difficult to trace the earliest lineaments of Merodach, how much more difficult must it be to trace those of the older gods!

The theology of Babylonia, as it is known to us, is thus an artificial product. It combines two wholly different forms of faith and religious conception. One of these was overlaid by the other at a very early period in the history of the people, and the theological beliefs of Sumer received a Semitic interpretation. This natural process of combination and assimilation was followed by an artificial attempt to weld the whole into a consistent and uniform shape. An artificial system took the place of natural growth, and the punning etymologies which accompanied it were but an illustration of the principles that underlay its methods. If we would successfully analyse the theology which has come down to us, we must, as it were, get behind it and discover the elements of which it was composed. We must separate and distinguish Sumerian and Semitic, must trace the influences they exerted upon one another, and, above all, must detect and discard the misinterpretations and accretions of the later systematic theology. For such an undertaking, it is true, our materials are still miserably scanty, [pg 274] and, with imperfect materials, the results also can be imperfect only. But all pioneering work is necessarily imperfect, and for many a day to come the history of Babylonian religion must be left to the pioneer. Year by year, indeed, the materials are increasing, and it may be that a discovery will yet be made, like that of the Pyramid texts in Egypt, which will reveal to us the inner religious thought and belief of Babylonia in those distant ages, when Nippur

and Eridu, and not as yet Babylon, were the theological centres of the land. Even now we possess inscriptions of the Sumerian epoch, which tell us the names of the gods who were worshipped by the kings of the pre-Semitic age, and throw light on the religious ideas which animated them, and the religious ritual which they observed. But such inscriptions are still comparatively few, their translation is full of difficulties, and the references contained in them to the theology of the time are scanty and unsatisfactory. And the most important of them—those of the high priests of Tello—belong to an epoch when the Semite had been for many centuries in the land, influencing and being influenced by his Sumerian neighbours. Though Lagas was still Sumerian, its overlord was the Semitic king of Ur.[215]

You must not, therefore, expect either so complete or so detailed an account of Babylonian religion as that which it is now possible to give of the religion of Egypt. There are no pictures from the walls of tombs, no bas-reliefs from the temples, to help us; we have to depend almost wholly on the literature that has come down to us, mutilated and only half examined as it is. Our efforts to interpret it are without the assistance of pictorial representations such as are at the disposal of the Egyptologist; they rest upon philology alone, and [pg 275] the element of uncertainty in them is therefore considerable.

The advances made in our knowledge of Babylonian religion, since I lectured upon it

some fifteen years ago, are consequently not so great as the inexperienced student might be tempted to believe. There are some things to be added, there is more to be corrected, but the main facts and principles which I then tried to place before the world of scholars remain intact. In some cases confirmation has come of suggestions which seemed only possible or probable; in other cases others have worked with greater success and better materials upon the foundations which I laid. If, therefore, the progress made during the past few years may appear disappointing, there is no reason for surprise; the fault lies not with the Assyriologist, but with the materials with which he has to deal. The labourer is ready, but the harvest is not yet ripe.

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Lecture II. Primitive Animism.

Deep down in the very core of Babylonian

religion lay a belief in what Professor Tylor has called animism. It belonged to the Sumerian element in the faith of the people, and, as we shall see, was never really assimilated by the Semitic settlers. But in spite of Semitic influences and official attempts to explain it away, it was never eradicated from the popular creed, and it left a permanent impress upon the folk-lore and superstitions of the nation. As in Egypt, so too in Babylonia, animism was the earliest shape assumed by religion, and it was through animism that the Sumerian formed his conception of the divine.

In Egypt it was the *Ka* which linked "the other world" with that of living men. In Babylonia the place of the *Ka* was taken by the *Zi*. We may translate Zi by "spirit," but like the Ka it was rather a double than a spirit in our sense of the term. Literally the word signified "life," and was symbolised in the primitive picture-writing of the country by a flowering plant. Life, however, meant a great deal more to early man than it does to us. It was synonymous with motion, with force and energy. All that moved was endowed with life; life was the only force known to man which explained motion, and, conversely, motion was the sign and manifestation of life. The arrow which sped through [pg 277] the air or the rock which fell from the cliff did so in virtue of their possessing life, or because the motive force of life lay in some way or other behind them. The stars which slowly moved through the sky, and the sun which

rose and set day by day, were living beings; it was life which gave them the power of movement, as it gave the power of movement to man himself and the animals by whom he was surrounded. The power of movement, in fact, separated the animate from the inanimate; all that moved possessed life; the motionless was lifeless and dead. Man's experience was necessarily his measure of the universe; the only force he knew of was the force we call life, and his reason seemed to demand that what held true of himself must hold true also of the rest of the world.

But, like the Egyptian, the Sumerian could not conceive of life except under visible and concrete form. The abstract was still embedded, as it were, in the concrete; it could not be divorced from it in thought any more than in those pictorial characters which were used by the scribes. What we mean by “force” would have been unintelligible to the primitive Babylonian; for him life was something real and material, which had a shape of its own, even though this shape was but an unsubstantial shadow, seen indeed by the eye, but eluding the grasp. At the same time it was more than a shadow, for it possessed all the qualities of the object or person to whom it belonged. It was not life in the abstract, but the counterpart of an individual object, which endowed that object with the power of motion, and gave it a place in the animate world.

The Sumerian Zi, therefore, closely resembled the Egyptian Ka. The human Zi was the

imperishable part of man; it made him a living soul while he was in this world, and after death continued to represent him in the [pg 278] shadowy world below.[216] Unlike the *lilla* or "ghost," it represented the man himself in his personality; if that personality were destroyed, it also ceased to exist. While on the one side it was the Zi which gave man life and the power of movement, on the other side, without the individual man there could be no individual Zi. Food and drink were offered to the Babylonian dead as they were to the Egyptian, and the objects the dead man had loved during his lifetime were deposited in his grave. His seal was attached to his wrist, his spear or staff was laid at his side, and at times even dates or fish or poultry were buried with him, lest he might feel hungry in the darkness of the tomb. The child had his favourite toys to play with, the woman her necklace of beads. The water-jar was there, filled with "the pure water" for which the dead thirsted, along with the bowl of clay or bronze out of which it might be drunk. "A garment to clothe him," says an old hymn, "and shoes for his feet, a girdle for his loins and a water-skin for drinking, and food for his journey have I given him."[217]

Like men, the gods too had each his Zi. We hear of the Zi of Ea, the god of the deep;[218] and the primeval "mother, who had begotten heaven and earth," was Zi-kum or Zi-kura, "the life of heaven" and "earth."[219]

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In the early magical texts "the Zi of heaven"

and the "Zi of earth" are invoked to remove the spell that has been cast over the sick or the insane. Even when Ea and his son Asari had taken the place of the demons of the older faith, the official religion was still compelled to recognise their existence and power. The formula of exorcism put into the mouth of Ea himself ends with an appeal to the "life" of heaven and earth. It begins, indeed, with "the charm of Ea," through the efficacy of which the evil spell is to be dissolved; but the charm of the god of wisdom is soon forgotten, and it is to the Zi of heaven and earth that the exorcist finally has recourse. "O life of heaven, mayest thou conjure it; O life of earth, mayest thou conjure it!" thus, and thus only, could the exorcism end. The old associations were too strong to be overcome, and the worshippers of Ea had to allow a place at his side for the "spirits" of an earlier age.

The ancient conception of the Zi lingered long among the Babylonian population. But, as the Semitic element became predominant, it fell more and more into the background, and survived—so far at least as the official religion was concerned—only in a few old formulæ and names. One of the fixed stars, for example, was called Sib-zi-Anna, "the Shepherd of the Life of Heaven," and a common form of oath was by "the life of the gods" or "king" (*nis ilâni*, *nis sarri*). Even Sennacherib swears by "the life of Assur"; but it is questionable whether either he or any of his contemporaries remembered the original

meaning and history of the phrase. The Sumerian Zi had received a Semitic translation, and therewith a Semitic connotation. The ideas attached to the Semitic *nêsu* were not those which had once clustered around the Zi. On the lips of the Semite even the word Zi itself meant "life" and little more. When [pg 280] Pur-Sin II. of Ur, a century or two before Abraham, addresses a dedication in Sumerian to the moon-god, he calls himself "the divine *Zi* of his country"[220]—in other words, a "god who gives life to his land." There is no question here of a vital force which is the counterpart of a man or god; we have, on the contrary, the Semitic conception of a divine father from whom his people derive their life. The Semite has transferred his own ideas to the language of his Sumerian predecessors, and "life" for him is no materialised reflection of an individual thing, but a principle which is diffused, as it were, from a divine centre. The "Zi of heaven" has become the abstract life, which the god can communicate to those about him.

It is only in the dim background of history, therefore, that we find in Babylonia a belief analogous to that which created the Egyptian doctrine of the Ka. It was foreign to the Semitic mind, and with the rise of Semitic supremacy, accordingly, it disappeared from the religion of Babylonia. We have to look for its fossilised relics in the old magical texts, which, like the spells and charms of modern folk-lore, have preserved so many of the beliefs and superstitions of an otherwise

forgotten past, or else in divine names and epithets which go back to a remote antiquity. The animism of the Sumerian is difficult to discover and trace, for it was already buried under Semitic modes of thought when the first libraries of Babylonia were being formed.

It was another Sumerian belief which exercised a greater influence upon the Semitic mind. This was the belief in ghosts. The *lil* or ghost was distinct from the *Zi*; while the *Zi* belonged to the world of the living, the *lil* belonged to the world of the dead. The *lil* consequently was no counterpart or double of either man or [pg 281] god, but a being with an independent existence of its own. Its home was beneath the earth, where the dead had their dwelling; but it visited this upper world under the shadow of night, or in desert places to which nothing living came.[221] It was essentially a spirit of darkness, and one of the names by which it was known was that of "the light-despoiler."[222] It came in the raging wind which darkens the heaven with clouds, or in the cloud of dust which betokens the approach of the storm. The *lil*, in fact, was essentially a demon, "without husband or wife," one of those evil spirits who tormented and perplexed mankind.

The sexless Lil was waited on by "a maid," who under the cover of night enticed men to their destruction, or seduced them in their dreams. She was a veritable vampire, providing the Lil she served with its human food. When the Semite succeeded to the heritage of the Sumerian, the sexless Lil

disappeared. Semitic grammar demanded that there should be a distinction between masculine and feminine, and Semitic modes of thought equally demanded that a female Lilît should take her place by the side of a male Lilu. The attributes of the "serving-maid" of the Sumerian Lil were transferred to the new creation of the Semitic mind, and the siren who lured men to their destruction ceased to be a serving-maid, and became the female Lilît herself. But the origin of the powers she exercised was never forgotten. When the name and character of the Babylonian Lilît were borrowed by the Hebrews under the form of Lilith, she was conceived of as a single individual spirit rather than as a class. Isaiah (xxxiv. 14) tells us how Lilith shall haunt the desolate ruins of Edom, and find among [pg 282] them "a place of rest"; while, according to the Rabbis, Lilith had been the first wife of man, in appearance the fairest of women, but in reality a vampire demon who sucked at night the blood of her victims.

The lord and ruler of the Lils was the god who was worshipped at Nippur. He bore, accordingly, the title of En-lil, "the lord of the ghost-world," and his temple was one of the oldest sanctuaries of Sumerian Babylonia.[223] It was a centre of primeval civilisation, and the source of the magical arts which gathered round the belief in the spirits of the underworld. But the lordship of the underworld implied also a lordship over the earth, of which it formed a part. En-lil, "the

lord of the ghost-world," thus became in time the ruler, not only of the dead, but also of the living. His empire ceased to be confined to the realms of darkness, and was extended to this upper world of light and of mankind. Up to the last, however, his primitive character was never forgotten. In the story of the Deluge he appears as the destroyer of men; Namtar, the plague-demon, is his minister; and like Kingu, the demon-god of chaos, he wore the tablets of destiny, which determine when men shall die.[224]

En-lil was accordingly the sovereign of the dead as well as of the spirits of the underworld. The Sumerian *lil* must therefore have once included the ghosts of men as well as other ghosts which never had a material existence in the flesh. The *lil* must once have meant [pg 283] that immaterial part of man which, after death, had its home in the underworld, from whence it issued at night to satisfy its cravings for food with the garbage of the streets. By the side of the Zi there must also have been the Lil; but we must wait till more monuments of Sumerian antiquity are discovered before we can define the exact relationship between them.[225]

In the Epic of Gilgames it is said that when the shade of Ea-bani was called up from the dead, like that of the shade of Samuel by the Witch of Endor, "it arose from the earth like a cloud of dust."[226] It was fitting that the ghost should be likened to a dust-storm. Its home was in the ground; and there, in the dark underworld, its food, we are told, was dust.

But the word used by the poet for the ghost of Ea-bani is not *lil*. It is another word, utukku, which occurs frequently in the magical texts. Here the *utukku* is a general name for a demon, and we hear of the *utukku* "of the field," "of the mountain," "of the sea," and "of the grave." The "*utukku* of the grave" must be the restless ghost of some dead man which has become a spirit of darkness, working evil to mankind. The ordinary *utukku*, however, had no human ancestry; it was a demon pure and simple, which sat upon the neck of the sufferer and inflicted upon him pain and death. It corresponded with the vampire of European folk-lore; and just as the ranks of the vampire might be recruited from the dead, [pg 284] so too might the class of demons whom the Babylonians termed *utukki*.

It was the same with another species of demon, the *ekimmu*, which hovered around the tomb and attacked the loins of those who fell in its way. But the *ekimmu* was a being whose origin was known. It was the spirit of an unburied corpse over whose unsanctified remains the funeral rites had never been performed. The mystic ceremonies and magical words which consigned the dead to their last resting-place had been neglected, and the hapless spirit was left unprovided with the talismans that would enable him to cross the river of death, or join his comrades in the passive tranquillity of the lower world. Restlessly, therefore, it wandered about the desert places of the earth, finding at times a shelter in the bodies of the living, whom it

plagued with sore diseases, and seeking to satiate its hunger under the cover of night with the refuse it could pick up "in the street." The food and drink which pious hands laid in the tomb were denied to the tombless ghost, and it had to search for them where it could. The Epic of Gilgames concludes with a description of it, which paints in vivid colours the old Babylonian belief—

> "He whose body lies forsaken in
> the field,
> As thou and I alike have seen,
> His *ekimmu* rests not in the earth.
> He whose *ekimmu* has none to
> care for him,
> As thou and I alike have seen,
> The garbage of the pot, the
> refuse of food,
> Which is thrown into the street,
> must he eat."

It is no wonder that a Babylonian king prays that the body of his enemy may be "cast aside, and no grave allowed to him,"[227] or that Assur-bani-pal should have torn the bodies of the Elamite kings from their tombs [pg 285] at Susa. Sennacherib similarly desecrated the burial-places of the ancestors of Merodach-baladan; and one of the oldest of Babylonian monuments, the so-called Stela of the Vultures, depicts the bodies of the slaughtered enemy exposed to the vultures that feed upon them, while the slain Babylonians themselves are buried by their companions under a tumulus of earth.

The *ekimmu* was thus, properly speaking, the ghost of the unburied corpse; whereas the *utukku* was the ghost of a corpse which had obtained burial, but through some accident or other had escaped from the realms of the dead. While, therefore, the *ekimmu* necessarily had a human origin, the *utukku* was only accidentally a human ghost. The rites with which its body had been laid in the grave, ought to have confined it to the underground regions of the dead; and the "pure water" and food with which it had been provided were sufficient to sustain it in its existence below. If it returned to the upper world it could only have been through the arts of the necromancer, and the sufferings it may have inflicted upon men were but the revenge it took for being disturbed. The *utukku*, like the *lil*, belonged to a class of supernatural beings who manifested their presence in a particular way, and it was only as it were accidentally that the ghost of a dead man came to be included among them.

But it must be noticed that no distinction was drawn in the mind of the Babylonian between these supernatural beings and the ghosts of the dead, at all events so far as their nature and to a certain extent their powers were concerned. The ghost might become an *ekimmu* just as it might become a *lil*; all were alike denizens of the underground world, and in primeval times obeyed the rule of the En-lil, "the lord of ghosts."

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The same belief must once have prevailed in

Palestine. When the spirit of Samuel was called up from the dead, the witch declared she saw Elohim rising up from the earth in the form of an old man clothed in a mantle. Now Elohim or "gods" was the general term under which the Canaanite included all the beings of the spiritual world in whom he believed; and in calling the spirit of Samuel "Elohim," the witch was accordingly asserting that the human ghost she had evoked had become thereby one of them. As the ghost of Ea-bani when summoned from its resting-place became an *utukku*, so the ghost of Samuel for the same reason became one of the Elohim.

The ghost, like the body to which it had belonged, was dependent for its existence upon food and drink. The legend of the descent of Istar into Hades describes the ghosts of the dead as flitting like winged bats through their gloomy prison-house, drinking dust and eating clay. The bread and dates and water offered at the tombs of the dead were a welcome substitute for such nauseous food. Food, however, of some kind it was necessary for the ghost to have, otherwise it would have suffered from the pangs of hunger, or died the second death for want of nourishment.

Like the Egyptian Ka, consequently, the Babylonian ghost was conceived of as a semi-material counterpart of the body, needing, like the body, drink and food; and if recalled to the upper world in the form of an *utukku* or an *ekimmu*, resembling the body in every detail, even to the clothes it wore. Moreover,

as in Egypt, the doctrine of the double must be extended to inanimate objects as well as to living things. The offerings deposited with the dead included not only poultry and fish, but also dates and grain, wine and water. The objects, too, which the dead had loved in his life were laid in his grave—toys [pg 287] for the child, mirrors and jewellery for the woman, the staff and the seal for the man. It must have been the doubles of the food and drink upon which the ghost fed in the world below, and the doubles of the other objects buried with the corpse, which it enjoyed in its new mode of existence. There must have been ghosts of things as well as ghosts of men.

The overlaying of primitive Sumerian animism by Semitic conceptions and beliefs naturally introduced new elements into the views held about the imperishable part of man, and profoundly modified the old theories regarding it. The Zi, as we have seen, became synonymous with the vital principle; the *lil*, the *utukku*, and the *ekimmu* were banished to the domain of the magician and witch. The words survived, like "ghost" in English, but the ideas connected with them insensibly changed. In place of En-lil, "the lord of the ghost-world," a new conception arose, that of Bilu or Baal, "the lord" of mankind and the visible universe, whose symbol was the flaming sun.[228] The ghosts had to make way for living men, the underground world of darkness for the world of light. En-lil became a Semitic Baal, and man himself became "the son of his god."[229]

With the rise of Semitic influence came also the influence of the culture that emanated from Eridu. The character of Ea of Eridu lent itself more readily to Semitic conceptions than did the character of En-lil. There was no need for violent change; the old Sumerian god (or rather "spirit") retained his name and therewith many of his ancient attributes. He remained the god of [pg 288] wisdom and culture, the father of Aṡari, "who does good to man."

When Asari was identified with Merodach the sun-god of Babylon, Semitic influence was already in the ascendant. Merodach was already a Semitic Baal; the supremacy of his city made him the supreme Baal of Babylonia. The older Baal of Nippur was absorbed by the younger Baal of Babylon, and the official cult almost ceased to remember what his attributes and character had originally been. Even the reciter of the magical texts probably forgot that the god had once been a chief *lil* or ghost and nothing more.

This altered conception of the god of Nippur was necessarily accompanied by an altered conception of the ghost-world over which he had ruled. It was handed over to other gods in the State religion, or else passed into the possession of the wizard and necromancer. Nergal of Cutha became the lord of Hades, which he shared with the goddess Eris-kigal or Allat. Legend told how at the command of the gods of light, Nergal had forced his way into the dark recesses of the underworld, and there compelled the goddess to become his

bride. From henceforward Hades was a realm under the control of the gods of heaven, and part of that orderly universe which they governed and directed.

The conquest of Hades by the gods of light implied the conquest by them of death. The dead was no longer a mere ghost, beyond the reach of the lords of heaven, and able to play havoc in their own sphere when darkness had swallowed up the light. The lords of heaven now claimed the power of "raising the dead to life." It is an epithet that is applied more especially to Merodach, the minister and interpreter of his father Ea, through whose magic words and wise teaching he heals the diseases of mankind, and even brings them again from the world of the dead.

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It is evident that we here have a new conception before us of the imperishable part of man. The gods are with man beyond the grave as they are on this side of it. There is no inexorable destiny forbidding them to bring him back to life. In other words, there is a life in the next world as well as in this. It may be a very inferior and shadowy kind of life, but it is a life nevertheless, and not the existence of a bloodless ghost which would perish if it could not satisfy its cravings with food and drink. The religious consciousness has passed beyond the stage when the future world is peopled with the doubles and counterparts of existing things, and it has attained to the conception of a spiritual life which man can share with the immortal gods. Animism has

made way for polytheism.

How close this connection between the gods and the souls of men became in later days, may be seen from the fact that when Assur-bani-pal visited the tombs of his forefathers, he poured out a libation in their honour and addressed to them his prayers. They had, in short, become gods, like the gods of light to whom temples were erected and offerings made. The change in point of view had doubtless been quickened by that deification of the king of which I shall have to speak in a future lecture, and which seems to have been of Semitic origin. When the king became a god, to whom priests and temples were dedicated both in his lifetime and after his death, it was inevitable that new ideas should arise in regard to the nature of the soul. The spirit who was addressed as a god, and set on a level with the divine lords of heaven, was no powerless and starveling ghost in the underworld of En-lil, but a spirit in the more modern sense of the word, who dwelt in the realms of light, where he could hear and answer the prayers that were laid before him. The ghost had been transformed [pg 290] into a soul, whose nature was the same as that of the gods themselves, and which, like them accordingly, could move freely where it would, listening to the petitions of those on earth, and interceding for them.

This conception of the soul had already been arrived at in the age of Sargon of Akkad, the earliest to which at present anything like full contemporaneous records reach back. But it

was an age in which Semitic influence was already dominant; Sargon was the founder of a Semitic empire which extended to the shores of the Mediterranean, and the Sumerian epoch of Babylonian civilisation had long since passed away. Remote as the age seems to us of to-day, it was comparatively late in the history of Chaldæan culture. And deification was not confined to the person of the king. The high priests of the Babylonian cities who owned allegiance to him were similarly deified by their subjects. The daily offering was made, for instance, to the deified Gudea, the Sumerian governor of Lagas; he who had ruled on earth, whether Semite or Sumerian, was adjudged worthy of a place among the gods of the official creed. King and noble alike could be raised to the rank of a divinity; and we even find Gimil-Sin, the king of Ur, erecting a temple to his own godhead.[230] We are reminded of the shrines built by the later Pharaohs in honour of their own Kas.

The deification of man, and therewith a belief in the higher destinies of the human soul, can thus be traced back to an early period of Semitic supremacy in Babylonia. Unfortunately our evidences for this belief in the higher destinies of the soul are still but scanty. In this respect Babylonia offers a striking contrast to Egypt. There the larger part of the monumental records we possess are derived from tombs; and Egyptian belief in regard to the future life is abundantly described not [pg 291] only on the

tombstones, but also on the inscribed and pictured walls of the sepulchre itself. We know almost more of what the Egyptian thought about the imperishable part of man and its lot hereafter, than we do about any other portion of his creed. In Babylonia and Assyria, on the contrary, there are no tombstones, no pictured and inscribed tombs. The literature we possess tells us but little concerning the future life and the beliefs connected with it. The ritual and the hymns to the gods are concerned with this life, not with the next, and we have to grope our way, as it were, through obscure allusions and ambiguous phrases if we would find in them any references to the world beyond the grave. To fall back on mythological poems and heroic epics is dangerous and misleading. The literary myth will give us as false an idea of the psychology of a people as it will of their theology; at most it will express the beliefs of the individual writer, or enshrine old terms and phrases, the primitive meaning of which has passed away. To extract a psychology from literary legends is as difficult as to extract from them sober history. The poets who depicted Hades, with its batlike ghosts that fed upon dust, were using the language of the past rather than of the age in which they lived. We might as well infer that the Englishman of the eighteenth century believed in the Muses whom his poets invoked, as infer from the language of the poets of Babylonia that the Hades they described was the Hades of popular belief. The cult of the kings and nobles is sufficient

of itself to prove that such could not have been the case. And when primitive conceptions become the commonplaces of literature, their true signification is lost or blurred.

Still less help can be obtained from the magical texts. And by an unfortunate accident the magical texts constitute a very undue proportion of those which have [pg 292] hitherto been examined. Until recently we have been dependent for our knowledge of Babylonian literature on the relics of the library of Nineveh, the greater part of which was collected by Assur-bani-pal, and Assur-bani-pal had a special predilection for charms and exorcisms, and the pseudo-science of the augur or astrologist. The world of the magical texts was a world that stood apart by itself. Magic was only half recognised by the orthodox faith; its beliefs and practices had come down from an age when that orthodox faith did not as yet exist, and its professors were looked upon with suspicion by the official priesthood. The creed upon which it rested, therefore, was a creed of the remote past rather than of the present. Its gods and goddesses were not those of the State religion except in name; the Istar who patronised the witch and superintended the mixture of the poisonous philtre under the cloak of night, was a very different Istar from the goddess of love and war who promised help and comfort to Esar-haddon in his need, and was known to be “the mother” of mankind. The State religion, indeed, wisely temporising, had

recognised magic so far as it could be regulated, and placed, as it were, under the supervision of the priesthood; “the black art” was never a heresy to be suppressed by force, as in ancient Israel; but for all that it stood outside the official faith, and embodied principles and conceptions which could be harmonised but imperfectly with the higher and more enlightened ideas of the historical period. We may find in the magical texts survivals from the primeval age of animism, if only we know how to interpret them rightly, for the religious conceptions of a later age we shall look in vain. They offer us magic and not religion, the wizard or witch and not the priest.

Such, then, are the reasons why it is impossible for the present to describe the psychology of the Babylonians [pg 293] with the same accuracy and fulness as that of the Egyptians, or to trace its history with the same detail. The materials are wanting, and probably we shall never have them in the same abundance as in Egypt. But one thing is clear. Behind the polytheistic view of the human spirit which prevailed in later times, there lay an animistic view which closely resembled the primitive Egyptian doctrine of the Ka. The animistic view passed away with the rise of Semitic supremacy and the deification of man, and to discover and define it must be largely a matter of inference. The doctrine of the double was superseded by the doctrine of the soul—that is to say, of an immortal element which after death was

reunited with the gods. The Zi, with the Lil and the Ekimmu, had to make way for a higher and purer conception of the spirit of man. The old names, indeed, still remained, but more and more emptied of their earlier meaning, or banished to the outer darkness of the magician and witch. The water and food that once served to nourish the ghost in the world below, became offerings to the dead man, and to the gods under whose protection he continued to be. “All the furniture that befitteth the grave,” says an Assyrian king, “the due right of his sovereignty, I displayed before the sun-god, and beside the father who begat me I set them in the grave. Gifts unto the princes, even the spirits of earth, and unto the gods who inhabit the grave, I then presented.”[231] The gifts, it will be noticed, are not only set by the side of the dead, but are also presented to the sun-god, who is thus associated with the deceased king. They are consecrated to the god of light, who judged mankind, before they can be claimed by the gods of the grave.

But with all this it must be allowed that a great contrast exists between the Babylonian and the later [pg 294] Egyptian view of the imperishable part of man and its lot in the other world. And this difference of view results from a further difference in the view taken of this present life. To the Egyptian the present life was but a preparation for the next; not only the spiritual elements of which he was composed, but, as he hoped, his body itself would survive beyond the grave. It was

otherwise in Babylonia. No traces of mummification are to be found there; at most we hear of the corpse being anointed for death, as it were, with oil or honey; and cremation, partial or complete, seems to have been practised. The thoughts of the Babylonian were fixed rather on this world than on the next; his horizon, speaking generally, was bounded by death. It was in this world that he had relations with the gods and duties towards them, and it was here that he was punished or rewarded for the deeds committed in the flesh. The practical character of the Babylonians did not lend itself to dreams and speculations about the future; the elaborate map of the other world, which is drawn in the sacred books of Egypt, would have been impossible for them. They were too much absorbed in commerce and trade and the practical pursuit of wealth, to have leisure for theories that concerned themselves with a doubtful future and an invisible world. The shadow of the old religion of Nippur, moreover, with its underground Hades of darkness and gloom, rested to the last on the mind of the Babylonian people. The brighter views which had emanated from Eridu never succeeded in overcoming it altogether. The gods of light ruled, indeed, over a world that had once belonged to the demons of night, but their victory never extended further. The land of Hades still continued to be a land of darkness, even though the waters of life gushed up from below the golden throne of the spirits who dwelt [pg 295] there. We find no conception

in Babylonian literature parallel to the Egyptian fields of Alu, no judgment-hall of Hades before which the conscience of the dead man is arraigned. The Babylonian was judged in this life and not in the next, and the god who judged him was the sun-god of day, and not the dead sun-god of the other world.

It is usually the fashion to ascribe this concentration of religion upon the present world, with its repellent views of Hades and limitation of divine rewards and punishments to this life, to the inherent peculiarities of the Semitic mind. But for this there is no justification. There is nothing in the Semitic mind which would necessitate such a theological system. It is true that the sun-god was the central object of the Semitic Babylonian faith, and that to the nomads of Arabia the satisfaction of their daily wants was the practical end of existence. But it is not among the nomads of Arabia that we find anything corresponding with the Babylonian idea of Hades and the conceptions associated with it. The idea was, in fact, of Babylonian origin. If the Hebrew Sheol resembles the Hades of Babylonia, or the Hebrew conception of rewards and punishments is like that of the Assyrians and Babylonians, it is because the Hebrew beliefs were derived from the civilisation of the Euphrates. Historically we know that the Israelites traced their origin from Ur of the Chaldees, and that in days long before Abraham, Canaan formed part of a Babylonian empire, and was permeated by Babylonian culture; on the theological side

the derivation of the Hebrew doctrines is equally clear. The Hebrew Sheol is too exactly a counterpart of the Babylonian world of the dead not to have been borrowed from it, like Lilith and the other spirits whose home it was, and the theology which taught that the sun-god was the supreme [pg 296] judge of men, punishing in this life their sins or rewarding their good deeds, was part of the culture which came from Babylonia to the West. It was no inherent heritage of Semitic nature, but the product of a civilisation whose roots went back to a non-Semitic race. The ruling caste in Egypt were of Semitic extraction, but their religion contains little or no trace of the ideas which underlay the Babylonian doctrines of divine retribution and the future life of the soul.

It is to Babylonia, therefore, that we must look for the origin of those views of the future world and of the punishment of sin in this life which have left so deep an impression on the pages of the Old Testament. They belonged primarily to Babylonia, and were part of the price which the Semites of the West had to pay for the inestimable gift of culture that came to them from the banks of the Euphrates. They were views from which the Israelite was long in emancipating himself. The inner history of the Old Testament is, in fact, in large measure a history of the gradual widening of the religious consciousness of Israel in regard to them, and their supersession by a higher and more spiritual form of faith. The old belief, that misfortune

implies sin and prosperity righteousness, is never, indeed, entirely eradicated, and Sheol long continues to be a land of shadow and unsubstantiality, where good and bad share the same fate, and the things of this life are forgotten; but little by little newer and purer views make their way into the religion of the people, and the higher message which Israel was destined to receive takes the place of the teaching of the old culture of Babylonia. Babylonia had done its part; new forces were needed for the education of mankind.

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Lecture III. The Gods Of Babylonia.

I have already had occasion to refer to one of the gods of Babylonia, En-lil or El-lil of Nippur.[232] His worship goes back to the earliest period of Babylonian history; his sanctuary at Nippur was one of the oldest in

the land. He belongs to the period when the Sumerian was still supreme, and the name he bore was the Sumerian title of En-lil, “the lord of the ghost-world.” But it was a title only; the “lord of the ghosts” was himself a ghost, albeit the chief among them.

The fact must be kept carefully in mind. As yet there was no god in the proper sense of the term. The superhuman powers that were dreaded and propitiated were ghosts only, like the ghosts of dead men; and, like the latter, they were denizens of the grave and the underground world. It was only at night that they emerged from their retreat, and terrified the passer-by. Primitive man fears the dark as much as does the child; it is then that the powers of evil are active, and spiritual or supernatural foes lurk behind every corner ready to injure or destroy him. The ghosts of the night are accordingly objects of terror, harmful beings from whom all forms of sickness and insanity are derived.

But even these ghosts can be controlled by those who [pg 298] know the magic words or the mystic rites which they are compelled to obey. Between the ghost and his victim the sorcerer or medicine-man can interpose, and by means of his spells force the spirit to quit the body of the sufferer or enter the body of an enemy. By the side of the ghost, therefore, stands the sorcerer, who is at once the master and the minister of the spirit-world.

With the progress of civilisation an organised body of sorcerers necessarily grows up. But an

organised body of sorcerers also implies an organised body of spirits, and an organised system of controlling them. The spells and charms which have been handed down from the past are formed into a system, and the spirits themselves are classified and defined, while special functions are assigned to them. The old unorganised animism passes into an organised shamanism, such as still prevails among certain Siberian tribes. The sorcerer is on the high road to becoming a priest.

Between the sorcerer and the priest, however, there is a gulf too wide to be spanned. The religious conceptions presupposed by them differ in kind as well as in degree. The nature of the superhuman beings by whom man is surrounded, and the relations which he bears to them, are essentially different in the two cases. The priest may also be a sorcerer, but the sorcerer cannot be a priest.

Can shamanism develop naturally into theism, and the sorcerer into the priest? Or is there need of foreign influences and of contact with other ideas and religious beliefs? I should myself be inclined to adopt the second alternative. Theism may absorb shamanism, and the priest throw the ægis of his authority over the sorcerer, but the natural development of the one into the other is contrary to the facts of psychology as well as to those of history. The evolution of a god out of the [pg 299] shaman's ghost may be conceivable, but no evidence for it exists. The superstitions and beliefs of shamanism linger, indeed, under a theistic religion, and the

polytheism of Babylonia was no exception to the rule. Up to the last the magician flourished there, and the spells he worked were recognised by the religion of the State. But for all that they stood outside the religion of the State, harmonising with it just as little as the superstitions of popular folk-lore harmonise with the religion we profess. No one would assert that the Christianity of to-day has grown out of beliefs like that in the vampire which still holds such sway in some of the Christian countries of Europe; and there is just as little reason for asserting that the vampire of the primitive Sumerian developed into a Babylonian deity. They represent two diverse currents of belief, which may for a time run side by side, but never actually coalesce.

Babylonian tradition itself bore witness to the fact. The Chaldæan historian Berossos tells us that the elements of culture, and therewith of the organised religion of a later day, were brought to Babylonia from abroad. Oannes or Ea, the culture-god, had risen morning by morning out of the waters of the Persian Gulf, and instructed the savage races of the shore in the arts of life. It was not from Nippur and the worshippers of En-lil, but from that mysterious deep which connected Babylonia with other lands, that its civilisation had come. It was Ea who had taught men “to found the temple” in which the gods of aftertimes were to be adored. The culture-god of Babylonia was Ea, and the home of Ea was not in Babylonia, but in the deep.

There is no mistaking the significance of the legend. The culture of Babylonia originated on the seacoast, and was brought to it across the sea. The elements of civilisation were due to intercourse with other lands. [pg 300] And this civilisation was associated with a god—with a god, too, who represented all the higher aspects of Babylonian religion, and was regarded as the author of its sacred books. The impulse which transformed the "lord of the ghost-world" into a god, and replaced the sorcerer by a priest, came not from within, but from without.

The impulse went back to that primitive age when Sumerian supremacy was still unquestioned in the land. Other races, so the legend averred, were already settled there, but they were all alike rude and savage "as the beasts of the field." How far distant it may have been in the night of time we can but dimly conjecture. At the rate at which the northern coast of the Persian Gulf is being slowly silted up, it would be at least eight thousand years ago when the old seaport of Eridu and the sanctuary of its god Ea stood on the shores of the sea. But the influence of the Semite was already beginning to be felt, though indirectly, through maritime trade.

New ideas came from the south. Ea was a god, and like the gods of the Semitic race he had a wife and son. While he himself was lord of the deep, Dam-kina, his wife, was the mistress of the land. His son was Aṡari, "the prince who does good to man,"[233] and who, in contradistinction to the night-demons of

Nippur, brought knowledge and healing to the men whom Ea had created. The Sumerian might indeed speak of the "Zi"—"the spirit"—of Ea, or rather of the deep, but to the Semite he was a veritable god.

At the same time it was the conception only of Ea and his family which we need trace to a foreign source. Their names are purely Sumerian, and their origin consequently [pg 301] must be Sumerian too. Doubtless they had once been mere *lils* or ghosts, belonging to the ghost-world of the god of Nippur, and the spells taught by Ea to mankind were survivals from the day when the sorcerer was still his priest.[234] But under Semitic influence the *lil* had been transformed into a god; the sacred book took the place of the charm, and the priest of the magician. The charm and the magician were still recognised, but it was on the condition that they adapted themselves to the new ideas. Sumerian shamanism was overlaid by Semitic polytheism, and in process of time was absorbed into it.

The culture of Eridu spread northward, along with the religious ideas which formed so integral a part of it. The worship of Ea was adopted in other cities of Babylonia, and the god of Babylon was identified with his son. The *lil* which had been pictured under animal shape put on human form, and the Sumerian accepted the conviction of the Semite, that man was made in the likeness of his god. En-lil of Nippur had to yield to the influence of the stranger. The antiquity of his worship, the sanctity of his temple, could not save him

from his fate. He too became a Semitic god; his old name became an unmeaning title, which survived in literature but not in the mouths of the people, and he was henceforth addressed as a Semitic Bilu or Baal. He ceased to be the chief of the ghosts of night, and was transformed into the divine "Lord" of Semitic worship, who, like the sun, watched over this nether earth. It was a transformation and not a development.

As the Semitic Bel, the god of Nippur continued for [pg 302] long centuries to retain the ancient veneration of the people. Unlike the Greek Kronos, he was not as yet dethroned by the younger gods. The position occupied by the great sanctuary of Nippur and its priesthood long prevented this. But the destiny of Kronos at last overtook him. Babylon became the capital of the kingdom, and its god accordingly claimed precedence over all others. Merodach of Babylon assumed the title of Bel, and little by little the old god of Nippur was robbed of his ancient rank. For the Babylonia of later history Merodach and not En-lil was the supreme Baal, and even the legends that had been told of the god of Nippur were transferred to his younger rival. The memories that still gathered round Nippur were too deeply tinged with the colours of a religion that had passed away, and the beliefs of a darker and less civilised form of faith. Merodach was the champion of the gods of light, En-lil had been the lord of the demons of darkness. Theologically as well as politically it was needful that Merodach

should supplant En-lil.

The spread of the worship of Ea, or rather of the religious conceptions with which it was associated, brought with it the effacement of Dam-kina. Dam-kina had once been the earth; just as En-lil at Nippur was "the lord of ghosts," of whom he was himself one, so at Eridu Dam-kina was the "lady of the earth," with which, as its Zi or "spirit," she was herself identified. Sumerian grammar knew no distinction of gender, and in the Sumerian family the woman held a foremost place by the side of the man. It was otherwise among the Semites. The distinction between the masculine and the feminine is engrained in the Semitic languages, but the distinction is attained by forming the feminine out of the masculine. While a considerable part of Semitic flexion is the result of vowel changes within the word [pg 303] itself, the feminine is created by attaching an affix to the masculine form. The masculine presupposes the feminine, but the feminine is dependent on the masculine.

Semitic grammar merely reflects the fundamental ideas of the Semitic mind. For the Semite the woman is the lesser man, formed out of him and dependent upon him. Like the feminine of the noun, she is the colourless reflection of her husband, though without the reflection there can be no husband. Wherever the Semitic spirit has prevailed, the woman has been simply the helpmeet and shadow of the man; for the orthodox Mohammedan she hardly possesses

a soul. It is only where the Semitic spirit has been met and checked by the influence of another race that this is not the case; the high place retained by the woman in Babylonian society would of itself have been a proof that Semitic culture had here been engrafted on that of an older people, even if the monuments had not revealed to us that such was indeed the fact.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the goddesses or female spirits of Sumerian faith faded away as the Semitic element in Babylonian religion became stronger. At first Semitic influence had done no more than transform the "handmaid of the *lil*" into a goddess; then the goddesses themselves became like the woman in Semitic thought, pale and colourless, existing merely for the sake of the god. Dam-kina, the lady of the earth, was remembered only by the antiquarian or by the compiler of a cosmological system. When she became the wife of Ea her fate was sealed.

Her attributes and office, in fact, were transferred to him. At Eridu he had necessarily been more than the lord of the deep; he was lord of the city as well. He had as it were migrated from the deep; he had left his [pg 304] palace of the sea and come to dwell in a sanctuary on land. The ground on which Eridu stood was the gift of the sea, the soft silt which the retreating waves of the Persian Gulf had left behind them. It had once been part of the domain of Ea, if not Ea himself. Ea accordingly came to be addressed

as the “lord of the earth” as well as of the sea, and Eridu, his city, was the “city of the lord of the land.” The men who inhabited it were his creation: he had formed them like a potter out of the clay, and as the divine “potter” he was therefore known unto them.[235] Like the Egyptian Khnum at the Cataract, he was the first artist in clay, and the models that he made were the first men.

The god of culture was thus also the creator of mankind. He brought civilisation to them from his home beneath the waves, but it was because he had already created them. They were not indeed his children, but the creation of his hands, for the culture-god was necessarily an artist, and the men he moulded were the highest products of his skill. Water and earth had alike gone to their formation; Ea was master not only of the sea, but of the land of Eridu as well.

The heritage of Dam-kina was thus usurped by the god whom Semitic influence had given to her as husband. And therewith the heritage of another goddess of the Sumerian cult was usurped as well. This was Bau, whose native home was probably farther to the north, though she had been as it were domesticated at Eridu in early days. As Dam-kina was made the wife of Ea, so Bau was made his mother. For this there was a special reason. Bau was known as “the great mother,” from whom mankind had received the herd and the flock as well as the crops of the field. She it was who gave fertility to the soil, and protected those who tilled it. [pg 305] The heifer was

her symbol, and she may have been originally the local spirit of some field in the neighbourhood of Eridu.[236] But in the days when she is first known to us by contemporaneous inscriptions, she is already a goddess, and the Semitic conception of a divine mother is already attached to her.[237] She thus resembles another goddess, Aruru by name, whom an old cosmological poem associates with Merodach (or rather Ea) in creating "the seed of man," which springs forth from her bosom like the reed from the marsh or "the wild cow with its young." In their origin Bau and Aruru are alike but Dam-kina under other names,—the earth-spirits of the old Sumerian religion, who beget or create all living things. The underground world over which En-lil held rule was not only the home of the dead, it was also the place where the seed must be buried before it can spring up into the green herb. That same ghost-world, consequently, to which the dead must journey, is also the source of life. The *lil* (or rather the Zi) who inhabits it is the mother of mankind, even though it is also the home of the demon who plagues them with disease.

Hence it was that when Bau assumed the dress of a Semitic goddess, she became first the creatress-mother, and then the mother of the creator. As such, however, she entered into rivalry with another deity who was similarly in process of development out of an earlier form. This was Zi-Kum or Zi-Garum, "the spirit of the sky," [pg 306] who is called

"the mother that has begotten heaven and earth," and "the seeress of the spirit of the earth" (*Ê-kur*), that is to say, of En-lil.[238] To the primitive seafarer of Babylonia the waters of the Persian Gulf seemed to descend from the vault of heaven which rested upon them; the streams which intersected the ground were fed by the rains, and it was therefore natural to suppose that the sea which blended with the sky was similarly derived from it. The deep was embosomed in the heavens, and the spirit of the deep accordingly must have been begotten by the spirit of the sky.

But this spirit of the sky necessarily owned obedience to the "lord of the ghost-world," and the mother of Ea of Eridu was thus at the same time a ministering handmaid of En-lil.[239] The Zi who was worshipped at Eridu was also a Lil in the theology of Nippur, and the home of the Lil was beneath the earth. In this way we must explain how it is that Zi-Kum, "the heaven," is also, under another aspect, Zi-Kura, "the earth," and as such identical with Dam-kina and Bau.[240] That she should have coalesced with Bau rather than with Dam-kina, was due to the fact that the one was made the mother of Ea, while the other became his wife. But the lineaments of the old "spirit of the sky" were soon obliterated. As the religion of Babylonia moved further and further away from the animism of the past, the spirit's existence faded [pg 307] into the background and Bau stepped into its place. Zi-Kum, "the spirit of the sky," ended by becoming a symbol of that primordial deep

from which Ea had derived his wisdom, and whose waters were above the visible firmament as well as below it.[241] Ea, the god of the mixed Babylonian race, had absorbed the spirits and ghosts of the Sumerian faith. Their attributes had been taken from them, and they had been transformed into goddesses whose sole end was to complete the family of the culture-god.

The old faith was avenged, however, when Babylon became the political head of Babylonia. Ea was supplanted by his son, and the honours he had received were transferred to the younger god. It was his son, too, under a new and foreign name. Merodach was son of Ea only because he had been identified with Aṡari, who was son of Ea in the theology of Eridu. Henceforward Ea shines merely by reflected light. His wisdom is handed on to Merodach; even the creation of mankind is denied to him. It is not Ea, but Merodach, who conquers the dragon of chaos and introduces law and order into the world, and it is equally not Ea but Merodach who is the creator of all visible things. Ea is not robbed, like Bel of Nippur, of his name and prerogatives, he is simply effaced.[242]

[pg 308]
Midway between Nippur and Eridu stood the city of Erech. Doubtless it was of Sumerian foundation, like the other great cities of Babylonia, but as far back as we can trace its history it is already a seat of Semitic power and religious cult. Its god was Anu, the sky. It may be that Anu had been brought from

elsewhere, for a Babylonian inscription of the twelfth century B.C. calls Dêr rather than Erech his city; but if so, the Semitic inhabitants of Erech knew nothing of it. For them Anu was the protecting god of their city, the father of Istar, whose habitation it was. From the days when Erech first became a Semitic possession, Anu and Istar had been worshipped in it side by side. Indeed, it would seem from the inscription of Lugal-zaggi-śi, discovered at Nippur, that at the remote period to which it belongs Istar had not yet been associated with Anu in the divine government of Erech. Lugal-zaggi-śi was king of Erech, and as a consequence "priest of Ana," but not of Istar. So far as the evidence goes at present, it points to the fact that the divine patron of Erech was Anu, and that Istar was introduced by the Semites, perhaps from the town of Dilbat (now Dillem).

The god and his name were alike borrowed by the Semite from his Sumerian predecessor. Ana was the Sumerian word for "sky," and it was doubtless a spirit of the sky which had been worshipped by the primitive population of the country. But when the hieroglyphic pictures were first invented, out of which the cuneiform characters afterwards developed, the spirit was already on the way to becoming a god. The eight-rayed star which denotes Ana in the historical days of Babylonia [pg 309] also denotes a god. He thus became a type of the god as distinguished from the spirit, and bears witness to the evolution that was already taking place in the religion of

Babylonia.

That there had been spirits of the sky, however, as well as spirits of the earth, was never forgotten. By the side of the Anunna-ki or “spirits of the earth” the later theology continued to retain a memory of the Igigi or spirits of heaven.[243] As En-lil was the chief among the spirits of the earth, so it is probable that Ana was chief among the spirits of the sky. But there was not the same difficulty in accommodating his name and personality to the new conception of a god that there was in the case of En-lil. His old Sumerian title brought with it no associations with animism; there was no need to change it, and it could therefore, like the name of Ea, be retained even when the spirit of the sky had become the god of heaven. From the outset Ana had stood outside the sphere and dominion of En-lil; he was no ghost of the underworld to be degraded or renamed.

While, therefore, in En-lil of Nippur, even under his new Semitic form of Bel, the dominant element remained Sumerian, and in Ea of Eridu the Semitic and Sumerian elements were mingled together, Ana of Erech was distinctively [pg 310] a Semitic god. It was only by main force, as it were, that En-lil could be transformed into the semblance of a Semitic Baal; up to the last he continued to be lord of the earth rather than of the sky, whose dwelling-place was below rather than above.[244] It was this, perhaps, which facilitated his effacement by Merodach; the lineaments of a Baal were more easily

traceable in the sun-god of Babylon than in the god of Nippur. But the sky-god was already a Baal. Between him and the Semitic Baal-shamain, “the lord of heaven,” the distance was but slight, and it was not difficult to clothe him with the attributes which the Semite ascribed to his supreme deity. A consciousness of the fact may possibly be detected in the readiness with which the name and worship of Anu were accepted in the Semitic West; when Babylonian culture made its way to Canaan, it was primarily Anu and the divinities most closely associated with him—Istar, Anat, and Dagon—who found there a home.

