

## Historical Contacts between Ancient India and Babylon

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Evidence of historical a connection between ancient India and Babylon, is supported by some remarkable similarities between their religions, which suggest a possible diffusion of ideas. While the impact of the Babylonian religion on the Judeo-Christian Bible is well known, little attention has been devoted to its interconnection with the religion of India. One example of their congruence is the remarkable correspondence between Manu the Indian flood hero, as described in the *Satapatha Brahmana* (SB 1:8.1.1-6) and the *Mahabharata* (MB 3:186) and Uta-Napishtim as depicted in the Babylonian *Gilgamesh* (G 11:1-161).<sup>1</sup> The nine following commonalities taken verbatim from the original texts illustrate the congruence of the narratives:

1) God tells them to build a ship. Manu: "Thou shalt then attend to my advice by preparing a ship" (SB 1:8.1.4); "Thou shalt build a strong and massive ark" (MB 3:186). Uta-Napishtim: "Ea repeats... Tear down the house. Build an ark" (G 11:20, 24).

2) They are told to save organic life. Manu: "Take with thee all the different seeds... and separately and carefully must thou preserve them therein" (MB 3:186). Uta-Napishtim: "Ea repeats... Load the seed of every living thing into your ark" (G 11:27).

3) They construct the vessel. Manu: "He attended to the advice by preparing a ship" (SB 1:8.1.5). Uta-Napishtim: "On the seventh day the ark was completed" (G 11:76).

4) They enter the ship and set sail. Manu: "When the flood had risen, he entered the ship" (SB 1:8.1.5); "Manu... Set sail in an excellent vessel on the surging sea" (MB 3:186). Uta-Napishtim: "I made all my kin and family go onto the boat.... I went into the ark and closed the gate" (G 11:84, 93).

5) The length of time of the deluge is given- Manu: "for many a long year" (MB 3:186). Uta-Napishtim: "On the seventh day of its coming the storm flood broke from the battle" (G 11:129).

6) The flood subsides- Manu: “As the waters subside, thou mayest gradually descend” (SB 8:1.1.6). Uta-Napishtim: “The sea grew quiet, the storm was still; the Flood stopped” (G 11:131).

7) The flood hero and the seven sages survive the flood- Manu: “The flood then swept away all these creatures and Manu alone remained here” (SB 1:8.1.6); “When the world was thus, flooded, none but Manu, the seven Rishis, and the fish could be seen” (MB 3:186). Uta-Napishtim: “All of humanity was turned into clay... No man was meant to live through the devastation” (G 11:133, 173). **In both the Indians and Mesopotamian narrative the seven sages survived the flood** since Marduck sent the seven sages to Apsu during the deluge.<sup>ii</sup>

8) The ship eventually lands on a mountain- Manu: “He passed swiftly up to yonder northern mountain.... That slope of the northern mountain is called Manu’s descent” (SB 1:8.1.5-6); “they immediately tied the boat on that peak of the mountain” (MB 3:186). Uta-Napishtim: “The ark grounded on the mountain Nisir” (G 11:140).

9) They offer a religious sacrifice- Manu: “He engaged in worshiping and austerities. During this time he also performed a paka-sacrifice: he offered up in the waters clarified butter, sour milk, whey and curds” (SB 1:8.1.7); “He therefore practiced great asceticism. And endowed with ascetic merit, Manu... set about his work” (MB 3:186). Uta-Napishtim: “I... offered sacrifice. I sent out a drink offering upon the ziggurat of the mountain: seven and seven cult-vessels I set up. Beneath them I poured cane, cedar, myrtle” (G 11:155-58).