Ana, the sky, thus became Anu, the god of a Semitised Babylonia. But a Semitised Babylonia could not conceive of a god without a goddess who stood to him in the relation of the feminine to the masculine gender. Out of Anu was formed Anat, the feminine counterpart of the god. The same process at Nippur had created a Belit or Beltis out of the masculine Bel. The goddesses owed their existence to a grammatical necessity, and their unsubstantial and colourless character justified their origin. They fitly represented the relation in which, according to Semitic ideas, the woman stood to the man. [pg 311] She was formed out of him in nature as the feminine was out of the masculine in language, and her very existence thus depended on her “lord.”

There was, indeed, a goddess, even in Erech, the centre of Semitic influence, who possessed

a very strongly-marked and independent character of her own. This was Istar, of whom I shall have to speak at a future time. But it was just because Istar possessed this independent character that she could not be the wife of the god of the sky. The Semitic Baal brooked the presence of no independent goddess in the divine family; the wife of the god could not claim rights of her own any more than the wife of the man. Anu, like Bel and Ea, stood alone.

Erech had been made the capital of a temporarily united Babylonia at an early age in its Semitic history. Before the days of Sargon of Akkad, Lugal-zaggi-śi—we know him only by his Sumerian name—had made himself supreme over the smaller States of the country, and even carried his arms to the distant West. In an inscription he has left us he boasts that his empire extended "from the lower sea of the Tigris and Euphrates to the upper sea," presumably the Mediterranean, as he further defines his power as stretching "from the rising to the setting of the sun." Erech became the capital of the kingdom, and it was perhaps at this time that it acquired the name which it bore ever afterwards of "the city" *par excellence*. Future ages were never allowed to forget that it had once been the premier city of Babylonia.

Lugal-zaggi-śi calls himself "the priest of Anu," the god of the city which he had made the seat of his power. Anu for awhile was the god of the supreme State in Babylonia, and therefore supreme god of the whole country.

The king, it is true, had come from the north, [pg 312] and his authority had been given him by Bel of Nippur; the old sanctuary of Nippur still claimed the first place in the religion of Northern Babylonia, and the cult of its god retained its ancient hold on the veneration of the people. But from henceforward he had to share his divine honours with another; Bel of Nippur, indeed, conferred the sovereignty, but the sovereign was priest and vicegerent of Anu. Bel and Anu were associated together at the head of the pantheon of Northern Babylonia, and the position they occupied in it became more and more unique.

So firmly established was it before the reign of Sargon of Akkad, that even his victories and the empire he founded failed to give them a colleague in the god of the new capital city. Bel and Anu remained supreme; the sun-god of Akkad or Sippar had to content himself with a subordinate rank. The theological system which put Bel and Anu at its head was already formed, and the position assigned to them by the veneration and traditions of antiquity was too firmly fixed to be shaken. Northern Babylonia worshipped a dyad in the shape of two supreme gods.

But Babylonia itself was a dual State. It was probably on this account that Lugal-zaggi-śi had fixed his capital at Erech in the centre of the country, midway between north and south. And the gods of Northern Babylonia were not necessarily those of the south. Here Ea was at the head of the divine host; for the

south his city of Eridu was what Nippur was for the north, and the same causes which made Bel the dispenser of power to the northern princes, made Ea the guardian and guide of the monarchy in the south. For their worshippers Bel and Ea stood on the same level; the cult of each alike had descended from a remote antiquity, and their priests exercised a similar influence and power. As the [pg 313] Babylonians of the north were called the people of Bel whom Bel could grant to whom he would, so too the mixed races of the south were the creation of Ea to whom the god of Eridu had taught the arts of life.

The union of north and south consequently brought with it the formation of a divine triad. Ea joined himself to Bel and Anu, and the supreme triad of Anu, Bel, and Ea thus came into existence. The process of formation was facilitated by the fact that the three gods were already distinguished from one another in their main features. Anu was the god of the sky; the earlier history of Bel had given him naturally the dominion of the earth; and though, in becoming a Semitic Baal, he had acquired the attributes of a god of the upper sphere, these were allowed to fall into the background. Ea was even easier to deal with; his home was in the deep, and his rule was accordingly confined to the waters and the sea. That he had once been a god of the land as well as of the sea, was dropped out of sight, and in the later centuries of Babylonia it even began to be forgotten that he had created man out of the dust of the ground. He

ceased to be the divine potter, and became instead the god of the waters, who pours out the Tigris and Euphrates from the vases in his hands. As god of the earth and the living things upon it, his place was taken by his son. Aṡari, transformed into the Semitic sun-god Merodach, became the inheritor of his father's wisdom, and therewith of his father's power.

The formation of the Babylonian triad, and the differentiation of the divine persons who composed it, must have been the work of a theological school. It is an artificial scheme elaborated after the union of the northern and southern parts of the country. The universe is divided between the three divine representatives of Northern, Central, and Southern Chaldæa, whose [pg 314] sanctuaries were the oldest in the land, and whose cult had been handed down from time immemorial. The triad once formed became a model after which others could be created. The other great gods followed the example that had been set them, and were similarly resolved into triads. As the orthodox theological system of Egypt rested on the Ennead, the corresponding Babylonian system rested on the triad. The principle in each case was much the same. The Ennead was but a multiple of the triad, and presupposed the sacred number. Perhaps we may see in it the result of a contact between Sumerian modes of thought and the Semitic conception of the divine family. Where the god had a wife and a son, the godhead would naturally be regarded as a trinity.[245]

Under the first and supreme triad came the second triad of Sin, Samas, and Hadad. Sin, the moon-god, was adored under many names and in many forms. But his two chiefest temples were at Ur and at Harran. Ur, the modern Muqayyar, on the western bank of the Euphrates, had been dedicated to his service from the earliest times. The ruins of his temple still rise in huge [pg 315] mounds from the ground. The city stood outside the limits of the Babylonian plain, in the Semitic territory of the Arabian desert, and its Semitic population was therefore probably large. Harran, the other seat of the moon-god, was equally beyond the limits of Babylonia, and guarded the high road of commerce and war that led from the East to the West. But the name Harran, "the road," is Babylonian, and, like its temple and god, the city doubtless owed its origin to Babylonian colonists. They probably came from Ur.

The moon-god of Ur is called the son of En-lil of Nippur, and it may be therefore that Nippur was the mother-city of Ur. But it must be remembered that whereas Ur was built on the desert plateau of Arabia, Nippur stood among the marshes of the Babylonian plain. Its sanctuary could not have been founded before the marshes had been, at all events, partially drained, and the inundating rivers been regulated by dykes and canals. A settlement on the higher and drier ground would seem more naturally to precede one in the pestiferous swamps below it, and the fact that Ur was the neighbour of Eridu seems to

point to its early foundation and connection with the old seaport of the country. At the same time the worship of the moon-god is associated with the Semites of Arabia and the west rather than with Eridu, whose god revealed himself to mankind by day and not in the shades of night.[246]

It was right and fitting, however, that the moon-god [pg 316] should be "the firstborn" of the god of Nippur. The realm of En-lil was in the underground world of darkness, and the spirits over whom he had ruled plied their work at night. Naturally, therefore, it was from him and the dark world which originally belonged to him that the moon-god proceeded. It may be that Sin had once been one of the spirits in the domain of En-lil, a mere ghost whom the sorcerer could charm. But with his elevation to the rank of a god his attributes and character grew fixed and defined. In the ancient hymns addressed to him he is far more than a mere god of the moon. His worshipper at Ur, where he was known under the name of Nannar, addressed him as not only "lord of the moon," but also "prince of the gods," "the begetter of gods and men." It is thus that we read in an old bilingual hymn—

> "Father, long-suffering and full of
> forgiveness, whose hand upholds
> the life of all mankind,
> Lord, thy divinity, like the far-off
> heaven, fills the wide sea with
> fear ...
> Firstborn, omnipotent, whose

heart is immensity, and there is
none who shall discern it ...
Lord, the ordainer of the laws of
heaven and earth, whose
command may not be [broken]
...
In heaven, who is supreme?
Thou alone, thou art supreme!
On earth, who is supreme? Thou
alone, thou art supreme!
As for thee, thy will is made
known in heaven, and the angels
bow their faces.
As for thee, thy will is made
known on earth, and the spirits
below kiss the ground.
As for thee, thy will is blown on
high like the wind; the stall and
the fold are quickened.
As for thee, thy will is done on
the earth, and the herb grows
green."

Such language is fitter for a supreme Baal than for a local moon-god; and, in fact, it was as a supreme Baal rather than as a local moon-god that Nannar was adored [pg 317] at Ur. His connection with the moon was, as it were, an accident; the essential point about him was that he was the guardian god of the city. Its temple had been dedicated to him in prehistoric days, and with the rise of Semitic influence all the attributes associated with a Semitic Baal gathered round his person. He remained, it is true, a moon-god, but he was also more than a moon-god. He was the chief deity of a city whose kings had ruled throughout Babylonia, and carried their arms

to the distant West.

His transformation into a supreme Baal was doubtless assisted by the important place filled by the moon in early Babylonian culture. The moon was the measurer of time; the first calendar was a lunar one, and time was marked by the movements of the moon and not by those of the sun. It was on this account that the moon-god was called En-zu, "the lord of knowledge," by the Sumerians; through him they learned how to regulate the year and the festivals of the gods. Astronomy had been cultivated in Babylonia from the beginning of its history, and for a nation of astronomers the moon was naturally an object of veneration and regard. It was the symbol of law and order as well as of the light that illuminated the darkness of the night.

But we must notice that it was only at Ur and Harran that Sin or Nannar was thus elevated to the rank of a supreme Baal. The official theology refused to include him among the three chief gods of the land. He was, in fact, as Professor Hommel has shown, rather the Baal of the Semitics of Arabia and the West than of the Babylonians themselves, and the place occupied by his cult at Ur proves how completely this city lay outside the limits of the true Babylonia, and was peopled by an Arabian population.

The sun-god was born of the moon. The lunar year [pg 318] preceded the solar, and to the primitive Babylonian the moon was a more important agent of culture even than the sun.

Moreover, the sun seemed to rise from that world of night over which the moon held sway; the day was begotten by the night, and was accordingly reckoned from evening to evening. It is not until we come to the later age of Babylonian history that we find the old system making way for a new one, in which the day begins at midnight; and the 1st chapter of Genesis, with its "evening and morning," perpetuates the ancient system of Babylonian astronomy.

The sun-god was known under many names, and, like the moon-god, was worshipped in many of the Babylonian cities. But just as in historical times there were two chief seats of the worship of the moon-god,—at Ur in the south, and at Harran in the north,—so too there were two chief seats of the worship of the sun-god, one in Southern and the other in Northern Babylonia. The southern seat was Larsa, the northern Zimbir or Sippara on the borders of Mesopotamia. And as the moon-god of Ur was older than the moon-god of Harran, so there are reasons for thinking that the sun-god of Larsa was older than his rival at Sippara. Babylonian culture moved from south to north.

Both at Larsa and at Sippara the temple of the sun-god was called Ê-Babbara,—Bit-Uri in Semitic,—"the house of light." At Sippara it had been founded or restored by Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon of Akkad, in the early days of Semitic supremacy. The Sumerian Utu had already become the Semitic Samas, and clothed himself in the attributes of a Semitic

Bel. And therewith he had necessarily taken to himself a wife. This was Â, who, in becoming the consort of a Semitic Baal, was compelled to change her sex. For the Sumerian Â was a male god, a local sun-god, in fact, whom Professor [pg 319] Jastrow suggests may originally have been the sun-god of one of the separate villages out of the amalgamation of which the city of Sippara arose.[247] Sumerian grammar, however, did not recognise gender; so far as outward form was concerned, the same word, as in English, might be indifferently masculine or feminine, and there was therefore nothing in the name of Â itself which would forbid the foreigner from dealing with it as he would. Samas of Sippara needed a wife, and Â, despite her male origin, was accordingly given to him. But the gift was fatal to Â herself. She lost her individuality, and became the mere double of her husband. Samas absorbed her attributes and worship, and gradually she sinks out of sight, or survives only in the works of theological antiquarians or in the literature of the past.[248]

Hadad, the third in the second triad of the Babylonian State religion, had no city which he could peculiarly call his own. He had developed out of the Sumerian spirits of the storm, who revealed themselves in the raging wind or the tempest of rain. More than one elemental spirit or demon had gone to his making and there was consequently no single sanctuary in which his cult had been handed down from the beginning of time. Wherever

the storm raged or the deluge descended, Hadad was to be found, like the spirits from whom he had descended.

Under the influence of Semitic ideas he gradually became the god of the air. His old character, indeed never deserted him; up to the last he remained the divine power, who not only gave the fertilising rain in [pg 320] the thunder, and he carried the forked lightning in his hand. God of the air though he was, he continued to be the storm-god as well.

The god of the storm was naturally the god of the mountains. When the armies of Babylonia first made their way to the West, they found themselves in a land of mountains, where the storm burst suddenly upon them, and the streams flowed swollen with rain into the sea. Here, therefore, in the land of the Amorites the Babylonian seemed to have discovered the true home of the god he worshipped. Hadad was an Amorite rather than a Babylonian, and the title, accordingly, by which he was most frequently addressed in early days was that of "the Amorite god."

The title is Sumerian in origin, and must therefore have been given while as yet the Sumerian was dominant. This raises the question whether the name by which the god was subsequently known in Semitic Babylonia was not rather of Amorite than of Babylonian derivation. And there is much in favour of the view. Hadad, or Rimmon as he was also termed, was in a special way the god of Syria.

His worship was spread along the whole length of the Syrian seaboard, and we find him holding there the rank of a supreme Baal. It is not as the god of storms, but as the sun-god himself, that he was adored in Syria, and his very name there became synonymous with deity. That the Semitised Sumerian of Babylonia should have identified the supreme god of a land of mountains and storms with his own storm-god, we can understand; that the Syrian should have transferred the name of a Babylonian god of storms to his own chief Baal, would be difficult to explain. However this may be, the person of Hadad is peculiarly Semitic. [pg 321] The features which he inherited from his Sumerian ancestry were obscured or dropped, and he became in all respects a Semitic god. We need not be surprised, therefore, at finding that he was a special favourite in Assyria. Assur-nazir-pal calls him “the mightiest of the gods,” and the Assyrian troops in their onset are likened to him.[249]

The doctrine of the triad was not confined to the more prominent gods. It was extended to others also who occupied a lower rank in the divine hierarchy or in the public cult. Thus Samas helps to form the subordinate triad of Samas, Malik, and Bunênê, in which the local sun-gods, Malik and Bunênê, are distinguished from Samas of Sippara, and Bunênê is transformed into a female divinity, the consort of Malik. But in all cases the principle is the same. The Semitic conception of the divine family, husband, wife, and son,

is combined with the older ideas of genderless Sumerian, which placed the goddess on the same level as the god, and the result is a triad in which the Sumerian element has so far prevailed as to exclude the mother and son, and leave three gods of equal power and rank.[250]

[pg 322]
The Babylonian triad is thus in no way a trinity. The divine persons who compose it are coequal and independent one of the other, the sphere of each being limited by that of the other. But they divide the whole universe between them, or at all events that part of the universe over which their attributes and authority extend. They are partners with carefully defined powers, arranged in groups of three. None of them is a supreme Baal dominant over the other two. Nor, indeed, are they Baalim at all in the strict sense of the word. For the Semitic Baalim admitted of no such grouping; each was supreme god in his own locality, where his powers were neither shared nor limited by another god. A triad like that of Anu, Bel, and Ea could not exist where each local Baal claimed all the attributes that were divided between the three Babylonian deities, and its existence in Babylonia is one of many proofs that, though Babylonian religion in its later form was moulded by Semitic hands, the elements that composed it had come in large measure from an older faith.

[pg 323]

Lecture IV. The Sun-God And Istar.

It is thus that Nebuchadrezzar addresses his god in the plenitude of his glory and power—

"To Merodach, my lord, I prayed; I began to him my petition; the word of my heart sought him, and I said: 'O prince that art from everlasting, lord of all that exists, for the king whom thou lovest, whom thou callest by name, as it seems good unto thee thou guidest his name aright, thou watchest over him in the path of righteousness! I, the prince who obeys thee, am the work of thy hands; thou hast created me, and hast intrusted to me the sovereignty over multitudes of men, according to thy goodness, O lord, which thou hast made to pass over them all. Let me love thy supreme lordship, let the fear of thy divinity exist in my heart, and give what seemeth good unto thee, since thou maintainest my life.' Then he, the firstborn, the glorious, the leader of the gods, Merodach the prince, heard my prayer and accepted my petition."[251]

"To Merodach, my lord, I prayed, and lifted up my hand: 'O Merodach, (my) lord, the wise one of the gods, the mighty prince, thou didst create me and hast intrusted to me the dominion over multitudes of men; as my own dear life do I love the height of thy court; among all mankind have I not built a city of the earth fairer than thy city of Babylon. As I have loved the [pg 324] fear of thy divinity and have sought after thy lordship, accept the lifting up of my hands, hearken to my petition, for I the king am the adorner (of the shrine) who rejoices thy heart, an instructed ruler, the adorner of all thy fortresses.' "[252]

The god before whom the great Babylonian conqueror thus humbles himself in passionate devotion, was the divine guardian and lord of his capital city. Ever since the days when Babylon had been but one of the many villages of Babylonia, Merodach had been its presiding god. It was to him that Ê-Saggil, its sanctuary, was dedicated, and from him and his priesthood the kings of Babylon derived their right to rule. Merodach had given them their supremacy, first in Babylonia and then throughout Western Asia, and the supremacy he bestowed upon them was reflected upon himself. The god followed the fortunes of his city, because through him his city had risen to power; and he became Bel, "the lord," not for the inhabitant of Babylon only, but for all the civilised world. Like Amon of Thebes, Bel-Merodach of Babylon supplanted the older gods of the country because the city wherein he was worshipped supplanted the earlier

seats of Babylonian power.

Like Amon of Thebes, moreover, Merodach of Babylon owed much to his solar character. Youngest of the gods though he might be, he was yet a form of the sun-god,[253] and as such a representative and impersonation [pg 325] of the supreme Baal. However much his solar features were overshadowed by other attributes in later days, they were never wholly obscured, and his solar origin was remembered to the last. It was never forgotten that before he became the supreme Bel or "lord" of Babylonian theology he had been merely a local sun-god, like Utu of Larsa or Samas of Sippara.

We can even trace his cult to Sumerian days. A punning etymology, proposed for his name in an age when the true origin of it had been lost, made him the *amar-utuki* or "heifer of the goblin"; and the fact that the sun-god was known to have once been an *utuk* or "goblin" seemed to lend countenance to it. But when we first catch glimpses of his worship, he has already ceased to belong to the goblins of the night. He has been identified with Asari the son of Ea of Eridu, and has thus became the messenger and interpreter of the culture-god.

In the language of Sumer, Asari signified "the strong one" or "prince."[254] His name was expressed by two ideographs which denoted "place" and "eye," and had precisely the same meaning and form as the two which expressed the name of the Egyptian Osiris.[255] Between the Sumerian Asari and the Egyptian Osiris,

therefore, it seems probable that there was a connection. And to my mind the probability is raised to practical certainty by the fact that the character and attributes of both Asari and Osiris were the same. Osiris was Un-nefer, “the good being,” whose life was spent in benefiting and civilising mankind; Asari also was “the good heifer” [pg 326] (*amar-dugga*), and his common title was that of “the prince who does good to men” (*Aṡari-galu-dugga*). He it was who conveyed to men the teaching of Ea, who healed their diseases by means of his father's spells, and who “raised the dead to life.” Asari and Osiris are not only the same in name and pictorial representation, they play the same part in the history of religion and culture.

But there was one important difference between them. Osiris was a dead god, whose kingdom was in the other world; Asari brought help to the living, whom he restored from sickness and delivered from death. Even in Egypt, however, it was remembered that Osiris had been a god of the living before he was god of the dead. Tradition told how he had instructed men in the arts of life, and done for primeval Egypt what Ea and Asari had done for Chaldæa. The difference between him and Asari is a difference that runs through the whole of Egyptian and Babylonian theology. The Egyptian of the historical period fixed his eyes on the future life, and the god he worshipped accordingly was the god who judged and saved him in the other world; the religion of the Babylonian

was confined to this world, and it was in this world only that he was judged by the sun-god, and received his sentence of reward or punishment. The mummified sun-god did not exist for the Babylonians, for the practice of mummification was unknown among them.

It is possible that Aṡari, "the prince who does good to men," had been originally a title of Ea. If so, the title and the god had been separated from one another at an early epoch, and the title had become itself a god who owned Ea as his father. This relationship between Ea and his son betrays Semitic—or at all events foreign—influence. The ghosts and spirits of primitive Sumerian belief were not bound together by any such family ties; [pg 327] the demons of the night had little in common with the men they terrified and plagued. Asari had once been conceived of as a ram, Ea as an antelope; and between the ram and the antelope no genetic relationship was possible. They might be united together like the composite creatures which had come down to the Babylonians from the old Sumerian days, but there could be no birth of one from the other. Birth characterises the present creation in which like springs from like; it was only in the time of chaos that unlike forms could be mingled together in disorderly confusion.

That Asari was a sun-god follows from his identification with Merodach. Here and here only could have been the link which bound the two deities together.[256] But in passing into Merodach he lost his own personality.

Henceforth the son of Ea and the god of Babylon are one and the same.

It was but gradually that he attained his high position in the Babylonian pantheon. Ea and Asari were gods of the south; Babylon lay in the northern half of the country. There must therefore have been some special reason for the close connection that grew up between them. I know of no other that would account for it except the one I gave many years ago—that Babylon was a colony from Eridu. In this case we could understand why its local deity should have been a son of Ea, and how accordingly it became possible to identify him with that particular son of the god of Eridu whose attributes resembled his own.

It is difficult at present to trace the history of Merodach beyond the age of the dynasty of Khammurabi. [pg 328] It was then that Babylon became an imperial city, and the power of its god grew with the power of its rulers. The dynasty was Semitic, though of foreign origin; and we may gather from the names of the first two kings that the ancestral god of the family had been Ṡamu[257] or Shem. But with the possession of Babylon the manners and religion of Babylonia were adopted; the fourth king of the dynasty bears a Babylonian name,[258] and his grandson ascribes his victories to the god of Babylon.

Merodach is invested by Khammurabi with all the attributes of a supreme Semitic Baal. His solar character falls into the background; he becomes the lord of gods and men, who

delivers the weak and punishes the proud. The office of judge, which belonged to him as the sun-god, is amplified; the wisdom he had derived from Ea is made part of his original nature; his quality of mercy is insisted on again and again. Like the Semitic Baal, he is the father of his people, the mighty king who rules the world and occupies the foremost place in the council of the gods. Already the son of Khammurabi declares that the older Bel of Nippur had transferred to Merodach the sovereignty of the civilised world; the power of Nippur and its priesthood had passed to Babylon, and its god had to make way for a younger rival. As long as Babylon remained the capital of the kingdom, the Bel or "lord" of Babylonia was Merodach. The god followed the fortunes of his State.

The sanctity that had lingered for so many centuries around the temple of Nippur now passed to Ê-Saggil, the temple of Merodach. The priests of Merodach inherited the rights and functions of the priests of En-lil. From henceforth it was Merodach and his priests who could [pg 329] make and unmake kings; it was only the prince who had "taken the hand of Bel" of Babylon, and thereby been adopted as his son, that could claim legitimate rule. The descendants of the conquerors who had carried Babylonian culture to the lands of the West, derived their title to dominion not from Nippur, but from Babylon, and it was forgotten that the title had ever had any other source. The lordship of the world had indeed been transferred to a

new god and a new city; Zeus had supplanted his father Kronos.

A sort of pæan in praise of Merodach, which is supposed to form part of the Epic of the Creation, describes how the god of Babylon received the names, and therewith the attributes and powers, of the older deities. In the great assembly of the gods he was greeted as their Zi or "Life,"[259] then as Ea under his name of "god of divine life," then as Hadad or the god of "the good wind,"[260] and finally as Sin with "the divine crown," in whose name he became "the merciful one who brings back the dead to life." The ceremony was not concluded until he had received all "the fifty names of the great gods," whose virtues and essence had thus, as it were, passed into himself. Not only was he their heir, he also absorbed their whole being, and so became one with his father, who is made to say: "He is become even as myself, for Ea is (now) his name."

In these words we are brought very near to the [pg 330] Egyptian doctrine which transmuted one god into another, and saw in them only so many forms of the same divinity. But the stage of pantheism was never reached in Babylonia. The Semitic element in Babylonian religion was too strong to admit of it; the attributes and character of each deity were too clearly cut and defined, and the Semitic mind was incapable of transforming the human figures of the gods into nebulous abstractions. The god was too much of a man, moving in too well marked a

sphere, to be resolved into a mere form or manifestation. Merodach might receive from the other gods their attributes and the power to exercise them, but it was delegation and not absorption. The other gods still retained the attributes that belonged to them, and the right to use them if they would. Merodach was their vicegerent and successor rather than themselves under another form.

Hence it is that the human element in the Babylonian god predominated over the abstract and divine. His solar attributes fell into the background, and he became more and more the representative of a human king who rules his people justly, and whose orders all are bound to obey. He became, in fact, a Semitic Baal, made in human form, and consequently conceived of as an exaggerated or superhuman man. The other gods are his subjects, not forms under which he can reveal himself; they retain their individualities, and constitute his court. There is no nebulosity, no pantheism, in the religion of Semitic Babylonia; the formless divinity and the animal worship of Egypt are alike unknown to it. As is the man, so is the god, for the one has been made in the likeness of the other.

Nevertheless the solar origin of Merodach left its impress upon the theology of the State. It had much to do with that process of identifying one god with another, [pg 331] which, as we have seen, tended to approximate the doctrines of Babylonia to those of Egypt. Though the individual gods were distinguished and marked off from one

another like individual men, it was yet possible to get as it were behind the individual traits, and find in certain of them a common element in which their individual peculiarities were lost. The name, so the Babylonian believed, was the essence of the person or thing to which it was attached; that which had no name did not exist, and its existence commenced only when it received its name. A nameless god could not exist any more than a nameless man, and a knowledge of his name brought with it a knowledge of his real nature and powers. But a name was transferable; it could be taken from one object and given to another, and therewith the essential characteristics which had belonged to the first would become the property of the other.

When the name was changed, the person or thing was changed along with it. To give Merodach another name, therefore, was equivalent to changing his essential characteristics, and endowing him with the nature and properties of another god. The solar character which belonged to him primitively gave the first impulse to this transference and change of name. There were other solar deities in Babylonia, with distinct personalities of their own, for they were each called by an individual name. But the sun which they typified and represented was the same everywhere, and the attributes of the solar divinity differed but little in the various States of Semitic Babylonia. It was easy, therefore, to assign to the one the name of

another, and the assignment brought with it a change of personality. With the name came the personality of the god to whom it originally belonged, and who now, as it were, lost his individual existence. It passed into the person of the [pg 332] other deity; the two gods were identified together; but it was not by the absorption of the one into the other but by the loss of individual existence on the part of one of them. It was no resolution of two independent beings into a common form, but rather the substitution of one individual for another.

This process of assimilation was assisted by the Babylonian conception of the goddess. By the side of the god, the goddess was little more than a colourless abstraction which owed its origin to the necessities of grammar. The individual element was absent; all that gave form and substance to the goddess was the particular name she happened to bear. Without the name she had no existence, and the name itself was but an epithet which could be interchanged with another epithet at the will of the worshipper. The goddesses of Babylonia were thus like the colours of a kaleidoscope, constantly shifting and passing one into another. As long as the name existed, indeed, there was an individuality attached to it; but with the change of name the individuality changed too. The individuality depended more on the name in the case of the goddess than in the case of the god; for the goddess possessed nothing but the name which she could call her own, while the god

was conceived of as a human lord and master with definite powers and attributes. There was, it is true, one goddess, Istar, who resembled the god in this respect; but it was just the goddess Istar who retained her independent personality with as much tenacity as the gods.

When once the various sun-gods of Babylonia had been assimilated, or identified, one with the other, it was not difficult to extend the process yet further. As the city of Merodach increased in power, lording it over the other States of the country, and giving to their inhabitants [pg 333] its own name, so Merodach himself took precedence over the older gods of Babylonia, and claimed the authority and the attributes which had belonged to them. Their names, and therewith their powers, were transferred to him; the supremacy of En-lil, the wisdom of Ea, the glory of Anu, alike became his. The “tablets of destiny,” which conferred on their possessor the government of the visible world, were taken from the older Bel and given to his younger rival; the wisdom of which Merodach had once been the interpreter now became his own; and, like Anu, his rule extended to the farthest regions of the sky. But in thus taking the place of the great gods of earth and heaven, Merodach was at the same time the inheritor and owner of their names. If the tablets of destiny had passed into his possession, it was because he had assumed along with them the name of Bel; if Ea and Anu had yielded to him their ancient

prerogatives, it was because he had himself been transformed into the Ea and Anu of the new official theology. The Babylonian hymn in honour of Merodach, when it declares that the fifty names of the great gods had been conferred upon him, only expresses in another form the conviction that he had entered into the heritage of the older gods.

As time went on, and Babylon continued to be the sovereign city of the kingdom, the position of its god became at once more exalted and more secure. The solar features in his character passed out of sight; he was not only the giver of the empire of the world to his adopted son and vicegerent, the king of Babylon, he was also the divine counterpart and representative of the king in heaven. The god had made man in his own image, and he was now transformed into the likeness of men. Two ideas, consequently, struggled for the mastery in Babylonian religion—the anthropomorphic [pg 334] conception of the deity, and the belief in his identification with other gods; and the result was an amalgamation of the two. Merodach was the divine man, freed from the limitations of our mortal existence, and therefore able not only to rule over the other gods, but also, like the magician, to make their natures his own. The other gods continued to exist indeed, but it was as his subjects who had yielded up to him their powers, and of whom, accordingly, he could dispose as seemed to him good. Originally the first among his peers, he ended —at least in the belief of the native of

Babylon—in becoming supreme over them, and absorbing into himself all the attributes and prerogatives of divinity.

It was not, however, till the closing days of Babylonian independence that an attempt was made to give outward and visible expression to the fact. Nabonidos, the last king of Babylon and the nominee of its priesthood, took the images of the gods from their ancient shrines and carried them to Babylon. There, in the temple of Merodach, they formed as it were his court, bowing in reverence before him, when, on the festival of the New Year, he announced the destinies of the future. It was an effort to centralise the religion of the country, and give public proof of the supremacy of the god of Babylon. Like the parallel endeavour of Hezekiah in Judah, the attempt of Nabonidos naturally aroused the hostility of the local priesthoods; and, when Cyrus invaded the country, there was already a party in it ready to welcome him as a deliverer, and to maintain that Merodach himself had been angered by the sacrilegious king. The attempt, indeed, came too late, and Nabonidos was too superstitious and full of respect for the older sanctuaries and gods of Babylonia to carry it out in other than a half-hearted way. But it indicated the tendency of religious thought, and the direction in [pg 335] which the official worship of Merodach was irresistibly bearing its adherents. Merodach, like his city, was supreme, and the older gods were surely passing away.

The tendency was checked, however, by the

long continuity of Babylonian history. Babylonian records went back far beyond the days when Babylon had become the capital of the kingdom. It was remembered that there had been other centres of power, in ages when as yet Babylon was but an obscure village. It was never forgotten that the god of Nippur had once made and unmade kings, that Akkad had been the seat of an empire, or that Ur had preceded Babylon as the capital of the ruling dynasty. Babylonian history did not begin with the rise of Babylon to power, much as the priests of Babylon wished to make it do so; and the chronological schemes which made a native of Babylon the first ruler of mankind, or traced to Babylon the first observations of astronomy, were but fictions which a little acquaintance with history could easily refute. The earlier cities of the land were proud of their traditions and their temples, and were not inclined to give them up in favour of the *parvenu* city of Merodach; their religious corporations were still wealthy, and their sanctuaries still commanded the reverence of the people. Wholly to displace and efface them was impossible, as long as history continued to be written and the past to be remembered. The sun-god of Sippara, the moon-god of Ur or Harran, even En-lil of Nippur, all remained the rivals of Merodach down to the latest days of Babylonian existence. Nabonidos himself was forced to conform to the prevailing sentiment; he bestowed almost as much care on the temple of the moon-god at Harran, and the temple of the sun-god at Sippara, as upon that of

Merodach at Babylon, though, it is true, he tells us that it was Merodach who bade him restore the sanctuary of [pg 336] Sin, while the sun-god of Sippara might be considered to be Merodach himself under another name.[261]

It was thus history which prevented the rise of anything like monotheism in Babylonia. It was impossible to break with the past, and the past was bound up with polytheism and with the existence of great cities, each with its separate god and sanctuary and the minor divinities who revolved around them. At the same time the tendency to monotheism existed; and could the Babylonian have blotted out the past, it might have ended in the worship of but one god. As it was, the language of the later inscriptions sometimes approaches very nearly that of the monotheist. When Nebuchadrezzar prays to Merodach, his words might often have been those of a Jew; and even at an earlier date the moon-god is called by his worshipper "supreme" in earth and heaven, omnipotent and creator of all things; while an old religious poem refers, in the abstract, to "the god" who confers lordship on men. As was long ago pointed out by Sir H. Rawlinson, Anu, whose written name became synonymous with "god," is identified with various cosmic deities, both male and female, in a theological list;[262] and Dr. Pinches has published a tablet in which the chief divinities of the Babylonian pantheon are resolved into forms of Merodach.[263] En-lil becomes "the Merodach of sovereignty," Nebo

"the Merodach of earthly possessions," Nergal "the Merodach of war." This is but another way of expressing that identification of [pg 337] the god of Babylon with the other deities of Babylonian belief which, as we have seen, placed him at the head of the divine hierarchy, and, by depriving them of their attributes and powers, tended to reduce them into mere angel-ministers of a supreme god.

There was yet another cause which prevented the religion of Babylonia from assuming a monotheistic form. As we have seen, the majority of the Babylonian goddesses followed the usual Semitic type, and were little else than reflections of the male divinity. But there was one goddess who retained her independence, and claimed equal rank with the gods. Against her power and prerogatives the influence of Semitic theology contended in vain. The Sumerian element continued to exist in the mixed Babylonian nation, and, like the woman who held a position in it which was denied her where the Semite was alone dominant, the goddess Istar remained the equal of the gods. Even her name never assumed the feminine termination which denoted the Semitic goddess; Semitised though she might be, she continued to be essentially a Sumerian deity.

Many years ago, in my Hibbert Lectures, I first drew attention to the fact that Istar belonged to the non-Semitic part of the Babylonian population, and in both name and attributes was foreign to Semitic modes of thought. The best proof of this is to be found

in the transformations she underwent when her worship was carried by Babylonian culture to the more purely Semitic peoples of the West. In Arabia and Moab she became a male deity; the ideas and functions connected with her were incompatible in the Semitic mind with the conception of a female divinity. Even in Babylonia itself there were those who believed in a male Istar;[264] and the [pg 338] official theology itself spoke of an androgynous deity, of an Istar who was at once a goddess and a god.[265] In Canaan, where her female nature was accepted, she was changed into a Semitic goddess; the feminine suffix was attached to her name, and her attributes were assimilated to those of the native goddess Ashêrah. In Assyria, too, we can see the same process going on. The name of Istar with the feminine termination of Semitic grammar becomes a mere synonym of "goddess," and, as in Canaan, the Istars, or rather the Ashtoreths, mean merely the goddesses of the popular cult, the female counterparts of the Baalim or "Baals." It was only the State religion, which had its roots in Babylonia, that prevented Istar of Nineveh or Istar of Arbela from becoming a Canaanitish Ashtoreth.

This was the fate that had actually befallen some of the old Sumerian deities. In the Sippara of Semitic days, for example, the wife of the sun-god was the goddess Â. But Â had once been the sun-god himself, and texts exist in which he is still regarded as a god. Sumerian grammar was genderless; there was

no distinction in it between masculine and feminine, and the divine names of the Sumerian pantheon could consequently be classified by the Semite as he would. He had only to apply a feminine epithet to one of them, and it forthwith became the name of a goddess. Sippara already had its sun-god Samas: there was no room for another, and Â accordingly became his wife. But in becoming his wife she lost her individuality; her attributes and powers were absorbed by Samas, and in the later Semitic [pg 339] theology she serves only to complete the divine family or triad.

Istar succeeded in escaping any such effacement or degradation. Her worship was too deeply rooted in Babylonia, and too intimately associated with the religious traditions of the past. The same historical reasons which prevented monotheism from developing out of Babylonian polytheism prevented Istar from degenerating into an Ashtoreth. At times she came perilously near to such a fate: in the penitential psalms we find the beginnings of it; and, when Babylon became the head of the kingdom, the supremacy of Merodach threatened the independence and authority of Istar even more than it threatened those of the other "great gods." But the cult of Istar had been fixed and established long before Merodach was more than a petty provincial god; she was the goddess and patroness of Erech, and Erech had once been the capital of a Babylonian empire. It was needful that that fact should be

forgotten before Istar could be dethroned from the position she held in the religion of Babylonia, whether official or popular.

All attempts to find a Semitic etymology for the name of Istar have been a failure. We must be content to leave it unexplained, and to recognise the foreign character both of the name and of the goddess whom it represented. In Babylonia the name was never Semitised; the character of the goddess, on the other hand, was adapted, though imperfectly, to Semitic modes of thought. She took upon her the attributes of a Baal, and presided over war as well as over love. One result of this mingling of Semitic and Sumerian ideas was the difficulty of fitting her into the family system of Semitic theology. She could not have a wife, for she was a goddess; it was equally difficult to assign to her [pg 340] her shadow and counterpart, which was contrary to all the preconceptions of the Semitic mind. Generally, therefore, if not officially, she was conceived of as a virgin, or at all events as a goddess who might indulge in amours so long as they did not lead to regular marriage. Even Tammuz was the bridegroom rather than the husband of her youth, and he too had been banished to the darkness of the underground world long before Istar herself had interfered with the affairs of men. She has been described as the female principle corresponding with the male principle in the world: but the description is incorrect; she was rather the male principle in female form.

Istar at the outset was the spirit of the evening star. In days, however, when astronomy was as yet in its infancy, the evening and the morning stars were believed to be the same. It was only in aftertimes that an endeavour was made to distinguish between the Istar of the evening and the Istar of the morning. Originally they were one and the same, the herald at once of night and day. It was on this account that Istar was associated with Ana, the sky. The sky was her father, for she was born from it at sunset and dawn; and if other traditions or myths made her the daughter of the moon-god, they were not accepted at Erech, the centre and source of her cult.

In virtue of her origin she formed a triad with Samas and Sin. The sun, the moon, and the evening star divided, as it were, the heavens between them, and presided over its destinies. They were the luminaries that regulated the seasons of the year and determined the orderly course of the present creation. Istar represents “the stars ” of Genesis that were made with the sun and moon. But in the Babylonian system the triad of Istar, Sin, and Samas was not made, they were deities that [pg 341] were born. Before them was the older and higher triad of Anu, Bel, and Ea,—the sky, the earth, and the water,—the three elements of which the whole universe was formed.

How the spirit of the evening star came in time to be the goddess of love, is not difficult to understand. Even modern poets have sung

of the evening as the season of lovers, when the work and business of the day are over, and words of love can be whispered under the pale light of the evening star. But this alone will not explain the licentious worship that was carried on at Erech in the name of Istar. It was essentially Semitic in its character, and illustrates that intensity of belief which made the Semite sacrifice all he possessed to the deity whom he adored. The prostitution that was practised in the name of Istar had the same origin as the sacrifice of the firstborn, or the orgies that were celebrated in the temples of the sun-god.

At Erech, Istar was served by organised bands of unmarried maidens who prostituted themselves in honour of the goddess. The prostitution was strictly religious, as much so as the ceremonial cannibalism formerly prevalent among the South Sea Islanders. In return for the lives they led, the “handmaids of Istar” were independent and free from the control of men. They formed a religious community, the distinguishing feature of which was the power of indulging the passions of womanhood without the disabilities which amongst a Semitic population these would otherwise have brought. The “handmaid of Istar” owned allegiance only to the goddess she served. Her freedom was dependent on her priesthood, but in return for this freedom she had to give up all the pleasures of family life. It was a self-surrender which placed the priestess outside the restrictions of the family code,

and was yet for the sake of a [pg 342] principle which made that family code possible. Baal, the lord of the Semitic family, claimed the firstborn as his right, and Istar or Ashtoreth similarly demanded the service of its daughters.

It was the same in Canaan as at Erech. Did the rites, and the beliefs on which the rites were based, migrate from Babylonia to the West along with Babylonian culture, or were they a common Semitic heritage in which Erech and Phœnicia shared alike? It is difficult to give a precise answer to the question. On the one hand, we know that the Ashtoreth of Canaan was of Babylonian birth, and that in days far remote the theology of the Canaanite was profoundly influenced by that of Babylonia; on the other hand, the rites with which Istar was worshipped were confined in Babylonia to Erech; it was there only that her "handmaids" and eunuch-priests were organised into communities, and that unspeakable abominations were practised in her name. The Istar who was adored elsewhere was a chaste and passionless goddess, the mother of her people whom she had begotten, or their stern leader in war. It does not seem likely that a cult which was unable to spread in Babylonia or Assyria should nevertheless have taken deep root in Phœnicia, had there not already been there a soil prepared to receive it. Erech was essentially a Semitic city; its supreme god Anu had all the features of the Semitic Baal, "the lord of heaven"; and its goddess Istar,

Sumerian though she may have been in origin, like Anu himself, had clothed herself in a Semitic dress.

Moreover, there was another side to the worship of Istar which bears indirect testimony to the Semitic origin of her cult at Erech. By the side of the Istar of the official faith there was another Istar, who presided over magic and witchcraft. Her priestesses were the [pg 343] witches who plied their unholy calling under the shadow of night, and mixed the poisonous philtres which drained away the strength of their hapless victims. The black Istar, as we may call her, was a parody of the goddess of love; and the rites with which she was adored, and the ministers by whom she was served, were equally parodies of the cult that was carried on at Erech. But the black Istar was not only a parody of the goddess of the State religion, she was also the Istar of the popular creed, of the creed of that part of the population, in fact, which was least intermixed with Semitic elements and least influenced by Semitic beliefs. It was amongst this portion of the nation that the old Sumerian animism lingered longest and resisted the purer teaching of the educated class. The Semitic conceptions which underlay the worship of Istar at Erech were never thoroughly assimilated by it; all that it could do was to create a parody and caricature of the official cult, adapting it to those older beliefs and ideas which bad found their centre in the temple of En-lil. The black Istar was a

Sumerian ghost masquerading in Semitic garb.

As Bel attracted to himself the other gods, appropriating their names and therewith their essence and attributes, so Istar attracted the unsubstantial goddesses of the Babylonian pantheon. They became mere epithets of the one female divinity who maintained her independent existence by the side of the male gods. One by one they were identified with her person, and passed into the Istarât, or Istars, of the later creed. Like the Baalim, the Istarât owed what separate individuality they possessed to geography. On the theological side the Istar of Nineveh was identical with the Istar of Arbela; what distinguished them was the local sphere over which they held jurisdiction. The difference between them was purely geographical: the one was [pg 344] attached to a particular area over which her power extended, and where she was adored, while the other was the goddess of another city—that was all. It was the same goddess, but a different local cult. The deity remained the same, but her relations, both to her worshippers and to the other gods, were changed. There is no transmutation of form as in Egypt, but a change of relations, which have their origin in geographical variety.

In Babylonia, however, Istar was not so completely without a rival as she was in Assyria. There was another city of ancient fame which, like Erech, was under the protection of a goddess rather than of a god. This was one of the two Sipparas on the banks

of the Euphrates, which is distinguished in the inscriptions from the Sippara of Samas as the Sippara of Anunit. The feminine termination of the name of Anunit indicates that here again we have a goddess who, in the form in which we know her, is essentially Semitic. But it is only in the form in which we know her that such is the case. The origin of Anunit goes back to Sumerian times. She was in the beginning merely an Anunna or "spirit" of the earth, as sexless as the other spirits of Sumerian belief, and lacking all the characteristics of a Semitic divinity.[266] It was not till Sippara became the seat of a Semitic empire that the Anunna or Sumerian "spirit" was transformed into Anunit the goddess. The [pg 345] transformation here was accompanied by the same outward change as that which turned the Babylonian Istar into the Ashtoreth of Canaan. For a time it seemed as though Anunit rather than Istar would become the supreme goddess of Semitic cult; but the political predominance of Sippara passed away with the fall of the empire of Sargon of Akkad, and historical conservatism alone preserved the name and influence of its goddess. As time went on, Anunit tended more and more to sink into the common herd of Babylonian goddesses, or to be identified with Istar. As long as the Sumerian element continued to be strong in the Babylonian people and their religion, Anunit retained the position which the mixture of the Semite and Sumerian had created for her; with the growing dominance of the Semitic spirit, her independence and individuality departed, and

she became, like Beltis or Gula, merely the female complement of the god. Perhaps the process was hastened by the grammatical termination that had been added to her name.

Wherever, in fact, Semitic influence prevailed, the goddess, as opposed to the god, tended to disappear. It was but a step from the conception of a god with a colourless counterpart, whose very existence seemed to be due to the necessities of grammar, to that of a deity who absorbed within himself the female as well as the male principles of the universe, and who stood alone and unmated. A goddess who depended for her existence on a grammatical accident could have no profound or permanent hold on the belief of the people; she necessarily fell into the background, and the prerogatives which had belonged to her were transferred to the god. Istar herself, thanks to the masculine form of her name, became a god in Southern Arabia, and was identified with Chemosh in Moab, while even in Babylonia and [pg 346] Assyria she assumed the attributes of a male divinity, and was adored as the goddess of war as well as of love.[267] In Assyria, indeed, her warlike character predominated: she took the place of the war-gods of Babylonia, and armed herself with the falchion and bow.

I shall have hereafter to point out how this tendency on the part of the goddess to vanish, as it were, out of sight, leaving the god alone in possession, resulted in Assyria in raising its supreme god Assur to something of the position occupied by Yahveh in Israel. Assur

is wifeless; now and again, it is true, a wife is assigned to him by the pedantry of the scribes, but who it should be was never settled; and that he needed a wife at all, was never acknowledged generally. Like Chemosh in Moab, Assur reigns alone; and though the immemorial influence of Babylonia kept alive the worship of Istar by the side of him, it was Assur and Assur only who led the Assyrian armies to victory, and in whose name they subdued the disobedient. It was not until the kings of Assyria became kings also of Babylon that Istar encroached on the rights of Assur, or that an Assyrian monarch betook himself to her rather than to the god of his fathers in the hour of his necessity. As long as the capital remained at the old city of Assur, none but the god Assur might direct the counsels and campaigns of its princes, or confer upon them the crown of sovereignty. When Tiglath-pileser III. acknowledged himself the son of Bel-Merodach, and received from his hands the right to rule, it was a sign that the older Assyrian dynasty had passed away, that the kingdom had become a cosmopolitan empire, and that the venerable traditions [pg 347] of Babylon had subjugated its conquerors from the north. The mixed races of Babylonia had overcome the purer Semites of Assyria, Istar had prevailed against Assur, and Semitic monotheism sought a home in the further West.

[pg 348]

Lecture V. Sumerian And Semitic Conceptions Of The Divine: Assur And Monotheism.

In the preceding lectures I have assumed that the conception of the deity which we find in the later historical monuments of Babylonia and Assyria was of Semitic origin, differing radically from that formed of the godhead by the earlier Sumerian population. But it will doubtless be asked what basis there is for such an assumption; why may we not suppose that the later conception has developed naturally and without any violent break from older beliefs which were equally Semitic? Why, in short, must we regard the animism which underlay the religion of Babylonia as Sumerian, and not rather as the earliest form of Semitic faith?

The first and most obvious answer to the question would be, the fact that the older names of the superhuman beings who became the gods of the later creed are not Semitic, but Sumerian. En-lil of Nippur is the Sumerian En-lila, “lord of the ghost(s)”; when he becomes a Semitic god he receives the Semitic title of Bilu, Baal, “the lord.” And the further fact that in many cases the Sumerian name continued to be used in Semitic times, sometimes slightly changed, sometimes

adapted to the needs of Semitic grammar, proves not only that the Sumerian preceded the Semitic, but also that the Sumerian cult on its literary and philological side was assimilated by the Semitic settlers in Babylonia. The gods and [pg 349] goddesses of Babylonia were Sumerian before they were Semitic; though they wear a Semitic dress, we have to seek their ancestry outside the Semitic world of ideas.

As we know them, they are clothed in human form. The deities whose figures are found on the seal-cylinders of Babylonia or engraved on the walls of the Assyrian palaces are all alike in "the likeness of man." Bel-Merodach is as much a man as the king whom he adopted as his son; the sun-god who rises between the twin mountains of the dawn steps forth as a human giant to run his course; and Istar is a woman in mind and thought as well as in outward form. There are no animal gods in Babylonia, no monstrous combinations of man and beast such as meet us in the theology of Egypt. Not but that such combinations were known to the Babylonians. But they belonged to the primeval world of chaos; they were the brood of Tiamât, the dragon of lawlessness and night, the demons who had been banished into outer darkness beyond the world of light and of god-fearing men. Like the devils of medieval belief, they were the divine beings of an alien faith which the gods of the new-comers had exiled to the limbo of a dead past. Even the subterranean Hades of Semitic Babylonia recognised them not. The

gods worshipped by the Semite were Baalim or “Lords,” like the men whom they protected, and whose creators they were believed to be.