According to the Indian text: “There was a powerful and great Rishi (sage) of the name of Manu.” (MB 3:186). Similarly the commentator describes Uta-Napishtim as a sage.<sup>iii</sup> Also, Uta-Napishtim the name of the Babylonian flood hero corresponds with Nabha-Nedishtha who was a son of the Indian Manu.<sup>iv</sup> Following the chronological reckonings derived from astronomical calculations and genealogical lists of kings, the Babylonian flood has been estimated to have occurred in 3189 B.C.<sup>v</sup> Using similar Indian data, another independent source calculated that Manu the flood hero, lived in 3167 B.C. and his son Nabha-Nedishtha in 3149 B.C. Traditional Indian sources believe that the present age (the Kali Yuga) began in 3102 B.C.<sup>vi</sup>

**The Indian story of the creation of the world described in the *Laws of Manu* (LM 1:5-46) bears a likeness to the Babylonian version as presented in the *Enuma Elish*.** The Babylonian story of creation is given in seven tablets which are derived primarily from the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh, dating back to the seventh century B.C., but based on much older original text. Some pieces came from Ashur dated about 1000 B.C.<sup>vii</sup> In both accounts:

1) The universe is formless immersed in darkness- Indian: "This universe existed in the shape of darkness, unperceived, destitute of distinctive marks" (LM 1:5).

According to an older account: "Darkness there was; at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminate chaos. All that existed was void and formless" (RV 10:129.3).

Babylon: "And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both" (EE 1:4). The Babylonian Tiamat the tumultuous sea represents the primordial chaos, against which the demiurge struggled in fashioning the world. The word Tiamat corresponds with the Sanskrit word for the primeval darkness (tamas),<sup>viii</sup> the Hebrew primeval chaos (tehom), and the Egyptian abyss (tehem, tahamu). In three verses of the *Atharva Veda* (5:13.6-8), there is mention of the snake demon's Taimata and Viligi and the female demon Urugula, which may be cognates of the Babylonian deities, Tiamat, Belgi (or Belili), and the goddess Gula. In the Akkadian language the nether world is called Urugala.<sup>ix</sup>

2) The world originates from water- Indian: "He... created the waters, and placed his seed in them. The waters are called narah... they were his first residence" (LM 1:8, 10). In the older Vedic creation hymn depicted in the *Rig Veda* the primeval state of the universe is described as: "What covered in, and where and what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?" (RV 10:129.1). In a later account from the *Satapatha Brahmana* it is stated, "Verily, in the beginning this universe was water, nothing but a sea of water" (SB 11:1.6.1). Babylon: "When in the height heaven was not named, and the earth beneath did not bear a name, and the primeval Apsu (ocean), who begat them, And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both, - Their waters were mingled together" (EE 1:1-5).

3) Creation of the gods- Indian: "He, the Lord also created the class of the gods, who are endowed with life, and whose nature is action" (LM 1:22). Babylon: "Then were

created the gods in the midst of heaven,... Thus were established the great gods” (EE 1:9, 21).

4) God severs the darkness- Indian: “The Divine Self-existent... appeared with irresistible creative power, dispelling the darkness” (LM 1:6). Babylon: “He (Marduck) cast down her body and stood upon it. When he had slain Tiamat (the chaos), the leader, Her might was broken, her host was scattered” (EE 4:104-106).

5) God created Heaven and earth- Indian: “The Divine one resided in that egg during the whole year, then he himself by his thought divided it into two halves: And out of those two halves he formed the heaven and the earth” (LM 1:12-13). Babylon: “He (Marduck) split her up like a flat fish into two halves; One half of her he established as a covering for heaven” (EE 4:137-38). “Tutu... who established for the gods the bright heavens.... The creator of the earth... Since he created the realm of the heaven and fashioned the firm earth” (EE 7:15-16, 47, 115). Similarly, in the *Rig Veda* the world originated from the body of the primordial giant Purusha: “the sky was fashioned from his head; Earth from his feet” (RV 10:90.14).

6) God created the heavenly bodies and the divisions of time- Indian: “Time and the divisions of time, the lunar mansions and the planets,... this whole creation he likewise produced,... Lightning's, thunderbolts and clouds, imperfect and perfect rainbows, falling meteors, supernatural noises, comets, and heavenly lights of many kinds” (LM 1:24-25, 38). Babylon: He (Marduck) made the stations for the great gods; the stars, their images, as the stars of the Zodiac, he fixed. He ordained the year and into sections he divided it; for the twelve months he fixed three stars... The creator of the clouds above the waters, the establisher of the heavens” (EE 5:1-4; 7:83).

7) Creation of humanity out of himself- Indian: “With particles of himself, he created all beings” (LM 1:16). Babylon: “My blood will I take and bone will I fashion,... I will create man who will inhabit the earth... cutting the arteries of his (Tiamat's) blood. With his blood they created mankind;... After Ea, the wise, had created mankind, ... For their forgiveness did he create mankind” (EE 6:5, 7, 32-33, 35; 7:29).

8) Creation of vegetation- Indian: “Thus was this whole creation, both the immovable and movable, produced by those high-minded ones... I will truly declare to you, as well as their order in respect to birth.... All plants propagated by seed or slips;

grow from shoots” (LM 1:41-42, 46). Babylon: O Asari, “Bestower of planting, founder of sowing, creator of grain and plants, who caused the green herb to spring up!... The creator of barley and emmer, who provides seed for the land” (EE 7:1-2, 79).

**The account of Indra overcoming the dragon Vritra to free the cosmic waters and initiate the creation of the world (RV 1:32; 5:30.6-7; 10:103.2) resembles the story of Marduck who slew Tiamat the dragon of the watery chaos. Both Indra and Marduck used a thunderbolt, bow and arrow and a net or noose to overcome their adversary (RV 5:31.4; 8:45.4; 9:83.4; 10:103.2-3; EE 4:35-41, 95-101). Indra is referred to as “Apsujit” meaning "conqueror of Apsu" (RV 8:13.2; 8:36.1; 9:106.3), while “apsu” was the Babylonian name of the husband of Tiamat.<sup>x</sup> In Sanskrit “apsu” means the “primordial waters” as it does in the Babylonian language. The Babylonian Apsu and Indian Aptyas are water deities, analogous to the Sumerian Aaba, Iranian Apo, and Egyptian Hapi.**

**The Babylonians like the Indians believed the world was created out of eternally existing matter.** Both accounts mention seven prominent gods (LM 1:19, 36, 63; EE 6:81). Marduck the world artificer was the son of the sun god (EE 1:81, 102) as was Vaivaswata, the seventh Manu who created and protects the universe during the present age (LM 1:62-63).<sup>xi</sup>

Some scholars might contend that the Indians received the flood and creation stories from the Babylonians. A problem with this hypothesis is that there are some essential similarities between the Indian and Biblical accounts that are missing from the Babylonian version. For example, after the flood terminates, Manu and Noah repopulate the world (Gen., 9:1; SB 1:8.1.10; MB 3:186) and long genealogies are given of their descendants, which include cultural heroes like the Divine Incarnation Sri Rama and the patriarch Abraham (Gen. 10:1, 21-32; 11:10-32; VP 4:1, 5, 22). In the Indian and Hebrew creation narrative, unlike the Babylonian, God creates the world by speech or thought (Gen. 1:3; LM 1:8; SB 11:1.6.3), the creation of animals is mentioned (Gen. 1:20-25; LM 1:36, 39-40, 43-45), and the superiority of man over other life forms is

emphasized (Gen. 1:26; LM 1:96).

#### Additional Religious Affinities

**In the Sumerian version of the epic, the flood hero Ziusudra was transported to Dilmun the land of paradise in the east. Gilgamesh had to make a long and hazardous journey over mountain ranges and the sea to arrive at this faraway country. Samuel Kramer an expert on Sumerian history, identified Dilmun with the Indus Valley, partly because it was described as “the place where the sun rises” in the east; and because it was a land that traded the Indian products of ivory, gold, copper and timber with Sumer.<sup>xii</sup>**