Wherever the pure Semite is found, this belief in the anthropomorphic character of the deity is found also. Perhaps it is connected with that distinguishing characteristic of his grammar which divides the world into the masculine and the feminine, the male and the female. At any rate the Semite made his god in the likeness of men, and taught, conversely, that men had been made in the likeness of the gods. The two beliefs are but the [pg 350] counter sides of the same shield; the theomorphic man implies an anthropomorphic god. The god, in fact, was but an amplified man with amplified human powers; his shape was human, so too were his passions and his thoughts. Even the life that was in man was itself the breath of the god. That man was not immortal like the gods, was but an accident; he had failed to eat of the food of immortality or to drink of the waters of life, and death therefore reigned in this lower world. The gods themselves might die; Tammuz, the spouse of Istar, had been slain by the boar's tusk of angry summer, and carried into the realm of Hades,[268] and the temple of Merodach at Babylon was also known as his tomb. As the gods were born, so could they die; they could marry also and beget children, and they needed meat and drink like the sons of men. Indeed, the world of the gods was a duplicate and counterpart of

the world of mankind. On “the mountain of the world,” the Babylonian Olympos, [pg 351] the supreme god held his court; around him were ranged his subjects and servants, for there were servants in heaven as there were on earth; celestial armies went forth at his bidding, and there were wars among the gods as among men. Even theft was not unknown among them; a legend tells us, for instance, how the god Zu stole the tablets of destiny which were hung like the Urim and Thummim on the breast of “father Bel,” and therewith acquired for awhile the right and power to control the fate of the universe. As far back as we can trace the history of Semitic religion, whether in Babylonia, in Canaan, or in Arabia, its fundamental conception is always the same; the gods are human, and men are divine.

It is not surprising, therefore, that as soon as the Semitic element becomes paramount in Babylonia, the king becomes a god. At Babylon he was made the adopted son of Bel-Merodach by taking the hand of the deity, and thereby became himself a Bel, a ruler of “the people of Bel” over whom he was henceforth to exercise undisputed lordship. In earlier days, Sargon of Akkad, the founder of the first Semitic empire in Western Asia, and his son Naram-Sin, were explicitly deified. Naram-Sin is even addressed as “the god of Akkad”;[269] and a seal-cylinder found by Gen. di Cesnola in Cyprus describes its owner as “the servant of the god Naram-Sin.”[270] The title of “god” is assumed by the Semitic

successors of Sargon, to whatever city or dynasty they belonged; even the Sumerian princes in Southern Babylonia followed the example of their Semitic suzerains, and [pg 352] Gudea, the high priest of Lagas, built temples to his own godhead, where for long centuries his cult continued to be observed, and sacrifices and offerings to be made to him.[271] The occupation of Babylonia by the Arab or Canaanite dynasty to which Amraphel belonged, made no difference in the divine honours paid to the king; he still assumed the title of "god," and his subjects adored him by the side of Bel. But a change came with the conquest of Babylonia by Kassite hordes from the mountains of Elam; the foreign kings ceased to be divine, and the title of "god" is given to them no more. As the doctrine of the divine right of kings passed away in England with the Stuarts, so too the belief in the divinity of the king disappeared in Babylonia with the fall of the Semitic dynasties. Nothing could show more plainly its essentially Semitic origin, and the little hold it possessed upon the non-Semitic part of the population. The king was a god only so long as he was a Semite, or subject to Semitic influence and supremacy.

The apotheosis of the king is thus coeval with the rise of Semitic domination in Babylonia. In the older Sumerian epoch we look in vain for any traces of it. Man was not yet divine, for the gods were not yet human. There was as yet no Semitic Bel, and En-lil of Nippur was but a "lord of ghost(s)."

But we have better testimony to the fact than the ghosts of Nippur. Behind the human figures of the Semitic gods the primitively pictorial character of the cuneiform signs enables us to discern the lineaments of figures that belong to a wholly different sphere of religious thought. They are the figures not of men, but of brute beasts. The name of En-lil was denoted by a composite sign which represented the word *elim*, "a ram";[272] that of [pg 353] Ea by the ideograph which stood for *dara*, "the antelope."[273] En-lil, accordingly, was once a ram; Ea, an antelope. There are other deities which reveal their first shapes in similar fashion. The wife of Hadad, for example, was Azaga-śuga, "the milch-goat" of En-lil, from whom the primitive Sumerian shepherd derived his milk.[274] Merodach himself, or rather his Sumerian prototype at Eridu, was once Asari-elim, "the princely ram";[275] a striking title when we remember that Osiris, too, was addressed in Egypt as Ati, "the prince," and identified with the ram of Mendes. Even Zu, the divine thief who stole the tablets of destiny, was the storm-bird, the forefather alike of the roc of the *Arabian Nights* and of the Chinese storm-bird, "which, in flying, obscures the sun, and of whose quills the water-tuns are made."

In many cases, however, the original forms of the Babylonian divinities survived only in the animals upon whose backs they were depicted as standing, or with whom the gem-cutter associated them on seals.[276] Now and again an attempt was made to combine them with the

human figure. Thus Ea is at times represented as clothed in the skin of a fish, a fitting symbol of the relation between the newer and older religions of Babylonia and the antagonistic views of the godhead entertained [pg 354] by the races that dwelt there. At other times the animal form is relegated to that great company of demons and inferior spirits amongst whom room was found for the multitudinous ghosts of Sumerian belief. Where it is not altogether excluded from the world of gods and men, it exists only as the humble retainer of one of the human gods. As Merodach was accompanied by his four divine dogs, so Ea was attended by sacred bulls. They guarded the approach to the "field" and "house of Eden," like the colossal figures, with bull-like bodies and the heads of men, that guarded the gates of the palace or temple. They were, in fact, the cherubim who forbade approach to the tree of life (or knowledge),—that sacred palm which an old Babylonian hymn tells us was planted beside the pathway of Ea in Eridu, where the god had his house in the centre of the earth, pouring from his hands the waters of fertility that flowed down in the twofold streams of the Tigris and Euphrates.[277] In later art, however, the bull-like form disappeared, and the guardians of the sacred tree were represented in human shape, but with the heads of eagles. The change of form was due to the same striving to humanise the superhuman beings of Sumerian belief as that which had given a man's head to the colossal bulls; where the divine being had become a

god in the Semitic sense of the word, all traces of his bestial origin were swept away; where he remained as it were only on the margin of the divine world, the bestial element was thrust as far as possible out of sight, and combined with the features of a man. The cherub was allowed to retain his bull's body or his eagle's head, but it was on condition that he never [pg 355] rose to the rank of a god, and that human members were combined with his animal form.

The secondary creatures of the divine world of the Babylonians thus resembled, in outward form, the gods of Egypt. But whereas in Egypt it was the gods themselves who joined the head of the beast to the body of the man, in Babylonia it was only the semi-divine spirits and monsters of the popular creed who were thus partly bestial and partly human. The official theology could not banish them altogether; they became accordingly the servants and followers of the gods, or else the rabble-host of Tiamât, the impersonation of chaos and sin. Like the devils and angels of medieval belief, they were included among the three hundred spirits of heaven and the six hundred spirits of earth.[278] The spirits of heaven formed “the hosts” of which the supreme deity was lord, and whom he led into battle against his foes; Nebo was the minister and lieutenant of Merodach and “the hosts of the heaven and earth,” therefore it was his duty to muster and drill.[279] The Anunna-ki or “spirits of earth” had their habitation in the subterranean world of

Hades, where they sat on a throne of gold guarding the waters of life, while the Igigi or angels dwelt rather with the gods in the heaven of light and blissfulness. It was on this account that Assur-nazir-pal calls Nin-ip "the champion of the Igigi," and that elsewhere the god receives the title of "chief of the angels." But it was only in the later ages of Babylonian religion, when the Semitic conception of divinity had become predominant, [pg 356] that a distinction was made between the spirits of the earth and the air. It was only for the Semites that there were spirits of the underworld and angels of heaven; the Sumerian had known no difference between them; they were all alike Anunnas or spirits, and Nin-ip had been lord, not of the Igigi alone, but of the Anunna-ki as well.[280] He had, in fact, been one of them himself; he was the minister and attendant of En-lil, and it was never forgotten that, like the Anunna-ki, he was the "offspring of Ê-kur," the name at once of the temple of Nippur and of the underground world of Hades. Sometimes he is said to have sprung from Ê-sarra, "the house of the (spirit)-hosts." He had been a ghost in Nippur before he was transformed into a Semitic god.

But he had been a ghost who was associated with the dawn, and he thus became identified in the early Semitic age with the rising sun. His solar character raised him to the rank of a Baal, and, consequently, of a god. His older attributes, however, still clung to him. He was a sun-god who had risen out of the earth and

of the darkness of night, and in him, therefore, the darker and more violent side of the sun-god was reflected.[281] He became essentially a god of war, and as such a special favourite of the Assyrian kings. He it was who carried destruction over the earth at the time of the Deluge, while the Anunna-ki followed him with their blazing torches; and he is the brother of En-nugi, the god from whose hands there is no escape. With the spread of solar worship, [pg 357] the solar features of Nin-ip naturally grew more marked. At times he was the god of the noonday as well as of the dawn, for it was at noon that the rays of the sun were fiercest and most deadly to man; at times he was assimilated to his fellow sun-god Merodach, and made a son of Ea. The syncretic epoch of Babylonian religion had truly arrived when Ea and En-lil were thus interchanged, and the teaching of Nippur and Eridu united in the solar cult!

But we have glimpses of a time when Nin-ip was not yet a god in human form, much less a solar Baal. His name is a title merely, and originally denoted the sexless spirit, who was indifferently “lord” and “lady of the veil.”[282]

The veil was worn in sign of mourning, for the head was covered in sleep and death. Like the cloak which enfolded the shade of Samuel, it symbolised the denizen of the underworld. At first it would seem to have been merely a veil that covered the head and face, like the *kefffya* of the modern Arab; in course of time it was extended to the cloak in which the sleeper or the dead man could be

wrapped. But in either case it was a symbol of the world below, and as such became in the Semitic age the garment of the mourner. The god who was “lord of the veil” must once have dwelt beneath [pg 358] the earth, and been himself one of those spirits of darkness whose faces were veiled from the sight of the living.

Nin-ip, then, must have been one of the Anunna-ki, a spirit of the earth and the land of Hades, before he assumed the form of a Semitic Baal, and clothed himself with the attributes of the sun-god. And the shape in which he appeared to his worshippers was that of a swine. We are told that Nin-ip was one with Nin-sakh, “the lord of the swine”[283] and the servant of El-lil, who was adored at Lagas in Sumerian days, and to whom a temple was erected even at Erech. That the swine should be connected with the underground world of the dead, is not surprising. We find the same connection in Keltic mythology. There, too, the swine are the cattle of Hades, and it was from the subterranean fields of Hades that they were transported by Pryderi to the earth above.[284] The swine turns up the ground in his search for food; even to-day he is used to hunt for truffles, and primitive man saw in his action an attempt to communicate with the spirits of the underworld.[285]

From the earth-spirit with the veiled face, who incarnated himself in the swine, the distance is great to the solar hero and warrior god of the Semitic age. In fact, the distance is

too great to be spanned by any natural process of evolution. It is a distance in kind and not in degree. It presupposes fundamentally different conceptions of religion, animism on the one side and anthropomorphic gods on the other. If we are to listen to fashionable theories of the origin of religion, [pg 359] we start in the one case with the fetish, in the other case with the worship of ancestors. The difference is racial: wherever we find the Semite, in all periods of his history, his gods are human and not made in the form of the beast.

But the Semite, though he moulded the later religion of Babylonia, could not transform it altogether. The Sumerian element in the population was never extirpated, and it is probable that if we knew more of the religion of the people as opposed to the official theology, we should find that it remained comparatively little affected by Semitic influence. The witchcraft and necromancy that flourished is a proof of this; even the State religion was compelled to recognise it, and, like Brahmanism in the presence of the native cults of India, to lend it its sanction and control. It is instructive to observe what a contrast there was in this respect between the official religion of Babylonia and that of the more purely Semitic Israelites. Witchcraft and necromancy were practised also in Israel, but there they were forbidden by the law and suppressed by the head of the State. In Babylonia, however, the local deities were for the most part of Sumerian origin, and in spite

of their Semitic colouring and dress not unfrequently retained their old Sumerian names. Babylonian religion could not wholly repudiate its origin and parentage; the superstructure might be Semitic, but its basis was Sumerian. Like the Sumerian words which had been adopted into the language, the names of the gods remained to testify to the fact that the people and their religion were alike mixed. And with the names went early beliefs and legends, fragments of folk-lore and ritual which had descended from a non-Semitic past. The official creed found a niche for each of them as best it could, but the assimilation was never more than [pg 360] partial, and from time to time we meet with practices and conceptions which are alien to the official faith.

There were many expedients for getting rid of the multitudinous spirits of the ancient creed who had not been transmuted into Semitic deities. They might, as we have seen, be herded together in the indistinguishable crowd of spirits of heaven and earth that formed the angel-hosts of the gods of light, or else be transformed into demons in the train of Tiamât, the impersonation of chaos. Some of them might be set apart as the special servants and messengers of the gods, and occupy the place of archangels in the celestial hierarchy. But it was also possible to call in the aid of cosmology, and turn them into elemental powers representing successive stages in the history of creation. They thus continued to belong to that inchoate period of

Babylonian religion when as yet the Semitic gods had not come into existence, and at the same time they could be identified with those gods in the exercise of their creative power. In the language of later metaphysic, they thus became the successive thoughts of the creator realising themselves in the successive acts of the creation, like the æons of Gnosticism which emanate one from the other as the realised thoughts of God. The idea is doubtless a late one, and belongs to an age of philosophy; but it represents an attempt to grapple with the difficulties presented by the opposing Sumerian and Semitic elements in Babylonian religion, and to reconcile them together. It presupposes that identification of one god with another which the solar cult and the Semitic conception of the goddess had made possible, and so takes us one step further in the direction of monotheism. The divine or superhuman beings of the Sumerian creed are not merely identified with a particular god, but are even transformed into the male and female principles which [pg 361] his government of the world or the act of creation compels him to exhibit in concrete form.[286]

Before Babylonian theosophy could arrive thus far, two things were necessary. The gods had to be arranged in a divine hierarchy, and the identification of one with the other had to become possible. The hierarchical arrangement followed from the Semitic conception of divinity. If Baal were a counterpart of the human father, there would

be a divine family and a divine court modelled on the pattern of those of his worshippers. The god would have not only his wife and children, but his slaves and ministers as well. The deities of heaven would thus fall into orderly groups of higher and lower rank; the higher gods would tend to separate themselves more and more from those of subordinate degree, and the latter to sink into the position of second-rate intelligences, who stood midway between the gods and men, and depended on “the great gods” for their offices and existence.

The conception of a divine messenger or angel who carried the orders of the higher god from heaven to earth and interpreted his will to men, goes back to an early period in the history of Babylonian religion. We can trace it to the time when the Sumerian first began to be affected by Semitic influence. The *sukkal* or “angel”-minister plays a prominent part in primitive Babylonian theology, but it is noticeable that he is usually a son of the god whose messages he conveys to gods and men. Asari or Merodach is at once the son and the minister of Ea; Nin-ip, of En-lil. The fact points to an age when Sumerian animism had already been succeeded by Semitic Baalism; the spirit or ghost had become a god in human shape, who begat children and required an envoy.

When Merodach became the god of Babylon, and [pg 362] with the rise of his city to political power entered the circle of the supreme gods, he in his turn needed a

messenger. The latter was found in the god of the neighbouring city of Borsippa. The growth of Babylon was accompanied by the decay of Borsippa, which in time was reduced to a mere suburb of the rival town. The god of the suburb was necessarily annexed by the god of the city which had absorbed it, and as necessarily became his follower and servant. Khammurabi, to whom Babylon owed its position and influence, even transferred the ancient temple of the god of Borsippa to the god of Babylon, and included him among the inferior deities to whom chapels were erected in the great sanctuary of Merodach.[287] But the god of Borsippa had once been as independent and supreme in his own city as Merodach was at Babylon. He had been addressed as "the maker" of the universe and the irrigator of the fields, and the origin of the cuneiform system of writing was ascribed to him. The Semites called him the Nabium or "Prophet," and it was under this title of Nabium or Nebo that he became the minister of Merodach. The name was appropriate in his twofold character of interpreter of the will of Bel and patron of literature, and was carried by Babylonian conquest into the distant West. There Moses died in Moab on the summit of Mount Nebo, and cities bearing the name stood within the borders of Reuben and Judah.

It was doubtless the association of Nebo with Merodach that caused him, like Thoth in Egypt, to become the patron of literature and the god of the scribes. The culture-god was as

it were divided into two; while Merodach retained the functions peculiar to [pg 363] a Semitic Baal, Nebo watched over the library and school, and encouraged the study of the script which had been invented by him. The older claims of Ea fell into the background and were forgotten; it was no longer the god of Eridu, but Nebo, who had written the first book, and instructed mankind in the elements of culture. The marshal's staff, which Nebo had wielded as organiser of “the hosts of heaven and earth,” now became the rod of the scribe, and a consort was created for him in the person of Tasmit or “Hearing.” In Assyria, where the worship of Assur prevented any development of that of his rival Merodach, Nebo became a special favourite of the literary class, who derived their knowledge and inspiration from Babylon. Assur-bani-pal never wearies of telling us how Nebo and Tasmit had “made broad his ears and enlightened his eyes,” so that he had collected and republished the books and tablets of the kings who had gone before him.

As minister of Merodach, Nebo passed into the solar circle. In Egypt he would have been absorbed by the more influential god, but in Babylonia the Semitic conception of Merodach as a Baal who required his minister and envoy like an earthly king, stood in the way of any such identification. He consequently retained his personality, and it was another god who was identified with him. This was Nusku, once the fire which blazed up into flame and purified the

sacrifice. With the spread of the solar cult Nusku became a local sun-god, and was regarded as the god of the burning sun of noon. In Sumerian days, however, while he was still the spirit of the fire, he had been necessarily the servant and associate of En-lil; and when En-lil became the Semitic Bel of Nippur, Nusku followed his fortunes and was made his messenger. After this his identification with Nebo was easy. Nebo, too, was the messenger and [pg 364] interpreter of Bel, though it was the younger Bel of Babylon who had supplanted the older Bel of Nippur. As Bel-Merodach took the place of En-lil, so too did Nebo take the place of Nusku. The priests of Babylon knew of one Bel only, and the minister of Bel must be one and the same whether his name were Nusku or Nebo. That Nusku had originally been an independent deity was, however, never forgotten. The past history and religion of the country could not be ignored, and the priesthood were forced to erect a separate shrine to Nusku within the precincts of the temple of Nebo itself. Only thus could they be certain that the god would not avenge himself for being defrauded of his dues.

The history of Nebo is an instructive illustration of the successive changes that passed over the religion of Babylonia. We first have the ghost of Sumerian times, who becomes the god of a special city in the days when Semitic influence began to make itself felt. Then the god is transformed into a Semitic Baal, and with the political rise of the

neighbouring city of Babylon is degraded into an attendant and retainer of the mightier god. As interpreter of the will of the culture-god he deprives Ea of his ancient prerogatives, and his title of "Prophet" becomes his name. Henceforth he is a purely Semitic divinity, and a wife is found for him in the shadowy abstraction "Hearing." Under the influences of the solar cult, he is identified with the ancient Sumerian fire-spirit who had himself become a sun-god, and eventually he is adopted in Assyria as the patron of the learned class, and the divine representative of Babylonian learning.

But the history of Nebo also illustrates one of the directions in which the striving after a monotheistic faith displayed itself. Not only was a separate god, Nusku, amalgamated with Nebo, Nebo himself, while still [pg 365] keeping his independent personality, sank into a subordinate position which may be compared with that of an archangel in Christian belief. Babylonian religion came to distinguish between a limited number of "great gods" and the inferior deities who formed their court. Indeed, it went even further than this. From the days of Khammurabi onward there was a tendency to exalt Bel-Merodach at the expense of all his brother gods. The development of Babylonian religion, in fact, went hand in hand with that of the Babylonian State. The foundation of an empire had made the Babylonian familiar with the conception of a supreme sovereign, under whom there were vassal kings, and

under them again a dependent nobility. The same conception was extended to the celestial hierarchy. Here, too, Bel-Merodach sat supreme, while the other gods "bowed reverently before him," retaining, indeed, their ancestral rights and power within the limits of their respective sanctuaries, but acknowledging the supremacy of the one sovereign Bel. It was no longer in honour of En-lil that the inhabitants of Babylonia were called "the people of Bel," but because they were all alike the children and adorers of Bel of Babylon.

But Babylonian religion never advanced further. It is true that the tablet published by Dr. Pinches, to which I have already alluded in the last lecture, identifies the chief gods of the pantheon with Merodach in his various phases and functions; it is also true that Nabonidos, the last Babylonian king, shocked the consciences and violated the rights of the local priesthoods by bringing the images of their gods into the central sanctuary; but such speculations and efforts remained isolated and without effect. It was otherwise, however, in Assyria. There the deities for the most part, like the culture and language, had been imported from the south; [pg 366] there were no time-honoured temples and venerable traditions to contend against; and, above all, there was a national god who represented the State rather than a Semitic Baal, and was therefore a symbol of the unity which bound the State together.

The supreme god of Assyria was Assur; the

other gods were of Babylonian origin. And in the name of Assur we have the name of the country itself and its primitive capital. Assur, in short, was the deified city of Assur, the divine State which from the days of its successful revolt from Babylonia was predominantly military, with all the union and discipline of a military organisation. Such at least was the view taken of the god in the historical age of Assyria, though some modern scholars have doubted whether, like Nineveh, which derived its name from the goddess Ninâ, it was not originally rather the city that took its name from the god than the god from the city.

Such doubts, however, are set at rest by an examination of the proper names found in the Babylonian contracts of the early Semitic period, more especially in those of the age of Khammurabi. Many of them are compounded with the names of cities which are treated as deities, and are preceded by the prefix of divinity. Thus we have Sumu-Upi (Bu. 91-5-9. 2182. 16), like Ṡumu-Rakh or Sumu-Râ and Samuel, as well as Upi-rabi (Bu. 91-5-9. 377. 25), where the deified Upi or Opis plays exactly the same part as the deified rivers Euphrates and Tigris in other similarly compounded names. Between the deified city and the deified river no distinction was drawn. Both alike were impersonations of the god. So too in the second tablet of the *Surpu* series (*WAI.* iv. 59. 35, 38), Eridu and Babylon are invoked to deliver the sick man by the side of Ea and Merodach and various

other gods, as well as certain [pg 367] of the stars. Between the ordinary gods of Babylonia and the deified city no distinction is made.[288]

Had the city taken its name from the god, it would be difficult to find a satisfactory etymology for it. The spelling of the name is against our connecting it with the word *asiru*, "he who blesses" or "consecrates," from which the Assyrian *asirtu*, "sanctuary," is derived, like the name of the Canaanitish goddess Ashêrah.[289] On the other hand, the native Assyrian etymology is as inadmissible as the endeavours of our eighteenth century lexicographers to find Greek or Latin derivations for Anglo-Saxon words. The Assyrian scribes saw in Assur merely the old elemental deity Ansar, "the firmament," who was himself nothing more than the Sumerian spirit of the "heavenly host." It is wisest not to imitate them, but, as in the case of Merodach and Istar, to leave the origin of the name Assur unexplained.

The kings of Assyria were originally high priests of Assur. In other parts of the Semitic world the high priest similarly preceded the king. The father-in-law of Moses was high priest of Midian, and the high priests of Saba in Southern Arabia developed into kings.[290] There were high priests also in Babylonia, who took their titles not only from the gods they served, but also from the cities over which they ruled. The peculiarity in the case of Assyria, however, was that there the god and the city [pg 368] were one and the same. When, therefore, the high priest of Assur

assumed the title of king, he still retained his priestly functions under another title. He was priest, but no longer high priest. Assyria was a monarchy, not a theocracy; it was founded on military force, not on priestly influence. The king accordingly was not a representative and vicegerent of the god, like a Babylonian prince; he represented the god Assur only because he represented the city of Assur. It was through the city of Assur that the god manifested himself as it were to men.

One of the consequences of this fact was that Assur was a national as opposed to a merely local god. Wherever the power of the city extended, there the power of the god necessarily extended as well. When Assur became the capital of a kingdom, the whole land which owned its authority received its name and accepted the supremacy of its god. The local cults made way for the national cults; it was not only in Assur itself that the god had his temple; wherever a city called itself Assyrian, the worship of Assur held the first place. There were no old sanctuaries and cults to displace, as in Babylonia; the deities who were adored in the cities of Assyria were of Babylonian origin, like Ninâ and Istar; and when once Assyria had achieved its independence, and realised that it had a national life of its own, they were unable to maintain themselves against the national god.

This national god had given his people their freedom and right to rule. He it was who had led their armies to victory, and had vanquished the hostile deities of Babylonia.

He was thus identified with the army to which Assyria owed its existence, and with the king who was its leader in war. Wherever the army went or the king established himself, Assur went also. He lost, therefore, [pg 369] the last relics of his association with a particular locality, and became the god of the whole people. From every point of view he was national and not local.

Freed from the limitations of locality, he was consequently freed from the limitations of form. Bel-Merodach was necessarily human in form, with all the limitations of humanity; it was only where his image was that he could be present in visible shape. But Assur was not confined to the human image that represented him. He could also be represented by a symbol, and where the symbol was he was too. The symbol was a standard, on which an archer was depicted rising from a winged sun. It was carried with the armies of Assyria from place to place, like the ark in which the Israelites of the age of Samuel saw a symbol of the presence of their national God. The winged sun refers us to Egypt; so too does the standard on which the emblem of Assur was borne. The Asiatic conquests of the Eighteenth Dynasty had brought Egypt and Assyria into contact; the Assyrian king paid tribute to the Pharaoh, and doubtless depended on him for support against Babylonia. It was the period when Assyria was first feeling itself an independent nation; the authority of Babylonia had been shaken off, and the god of Babylon had been supplanted by Assur. We

need not be surprised, therefore, if Assur consented to borrow from Egypt the symbol which henceforth distinguished him from the Babylonian gods, and with the symbol went the theological ideas of which it was the expression.

These theological ideas were already deeply tinctured by the theories of the solar cult. The winged solar disc is evidence that Assur was assimilated to Amon-Ra of Egypt. But the assimilation stopped there. The Assyrians were too purely Semitic even to comprehend the nebulous pantheism of the Egyptian solar school; [pg 370] Assur remained an anthropomorphic god, with very definite attributes and sharply-cut features. The archer who rises above the disc of the sun significantly indicates the contrast between the theology of Egypt and Assyria. Above the sun-god is the human warrior, the lord of hosts, the god of battles, the divine leader of the armies of Assur. There was no room in the practical Assyrian mind for a formless divinity, with its infinite transformations and elusive shape. The Assyrian needed a soldier's god, at once human and clearly defined.

Nevertheless this human god was recognised as one with the sun-god. Or rather, perhaps, the sun was regarded as his visible manifestation, the mark or symbol under which he displayed himself. Assur was thus essentially a Semitic Baal, but a warlike Baal, who was the god of a nation and not of a particular place.

Where the nation and its army were, accordingly, their god was as well. And when Assyria claimed to rule the whole civilised world, the power and authority of its god became world-wide. It was in his name that the Assyrian troops went forth to fight, and it was "through trust in" him that they gained their victories. Those who resisted them were his enemies, those who submitted were incorporated into his empire, and became his subjects and worshippers. All other gods had to yield to him; he was not only paramount over them, but to worship them instead of him was an act of impiety. The sacrifice might continue to be made to them and the prayer offered, but it was on condition that the first-fruits of both sacrifice and prayer were given to Assur.

This, however, was not all. Assur was not only jealous of other gods, there was no goddess who could share with him his power. In the eyes of the Assyrian people he was wifeless, like Yahveh of Israel or Chemosh of Moab. It is true that some Assyriologists, with more [pg 371] zeal than knowledge, have found for him a wife, but they are not agreed as to who she was. Sometimes we have been told it was Serua, sometimes Istar, sometimes Belit. The very fact that such a difference of opinion exists is sufficient to condemn the whole supposition. It is based on the pedantry of certain of the Assyrian scribes, who, educated in the literature and religion of Babylonia, were naturally anxious to fit their national god into the Babylonian system of theology.

The gods of Babylonia had each his wife; they were each the head of a divine family, and consequently the chief god of Assyria must be the same. But it was difficult to find for him a female consort. Once or twice the help of the grammar is invoked, and the feminine Assurit is made to take her place by the side of Assur. But she was too evidently an artificial creation, and accordingly Belit was borrowed from Bel-Merodach, or Nin-lil from Bel of Nippur, and boldly claimed as the wife of Assur. But this too was acceptable neither to Babylonians nor to Assyrians, and, as a last resource, Istar, the virgin goddess, was transformed into a married wife. It might have been thought that the idea, once started, would have met with ready acceptance; for Istar was the goddess of Nineveh, as Assur was of the older capital which was superseded by Nineveh in the later days of the Assyrian empire. That it did not do so is a proof how firmly rooted was the wifelessness of Assur in the Assyrian mind; he was no Babylonian Bel who needed a helpmeet, but a warrior's god, who entered the battle wifeless and alone.

I can but repeat again of him what I said years ago in my Hibbert Lectures: “Assur consequently differs from the Babylonian gods, not only in the less narrowly local character that belongs to him, but also in his solitary nature. He is ‘king of all the gods’ in a sense [pg 372] in which none of the deities of Babylonia were. He is like the king of Assyria himself, brooking no rival, allowing neither wife nor son to share in the honours which he

claims for himself alone. He is essentially a jealous god, and as such sends forth his Assyrian adorers to destroy his unbelieving foes. Wifeless, childless, he is mightier than the Babylonian Baalim; less kindly, perhaps, less near to his worshippers than they were, but more awe-inspiring and more powerful. We can, in fact, trace in him all the lineaments upon which, under other conditions, there might have been built up as pure a faith as that of the God of Israel." That none such was ever built, may be accepted as a sign and token that between the Semites of Assyria and those of Israel there lay a difference which no theories of evolution are able to explain.

[pg 373]

Lecture VI. Cosmologies.

Man was made in the likeness of the gods, and, conversely, the gods are in the likeness of man. This belief lies at the root of the

theology of Semitic Babylonia, and characterises its conception of divinity. It follows from it that the world which we see has come into existence like the successive generations of mankind or the products of human art. It has either been begotten by the creator, or it has been formed out of pre-existing materials. It did not come into being of itself; it is no fortuitous concurrence of atoms; no self-evolved product out of nothing, or the result of continuous development and evolution. The doctrines of spontaneous generation and of development are alike foreign to Babylonian religious thought. That demanded a creator who was human in his attributes and mode of work, who could even make mistakes and experiments, and so call into existence imperfect or monstrous forms which further experience was needed to rectify. There was an earlier as well as a later creation, the unshapely brood of chaos as well as the more perfect creations of the gods of light.

As we have seen, the culture of primitive Babylonia radiated from two main centres, the sanctuary of Nippur in the north, and the seaport of Eridu in the south. The one was inland, the other maritime; and what I may term the geographical setting of the two [pg 374] streams of culture varied accordingly. The great temple of Nippur was known as Ê-kur, “the house of the mountain-land”; it was a model of the earth, which those who built it believed to be similarly shaped, and to have the form of a mountain whose peak

penetrated the clouds. Its supreme god was the lord of the nether earth, his subjects were the demons of the underworld, and the theology of his priests was associated with sorcery and witchcraft, and with invocations to the spirits who ruled over the world of the dead.

Eridu, on the contrary, was the dwelling-place of the god of the deep. Its temple, Ê-Saggila, "the house of the high head," was, we are told, "in the midst" of the encircling ocean on which the whole earth rested, and in it was the home of Ea, "the lord of the holy mound."[291] Its god was the author of Babylonian writing and [pg 375] civilisation, and his son and interpreter was Aṡari, "the benefactor of man." While the theology of Nippur concerned itself with the dead, that of Eridu was pre-eminently occupied with the living. Asari is invoked as the god who raised the dead to life, and the arts which make life pleasant were the gifts of Ea himself. It is perhaps not without reason that, while En-lil of Nippur appears as the destroyer of mankind, Ea is their creator and instructor. He not only created them, but he taught them how to live, and provided for them the spells and remedies which could heal the sick and ward off death.

Like Khnum of Egypt, he was called "the potter," for he had moulded mankind from the clay which his waters formed on the shores of the Persian Gulf.[292] Nor was it mankind only that was thus made. The whole world of created things had been similarly

moulded; the earth and all that dwelt upon it had risen out of the sea. The cosmology of Eridu thus made water the origin of all things; the world we inhabit has sprung from the deep, which still encircles it like a serpent with its coils.

But the deep over which the creator-god presided was a deep which formed part of that orderly framework of nature wherein the gods of light bear rule, and which obeys laws that may not be broken. It is not the deep where the spirit of chaos held sway, and of which she was an impersonation; that was a deep without limits or law, whose only progeny was a brood of monsters. Between the deep of Ea and the chaos of Tiamât the cosmology of historical Babylonia drew a [pg 376] sharp line of distinction; the one excluded the other, and it was not until the deep of Tiamât had been, as it were, overcome and placed within bounds, that the deep wherein Ea dwelt was able to take its place.

The two conceptions are antagonistic one to the other, and can hardly be explained, except on the supposition that they belong to two different schools of thought. The brood of Tiamât, it must be remembered, were once the subjects of En-lil of Nippur, and the Anunna-ki, or “spirits of the earth,” though they became the orderly ministers of the gods of light, nevertheless continued to have their dwelling-place in the underground world, and to serve its mistress Allat. The motley host that followed Tiamât in her contest with Bel-

Merodach were essentially the ghosts and goblins of the theology of Nippur; and it is with the latter, therefore, that we must associate the theory of the divine world with which they are connected. The world of Nippur was a world from which the sea was excluded; it was a world of plain and mountain, and of the hollow depths which lay beneath the surface of the earth. The cosmology of Nippur would naturally concern itself with the land rather than with the sea; the earth and not the water would have been the first in order of existence, and habitation of the gods would be sought on the summit of a Mount Olympus rather than in the depths of an encircling ocean.[293]

In the chaos of Tiamât, accordingly, I see the last [pg 377] relics of a cosmology which emanated from Nippur, and was accepted wherever the influence of Nippur prevailed. It has been modified by the cosmological ideas of Eridu; and in the story of the struggle between Tiamât and Merodach an attempt has been made to harmonise the two conflicting conceptions of the universe, and to weld them into a compact whole. The world of Tiamât has first been transformed into a watery abyss like that which the theologians of Eridu believed to be the origin of the universe, and then has been absorbed by the deep over which Ea held sway. The creator Ea has taken the place of the spirit of destruction, the culture-god of the dragon of darkness.

But a curious legend, which has been much misunderstood, still preserves traces of the old

cosmology of the great sanctuary of Northern Babylonia. It describes the war made against a king of Babylonia by the powers of darkness, the gnome-like beings who dwelt "in the ground," where Tiamât had suckled them, and where they had multiplied in the cavernous depths of a mountain land. They were, we are told, composite monsters, "warriors with the bodies of birds, men with the faces of ravens," over whom ruled a king and his wife and their seven sons.[294] Year after year the war continued, and, in spite of charms and incantations, host after host sent forth from Akkad was annihilated by the unclean and superhuman enemy. The Babylonian king was in despair; in vain he appealed to the gods, and declared how "terror and night, death and plague, earthquake, fear and horror, hunger, famine, and destruction," had [pg 378] come upon his unfortunate people. "The plain of Akkad" seemed about to become the prey of the demons of the night. How it was rescued from the danger that threatened it we do not know; the story is unfortunately broken, and the end of it has not been found. But the origin and character of the superhuman enemy is not difficult to discover; their dwelling-place is in the tomb-like recesses of the mountains, their mother was Tiamât herself, and they have the monstrous shapes of the ghosts and spirits of the ancient animism of Nippur.[295]

The legend was fitly preserved in the sanctuary of Nergal, the god of the dead, at Kutha. It too has undergone the harmonising

process of later times: the cosmologies of Nippur and Eridu are again set in antagonism, one against the other, and there is a first creation as well as a second engaged in the same struggle as that which under a different form is described in the legends of Eridu and Babylon. But the antagonists in it are alike the inhabitants of the dry land; there is no watery abyss from which they have sprung, whether it be the chaotic deep of Tiamât or the ocean home of the god of culture. The conceptions on which it rests belong to the inland plain of Babylonia rather than to the shores of the sea. Influenced though it has been by the cosmology of Eridu, the elements of which it is composed go back to an inland and not to a maritime State.

It will be seen that our knowledge of the cosmology of Nippur is still scanty and uncertain. The world which it presupposed had the form of a mountain, on the peak of which the gods lived among the clouds of heaven, while the cavernous depths below it were peopled [pg 379] with hosts of spirits and demons, the shades of the dead and the ghosts of a primitive animism. There was no encircling ocean, no abysmal deep on which it floated, and from which it had been produced. What its origin, however, was believed to be we do not yet know, or to what creative *Zi* or *Lil* it was held to owe its existence. For an answer to these questions we must wait until the ancient libraries of Nippur have been thoroughly excavated and explored.[296]

It is otherwise with the cosmology of Eridu. We know a good deal about it, thanks to the theologians of Babylon, whose god Merodach was the successor and representative of the god of Eridu. It is true that its form has been changed and modified in part for the greater glory of Merodach and his city, that Merodach has even taken the place of Ea as the creator, and that the cosmology of Nippur —or at all events of a similar school of thought—has been combined with that of Eridu, with the result that there are two creations, the first chaotic, and the second that of the present world. But it is still easy to disentangle the earlier from the later elements in the story, and to separate what is purely Babylonian from what belongs to Eridu.

One of the versions of the story that have come down to us has been preserved in a spell, of which, like verses of the Bible in modern times, it has been used to form a part. Its antiquity is shown by the fact that it is [pg 380] written in the ancient language of Sumer. It is thus that it begins—

> "No holy house, no house of the gods in a holy place had as yet been built,
> no reed had grown, no tree been planted,
> no bricks had been made, no structure formed,
> no house had been built, no city founded,
> no city built where living things could dwell.

Nippur was unbuilt, its temple of
Ê-kur was unerected;
Erech was unbuilt, its temple of
Ê-ana was unerected;[297]
the deep sea was uncreated,
Eridu unbuilt.
The site of (its) holy house, the
house of the gods, existed not,
all the earth was sea,
while in the midst of the sea was
a water-course.
In those days was Eridu built and
the temple of Ê-Saggil founded,
Ê-Saggil wherein dwells the
divine king of the holy mound in
the midst of the deep;—
Babylon was built, Ê-Saggil
completed;—
the spirits of the earth were
created together,
they called it by the mighty
name of the holy city, the seat of
their well-being.[298]
Merodach[299] tied (reeds) together
to form a weir in the water,
he made dust and mixed it with
the reeds of the weir,
that the gods might dwell in the
seat of (their) well-being.[300]
Mankind he created,—
the goddess Aruru created the
seed of mankind with him,[301]—
the cattle of the field, the living
creatures in the field, he created;
the Tigris and Euphrates he
made, and set them in their
place,
giving them good names.
Moss and seed-plant of the
marsh, reed and rush he created,

he created the green herb of the field,
[pg 381]
the earth, the marsh, the jungle,
the cow and its young, the calf,
the sheep and its young, the lamb of the fold,
the grove and the forest,
the goat, (and) the gazelle multiplied (?) for him.
Bel-Merodach[302] filled a space at the edge of the sea,
[there] he made an enclosure of reeds,
he constructed [a site?],
he created [the reeds], he created the trees,
he laid [a platform] in the place,
[he moulded bricks], the structure he formed;
[he built houses], he founded cities,
[cities he founded and] filled them with living things;
Nippur he built, Ê-kur he erected,
Erech he built, Ê-ana he erected,[303]
[the deep he created, Eridu he built].”

It is evident that the poem was written by one who lived on the marshy shores of the Persian Gulf, and had watched how land could be formed by tying the reeds in bundles and building with them a weir. It was in this way that the first cultivators of Eridu protected their fields from the tide, or reclaimed the land from the sea. None but those who had

actually seen the process could have devised a cosmology which thus applied it to the creation of the world. To the question—"How did this world come into existence?" the primitive inhabitant of Eridu seemed to have a ready answer: he too was able to create new land, out of which the rush and the herb could grow, where the cattle could be pastured, and the house built. What he could do, the gods had doubtless done at the beginning of time; all things must have come from the primeval deep, and the earth itself was but an islet rescued from the tides and created by obstructing their ebb and flow.

But it is also evident that the old poem has been [pg 382] revised and re-edited by the priesthood of Babylon. Ê-Saggil, the temple of Bel-Merodach of Babylon, has been confounded with the earlier Ê-Saggil of Eridu, and the creator-god Ea has been supplanted by Merodach. The supplanter, however, cannot conceal his foreign origin. The "enclosure" or "dwelling-place," "at the edge of the sea," must have been made in the first instance by the god of the deep, not by the sun-god of Babylon. Merodach had nothing to do with the sea and marshland, with cities that stood on the margin of the ocean, or reeds that grew by its shores. He was the god of an inland city, and he symbolised the sun and not the sea.

It is possible that even before its alteration at the hands of the theologians of Babylon, the old cosmological poem of Eridu had been modified in accordance with the requirements

of a theology which resulted from a fusion of Sumerian and Semitic ideas. The doctrine of the triad is already presupposed by it; Nippur, Erech, and Eridu, with their sanctuaries of Bel, Anu, and Ea, already represent Babylonia, and the temples of Bel and Anu even take precedence of that of Ea. At the same time the parallelism between Nippur and Erech on the one side, and Eridu on the other, is imperfect. The uncreated "deep," on the margin of which Eridu stood, has nothing corresponding with it in the two preceding lines, while the place of the temples of Nippur and Erech is occupied by the name of the city of Eridu. It seems clear, that the reference to the two great sanctuary-cities of Northern and Central Babylonia is an interpolation, which breaks and injures the sense. Originally, we may conclude, the poem named Eridu only; its author knew nothing of the other shrines of Babylonia; for him the temple of Ea at Eridu was the house of all "the gods."

[pg 383]
Ea, under the mask of Merodach, is the creator of mankind, as of all things else. In this act of creation the goddess Aruru is coupled with him; we have no materials at present for explaining why she should have been introduced, or whether the introduction formed part of the original legend. It is not the only passage, however, in which she appears as a creatress. According to the Epic of Gilgames, she had created the great hero of Babylonia, and it was she also who moulded Ea-bani, the companion of Gilgames, out of

clay which she had kneaded with her hands. Like Ea, therefore, she was a modeller in clay, and there was good reason for associating her with the divine potter who had made man. Had she been a god she would doubtless have been identified with him; as it was, she had to remain his companion and associate, whose name could not be forgotten even by a worshipper of Ea. Probably she was the goddess of some Babylonian city where she played the part that Ea played at Eridu; it may be that her sanctuary was at Marad, which claimed, as it would seem, to be the birthplace of Gilgames.

The name of the first man was Adapa, “the son of Eridu.” Ea had created him without a helpmeet; he had endowed him with wisdom and knowledge, but had denied to him the gift of immortality. Each day he baked the bread and poured pure water into the bowl; at night he drew the bolts of the gates of Eridu, and at dawn he sailed forth in his bark to fish in the waters of the Persian Gulf. Once, so the story ran, the south wind upset his skiff, and in revenge he broke its wings. But the south wind was a servant of Anu, and the god of the sky demanded the punishment of the daring mortal. Ea, however, intervened to save the man he had created. He clad Adapa in a mourner's robe, and showed him the road to heaven, telling him what he was to do in the [pg 384] realm of Anu, but forbidding him to eat or drink there. The gate of heaven was guarded by the gods Tammuz and Nin-gis-zida, who asked him the meaning of the

mourner's garment which he wore.[304] When he answered that it was for their own selves, because they had vanished from the earth, their hearts were softened, and they became his intercessors with Anu. Anu listened, and forgave; but that a mortal man should behold the secrets of heaven and earth was so contrary to right, that he ordered the food and water of life to be offered him. Adapa, however, remembered the commands of Ea, and, unlike the biblical Adam, refused the food of immortality. Man remained mortal, and it was never again in his power to eat of the tree of life. But in return, sovereignty and dominion were bestowed upon him, and Adapa became the father of mankind.

The legend is a Babylonian attempt to explain the existence of death. It is like, and yet unlike, the story in Genesis. The biblical Adam lost the gift of immortality because his desire to become as God, knowing good and evil, had caused him to be driven from the Paradise in which grew the tree of life. Adapa, on the other hand, was already endowed with knowledge by his creator Ea, and his loss of immortality was due, not to his disobedience, but to his obedience to the commands of the god. Adam was banished from the Garden of Eden, “lest he should put forth his hand and take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever”; while in the Babylonian legend it was Anu himself who was reluctant that one who had entered the gate of heaven should [pg 385] remain a mere mortal man. Babylonian polytheism allowed the existence of divided

counsels among the gods; the monotheism of Israel made this impossible. There was no second Yahveh to act in contradiction to the first; Yahveh was at once the creator of man and the God of heaven, and there was none to dispute His will. There is no room for Anu in the Book of Genesis; and as Ea, the creator of Adapa, was unwilling that the man he had created should become an immortal god, so Yahveh, the creator of Adam, similarly denied to him the food of immortal life.

That there is a connection between the Biblical story and the Babylonian legend is, however, rendered certain by the geography of the Biblical Paradise. It was a garden in the land of Eden, and Edin was the Sumerian name of the "plain" of Babylonia in which Eridu stood. Two of the rivers which watered it were the Tigris and Euphrates, the two streams, in fact, which we are specially told had been created and named by Ea at the beginning of time. Indeed, the name that is given to the Tigris in the Book of Genesis is its old Sumerian title, which survived in later days only in the religious literature. Even the strange statement that "a river went out of Eden," which "was parted and became into four heads," is explained by the cuneiform texts. The Persian Gulf was called "the Salt River," and, thanks to its tides, was regarded as the source of the four streams which flowed into it from their "heads" or springs in the north. On early Babylonian seals, Ea, the god of the sea, is depicted as pouring sometimes the four rivers, sometimes only the

Tigris and Euphrates, from a vase that he holds in his hands. Years ago I drew attention to a Sumerian hymn in which reference is made to the garden and sacred tree of Eridu, the Babylonian Paradise in the plain of Eden. Dr. Pinches [pg 386] has since discovered the last line of the hymn, in which the picture is completed by a mention of the rivers which watered the garden on either side. It is thus that the text reads—

> "In Eridu a vine[305] grew over-
> shadowing; in a holy place was it
> brought forth;
> its root was of bright lapis, set in
> the world beneath.
> The path of Ea was in Eridu,[306]
> teeming with fertility.
> His seat (there) is the centre of
> the earth;
> his couch is the bed of the
> primeval mother.[307]
> Into the heart of its holy house,
> which spreads its shade like a
> forest, hath no man entered.
> In its midst is Tammuz,
> between the mouths of the rivers
> on both sides."[308]

The sacred tree of the garden of Eridu was, however, not the tree of life. It was rather the tree of knowledge. This is shown by an inscription of Eri-Aku or Arioch, in which he describes himself as "the executor of the oracle of the sacred tree of Eridu." Perhaps it is to the same tree that reference is made in a magical text, in which a man possessed of

"the seven evil spirits" is healed with the help of "the tree which shatters the power of the incubus, and upon whose core the name of Ea is recorded."[309] But Ea was not only the god of wisdom, he was also the god of "life," and the trees of both wisdom and life might therefore be fitly placed under his protection.

When Babylon became the supreme head of Babylonia under Khammurabi and his successors, the creative functions [pg 387] of Ea were usurped by Merodach. A long poem celebrating the glories and power of Merodach, his struggle with chaos and creation of the world, and, finally, his formal investiture with the names and prerogatives of Ea, has been preserved to us in part. Ever since its discovery by Mr. George Smith it has been known as the Epic of the Creation, and the parallelism between the first tablet composing it and the first chapter of Genesis has long attracted attention. But the poem is of late date. It belongs to an age of religious syncretism and materialistic philosophy; the mythological beings of popular belief are resolved into cosmological principles, and the mythological dress in which they appear has a theatrical effect. The whole poem reminds us of the stilted and soulless productions of the eighteenth century, in which commonplace ideas and a prosaic philosophy masquerade as Greek nymphs or Roman gods. It is only here and there, as in the description of the contest with Tiamât, or in the concluding lines,—if, indeed, they belong to the poem at all,—that it rises above the level of dull mediocrity.