Another striking similarity is between the Indian and Babylonian conception of a world cycle. **According to Berossos (3rd century B.C.) ten Babylonian kings ruled before the flood for a period of 432,000 years, which is also the time length of the Indian Kali Yuga. Like the period before the flood, the Kali Yuga is an age of unrighteousness and calamities. Indians and Babylonians both believed that a world cycle begins and ends when the planets are in conjunction. An Indian world cycle last 4,320,000 years (Sk. mahayuga), while the Babylonians divided this period into two subcycles each lasting 2,160,000 years. For the Babylonians the first subcycle terminates when the planets are in conjunction in Cancer resulting in a conflagration and the second when they are in conjunction in Capricorn bringing about a world flood. While the Indians generally emphasize destruction by a flood, they also describe a world conflagration at the end of a cosmic cycle (MB 3:187). The Indian Buddhists also taught that a great age (mahakalpa) comes to an end, when the world is destroyed successively by fire and water, but in time the world is eventually revitalized. Since these time periods do not appear in the earlier Indian texts, but emerge at a later date in writings like the *Vishnu Purana* (1:3) and in the works of the astronomer Aryabhata (fl. 499 A.D.), it is likely that the diffusion of these ideas did not occur before the Indian trade relations with Babylon (9th-6th century B.C.) or the Achaemenid period (c. 550-331 B.C.).<sup>xiii</sup>**

Henry Heras, S.J. discovered many points of similarity between, Gilgamesh the hero of the Sumerian and Babylonian epics and Bhimasena the second of the Pandava brothers of the *Mahabharata*. Both: were courageous heroes; born into royal families; received their strength from the gods; killed several demons, lions and other ferocious animals; overpowered watchmen who tried to block their progress; were successfully denied entrance to a place; wielded the mace; wore animal skins; were favorably compared to a lion; were offered gifts by the King of the lower world; heard of the cosmological stories of the destruction of humanity; journeyed to a celestial region; bathed in a large body of water at the end of their journey; and plucked vegetation from the waters.<sup>xiv</sup>

Other religious affinities include an emphasis on the number seven and a trinity of deities. Seven Babylonian sages brought culture and civilization to the seven oldest cities of Mesopotamia. **The seven Babylonian deities are identified with the seven Pleiades** in the constellation Taurus. In India, the seven sages (Sk. saptarshis) are associated with the seven stars of the Great Bear (Ursa Major) **and their wives with the stars of the seven Pleiades (Sk. Krittkas). Like their Babylonian counterparts the seven sages survived the flood.** The Indian underworld of patala has seven stories and the lower world that Ishtar descended to had seven gates.<sup>xv</sup> Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver), and Shiva (destroyer) are the three members of the Indian trinity (Sk. Trimurti). By contrast the most ancient Babylonian triad consisted of Anu the supreme father god of heaven, Enlil the god of earth and the atmosphere and Ea the god of the primeval waters. A second triad was composed of Sin the moon god and his two children, Shamash the sun god, and Ishtar the queen of Heaven.<sup>xvi</sup> The ancient Indian and Babylonian religions were polytheistic often worshiping deities with similar sounding names related to the Assyrian (As.), Babylonian (Bab.), and Chaldean (Ch.) languages. They venerated analogous pantheon worshiping powerful Mother goddesses' (Sk. Matri; Bab. Mah); creator deities (Sk. Dhatri; Bab. Tutu); astral deities of the sun (Sk. Martanda, Surya, tarani; Bab. Marduk, Shullat, Ch. tur), moon (Sk. Sinivali, indu; Bab. Sin, As. itu), dawn (Sk. Ushas; Bab. Ishtar) and storms (Sk.