But mediocre as it may be from a literary point of view, it is of considerable value to the student of Babylonian cosmology. The author is fortunately not original, and his materials, therefore, have been drawn from the folk-lore or the theology of the past. A welcome commentary on the first tablet has been preserved, moreover, in the *Problems and Solutions of First Principles*, written by the philosopher Damascius, the contemporary of Justinian, whose accuracy and acquaintance with Babylonian sources it proves. Unfortunately the tablet is broken, and the final lines of it are consequently lost—

> "When above unnamed was the heaven,
> the earth below by a name was uncalled,
> [pg 388]
> the primeval deep was their begetter,
> the chaos of Tiamât was the mother of them all.
> Their waters were embosomed in one place,
> the corn-stalk was ungathered, the marsh-plant ungrown.
> At that time the gods had not appeared, any one of them,
> by no name were they called, no destiny [had they fixed].
> Then were the [primeval] gods created,
> Lakhmu and Lakhamu came forth [the first].
> Until they grew up ...
> Ansar and Kisar were created ...

Long were the days ...
Anu [Bel and Ea were made]."

To the Babylonian, name and existence were one and the same. Nothing could exist unless it had a name, and whatever had a name necessarily existed. That the heaven and earth were unnamed, therefore, was equivalent to saying that they were not yet in being. The words with which the Book of Genesis begins are a curious contradiction of the statement of the Babylonian cosmologist. But the contradiction illustrates the difference between the Hebrew and the Babylonian points of view. The Hebrew was not only a monotheist; he believed also that everything, even from the beginning, had been made by the one supreme God; the Babylonian, on the contrary, started with a materialistic philosophy. There are no gods at the outset; the gods themselves have been created like other things; all that existed at first was a chaos of waters. The Babylonian cosmology is that of Genesis without the first verse.

The word I have rendered "chaos" is *mummu*. Damascius explains it as νοητὸς κόσμος, "the world of thought" or "ideas." It is a world which has as yet no outward form or content, a world without matter, or perhaps more probably a world in which matter is inseparable from thought. And for this reason it is formless; matter as yet had assumed no shape, there is [pg 389] no single part of it which is so defined and separated from the rest as to receive a name and thereby to exist.

There is nothing but a dark and formless deep, which can be imagined but not pictured or described.

The chaos, however, is a chaos of waters. Once more, therefore, we are taken back to Eridu and the shores of the Persian Gulf, and to the cosmology which saw in the water the origin of all things. But the cosmology itself has been strangely changed. There is no longer a creator god, no longer an Ea, who, like Yahveh, existed before creation, and to whom the earth and its inhabitants owe their existence. He has been swept aside, and an atheistic philosophy has taken his place. The mythological garb of the larger part of the poem cannot disguise the materialism of its preface; in the later tablets of it Tiamât may once more be the dragon of popular imagination, but the first tablet is careful to explain that this is but an adaptation to folk-lore and legend, and that Tiamât is really what her name signifies, the chaos of waters.

The process of creation is conceived of under the Semitic form of generation. The Deep and the chaos of waters become male and female principles, from whom other pairs are generated. The process of generation easily passed into the emanation of the Gnostic systems of theosophy under the influence of Greek metaphysics. But the poet of Babylon remained true to his Semitic point of view; for him creation is a process of generation rather than of emanation; and though the divine or superhuman beings of the old mythology have become mere primordial elements, they are

still male and female, begetting children like men and gods.

To find the elemental deities or principles that could thus form links in the chain of evolution, it was necessary to fall back on the spirits or ghosts of the early [pg 390] Sumerian cult who were essentially material in their nature, and had nothing in common with the Semitic Baal. Lakhmu and his consort were part of the monstrous brood of Tiamât; they represented the first attempts to give form and substance to the universe. But the form was still chaotic and immature, suitably symbolised by beings, half human and half bestial, which had descended to Semitic Babylonia from Sumerian animism, and whose memory was kept alive by religious art.

Lakhmu and Lakhamu were followed by An-sar and Ki-sar, the upper and lower firmament. The one originally denoted the spirit-world of the sky, the other the spirit-world of the earth.[310] They were not gods in the Semitic sense of the term. But the Babylonian theologians transformed them into abstractions, or rather into Platonic archetypes of the heaven and earth. Their appearance meant that the world had at last taken form and substance; the reign of chaos was over, and limits had been set which should never again be overpassed. The earth and the sky bounded and defined one another; the age of formlessness was ended, and an orderly universe was being prepared fit to receive the present creation.

But the work of preparation was a long one, and not until it was finished could the gods of Semitic Babylonia be born. But even they have ceased to be gods for the philosophic cosmologist. They are replaced and represented by the triad of Anu, Bel, and Ea, who thus become mere symbols of the sky, the earth, and the water, the [pg 391] elements which Babylonian philosophy regarded as constituting the present world. Doubtless, did we possess the rest of the tablet, we should read how the other "great gods" were sprung from them.

The later tablets of the Epic, which are devoted to the glorification of Merodach, are for the most part of little interest for the cosmologist. They describe at wearisome length and with tedious reiteration the challenge of Tiamât to the gods, the arming of Merodach, and his victory over the dragon. Religions and mythological conceptions of all kinds have been laid under contribution, and confusedly mingled together. It was necessary that Merodach, the supreme god of Babylon, should have been the creator of the world; and it was therefore also necessary that the creative acts of the other creator gods of Babylonia should be transferred to him, however diverse they may have been. Hence, in the course of the poem, Merodach is described as destroying and creating by his word alone,—a cosmological conception which reminds us of that of the Egyptian school of Hermopolis, while after the destruction of Tiamât he is said to have cut

her in half like a flat fish, forming the canopy of heaven with one half, above which the "fountains of the great deep" were kept firmly barred. This is in flagrant contradiction with the cosmogony of the Introduction, but it is probable that it was derived from Nippur, where En-lil was perhaps described as creating the heavens and earth in a similar fashion. When the creative functions of En-lil were usurped by Merodach, the old myth was transferred to the god of Babylon; and accordingly, in the pæan which seems to form the end of the Epic, Bel of Nippur is declared to have bestowed upon Merodach his name of "lord of the earth," and therewith the powers and functions which accompanied it.

[pg 392]
The struggle between Tiamât, the dragon of darkness, and Merodach, the god of light, must originally have symbolised the dispersion of the black rain-cloud and raging tempest by the rays of the sun. But the author of the poem evidently regards it from a cosmological point of view. For him it is the victory of order over chaos, of the present creation over the formless world of the past, and of fixed law over anarchy and confusion. The conception of a law, governing the universe and unable to be broken, lay deep in the Babylonian mind. Even the gods could not escape it; they too had to submit to that inexorable destiny which distinguished the world in which we live from the world of chaos. All they could do was to interpret and reveal the decrees of fate; the decrees

themselves were unalterable. It was not Bel who issued them; they were contained in the tablets of destiny which he wore on his breast as the symbol of his supremacy, and which enabled him to predict the future. These were, indeed, the Urim and Thummim which, like the high priest of Israel, he was privileged to consult.[311] What they did was not to make him the arbiter of fortune, but its interpreter and seer. He learned from them how the laws of the universe were going to work, what destiny had in store for it, and how, therefore, it was needful to act. It does not even seem that his prevision extended beyond a year; at all events, [pg 393] when Bel of Nippur had yielded up his rights to Bel of Babylon, we are told that the latter had to sit each New Year's day in the mystic "chamber of the fates," determining the destiny of mankind during the ensuing year.

The victory over Tiamât was followed by the assignment of particular posts in the sky to Anu, Bel, and Ea. This again harmonises but ill with the cosmology of the preface to the poem; but the astronomers had long since divided the heaven between the gods of the Babylonian triad, and the honour of first doing so is accordingly assigned to Merodach. Then comes an account of the creation of the heavenly bodies—

> "He prepared the stations of the great gods;
> the stars corresponding to them
> he established as constellations;

he made known the year, and
marked out the signs of the
zodiac.
Three stars he assigned to each
of the 12 months,
from the beginning of the year
till (its) close.
He established the station of
Jupiter that they might know
their bounds,
that they should not sin, should
not go astray, any one of them.
The stations of Bel and Ea he
fixed along with it.
He opened gates on both sides,
he strengthened (their) bolts on
the left hand and the right;
in the middle he set a
staircase.[312]
He made the moon appear
illuminating the night;
he established it as the luminary
of night that the days might be
known."

Here it will be noticed that, as in Genesis, the heavenly bodies are regarded as already in existence. What the creator did was to establish them in their stations, and [pg 394] appoint them to mark and register time. In fact, as soon as Ansar—the upper firmament—appeared, they appeared also, though in an embryonic form. Merodach is thus an arranger rather than a creator, the founder of astronomy and the calendar rather than the maker of the stars. It is significant, however, that there is no reference to the sun; the sun-god could hardly fix for himself the laws he

had to obey.

It has usually been supposed that the account of the orderly arrangement of the stars was followed by that of the creation of animals. But the tablet on which the latter is found is a mere fragment, and Professor Zimmern may be right in thinking that it belongs to a different story of the creation. At any rate, the creation in it is assigned to "the gods" generally "in their assembly" rather than to Merodach alone. On the other hand, as we have seen, the author of the Epic did not hesitate to introduce into it cosmological myths and ideas which agreed but badly together, and it is not likely that he would have omitted to notice the creation of animate things.

But a description of the creation of the world, or even of the great struggle between the gods of light and the dragon of darkness, was not the main purpose of the Babylonian poem. This was the glorification of the god of Babylon. The story of the creation was introduced into it because it was necessary that the supreme god of the universe should also be its creator, and it was for the same reason that the overthrow of the powers of darkness and anarchy was assigned to Merodach alone. He usurped and absorbed the prerogatives and attributes of the older gods; their virtues, as it were, passed to him along with their sovereignty and kingdom. The fact is very plainly expressed in what appears to be the concluding tablet of the Epic. Here the names, and [pg 395] therewith

the essential natures, of the other deities are formally handed over to Bel-Merodach of Babylon. Henceforward he is acknowledged in heaven as well as in earth, the supreme Bel or Baal of Semitic faith, the father of gods and men. Ea, the lord of the deep, and Bel of Nippur, "the lord of the earth," alike yield up to him their powers; he assumes their names and titles; and, thanks to the centralising influence of Babylon, Babylonian religion approaches monotheism as nearly as its local character ever allowed it to do. The creator alone could rightfully claim the worship of the creatures he had made.

But it was an approach merely; the final step was never taken, even by the more speculative theologians of Babylonia, which swept away the polytheism of the local cults, and left Merodach without a rival.

Herein lies the great contrast between the Babylonian and the Hebrew conceptions of the creation. The Hebrew cosmology starts from the belief in one God, beside whom there is none else, whether in the orderly world of to-day or in the world of chaos that preceded it. On its forefront stand the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." There was chaos, it was true, but it was a chaos which had no existence apart from God, who was its absolute master to carve and fashion as He would. The deep, too, was there; but the deep was neither the impersonation of Tiamât nor the realm of Ea; the breath of the one God brooded over it, awaiting the time when the creative word

should be uttered, and the breath of God should become the life of the world. The elements, indeed, of the Hebrew cosmology are all Babylonian; even the creative word itself was a Babylonian conception, as the story of Merodach has shown us; but the spirit that inspires the cosmology is the antithesis of that which inspires the cosmologies [pg 396] of Babylonia. Between the polytheism of Babylonia and the monotheism of Israel a gulf is fixed which cannot be spanned.

The Babylonian Epic of the Creation, as we may continue to call it, sums up and incorporates the various cosmological systems and fancies that had been current in the country. They are thrown into a mythological form with a philosophical introduction. We may therefore regard it as embodying the latest and most fully elaborated attempt of the Babylonian mind to explain the origin of things. It is probably not much older than the age of the Second Assyrian empire, though the materials out of which it has been composed go back to the earliest days of Babylonian antiquity. But it exemplifies the three principles or fundamental ideas upon which Babylonian cosmology rested—the belief that water is the primal element, the belief in a lawless chaos from which the present world has, as it were, been rescued after a long and fierce struggle between the powers of darkness and light, and a belief in generation as the primary creative force. The doctrine that in water we must see the source of all things—a doctrine that made its way

through the cosmologies of Phœnicia and Israel into that of the Greek philosopher Thales—can be traced back to the days when Eridu was the seaport of Babylonia, and its inhabitants reclaimed the marshlands from the sea, and speculated on the origin of the soil on which they dwelt. The belief in the two creations of darkness and light, of confusion and law, may have arisen from the first contact between the teaching of Nippur and that of Eridu, and the endeavour to reconcile the antagonistic conceptions that underlay them, and the contrary systems of creation which they presupposed. The belief, finally, in generation as a motive force was part of the religious heritage that was common [pg 397] to the Semitic race. Semitic religion centred in a divine family which corresponded to the family of the worshipper on earth; the gods were fathers and mothers, and begat children like the human parents, after whom they were modelled. In so far, therefore, as the universe was divine, it too must have been evolved in the same fashion; it was only when it ceased to partake of the divine nature, and to assume its present form, that the god could deal with the materials of which it consisted, as the potter dealt with his clay; or could even create by the simple word of his mouth, like the man who similarly created the names of things, and therewith the things themselves which the names denoted. With the rise of philosophic speculation the process of divine generation became a process of emanation. The gods passed into mere symbols, or rather cosmic

principles and elements; they retained, indeed, their double nature as male and female; but that was all. The human element that once was in them disappeared, the concrete became the abstract. Mummu Tiamât was explained as the world of immature ideas,—the simple "apprehension," we might almost say, of the Hegelian philosophy,—and the first of the "Æons" of the later Gnosticism was thus started on its way. Babylonian religion had been narrowly local and anthropomorphic; under the guidance of a cosmological philosophy it tended to become an atheistic materialism. The poet who wrote the introduction to the Epic of the Creation could have had but little faith in the gods and goddesses he paraded on the scene; in the self-evolved universe of the schools there was hardly room even for the creator Merodach himself.

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Lecture VII. The Sacred Books.

Every organised religion has had its sacred books. They have been as indispensable to it as an organised priesthood; indeed, Mohammedanism is a proof that the sacred book is more necessary to its existence than even a priesthood. The sacred book binds a religion to its past; it is the ultimate authority to which, in matters of controversy, appeal can be made, for it enshrines those teachings of the past upon which the faith of the present professes to rest. It remains fixed and permanent amid the perpetual flow and ebb of human things; the generations of men pass quickly away, rites and ceremonies change, the meaning of symbols is forgotten, and the human memory is weak and deceitful; but the written word endures, and the changes that pass over it are comparatively few and slight.

Babylonia possessed an organised religion, a religion that was official, and to a large extent the result of an artificial combination of heterogeneous elements; and it too, therefore, necessarily possessed its sacred books. But they differed essentially from the sacred

books of ancient Egypt. The Egyptian lived for the future life rather than for the present, and his sacred books were Books of the Dead, intended for the guidance of the disembodied soul in its journey through the other world. The interest and cares of the Babylonian, on the contrary, were centred in the present life. The other world was [pg 399] for him a land of shadow and forgetfulness; a dreary world of darkness and semi-conscious existence to which he willingly closed his eyes. It was in this world that he was rewarded or punished for his deeds, that he had intercourse with the gods of light, and that he was, as is often said in the hymns, "the son of his god." What he needed, accordingly, from his sacred books was guidance in this world, not in the world beyond the grave.

The sacred books of Babylonia thus fall into three classes. We have, first, the so-called magical texts or incantations, the object of which was to preserve the faithful from disease and mischief, to ward off death, and to defeat the evil arts of the witch and the sorcerer. Secondly, there are the hymns to the gods; and, lastly, the penitential psalms, which resemble in many respects the psalms of the Old Testament, and were employed not only by the individual, but also in seasons of public calamity or dismay. We owe the first discovery of this sacred literature to the genius of François Lenormant; he it was who first drew attention to it and characterised its several divisions. It was François Lenormant, moreover, who pointed out that its nearest

analogue was the Hindu Veda, a brilliant intuition which has been verified by subsequent research.

Unfortunately our knowledge of it is still exceedingly imperfect. We are dependent on the fragmentary copies of it which have come from the library of Nineveh, and which resemble the torn leaves, mixed pell-mell together, that alone remain in some Oriental library from vanished manuscripts of the Bible and the Christian Fathers. Until the great libraries of Babylonia itself are thoroughly explored, our analysis and explanation of the sacred literature of the country must be provisional only; the evidence is defective, and [pg 400] the conclusions we draw from it must needs be defective as well.

Moreover, the purely ritual texts, which stand to the hymns in the same relation that the Atharva-Veda stands to the Ṛig-Veda, have as yet been but little examined. Their translation is difficult and obscure, and the ceremonies described in them are but half understood. The ritual, nevertheless, constituted an important part of the sacred literature, and its rubrics were regarded with at least as much reverence as the rubrics of the Anglican Prayer-book. Doubtless the actual words of which they consisted did not possess the same magical or divine power as those of the incantations and hymns, they were not—in modern language—verbally inspired, but they prescribed rites and actions which had quite as divine and authoritative an origin as the

hymns themselves. They were, furthermore, the framework in which the hymns and spells were set; and they all formed together a single act of divine worship, the several parts of which could not be separated without endangering the efficacy of the whole.

That the incantations were the older portion of the sacred literature of Chaldæa, was perceived by Lenormant. They go back to the age of animism, to the days when, as yet, the multitudinous spirits and demons of Sumerian belief had not made way for the gods of Semitic Babylonia, or the sorcerer and medicine-man for a hierarchy of priests. Their language as well as their spirit is Sumerian, and the *zi* or "spirit" of heaven and earth is invoked to repel the attack of the evil ghost, or to shower blessings on the head of the worshipper. They transport us into a world that harmonises but badly with the decorous and orderly realm of the gods of light; it is a world in which the *lil* and the *utuk*, the *galla* and the *ekimmu*, reign supreme, and little room [pg 401] seems to be left for the deities of the Semitic faith. The gods themselves, when they are introduced into it, wear a new aspect. Ea is no longer the creator and culture god, but a master of magic spells; and his son Asari displays his goodness towards mankind by instructing them how to remove the sorceries in which they have been involved, and the witcheries with which they are tormented.

But it must be borne in mind that the incantations do not all belong to the same

age. The description I have just given holds good only of the oldest part of them. The Sumerian population continued to exist in Babylonia after the Semitic occupation of the country, and Sumerian animism continued to exist as well. By the side of the higher Semitic faith, with its gods and goddesses, its priesthood and its cult, the ancient belief in sorcery and witchcraft, in spells and incantations, and in the ghost-world of En-lil, flourished among the people. And as in India, where Brahmanism has thrown its protection over the older cults and beliefs of the native tribes, assimilating them as far as possible, or explaining them in accordance with the orthodox creed; so too in ancient Babylonia, the primeval animism of the people was tacitly recognised by the religion of the State, and given an official sanction. There was no declaration of hostility towards it such as was made by the religion of Israel; on the contrary, the old incantations were preserved and modernised, and the sanctity with which they had been invested allowed to remain unimpaired. At the same time, they were harmonised, so far as could be, with the official creed. The gods of the State religion were introduced into them, and to these gods appeal was made rather than to “the spirit of heaven” and “the spirit of earth.” The spirits and ghosts of the night existed, indeed, but from henceforth they had to [pg 402] be subservient to the deities of the official faith. It was no longer the medicine-man, but the priest of the Semitic deity, who recited the incantation for the suppliant and the sufferer.

We can almost trace the growth of what I will term the Book of Incantations down to the time when it assumed its final form. It was no Book, however, in the proper sense of the term, and it is doubtful whether all the collections which might have been comprised in it were ever combined together. But it is convenient to speak of it in the singular, so long as we remember that this is merely a mode of speech.

As a matter of fact, each great sanctuary seems to have had its own collection. These were added to from time to time; some of them were amalgamated together, or parts belonging to one collection were incorporated into another. Spells which had been found effective in warding off disease or preventing evil, were introduced into a collection which related to the same subject, whatever may have been their source, and the list of gods invoked was continually being enlarged, in the hope that some one at least among them might give the sufferer relief. The older collections were modified in accordance with the requirements of the State religion, and the animism that inspired them accommodated to the orthodox belief; while new collections came into existence which breathed the later Semitic spirit, and were drawn up under the supervision of the Babylonian priesthood. Hymns and even penitential psalms were embodied in them, like the verses of the Bible or the Quran, which are still used as charms in Christian and Mohammedan countries; and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish

between the hymn that served merely as an incantation and the hymn that was chanted in the service of the gods. Indeed, incantatory formulæ are not unfrequently intermixed with the [pg 403] words of the hymn or psalm, producing that grotesque and embarrassing medley of exalted spiritual thought and stupid superstition which so often meets us in the religious literature of Babylonia. How late some of the collections are in the history of Babylonian religion, may be judged from the fact that a time came when the old Sumerian language was no longer considered necessary to ensure the efficacy of the charm, and collections of incantations were made in the Semitic language of later Babylonia.

Criticism will hereafter have to sift and distinguish these collections one from the other, and, above all, determine the earlier and later elements contained in each. At present such a task is impossible. Few, if any, of the collections have come down to us in a perfect state; there are many more, doubtless, which future research will hereafter bring to light; and as long as we are dependent solely on the copies made for the library of Nineveh, without being able to compare them with the older texts of the Babylonian libraries, the primary condition of scientific investigation is wanting. Nevertheless there are certain collections which stand out markedly from among the rest. They display features of greater antiquity, and the animism presupposed by them is but thinly disguised. It is comparatively easy to separate in them

the newer and older elements, which have little in common with each other. Most of them point to Eridu as the source from which they have been derived, though there are others the origin of which is probably to be sought at Nippur.

In these older incantations the gods of the official cult are absent, except where their names have been violently foisted in at a later date, and their place is taken by the spirits or ghosts of early Sumerian belief. The *Zi* or "spirit of the sky," "the spirit of the earth," "the spirit [pg 404] of Ansar and Kisar," such are the superhuman powers that are invoked, and to whom the worshipper turns in his extremity. Even when we come across a name that is borne by one of the deities of the later Babylonian religion, we find that it is the name not of a god, but of a denizen of the ghost-world. "O spirit of Zikum, mother of Ea," we read in one place; "O spirit of Nina, daughter of Ea"; "O spirit, divine lord of the mother-father of En-lil; O spirit, divine lady of the mother-father of Nin-lil"; "O spirit of the moon, O spirit of the sun, O spirit of the evening star!" There is as yet neither Bel of Nippur, nor Sin and Samas and Istar; the sorcerer knows only of the spirits that animate the universe, and bring good and evil upon mankind. Nothing can be more striking than the enumeration of the divine powers to whom the prayer is directed, in an incantation of which I have given the translation in my Hibbert Lectures (p. 450 sqq.)—

"Whether it be the spirit of the
divine lord of the earths;
or the spirit of the divine lady of
the earths;
or the spirit of the divine lord of
the stars;
or the spirit of the divine lady of
the stars;
or the spirit of the divine lord of
progenies;
or the spirit of the divine lady of
progenies;
or the spirit of the divine lord of
...;
or the spirit of the divine lady of
...;
or the spirit of the divine lord of
the holy mound (Ea);
or the spirit of the divine lady of
the holy mound (Damkina);
or the spirit of the divine lord of
the dayspring of life;
or the spirit of the divine lady of
the dayspring of life;
or the spirit of the divine chanter
of the spirit-hosts (En-me-sarra);
or the spirit of the divine
chantress of the spirit-hosts."[313]

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Even the word "divine," which I have used here in default of anything better, imports theological ideas into the texts which were really foreign to them. The original means nothing more than "superhuman" or perhaps "non-human"; the Sumerian term is *dimmer*, of which *dimme*, "a ghost," and *dimmea*, "a spectre," are but other forms; and the ideograph by which it is symbolised is an

eight-rayed star.[314] "The divine lord" and "divine lady" of the incantation are but the *lil* and its handmaid under another guise; they are merely the ghost-like spirits who display themselves at night in the points of light that twinkle and move through the sky.

The theologians of a later day amused themselves by cataloguing the Sumerian names of the spirits invoked in the ancient incantations, and transforming them into titles of the deities of the official pantheon. The same process had been followed in the Semitic translations which were added to the incantatory texts. The spirit of the sun became Samas, the spirit of the evening star became Istar. En-lil of Nippur was transmuted into Bel, and Nin-lil, the lady of the ghost-world, into Bilat or [pg 406] Beltis. The process was facilitated by the changes undergone at Eridu by the magical texts themselves, even before the days of Semitic influence. Maritime intercourse with other lands had already deeply affected the theology of Eridu; the crude animism of an earlier epoch had made way for the conception of a culture-god who taught men the elements of civilisation, and wrote books for their instruction. He was still a "spirit" rather than a god in the Semitic sense of the word, but he was a spirit who had emerged above the rest, who had acquired those family ties which formed the very foundation of civilised life, and to whom the creation of the world was due. Ea was not indeed a Baal, but he was already on the way to become a god in human form.

At the same time, both Ea and his son Asari still appear in animal shape. Asari is, it is true, “the benefactor of man,” but he is also “the mighty one of the princely gazelle,” and even “the gazelle” himself; while Ea is “the antelope of the deep,” or more simply “the antelope.”[315] At other times he is the “lord of the earth” which he has created, or the “king” of that “holy [pg 407] mound” of waters which rose up against the sky like a mountain, and behind which the sun appeared at dawn. The titles that he bears point unmistakably to Eridu. Here alone Ea was the creator of the earth, and here too, in the temple of the god, was a likeness of that “holy mound” whereon the future destinies of mankind were declared. The oldest incantations which have come down to us must have been composed at Eridu in the days of its Sumerian animism.

There are other divine or semi-divine names in them which tell the same tale. The pure waters which heal the sick and destroy the power of witchcraft are brought by the water-spirit Nin-akha-kudda, “the mistress of spells,” whom the theologians of a later time transformed into a daughter of Ea. Bau, too, the heifer of the city of Isin,[316] appears along with the water-spirit. Like Zikum, she was the mother of Ea and “the generatress of mankind,” and she shared with Asari the honours of the New Year's festival. But Bau, it would seem, was not originally from Eridu. She had come there from a neighbouring city, and her presence in the incantations is a proof

that even in these oldest monuments of a sacred literature we are still far from the beginnings of Babylonian religion.

At Nippur it was the ghosts and vampires, who had their habitation beneath the ground, that were objects of terror to the men who lived upon it. At Eridu the demons were rather the raging winds and storm-clouds which lashed the waters of Ea into fury, and seemed for a time to transform his kingdom into a chaos of lawless destruction. The fisherman perished in his bark, while the salt waves inundated the land and ravaged the fields of the husbandman. It was here, on the shores of the Persian Gulf, that the story of the great flood was perhaps [pg 408] first thrown into literary form, and that conception of the universe grew up which found its last expression in the legend of the struggle between Merodach and the forces of anarchy. At any rate it was here that the spirits of evil were pictured as the seven evil demons in whom the tempest was, as it were, incarnated —

> "Seven are they, seven are they,
> in the hollow of the deep seven
> are they!
> Gleams (?) of the sky are those
> seven.
> In the hollow of the deep, in a
> palace, they grew up.
> Male they are not, female they
> are not.
> Destructive whirlwinds are they.
> Wife they have not, child they

beget not;
compassion and mercy they do
not know.
Prayer and supplication hear
they not.
Horses bred in the mountains are
they.
Unto Ea are they hostile.
The throne-bearers of the gods
are they.
To work mischief in the street
they settle in the highway.
Evil are they, evil are they!
Seven are they, seven are they,
seven twice again are they!"

The seven evil spirits played an important part in the demonology of ancient Eridu, and echoes of it survive in the later literature. They were even transmuted into a god, and unified in his person under the name of "the divine seven";[317] while the last month of the year, the stormy Adar, was dedicated to them. But in earlier days it needed all the wisdom of Ea to counteract their wicked devices. The fire-god himself was sent to drive [pg 409] them from their victims, and to disclose their nature and origin—

"In the mountain of the sunset, it
is said, "those seven were born;"
in the mountain of the sunrise
those seven grew up;
in the hollows of the earth they
have their dwelling;
on the high-places of the earth
their names are proclaimed.
As for them, in heaven and earth

they have no dwelling, hidden is
their name.
Among the sentient gods they are
not known.
Their name in heaven and earth
exists not.
Those seven from the mountain
of the sunset gallop forth,
those seven in the mountain of
the sunrise are bound to rest.
In the hollows of the earth they
set the foot;
on the high-places of the earth
they lift the neck.
They by nought are known; in
heaven and earth there is no
knowledge of them."

The hymn or incantation which thus describes them belongs to a late period in the history of Babylonian religion. The animism of primitive times has been replaced by the gods and goddesses of the later official faith. But the belief in the seven evil spirits still lingered, not only in the popular mind, but also in the ranks of the official hierarchy; and it was still remembered that they had been at the outset the spirits of the tempest, born in the clefts of the ravine or on the stormy mountain-top, from whence they issued like wild horses. The flame of sacrifice could alone avert their onset, and incantations were still composed under official sanction, with the help of which they might be driven away. The fact shows to how late an epoch the composition of spells and incantatory hymns may come down, even when the atmosphere they breathe is still that

of Eridu, and the language in which they are written is still the sacred Sumerian. But there are collections of magical hymns [pg 410] and formulæ which are even yet later in date. The eight books of the so-called Maqlû or "Burning" collection are written throughout in Semitic Babylonian;[318] and though two out of the nine books of another collection—that of the Surpu or "Consuming Fever"—are bilingual, they have been clearly translated from the more original Babylonian into Sumerian, like the Latin exercises of to-day.[319] The official canon of the magical texts, in fact, was long in formation, and did not assume its final shape until the age of Khammurabi or later, even though its roots go back to the earliest period of Babylonia, to the age of animism and the medicine-man, when the Sumerian was still dominant in the land, and the Semitic nomad or trader was content to learn from him the elements of civilisation.

The official canon had been collected together from all sides. Most of the great sanctuaries of the country had probably contributed to it; in most, if not in all, of them there must have been magical rituals which had grown up under the care and supervision of the priesthood, and in which the old beliefs of the people were disciplined and harmonised with the dogmas of the State creed. Up to the last, one of the classes into which the priesthood was divided was known as the Êni or "Chanters," whose name was derived from the Sumerian *ên*, "an incantation." It is this word which is prefixed to the charms and

incantatory hymns that constitute so integral a part of the magical texts; and though in course of time it came to denote little more than "recitation," it was a recitation which possessed magical powers, and for which, therefore, [pg 411] a special training was necessary. A single mistake in pronunciation or intonation, a single substitution of one word for another, was sufficient to destroy the charm and necessitate the repetition of the ceremony. Some of the incantations had even to be recited in a whisper, like certain parts of the Roman missal; and a whole series or collection is accordingly termed the ritual of "the whispered charm," reminding us of the passage in the Book of Isaiah where the prophet refers to "the wizards that peep and that mutter."[320]

By the side of the "Book of Incantations"—whether it ever existed or not—there was another sacred book containing hymns to the gods. Here, again, it is more than doubtful whether the various collections of hymns compiled for use in the great sanctuaries of the country were ever combined together and incorporated into a single volume. The tendency to religious centralisation and unification in Babylonia was arrested before it could produce in religion what the seventy-two books of the "Illumination of Bel" were for astronomy and astrology, a compilation in which the observations of the past were collected and brought together.[321] Babylon, despite its political predominance, never succeeded in absorbing the religious cults of

the more venerable sanctuaries of the country; the historical conservatism of the people was too strong, and even Nabonidos was forced to lavish gifts on the shrine of the sun-god at Sippara as well as upon [pg 412] that of Merodach at Babylon. The priesthood of Babylon were content to be chief among their peers; there was no monotheistic zeal to sweep away the rival temples, and the intensely localised character of Babylonian religion prevented the rise of monotheism. And without religious centralisation a common service-book and canon are not very probable. Perhaps, moreover, the hymns to the gods were too long in detaching themselves from the magical ritual, and too late in acquiring a sacred character of their own, to attain the same degree of divine authority as the incantations. Many of them are not only in Semitic Assyrian, but were composed as late as the reigns of the last Assyrian kings, while even those which are bilingual seem to have been in many cases the work of Semitic poets, the Sumerian text being a translation from the Semitic into the sacred language of theology.

At the same time, Lenormant was not far wrong in comparing the religious hymns of Chaldæa with those of the Rig-Veda. Like the latter, they belong to different periods of time, and comprise poems as unlike one another as war-songs and incantations and philosophic addresses to the gods. Moreover, as in the case of the incantations, there were collections of hymns addressed to the god or

gods of the sanctuary in whose service they were used. Thus many of them belong to a collection that must have been made for the temple of the sun-god at Sippara or Larsa; all alike are addressed to the sun-god, the supreme judge of mankind; and the language that is used of him is the same in each. Other hymns celebrate the moon-god of Ur, while others belong to Nippur or to the sanctuary of Merodach at Babylon. The hymn to the god was as much a necessary portion of divine service as the incantation or the ceremonial rite.

The ritual texts tell us how and when it was employed. Thus on the festival of the New Year the service in the [pg 413] temple of Bel-Merodach was opened by a hymn in honour of his ark; and on the second of Nisan the priest was ordered to go down to the Euphrates at the beginning of the first hour of the night, and then, after putting on the prescribed vestment, and taking the waters of the river in his hand, to "enter into the presence of Bel," and there recite a long hymn in praise of the god. The hymn closed with a prayer—

> "Show mercy to thy city of
> Babylon;
> to Ê-Saggil thy temple incline thy
> face;
> grant the prayers of thy people
> the sons of Babylon!"

But there is yet another proof of the sacred

character that attached itself to the hymns. Many of them were employed as incantations. Not only were they introduced into the magical texts, like the verses of the Bible when used as charms, but the magical element was inserted in the hymn itself. The address to the deity was combined with spells and incantations, producing a confused medley of spiritual expressions and grovelling superstition that is at once repellent and grotesque to our modern notions. The hymn, moreover, is prefaced by the word *ên* or "incantation," which makes its words as authoritative and unalterable as the rest of the magical ritual. The same sacredness that invests the latter invests also the hymn. The hymn, in short, is as much verbally inspired as the incantation or spell; indeed, between the hymn and the incantation no clear line of demarcation was drawn by the Babylonian, and it is questionable whether he would have recognised that there was any such line at all.

It was in the use that was made of them, and not in their essential nature, that the hymn to the god and the incantation differed from one another. And as animism preceded the official religion of Babylonia, and the belief [pg 414] in spirits preceded the worship of the gods, so too did the incantation precede the hymn. The sacredness that was acquired by the hymn was originally reflected from the incantation; it was not the contents of the hymn, but the actual words of which it was composed, that gave it its sacred and authoritative character, and consecrated its

employment by the priestly caste.

It is accordingly with good reason that I have described the hymns, like the incantations proper, as verbally inspired. The inspiration lay in the words more than in the sense they conveyed; an error of pronunciation was more fatal than a misunderstanding of their meaning. As long as the words were recited correctly, it mattered little whether either priest or people understood precisely what they meant.

I have already in an earlier lecture quoted some lines from the hymn to the moon-god which was probably composed for the services in the great temple of Ur. The hymns in honour of the sun-god are much more numerous, and formed part of a collection which seems to have been made by the priests of Bit-Uri, the temple of the sun-god at Sippara. The sun-god they celebrate is the incorruptible "judge of mankind," the rewarder of the innocent and the punisher of the guilty, who sees all that is done on earth, and acts towards those who call upon him with justice and mercy.

> "O lord, we read in one of
> them,[322] "illuminator of the
> darkness, opener of the sickly
> face,"
> merciful god, who setteth up the
> fallen, who helpeth the weak,
> unto thy light look the great
> gods,
> the spirits of earth all gaze upon

thy face.
Tongues in unison like a single
word thou directest,
[pg 415]
smiting their heads they look to
the light of the mid-day sun.
Like a wife thou standest, glad
and gladdening.
Thou art their light in the vault
of the far-off heaven.
Thou art the object of their gaze
in the broad earth.
Men far and near behold thee
and rejoice!”

The language of another hymn is in a similar strain—

“Direct the law of the multitudes
of mankind!
Thou art eternal righteousness in
the heavens!
Thou art of faithful judgment
towards all the world!
Thou knowest what is right, thou
knowest what is wrong.
O sun-god, righteousness hath
lifted up its foot!
O sun-god, wickedness hath been
cut down as with a knife!
O sun-god, the minister of Anu
and Bel art thou!
O sun-god, the judge supreme of
heaven and earth art thou!

O lord of the living creation, the
pitiful one (who directest) the
world!
O sun-god, on this day purify and

illumine the king the son of his god!
Whatever worketh evil in his body let it be taken away!
Cleanse him like the goblet of the Zoganes!
Illumine him like a cup of ghee; like the copper of a polished tablet let him be made bright!
Release him from the ban!"[323]

The last words illustrate that strange mixture of spiritual thought and the arts of the sorcerer to which I have more than once alluded. The hymns to the sun-god were not yet emancipated from the magical beliefs and ceremonies in which they had had their origin; they were still incantations rather than hymns in the modern sense of the word. The collection to which they belonged must have been used by the class of priests known as "Chanters" or "Enchanters," who had succeeded to the sorcerers and medicine-men of the pre-Semitic past; and the fact explains how it is that in many of them we [pg 416] have an alternating antiphonal service, portions of them being recited by the priest and other portions by the worshipper. In some instances, indeed, the verses seem to have been alternately intoned by the priest and the assistant ministers, like the canticles or psalms in the Christian worship of to-day. The practice had its origin in the magical ritual, where the sorcerer first recited the incantation, and then called upon the individual to repeat it once or oftener after him. It is another proof of the intimate

connection that existed between the hymns and the incantations out of which they had sprung; like the Veda or the Zend-Avesta, the sacred books of ancient Chaldæa mixed magic and the spiritual worship of the gods together in a confusion which seems to us difficult to understand.

It was the same with the penitential psalms which constitute the third division of the sacred literature of Babylonia. In many respects they resemble the psalms of the Old Testament. Like them they are intended for public use, in spite of their individualistic form; the individual represents the community, and at times it is the national calamity and the national sin to which reference is made. After the revolt and reconquest of Babylon by Assur-bani-pal, when the city was still polluted by the corpses of those who had perished by famine or the sword, the prophets[324] ordered that its shrines and temple-roads should be purified, that its "wrathful gods and angry goddesses" should be "appeased by prayers and penitential psalms," and that then, and only then, the daily sacrifices in the temples should be offered once more.[325] Doubtless the penitential psalms were in the first instance the spontaneous outpouring of the heart of the individual; it was his sufferings that [pg 417] they depicted, and his sins that they deplored; but as soon as they had been introduced into the worship of the temple, and become part of the public cult, the individual element in them fell into the

background, and in the sins and sufferings of the individual both priest and laity saw those of the whole community.

Like the Hebrew psalms, again, they express the belief that sin is the cause of suffering and calamity, and that it can be removed by penitence and prayer to the offended deity. But whereas the Hebrew monotheist knew of one God only who could inflict punishment and listen to the repentant words of the sinner, the Babylonian polytheist was distracted by the uncertainty as to what particular divinity he had offended, and to whom, therefore, his penitent appeal should be addressed. In the penitential psalms, accordingly, it is the vague and general "god" and "goddess" that are invoked, rather than a particular deity. It is only occasionally that the names of special gods are introduced, and then a long list of them is sometimes given, in the hope that among them might be the divinity whose anger had been excited, and whose wrath the sufferer was eager to appease.

Sin, it must be remembered, in the eyes of the Babylonian included a good deal more than moral wrong-doing. There were ritual sins as well as moral sins, offences against the ceremonial law as well as against the moral or spiritual code. The sin was not unfrequently involuntary, and the sufferer did not even know in what particular respect he had offended against the divine laws. It may have been the eating of forbidden food, such as that which drove Adam and Eve from the

sinless garden of Paradise. Or, again, it may have been a real sin, a sin of thought and word committed in the secrecy of the heart. “Was he frank in [pg 418] speaking,” it is asked in a confession which is put into the mouth of a suppliant, “but false in heart? Was it ‘yes’ with his mouth, but ‘no’ in his heart?” So far as the punishment was concerned, little distinction was made between moral and ceremonial sin; both were visited alike, and the sin of ignorance was punished as severely as the sin that was committed with deliberate intent.

The recitation of the penitential psalms was accompanied by fasting. “Food I have not eaten,” the penitent is made to say, “pure water I have not drunk.” And, as in the case of the incantations and hymns, the recitation was antiphonal. Portions of the psalms were recited by the priest, who acted as the mediator between the penitent and the offended deity; other portions by the penitent himself, or a choir of attendant ministers. The ideas which had been associated with the use of the incantations still dominated the public cult. Indeed, the penitential psalm sometimes very nearly approaches the incantation in character. On the one side, it is difficult to distinguish from the psalm a confession like that from which I quoted just now, and which nevertheless forms part of a magical ritual; on the other side, the psalm itself at times degenerates into the language of magic. Babylonia never shook off the influence of those collections of incantations which

constituted its first sacred book, and gave it its first conception of a divinely-inspired literature; up to the last the descendants of the old medicine-man occupied a recognised place in the priestly hierarchy, and the "Chanter" and "Augur" stood on the same footing as the "prophet" and the "priest."

Perhaps it was the same influence which demanded that the language of the penitential psalm should be the extinct Sumerian. That some of the psalms went [pg 419] back to Sumerian times and were composed by Sumerians in their own tongue, I have little doubt; but it seems also unquestionable that many of the psalms which have come down to us were of Semitic origin, the Sumerian version attached to them being really a translation of the original Semitic text. At all events, penitential psalms were written in later times in Assyria, whose authors either did not care or did not know how to provide them with a Sumerian text. It may be that they did not possess the same sacred authority as the older psalms, but, like the latter, they were used in the public services of the northern kingdom with the authorisation of the king. The king in Assyria, it must be remembered, exercised the influence that was wielded by the priesthood in the southern kingdom. The Assyrian psalms, in fact, were like our modern hymns; the sanctity that surrounded the older penitential psalms of Babylonia was indeed denied them, but they better suited the newer age and the character of the Assyrian people, and there was no

omnipotent priesthood to forbid their introduction into the public cult. They stood, it is true, outside the sacred canon of Babylonia, in the sense that no dogmas of religion could be built on them, and it is probable that they never received the sanction of the Babylonian priests; but for all that the spirit they breathe is that of the older psalms; and had the Assyrian empire lasted longer, it is possible that they too might have become a sacred book.

I will conclude my lecture with one of the penitential psalms, which, we are told, might be addressed "to any god"—

> "The heart of my lord is wroth;
> may it be appeased!
> May the god that I know not be
> pacified!
> May the goddess whom I know
> not be pacified!
> May the god I know and (the
> god) I know not be pacified!
> [pg 420]
> May the goddess I know and (the
> goddess) I know not be pacified!
> May the heart of my god be
> appeased!
> May the heart of my goddess be
> appeased!
> May the god and the goddess I
> know and I know not be
> pacified!
> May the god (who has smitten
> me be pacified)!
> May the goddess (who has
> smitten me be pacified)!

The sin that (I sinned) I knew not;
the sin (that I committed I knew not).
The word of blessing (may my god pronounce upon me);
a name of blessing (may the god I know and I know not) record for me!
The word of blessing (may the goddess pronounce upon me)!
Food I have not eaten,
pure water I have not drunk.
An offence against my god unknowingly have I committed;
an offence against my goddess unknowingly I have wrought.
O lord, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
O my god, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
O my goddess, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
O god whom I know and whom I know not, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
O goddess whom I know and whom I know not, my sins are many, my transgressions are great!
The sin that I sinned I knew not,
the transgression I committed I knew not.
The offence I committed I knew not,
the offence that I wrought I knew not.
The lord in the wrath of his heart has regarded me;
god has visited me in the anger

of his heart;
the goddess has been violent against me, and has put me to grief.
The god whom I know and whom I know not has oppressed me,
the goddess whom I know and whom I know not has brought sorrow upon me.
I sought for help, and none took my hand;
I wept, and none stood at my side;
I cried aloud, and there was none that heard me.
I am in trouble and hiding, and dare not look up.
[pg 421]
To my god, the merciful one, I turn myself, I utter my prayer, the feet of my goddess I kiss and water with tears.
To the god whom I know and whom I know not I utter my prayer.
O lord, look upon (me; receive my prayer)!
O goddess, look upon (me; receive my prayer)!
O goddess whom I know (and whom I know not, receive my prayer)!
How long, O god, (must I suffer)?
How long, O goddess, (shall thy face be turned from me)?
How long, O god whom I know and whom I know not, shall the anger (of thy heart continue)?
How long, O goddess whom I

know and whom I know not,
shall the wrath of thy heart be
unappeased?
Mankind is made to wander, and
there is none that knoweth.
Mankind, as many as have a
name, what do they know?
Whether he shall have good or
ill, there is none that knoweth.
O lord, cast not away thy
servant!
Overflowing with tears, take him
by the hand!
The sins I have sinned, turn to a
blessing;
the transgressions I have
committed may the wind carry
away!
Strip off my manifold
transgressions as a garment.
O my god, seven times seven are
my transgressions; forgive my
sins!
O my goddess, seven times seven
are my transgressions; forgive
my sins!
O god whom I know and whom I
know not, seven times seven are
my transgressions; forgive my
sins!
O goddess whom I know and
whom I know not, seven times
seven are my transgressions;
forgive my sins!
Forgive my sins, and let me
humble myself before thee.
May thy heart be appeased as the
heart of a mother who has borne
children!
May it be appeased as that of a

mother who has borne children,
as that of a father who has
begotten them!”

[pg 422]

Lecture VIII. The Myths And Epics.

A lecture on the myths of Babylonia may perhaps seem out of place in a course, the subject of which is Babylonian religion. But religion has its mythology as well as its theology, and sometimes the mythology has had a good deal to do with moulding or even creating its theology. Moreover, the myths of Babylonia were intimately connected with its worship of the gods. They all related, so far as we know, to the gods and spirits, or else, to what Greek theology would have called heroes and demi-gods. They embody religious beliefs and practices; they contain allusions to local cults; above all, they not unfrequently reflect the popular conception of the divine.

Only we must beware of basing theological conclusions on their unsupported evidence. They have come to us in a literary form, and students of folk-lore know how little trustworthy, even for the purposes of the folk-lorist, a tale is which has undergone literary remodelling. It is difficult to distinguish in it what is peculiar to the individual author or the literary circle in which he moves, and what is really the belief of the people or the traditional heritage of the past. In fact, all mythology, whether literary or otherwise, suffers from the mixture within it of old and modern ideas. The old ideas may be preserved in it like the fossils in a geological formation, or they may have been coloured and explained away [pg 423] in accordance with the conceptions of a later age; but in either case they are mingled with the beliefs and notions of after generations, which our ignorance necessarily prevents us from separating with the requisite care. In dealing with the history of religion, therefore, we ought to treat the language of a literary myth with extreme caution, and refrain from drawing any far-reaching inferences from the statements we find in it.

This is more especially true of the literary epics of ancient Babylonia. They seem to have been numerous; at all events fragments of a good many have been saved for us out of the wreckage of the past. But they belong for the most part to the same period, the age of national revival which began with the reign of Khammurabi, and continued for several

centuries after his death. It is possible that Sin-liqi-unnini, the author of the great Epic of Gilgames, was a contemporary of Abraham; the story of Adapa, the first man, was already in existence, and had become a standard classic, when the Tel el-Amarna letters were written in the fifteenth century B.C. Behind all these poems lay a long-preceding period in which the myths and legends they embody had taken shape and formed the subject of numberless literary works. The Epic of Gilgames is, for instance, but the final stage in the literary development of the tales and myths of which it is composed; older poems, or parts of poems, have been incorporated into it, and the elements of which it consists are multiform and of various origin. The story of the Deluge, which constitutes the eleventh book, has been foisted into it by an almost violent artifice, and represents a combination of more than one of its many versions which were in circulation in Babylonia. When the early libraries of the country have been explored, we shall know better than we do now how far the story in the form we have of it in the Epic is original, and how [pg 424] far the author has freely borrowed from his predecessors, using their language or combining their work.

As a rule, the subject of a Babylonian poem is either some single god or some single hero. When the god or hero is merely a central figure around whose adventures those of other gods or heroes are made to revolve, the poem becomes an Epic. It still retains its

mythological shape, and the world in which it moves is a world of supernatural powers, a divine fairyland in which the gods play the part of men. But there is none of the dull and crass euhemerism which distinguishes the Egyptian tales of the gods. The gods do not become mere men with enlarged human powers; they remain divine, even though their actions are human and the stage on which they move is human also. It was the pantheism of the Egyptian, in conjunction with the deification of the Pharaoh, that made him rationalise the stories of his gods; in Babylonia there was no such temptation; each deity retained his individual character, and from the outset he had worn the likeness of a man. But it was a likeness only, behind which the divinity revealed itself, though the likeness necessarily caused the revelation to be made through individual features, clearly cut and sharply defined. Bel was no human king possessed of magical powers, who had once sat on the throne of Babylon; he remained the god who could, it is true, display himself at times to his faithful worshippers, but whose habitation was in the far-off heavens, from which he surveyed and regulated the actions of mankind. The gods of Babylonian mythology still belonged to heaven and not to earth, and its heroes are men and not humanised gods.

I have already referred to the story of the first man, Adapa, and his refusal of the gift of immortality. The story, as we have it, has received a theological colouring; like the

narrative of the Fall in the Book of Genesis, it [pg 425] serves to explain why death has entered the world. Man was made in the likeness of the gods, and the question therefore naturally arose why, like them, he should not be immortal. The answer was given, at any rate by the priests of Eridu, in the legend of Adapa and his journey to the sky.

There was yet another story which illustrated the punishment of human presumption,—the attempt of man to be as a god,—and is thus a parallel to the story of the tower of Babel. It is the legend of Etana and the eagle, who tempts the hero to ascend with him to the highest heavens and there visit the abodes of the gods. Borne accordingly on the breast of the bird, Etana mounts upwards. At the end of two hours the earth looks to them like a mere mountain, the sea like a pool. Another four hours and “the sea has become like a gardener's ditch.” At last they reach “the heaven of Anu”; but even there they refuse to stay. Higher still they ascend to the heaven of Istar, so that the sea appears to them “like a small bread-basket.” But before they can reach their destination the destined penalty overtakes the presumptuous pair. The eagle's wings fail him, and he falls through space, and both he and his burden are dashed to the ground.

With this story of Etana there has been coupled a legend, or rather fable, of the eagle itself, which the mutilated state of our copies of it renders extremely obscure. The eagle had

devoured the young of the serpent, who accordingly appealed to the sun-god, the judge of all things, for justice. By the sun-god's advice the serpent creeps into the carcase of a dead ox, and there, when the eagle comes to feed upon the putrifying flesh, seizes his enemy, strips him of his feathers, and leaves him to die of hunger and thirst. This must have happened after the fall of the eagle from heaven; and we [pg 426] may therefore conjecture that, while his human companion was killed, like Icarus, by the fall, the punishment of the eagle was deferred. But it came finally; not even the most powerful of the winged creation could venture with impunity into the heaven of the gods.

While the celestial seat of Istar was beyond the reach of man, Istar herself sought Tammuz, the bridegroom of her youth, in the underground realm of Hades, in the hope that she might give him to drink of the waters of life which gushed up under the throne of the spirits of the earth, and so bring him back once more to life and light. The poem which told of her descent into Hades was sung at the yearly festival of Tammuz by the women, who wept for his untimely death. Like Baldyr, the youngest and most beautiful of the gods, he was cut off in the flower of his youth, and taken from the earth to another world. But while the myth embodied in the poem, and illustrated by numberless engraved seals, makes him descend into Hades, the older belief of Eridu, where he had once been a water-spirit,—“the son of the spirit of the

deep,"—transferred him to the heaven above, where, along with Nin-gis-zida, "the lord of the upright post," he served as warder of the celestial gate. In my Hibbert Lectures I have dealt so fully with the story of Tammuz in the various forms it assumed, as well as with the myth of Istar's pursuit of him in the world below, that I need not dwell upon it now. All I need do is to insist upon the caution with which we should build upon it theories about the Babylonian's conception of the other world, and the existence he expected to lead after death.

The description of Hades with which the poem begins was borrowed from some older work. We meet with it again almost word for word in what is probably one of the books of the Epic of Gilgames. The fact illustrates [pg 427] the way in which the poets and epic-writers of Babylonia freely borrowed from older sources, and how the classical works of Chaldæa were built up out of earlier materials. Perhaps if reproached with plagiarism, their authors would have made the same answer as Vergil, that they had but picked out the pearls from the dunghill of their predecessors. At all events the description of Hades is striking, though it must be remembered that it represents only one of the many ideas that were entertained of it in Babylonia—

> "To the land from which there is
> no return, the home of
> [darkness],

Istar, the daughter of Sin,
[turned] her mind,
yea, the daughter of Sin set her
mind [to go];
to the house of gloom, the
dwelling of Irkalla,
to the house from which those
who enter depart not,
the road from whose path there
is no return;
to the house where they who
enter are deprived of light;
a place where dust is their
nourishment, clay their food;
the light they behold not, in
thick darkness they dwell;
they are clad like bats in a garb
of wings;
on door and bolt the dust is
laid."

Through the seven gates of the infernal regions did Istar descend, leaving at each some one of her adornments, until at last, stripped and helpless, she stood before the goddess of the underworld. There no mercy was shown her; the plague-demon was bidden to smite her with manifold diseases, and she was kept imprisoned in Hades like the ordinary dead. But while the goddess of love thus lay bound and buried, things in this upper world fell into confusion. Neither men nor cattle produced offspring, and the gods in heaven took counsel what should be done. Ea accordingly created an androgyne, to whom the name was given "Bright is his light." Before him the gates of Hades opened, and the darkness within them was lighted up. The

infernal goddess was forced to obey [pg 428] the orders of heaven; and though she cursed the messenger with deadly imprecations, the spirits of the earth were seated on their golden throne while Istar was sprinkled with the water of life, and she then returned once more to the world of light.

Ereskigal, the goddess of Hades, forms the subject of yet another poem, fragments of which were found at Tel el-Amarna in Egypt, where the poem had been used as a text-book for the students of the Babylonian language and script. The poem recounts how she refused to come to a feast which the gods had prepared in heaven, and how Nergal invaded her dominions, broke through the gates that shut them in, and, seizing Ereskigal by the hair, dragged her from her throne. But she begged for mercy, and Nergal consented to be her husband, and to rule with her over the realm of the dead. The "tablet of wisdom" was transferred to him, and she became a Semitic Baalat, the mere reflection of her "lord." The Sumerian "queen of Hades" gave place to a Semitic Bel.

The "tablet of wisdom" was distinct from the "tablets of destiny," which gave their possessor a foreknowledge of the future course of events. The possession of the latter implied supreme rule over gods and men; it brought with it the right to be "Bel" in the fullest sense of the word. Like the Urim and Thummim, they were hung upon the breast; and in the Epic of the Creation, Tiamât is described as delivering them to her demon

husband Kingu, who thereby became the acknowledged ruler of the world. The victory of Merodach over the powers of darkness transferred to him the mystic tablets; from henceforth he was the Bel who had made, and who directed, the existing universe; and once each year, at the New Year's festival, he sat enthroned above the mercy-seat in his temple at Babylon, declaring [pg 429] the destinies of the coming year. But before the tablets were given to Bel-Merodach of Babylon, they had belonged to the older Bel of Nippur and Dur-ili; and a myth told how Zu, the storm-bird, had stolen them while Bel was "pouring forth the pure water and mounting his throne" at the beginning of day. "I will take," he had said, "the divine tablets of destiny, even I; the laws[326] of all the gods will I decree; my throne will I establish and issue my commands, and direct all the angels (of heaven)." The thief flew with his spoil to Mount Sâbu; and Anu called in vain upon his brother gods to pursue and smite him, and recover the stolen treasure. It was only at last by the help of stratagem that the nest of Zu was found, and the tablets restored to Bel.

A myth of more transparent meaning is that which told of the ravages wrought in land after land by Urra, the Pestilence. The description of the plague-god reminds us of that angel of pestilence whom David saw with his hand stretched forth over Jerusalem. No moral considerations moved him; just and unjust, the sinner and the innocent, were alike involved in a common destruction.

Babylon was the first to be smitten, then Erech; and Merodach and Istar mourned vainly over the ruin of their people. Then Isum, the angel-messenger of Urra, was sent on a longer mission. The pestilence spread over the whole civilised world; Syria and Assyria, Elamite and Bedâwin, Kurd and Akkadian equally suffered. The vineyards of Amanus and the Lebanon were rooted up, and those who cultivated them perished from the earth. For "unnumbered years" the scourge lasted, for Urra had "planned evil because of former wickedness," and it was long before his rage was appeased, and the world returned to its normal state.

[pg 430]
Similarly transparent is the story of the assault of the seven evil spirits upon the moon, resulting in its eclipse and threatened extinction. En-lil in despair sends his messenger, the fire-god, to Ea for advice and help, which are accordingly given, and the moon-god is saved. The poem, however, is of a much older date than those we have hitherto been considering. It goes back to the time when magic still held a foremost place in the official religion of Babylonia; when Aṡari, the son of Ea, had not as yet become Bel-Merodach of Babylon; and when the cult of Ea had not been obscured by those of younger deities. In fact, it forms part of one of the incantation texts, and is described as the sixteenth book of the series on evil spirits. But the divine triads already make their appearance in it; Ea does not stand alone, but

shares his powers with En-lil and Anu, while below them is the triad of Sin, Samas, and Istar. We may look upon the story as belonging to the age which saw the transformation of Sumerian animism into the syncretic State religion of later days; the Semitic gods are there, but they still retain in part the functions which distinguished them when they were “spirits” and nothing more.

Between the legend of the assault upon the moon-god and the Epic of Gilgames the distance is great. Centuries of thought and development intervene between them, and there is a difference not only in degree, but also in kind. While one reminds us of the legends of Lapps or Samoyeds, the other finds its parallel in the heroic tales of Greece. Gilgames is a hero in the Greek sense of the term; he is not a god, at least for the poet of the Epic, even though he lived like Achilles and Odysseus in days when the gods took part in visible form in the affairs of men. So far as we know, it is the masterpiece of Babylonian epical literature,—a proof that however deficient [pg 431] the pure-blooded Semite may have been in epical and mythological genius, the mixed race of Babylonia was in this respect the rival of the Greek. Like the story of the Trojan War, the story of Gilgames attracted to it epical and mythological elements from all sides, and became a veritable treasure-house of Babylonian mythology.

Its author divided it into twelve books. Long ago it was noticed that the arrangement has

an astronomical basis, and that the adventures of the hero described in some at least of the books are made to correspond with the current names of the months of the year. Thus the love and revenge of Istar are the subject of the sixth book, answering to the name of the sixth month, that of “the mission of Istar”; while the episode of the Deluge is introduced into the eleventh book, where it fitly corresponds with the eleventh month Adar, “the month of the curse of rain.” It is true that the correspondence between the subject of the book and the name of the month cannot be traced in all cases, but it must be remembered that each month had many names, especially in the age of Khammurabi, and that the poet would have more especially in his mind the religious festivals which distinguished the months of the year. As was pointed out by Sir H. C. Rawlinson, he must have regarded Gilgames, if not as a solar hero, at all events as a representative of the sun-god. Not only is the Epic divided into twelve books, but in the seventh, when the summer solstice is passed and the year begins to wane, the hero is smitten with a sore disease. It is not until the twelfth and last book is reached, that, after bathing in the waters of the ocean which encircles the world, he is healed of his sickness, and restored once more to health and strength.

But the solar character of Gilgames did not originally [pg 432] belong to him. His name, like those of most of the Babylonian heroes,

had come down from Sumerian times, when as yet the gods did not exist, and the world of living things was divided between “spirits” and men.[327] And Gilgames was a man, the creation of the goddess Aruru, whose original birthplace seems to have been Marad, and of whom a tale was told which may be the prototype of that of Akrisios and Perseus.[328] He was the Hêraklês of Babylonia, the embodiment of human strength, who saves his country from its foes, and destroys the monstrous beasts that infest it,—a mighty prince, though not an actual king. There is no reason why he should not have been like Cyrus, a historical personage round whose name and deeds myths afterwards gathered; an early inscription recording the restoration of the wall of Erech states that it had been originally built by the deified Gilgames.[329]

The Epic begins with a description of his rule at Erech, “the seat” of his power. Between him and the inhabitants of the city there seems to have been little goodwill. He had not left, they complained, the son to his father or the wife to her husband. It may be that the legend contains a germ of historical truth, and goes back to the days when Erech was still a battleground [pg 433] between Sumerian and Semite.[330] At any rate the gods, we are told, heard the cry of the people, and Aruru was instructed to create a rival to Gilgames, who might overcome him in the contest of strength. The goddess accordingly kneaded clay with her hands, and made it in the form of Ea-bani, half-man and half-beast. His body

was covered with hair; “he knew neither kin nor country”; “with the gazelles he ate the grass” of the field, and “satisfied his thirst with the cattle.” On the seals he is represented as a satyr with a goat's legs and human head.

Vainly “the Huntsman” endeavoured to capture him. Ea-bani broke through the nets that were laid for him; and it was only when one of the courtesans of Istar was sent to entice him that he yielded to the temptation, and left his gazelles and cattle to lie with her seven nights. When once more he turned back to them, they fled from him in terror; he had become a man, knowing good and evil, and between him and the brute beasts there was nothing more in common. He listened accordingly to the courtesan, and went with her to Erech, “the seat of Gilgames, the giant in strength, who like a wild ox is stronger than the strongest men.” There Gilgames had dreamed three dreams relating to him; and Ea-bani, on hearing the interpretation of them, gave up his design of wrestling with the hero, and became instead his fast friend and ally.

The third book of the Epic describes the expedition of the two heroes against the tyrant Khumbaba, whose [pg 434] home was in the cedar-forest of Elam. They found a way into its magical depths, gazing in wonder at the height of the trees, and beholding the mountain of the cedars, “the mystic” seat of the gods, the shrine of Irnini; “before the mountain the cedars lifted up their luxuriant

foliage; deep was their shadow and full of pleasaunce." Khumbaba was overcome and slain; but Gilgames once more dreamed a dream, wherein the heavens thundered, the lightning flashed, and the earth shook, and which portended disaster to Ea-bani and his friend.

The sixth and following books describe how the dream was fulfilled. Istar saw and loved Gilgames in the strength of his manhood, and asked him to be her bridegroom. "If thou wilt be my husband," she declared—

> "I will let thee ride in a chariot
> of lapis-lazuli and gold,
> thou shalt harness each day great
> mules (to thy yoke);
> the odours of cedar shall enter
> our house ...
> Kings, lords, and princes [shall
> bow] at thy feet;
> [the increase] of mountain and
> plain shall they bring thee in
> tribute."

Gilgames, however, rejected the offer of the goddess in scorn, and taunted her with her fickleness and cruelty and the miserable end of all who had loved her in the past—

> "Tammuz, the spouse of thy
> youth,
> thou ordainest weeping for him
> year by year.
> The bright-coloured wood-pigeon
> didst thou love;

thou didst smite him and break
his wings;
in the woods he sits and cries, ‘O
my wings!’
Thou didst love a lion perfect in
might;
seven times seven didst thou dig
for him a pit.
Thou didst love a horse, glorious
in battle;
whip and spur and bridle didst
thou decree for him.
Fourteen hours didst thou make
him gallop;
weariness and thirst didst thou
lay upon him;
[pg 435]
for his mother, the goddess Silili,
thou ordainest weeping.
Thou didst love the shepherd
Tabulu,
who poured out the salt
continually for thee;
day by day did he slay for thee
the sucklings.
Thou didst smite him, and
change him into a wolf.
His own shepherd-boys drove
him away,
and his own dogs bit his flesh.
Thou didst love Isullanu, the
gardener of thy father,
who was ever bringing thee fruit;
day by day he made bright thy
dish;
thou didst lift thine eyes to him,
and speak softly to him:
‘Isullanu mine, let us eat the
gourds together;
put forth thine hand and touch

one ...'
Isullanu answered her:
'Of me what requirest thou?
Has my mother not baked, have I
not eaten,
that I should eat such food?
Thorns and thistles are hidden
therein' (?).
When thou didst hear these his
words,
thou didst smite him, and change
him into a column (?),
and didst plant him in the midst
of [the garden?]."

Istar flew to her father Anu in heaven, and demanded from him vengeance upon Gilgames for the slight he had put upon her. Accordingly a monstrous bull was created, which ravaged the country, and threatened the life of Gilgames himself. But Gilgames was more than a match for the monster. With the help of Ea-bani the bull was slain, and its huge horns carried in triumph through the streets of Erech; while Istar stood in impotent rage on the walls of the city, lamenting the death of the bull, and calling on her harlot priestesses to weep over it with her.

But the death of "the divine bull" had evil consequences for the two heroes. The curse of Istar falls upon them; Gilgames himself is smitten with a grievous sickness, and Ea-bani dies after lingering in pain for full twelve days. Gilgames is inconsolable; vainly he protests against the law of death which carries away the [pg 436] strong equally with

the weak, the hero equally with the common man. The ninth book thus begins—

> "Gilgames for his friend Ea-bani
> weeps bitterly and lies
> outstretched upon the ground.
> "'Shall I not die like Ea-bani?
> Grief has entered my body;
> I fear death, and lie outstretched
> upon the ground.' "

Accordingly he determines to visit Xisuthros,[331] the hero of the Deluge, who dwelt beyond the river of death, whither he had been translated without dying, and learn from him the secret of immortality.

The road was long and difficult; mortal man had never trodden it before. But there was divine blood in Gilgames; and as the Greek Hêraklês forced his way to Hades, so he too forced his way beyond the limits of our human world. First he had to pass the twin mountains of Mas, in the northern desert of Arabia, which guard the daily rising and setting of the sun, whose summit touches the "zenith of heaven," while "their breast reaches downwards to Hades." Men with the bodies of scorpions guarded the gateway of the sun, the horror of whose aspect was "awesome," and whose look "was death." But "the scorpion-man" and his "wife" recognised that the stranger was partly divine, and he was allowed to pass in safety through the open doors. Once beyond them he entered a region of thick darkness. For the space of

twelve double hours he groped [pg 437] his way through this land without light, when suddenly he emerged from it into the bright light of day. Here grew a marvellous tree, whose fruit was the precious turquoise[332] and lapis-lazuli, which hung from it like clusters of grapes.

At last Gilgames reached the shore of the ocean, which, like a serpent, encircles the earth. Here Ṡiduri, or Ṡabitum "the lady of Saba,"[333] sat upon "the throne of the sea." But she locked the gate of her palace, and forbade him to cross the ocean; none had ever passed over it except the sun-god in his nightly voyage from west to east. Once more, however, the element of divinity that was in Gilgames prevailed; Ṡabitum acknowledged that he was more than a mere man, and allowed his right to seek his ancestor beyond the river of death. Arad-Ea, the pilot of Xisuthros, was summoned; trees were cut and fashioned into a boat, and for a month and fifteen days Gilgames and his pilot pursued their voyage over the sea. Then "on the third day" they entered "the waters of death." The hero was bidden to cling to the rudder and to see that the deadly water did not touch his hand. Twelve strokes of the oar were needed before the rapids were safely passed, and the boat reached the shore that lay beyond the realm of death. Here Gilgames beheld Xisuthros "afar off" "at the mouth of the rivers." At once he communicated to him the object of his journey: how and why had Xisuthros escaped the universal law of death?

The answer is contained in the eleventh book of the Epic, which recounts the story of the great Deluge.

Ever since its discovery by George Smith in 1872, the Babylonian story of the Deluge, which has thus been [pg 438] introduced into the Epic of Gilgames, has attracted the special attention of both scholars and the public. On the one side it agrees with the story of the Deluge handed down to us by the copyists of the Chaldæan historian Berossos, and so is a witness to his trustworthiness; on the other side, its parallelism with the account of the Deluge in the Book of Genesis is at once striking and startling. But the version of the story embodied by Sin-liqi-unnini in his Epic was but one out of many that were current in Babylonia. We have a fragment of another which so closely resembles that of the Epic, as to have been long believed to form part of it; indeed, it is possible that it comes from a variant copy of the Epic itself. Fragments of another version have lately been found by Dr. Scheil in a Babylonian tablet which goes back to the reign of Ammi-zadok, the fourth successor of Khammurabi.[334] Even the version contained in the Epic seems to be a combination of two earlier ones, or rather to be based upon at least two different versions of the legend. The story, in fact, must have been of immemorial antiquity in Babylonia; Xisuthros and his ship are depicted upon some of the earliest seals, and Babylonian chronology drew a sharp line of division between the kings who had reigned before

and after the Flood. In the Epic Xisuthros is a native of Surippak on the Euphrates, but the story must originally have grown up at Eridu on the shores of the Persian Gulf. Like the story of the struggle with Tiamât, it typifies the contest between the anarchic elements of storm and flood and that peaceful expanse of water in which the fishermen of [pg 439] Eridu plied their trade, and out of which the culture-god had ascended. It is significant that up to the last it was En-lil of Nippur who was represented as sending the Flood that destroyed mankind, while Xisuthros was saved by Ea.

The Babylonian story of the Deluge has been so often translated and is so well known, that there is no need for me to repeat it here. It is sufficient to note that Xisuthros, like Noah, owed his preservation to his piety. In the final scene, when Bel (En-lil) is enraged that any one should have escaped from the destruction he had brought upon mankind, Ea pacifies him with the words: “Punish the sinner for his sins, punish the transgressor for his transgressions; be merciful that he be not [utterly] cut off, be long-suffering that he be not [rooted out].” The Deluge was a punishment for sin, and it was only just, therefore, that the righteous man should be saved.

The translation of Xisuthros with his wife to the paradise beyond the grave is evidently regarded by the author of the Epic as a further reward for his piety. But we may suspect that this was not its original cause. In

the myth of Adapa, the first man, we find Anu laying down that the mortal who has penetrated into the secrets of the gods must receive the gift of immortality and become as one of the gods himself, and it would seem that the same idea inspired the belief in the translation of the second father of mankind. Xisuthros too had learned the secret counsels of the gods; with the help of Ea he had outwitted Bel, and it was therefore needful that the gift of immortality should be conferred on him, and that he should dwell like them in the land which death cannot reach.

True to his primeval character, En-lil of Nippur was the author of the Deluge. His ministers, Nin-ip, Nusku, and En-nugi, carry out his commands, while "the spirits [pg 440] of the earth lift up their torches." But the poet of the Epic has spoilt the primitive symmetry of the picture by introducing the triad into it along with the storm-god Hadad of later times, and so making the destruction of mankind not the work of En-lil alone, but of the gods generally in common council. The result has been a want of coherence in the elements of the story; Istar[335] consents to the death of the children she has borne, only to repent of it subsequently when she sees them filling the sea "like fish," and to weep with the rest of the gods over the havoc that has been wrought. Perhaps Professor Jastrow is right in his suggestion that two separate versions of the story have been united together, in one of which it was the single city

of Surippak and its inhabitants that were destroyed, while in the other the Deluge was universal. However that may be, Ea disclosed the determination of En-lil to his faithful servant, “the son of Ubara-Tutu.” According to one part of the story, the disclosure was made through a dream; according to another part, by a device similar to that which gave the Phrygian Midas his ass's ears. The god whispered the meditated deed of Bel and the means of escaping it to one of those reed-huts which stood by the shore of the Persian Gulf, and in which Xisuthros—despite the fact that he is called “a man of Surippak”—was born. The rustling reeds communicated to him the secret, and he in turn told his “lord Ea” that he had understood the message.

The ship was built, and by the advice of Ea the too-inquisitive inquirers were informed that the builder was transferring his allegiance from Bel, the lord of the land, to Ea, the god of the sea.[336] All sorts of provisions were [pg 441] stored in it, together with “the seed of life,” each after its kind —“cattle of the field, wild beasts of the field, and the sons of the craftsmen.” Then the helm was placed in the hands of Buzur-Sadi-rabi, the steersman, the door of the ark was closed, and the storm broke upon the earth. For seven days and nights it raged; man and his works were swept away, and the ark alone survived with its living freight. When at last Xisuthros opened his window and looked out, a desolate waste of waters was all that could be seen. Above it the lofty peak of the mountain of

Nizir[337] in the north-east finally appeared; here the ship grounded, and seven days afterwards Xisuthros sent forth a dove to see if the earth were dry. But the dove "went to and fro, and returned." Next he sent forth a swallow, which returned also to the ark; and lastly a raven, which "ate, waded and croaked, and did not return." So the Chaldæan Noah knew that the waters of the Flood had subsided: and accordingly he opened the door of the ark and let the animals within it depart towards "the four quarters of heaven." Then he offered sacrifice on the summit of the mountain, setting beside it vases of smoking incense ranged "seven by seven." The gods smelt the sweet savour of the offering, and rejoiced that there were men still left to prepare it for them. They gathered, we are told, "like flies above the offerer," while Beltis lifted up "the bow that Anu had made."

En-lil alone refused to be reconciled. He vented his wrath at the escape of Xisuthros and his family upon the Igigi or angels, who, as spirits, were more under his control than the gods. But Ea took the blame upon [pg 442] himself, and, after declaring that the righteous must not suffer with the guilty, persuaded Bel to promise that though he might send the wild beast, the famine, and the pestilence upon mankind, the earth should never again be visited by the waters of a flood. Then Bel entered the ship, blessed Xisuthros and his wife, and translated them to the other world.

After hearing the story, Gilgames fell into a deep sleep, which lasted six days and seven nights, while the wife of Xisuthros prepared magic food, which she placed at the head of the sleeper. When he awoke he ate it, and his sickness departed from him. But his skin was still covered with sores, and it was therefore necessary that he should bathe in the purifying waters of the ocean before the full strength and beauty of his youth came back to him.

Xisuthros now tells him of the plant of immortality which grows, covered with thorns, at the bottom of the ocean. The hero accordingly ties heavy stones to his feet, and dives for it; and though the thorns pierce his hands, he brings a branch of it to the surface, and prepares to carry it to the world of men. But the gift of immortality was not for men to possess. On his voyage home Gilgames stops awhile at a fountain of cool water, and while he bathes in it a serpent perceives the odour of the plant, and steals it away. Vainly the hero laments its loss, the plant that “changes age into youth ” could never be brought to a world the law of which is death.

Man must die, but what is the lot of the dead? This is the question which forms the burden of the twelfth and last book of the Epic. Gilgames wanders from temple to temple, asking the god of each if the earth has seized hold of Ea-bani, and if so, what is his fate below. But the gods are silent; they give neither answer nor sign. At last, however, he reaches the shrine [pg 443] of Nergal, the god

of the dead, and Nergal causes the earth to open and the spirit of Ea-bani to ascend out of it like a cloud of dust. And then the answer is given. He who has friends to care for him will "lie on a couch and drink pure water"; the hero too—

> "who is slain in battle, as you
> and I have seen,
> his father and his mother support
> his head,
> and his wife [weeps] over him.
> But he whose body lies forsaken
> in the field, as thou and I have
> seen,
> his ghost rests not in the earth.
> He whose ghost has none to care
> for him, as thou and I have seen,
> the garbage of the pot, the refuse
> of food,
> which is thrown into the street,
> must he devour."

With this dreary and materialistic picture of the other world the Epic comes to an end. It is a curious contrast to the life in the fields of Alu to which the Egyptian worshipper of Osiris looked forward; and there is little need to wonder that the mind and religious cult of the Babylonian should have been centred in the present life. The Hades in which he was called upon to believe was more dreary even than the Hades of the Homeric Greeks.

The Epic of Gilgames forces two questions upon our attention, both of which have been often discussed. The one is the relation of the

story of the Deluge contained in it to the Biblical narrative of the Flood, the other is the relation of Gilgames himself to the Greek Hêraklês. From the outset it has been perceived that the connection between the Babylonian and Hebrew stories is very close, and that the Babylonian is the older of the two. The birds, for instance, sent out by Xisuthros are three instead of two, as in the Biblical narrative, though the number of times they were despatched is the same in [pg 444] both cases; and the ship of the Babylonian version has been replaced by an ark in the Old Testament account. In fact the Babylonian story has been modified in Palestine and under Western influences. In an inland country an ark was naturally substituted for a ship, more especially as the latter contained a house with window and door; even in Babylonia itself, in the processions of the gods, an ark came to take the place of the ship of primitive Eridu. The olive branch, again, with which the dove returned, according to the Book of Genesis, points to Palestine, where the olive grew; while the period of the rainfall has been transferred from Sebet or January and February, when the winter rains fall in Babylonia, to the "second month" of the Hebrew civil year, our October and November, when the "former rains" began in Canaan. Similarly, the subsidence of the waters is extended in the Hebrew narrative to the middle of the "seventh month," when the "latter rains" of the Canaanitish spring are over.

But the most remarkable fact brought to light by a comparison of the Babylonian story with that of Genesis is, that the resemblances between them are not confined to one only of the two documents into which modern criticism has separated the Biblical narrative. It is not with the so-called Elohistic, or the so-called Yahvistic, account only that the agreement exists, but with both together as they are found at present combined, or supposed to be combined, in the Hebrew text.[338] The fact throws grave doubt on the reality of the critical analysis. As I have said elsewhere:[339] "Either the Babylonian poet had before him the present 'redacted' text of Genesis, or else the Elohist and Yahvist must have copied the Babylonian story upon the mutual understanding [pg 445] standing that the one should insert what the other omitted. There is no third alternative."

The Palestinian colouring of the Biblical version of itself excludes the supposition that the story was borrowed by the Jews in the age of the Babylonian exile. Such a supposition, indeed, would be little in accordance with the feelings of hatred felt by the captives towards their Babylonian conquerors and the religious beliefs and traditions of the latter. But the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets has shown that the culture and literature of Babylonia had made its way to Palestine and even to Egypt long before the Mosaic age. The great literary works of Chaldæa were already known and used as text-books in the West, and, like the

story of the first man Adapa, a portion of which was found in Egypt, the story of the Deluge and the second founder of the human race must also have been known there. Gunkel has made it clear[340] that the conceptions and beliefs which underlie the history of the Flood, and find their expression in the statement that "the fountains of the great deep" were broken up, are not only of Babylonian origin, but are also met with in the earliest fragments of Old Testament literature. Before the Israelites entered Canaan, the cosmological ideas of Babylonia had already made their way to it, and been adapted to the geographical conditions of "the land of the Amorites."

The story of a deluge was known to Greece as well as to Palestine. There, too, it had been sent by Zeus as a punishment for the impiety of mankind; and Deukalion, the Greek Noah, saved himself and his family in a ship.[341] The peak of Parnassos played the same part in the [pg 446] Greek legend that the mountain of Nizir played in the Babylonian; and the stones thrown on the ground by Deukalion which became men, remind us of the images of clay moulded by the goddess Mami in the mutilated Babylonian myth of Atarpi, which similarly become men and women.

But it is not so much with the episode of the Deluge as with the whole story of Gilgames and his adventures that Greek mythology claims connection. The desire of finding the biblical Nimrod in the cuneiform tablets long seduced Assyriologists into the impossible

attempt to identify him with Gilgames; it is not, however, to the Biblical Nimrod, but to the Greek Hêraklês, that the Babylonian hero is related. The curious parallelism between the twelve labours of Hêraklês and the twelve adventures of Gilgames may be an accident; but it is no accident that Gilgames and Hêraklês should alike be heroes who are not kings, and that both alike should be tormented with a deadly distemper which destroyed the flesh. Khumbaba is the tyrant Geryon, the bull slain by Gilgames is the Kretan bull slain by Hêraklês, and the Nemæan lion reappears in the lion which Gilgames is so often represented on the seals as strangling to death. As Hêra persecuted Hêraklês, so Istar persecuted Gilgames; the journey of the Greek hero into Hades is paralleled by the journey of Gilgames beyond the waters of death; and the tree which he found on the shores of the sea with its fruit of precious stones is the magical tree of the Hesperides with its golden apples which grew in the midst of the western ocean.

It is true that there are many elements in the legend of Hêraklês which are not derived from Babylonia. But it is also true that, like the cosmogonies of Hesiod or the cosmological philosophy of Thales, there are also elements in it for which we must claim a Babylonian [pg 447] origin. Probably they made their way to Greek lands at the same time as the Cyprian cult of Aphroditê or the myth of Adônis, whose name indicates the road along which the culture of Babylonia

had travelled. Recent archæological discoveries have revealed the fact that in the days when Canaan was a Babylonian province, a civilisation already existed in the Ægean, and that an active intercourse was carried on between Egypt and Asia on the one hand, and the islands and shores of the Mediterranean on the other, in which Krete took a leading share. Light is only just dawning on what until lately was the "prehistoric" past of the European peoples; before long a new world will doubtless be disclosed to us, such as that which the decipherment of the cuneiform texts has brought to light.

It is not only in the mythology of primitive Greece that we can trace the influence of the legends embodied in the Epic of Gilgames. The adventures of Gilgames in search of immortality form part of the story of that mythical Alexander who grew up in literature by the side of the Alexander of history. He too had to make his way through a land of thick darkness, and he too finally failed in his endeavour to secure the "waters of life."[342] Man is and must remain mortal; this is alike the teaching of the old poet of Chaldæa and of the romance which the contact of Eastern and Western thought called into existence in classical days.

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Lecture IX. The Ritual Of The Temple.

The temple of the god was the centre and glory of every great Babylonian city. The Babylonian States had been at the outset essentially theocratic; their ruler had been a high priest before he became a king, and up to the last he remained the vicegerent and adopted son of the god. It was round the temple that the city had grown and its population clustered. The artisans worked for it, and the agricultural labourers tilled its fields. The art of Babylonia originated within the temple precincts; it was for its adornment that the enamelled tiles were first made, and wood or stone or metal carved into artistic shapes, while the endowments which thus fostered the craftsman's art were derived from landed property or from the tithes paid to the priests upon the produce of the soil. The culture of Babylonia was with good reason traced back to the god Ea.

The place occupied in Assyria by the army was filled in Babylonia by the priesthood. The priests could make and unmake their kings. The last monarch of Babylonia, Nabonidos,

was a nominee of the priests of Babylon; it was from them, and not from the rights of heritage, that he had derived his title to the throne. The great sanctuaries of the country influenced its destinies to the last. The influence of Nippur and Eridu, in fact, was wholly religious; we know of no royal dynasties that sprang from them. Even Nabonidos, with all his [pg 449] centralising zeal on behalf of Merodach of Babylon, was constrained to lavish gifts and honours on the sun-god of Sippara, at all events in the early part of his reign.

We must therefore look upon the temple as the oldest unit in the civilisation of Babylonia. Babylonian culture begins with the temple, with the worship of a deity or a spirit, and with the ministers attached to the cult. Centuries before En-lil of Nippur had developed into a Semitic Bel, an earthly dwelling-house had been provided for him which became in time the temple of a god. Its first name, Ê-kur, “the house of the earth” or “mountain,” continued always to cling to it, even though the original meaning of the name was forgotten, and it had come to signify a temple in the later sense of the word.

The temple was the sign and token of the reclamation of the primitive Babylonian swamp. Before it could be erected, it was needful to construct a platform of solid earth and brickwork, which should rise above the pestiferous marsh, and serve as a foundation for the building. The Sumerians called the platform the ki-gal or “great place”; it was the

first place of human or divine habitation wrested from the waters of the swamp, and it marked the triumph of civilised man over nature. Emphatically, therefore, it was a "great place," a solid resting-place in a world of water and slime.

On the platform the temple buildings were piled. There was no stone in Babylonia; it was a land of mud, and of mud bricks, accordingly, baked in the sun, the temple of the god was constructed. What was lost in beauty or design was gained in solidity. The Babylonian temples were huge masses of brick, square for the most part, and with the four corners facing the four cardinal points. It was only exceptionally that the four sides, instead of the four corners, were made to front the four "winds."

These masses of brick were continually growing in [pg 450] height. The crude bricks soon disintegrated, and the heavy rains of a Babylonian winter quickly reduced them to their primeval mud. Constant restorations were therefore needed, and the history of a Babylonian temple is that of perpetual repairs. Efforts were made to keep the walls from crumbling away by building buttresses against them, and the bricks were cemented together with bitumen. But all precautions were in vain. A period of national decay inevitably brought with it the decay also of the temples, and a return of prosperity meant their restoration on the disintegrated ruins of the older edifice. The artificial platform became a *tel* or mound.

But the growth in height was not displeasing to the priestly builders. The higher the temple rose above the level of the plain, the better they were pleased. A characteristic of the Babylonian temple, in fact, was the *ziggurat* or "tower" attached to each, whose head it was designed should "reach to heaven." The word *ziggurat* means a "lofty peak," and the royal builders of Babylonia vied with one another in making the temple towers they erected as high as possible.

There was more than one reason for this characteristic feature of religious Babylonian architecture. The first settlers in the plain of Babylonia must soon have discovered that the higher they could be above the surface of the ground the better it was for them. The nearer they ascended to the clouds of heaven, the freer they were from the miasmata and insects of the swamp. The same cause which led them to provide a platform for their temples, would have also led them to raise the temple as high as they could above the level of the plain. This, however, will not explain the origin of the tower itself. It would have been a reason for building the temple as high as possible, not for attaching to it a [pg 451] tower. Nor was the tower suitable for defence against an enemy, like the pylons of an Egyptian temple. At most it was a convenient watch-tower from which the movements of a hostile band could be observed. There must have been some other reason, more directly connected with religious beliefs or practices, which found its outward expression in the

sacred tower.

The sanctuary of Nippur, it will be remembered, was the oldest in Northern Babylonia. And from time immemorial it had been known as Ê-kur, "the house of the mountain-land." It represented that underground world which was the home of En-lil and his ghosts; and this underground world, we must observe, was conceived of as a mountain. In fact, the cuneiform character which signifies "country" also signifies "mountain," and the hieroglyphic picture out of which it developed is the picture of a mountain-range. The land in which it was first drawn and stereotyped in writing must, it would seem, have been a mountainous one, like the land in which the subterranean realm of En-lil was regarded as a lofty hill. In other words, the Sumerians must have been the inhabitants of a mountainous country before they settled in the plain of Babylonia and laid the foundations of the temple of Nippur.

And this mountainous country lay to the north or east, where the mountains of Elam and Kurdistan border the Babylonian plain. In the story of the Deluge the ark is made to rest on the summit of the mountain of Nizir, which is probably the modern Rowandiz, to the north-east of Assyria; and the gods were believed to have been born in "the mountain of the world," in the land of Arallu.[343] Here, too, they held their court; "I will ascend into heaven," the Babylonian monarch is made [pg 452] to say in the 14th chapter of Isaiah, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of El; I

will sit also upon the mount of the assembly (of the gods), in the extremities of the north;[344] I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." More than one temple in both Babylonia and Assyria took its name from this "mountain of the world"; the *ziggurat* at Kis was known as "the house of the mountain of mankind," while a temple at Ur was entitled "the house of the mountain," and the shrine of Gula at Babylon was "the house of the holy hill."[345]

All over Babylonia, accordingly, the mountain is brought into close connection with the religious cult. Not at Nippur only, but in other cities as well, the home of the gods is on the summit of an Olympos, within whose subterranean recesses they were born when as yet the primitive ghost or spirit had not become a god. Sumerian religion must have grown up rather among the mountains than in the plain, and the memory of its birthplace was preserved by religious conservatism. The *ziggurat* of the temple goes back to the days when the gods were still gods of the mountain, and the builders of the temple sought to force a way into the heavenly Olympos by raising artificially an imitation of the mountain on the alluvial plain. The tower was a mimic representation of the Ê-kur, or mountain of the earth itself, where En-lil, "the god of the great mountain" (*sadu rabu*), had his seat. And the earth could have been figured as a mountain only by the inhabitants of a mountainous land.

But this conception of the world of gods and

men stands in glaring contrast to the cosmology of Eridu. [pg 453] There the primeval earth was not a mountain peak, but the flat lands reclaimed from the sea. The gods and spirits had their home in the abysses of the ocean, not in the dark recesses of a mountain of the north; the centre of the world was the palace of Ea beneath the waves, not "the mountain-house" of En-lil, or the dark caverns of "the mountain of Arallu." Once more we are confronted by a twofold element in Babylonian thought and religion, and a proof of its compound nature. Like the contradictory elements in Egyptian religion, which can best be explained by the composite character of the people, the contradictory elements in Babylonian religion imply that mixture of races which is described in the fragments of Berossos.

In the tower or *ziggurat*, accordingly, we must see a reflection of the belief that this nether earth is a mountain whose highest peak supports the vault of the sky. Around it float the stars and clouds, concealing the heaven of the gods from the eyes of man. But this Olympian heaven was really an afterthought. It was not until the ghosts of the lower world had developed into gods, and been transferred from the heart of the mountain to its summit, that it had any existence at all. It belongs to the age of astro-theology, to the time when the moon and sun and host of heaven became divine, and received the homage of mankind. This is an age to which I shall have to refer again in my next and concluding lecture. It

was the time when the *ziggurat* began to consist of seven storeys, dedicated to the seven planets, when the *ziggurat* of Erech was called "the house of the seven black stones," and that of Borsippa, "of the seven zones of heaven and earth."[346]

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The *ziggurat* occupied but a small part of the temple area. What the temple was like we know to a certain extent, not only from the American excavations at Nippur, but more especially from the accounts given us by Herodotos and by a cuneiform tablet which describes the great temple of Bel-Merodach at Babylon. The latter was called Ê-Saggila, "the house of the exalted head"; and though the account of Herodotos is probably quoted from an earlier author, while the cuneiform tablet, which was seen and translated by Mr. George Smith at Constantinople, has unfortunately been lost, there is nevertheless no ground in either case for mistrust. The description given by Herodotos fully agrees with that of the tablet.

The visitor to the temple first entered the "Great" or Outer Court. It was 900 feet in breadth, and more than 1150 in length. If we may judge from the analogy of Nippur and Lagas, an arcade ran round its interior, supported on columns, and two larger, but detached, columns of brick or stone stood on either side of the entrance. At Babylon a second court opened out of the first, devoted to the worship of the goddesses Istar and Zamâmâ. Six gates pierced the walls—the

Grand Gate, the Gate of the Rising Sun, the Great Gate, the Gate of the Colossi, the Gate of the Canal, and the Gate of the Tower-view.[347] Then came the *kigallu*, or platform, of the original temple, the sides, and not the corners of which faced the four cardinal points, and which possessed four gates, each in the centre of a side. In it was the *ziggurat*, "the house of the foundation of heaven and earth," as it was termed, with its seven stages, which [pg 455] rose one above the other in gradually diminishing proportions to a height of 300 feet.[348] A winding ramp led upwards on the outside, connecting the stages with each other, and allowing a chariot to be driven along it to the top. Here in the last of the seven stages was the chamber of the god. It contained no image of the deity, only a couch of gold and a golden table for the shewbread.[349] None but a woman into whom the god had breathed the spirit of prophecy was allowed to enter it, and it was to her that Bel revealed himself at night on his golden couch and delivered his oracles. As in Greece, so too in Babylonia and Assyria, women were inspired prophetesses of the gods. It was from the priestesses and serving-women of Istar of Arbela that Esar-haddon received the oracles of the goddess; and we are reminded that in Israel also it was the prophetess Deborah who roused her countrymen to battle, and Huldah, rather than Jeremiah, to whom the high priest betook himself that he might hear "the word of the Lord."

It is significant that the place of the oracle

was the topmost chamber of the tower. The god is conceived as coming down from heaven;[350] it is there that he lives, not in the underground recesses of the mountain of the world or fathomless abysses of the sea. When the *ziggurat* took its final shape, the [pg 456] deities of Babylonia had already been transported to the sky.

It is also significant that there was no image of the god. The spiritual had been finally separated from the material, and where the god himself came in spiritual form no material image of him was needed. Though none might be able to see him with mortal eye save only his inspired priestess, he was nevertheless as actually present as if he had embodied himself in some statue of metal or stone. The denizen of heaven required no body or form of earthly make; the divine spirits who were worshipped in the sun or stars were seen only by the eye of faith.

But it was in the *ziggurat* only that the deity thus came down from heaven in spiritual guise. In the chapels and shrines that stood at its foot images were numerous; here the multitude, whether of priests or laymen, served and worshipped, and the older traditions of religion remained intact. On the eastern side of the tower was the sanctuary of Nebo, the “angel” or interpreter of the will of Merodach, with Tasmit, his wife. To the north were the chapels of Ea and Nusku, and to the south those of Anu and En-lil, while westward was the temple of Merodach himself. It consisted of a double building, with a court

between the two wings. In the recesses of the inner sanctuary was the *papakhu*, or "Holy of Holies," with its golden image of the god. Here too was the golden table of shewbread and the *parakku*, or mercy-seat, which at times gave its name to the whole shrine.

The innermost sanctuary was known as the Du-azagga, or "Holy Hill," after which the month Tisri received one of its names.[351] But the name had really come from [pg 457] Eridu. It was the dwelling-place of Ea on the eastern horizon of the sea, where the sun rises from the deep,[352] and Asari accordingly was entitled its "son." When Asari became Merodach of Babylon, the Holy Mound or Hill migrated with him, and the seat of the oracular wisdom of Ea was transformed into the shrine of Merodach, where he in his turn delivered his oracles on the festival of the New Year.[353] Lehmann[354] has shown that originally it represented the mercy-seat, the "golden throne" of the description of Herodotos, above which the deity seated himself when he descended to announce the future destinies of man. It was only subsequently that it was extended to the "Holy of Holies" in which the mercy-seat stood.

A golden altar seems to have been raised close to the mercy-seat of the god. If Herodotos may be trusted, lambs only were allowed to be sacrificed upon it. But there was another and larger altar in the outer court. On this whole sheep were offered, as well as frankincense.

The architectural arrangement of a Babylonian temple, however, was not always the same. The orientation of the temple of Merodach, as we have seen, differed from [pg 458] that of the majority of the Babylonian sanctuaries. The number of chapels included within the sacred precincts varied greatly, and even the position of the great tower was not uniform. But the general plan was alike everywhere. There was first the great court, open to the sky, and surrounded by cloisters and colonnades. Here were the houses of the priests and other ministers of the temple, the library and school, shops for the manufacture and sale of votive objects, even the stalls wherein the animals were kept that were intended for sacrifice. In the centre of the court stood an altar of sacrifice, with large vases for the purposes of ablution by the side of it, as well as a "sea," or basin of water, which derived its name from the fact that it was a symbol of the primeval "deep." The basin was of bronze or stone, and was at times supported on the backs of twelve oxen, as we learn from an old hymn which describes the construction of one of them.[355] At other times, as at Lagas, the basin was decorated with a frieze of female figures, who pour water from the vases in their outstretched hands.[356] The purifying effects of the water of the "deep" were transferred to that of the mimic "sea," and the worshipper who entered the temple after washing in it became ceremonially pure.

The great court, with its two isolated columns

in front of the entrance, led into a second, from the floor of which rose the *ziggurat* or tower. The second court formed the approach to the temple proper, which again consisted of an outer sanctuary and an inner shrine. Whether the laity were admitted into its inner recesses is doubtful. No one, indeed, could appear before the god except through the mediation of a priest; and on the seal-cylinders a frequent representation is that of a [pg 459] worshipper whom the priest is leading by the hand and presenting to the image of a deity. But it is not certain that the image represented on them was that which stood in the Holy of Holies, or innermost shrine; it may have been a second image, erected in another part of the temple. On the other hand, the numerous chapels of the secondary gods who formed the court of the chief deity of a city, can hardly have been furnished with more than one statue, and it is even questionable whether they consisted of more than one chamber. Perhaps it was only from the topmost room of the tower that the layman was absolutely excluded.

The Babylonian temple, it will be seen, thus closely resembled the temple of Solomon. That, too, had its two courts, its chambers for the priests, its sanctuary, and its Holy of Holies. Both alike were externally mere rectangular boxes, without architectural beauty or variety of design. It was only in the possession of a tower that the Babylonian temple differed from the Israelite. They agreed even in the details of their furniture.

The two altars of the Babylonian sanctuary are found again in the temple of Jerusalem; so too are the mercy-seat and the table of shewbread. Even the bronze “sea” of Solomon, with its twelve oxen, is at last accounted for; it was modelled after a Babylonian original, and goes back to the cosmological ideas which had their source in Eridu. Yet more striking are the twin pillars that flanked the gateway of the court, remains of which have been found both at Nippur and at Tello. They are exactly parallel to the twin pillars which Solomon set up “in the porch of the temple,” and which he named Yakin and Boaz. In these, again, we may find vestiges of a belief which had its roots in the theology of Eridu. When Adapa, the first man, was [pg 460] sent by Ea to the heaven of Anu, he found on either side of the gate two gods clothed in mourning, and weeping for their untimely removal from the earth. Like the two cherubim who guarded the tree of life, they guarded the gate of heaven. One of them was Tammuz, the other Nin-gis-zida, “the lord of the firmly planted stake.” Each had perished, it would seem, in the prime of life, and hence were fitly set to guard the gates of heaven and prevent mortal man from forcing his way into the realm of immortality. Yakin, it should be noticed, is a very passable translation of the Sumerian Nin-gis-zida; perhaps Boaz preserves, under a corrupted form, a reminiscence of Tammuz.

There was yet another parallelism between the temples of Babylonia and Jerusalem. The

Hebrew ark was replaced in Babylonia by a ship. The ship was dedicated to the god or goddess whose image it contained, and was often of considerable size. Its sides were frequently inlaid with gems and gold, and it always bore a special name. One at least of the names indicates that the ship goes back to the days when as yet the gods had not assumed human forms; the ship of Bau is still that of "the holy cow." In early times the ship was provided with captain and crew; later, it was reduced in size so that it could be carried like an ark on the shoulders of men. But its original object is clear. On days of festival the god was rowed in it on the sacred river, where he could enjoy the cool breeze, and return, as it were, to the "pure" waters of the primeval deep. Gradually it became merely his travelling home when he left his usual dwelling-place. In Assyria its place was even taken by a throne or platform borne upon the shoulders in the religious processions. The ship, in fact, passed into an ark, the curtained palanquin or shrine wherein the deity could conceal himself from [pg 461] the eyes of the profane when he left his own sanctuary.