Maruts; Bab. Murtaznu); nature deities of wind (Sk. Anila; Bab. Enlil), fire (Sk. Barhih; As. Bir), water (Sk. Aptyas; Bab. Apsu), trees and fish deities, semi-divine birds, bulls, lions (Sk. hari; Ch. aryeh) and serpents (Sk. Nagas; Bab. Ningishzida). They both revered anthropomorphic deities that were associated with celestial bodies; wore a horned headdress; or rode on the back of a tiger, panther, or lion like the Indian Durga and the Babylonian Ishtar. The Indians and Babylonians venerated a mountain that rises to heaven (Sk. Meru; Bab. Mashu) and worshiped their ancestors.<sup>xvii</sup>

Common Indian-Babylonian architecture and symbolism include: oval or round temples dedicated to a love goddess; temple towers (Sk. shikara; Bab. ziggurat) symbolizing cosmic mountains with receding tiers and terraces, surrounded by a wall entered via a series of gates and astronomically designed temples with an image of the deity occasionally exposed to the light of the rising sun. In Mesopotamia, golden stars and disks having an astral significance were sewn into the garments worn by gods and divine kings. Likewise, in the Indian Vedic ritual a celestial garment called the tarpya was worn by the divine King Varuna, symbolizing the rain clouds and the stars of the night sky. The swastika and cross were religious symbols of both societies.<sup>xviii</sup>

Similar Indian-Babylonian religious rites include: the image of a deity being fed, dressed, bathed, anointed and worshiped; the face of the deity illumined by a lamp; an image of a deity carried through the city in a palanquin or cart or on the river in a boat; portions of the divine meals being eaten by the devotees; purification rites utilizing bathing, sprinkling of water and incense; ringing of bells to dispel inauspicious beings and magic circles drawn by a priest using colored powder. The Assyrian Legal Code (c. 2000 B.C.) like the Laws of Manu is religiously oriented, dealing with similar crimes and a parallel social, political, and business life. They provide similar provisions for slander and all aspects of marriages including adultery, abortion, and divorce.<sup>xix</sup>

#### Areas of Historical Contact

The many religious similarities are too detailed to result from chance alone.



One possibility is that the diffusion of religious ideas occurred during the period of contact between the South India, the Indus Valley, and Sumer. **According to Sumerian tradition they established their communities in Southern Mesopotamia, migrating from the east by sea from the Persian Gulf. The immigrants brought a developed civilization with knowledge of agriculture, metal works, and the art of writing to that area. One legend states that Oannes with the head and feet of a man and body of a fish came from the Persian Gulf to teach culture and science to the Babylonians. H. R. Hall identified the land of the East with the Indus Valley and Rakhaldas Banerjee with Kerala in South India.** Hall noted that the Sumerians were ethnically very similar to the Indians.<sup>xx</sup> The book of Genesis 11:2-4 mentions that men migrated from the east to the land of Shinar (Babylon) and they built a city using burnt bricks. Flat rectangular bricks were used both in the Indus Valley and Sumer.<sup>xxi</sup> The Indus Valley and South India are geographically connected with the Euphrates region, by the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The Sumerians probably came from a warm country since in numerous statues they are often nude above the waste. It is unlikely that they originated in Elam, whose language is not agglutinative like the Sumerians and whose script is quite different.<sup>xxii</sup> Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and the Jesuit priest Henry Heras (1888-1955) maintained that flood and other Biblical legends originated with the Tamilian Dravidians of South India. The Swami taught that one branch of the Tamilian Dravidians gave rise to the Egyptian and another to the Sumerian civilization, which provided the foundation for the Babylonian culture and some stories in the Book of Genesis.<sup>xxiii</sup>

**The country of Elam which was located on the eastern border of Sumer was first mentioned about 3000 B.C., lasting until its defeat by the Assyrian's under Assurbanial in 640 B.C. Other studies have demonstrated that the Dravidian language of South India is related to Old Elam (2200-1300 B.C.), displaying a common vocabulary, grammatical structure, phonology, and morphology.**<sup>xxiv</sup> According to one study, about one quarter of 270 Elam lexical terms are good cognates with the Dravidian language of Old Tamil (600 B.C.).<sup>xxv</sup> **N. Lahovary has supplied an abundance of evidence attempting to prove that the Proto-**