A discovery made by Mr. Hormuzd Rassam in the mounds of Balawât, some fifteen miles from Mossul, shows that in Assyria the development of the ship into the ark was as complete as it was in Israel. Here he found a small chapel dedicated to the god of dreams. At the entrance of the sanctuary was a stone coffer, which contained two small alabaster slabs thickly covered with cuneiform writing.

They proved to be records of the conquests of Assur-nazir-pal, the builder of the chapel, and each tablet contained the same text. It was not surprising that the native workmen when they opened the coffer believed that they had discovered the veritable tables of the Mosaic Law! We are told in the Old Testament that the latter were kept in the ark. Not far from the coffer in the north-west corner of the shrine was a stone altar the ascent to which was by a flight of five steps.

The temples were served by an army of priests. At the head came the *patesi* or "high priest," who in the early days of Babylonian history performed the functions of a king. But the *patesi* was essentially the vicegerent of the god. The god delegated his powers to him, and allowed him to exercise them on earth. It was the doctrine of priestly mediation carried to its logical conclusion. Only through the priest could the deity be approached, and in the absence of the deity the high priest took his place. At Babylon, as we have seen, the divine rights were conferred by an act of adoption; the vicegerent of Bel, by "taking the hand" and becoming the son of the god, acquired the right to exercise his sovereignty over men. An early king of Erech calls himself the son of the goddess Nin-śun. From the outset the Babylonian monarchy was essentially theocratic; [pg 462] the king was simply the high priest in a new form.

But with the rise of Semitic supremacy the king himself became a god. The vicegerent had taken to himself all the attributes of the

deity, the adopted son succeeded to the rights and powers of his divine father. The *patesi* ceased to be the king himself, and became instead his viceroy and lieutenant. Wherever the supreme monarch had a governor who acted in his name, he had also a representative of his divine authority. There were high priests of the god on earth as well as of the gods in heaven.

A new term was wanted to take the place of *patesi*, which had thus come to have a secular as well as a religious signification. It was found in *sangu*, which, more especially in the Assyrian period, meant a chief priest. Every great sanctuary had its chief priests who corresponded to the Hebrew "sons of Aaron," with a "high priest" or *sangam-makhu* at their head.[357] Under them were a large number of subordinate priests and temple ministers—the *kali* or "gallos-priests,"[358] the [pg 463] *niṡakki* or "sacrificers," the *ramki* or "pourers of libations," and the *pasisi* or "anointers with oil." There was even a special class of bakers who made the sacred cakes that were used in the temple service, as well as "chanters" and "wailers," "carriers of the axe" and "of the spear." Above all, there were the prophets and augurs, the soothsayers (*makhkhi*) and necromancers (*musêli*), and those who "inquired" of the dead (*saili*).

The *asipi* or "prophets" constituted a class apart. In some respects they resembled the prophets of Israel. It was "by order of the college of prophets" that Assur-bani-pal purified the shrines of Babylon after the

capture of the city, and the prophet accompanied even an army in the field. At times they predicted the future; more often it was rather an announcement of the will of Heaven which they delivered to mankind.[359] As they prophesied they poured out libations; hence it is that the purification of the shrines of the Babylonian temples was their special care, and that an old ritual text commands the prophet to pour out libations "for three days at dawn and night during the middle watch."[360] The word was borrowed by the writer of the Book of Daniel (ii. 10) under the form of *ashshâph*, which the Authorised Version renders "astrologers." But the Babylonian *asip* or "prophet" was not an astrologer; he left to others the interpretation of the stars, and contented himself with counselling or foretelling the destinies of men. Like his master Bel-Merodach, he was the interpreter of the [pg 464] wisdom of Ea, and the revealer of his counsels. The Holy of Holies in the great temple of Babylon, where Bel uttered his oracles, was known as the "house of prophecy," like the ship also in which the image of the god was ferried across the stream.[361] The prophet may have been part of the heritage bequeathed by Eridu to the Babylonian people.

By the side of the prophet stood the seer (*sabrû*).[362] The seer and the prophet were distinct from one another; there was no confusion between their offices, as seems to have been at one time the case in Israel. The seer was not the "speaker" who declared the

will of the gods or the fate that was decreed for man; it was, on the contrary, through visions and trances that the future was made known to him. Assur-bani-pal tells us how, on the eve of the Elamite war, after he had invoked the aid and protection of Istar, “a seer slept and dreamed a prophetic dream; a vision of the night did Istar reveal unto him; he repeated it to me, saying: ‘Istar, who dwelleth in Arbela, came down, and on the right hand and [pg 465] on the left hung (her) quivers; in her hand she held the bow; she drew the sharp war-sword and held it before her. Like a mother she speaketh with thee, she calleth thee; Istar, the queen of the gods, appointeth for thee a doom: ... “Eat food, drink wine, make music, exalt my divinity, until I march and this work of mine be accomplished. I will give thee thy heart's desire; thy face shall not grow pale, thy feet shall not totter.”’”

Here the message of the seer passes into a prophecy, and his office is distinguished from that of the prophet only through the difference in the mode of revelation. The seer went back to the earliest ages of Semitic Babylonia. The “seer” of the palace of Sargon of Akkad is already mentioned on a contemporaneous tablet by the side of “the king” and “the queen.”[363] Like the other priests among whom he was reckoned, it was necessary that he should be without bodily blemish. The leper, the blind, and the maimed were excluded from the service of the gods.[364]

How far the Babylonian prophet resembled

the Hebrew prophet it is at present impossible to say. But there were certainly two important points in which they differed. The Babylonian prophet was, on the one side, a member of the priestly body; the mere peasant could not become an "utterer" of the will of heaven without previous training and consecration. There was, consequently, no such distinction between the prophet and the priest as prevailed in Israel; Babylonia was a theocratic, not a democratic State. On the other side, the prophet was closely linked with the magician and necromancer. [pg 466] Magic had been taken under the protection of the State religion, not repudiated and persecuted as among the Israelites. Hence, while the prophet was a priest to whom the rites of purification were specially entrusted, he was at the same time classed with the *sailu* who "inquired" of the dead, the *musêlu* or necromancer, and the *makhkhu* or "soothsayer."

On the other hand, there were prophetesses as well as prophets in both Babylonia and Israel. The employment of women in the temple services peculiarly characterised Babylonia. As we have seen, it was a woman only who was privileged to enter the secret shrine of Bel-Merodach at Babylon; while unmarried women were consecrated, not only to Istar, but also to the sun-god, and, like the priests, formed a corporate community. We are told that in the lower world of Hades there were female as well as male soothsayers; it was the home of the black art, and so reflected the

constitution of the professors of sorcery in the upper world.

Along with the seer and the soothsayer, the prophet was thus annexed by the temple. A definite duty was assigned to him there; he was “the pourer out” of libations. The libations were doubtless originally of “pure” water, to which was subsequently added wine, whether made from the palm or the vine. Along with the libations all the first-fruits of the cultivated land were offered to the gods. Milk and butter and oil, dates and vegetables, were given in abundance. So too were the spices and incense that were brought from the southern coast of Arabia, the corn that was grown in the fields, garlic and other herbs from the garden, and honey from the hive. But animal sacrifices were not forgotten. Oxen and calves, sheep and lambs, goats and kids, fish and certain kinds of birds, were slain upon the altar, and so presented to the gods. It is noticeable that it was [pg 467] only the cultivated plant and the domesticated beast that were thus offered to the deity. The dog and swine, or rather wild boar, are never mentioned in the sacrificial lists. What man gave to heaven was what he ate himself, and reared or grew with the sweat of his brow. The gazelle, indeed, is named, but it is a scape-goat which is driven into the desert like the Hebrew Azazel, carrying away with it the sins and sickness of those who let it loose.[365] The gods of Semitic Babylonia were essentially human, and what man lived upon they too required. They had, moreover, given

their worshippers all they most needed and prized—fruitful fields, fat cattle, rain in its season, and the blessings of the sunshine. In return they demanded the first-fruits of what was in reality their own; they could, if they so chose, deprive man of the whole, but they were generously satisfied with a part. The Semitic Baal was indeed like a divine king; lord and master though he was of the cultivated soil and of all that it produced, he was content only with a share.

Was the firstborn of man included among the sacrifices that were deemed acceptable to heaven? Years ago I published an early text which seemed to show that such was the case. My interpretation of the text has been disputed, but it still appears to me to be the sole legitimate one. The text is bilingual in both Sumerian and Semitic, and therefore probably goes back to Sumerian times. Literally rendered, it is as follows: "Let the *algal* proclaim: the offspring who raises his head among men, the offspring for his life he must give; [pg 468] the head of the offspring for the head of the man he must give, the neck of the offspring for the neck of the man he must give, the breast of the offspring for the breast of the man he must give."[366] It is difficult to attach any other meaning to this than that which makes it refer to the sacrifice of children.

The question, however, is really settled by the evidence of archæology. On the famous stela of the Vultures, now in the Louvre, a sort of wicker-work cage is represented, filled with

captives who are waiting to be put to death by the mace of the king.[367] On a certain class of seal-cylinders, moreover, a scene is engraved which Ménant seems to me to have rightly explained as depicting a human sacrifice. In later times, it is true, human sacrifice ceased to be practised; there are few, if any, references to it in the inscriptions, and the human victim is replaced by an ox or sheep. It was to the offended majesty of the Assyrian king rather than of the god Assur that the Assyrian conqueror impaled or burnt the beaten foe; and among the lists of offerings that were made to the deified rulers of Babylonia, we look in vain for any mention of man or child. As in Israel, so too in the kingdoms of the Euphrates and [pg 469] Tigris, human sacrifice seems to have disappeared at an early date.

So, moreover, does another custom which has been revealed to us by the archaic sculptures of Tello. That was the custom of approaching the deity stripped of clothing;[368] and Professor Jastrow aptly compares with it not only the scanty dress of the Mohammedan pilgrims on Mount Arafat, but also Saul's conduct when the spirit of prophecy fell upon him. A similar custom prevailed in Keltic Ireland, and the Hindu still strips himself when he sits down to eat.

The growth of culture, and it may be also the mixture of races, thus deprived the gods of two of the prerogatives they had once enjoyed. They could no longer claim the firstborn of men, nor require that the

worshipper should enter their presence naked and defenceless. But they retained all their other kingly rights. A tithe of all that the land produced was theirs, and it was rigorously exacted, for the support of the temples and priests. Babylonia, in short, was the inventor of tithe.

Why it should have been a tenth we cannot say. The numerical system of the Babylonians was sexagesimal and duodecimal, not decimal, and the year consisted of twelve months, not of ten. Perhaps the institution went back to a period when the year of twelve months had not yet been fixed, and, like the lunar year of the modern Mohammedan, it still possessed but ten months. However this may be, the tithe became a marked characteristic of Babylonian religious life. It was paid by all classes; even the king and his heir were not exempt from it. One of the last acts of the crown prince Belshazzar was to pay the tithe, forty-seven shekels in amount, due from his sister to the temple of the sun-god [pg 470] at Sippara, at the very moment when Cyrus was knocking at the gates of Babylon.[369] It is probable that the daily sacrifices were provided for in great measure out of the tithe; at all events, Assur-bani-pal tells us that after the suppression of the Babylonian revolt, he levied upon the people the provision needed for the sacrifices made to Assur and Beltis and the gods of Assyria. They were, however, often endowed specially; thus Nebuchadrezzar made special provision for the daily sacrifice of eight lambs

in the temple of Nergal at Cuthah; and an earlier king of Babylonia describes how he had increased the endowment of the stated offerings at Sippara.

The daily sacrifice was called the *ṡatttûku*, a term which goes back to the age when the Semite was first mingling with the older Sumerian.[370] There were other terms in use to denote the various kinds of offering that were presented to the gods. The animal sacrifice had the name of *zîbu*, the meal-offering being known as manitu.[371] The free-will offering was *nidbu*; the "gift" or "benevolence" demanded by the god upon the produce of the field being *qurbannu*, the Hebrew *qorbân*. Other terms also were employed, the exact sense of which is still uncertain; among them is one which probably means "trespass-offering."

It is impossible not to be struck by the many points of similarity between the Babylonian ritual and arrangement of the temples and that which existed among the Israelites. The temple of Solomon, in fact, was little more than a reproduction of a Babylonian sanctuary. [pg 471] And just as the palace of the Hebrew king adjoined the temple in which he claimed the right of offering sacrifice, so too at Babylon the palace of Nebuchadrezzar—who, it must be remembered, was a pontiff as well as a king—stood close to the temple of Merodach. Even the bronze serpent which Hezekiah destroyed finds its parallel in the bronze serpents erected in the gates of the Babylonian temples.[372] The internal decoration of the

sanctuary, moreover, was similar in both countries. The walls were made gorgeous with enamelled bricks, or with plaques of gold and bronze and inlaid stones. Sometimes they were painted with vermilion, the monsters of the Epic of the Creation being pictured on the walls. But more often the painted or sculptured figures were, as at Jerusalem, those of cherubim and the sacred tree or other vegetable devices. At Erech, bull-headed colossi guarded the doors.

But the resemblance between the Babylonian and Hebrew rituals extends beyond the ceremonial of the temple of Solomon into the Levitical Law. In fact, the very term for law, the *torâh*, as the Israelites called it, was borrowed from the Babylonian *tertu*, as was first pointed out by Professor Haupt. It is even a question whether the word is not a derivative from the verb *ahâru*, "to send" or "direct," from which the name of Aaron was also formed. However this may be, even the technical words of the Mosaic Law recur in the ritual texts of early Babylonia. The biblical *kipper*, "atonement," is the Assyrian *kuppuru*; and the *qorbân*, as we have seen, is the Assyrian *qurbannu*. A distinction was made between the offerings of the rich and of the poor (*muskînu*),[373] and the sacrificial animal was required [pg 472] to be "without blemish" (*salmu*). The "right" thigh or shoulder of the victim was given to the priest, along with the loins and hide, the rump and tendons, and part of the stomach.[374] Still more interesting is it to find in the ritual of the

prophets instructions for the sacrifice of a lamb at the gate of the house, the blood of which is to be smeared on the lintels and doorposts, as well as on the colossal images that guarded the entrance.[375] To this day in Egypt the same rite is practised, and when my dahabiah was launched I had to conform to it. On this occasion the blood of the lamb was allowed to fall over the sides of the lower deck.

There are other parallels between Babylonia and Mosaic Israel which have been brought forward by Professor Zimmern. In the "Tabernacle of the Congregation," or "Tent of meeting," he sees the place where "the proper time" (*moêd*, Assyr. *adannu*) for an undertaking was determined by the *barû* or seer; at any rate, "to determine the proper time" (*sakânu sa adanni*) was one of the functions of the Babylonian seer.[376] By the side of the rituals for the seers and prophets, moreover, there was another for the *zammâri* or "singers." The hierarchy of a Babylonian temple was, in short, the same as that of Israel.

But in addition to the architecture of the temple and the regulations of the ritual, there were yet other resemblances between the religious law of Babylonia and that of the Israelites. They may be traced in the numerous festivals of the calendar, and the time of year at which they were held. Foremost among them was the festival of the New Year. Babylonia was primarily an agricultural community, and the festivals of

its gods, [pg 473] like the names of the months, were determined by the necessities of agriculture. Spring and autumn were marked by the sowing of the seed and the garnering of the harvest. But neither the one nor the other took place in all parts of the country at the same time of the year. In the south the harvest might be gathered in when the corn was sown in the north, or the seed sown when in colder regions the harvest was gathered in.

Hence it was that the same festival might commemorate either the beginning or the end of the agricultural year. But in either case it was a period of rejoicing and rest from labour, of thanking the gods for their benefits, and offering them the first-fruits of the field. In the old days of Gudea of Lagas the year commenced with the festival of the goddess Bau in the middle of October; in the later Babylon of Khammurabi the feast was transferred to the spring, and the first month of the year began in March. But the older calendar of Babylonia had been already carried to the West, and there preserved in a country to whose climatic and agricultural conditions it was really inapplicable. The ancient Canaanitish year began in the autumn in what the later calendar reckoned the seventh month. It was not, however, till after the final unification of the country under Khammurabi that a fixed and uniform calendar was imposed upon all the sanctuaries of Babylonia. At an earlier epoch the great sanctuaries had each its own calendar; the months were variously named,

and the deities to whom the festivals were dedicated were not always the same.[377] At Lagas it was Bau to whom the festival of the New Year was sacred; at Babylon it was Merodach.

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Besides the festivals of the spring and autumn, there was yet a third festival belonging to the agricultural year. This was the feast of the summer solstice, which fell in the month of June. It marked the drying up of the soil and the disappearance of the crops and vegetation of the spring. In some of the early States of Babylonia it was consecrated to a god Bil-'si;[378] in the calendar of Assyria, Tammuz took the place of the older god. Tammuz had perished by an untimely death, and it was fitting that the death of the god should be celebrated when nature also seemed to die. There was a time, however, when the festival of Tammuz had been observed, at all events in some parts of Babylonia, in October rather than in June. The same month that had witnessed the feast of the New Year witnessed also that of Tammuz risen again from the dead.

The three great feasts of the Babylonian agriculturist are found again in Canaan. But it is noticeable that the third of them—the feast of Weeks, as it was called by the Hebrews—was there the correspondent of the spring festival in Babylonia. It was, in fact, a repetition of the festival of spring. And the latter accordingly becomes a prelude and anticipation of it. On the 16th of Nisan the

Levitical Law ordered a sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest to be presented (Lev. xxiii. 10-14), and the unleavened bread eaten at the festival itself [pg 475] symbolised the ingathering of the corn which was thus dedicated to God in the form of consecrated cakes.

The three great agricultural festivals were supplemented by others. Many of these occurred at fixed times of the year, and commemorated the divinities worshipped in one or other of the sanctuaries of Babylonia. Some of them were observed throughout the country; others only in a particular city and district. With the deification of a new king came a new festival in his honour; and if his cult lasted, the festival continued also by the side of the established festivals of the older gods. But new festivals might further be instituted for other reasons. The building or restoration of a sanctuary, or even the dedication of a statue, was a quite sufficient pretext. When Gudea consecrated the temple of Inguriśa at Lagas, he tells us how he had "remitted penalties and given presents. During seven days no service was exacted. The female slave was made the equal of her mistress; the male slave was made the equal of his master; the chief and his subject have been made equal in my city. All that is evil I removed from this temple."[379]

The temporary freedom thus granted to the slave seems to have been a characteristic of the Babylonian festival. Berossos stated that in the month of Lôos or July, the feast of

Sakæa was celebrated at Babylon for five days, when it was "the custom that the masters should obey their domestics, one of whom is led round the house clothed in a royal garment."[380] The custom has often been compared with that which prevailed at the Roman Saturnalia, and a baseless theory has recently been put forward connecting with it the Hebrew feast of [pg 476] Purim.[381] But the custom was really the exaggeration in the Greek age of Babylonian history of the old doctrine which underlay the Babylonian conception of a holy day. A holy day was essentially a holiday, a day when the whole people rested from work, and when, accordingly, even the slave recovered for awhile his freedom. The summer feast of Sakæa, at least in its original form, or the festival ordained by Gudea at the consecration of the temple of Ê-Ninnu, was thus a parallel to the Hebrew year of Jubilee. In the year of Jubilee we have the western reflection of beliefs and usages that were familiar to the ancestors of Abraham.

The Sabbath-rest was essentially of Babylonian origin. The word Sabbath itself was borrowed from Babylonia, where it had the form Sabattu, and was derived by the native lexicographers from the Sumerian *sa*, "heart," and "*bat*, to cease," and so explained as "a day of rest for the heart."[382] The derivation is, of course, absurd, but it indicates the antiquity of the term. There was yet another name, *sulum*, or "quiet day," which was more especially used as a

translation of the Sumerian *udu* [pg 477] *khul-gal*, "dies nefastus," on which it was unlawful or unlucky to perform certain kinds of work.[383] Thus, in a list of what we should call the Saints' days in the month of the Second Elul, we read that the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th days of the month were all alike days of quiet and rest. "The 7th day," we are told, "is a day dedicated to Merodach and Zarpanit. It is a lucky day and a quiet day. The shepherd of mighty nations (*i.e.* the king) must not eat flesh cooked at the fire or in the smoke. His clothes he must not change. White garments he must not put on. He must not offer sacrifice. The king must not drive a chariot. He must not issue royal decrees. In a secret place the seer must not prophesy. Medicine for the sickness of his body he must not apply. For making a spell it is not fitting."[384] Here the Sabbath recurs, as among the Hebrews, every seven days; and Professor Jensen has pointed out that the 19th of the month, on which there was also a Sabbath, was forty-nine days or seven weeks from the beginning of the previous month. There was therefore not only a week of seven days, but a week of seven-day weeks as well. In fact, the chief difference between the Babylonian and the Hebrew institution lay in the subordination of the Sabbath to the festival of the "new moon" among the Babylonians. There was no Sabbath on the first day of the month; its place was taken by freewill offerings to the moon.

The Sabbath, it will be noticed, was not a fast-

day. Fasts, however, were not infrequent in Babylonia and Assyria, and in times of danger and distress might be [pg 478] specially ordained. When Esar-haddon was hard pressed by his northern enemies, he ordered prayers to be made and ceremonies to be performed to the sun-god, lasting for one hundred days and nights. It was a long period of public humiliation, and the god was asked to grant favourable visions to the "seers" who implored his help. In the penitential psalms, fasting is alluded to more than once. "Instead of food," says the penitent, "I eat bitter tears; instead of palm-wine, I drink the waters of misery." Or, again: "Food I have not eaten, weeping is my nourishment; water I have not drunk, tears are my drink."[385]

The fast and the feast alternated as they did in Israel. As we come to know more of the ritual of Babylonia, the resemblance it bears to that of the Hebrews becomes at once more striking and extensive. They both start from the same principles, and agree in many of their details. Between them, indeed, lies that deep gulf of difference which separates the religions of Israel and Babylonia as a whole; the one is monotheistic, the other polytheistic. But, apart from this profound distinction, the cult and ritual have more than a family relationship. Customs and rites which have lost their primitive meaning in the Levitical Law, find their explanation in Babylonia; even the ecclesiastical calendar of the Pentateuch looks back to the Babylonia of the age of Khammurabi. It cannot be an accident that

the Khammurabi or Ammurapi of the cuneiform inscriptions is the Amraphel of Genesis, the contemporary of Abram the Hebrew, who was born in “Ur of the Chaldees.” The Mosaic Law must have drawn its first inspiration from the Abrahamic age, modified and developed though it may have been in the later centuries of Israelitish history.

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Lecture X. Astro-Theology And The Moral Element In Babylonian Religion.

A hundred years ago, writers on the history or philosophy of religion had much to say about what they called Sabaism. The earliest form of idolatry was supposed to have been a worship of the heavenly bodies. A passage in the Book of Job was invoked in support of the fact, and beautifully executed drawings of Babylonian seal-cylinders were made for the sake of the pictures of the sun and moon and stars that were upon them. Sir William Drummond resolved the sons of Jacob into the signs of the Zodiac;[386] Dupuis derived Christianity itself from a sort of allegorical astronomy.

"Sabaism" has long since fallen into disrepute. Anthropology has long since taught us that primitive religion is not confined to a worship of the stars. The cult of the heavenly bodies was not the source of polytheism; indeed, there are systems of polytheism in which it has never existed at all. Of late the tendency has been to discount it altogether as a factor

in the history of religion.

But the tendency has gone too far. There was one religion, at all events, in which it played an important part. This was the religion of ancient Babylonia and of those other countries which were influenced by Babylonian culture. But even here the decipherment of the [pg 480] inscriptions seemed to show that it belonged to a late age, and was an artificial product which never affected the people as a whole. When I delivered my Hibbert Lectures, I believed that I could dismiss it in a few words as merely a kind of subsidiary chapter added to the religion of the State by pedants and scholars.

Certain it is that the elaborate system of astro-theology which characterised Babylonian religion was an artificial creation. It was the result of a combination of religion with astronomy which was elaborated in the schools. Astronomy, like all other sciences, was under the control of the priests, the observatory rose by the side of the school within the precincts of the temple, and the dependence of the calendar on the observations of the astronomer gave them a religious character. Moreover, the astro-theology of Babylonia did not go back to primeval times. The identification of the official gods with the heavenly bodies belongs to an age when the official religion had already been crystallised into shape, and a map of the heavens had been made. We can almost watch its rise and trace its growth.

Nevertheless the rise and growth are of far earlier date than was formerly imagined. Astro-theology was not a mere learned scheme of allegorised science, the plaything of a school of pedants; it exercised a considerable influence upon the religion of Babylonia and upon the history of its development. It had, moreover, a background in the faith of the people. Like the rivers and streams, the stars also were really worshipped,[387] and the symbols drawn on the seal-cylinders show that this worship must go back to the oldest period of Babylonia. Even the ideograph that denotes "a god" represents an [pg 481] eight-rayed star. The fact is significant. At the time when the pictorial hieroglyphics were first being formed out of which the cuneiform characters were to grow, the star was already the symbol and representative of the divine. It was not as yet the more general and abstract "sky," it was the particular star that was adored as a god. Babylonian religion, as far back as its written history leads us, really begins with Sabaism.

How is this fact to be reconciled with the further fact that the gods of Babylonia were once spirits and ghosts, the *zi*'s of Eridu and the *lil*'s of Nippur? To this question no answer at present is possible; at most we can only suggest that the *zi*, or spirit, was localised in the star. A spirit of the sun was as conceivable as a spirit of Ea, and the son of Ea, it must be remembered, became a sun-god. "The *zi* of the god" meant originally in the primitive picture-writing "the spirit of the star," and the

literal rendering of the invocation in the early spells would be “the spirit of the star who is lord of Du-azagga,” “the spirit of the star who is mistress of the holy hill.” In the Book of Isaiah the Babylonian king is made to say that he would enthrone himself among the gods on the summit of the Chaldæan Olympos “above the stars of El”; and Nin-ip, the interpreter of En-lil, was at once the sun-god and the moon. Istar, it must not be forgotten, was primarily the evening star; and Istar was not only supreme among the goddesses of Babylonia, she was the type and representative of them all. The signs of the Zodiac had once been the monster allies of the dragon of chaos.

With all this, it may hereafter prove that the conception of the divine as a star was introduced by a different race from that which saw in it a spirit or a ghost. At all events, it was a conception which the inscriptions of Southern Arabia have shown to have prevailed [pg 482] among the Western Semites. Professor Hommel has made it clear[388] that the Semitic tribes to which the Arabs of the south, the Aramæans, and the Hebrews alike belonged, worshipped four supreme deities—Athtar, the evening and morning star; the moon-god and its messenger or “Prophet”; and the goddess of the sun. Athtar is the Babylonian Istar, who has become a male god in her passage to the Semites; and, while the people of Hadhramaut borrowed the name of Sin from Babylonia, those of Qatabân borrowed the name of Nebo (Anbây). Samas, the sun, has become a

goddess; the moon-god has taken the foremost place in the pantheon, and the sun has accordingly been transformed into his colourless reflection. As in the case of Istar, so too in that of the sun-god, the genderless grammar of Sumerian facilitated the change. Â, the sun-god of Sippara, had become his wife under Semitic influence,[389] and from Sippara the conception of a solar goddess passed to the Semites on the western side of the Euphrates.

The supreme Baalim of the South Arabian inscriptions must thus have been of Babylonian origin. Name and character alike were derived from Sumerian Babylonia. And from this the further inference is obvious: Arabian and West Semitic "Sabaism," with its worship of the heavenly bodies, was not indigenous. It must have been the result of contact with Babylonian civilisation, a contact which gave Ur and Harran a mixed population, and caused them to be the seats and centres of the worship of the moon-god. The primitive Semitic Baal—the "lord" of a specific plot of earth or tribal territory—became a moon-good or an evening star, while his wife was embodied in the sun.

This conclusion is confirmed by a study of the religion [pg 483] of Canaan. Here the place occupied by the moon-god among Arabians and Hebrews is taken by the sun. The supreme Baal is the sun-god, and the female Ashtoreth is identified with the moon. As I endeavoured to show in an earlier lecture, there was a period in the history of

Babylonian religion when here also the sun-god was supreme. The gods were resolved into solar deities, or rather were identified with the sun. The solar element in Merodach threatened to absorb his human kingship; it was only his likeness to man that saved him from the fate of the Egyptian gods.

It is just this phase in the history of Babylonian theology that we find reflected in the theology of Canaan. Baal has passed into the sun-god, and his characteristics are those of the sun-gods of Babylonia. The historical monuments have told us how long and deep was the influence of Babylonia upon the culture of Canaan, and it was exercised just at the time when the solar faith had triumphed in the Babylonian plain. It is not without significance that Sargon of Akkad, who first brought the civilisation and arts of Babylonia to the shores of the Mediterranean, should have had his capital in a city which adjoined Sippara, the special seat of solar worship. While Arabia drew its inspiration from Ur, the religion of Canaan was modified by contact with a culture and theology that were more purely Babylonian. Phœnician tradition stoutly maintained that the ancestors of the Canaanitish people had come from the Persian Gulf.

“Sabaism,” therefore, to use the old term, must really have been an early form of Babylonian belief. It was communicated to the Semites west of the Euphrates at different times and in different ways. To the Western Semites of Arabia and Mesopotamia it came

through Ur, and consequently set the moon-god at the head of the divine hierarchy. To the Canaanite it was carried more [pg 484] directly, but at a later period, when the solar worship had become dominant in Babylonia. The influence of Nippur had waned before that of Eridu, and out of Eridu had risen a culture-god whose son and vicegerent was the sun.

The moon-god was addressed in Southern Arabia by different titles, one of which was that 'Ammi or 'Ammu which forms part of the name of Khammurabi. Professor Hommel hints that even the Hebrew Yahveh may once have been a title of the moon-god among the Western Semites of Babylonia. As I was the first to point out, the name of Yahveh actually occurs in a document of the age of Abraham, where it enters into the composition of the name Yahum-ilu, the Joel of the Old Testament. Professor Hommel has since found other examples of it in tablets of the same period, thus overthrowing the modern theory which derives it from the Kenites.[390] It was already known to “Abram the Hebrew” in Ur of the Chaldees.

The hymn to the moon-god of Ur, to which I have referred in an earlier lecture,[391] is almost monotheistic in tone. To the writer he “alone is supreme in heaven and earth.” He is the creator of the universe; he is also the universal “Father,” “long-suffering and full of forgiveness, whose hand upholds the life of all mankind.” More than that, he is “the omnipotent one, whose heart is immensity,

and there is none that may fathom it." Among the other gods he has no rival; he causes the herb to grow, and the cattle and flock to bring forth; and he established law and justice among mankind. The angels of heaven and the spirits of the earth alike do homage to him; there is no goddess even who appears at his side. The hymn formed part of the [pg 485] ritual of the great temple at Ur before the birth of Abraham, and the Hebrew patriarch may well have listened to its teaching.

From Ur and its mixed population we can trace the worship of the Babylonian moon-god along the coasts of Southern Arabia as far as Egypt. In Hadhramaut, as I have already said, the very name of Sin was retained, and even in North-western Arabia the name of the sacred mountain of Sinai bears witness to the cult of the Babylonian deity. Early seal-cylinders associate with the moon-god both an ape and a dwarf-like figure, called Nu-gidda, "the dwarf," in Sumerian, who dances in honour of the god, like the Danga dwarf in Egypt, or the cynocephalous apes of Thoth. In Egypt, however, the dwarf assumes the shape of Bes, who is often represented with an ape on either side; and Bes with his crown of feathers, along with the apes (or monkeys) that accompany him, came from the south of Arabia to the valley of the Nile.

The monotheistic tendency of the hymn to the moon-god stands in marked contrast to the polytheism of the solar hymns. The solar ritual, in fact, was essentially polytheistic. But

Nannar or Sin, the moon-god, was "the prince of the gods," the ruler of the starry hosts of heaven. By the side of him the stars were but as the sheep of a flock in the presence of their shepherd, or as the people of a State in the presence of their deified king. Hence he was lord over his brother gods in a way that the sun-god could never be; they became the hosts that he marshalled in fight against the enemies of light and order, the multitude that obeyed his voice as the sheep follow their shepherd. The moon-god was emphatically "the lord of hosts"!

The title was applied to other gods in later days. Nebuchadrezzar calls Nebo "the marshaller of the hosts [pg 486] of heaven and earth,"[392] and Tiglath-pileser I. makes Assur "the director of the hosts of the gods." The kings transferred the title to themselves, changing only "gods" into "men," and so becoming "kings of the hosts of mankind." But the first signification of the term was "the host of heaven," the stars of El above whom the king of Babylon sought to erect his throne. One of the primeval divinities of the pantheon—a divinity, indeed, who scarcely emerged from his primitive condition of a primordial spirit—was En-me-sarra,[393] "the enchanter of the (heavenly and earthly) hosts," to whom in some of the old Babylonian cities a feast of mourning was celebrated at the time of the winter solstice in the month Tebet. A hymn entitles him "the lord of the earth, the prince of Arallu, lord of the place and the land whence none return,

even the mountain of the spirits of earth ... without whom Inguriśa cannot produce prosperity in field or canal, cannot create the crop ... he who gives sceptre and reign to Anu and El-lil."[394] He is invoked, like the moon-god, to establish firmly the foundation-stone that it may last for ever. But it is not only over the spirits of the underground world that he holds sway; he reigns also in heaven, in the close vicinity of the ecliptic, and "the seven great gods" who were his sons were stars in the sky. His attributes, therefore, closely resemble those of the moon-god of Ur: like the moon-god, he is at once lord of the sky and of the underworld, a father of the stars of night who makes the green herb grow in the earth below. In En-me-sarra, "the enchanter of the (spirit)-hosts," the [pg 487] realm of the moon-god was united with that of En-lil; as lord of the night he ruled in Hades, and was supreme even in that "mountain" of the ghost-world from which En-lil derived one of his names.[395]

But I must leave to others the task of further pursuing the path of exploration which I have thus sketched in outline. That Yahveh was once identified with the moon-god of Babylonia in those distant days, when as yet Abraham had not been born in Ur of Chaldees, explains his title of "Lord of hosts" better than the far-fetched theories which have been invented to account for it. The explanation has at least the merit of being supported by the ancient texts of Babylonia. Adventurous spirits may even be inclined to

see in Sinai, the mountain of Sin, a fitting place for the promulgation of the Law of the Lord of hosts; but such speculations lie beyond the reach of the present lecturer, and the lectures he has undertaken to give.

The name of En-me-sarra, "the enchanter of the (spirit)-hosts," brings us back to that dark background of magic and sorcery which distinguished and disfigured the religion of Babylonia up to the last. The Sumerian element continued to survive in the Babylonian people, and the magic which was its primitive religion survived also. It was never eliminated; behind the priest lurked the sorcerer; the spell and the incantation were but partially hidden beneath the prayer and the penitential psalm. One result of this was the exaggerated importance attached to rites and ceremonies, and the small space occupied by the moral element in the official Babylonian faith. There was doubtless a certain amount of spirituality, more especially of an individualistic sort; the sinner bewails his transgressions, and appeals for help to his deity, but of morality as an integral part of [pg 488] religion there is little evidence. We look in vain for anything analogous to the judgment-hall of Osiris and the negative confession of the Egyptian dead; the Babylonian gods, it is true, preferred that a man should walk uprightly, but his future salvation did not depend on his conduct in this life. He was punished in this world for his sins and shortcomings, but the sins were not confined to sins against morality; they equally

included ceremonial transgressions.

At the same time, a sort of catechism which forms part of the ritual of the seers shows that a recognition of the moral element in religion was not altogether wanting. The following is Professor Zimmern's translation of it: “Has he estranged the father from his son? Has he estranged the son from his father? Has he estranged the mother from her daughter? Has he estranged the daughter from her mother? Has he estranged the mother-in-law from her daughter-in-law? Has he estranged the brother from his brother? Has he estranged the friend from his friend? Has he estranged the companion from his companion? Has he refused to set a captive free, or has he refused to loose one who was bound? Has he excluded the prisoner from the light? Has he said of a captive, ‘Hold him fast,’ or of one who was bound, ‘Strengthen his bonds’? Has he committed sin against a god, or has he committed sin against a goddess? Has he offended a god, or has he held a goddess in light esteem? Is his sin against his own god, or is his sin against his own goddess? Has he done violence to one older than himself, or has he conceived hatred against an elder brother? Has he held his father and mother in contempt, or has he insulted his elder sister? Has he been generous in small things, but avaricious in great matters? Has he said ‘yea’ for ‘nay,’ and ‘nay’ for ‘yea’? Has he [pg 489] spoken of unclean things or [counselled] disobedience? Has he spoken wicked words?... Has he used false scales?... Has he

accepted a wrong account, or has he refused a rightful sum? Has he disinherited a legitimate son, or has he recognised an illegitimate son? Has he set up a false landmark, or has he refused to set up a true landmark? Has he removed bound, border, or landmark? Has he broken into his neighbour's house? Has he drawn near his neighbour's wife? Has he shed his neighbour's blood? Has he stolen his neighbour's garment?"[396]

The list of questions reminds us of the negative confession of the Osirian creed, but the end and purpose of it is different. They are the questions put to the penitent in order that the priest may discover why the wrath of the gods has fallen upon him. They relate to this life only, not to the next; conformity to the moral code they imply brings with it no assurance of eternal happiness, it is a guarantee only against suffering and misfortune in the present world. The point of view of the Babylonian was that of the friends of Job.

Morality, in fact, was left in large measure to the legislator. An old code, which seems to have been ascribed to the god Ea, asserts explicitly the responsibility of the ruler, and his amenability to divine punishment for unrighteous dealing.

"If the king does not give heed to justice," it begins, "his people will perish and his land be enfeebled.[397]

"If he gives no heed to the law of the land, Ea,

the king of destinies, will change his destiny, and visit him with misfortune.

[pg 490]
"If he gives no heed to his nobles, his days shall [not] be long.

"If he gives no heed to the wise, his land will revolt against him.

"If he gives heed to the (law-)book, the king will behold the strengthening of his land.

"If he gives heed to the writing (*sipir*) of Ea, the great gods will establish him in counsel and knowledge of justice.

"If he smites a man of Sippara and gives a wrong decision, the sun-god, who judges heaven and earth, will appoint another judge in his land, and a just prince and a just judge instead of unjust ones.

"If the sons of Nippur come to him for judgment, and he accepts bribes and treats them harshly, Bel, the lord of the world, will bring a foreign enemy against him and destroy his army; the prince and his general will be hunted like outcasts through the streets.

"If the sons of Babylon bring silver and offer bribes, and he favours the Babylonians and turns himself to their entreaty, Merodach, the lord of heaven and earth, will set his foes over him, and give his goods and his treasure to his enemy. The sons of Nippur, or Sippar, or

Babylon who act thus shall be cast into prison."[398]

The dissociation of ethics and religion in Babylonia was due to a considerable extent to the practical character of Babylonian theology and the limitation of the doctrine of rewards and punishments to this life. In contrast to the Egyptian, who may be said to have lived for the next world, the Babylonian lived for this. It was here that he was rewarded for his piety or punished [pg 491] for his sins. The world beyond the grave was a place of unspeakable dreariness. I have already described it in a previous lecture. It was a prison-house of darkness and unsubstantiality; a land where all things were forgotten, and those who inhabited it were themselves forgotten of men. It resembled the Hebrew Sheol; indeed, it is probable that the name of Sheol is borrowed from Babylonia,[399] and borrowed names are apt to indicate that the ideas connected with them were borrowed too. In the gloom of that underworld, where the ghosts of the dead fed on dust and refuse, the hideous monsters of chaos still moved and dimly showed themselves, while "the kings of the nations" sat on their shadowy thrones, welcoming the slaughtered king of Babylon with the words: "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?" The dead man never again saw the light of the sun. There was no Osirian paradise to receive him, with its sunshine and happy meadows; even the brief period of light which the solar creed of Egypt allowed the bark of the sun-

god to bring to the denizens of the other world, was denied to the dead Babylonian. Over the gates of the world beyond the grave the words were written: “Abandon hope, all ye that enter here.” There was no return; none, even with the help of Merodach, could come back to the home he had left on earth; the sevenfold gates of Hades opened only to admit those that entered it. Death meant the extinction of light and hope, even of the capacity for feeling either pleasure or pain.

It was on this life, therefore, that the religious thoughts of the Babylonian were centred. And his view of his relation to the gods was a curious mixture of spirituality [pg 492] and the commercial instinct. On the one hand, it was a question of barter; if the man was generous in his gifts to the gods, if he did what they approved and abstained from what they condemned, above all, if the rites and ceremonies of religion were correctly fulfilled, the gods were bound to grant him all that his heart desired. On the other hand, if misfortune fell upon him, it was a proof that he had sinned against them. And as the centuries passed the consciousness of sin sank more and more deeply into the heart of the Babylonian. At first, indeed, the sins were offences against the ritual rather than against the moral and spiritual code. The ghosts and spirits of the old Sumerian faith were non-moral; if some of them inflicted pain and disease upon man, it was because it was their nature to do so, and the only defence against them was in the charms of the sorcerer. But

with the arrival of the Semite, and the consequent transformation of the goblin into a god and of the sorcerer into a priest, a new conception was introduced of the divine nature. The gods became human, and the humanity they put on was that of civilised man. They became moral agents, hating iniquity and loving righteousness, ready to help the creatures they had made, but chastising them for their offences as the father would his son. “Father,” in fact, is one of the commonest titles given to the god in the new age of Babylonian religion. It was only in the conception of Hades that the old ideas still maintained their influence, that the powers who ruled there still continued to be the malignant or non-moral monsters of an earlier belief, and that a common lot was believed to await in it all mankind, whatever might have been their conduct on this side of the grave.

In this world, on the contrary, the conviction that sin brought punishment with it became more and more pronounced. And with the conviction came an increasing [pg 493] belief in the efficacy of prayer and repentance, and the necessity for purity of heart. The words supposed to have been put into the mouth of Merodach after his creation of man, late in date though they may be, testify clearly to the fact. I give them in Mr. King's translation[400]—

> “Towards thy god shalt thou be
> pure of heart, for that is the
> glory of the godhead;
> Prayer and supplication and

bowing low to the earth, early in
the morning shalt thou offer unto
him....
The fear of god begets mercy,
offerings increase life, and prayer
absolves from sin.
He that fears the gods shall not
cry aloud [in grief],
he that fears the spirits of earth
shall have a long [life].
Against friend and neighbour
thou shalt not speak [evil].
Speak not of things that are
hidden, [practise] mercy,
When thou makest a promise (to
give), give and [hold] not
[back]."

Already, in the age of Khammurabi, the author of the story of the Deluge makes it the punishment inflicted on mankind for their misdeeds, and the Chaldæan Noah is rescued from it by Ea on account of his piety. The penitential psalms and ritual texts are full of illustrations of the same fact. It is true that the misdeeds are often merely involuntary violations of the ceremonial law or offences against the ritual, but the sense of guilt attaching to them is already profound. It required centuries before the Babylonian was able to distinguish between moral and ceremonial sin,—if, indeed, he ever succeeded [pg 494] in doing so,—but at an early period a consciousness of the heinousness of sin already lay heavily upon him, as well as of the need of repentance. A profound sense of his transgressions, and of the punishment they

deserved, had grown up within him long before he had learnt to confine it to moral guilt. In this respect, again, he differed from the Egyptian: penitence and the consciousness of sin belonged to Babylonia; we look in vain for them in the valley of the Nile. The light-hearted Egyptian was too contented to feel them; the gods he worshipped were, like himself, kindly and easy-going, and the pantheism of the upper classes offered no place to a reproachful conscience.

But the gods of Babylonia, in the days when the Sumerian and the Semite had become one people, were stern judges. The theology of Eridu was coloured and darkened by that of Nippur; Ea might save Xisuthros from the waters of the Flood, but En-lil had doomed all men to destruction. And whether it was the sun-god who was worshipped, or the moon-god of Ur, it was still a judge who beheld and visited all the deeds of living men. In the sun-god the judge predominated, in the moon-god the father, but that was all. The father was also a judge, the judge was also a father, and the same word might be used to denote both.

But it must be remembered that the judgeship of the son-god and the fatherhood of the moon-god were confined to the present world. They were not dead gods like Osiris, whose tribunal was in another world. There was no postponing the evil day, therefore; a man's sins were visited upon him in this life, just as it was also in this life that his righteousness was rewarded. A death-bed repentance was useless; penitence, to be effective, must be

manifested on this side of the grave.

Hence came the penitential ritual which forms so [pg 495] striking a feature in the service-books of Babylonia. It was reduced to a system, like the confessional in later days. The penitent was instructed by the priest what to say, and the priest pronounced his absolution. For the exercise of priestly absolution was another essential feature of Babylonian religion.

Besides the consciousness of sin and the conception of repentance, the idea of mediation must also be traced to Babylonia. On the earliest seals the priest is represented as acting as a mediator between the worshipper and his god. It is only through the priest that the layman can approach the deity and be led into the presence of the god. This idea of mediation has a twofold origin. On the one side, it goes back to the beliefs which saw in the magician—the predecessor of the priest—the possessor of knowledge and powers that were hidden from the rest of mankind; on the other side, it has grown out of the doctrine that the priest was the vicegerent of the god. It was thus the result of the union of two conceptions which I believe to have been respectively Sumerian and Semitic. The deified king or pontiff necessarily took the place of the god on earth; Gudea, for instance, at Lagas was the representative of the god Inguriša, and therefore himself divine. The fact that the gods were represented in human forms facilitated this conversion of the minister of the deity into his adopted son and

representative; the powers and functions of the god were transferred to him, and, like the vassal-prince in the absence of the supreme king, he acted in the god's place.

The Semitic Baal was a lord or king of human shape and passions. He thus stood in marked contrast to the Sumerian ghost or spirit; and, as we have seen, the gulf between them is too deep and broad to be spanned by the doctrine of evolution. For the Sumerian the world outside man was peopled with spirits and demons; for the [pg 496] Semite it was a human world, since man was made in the image of the gods. The triumph of the gods of light and order over the monsters of chaos symbolised not only the birth of the present creation, but also the theological victory of the Semite over the Sumerian. And with the victory came a conception of the divine which was modelled on that of the organised State. As the human head of the State was himself a god, delegating his authority from time to time to his human ministers, so too in the world of gods there was a supreme Baal or lord who was surrounded by his court and ministers. Foremost among these were the *sukkalli* or “angels,” the messengers who conveyed the will of their lord to the dwellers upon earth. Some of them were more than messengers; they were the interpreters and vicegerents of the supreme deity, like Nebo “the prophet” of Borsippa. And as vicegerents they naturally became the sons by adoption of Bel; Asari of Eridu first takes the place of Ea, whose double he originally was, and then in

the person of Merodach becomes his son; Nin-ip of Nippur, the messenger of En-lil, is finally transformed into his son, and addressed, like Horus in Egypt, as "the avenger of his father."[401] The hierarchy of the gods is modelled upon that of Babylonia, and the ideas of mediation and vicegerency are transferred to heaven.

Repentance, the consciousness of sin, and mediation are thus conceptions all of which may be traced back to Babylonia. And each of them leads naturally, if not inevitably, to other and cognate conceptions. Mediation, as I have pointed out, is partly dependent on a belief in a doctrine of vicegerency, which, in combination with a profound sense of sin, leads in turn to the doctrine of [pg 497] absolution. And mediation itself is given a wide meaning. The priest mediates between the layman and his deity; the lesser gods between mankind and the supreme Baalim. M. Martin aptly compares the intercession of Abraham for the doomed cities of the plain, and the doctrine of the intercession of the Saints in the Christian Church.[402]

The consciousness of sin, again, is similarly far-reaching. It extends to sins of ignorance and omission as well as to sins of commission. Time after time the penitential psalms ask forgiveness for sins the very nature of which was unknown to the penitent. "The sin that I have done I know not," he is made to say, "The transgression that I have committed I know not."

> "An offence I have committed
> unwillingly against my god.
> A sin against my goddess
> unwillingly have I wrought:
> O lord, my transgressions are
> many, manifold are my sins!"

The disease or misfortune that had overtaken him was a proof of the sin, even though it had been committed involuntarily or in ignorance that it was wrong. "When I was little I sinned," says another psalm, "yea, I transgressed the commandments of my god."[403]

Repentance has its corollary confession, whether public or private. And the ritual texts show that both public and private confession was practised in Babylonia. Indeed, private confession seems to have been the older and more usual method. The penitential psalms are in the first person singular, like the Hebrew psalms; in public confession the Babylonian probably believed that a man was more likely to think about the sins of others than about his own.