**Dravidian language is a polysynthetic language that was spoken in a broad geographical area, by the members of the dolichocephalic non-Semitic Mediterranean sub-race.** This generic language exists today among the South Indian Dravidians, Basques of Spain and in the Caucus region, but died out in Sumer, Elam, the Indus Valley, and others areas. The existence of the initial location of this language is unknown. Lahovary conjectured that it originated in the vast geographical area between Egypt and Iran, some five or six thousand years ago. In the fourth millennium the unified language dispersed into fragments, with one group migrating to the Indus Valley and later to South India bringing civilization to those areas. H. Heras taught that the ancient Dravidians, Sumerians, Egyptians, Iberians of Spain, Etruscans, Libyan's, Minoan's of Crete, Hittites, inhabitants of the Indus Valley and other countries are members of the Mediterranean sub-race.<sup>xxvi</sup>

There is some evidence that the Dravidian language of South India resembles the Sumerian language of the 3500-2400 B.C. period. Both languages; are agglutinative in structure with comparable phonological systems, avoid constant clusters in the word's initial position, make no distinction between voiceless and voiced consonants, do not employ grammatical gender, make a distinction between personal and irrational nouns, group words into the two morphological categories of substantives and verbs, extensively use participial construction and usually add the determining and modifying symbols at the end to keep them distinct from their roots. K. Muttarayan identified a lexical correspondence between the Sumerian and Dravidian language for over 200 terms. He reached the conclusion that Sumerian is a primitive form of the Tamilian language, which later influenced the Akkadian language. A. Sadisvam concluded that the Sumerian language is an older form of the Dravidian language, based on phonetic laws that relate over one hundred common terms.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Archaeological findings have uncovered several analogies between the technology and implements of the South Indian Dravidians and pre-Semitic Palestine. In both societies are found homes built on hills and mounds' sixty to three hundred feet high, foot paths with an absence of roads, multiple private and public granaries and a

wide variety of pottery. In the households of both societies were found earthen lamps, needles used in spinning, a variety of stone, flint and metal carpenter tools, styli used by scribes and a conical pipe musical instrument. Common to ancient Palestine, South India and the Indus Valley are spoons made of shells, spinning whorls and a variety of bead ornaments, necklaces, bracelets, and rings. The South Indian burial urns of Adichanallur contain iron, and bronze implements and the rock-cut tombs of Purandhar are both analogous to those of Palestine.<sup>xxviii</sup>

**The Jesuit priest Henry Heras concluded that about 5000 B.C. the South Indians traveled by sea to the Indus Valley initiating the Harappan culture. At a later date this civilization spread from the Indus to the Euphrates River in the Middle East.** Heras and others consider Proto-Dravidian to be the language of the Indus Valley, while a number of Indian scholars prefer Proto-Sanskrit.<sup>xxix</sup> Sir John Marshall accepted the possibility of the Indus Valley as being the cradle of civilization, laying the roots of the Babylonian culture. One factor is that the area of India, Kashmir, Tian-Shan, and Afghanistan was the original home of 159 cultivated plants, followed by China with 136, the East Indies, Java and the Philippines with 55 and the Middle East with 38.<sup>xxx</sup>

**Several archaeological studies have demonstrated that there was a great deal of similarity between Sumer and the Indus Valley in regards to their copper bearing chalcolithic technology, homes, household items, pottery, clothing, hairstyles, beads, jewelry, tools, seals, games and language.**<sup>xxxi</sup> Archaeological and textual evidence has proven the existence of a large-scale land and sea trade network in the middle of the third millennium B.C. The three primary trade centers were located in the Indus Valley on the east, Mesopotamia and Western Iran on the west and Southern Turkmenia on the north.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Some scholars support the thesis that one group of people originating in Iran migrated east to Sumer and another west to the Indus Valley, initiating those civilizations. According to another hypothesis, the seafaring Sumerian civilization