Penitence implies a need of absolution. It also implies [pg 498] a belief in the sinfulness of human nature and the purity of the divine. The purity, it is true, may be ceremonial rather than moral, and in the early days of Babylonian religion the ceremonial element almost obscured the moral. But as time went on the moral element grew ever stronger, and the ritual texts began to be superseded by prayers of a more spiritual character. The

prayers addressed by Nebuchadrezzar to Merodach rise almost to the height of a passionate faith in the absolute goodness and mercy of the god.

Speaking generally, then, we may say that the religion of Babylonia was essentially anthropomorphic, with all the faults and virtues of an anthropomorphic conception of the divine. But it was grafted on a primeval stock of Sumerian shamanism from the influences of which it never wholly shook itself free. It thus differed from Hebrew anthropomorphism, with which in other respects it had so much in common. Behind the lineaments of Hebrew anthropomorphism ghost or goblin are not to be found.

And yet between the religion of Babylonia and that of Israel there was much that was alike. It was natural, indeed, that it should be so. The Babylonians of history were Semitic, and Abraham the Hebrew had sprung from a Babylonian city. In the last lecture I drew attention to the similarity that existed between the temples of Babylonia and that of Jerusalem, a similarity that extended even to details. There was the same similarity between the Babylonian rituals and the Mosaic Law; the priesthood, moreover, was established on the same lines, and the prophets and seers of Israel have their analogues in those of Chaldæa. The religious law and ritual of the Hebrews looks back like their calendar to the banks of the Euphrates.

The same lesson is taught by the literary

traditions [pg 499] of the Hebrew people. The cosmology of Genesis has its roots in the cosmology of Eridu, and the first home of mankind is placed by the Old Testament in Eden, “the plain” of Babylonia, which was watered by the Tigris and Euphrates. The Babylonian story of the Deluge is the parent of that which is recounted in the Hebrew Scriptures, while it was at Babylon that the dispersal of mankind took place. The background of Hebrew history is as purely Babylonian as the background of Hebrew ritual.

And, as Gunkel has shown,[404] the old Babylonian traditions embodied in the Book of Genesis must have made their way to the West at the very beginning of Hebrew history. They enter into the web of the earliest Hebrew thought, and are presupposed by Hebrew literature. The cosmology which saw the primordial element in the watery deep, and told of the victory that had been won over Tiamât, the dragon of chaos, must have been already known in Canaan when the language and script of Babylonia were taught in its schools, and Babylonian literature studied in its libraries. Long before the Mosaic age, the literary culture of Babylonia had profoundly affected the peoples of Syria, and had penetrated even to the banks of the Nile. Need we be surprised, then, if we find a “sea” in the temple of Solomon, the symbol of beliefs which had their origin on the shores of the Persian Gulf, or priestly ordinances which recall those of ancient Chaldæa?

The ordinances and temples were but the outward symbols of the ideas that had created them. The anthropomorphism of Semitic Babylonia is reflected in the anthropomorphism of the Israelites. The sense of sin and of the overwhelming power of the deity, the efficacy of penitence and the necessity of a mediator, [pg 500] are common to both Babylonia and Israel. Hence it is that the penitential psalms of the Babylonian ritual bear so striking a resemblance to the psalms of the Old Testament; hence, too, the individual element and deep spirituality that characterise them. Israel was indebted to Babylonia for something more than the seeds of a merely material civilisation.

It is true that there is a gulf, wide and impassable, between the Babylonian religion as we decipher it in the cuneiform tablets, and the religion of Israel as it is presented to us in the Old Testament. On the one side, we have a gross and grotesque polytheism; on the other, an uncompromising monotheism. Babylonian religion made terms with magic and sorcery, and admitted them in a certain degree to its privileges; they were not incompatible with polytheism; but between them and the worship of the one God there could be no reconciliation. It was the same with the sensualities that masqueraded at Erech in the garb of a religious cult; they belonged to a system in which the sun-god was Baal, and a goddess claimed the divided adoration of man. To Israel they were forbidden, like the necromancy and witchcraft

with which they were allied.

But deep and impassable as may be the gulf which separated the Mosaic Law from the official religion of Babylonia, different as may have been the development of prophecy in Babylonia and Israel, the primordial ideas from which they started were strangely alike. The same relation that is borne by the religion of ancient Egypt to Christianity is borne by the religion of Babylonia to Judaism. The Babylonian conception of the divine, imperfect though it was, underlay the faith of the Hebrew, and tinctured it up to the end. The Jew never wholly freed himself from the dominion of beliefs which had their first starting-point in the "plain" of [pg 501] Babylonia; his religious horizon remained bounded by death, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob continued to be the God of the living and not of the dead. It was in this world that the righteous were rewarded and the wicked punished; the world to come was the dreary shadow-land of Babylonian teaching, a land of darkness where all things are forgotten, but also a land where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

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Footnotes

1. *Notes for the Nile*, pp. 188, 189.

2. Révillout in the *Revue égyptologique*, i. 4, ii. 3.

3. For the extraordinary variety of senses in which the verb *ye*, "to eat," has come to be used in the African language of Akra, see Pott, *Ueber die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues von Wilhelm von Humboldt*, ii. pp. 495-498 (1876). Thus *ye no*, "to be master," is literally "to eat the upper side"; *ye gbî*, "to live" or "exist," is literally "to eat a day"; *feî ye*, "to be cold," is "to eat cold."

4.

See Schweinfurth, “Ueber den Ursprung der Aegypter,” in the *Verhandlungen der Berliner anthropologischen Gesellschaft*, June 1897.

5.

See W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, 1898.

6.

“The custom of dismembering the body or stripping it of its flesh is widely spread: the neolithic tombs of Italy contain skulls and bones which have been painted red; Baron de Baye has found in the tombs of Champagne skeletons stripped of their flesh, and the Patagonians and Andamanners as well as the New Zealanders still practise the custom” (De Morgan, *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Egypte*, ii. p. 142). Secondary burial is met with in India among the Kullens, the Kâthkaris, and the Agariya, as well as in Motu, Melanesia, Sarawak, the Luchu Islands, Torres Straits, and Ashanti, while “in some of the English long barrows the bones appear to have been flung in pell-mell” (Crooke in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxix. pp. 284-286 (1899)).

7.

See Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, ii. p. 372

sqq.

8. See Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et l'Archéologie égyptiennes*, i. p. 85 sqq.

9. Mariette, *Dendérah, Texte*, p. 156.

10. In the Pyramid texts the dead are described as being carried across the lake which separates this world from the fields of Alu, on the wings of Thoth.

11. See Sethe in the *Zeitschrift für Aegyptischer Sprache*, 1897, 1.

12. Similarly the "chief *Kher-heb*" of the Pharaoh, in the age of the Old Empire, bore the title of "Chief of the city of Nekheb" (Ebers, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. tr., p. 90). The Pyramid texts speak of the White Crown of Southern Egypt as well as of the royal uræus "in the city of Nekheb" (*Pepi* 167); and the goddess of the city is described as "the cow Samet-urt" who was crowned with the two feathers (*Teta* 359). Elsewhere mention is made of "the souls of On, Nekhen, and Pe" (*Pepi* 168, 182; see also *Teta* 272). By the "souls of On" Ra or rather Tum was meant; Pe and Dep constituted the twin-city of the Delta called Buto by

the Greeks, over a part of which (Dep) Uazit the serpent-goddess of the north presided, while the other half (Pe) acknowledged Horus as its chief deity. In *Teta* 88 “the doubles in Pe” are said to be “the double of Horus.”

13. Wiedemann, in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, iv. p. 332.

14. The title of “good god” went back to a very early date, and stands in contrast to that of *nefer mât-kher*, “good and true of voice,” applied to the ordinary individual on early seal-cylinders.

15. See the illustration from the temple of Amon-hotep III. at Luxor, in Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 111.

16. The Westcar Papyrus, which was written in the time of the Middle Empire, already describes the first three kings of the Fifth Dynasty as born of Ruddadt (the wife of a priest of the sun-god) and the god Ra of Sakhab (Erman, “Die Märchen des Papyrus Westcar,” i. p. 55, in the *Mittheilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen zu Berlin*, 1890).

17.

Callaway, *Unkulunkulu; or, the Tradition of the Creation as existing among the Amazulu and other Tribes of South Africa*, pt. i. pp. 2, 7, 8.

18. Professor Maspero, to whom, along with Sir P. Le Page Renouf, we owe the explanation of what the Egyptians meant by the Ka, first pointed out the meaning of the portrait statues which were buried in the tomb (*Recueil de Travaux*, i. pp. 152-160).

19. Renouf, *TSBA*. vi. p. 504 sqq.; Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, iii. 194. 13; Dümichen, *Tempelinschriften*, i. pl. 29.

20. *A Season in Egypt*, 1887, pp. 21, 22.

21. Cf. the illustrations in Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 259; and Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, iii. 87. In Bonomi and Arundale, *Gallery of Antiquities*, pt. i. pi. 31, is a picture of Thothmes II. with his Ka standing behind him.

22. Baring Could, *Curiosities of Olden Times*, 2nd ed., p. 57 sqq.

23. It is noticeable that while the Tel el-Amarna letters show that the actual

pronunciation of the word Ka was Ku, *Ha-ka-Ptah*, the sacred name of Memphis, being written *Khi-ku-Ptakh* (*Aiguptos*), *ku* was "food" in the Sumerian of primitive Babylonia.

24.

In his *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, i. p. 61, Professor Maspero gives "cake" as the original sense of *Ka*, which, however, he explains as "a cake of earth," and hence "substance."

25.

Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 114. The Ka, however, is here identified with the Khu, and it is questionable whether the passages referred to in the Pyramid texts really embody old ideas which are to be interpreted literally, or whether they are not rather to be taken metaphorically.

26.

Maspero, *Comptes rendus du Congrés provincial des Orientalistes à Lyon*, 1878, pp. 235-263; Renouf, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology* (1879), vi. pp. 494-508.

27.

This particular bird was chosen because its name was similar in sound to that of the Khu. For the same reason the plover (*ba*) denoted the Ba or soul. On objects found by de Morgan in the tomb of Menes at Negada, the "soul" is represented by

an ostrich.

28.

See Chassinat, *Recueil*, xix. p. 23 sqq.

29.

From the fifteenth to the eleventh century B.C., it was fashionable to substitute for the bird a beetle with a ram's head, the phonetic value of the hieroglyph of ram being *ba*, and that of the beetle *kheper*, "to become."

30.

Hermes Trismeg., *Pœmandres*, ed. Parthey, chs. i. and x.

31.

Études de Mythologie, i. p. 166.

32.

De Abst. iv. 10.

33.

Cf. also Plutarch, *De Esu carnium Or.* ii. p. 996, and *Sept. Sapient. Conviv.* p. 159 B.

34.

The four vases were dedicated to the man-headed Amset (or Smet), the jackal-headed Dua-mut-ef, the ape-headed Hâpi, and the hawk-headed Qebḥ-sonu-f, who are identified with the planets in the Pyramid texts (Maspero, "Pyramide du roi Ounas" in the *Recueil de Travaux*, iii. p. 205).

35.

See the Book of the Dead, chs. xxvi. and sqq.

36. It is still a moot question whether any scarabs go back to the age of the Old Empire. Personally, I am inclined to agree with Prof. Flinders Petrie in thinking that they do so.

37. Or, according to Renouf's translation: “Pleasant unto us, pleasant unto the listener, is the joy of the weighing of the words.”

38. Three grains of the natron of the city of Nekheb had to be used, while only two grains of that of the north were required (Maspero, “Pyramide du roi Ounas” in the *Recueil de Travaux*, iii. p. 182). The Horus of Nekhen, opposite El-Kab, was represented by a mummified hawk (*akhem*).

39. De Morgan, *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Égypte*, ii. pl. iii. line 2.

40. *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, xxxvi. pls. xii. and xiii.; Quibell, *Hierakonpolis*, pt. i. pl. xxix.

41. Professor Maspero, however, proposes to see in them a symbol of the king of Upper Egypt destroying a hostile city.

42. *Recueil de Travaux*, xxi. pp. 116, 117.

Dr. Naville points out that on the Palermo Stela the festival of the Shesh-Hor, with the determinative of a sacred bark, occurs repeatedly in that part of the inscription which relates to the festivals of the kings of the first two dynasties. Professor Petrie has found the same festival mentioned on two ivory tablets from the tomb of a king of the First Dynasty at Abydos (Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty*, pt, i. pl. xvii.); and it may be added that in the Pyramid texts (*Pepi* 670; *Recueil de Travaux*, viii. p. 105) the Mât or Mâdit bark of the sun-god is identified with the bark of the Shesh-Hor, while the Semkett or bark in which the sun-god voyages at night becomes a bark in which the place of the hawk is taken by a picture of the ben or tomb of Osiris—here identified with that of Akhem the mummified hawk, which forms part of the symbol for the Thinite nome. Elsewhere it is the Semkett or day-bark of the sun which is identified with the festival of the Shesh-Hor (*Recueil de Travaux*, iii. p. 205).

43.

On the *mesnitiu* or "blacksmiths" of Horus, see Maspero, *Études de Mythologie*, ii. p. 313 and sqq. The *Mesnit* or "Forge" was the name given to the passage opening into the shrine of the temple of Edfu.

44.

Quibell, *Hierakonpolis*, pt. i. pl. ii.

45.

See de Rougé, *Recherches sur les Monuments qu'on peut attribuer aux six premières dynasties*, pp. 44, 45.

46.

Mr. Quibell found a large bronze hawk with a head of solid gold and eyes of obsidian along with two bronze figures of Pepi, in the foundation of the temple of Nekhen (Kom el-Aḥmar); see Quibell, *Hierakonpolis*, pt. i. pl. xlii. Hor-nubi, "the golden Horus," was the god of the Antæopolite nome.

47.

The 1st (Ombite) and 2nd (Apollinopolite) nomes, the 3rd nome (originally) with its capital Nekhen, the nomes of the "Eastern and Western Horus" (Tuphium and Asphynis), Qus "the city of Horus the elder," the 5th (Coptite) nome, the 6th nome of Dendera in so far as Hathor was daughter and husband of Horus, the 10th (Antæopolite) and 12th (Hierakopolite) nomes, and finally the 15th, 18th, and 20th (Herakleopolite) nomes. In the Delta also Horus was god of the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 19th, 25th, 27th, and 30th nomes, of which the 7th and 8th were close to the Asiatic frontier.

48.

When this emblem was first invented we do not know; it probably goes back to the præ-Menic period, like the composite animals on the early monuments of Nekhen and Abydos. Its first dateable occurrence is on a boulder of granite in the island of Elephantinê above the name and figure of Unas of the Fifth Dynasty. It is also engraved above the double figure of an Old Empire king on a great isolated rock near El-Kab, which is probably of the same date. The tablet on which it is engraved faces south-east.

49.

Hor-merti, “Horus of the two eyes,” was worshipped at Shedennu in the Pharbæthite nome of the Delta. Grébaut's view, that the two eyes originally represented the light, seems to me too abstract a conception for an early period (*Recueil de Travaux*, pp. 72-87, 112-131). In the Pyramid texts (*Rec.* iv. p. 42), mention is made of Horus with “the blue eyes.”

50.

Cf. Sayce, *TSBA.*, Nov. 1898. In one case the name of the god is written *Kha-ar*. In *WAI.* ii. 55. 36, Khur-galzu, “Horus, thou art great!” is given as the name of a Sumerian goddess.

51.

Nin-ip was identified with the planet Saturn, like "Horus the bull."

52.

It was then that the two obelisks were erected in front of the temple by Usertesen I., which caused it to be known as Hât-Benbeni, "the house of the two obelisks."

53.

The members of the Ennead of Heliopolis or On are named in the Pyramid texts (*Pepi* ii. 666) Tum, Shu, Tefnut, Seb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Set, and Nebhât.

54.

See his *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, ii. p. 337 sqq.

55.

Similarly, on early Babylonian seal-cylinders the leaves of the folding doors through which the sun-god comes forth at daybreak are surmounted by lions. See the illustration in King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythologie*, p. 32. (The genuineness of this cylinder has been questioned without good reason.)

56.

The wife occasionally provided for Asshur by the scribes was a mere grammatical abstraction, like Tumt, the feminine of Tum, whose name is now and then met with in late

Egyptian texts.

57.

One of the old formulæ embedded in the Pyramid texts (*Teta* 86) reads like a passage from a Sumerian hymn: “Hail to thee, great deep (*ageb*), moulder of the gods, creator of men.” It belongs to Babylonia rather than to Egypt, where the “great deep” could have been a matter only of tradition.

58.

See Petrie, *Medum*, p. 30.

59.

The existence of other cities of the name in Upper Egypt, “On of the south,” now Erment, and On, now Dendera, shows that it must go back to the earliest epoch of Pharaonic Egypt. I believe that it is the Sumerian *unu*, “city,” and that the column which represented it hieroglyphically denoted “a foundation” or “settlement.”

60.

It will be shown in a future lecture that Osiris was the mummified Anher. One is tempted to ask whether Ptaḥ is not similarly the mummified Tum?

61.

Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes, ii. p. 270 sqq.

62.

This has been proved by a stela of Antef IV. of the Eleventh Dynasty, discovered by M. Legrain in 1900, in the temple of Ptaḥ. Khonsu was a mere epithet of the moon-god, meaning "wanderer." In a later age Khonsu was himself superseded by Mentu.

63.

For the architectural plan of the temple, see Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. tr., p. 287.

64.

Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. tr., p. 262.

65.

Another strophe of the Hymn to Aten, as translated by Professor Breasted (*De Hymnis in Solem sub rege Amenophide iv. conceptis*, p. 47), is equally explicit: "Thou hast created the earth according to thy pleasure, when thou wast alone, both all men and the cattle great and small; all who walk upon the earth, those on high who fly with wings; the foreign lands of Syria (*Khar*) and Cush as well as the land of Egypt; each in its place thou appointest, thou providest them with all that they need; each has his granary, his stores of grain are counted. Diverse are the languages of men, more different than their shape is the colour of their skin, (for) thou hast distinguished

the nations of the world (one from the other).” In the succeeding strophe the monotheism of the worshipper of Aten, in whose eyes even the sacred Nile was the creature of the one true God, appears in striking contrast to the ordinary polytheism of Egypt (Breasted, *l.c.* p. 53): “Thou createst the Nile in the other world, thou bringest it at thy pleasure to give life to mankind; for thou hast made them for thyself, O lord of them all who art ever with them, O lord of all the earth who risest for them, O sun of day (the mighty one in?) the remotest lands, thou givest them their life, thou sendest forth the Nile in heaven, that it may descend for them; it raises its waves mountain high like the sea, it waters the fields of their cities. How glorious are thy counsels! O lord of eternity, thou art a Nile in heaven for foreign men and cattle throughout all the earth! They walk on their feet, (and) the Nile cometh to Egypt from the other world.”

66.

Diod. Sic. i. 83.

67.

Except in the case of Osiris at Abydos; Petrie, *The Royal Tombs of the First Dynasty*, pt. i. pl. xv. 16; comp. also at Kom el-Aḥmar, *Hierakonpolis*, pt. i. pl. xxvi. B,

though here it seems to be the Pharaoh who is represented.

68. Quibell in the *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, xxxvi. pls. xii., xiii.; *Hierakonpolis*, pt. i. pl. xxix.

69. On a stela in the Wadi Maghara, in the Sinaitic Peninsula, Sahu-Ra of the Fifth Dynasty, divided into two figures, one with the crown of Lower Egypt the other with that of Upper Egypt, is standing before a standard on which are the two emblems of Southern and Northern Egypt, Set and Horus. Set is represented by his usual animal, but Horus by an uræus serpent and the same symbol as that on the plaque (de Morgan, *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Égypte*, i. p. 233). As we learn from the legend of Seb recounted at At-Nebes (Saft el-Henna), the two relics preserved there were the uræus and lock of hair of Ra. The lock of hair has practically the same form as the symbol we are considering here, and long before the legend had been concocted, Ra and Horus had been identified together (see Griffith, *Antiquities of Tell el-Yahudiyeh, Seventh Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund*, pl. xxiii.).

70. De Morgan, *Recherches sur les*

Origines de l'Égypte, ii. pls. ii. and iii.; Sayce in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, Feb. 1898. It will be noticed that Thoth is represented by the ibis and not by the ape.

71.

De Morgan, *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Égypte*, p. 93.

72.

For late examples of the worship of animals like the cat, ram, swallow, or goose, as animals and not as incarnations of an official god, see Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, ii. p. 395 sqq. The rarity of them is due to their representing private and domestic cults not recognised by the religion of the State. “The worship of the swallow, cat, and goose, which had commenced as the pure and simple adoration of these creatures in themselves, always remained so for the multitude. We must not forget that Orientals regard beasts somewhat differently from ourselves. They ascribe to them a language, a knowledge of the future, an extreme acuteness of the senses which allows them to perceive objects and beings invisible to man. It was not, indeed, all Egypt that worshipped in the beast the beast itself; but a considerable part of it which

belonged almost entirely to the same social condition, and represented pretty much the same moral and intellectual ideas."

73.

See Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypten*, pp. 108, 109.

74.

Late inscriptions call Bakh or Bakis "the living soul of Ra," but this was when Mentu and Ra had been identified together. Stelæ of the Roman period, however, from Erment represent the sacred bull without any solar emblem, while by the side of it stands a hawk-headed crocodile crowned with the orb of the sun. It is possible that the latter may be connected with the hawk-headed crocodile, with the orb of the sun on its head and an uræus serpent at the end of its tail, which in Greek *graffiti* at Philæ is called Ptiris.

75.

Nicolaus Damascen., *Fr.* 128, ed. Müller.

76.

De Rougé, *Monnaies de nomes*, p. 46.

77.

Griffith (*Proc. of Society of Biblical Archæology*, xxi. p. 278) has recently proposed to see in Deḫuti a derivative from the name of the nome Deḫut, like Anzti, the title of

Osiris at Busiris, from the name of the nome Anzet. But this is “putting the cart before the horse.” It was not the nomes that were birds or men, but the deities worshipped in them. Anz (perhaps from the Semitic *'az*, “the strong one”) meant “king,” and represented the human Osiris.

78. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, ed. Leemans, lxxii. p. 126.

79. *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache* (1880) p. 50.

80. *Rev. Archéologique*, xxxiv. p. 291. On the seal-cylinder they are accompanied by the lion-headed eagle of primitive Babylonian art. The Egyptian figures are given in the *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, xxxvi. pl. xii.

81. *Ep. ad Cor.* 25.

82. See also Herodotos, ii. 73; Pliny, *N. H.* x. 2; Tertullian, *De Resurr.* 13.

83. De Morgan, *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Égypte*, ii. p. 165.

84. Sayce, *Proc. SBA.*, Feb. 1898, No. 8. On a monument discovered at Sân

(Petrie, *Tanis*, pt. ii. pl. x. 170), we read of "Horus in the *bennu* as a black bull," "Horus in the *bennu* as a horned bull." The cemetery of Tanis was called "the city of the phœnix" (*bennu*). At Edfu it is said that the phœnix (*bennu*) "comes forth from the holy heart" of Osiris.

85.

On a stela in the Louvre a certain Psamtik, son of Uza-Hor, calls himself prophet of Khufu, Khaf-Ra, and Dadef-Ra, as well as of Tanen, Isis, and Harmakhis.

86.

The versification is Canon Rawnsley's, *Notes for the Nile*, pp. 188, 189. Professor Erman's literal translation is as follows (*Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. tr., pp. 386, 387) —

"I heard the words of Imhotep and Har-dad-ef,
Who both speak thus in their sayings:
'Behold the dwellings of those men, their walls fall down,
Their place is no more,
They are as though they had never existed.'
No one comes from thence to tell us what is become of them,
Who tells us how it goes with them, who nerves our hearts,
Until you yourselves approach the

place whither they are gone.
With joyful heart forget not to glorify thyself
And follow thy heart's desire, so long as thou livest.
Put myrrh on thy head, clothe thyself in fine linen,
Anointing thyself with the marvellous things of God.
Adorn thyself as beautifully as thou canst,
And let not thy heart be discouraged.
Follow thy heart's desire and thy pleasures
As long as thou livest on earth.
Follow thy heart's desire and thy pleasures
Till there comes to thee the day of mourning.
Yet he, whose heart is at rest, hears not their complaint,
And he who lies in the tomb understands not their mourning.
With beaming face keep holiday to-day,
And rest not therein.
For none carries his goods away with him,
Yea, none returns again, who has journeyed thither."

87.

Brugsch's translation (*Die Aegyptologie*, i. p. 163).

88.

Hibbert Lectures on the *Religion of*

Ancient Egypt (1879), pp. 93-100.

89.

Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie*, p. 167.

90.

See *Beni-Hasan*, pt. iii. (*Archæological Survey of Egypt*), pl. v. fig. 75.

91.

The double-headed axe is carved repeatedly on the walls of the "palace of Minos," discovered by Dr. A. J. Evans at Knossos, and seems to have been the divine symbol which was believed to protect the building from injury. On the coins of Tarsus the sun-god Sandan carries an axe.

92.

See above, p. 83.

93.

De Isid. 12.

94.

As Thoth writes the name of the king upon the sacred sycamore in order to ensure him everlasting life, so the name of Ea is written upon the core of the sacred cedar-tree (*WAI.* iv. 15, *Rev.* 10-13); Sayce, Hibbert Lectures on the *Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, p. 240.

95.

Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes, ii. pp. 381-385.

96.

This is Brugsch's translation (*Religion*

und Mythologie der alten Aegypter, p. 123 sqq.); but the meaning of the last name is doubtful, and the first is rather “time” than “eternity.”

97. See Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, ii. pp. 257 sqq. and 375 sqq. In an inscription discovered by Professor Petrie in the tombs of the first two dynasties at Abydos, Thoth is represented as a seated ape (*The Royal Tombs of Abydos*, pt. i. pl. xvii. 26). On the other hand, on the broken Abydos slate figured in de Morgan, *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Égypte*, pl. ii., which is probably prehistoric, Thoth appears as an ibis.

98. *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Égypte*, p. 65.

99. Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, p. 429 sqq.

100. The same cap is worn by the god who sits behind a scorpion-man on a stone containing a grant of land by the Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar I. (B.C. 1100). The stone was found at Abu-Habba, and is now in the British Museum (*WAI.* v. 57).

101. Maspero (*Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 157) reproduces a picture in the

temple of Luxor representing Khnum moulding Amon-hotep III. and his *Ka* on a potter's table.

102.

See Scheil, *Recueil de Travaux*, xx. p. 124 sqq.

103.

The *khnum* or "pot" is often used to express the name of Khnum in the hieroglyphics. It reminds us of the vase on early Babylonian seal-cylinders from the two sides of which flow the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, and which is often held in the hands of the water-god Ea. The design is reproduced with modifications on early Syrian cylinders, and the name of the zodiacal sign Aquarius shows to what an antiquity it must reach back. The primitive Egyptians believed that the Nile issued from a grotto to which the *qerti* or "two gulfs" of the Cataract gave access (Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, pp. 19, 38, 39), and Khnum was the god of the Cataract. Perhaps the classical representation of the Tiber and other rivers holding urns from which a stream of water flows is derived from Egypt.

104.

Men-nofer (Memphis), "the good place," is the equivalent of the name of the ancient seaport of Babylonia, Eridu, the Sumerian Eri-duga or

"good city." Ea, the culture-god and creator, was the god of Eridu. In the Deluge tablet (l. 9) Ea says that he had not "opened (*patû*) the oracle of the great gods." It is hardly worth while to mention that the antiquity of Memphis has been disputed by some philologists.

105.

Ptaḥ is stated in the Book of the Dead to have been the original author of the ceremony which he first performed on the dead gods.

106.

This is Maspero's view (*Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, ii. pp. 21, 22). Wiedemann (*Religion der alten Aegypter*, p. 75) makes Sokaris a sun-god; but his solar attributes belong to the time when he was identified with Ra of Heliopolis.

107.

It was only when the sun-god had absorbed the other deities that they became the children of Ra.

108.

Recueil de Travaux, xix. pp. 50, 54.

109.

To "come in peace" is still a common expression in Egyptian Arabic, and means "to return safely." The name seems to be taken from the office of Im-hotep, which was to conduct the dead safely back to a second life.

110. Nofer-Tum and Im-hotep had human forms like their father. The first is a man with a lotus flower on the head, the second a youth with a papyrus roll on the knee.

111. There was a difference only in the vowel of the first syllable.

112. The Nile-gods, representing the Nile and the canals, are depicted as stout men with large breasts, crowned with flowers, and wearing only the narrow girdle of prehistoric Egypt. The human form agrees well with the fact that the Nile was first engineered, and so made a source of life for Egypt, by the Pharaonic Egyptians. Babylonia was the country, it must be remembered, where river engineering and irrigation were originally developed.

113. "Hymn to the Nile," translated by P. Guieysse, *Records of the Past*, new series, iii. p. 46 sqq. The hymn was composed by Anna or Annana in the time of Meneptah II.

114. Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie*, pp. 3, 248, 348.

115. Her name is already mentioned in

the Pyramid texts, and in *Pepi* ii. 131 she is described as the eye of Horus and "the opener of the paths," the ordinary title of Anubis as god of the dead.

116. In the Speos Artermidos near Beni-Hassan, where a large cemetery of mummified cats has been found, she is called Pakht, an older form of Bast.

117. On a slab discovered by Professor Petrie at Koptos, Usertesen I. of the Twelfth Dynasty already appears standing before a cat-headed goddess who is called "Bast, the lady of Shel." Shel is perhaps Ashel at Karnak, where the temple of Mut stood, in which so many figures of Bast or Sekhet have been found (Petrie, *Koptos*, pl. x. 2). The name of Bast also occurs in the Pyramid texts (*Pepi* 290); but here it is an epithet of Uazit, the goddess of Dep or Buto, once the capital of the kingdom of Northern Egypt, who is contrasted with the goddess of Nekheb.

118. Naville, *Bubastis* (*Egypt Exploration Fund*), i. pp. 44, 47, 48.

119. Horus Ahi. The meaning of Ahi, the local title assigned to Horus the younger, is doubtful.

120.

Thus at Dendera we read: “Ancestral mother of the gods, thou unitest thyself with thy father Ra in thy festal chamber.”

121.

The so-called Hathor head with the horns of a cow is already found on the slate plaque of Kom el-Aḥmar, which is either of the time of the First Dynasty or pre-Menic (*Zeits. f. Aegypt. Spr.* xxxvi. pl. xii.). A head of similar type is engraved under the name of Pepi II., discovered at Koptos (Petrie, *Koptos*, pl. v. 7).

122.

Horus and Hathor, that is to say, Baal and Ashtoreth, were, according to the Egyptians, the deities of Mafket, the Sinaitic Peninsula.

123.

It must be remembered that in Egypt the place occupied by the morning star in the astronomy and myths of other peoples was taken by Sirius on account of its importance for the rising of the Nile. And Sirius was identified with Isis.

124.

Recueil de Travaux, xx. p. 62. Dr. Scheil further points out that the sacred bark of Bau, with whom Istar is identified, was called “the ship of the holy cow.” At Dendera also, Isis, in her bark as goddess of the star

Sirius, becomes Hathor under the form of a cow.

125.

Professor Wiedemann has suggested that the name of Men-tu or Mon-tu is connected with that of A-mon. It is, however, more reasonable to associate it with that of the Mentiu or Semitic nomads of the Sinaitic Peninsula.

126.

Hence the ram-headed sphinxes that lined the roads leading to the temple of Karnak. The flesh of the ram was tabooed at Thebes, an indication that the animal was originally a totem (cf. Herod. ii. 42).

127.

A stela of Antef IV., found by M. Legrain in 1900, shows that Khonsu was preceded by Ptaḥ as the third member of the trinity. See above, p. 90.

128.

So Lauth, *Aus Aegypten's Vorzeit*, p. 61; Brugsch, *Dictionnaire géographique*, pp. 61, 62; Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 180. The evidence, however, is not quite clear.

129.

The bronze figures of the ibis found at Tel el-Baqlîya, on the east bank of the Damietta branch of the Nile, opposite Abusir or Busiris, have

shown that it is the site of the capital of the Hermopolite nome.

130.

At Beḥbêt near Mansûra.

131.

This, at least, is how the name is usually written. But on an early seal-cylinder which I have published in the *Proc. SBA.*, Feb. 1898, No. 2, where we read, "The city of the ram, the city which is called Dad," the name is written *D-d*, and on a libation-table of the Sixth Dynasty from El-Kab we find *Dad-d-u* (Quibell, *El-Kab*, pl. iv. 1). The earlier pronunciation of the name as found in the Pyramid texts is Zaddu or Zadu.

132.

As early as the age of the Pyramid texts the column Dad had come to be explained as a picture of the spine, or rather spinal column (*ȝad*), of Osiris, which was supposed to be preserved at Daddu or Pi-Asar-neb-Daddu or Abusir. See *Unas* 7.

133.

Not unfrequently a rich Egyptian who was buried at Saqqâra had a cenotaph at Abydos. I believe that the fashion had been set by the founder of the united monarchy himself, and that besides the tomb of Menes at Negada there was also a cenotaph of the king at Abydos. At

all events clay impressions of his Ka-name Aḥa have been found there in the Omm el-Ga'ab.

134.

The title borne by Osiris at Abydos was Khent-amentit, “the ruler of the west.” There is no need of turning the title into a separate god who was afterwards identified with Osiris: he was as much Osiris as was Neb-Daddu, “the lord of Daddu.” Professor Maspero says with truth that “Khent-amentit was the dead Anher, a sun which had set in the west” (*Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, ii. p. 24)—or rather, perhaps, a sun that was setting in the west, as his domain was the necropolis of Omm el-Ga'ab, immediately eastward of the western boundary of hills. When “Osiris of Daddu” is distinguished from “Khent-Amentit of Abydos,” as on a stela of the Eleventh Dynasty (Daressy in the *Recueil de Travaux*, xiv. p. 23), this is only in accordance with the Egyptian habit of transforming a divine epithet into a separate deity.

135.

Already in the Pyramid texts Horus is said to have assisted in the burial of Osiris, who goes to the plains of Alu with “the great gods that proceed from On” (*Pepi* ii. 864-872); and we have perhaps a reminiscence

of the spread of the Osirian cult to the south and the identification of Osiris with Akhem, the mummified Horus of Nekhen, in *Pepi* ii. 849, where we read: “Seb installs by his rites Osiris as god, to whom the watchers in Pe make offering, and the watchers in Nekhen venerate him” (Maspero in the *Recueil de Travaux*, xii. p. 168). Pe and Nekhen were the capitals of the two pre-Menic kingdoms of Northern and Southern Egypt, and on a stela from Nekhen (Kom el-Aḥmar) in the Cairo Museum, “Horus of Nekhen” is identified with Osiris (*Recueil de Travaux*, xiv. p. 22, No. xx.). In the inscriptions of the Pyramid of Pepi II., lines 864-5, it is said that Isis and Nebhât wept for Osiris at Pe along with “the souls of Pe.” Pe with its temple of the younger Horus, and Dep with its temple of Uazit the goddess of the north, together formed the city called Buto by the Greeks.

136.

So in the Pyramid texts (*e.g. Teta* 171, 172).

137.

The origin of the name of Set had already been forgotten in the age of the Pyramid texts, where it is explained by the determinative *set*, “a stone.”

138. When the hieroglyphic name of the Busirite nome was first invented, Osiris was still the living "lord of Daddu" rather than the mummified patron of its necropolis, since it represents him as a living Pharaoh with the title of *ânz* or "chieftain."

139. *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, xii. 8, pp. 401-402.

140. The origin of the name of Osiris had been forgotten by the Egyptians long before the age of the Pyramid texts, where we find (*Unas* 229) the grammatical goddess User-t invented to explain Osiris, as if the latter were the adjective *user*, "strong"! M. Grébaut long ago expressed his belief that Osiris was of foreign origin (*Recueil de Travaux*, i. p. 120).

141. Nebo or Nabium (Nabu), "the prophet," was the interpreter of the will of Merodach, just as Merodach was the interpreter of the will of Ea.

142. The constellation of Osiris was called "the soul of Osiris," and Professor Maspero notes that the Pyramid texts place his kingdom near the Great Bear (*Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, ii. p. 20). Isis became Sirius, and Horus the morning star.

143.

The Ancient Egyptian Doctrine of Immortality, p. 48.

144.

Renouf's translation of the 125th chapter of the Book of the Dead (*Papyrus of Ani*) is as follows:—"I am not a doer of what is wrong. I am not a plunderer. I am not a robber. I am not a slayer of men. I do not stint the measure of corn. I am not a niggard. I do not desire the property of the gods. I am not a teller of lies. I am not a monopoliser of food. I am no extortioner. I am not unchaste. I am not the cause of others' tears. I am not a dissembler. I am not a doer of violence. I am not a domineering character. I do not pillage cultivated land. I am not an eavesdropper. I am not a chatterer. I do not dismiss a case through self-interest. I am not unchaste with women or men. I am not obscene. I am not an exciter of alarms. I am not hot in speech. I do not turn a deaf ear to the words of righteousness. I am not foul-mouthed. I am not a striker. I am not a quarreller. I do not revoke my words. I do not multiply clamour in reply to words. I am not evil-minded or a doer of evil. I am not a reviler of the king. I put no obstruction on (the use of the Nile) water. I am not a bawler. I am not a reviler of the god. I am not fraudulent. I am not sparing

in offerings to the gods. I do not deprive the dead of the funeral cakes. I take not away the cakes of the child, or profane the god of my locality. I do not kill sacred animals."

145.

Wiedemann, *Die Religion der alten Aegypter*, pp. 132, 133; and Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, pp. 188-190.

146.

Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 190.

147.

Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, p. 191.

148.

So on a stela translated by Professor Maspero (*Recueil de Travaux*, iv. p. 128) the deceased says: "Never has one said of me, What is that he hath done? I have not injured, I have not committed evil; none has suffered through my fault, the lie has never entered into me since I was born, but I have always done that which was true in the sight of the lord of the two worlds. I have been united in heart to the god; I have walked in the good paths of justice, love, and all the virtues. Ah, let my soul live ... for behold I am come to this land, O souls, to be with you in the tomb, I am become one of you who detest sin."

149.

Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vi. p. 260, ed. Sylb. See Lepsius, *Einleitung zur Chronologie der Aegypter*, pp. 45, 46. The remains ascribed to Hermes Trismegistos, including the Dialogue called *Pœmandres*, have been translated into English by J. D. Chambers (1882). The Dialogue is already quoted by Justin Martyr (*Exhort. ad Græcos*, xxxviii.).

150.

The extraordinary care with which the sacred texts were handed down through long periods of time is illustrated by certain of the Pyramid texts, which are reproduced word for word down to the close of the Egyptian monarchy. Thus passages at the beginning of the inscriptions in the Pyramid of Unas are repeated in the Ritual of Abydos, and another portion of the same text is found on a stela of the Thirteenth Dynasty, as well as in one of the courts of the temple of queen Hatshepsu at Dêr el-Bâhari, where, as Professor Maspero remarks, “we have three identical versions of different epochs and localities.” The invocations against serpents (*Unas* 300-339) recur in the tomb of Bak-n-ren-ef of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty. See Maspero, *Recueil de Travaux*, iii. pp. 182, 195, 220. The fact gives us confidence in the statements of the Egyptian scribes, that such and such chapters of the

Book of the Dead had been “found” or written in the reigns of certain early kings.

151. There is much to be said for the view of Professor Piehl, that we have in it an amalgamation of the rituals and formulæ of the various chief sanctuaries of Egypt, which have been thrown side by side without any attempt at arrangement or harmony. One of such rituals would be that mentioned on the sarcophagus of Nes-Shu-Tefnut, where we read of “the sacred writings of Horus in the city of Huren” in the Busirite nome (*Recueil de Travaux*, vi. p. 134). On the sarcophagus of Beb, discovered by Professor Petrie at Dendera, and belonging to the period between the Sixth and the Eleventh Dynasties, we have not only “early versions” of parts of the Book of the Dead, but also chapters which do not occur in the standard text (Petrie, *Dendereh*, 1898, pp. 56-58).

152. We even read in them of Ra being “purified in the fields of Alu” (*Unas* 411).

153. Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, pp. 367-370.

154. Various interpretations have been given of the phrase *per m hru*. I have adopted that which seems to me most consonant with both grammar and logical probability.

155. The inscribed scarab does not seem to be older than the age of the Eleventh Dynasty, when it began to take the place of the cylinder as a seal. At all events there is no authentic record of the discovery of one in any tomb of an earlier date, and the scarabs with the names of Neb-ka-ra, Khufu, and other early kings, were for the most part made in the time of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty. It is possible, however, that some at least of the scarabs which bear the name of Ra-n-ka of the Eighth Dynasty are contemporaneous with the Pharaoh whose name is written upon them. If so, they are the oldest inscribed scarabs with which we are acquainted. Uninscribed scarabs, however, go back to the prehistoric age. The use of the scarab as an amulet is already referred to in the Pyramid texts. And Dr. Reisner has discovered green porcelain beetles in the prehistoric graves of Negadiyâ, along with other green porcelain amulets, such as turtles, etc.

156. As is also the case in the Pyramid texts.

157. Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, p. 369.

158. Maspero, "La Pyramide de Pepi 1er" in *Recueil de Travaux*, vii. pp. 161, 162. In the Babylonian Epic of Gilgames the place of Nu-Urru is taken by Ur-Ninnu.

159. The Book of the Dead has been analysed by Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, i. pp. 325-387.

160. Translated by P. J. de Horrack.

161. For a translation and analysis of the Book of Am Duat, see Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes* ii. pp. 1-163.

162. *Revue égyptologique*, i. 4, ii. 3 (1880, 1881), where an account of the demotic story is given by E. Révillout.

163. Scheil, "Tombeaux thébains" in *Mémoires de la Mission archéologique française du Caire*, v. 4, pl. 4.

164. So in the Pyramid texts (*Unas* 170) reference is made to "the *baqt*," or "ben-nut tree which is in On." The tree is the *Moringa aptera Gærtner*, from the fruit of which the myrobalanum oil was extracted (Joret, *Les Plantes dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age*, i. pp. 133, 134).

165. *Ancient Egyptians*, iii. p. 349. The *bennu* is described as "the soul of Osiris."

166. *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, ii. p. 395 sqq.

167. The influence of the State religion is visible in the picture, as the cow has the solar disc between its horns, and the cobra is crowned not only with horns, but also with the solar disc. Behind the cobra is the leafy branch of a tree. There is no reason for supposing with Wiedemann (*Muséon*, 1884) that the monument is Ethiopian: what is decipherable in the inscription is purely Egyptian. Professor Wiedemann calls the animal on the left a ram, but my drawing made it a cow. At the feet of the cow, which has a garland round the neck, are two vases.

168. See the very interesting study of

Maspero on “La Déesse Miritskro et ses guérisons miraculeuses” in *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie*, ii. pp. 402-419; *Recueil de Travaux*, ii. p. 109 sqq.

169.

The Belmore collection of Egyptian antiquities contains several stelæ which commemorate the popular worship of the serpent; see *Belmore Collection*, pls. 7, 8, and 12. In one of them the uræus has the human head of the official deity; in another it stands on the top of a shrine; but on one (given in pl. 7) the worshipper is kneeling before a coluber of great length, which has none of the attributes of the State gods, and whose numerous coils remind us of Apophis.

170.

Herodotos, i. 78.

171.

Sayce, “Serpent Worship in Ancient and Modern Egypt,” in the *Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1893.

172.

Voyage du Sieur Paul Lucas, fait en mdccxiv etc., par Ordre de Louis XIV., ii. pp. 83-86.

173.

Voyage d'Égypte et de Nubie, nouv. édit. par L. Langlés, ii. pp. 64-69.

174.

See my article on “Serpent Worship in Ancient and Modern Egypt,” in the *Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1893. On a rock called Hagar el-Ghorâb, a few miles north of Assuan, I have found *graffiti* of the age of the Twelfth Dynasty, which show that a chapel of “the living serpent” stood on the spot; and a native informed me that the rock is still haunted by a monstrous serpent, “as long as an oar and as thick as a man,” which appears at night and destroys, with the fire that blazes from its eyes, whoever is unfortunate enough to fall in its way. See *Recueil de Travaux*, xvi. p. 174.

175.

In the *Verhandlungen der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, 1889, No. 7.

176.

The legend was first published by Pleyte and Rossi, “Les Papyrus hiératiques de Turin,” pls. 31, 77, 131-8. It was translated by Lefébure in the *Zeitschrift für Aegyptische Sprache*, 1883, pp. 27-33.

177.

The shrine of Horus, whom the legend here identifies with the son of Osiris, was called Mesen at Edfu. The winged solar disc, which seems to have originated there, is called sometimes “the lord of the city of Beḥudet,” sometimes “the lord of the

city of Mesen." Beḥudet was formerly read Hud, and it is possible that this was really the pronunciation of the name in later days. At all events it seems to be the origin of the modern Edfu, which, of course, has nothing to do with the verb *deb*, "to pierce."

178.

"The City of the Twins" seems to be the same as Ḥa-Zaui, "the House of the Twins," which Dümichen identifies with the Greek Khnubis, close to Esna. An inscription at Esna says that it was also termed Pa-Saḥura, "the House of Saḥura" (of the Fifth Dynasty), a name which Dümichen finds in that of the modern village of Sahera, south of Esna. On a prehistoric slate found at Abydos the name of the city appears to be indicated by the figures of two twins inside the cartouche of a town (de Morgan, *Recherches sur les Origines de l'Égypte*, i. pl. iii., first register).

179.

Naville, *Mythe d'Horus*, pls. 12-18; Brugsch, *Abhandlungen der Götting. gelehrt. Akademie*, xiv.

180.

Griffith, "Minor Explorations," in the *Seventh Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund* (1890), pp. 71-73; Maspero, *Dawn of Civilisation*, pp.

169-171.

181.

Cf. the 155th chapter of the Book of the Dead: “These words must be spoken over a gilded *dad*, which is made from the heart of a sycamore and hung round the neck of the dead. Then shall he pass through the gates of the other world.” When this chapter was written, however, the real origin of the *dad*—a row of four columns—had been forgotten, and it was imagined to represent the backbone of Osiris. We are transported by it into the full bloom of religious symbolism.

182.

Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. tr., p. 273.

183.

See Maspero, *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes*, i. pp. 82-89.

184.

See above, p. 90.

185.

Records of the Past, first series, ii.

186.

See Cudworth's translation of Iamblichus.

187.

Maspero, “La Pyramide du Roi Ounas,” in the *Recueil de Travaux*, iv. pp. 59-61.

188. Elsewhere in the Pyramid texts the Akhimu-seku or planets of the northern hemisphere are identified with the gods (*Unas* 218-220); Unas himself rises as a star (*Unas* 391); Sirius is the sister of Pepi (*Pepi* 172); while the Khû or luminous spirits are identified with the planets (*Teta* 289). We hear of the "fields of the stars" (*Unas* 419), of the morning star in the fields of Alu (*Pepi* 80), and of Akhimt, the grammatically-formed wife of Akhim "planet," who is associated with "Babî, the lord of night" (*Unas* 645, 646). One of the constellations frequently mentioned in the Pyramid texts is "the Bull of heaven," which was also an important constellation in early Babylonian astronomy, where the name formed part of an astronomical system; in *Unas* 421 the "Bull of heaven" is called the *An* or "column" of Heliopolis. We hear also of "the fresh water of the stars" (*Unas* 210). With the latter may be compared the goddess Qebḥu, or "Fresh Water," the daughter of Anubis, the primitive god of the dead, who poured forth the liquid from four vases (*Pepi* 393). With the name of the goddess the symbol of the Antæopolite nome of Upper Egypt is associated.

189. In the *Proc. SBA.* xv. p. 233.

190.

Or rather, perhaps, was the Osiris of primeval Egypt.

191.

Lepsius, *Chronologie der Aegypter*, pp. 78, 79. See Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie*, ii. pp. 339-342.

192.

Hommel, *Ausland*, 1892, p. 102; Ginzel, *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte*, i. pp. 12-15. Diodorus (ii. 30) states that the "councillor gods" were only thirty in number; but the list of planetary stations discovered by Hommel in *WAI.* v. 46, shows that the text must be corrected into thirty-six. Indeed, Diodorus himself adds that every ten days there was a change of constellation, so that in a year of 360 days there must have been thirty-six constellations in all.

193.

The Egyptian *za* is the Semitic *ṣi*, "ship," from which it seems to have been borrowed.

194.

Maspero, "La Pyramide du Roi Pepi 1er" in *Recueil de Travaux*, viii. p. 103.

195.

For instance, in the Rhind Papyrus: Wiedemann, "Ein altägyptischer Weltschöpfungsmythus," in the *Urquell*, new ser., ii. p. 64, "Heaven

was not, earth was not, the good and evil serpents did not exist."

196.

See above, p. 86.

197.

The serpent with the seven necks (*Unas* 630, *Teta* 305) is the Babylonian "serpent with the seven heads," and points to Babylonia, where alone seven was a sacred number. Other coincidences between Egyptian and Babylonian mythology that may be noted are "the tree of life" (*khet n ânkh*) which grew in Alu, and was given by the stars to the dead that they might live for ever (*Pepi* 431); and the "great house," the Babylonian *ê-gal*, which is several times referred to in the Pyramid texts.

198.

Thus in the Pyramid texts (*Unas* 518) Unas is described as "eating" the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt.

199.

Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie égyptiennes, ii. pp. 446, 447.

200.

Golénischeff, in the *Recueil de Travaux*, xv. pp. 88, 89. The passage is found in Papyrus 1116 of the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. The words "son of man" are a literal translation of the original *si-n-sa*.

201.

For the scenes accompanying the text, see Gayet, “Le Temple de Louxor,” in the *Mémoires de la Mission archéologique française au Caire*, xv. 1, pl. lxxi., where, however, the copy of the inscriptions is very incorrect. My translation is made from a copy of my own. The whole inscription is as follows: “Said by Amon-Ra, etc.: He (the god) has incarnated himself in the royal person of this husband, Thothmes IV., etc.; he found her lying in her beauty; he stood beside her as a god. She has fed upon sweet odours emanating from his majesty. He has gone to her that he may be a father through her. He caused her to behold him in his divine form when he had gone upon her that she might bear a child at the sight of his beauty. His lovableness penetrated her flesh, filling it with the odour of all his perfumes of Punt.

“Said by Mut-em-ua before the majesty of this august god Amon, etc., the twofold divinity: How great is thy twofold will, how [glorious thy] designs in making thy heart repose upon me! Thy dew is upon all my flesh in ... This royal god has done all that is pleasing to him with her.

“Said by Amon before her majesty:

Amon-hotep is the name of the son which is in thy womb. This child shall grow up according to the words which proceed out of thy mouth. He shall exercise sovereignty and righteousness in this land unto its very end. My soul is in him: he shall wear the twofold crown of royalty, ruling the two lands like the sun for ever."

202.

Also written Telloḫ, on the assumption that the second syllable represents *loḫ*, "a tablet." But the native pronunciation is Tello.

203.

The palace is represented by the mound called El-Qasr, the temple by that called Tell 'Amrân ibn 'Ali.

204.

The name of Khammu-rabi or Ammu-rabi is written Ammu-rapi in Harper, *Letters*, iii. p. 257, No. 255 (K 552), as was first noticed by Dr. Pinches (see the *Proc. of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, May 1901, p. 191); Dr. Lindl suggests that the final *-l* of the Hebrew form is derived from the title *ilu*, "god," so often given to the king. Professor Hommel further points out that the character *be* with which the final syllable of the royal name is sometimes written also had the value of *pil*.

205.

Eridû is a Semitised abbreviation of the Sumerian Eri-dugga, “good city.”

206.

Years ago I pointed out that *uru* was one of the words which (along with what it signified) was borrowed by the Semites from their Sumerian neighbours or predecessors (*Transactions of Society of Biblical Archæology*, i. 2, pp. 304, 305).

207.

Literally, “the lord of the ghost(s),” “the ghost-lord.” The name has been so misunderstood and misinterpreted, that it is necessary to enter into some details in regard to it, though the facts ought to be known even to the beginner in Assyriology. The Sumerian *lilla* or *lil* meant a “ghost,” “spirit,” or “spook,” and was borrowed by the Semites under the form of *lilû*, from which the feminine *lilîtu* was formed in order to represent the female *lil* whom the Sumerians called *kiel lilla*, “handmaid of (the male) *lil*.” *Lilîtu* is the Hebrew *Lîlîth* (Isa. xxxiv. 14). In the lexical tablets the *lil* is explained as “a breath of wind” (*saru*), or more exactly as a *zaqiqu*, or “dust-cloud” (not, of course, “a fog,” as it has sometimes been translated, in defiance alike of common sense and of modern Arab beliefs). When the

spirit of Ea-bani rose from the ground, it naturally took the form of a "dust-cloud"; at other times, when the spirits appeared in the air, they revealed their presence by a draught of cold "wind."

208.

See Pinches, "Certain Inscriptions and Records referring to Babylonia and Elam," in the *Journal of the Victoria Institute*, xxix. p. 44: "between the mouths of the rivers on both sides."

209.

It is significant that although the antediluvian kings enumerated by Berossos must have belonged to Eridu, as is shown by their connection with the Oannes-gods who rose from the Persian Gulf, they are not kings of Eridu, but of Pantibibla and Larankha (which seems to have been the Surippak of the cuneiform texts).

210.

Thureau-Dangin, in the *Revue Sémitique*.

211.

Heuzey, "Sceaux inédits des rois d'Agadé," in the *Revue d'Assyriologie*, iv. 1, pp. 1-12.

212.

It is to this adoption by the god that the phrase met with in early

Sumerian texts—"the king (or the man) the son of his god"—probably refers, though it may possibly have eventually come to be synonymous with "pious man." Professor Hommel compares Hebrew names like Ben-Ammi, "the son of (the god) Ammi."

213.

A. H. 83-1-18, 1866, *Rev.* v., published by Pinches in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, xviii. 8 (1896), and explained by him, p. 255. I should myself prefer to render Par-Ėṣu "the land of the offspring of the god Ėṣu" (or Esau).

214.

See my Hibbert Lectures, p. 107, note.

215.

This at least was the ease in the time of Gudea, to whom we owe all the more important theological references found in the Tello texts.

216.

Thus we have the phrase "to swear by the *Zi* of the king" (see Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*, s.v. *nisu*). The Zi included the *ekim* or specific ghost, whose prominence belongs rather to post-Sumerian days than to the early ages of Babylonian history.

217.

King, *Babylonian Religion*, p. 46.

218.

WAI. ii. 36. 54, 56. 33-38.

219.

See my Hibbert Lectures on *Babylonian Religion*, p. 375. A common phrase is “the Zi (Assyr. *nis*) of the great gods” (Delitzsch, *Assyrisches Handwörterbuch*, s.v. *nisu*). In the incantation text, *WAI.* iv. 1, 2, the gods of later times are still *Zis*. A translation of part of the text will be given in a future chapter. For the possibility that the Zi and the Lil originally had much the same meaning, the one being used at Eridu and the other at Nippur, see the next lecture.

220.

Scheil in *Recueil de Travaux*, xxii. p. 38.

221.

See Sm. 1981. 3, where the *edinna* or “desert” is called the home of the *lilla*.

222.

Uda-kára.

223.

By assimilation En-lil became El-lil. The name is literally “ghost-lord,” where the singular *lil* represents a class. Hence En-lil is “lord of the ghosts” in general, conceived of as “the devil” is often conceived of in

Christian literature, or as Hades sometimes meant all the denizens of the underworld in Greek. Dialectic forms of the name are Mul-lil and U-lil.

224.

Under Semitic influence these "tablets of destiny" lost their primitive signification, and became, like the Urim and Thummim of the Old Testament, simply a means of predicting the future.

225.

At Eridu the Zi seems to have taken the place occupied by the Lil at Nippur; at all events, just as En-lil was the chief Lil or Lilla at Nippur, so Ea seems to have been the chief Zi at Eridu. On this see the next lecture.

226.

Zaqiqu is of course a "cloud of dust," not "a wind," as some scholars have translated it. A wind does not rise up out of the earth, but comes from the air or sky. In *WAI.* v. 6, vi. 64, the meaning of *zaqiqi* can be "dust" and nothing else: *ilâni-su istarâti-su amnâ ana zakiki*, "its gods and goddesses I reduced to dust."

227.

WAI. v. 61, vi. 54, 55, where we must read *kibira*.

228.

Professor Hommel has shown that

among the Arabian and Western Semites (the Canaanites excepted) the original Baal was rather the moon-god than the sun-god. The supremacy of the sun-god belongs to Semitic Babylonia (*Aufsätze und Abhandlungen*, ii. pp. 149-165).

229. With this phrase, which is so frequent in the Babylonian texts, Hommel compares names like Ben-Ammi, “the son of (the god) Ammi.”

230. Thureau-Dangin in the *Recueil de Travaux*, xix. p. 186.

231. Quoted by King, *Babylonian Religion*, p. 49.

232. By assimilation En-lil became El-lil (and Ul-lil) in one of the Sumerian dialects (*WAI.* v. 37. 21). Hence the Illinos (for which Illillos must be read) of Damascius.

233. Aṡari-galu-dugga. We owe the interpretation of the name to the insight and learning of Fr. Lenormant, from whose untimely death the investigation of Babylonian religion has suffered grievously.

234. Is it possible that the original

difference between the Zi and the Lil was that the one term was used at Eridu the other at Nippur, the meaning being pretty much the same in both cases? Unfortunately we have no materials at present for answering the question.

235.

WAI. ii. 55. 43, 58. 57; iii. 67. 156.

236.

Her assignment as a wife to the sun-god of Kis or to Nin-ip of Nippur belongs to a later period; see my Hibbert Lectures, p. 263.

237.

Originally, however, she had been merely a spirit in the form of a heifer; *WAI.* ii. 62. 45, where "the ship of Bau" is called "the ship of the holy cow." The name is doubtless Sumerian, and it seems to be the origin of the Baau of Phœnician cosmology, which asserted that the first men, Æôn and Protogonos, were born of "the wind Kolpia and his wife Baau, which is interpreted Night" (Eusebius, *Prœpar. Evang.* i. 10). Baau is probably the Hebrew *Bohu*.

238.

See my Hibbert Lectures, pp. 262, 374, 375. Ê-kur, "the house of the earth," was the name of the temple of En-lil at Nippur. It was the abode of the "lord of the spirits" of the

earth and the underworld.

239. She is called “the handmaid of the spirit of E-kura” (*WAI.* ii. 54. 18). The “spirit of E-kura” is En-lil, whose temple E-kura was, and consequently the title identifies her with the *kiel lilla* or “handmaid of the Lil,” who eventually became the Lilith of Jewish folk-lore.

240. Hence in the hymn which describes the oraculur tree of Eridu (*WAI.* v. 15) the “couch” of Ea is called “the bed of Zi-Kum” in “the central place of the earth.”

241. See my Hibbert Lectures on the *Religion of the Ancient Babylonians*, pp. 374, 375.

242. Similarly, as I first indicated in my Hibbert Lectures (p. 132), the first two antediluvian kings of Babylonia given by Berossos do not belong to the original list, but have been prefixed to it when Babylon became the leading city of the country, and it was accordingly necessary to make it the capital of the kingdom from the very beginning of time. It is worth notice that, just as the first two antediluvian Babylonian kings are a later addition to the original list, so the first two antediluvian patriarchs

in the Book of Genesis seem to have been added to the original eight. Adam and Enos are synonyms like Cainan and Cain, for whom Seth, the Sutu or Bedâwin (Num. xxiv. 17), was substituted. In the Babylonian list, Amelon or Amilu, “man,” corresponds with Enos, just as Ammenon (Ummanu, “the craftsman”) corresponds with Cainan or Cain, “the smith.” For both the Babylonian and the Hebrew, man in the abstract was followed immediately by civilised man.

243.

The Igigi are represented ideographically by v + ii (the ideograph of plurality). Perhaps, therefore, they were originally the spirits of the five planets duplicated according to their appearance in the evening and morning. If the opinion of Pognon (*L'Inscription de Bavian*, i. p. 25) could be sustained that the original ideograph was really vii and not v + ii, we should have a better explanation of them as the seven planets which, in Chaldæan astronomy, included the sun and moon. The meaning of the name is unknown. Guyard's supposition, that it is derived from the Assyrian *agâgu*, “to be angry” (not “to be strong,” as he imagined), is devoid of probability. In K 2100, col. iv., it is also written Igâgâ, and explained by

isartum, "justice," or "straight direction." In *WAI.* ii. 35. 37, the NUN-GAL (pronounced *Kisagal*) is called the *Rîbu* which Jensen would connect with the Hebrew Rahab.

244.

The divine "lord" of a place or territory, such as is met with in a South Arabian or Phœnician inscription, is totally different from the lord of the ghost-world at Nippur. The one was master of a definite territory on the surface of the earth, the other was a spirit ruling over other spirits in an underground world. The two conceptions have nothing in common with one another.

245.

The evidence that has since come to light shows that I was wrong in my Hibbert Lectures (pp. 110, 193) in supposing that the origin of the triad was purely Sumerian. It was really due to the fusion of the Sumerian and Semitic elements in the official Babylonian religion. Possibly the astronomical triad of the sun, moon, and evening star may have suggested the artificial grouping of the gods of the three great seats of religious culture, but that was all. The origin of the triad must be sought in geography, or rather in the fact that Ana, En-lil, and Ea represented the

three chief sanctuaries and centres of religious influence in Babylonia. I have already pointed out (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 192) that from the fact that Ana is the first of the triad we may infer that the whole doctrine originated in the theological school of Erech. Erech, in fact, was the meeting-place of the Semite and Sumerian, where the Semitic influence first found itself supreme. The Baal of historical Semitic religion was a sky-god, despite Robertson Smith's ingenious philological attempts to find a terrestrial source for him.

246.

Cf. Hommel, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen*, ii. pp. 149-165. Hommel has proved, with the help of the Minæan inscriptions, that primitive Semitic religion consisted of moon and star worship, the moon-god Athtar and an “angel” god standing at the head of the pantheon, while the sun-goddess was attached to them as daughter or wife. The supreme Baal of the Western Semites was thus originally the moon-god, a fact that throws light on his cult at Ur and Harran, which lay outside Babylonia proper, and were inhabited by a large West Semitic population.

247.

Religion of Babylonia and Assyria, p. 74.

248. The name of the Edomite king Â-rammu in the time of Sennacherib shows that the name and worship of Â had been carried to the West. Compare also the name of Ehud (Judg. iii. 15). Â seems to have been a title signifying "the father," the actual Sumerian name of the deity being Sirrigam (see my Hibbert Lectures, p. 178).

249. For the absorption by Hadad of the Sumerian god of the air, Meri or Mermer, the divine patron of the city of Muru, my Hibbert Lectures, p. 202 sqq., may be consulted. Gubára, "the lady of the plain," was apparently originally the wife of Meri; when Meri passed into Hadad, Gubára necessarily became the wife of the latter, "the lord of the mountain," as he was called. As Hadad was already provided with a wife, Sala, the next step was to identify Sala and Gubára. Properly speaking, Gubára represented the Canaanitish goddess Ashêrah, Asirtum in Babylonian: see Reisner, "Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit," in the *Mittheilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen zu Berlin*, x. p. 139,

where the Sumerian *Martue mulu kharsagga-ga Gubarra gasan gu-edin* is translated *Amurru bel sadî Asratum belit tseri*, "the Amorite god (Hadad), the lord of the mountain; Asratum (Ashêrah), the lady of the plain."

250.

The triad of Athtar, the moon-god and the "angel-messenger," which Hommel has shown to be presupposed in the South Arabian inscriptions, was due to the influence of Babylonian culture. This is made clear by the Babylonian name of the moon-god, Sin, in the inscriptions of Hadhramaut, and of Aubây, *i.e.* Nebo, in those of Katabân. On the other hand, the addition of the sun-goddess to the triad is purely Semitic.

251.

East India House Inscription, i. 52-ii. 5.

252.

East India House Inscription, ix. 45-x. 5.

253.

The solar character of Merodach was first pointed out by myself (*Trans. SBA.* (1873) ii. p. 246), and the proofs of it were given in my Hibbert Lectures, p. 100 sqq. The Sumerian poem in which the creation is ascribed to Ea makes Ê-Saggil originally the name of the temple of

Ea at Eridu, from whence it must have been transferred to Babylon when Ea was supplanted by Merodach. From the list of Babylonian kings in which their names are explained, we may perhaps infer that the proper title of the temple at Babylon was E(s)-Guzi. Guzi had the same meaning in Sumerian as Ê-Saggil, "the house of the high head" (*WAI.* ii. 30. 4, 26. 58).

254.

Compare *Ati*, "prince," the title of Osiris.

255.

This was first pointed out by Ball, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, xii. 8, pp. 401, 402.

256.

We may compare the statement in a hymn (*WAI.* v. 50. i. 5) that the sun-god "rises from the Du-azagga, the place of destinies," where the Assyrian translation has "mountain of destinies." The Du-azagga was on the horizon of Ea's domain, the deep.

257.

More commonly written Ṡumu.

258.

Abil-Sin, "the son of the moon-god," the god of the city of Ur, to which the preceding dynasty had belonged.

259.

Though Zi is used here in its Semitic sense of "life" in the abstract, the position given to it as the first of the divine names and qualities bestowed on Merodach is significant. Before he can be identified with any of the gods of the official pantheon, he must become a Zi or "spirit," or more strictly "*the* spirit" of heaven. Similarly the divine essence of Ea is still called his Zi or "spirit," a survival from a time when Ea was not yet a god.

260.

It is probable that the word "wind" here, though its original sense was obscured or forgotten, goes back to an age when it signified the *lil* of which in the lexical tablets it is given as an equivalent.

261.

It must also be remembered that the attentions lavished by Nabonidos upon the older sanctuaries of Babylonia outside the walls of Babylon belonged to the earlier part of his reign.

262.

WAI. ii. 54, No. 4; iii. 69, No. 1. In ii. 54, No. 3, the cosmic deities are made "the mother(s) and father(s) of Anu" instead of being identified with him. But the identification is doubtless really due to the fact that *ana* meant "god" as well as "Anu."

263.

Journal of the Victoria Institute, xxviii. 8-10.

264.

Thus the god Tispak (the Susinak of Susa, K 92691, *Rev.* ii. 35) is identified with Istar in *WAI.* 35. 18, comp. ii. 57. 35; and Iskhara, another name of Istar, is called a male deity with a wife, Almanâti (*Strassmaier*, 3901). Professor Barton notices (*Journal of American Oriental Society*, 21, pp. 186-188) that an inscription of Lugal-khaśśi, an early king of Kis, is dedicated to "the king Nana and the lady Nana."

265.

WAI. iii. 53. 30-9.

266.

I can suggest no better etymology for the word Anunna than that proposed in my Hibbert Lectures, p. 182. It is supported by K 2100, col. iv., where the Sumerian pronunciation of Anunna-ki is given as Enu-kki, "the lord of the earth." When the "spirits of the earth" came to be distinguished from "the angels" or "spirits" of the air, the form Anunna-ki or Anunna-ge, "the spirit of the earth" or "lower world," became more usual than the simple Anunna. The latter is used of the Igigi or "angels" in K 4629, *Rev.*, and of the Anunna-ki in *WAI.* iv. 1, 2, col. iv. 3.

267. Hoffmann remarks in regard to the Aramaic inscriptions of Zenjirli (*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, xi. p. 253): "The most interesting fact is that even the theological Hadad-stela makes no mention of a female goddess."

268. The origin and nature of Tammuz have been investigated in my Hibbert Lectures, pp. 220-245, and need not be repeated here. He was primarily a Zi or spirit worshipped at Eridu, where he was known as "the Son of the Spirit of the Deep," *i.e.* Ea. He was, in fact, the primitive sun-god of Eridu, though his character underwent strange transformations in the course of his identification with Nin-girṡu (Inguriṡa) and other gods. But Tammuz was a sun-god who spent half his annual life in the underworld, or, according to another view, as fellow-warder with Nin-gis-zida of the gates of heaven. Hence he pastures his cattle in the fields beyond the river Khubur, the ocean-stream that encircles the earth, on the road to the land of the dead (Craig, *Religious Texts*, i. p. 17). On the other hand, he was also said to dwell in the midst of the cosmic temple of Ea at Eridu, between the Tigris and Euphrates (*WAI.* iv. 15. 58-59). It is possible, though not yet

proved, that in Tammuz two deities have been combined together, the sun-god and the vegetation of the spring which the young sun of the year brings into existence. However this may be, in Tammuz and Nin-gis-zida I see the Babylonian prototypes of the two pillars Jachin and Boaz erected by Solomon in front of the temple (1 Kings vii. 21). Nin-gis-zida means “the lord of the upright post” (*bil itsi kêni* in Semitic Babylonian), and thus corresponds with Jachin.

269.

Thureau-Dangin in the *Recueil de Travaux relatifs à la Philologie et à l'Archéologie égyptiennes et assyriennes*, xix. pp. 185-187.

270.

Published and translated by me in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, v. (1877) p. 441, where I pointed out for the first time that the early Babylonian kings were deified.

271.

Scheil in the *Recueil de Travaux*, xviii. p. 71, xxi. p. 27.

272.

See Brünnow, *Classified List*, No. 8883.

273.

WAI. ii. 55. 27, iv. 25. 40. *Dara*, Semitic *turakhu*, is shown to be “an

antelope" by the figure of an antelope, ending in a fish, which is stated to represent Ea on a boundary-stone from Susa published in de Morgan's *Délégation en Perse*, vol. i., and explained by Scheil in the *Recueil de Travaux*, xxiii. pp. 96, 97. The figure is accompanied by the symbol of Ea, a weapon which terminates in the head of a ram.

274.

WAI. iii. 68. 12-14. See my Hibbert Lectures, p. 286. For "the cow" Bau, see above, p. 148. Nergal or Allamu was originally the gazelle (Brünnow, *Classified List*, Nos. 1906, 1907).

275.

WAI. ii. 18. 57, 55. 69, iv. 3. 25.

276.

Thus the monkey is associated with Nu-gidda, "the dwarf," who in his turn accompanies the moon-god.

277.

The last line of this hymn (*WAI.* iv. 15. 52 sqq.), of which I have given a translation in my Hibbert Lectures, p. 238, has been discovered by Dr. Pinches, and published by him in the *Journal of Transactions of the Victoria Institute*, xxix. p. 44.

278.

In Reisner, "Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen nach Thontafeln griechischer Zeit," in the

Mittheilungen aus den orientalischen Sammlungen, x. p. 135, 25-32, and p. 139, 151-158, we read, “the great gods are 50; the gods of destiny are 7; the Anunnaki of heaven are 300; the Anunnaki of earth are 600.”

279. Hence he is called by Nebuchadrezzar *pakid kissat samê u irtsitim*, “marshaller of the hosts of heaven and earth” (*WAI.* i. 51. 13).

280. For the Anunna-ki and Igigi, see above, p. 344.

281. The solar character of Nin-ip was first pointed out by myself in the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, ii. (1873) p. 246, and again in my Hibbert Lectures, pp. 152, 153. He was probably called Bêr in Assyrian, but the Cilician Nineps shows that he was also known by his Sumerian title of Nin-ip. See my paper in the *Proc. SBA.* xx. 7, pp. 261, 262.

282. The ideograph denotes the *keffîya*, corresponding both to the veil and to the turban. In its earliest pictorial form it represents a veil covering both the head and face, and leaving only the hair at the back of the head visible. It was usually termed *uras*, a word borrowed by Semitic

Babylonian under the form of *urasu*, which in its turn created the verb *arâsu*, "to veil," and the word *aristu*, "a cloak." The *keffîya* was also known in Sumerian as *mutra*, Semitic *mutru*, from which the Greek μίτρα was borrowed. The *mitra* properly signified the Oriental turban; but as no such head-dress was worn by the Greeks, it is already used by Homer for the girdle of the waist. Besides the value of *uras*, the ideograph also had the value of *dara* (in Assyrian *nibittu* and *iškhu*, "a veil"). It is possible that the actual pronunciation of the name Nin-ip was In-dar.

283.

WAI. ii. 57. 39.

284.

Gwydion induced Pryderi by stratagem to give some of them to him, and so carried them from Dyved to North Wales; Rhys, Hibbert Lectures on *Celtic Heathendom*, pp. 242-244.

285.

Cf. *WAI.* ii. 19. 49*b*, "the spirits of the earth I made grope like swine in the hollows."

286.

See, for example, *WAI.* ii. 54. 3 *Obv.* 4-14, 4. 37-45.

287.

There is no reason for holding that the temple of Ê-Zida rebuilt by Khammurabi at Borsippa, was any other than the old Ê-Zida which was dedicated to Nebo.

288.

For names like Sippar-sadî, Sippar-saduni, Upê-semi, and Upê-natsir, see Pinches, *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, xliii. p. 277.

289.

Support may be found for this etymology in the common title of Assur as "the good god," which is written ideographically *an-dugga*. But even if the Assyrians believed that this was the proper signification of the name of their god, it does not follow that they were right; and since the characters representing the title could be read AN-SAR, it is possibly only a play on the supposed connection of the name with the Sumerian Ansar. The latter appears as Assoros in Damascius. Perhaps Assur (originally Asur) is merely *asurru*, "a wall."

290.

Glaser, *Skizze der Geschichte Arabiens* (1889), pp. 64-74.

291.

Du-azagga. As the "holy mound" was the home of Ea, it follows that it was originally part of the Persian Gulf; on the other hand, the name given to it

implies that it resembled a mountain lifting itself up into the sky. The sun rose from it (*WAI.* v. 50. 5*a*); hence it must have been the eastern horizon, which, to an inhabitant of Eridu, would have been the horizon of the sea, that ascended towards the heavens like a great mound. A model was made of it, which became the *parakku* or mercy-seat of Ea in his temple at Eridu. When Eridu and its god were supplanted by Babylon and Bel-Merodach, the Du-azagga was transferred to the latter city and became "the seat of the oracles" in the shrine of Bel-Merodach, "whereon," according to Nebuchadrezzar, "at the festival of Zagmuku, at the beginning of the year, on the 8th and 11th days, the king of the gods of heaven and earth, Bel, the god, seats himself, while the gods of heaven and earth reverently regard him, standing before him with bowed heads." When Nebo became the minister of Merodach, he too was addressed as "the god of the holy mound" (*WAI.* ii. 54. 71), and one of "the three great names of Anu" was said to be "the king who comes forth from the holy mound," another of the names being "the creator of the heavenly hosts" (*WAI.* iii. 68. 19, 20). Even Istar, or rather Iskhara, is called "the goddess of the holy mound" (*WAI.* iii. 68. 27). It

may be added that a lexical tablet makes the "holy mound" a synonym of the deep (*WAI.* v. 41, No. 1).

292.

WAI. ii. 58. 57. His Sumerian title as the divine potter was Nunurra, which is explained as "god of the pot," or more literally "lord of the pot" (Brünnow, *Classified List*, 5895). See Scheil, *Recueil de Travaux*, xx. p. 125.

293.

El-lil, it should be noted, was called "the great mountain" (Kur-gal, Sadu-rabu in Semitic), and the name of his temple was Ê-kur, "the house of the mountain." It is probable that the belief in the Kharsag-kurkurra, or "mountain of the world," on which the gods lived, originated at Nippur. From Isa. xiv. 13 we gather that it was placed in the north. Nin-lil, the wife of En-lil, is called Nin-kharsag, "the lady of the mountain," by Samsu-iluna, who describes her as "the mother who created me" (*Brit. Mus.*, pl. 199, 1. 41).

294.

These are the creatures described by Berossos as sprung from the bosom of Tiamât—winged men, with four or two faces, or with the feet of horses and goats; human-headed bulls; dog-headed horses, and the like—which were depicted on the

walls of the temple of Bel-Merodach, the successor of Bel of Nippur (Syncell. p. 29; Euseb. *Chron. Armen.* p. 10, ed. Mai).

295.

A variant fragment of the legend, as was first recognised by myself in the *Proc. SBA.* xx. pp. 187-189, was published by Dr. Scheil from an early Babylonian tablet in the *Recueil de Travaux*, xx. pp. 66, 67.

296.

An indication may, however, be found in the statement that the Lillum or "Lil" was the "mother-father" of En-lil (*WAI.* iv. 27. 5), and the further reference to the Zi or "spirit" who was the "mother-father" of En-lil and Nin-lil (*WAI.* iv. 1. Col. ii. 25-28). The genderless Sumerian knew of no distinction of sex; the creative principle was at once female and male. It will be noticed that the female element takes precedence of the male in contradistinction to Semitic ideas.

297.

These two lines are an interpolation.

298.

These three lines have been interpolated.

299.

The name of Merodach has been substituted for that of Ea.

300. A play on the name of Eri-dugga, “the good city.”

301. Probably an interpolation.

302. Originally Ea.

303. These two lines do not belong to the original poem.

304. For Tammuz and Nin-gis-zida, see above, p. 350, note. It may be added that in the Maqlû collection of incantation texts, Nin-gis-zida seems to be regarded as a goddess and the consort of Nusku, the fire-god. Nin, in Sumerian, more often signified “lady” than “lord.” It is possible that at Eridu she was held to be the wife of Tammuz.

305. Perhaps Hommel is right in translating “palm.”

306. Cp. Gen. iii. 8.

307. Zikum or Nammu, the abyss, who is called the mother of Ea. Nammu is given as the Sumerian name or title of Zikum in *Cuneiform Texts*, xii. p. 26, 1. 20.

308.

See my Hibbert Lectures, p. 238, and Pinches, *Journal of the Victoria Institute*, xxix. p. 44.

309.

WAI. iv. 15, Col. ii. 5, 6.

310.

So in *WAI.* iv. 25. 49, *an-sar ki-sar* is translated "the hosts of heaven and earth." In *WAI.* v. 43. 27, the Sumerian "the divine scribe, the creator of the hosts of earth," is paraphrased by the Semitic translator *Nabû pakid kissat samê u irtsiti*, "Nebo, the captain of the hosts of heaven and earth." For the Semite, the god he worshipped was lord of the hosts of heaven as well as of the spirits of the earth.

311.

It is possible that the Hebrew Urim and Thummim were really connected with the Babylonian "tablets of destiny." The latter were fastened "on the breast," according to the Epic of the Creation, like the Urim and Thummim of the Israelitish high priest. In *WAI.* iv. 18, No. 3, Ea describes a sort of magical breastplate, made of gold, which was to be set with precious stones and fastened to the breast. Nine stones are named, which seem to have been carved into figures of the gods, like Egyptian amulets, since they are said to be "the flesh of the gods."

Professor Zimmern even suggests (*Beiträge zur Kenntniss der babylonischen Religion*, p. 91) that Urim is to be identified with the Assyrian *urtu*, a synonym of *tertu* (*tôrâh*), "instruction" or "law."

312.

Compare the "ladder" of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12). A similar staircase or ladder is represented on the conical or egg-shaped stone which symbolised the moon-god of Harran (*e.g.* Lajard, *Culte de Mithra*, 54, 4).

313.

En-me, literally, "lord of the voice," appears to have been pronounced *ên* in Sumerian, since the Semitic *ênu* was borrowed from it. The word has the same root as *ên*, "an incantation," and the *ênu* denoted the priest who "recited" the incantatory ritual. He may thus be compared with the Egyptian *kher-heb*. There was an *ênu* or "chanter of Istar," whose technical name was *ukurrim*, and another of Ea, "the holy father," who was called the *sennu*. The incantatory formulæ, it must be remembered, relate for the most part to Ea and Istar. Another class of the *ênu* was called *sailu*, "the magian," in Assyrian (literally, "the questioner" of the spirits who may have practised ventriloquism); in Sumerian the name may be read *ên-*

lil, “the chanter of the *lil*.”

314.

I can still see no better etymology for *dimmer*, *dingir*, “god,” than the one I proposed in my Hibbert Lectures (p. 143), viz. *dim*, “to create” or “make.” From the same root we have *dim* or *dimma*, “offspring” (*WAI.* v. 29. 71), which illustrates the antithesis between the Sumerian who regarded generation as an act of creation, and the Semite who regarded creation as an act of generation. In *WAI.* ii. 47. 29, *dim* takes the place of *dumu*, “son.” *Dimme* and *dimmea* show that in *dimmer* the final consonant is a suffix.

315.

WAI. ii. 55. 27, iv. 25. 40. I have retained here the ordinary rendering of “gazelle” for the Assyrian *ditanu*, though it is more probable that its Sumerian equivalent *elim* (perhaps the Heb. *âyîl*) means “ram.” At all events *elim* is given as *kuśarikku* or “ram” in Sc. 315. But there is a difficulty about the god to whom the name was originally applied. In *WAI.* ii. 55. 31-33, “the princely *elim*,” “the mighty *elim*,” and “the earth-creating *elim*” are given as names of Ea; whereas in *WAI.* v. 21. 11, *elim* is a synonym of the god Aśari, and in Sc. 312 it is the equivalent of El-lil. As “the ship” or ark of Ea was “the

ship of the antelope of the deep," Ea must have been the antelope (*turakhu*) rather than the ram or gazelle; and I believe, therefore, that the transference of what was properly the name of El-lil to Asari and Ea was due to the confusion that grew up between El-lil after his transformation into the Semitic Bel and Asari after his transformation into the Semitic Bel-Merodach. The ideograph which denotes *elim* represents a quadruped, sometimes with an eye, sometimes with the ideograph of sheep, attached to it.

316.

WAI. v. 52, Col. iv. 8.

317.

Perhaps, however, the "divine seven" was descended from the seven gods who were sons of En-me-sarra, according to *WAI.* iv. 23, No. 1. En-me-sarra means "the incantation-priest of the (heavenly) hosts" (*ênu sa kissati*), and his "sons" therefore remind us of Job xxxviii. 7. It will not be forgotten that Philo Byblius made "the seven sons of Sydyk, the Kabeiri, with their eighth brother Asklêpios (Ashmûn)," the first writers of history (Euseb. *Præp. evang.* i. 10).

318.

It has been edited and translated by Tallqvist, *Die Assyrische*

Beschwörungsserie Maqlû (1894), who calculates that it contained 1550 lines, or more than 9000 words.

319. The whole work is in the metrical form characteristic of Semitic Babylonian. It has been edited by Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der babylonischen Religion; Die Beschwörungstafeln Shurpu* (1896).

320. Isa. viii. 19. The beginning, for instance, of the second book of the Maqlû collection had to be recited in a whisper before a wax image.

321. As the title of the latter work is sometimes written UD-MA AN EN-LIL as well as UD AN EN-LIL, the real translation may be "when (*enu-ma*) Bel," rather than "Illumination (*namaru*) of Bel," these having been the opening words of the first tablet. Since, however, it was translated into Greek by Berossos as a work of "Bel" (Seneca, *Quæst. Nat.* iii. 29), the name assigned to it in the text is on the whole to be preferred.

322. *WAI.* iv. 19, No. 2.

323. *WAI.* iv. 28, No. 1.

324. Literally, "the prophetdom" or

"college of prophets" (*isipputi*).

325.

WAI. v. 4. 86-91.

326.

Terêti, the Heb. *thôrâh*. The laws which the gods have to obey are meant.

327.

Gilgames seems to mean "great father," from *gilga*, "father," and *mes*, *i.e. mas*, "great."

328.

Hist. Anim. xii. 21. Sokkaros, king of Babylonia, fearing that his daughter's son would dethrone and slay him, imprisoned her in a tower. Gilgamos, however, was born to her. By his grandfather's orders he was thrown from the tower, but saved by an eagle, which caught him upon its wings. Philologically it is possible to identify Sokkaros and Akris-ios.

329.

Hilprecht, *The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania*, i. 15. 26; Hommel in the *Proc. SBA.* xvi. pp. 13-15. The inscription is as follows: "The deified Abil-ili(?), father of the army of Erech, the son of Bel-semea, has restored the walls of Erech, which were built in old times by the deified Gilgames."

330.

Professor Haupt, however, to whom

we owe the “editio princeps” of the Epic of Gilgames, believes that the description of the siege of Erech does not belong to the Epic at all. He finds the beginning of it in the fragment K 2756 c, generally assigned to the third book of the poem. See his article on “The Beginning of the Babylonian Nimrod Epic” in the “Johns Hopkins Semitic Papers” (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, xxii. 1 (1901)).

331.

As Berossos has told us what was the pronunciation of the name of the hero of the Chaldean Deluge, the disputes of modern Assyriologists as to whether it was Pir-napistim or the like are but labour lost. The true analysis of the name Xisuthros is still unknown, though it is possible, but not probable, that George Smith was right in seeing in it a metathesis of the title Adra-khasis applied to several of the early Babylonian heroes. Adra-khasis means “the very clever,” reminding us of “Mohammed the clever” in modern Egyptian folk-lore.

332.

Śamtu, Heb. *shohem* (Gen. ii. 12).

333.

So Hommel, who is probably right in seeing in the word the name of Saba in Southern Arabia.

334. Zimmern, indeed, has suggested that this latter text belongs to the legend of Atarpi, which, however, has unfortunately come down to us in so mutilated a condition that no certain interpretation of it is possible. The discoverer of the tablet is more probably right in connecting it with the story of the Flood.

335. Who here takes the place of Aruru.

336. The words “I will no longer dwell in your city, and turn my face toward the ground of En-lil,” imply that Surippak was not far from Nippur.

337. The mountain of Nizir was in the country called Lulubi or Luluwi by the Assyrians, Lulu in the Vannic inscriptions. In the bilingual inscription of Topzawa, Lulu is made the equivalent of the Assyrian Urardhu, the Hebrew Ararat.

338. See my *Early History of the Hebrews*, p. 122 sqq.

339. *Loc. cit.*, p. 126.

340. *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895).

341. It should be noticed that, as the voyage of Xisuthros lasted for a Babylonian week of seven nights, so the voyage of Deukalion lasted for a Greek week of nine days. Ogyges is but a local variant of Deukalion.

342. See Meissner, *Alexander und Gilgamos* (1894).

343. See my Hibbert Lectures, pp. 360-363, where the various passages relating to the Babylonian Olympos are quoted.

344. The land of Arallu or Hades.

345. This, however, is rather the "holy mound" of waters, in which Ea had his home, than the inland mountain of En-lil.

346. *Ur* is the Sumerian word for "zone." It is translated by *arâru*, "to bind"; *etsêdu*, "to bind the sheaves" for harvest; and *khamâmu*, "to bind" or "fix" laws.

347. From Mr. Smith's words it is difficult to determine whether the gates were in the first or second court, or whether (as seems the more probable) the tablet intended us to

understand that the gates belonged to both courts.

348.

The first stage was 300 feet square and 110 feet high, while the topmost was 80 feet long by 70 broad and 50 high.

349.

For the shewbread, see Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der babylonischen Religion*, pp. 94, 95; and Haupt, "Babylonian Elements in the Levitic Ritual," p. 59 (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1900). Sometimes six dozen cakes were laid before the god, sometimes three dozen, more often only one dozen, as among the Israelites. The shewbread is called *akal pani*, which is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew *lekhem happânîm*; and Professor Haupt has pointed out that it was required to be unleavened (*mutqu*).

350.

Cp. Gen. xi. 5.

351.

The Sumerian *du* has, of course, nothing to do with the Semitic Babylonian *dû*, "a chapel" (unless, indeed, the latter is borrowed from the Sumerian word). It is properly the equivalent of *tilu*, "a mound" or "hill"; but as the *tilu* or *tel* was generally inhabited, it came further to acquire the signification of *subtu*,

"a dwelling-place."

352.

WAI. v. 50. i. 5; 41. 1, *Rev.* 18.

353.

See above, p. 374, note 1.

354.

Samassumukin, ii. pp. 47-51. Nebuchadrezzar calls the Du-azagga, "the place of the oracles of the Ubsu-ginna, the mercy-seat of destinies, which on the festival of the New Year (Zag-muku), on the eighth and eleventh days," Bel announces before the assembled gods. Jensen (*Kosmologie der Babylonier*, pp. 239-242) first pointed out that the Ubsu-ginna was "the assembly-place" of the gods, which was located in or upon Ê-kur, "the Mountain of the World" (*WAI.* iv. 63. 17.). It thus corresponds with "the mount of the Assembly" of Isa. xiv. 13, and illustrates the combination of the theology of Eridu with that of Nippur.

355.

WAI. iv. 23, No. 1, translated in my Hibbert Lectures, p. 495.

356.

De Sarzec, *Découvertes en Chaldée*, pp. 216, 217.

357.

The *sangu* was called *êbar* in Sumerian, with which the name of

Eber in Gen. xi. 15 may possibly be compared.

358.

Not “astrologers,” as has sometimes been supposed. *Kalû* is borrowed from the Sumerian *kal*, as *makhkhû* is from *makh*. At their head was the *abba-kalla*, *aba-kul*, or *ab-gal*, a word which under the first form is used as a proper name in early Babylonian texts. Assyrian colonists carried it to Kappadokia, and Strabo accordingly tells us that the high priest of Komana was called Abaklês. A Hellenised form of the title, Bakêlos, is given by Hesychius, who renders it by “the grandee” and “the gallos-priest” (see my note in the *Proc. SBA.* xxiii. p. 106). *Abgal* is stated to be the equivalent not only of the borrowed Assyrian *abkallu*, but also of *bil terti*, “master of the law”; *khassu* and *imqu*, “the learned one” (like the Arabic *'alim*); and *mar ummani*, “the craftsman” or “professional” (*WAI.* v. 13. 37-42). The relation of *kalû* to *gallu* (Sumerian *kal* and *galla*), “a servant,” is not yet clear, though it must be remembered that the *gallos* was the “servant” of Kybelê. On the use of *kal*, “servant” in the Sumerian texts, see Reisner, *Tempelurkunden aus Telloh*, pp. 20, 21.

359.

So in a text quoted in my Hibbert Lectures, p. 81, “like Bel on the mercy-seat of the destinies the prophecy shall be uttered, this shall be said: ‘Bel has come forth, the king has looked after me.’ ” A special class of “prophets” bore the name of *masmas* (whence *masmasu* in Assyrian), which is translated *mullilu*, “the praiser” of the gods (Heb. *hillêl*).

360.

See my Hibbert Lectures, p. 79.

361.

Ê-kua and Mâ-Kua, *bit-assaputi* and *elip-assaputi* in Semitic. Jastrow mistranslates “dwelling-house” instead of “oracle” or “prophecy”; the true meaning of the word was already discovered by Oppert in the early days of cuneiform decipherment.

362.

The *sabrû* was distinct from the *barû*, whose name seems to have a more general signification, and Professor Haupt is probably right in regarding it as the *shaphel* form of the latter. He gives *barû*, however, too wide a meaning when he makes it denote a “diviner” of every kind and sort. It is true that magic was taken under the ægis of Babylonian theology, and that just as the *asipi* or “prophets” might be made to include the “enchanters” and “pronouncers” of

spells, so the *bari* might include those who sought to divine the future by examining the entrails of victims or by means of a cup (cp. Gen. xliv. 5). But, properly speaking, the *barû*, like the *sabrû*, "revealed" the future by means of dreams. Haupt's correction of *baddîm* into *bârîm*, "diviners," in Isa. xliv. 25 and Jer. l. 36, is brilliant (*Babylonian Elements in the Levitic Ritual*, p. 57). The Sumerian equivalent of *barû* is KHAL (or more correctly *âkhal*); that of *sabrû*, PA-AL, where PA means "the official."

363. Thureau-Dangin, "Tablettes chaldéennes inédites," in the *Revue d'Assyriologie*, iv. 3, pl. xiii. 40, *Obv.*

364. So too was a person of illegitimate birth, as has been pointed out by Haupt (*Journal of Biblical Literature* (1900), p. 57).

365. J. D. Price in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, xxi. 2, pp. 1-22. In the hemerology published in *WAI.* iv. 32, the animal mentioned in col. 1, line 3, is not a gazelle, as I have supposed in my Hibbert Lectures, p. 70, but a "goat" (Sumerian *sikku*, Assyrian *sapparu*).

366. There is no question here of a scape-

goat or anything similar. The word "offspring" is *uritsu*, which is the regular equivalent of Bir "suboles." The addition of the words *sa amiluti*, "of mankind," confines it in this case to man. Already, in 1875, in my *Elementary Assyrian Grammar* (p. 123), I pointed out that it was connected with the Arabic warats, which I see (like many other things of the same sort) has recently been announced as a new discovery. The verb *ittadin*, by the way, is an Iphteal, not a Niphal, and therefore cannot be translated as a passive.

367.

De Sarzec, *Découvertes en Chaldée*, iv. 1, pl. 4 *bis*. This was in the time of king E-anna-du. A bas-relief of the time of Entemena on the same plate, 5 *bis* (*3b*), represents what may also be a human sacrifice, one naked captive lying on the ground already slain, while another is being led to execution.

368.

References are given in Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 666.

369.

The tithe was paid on the 5th of Ab; on the 16th of Tammuz, nineteen days earlier, Gobryas had entered Babylon with the soldiers of Cyrus.

370.

A more comprehensive term was *ginû*, "the fixed offering," which included not only the daily sacrifices, but all other stated sacrifices as well.

371.

See my Hibbert Lectures, p. 72, note 2.

372.

WAI. i. 65, ii. 19-21; 54. iii. 48-50. See Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant*, pp. 110, 116.

373.

Cp. Lev. v. 7, 11.

374.

Haupt, *Babylonian Elements in the Levitic Ritual*, pp. 60, 61.

375.

Zimmern, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Babylonischen Religion*, p. 127.

376.

L.c., p. 88, note 2.

377.

On the early Babylonian calendar, see Radau, *Early Babylonian History*, pp. 287-307.

378.

The real reading of the god's name is unknown. He was identified with Nin-ip (*WAI.* ii. 57. 68), the sun of the south (*WAI.* ii. 57. 51), and therefore the midday sun—not the morning sun, as has recently been maintained. Nin-ip was the

messenger or “angel” of El-lil of Nippur, and consequently Bil-'si is further identified with “the moon of Nippur” (*WAI.* 57. 56), the angel of the lord of the ghost-world being more properly the moon than the sun. When Bel-Merodach of Babylon usurped the functions of El-lil, Bel-'si naturally became Nebo, “the power of strength” (*WAI.* v. 43. 37), who stood in the same relation to Merodach that Nin-ip did to El-lil. Bil-'si was also the seventh of the *tikpi*-stars (*WAI.* ii. 49. 10-13, iii. 50-52).

379.

Amiaud's translation in *Records of the Past*, new ser., ii. pp. 83, 84.

380.

Athenæus, *Deipnosophist*, 14.

381.

The most obvious derivation of the Hebrew Purim is that which I have proposed in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, xix. 7, pp. 280, 281, little as it may suit certain fashionable hypotheses. On the Black Obelisk (175), Shalmaneser says: “For the second time the Pûr-festival of Assur and Hadad I celebrated”; and a deed of sale (Rm. 2. 19) is dated in the eponymy of Bel-danan, B.C. 734, “in the year of his Pûr-office” (*ina sanê puri-su*). Pur, which is interpreted “a lot,” has

naturally no connection with the Assyrian *bur*, which is stated to mean "a stone." That we must read *bur* and not *pur*, is shown by the variant spelling *ba-ar* (Sa 5. iv. 10).

382.

WAI. ii. 32. 16. The reading of Delitzsch and myself has been called in question, the tablet having apparently been damaged since we examined it, but all doubts have now been set at rest by K 93037, *Obv*. 24 (published in *Cuneiform Texts*, xii. 6), where *sabattum* is the equivalent of a Sumerian "*the* day" *par excellence*. Babylonia was the home of astronomy and of the sacredness of the number seven, due to the fact that there were seven planets, so that a seventh-day Sabbath was natural there.

383.

Compare the Rabbinical phrase, "soiling the hands," applied to the inspired books of Scripture.

384.

A translation of the whole text is given in my Hibbert Lectures, pp. 70-76. With the last prohibition, compare Isa. lviii. 13, "not speaking thine own words" on the Sabbath-day.

385.

Jastrow, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 322, 323.

386. *Ædipus Judaicus* (London, 1811).

387. So in the second book of the *Surpu* series (*WAI.* iv. 59, Col. ii. 106, Col. iv. 7-9, translated in my Hibbert Lectures, pp. 508, 509); *WAI.* iii. 66. *a* 9, 13.

388. *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen*, ii. pp. 149-165.

389. See my Hibbert Lectures, pp. 177, 178.

390. *Expository Times*, ix. (1898) p. 522; March 1900, p. 270.

391. P. 316.

392. *WAI.* i. 51. 1, 13.

393. Pronounced Ên-sarra, Ênu-sa-kissati in Semitic.

394. See the translation of the hymn in my Hibbert Lectures, p. 301. The text has been commented on by Fr. Martin, *Textes réligieux assyriens et babyloniens*, pp. 77-80.

395. The god of the “great mountain,” see

above, pp. 376, 452.

396. Zimmern, *Die Beschwörungstafeln Shurpu*, p. 3 sqq.

397. We may notice that it is the people, and not the king, who will suffer for the misdeeds of the latter; cp. 2 Sam. xxiv. 17, and Horace, *Ep.* i. 12, 20: "quicquid delirant reges, plec tuntur Achivi."

398. *WAI.* iv. 55. The inscription was first translated by George Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries* (1875), pp. 409-411, and by myself in the *Records of the Past*, first ser., vii. (1876), pp. 119-122. Mr. King has recently given the first part of the text in his *Babylonian Religion*, pp. 217, 218.

399. Hommel suggests that *silân*, "the hollow place underneath the earth," is derived from *sa'ûlânu*, "sheol" (*Aufsätze* und *Abhandlungen*, iii. p. 347).

400. *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 83. See George Smith, *Chaldæan Account of Genesis*, pp. 78-80 (II. 10-13, 16-23).

401. K 255, *Obv.* i. 19, *Ablu dannu mutir gimilli Bili abi-su*, "the mighty son,

the avenger of Bel his father."

402. *Textes religieux assyriens et babyloniens*, p. xvi.

403. Martin, *l.c.*, p. 14.

404. H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895).

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