traveled to India from Mesopotamia colonizing the Indus Valley.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The Hittites whose language is akin to Sanskrit, settled in Asia Minor about 2000 B.C. Later about 1600 B.C. they extended their empire into North Syria and in the fourteenth century B.C. established control over Upper Mesopotamia and South Syria as far as Lebanon. They were defeated by the Assyrians in the eighth century B.C. The Boghaz-Keui inscriptions (1360 B.C.) in East Anatolia record a treaty between the Hittites and the Mitanni who were defeated in battle. It alludes to four Vedic deities worshiped by the Mitanni, Indara (Sk. Indra), Aruna (Sk. Varuna), Miiitra (Sk. Mitra), and the Nasattiiia twins (Sk. Nasatya). Another Mitanni-Hittite document mentions the Indian numerals, one (Sk. eka; Mit. aika), three (Sk. tariya; Mit. teras), five (Sk. panka; Mit. panza), seven (Sk. sapta; Mit. satta), and nine (Sk. navati; Mit. nav). Excavations at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt relate that in the middle of the second millennium B.C., princes with Indo-Iranian names were ruling in Syria and Palestine.<sup>xxxiv</sup> For several centuries after 1800 B.C. the Kassites ruled in Mesopotamia. They worshiped several Indian deities like Surias (Sk. Surya), Maruttas (Sk. Marut), Bugus (Sk. Bhaga), Simalia (Sk. Himalaya), and Dakas (Sk. Daksa).<sup>xxxv</sup>

There is considerable evidence of trade relations between India and Babylon in the first millennium B.C. The figures of Indian apes, elephants, and Bactrian camels (Sk. kalabha; As. gammalu; Arab. gamal) are portrayed on the obelisk of Shalmaneser III (859 B.C.). Precious stones, timber, striped clothing, and spices, all products of India were part of the tribute that Tiglath Pileser III (745-727 B.C.) received from the Chaldeans. Cotton trees from India were planted at the palace built by Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) at Nineveh. "Sindhu" is the word used for cotton on tablets found in the library of the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal (668-627 B.C.). Ancient India was referred to as Hindu (Persian), Hentui (Egyptian), and Hoduw (Hebrew), since the country was located on the east side of the Sindhu River. Indian teak logs have been uncovered at a temple in Ur and at the moon temple and royal palace of Nebuchadnezzar (604-561 B.C.) along with Indian cedar wood. The Indian *Jataka Tales* mention a flourishing maritime trade between the Indian port of Suparaka (Sopara) and Babylon (Sk. Baveru)

in the sixth and seventh century B.C. Indian merchants exported rice (Sk. vrihi; Arab. ourz), peacocks, crows and hound dogs to Babylon. A trade colony in Babylon was established by Indian merchants, and it is likely that the Babylonians built a trade center at Taxila in Northwest India. From Babylon, India received embroidered works, fine silk (Sk. shalmala; Arab. harir) fabrics, linen, colored glass, metal bowls, carved ivory objects, animal hides, oil and wine.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

In conclusion, it is difficult to ascertain if the flood story, creation narrative, and the other religious affinities originated in India, Babylon or in another geographical area. The common religious ideas and linguistic terms might have been transmitted at an early period resulting from a common origin in the Indus Valley, South India, Iran or Sumer; or at a later date as a consequence of extensive trade relations and political contact between India and Babylon.

### Appendix

There are several Mesopotamian deities with names that correspond with Indian deities or Sanskrit terms. In the following list of etymological parallels, the Indian deity or Sanskrit (S) word is given first followed by the name and function of the Akkadian (Ak), Assyrian (As), Babylonian (B) or Chaldean (C) deity. When the Indian and Mesopotamian deities share a common function, it is listed only after the Mesopotamian term.<sup>xxxvii</sup> It is not easy to ascertain if the etymological affinities are authentic or are merely accidental coincidences due to a random process. The names might have entered into the Mesopotamian or Sanskrit language at a very early date or could be loan words resulting from later trade relations. The Sanskrit and Babylonian terms, might have originated in a different historical period separated by many centuries.

Indian and Mesopotamian deities: Indra (S); Adad (B), rain and storm god/ Asuniti (S), death deity; Anunaki (B), judge of dead/ Aptyas (S), water deities, apsu (S) water; Apsu (B), sea god/ Ashura (S), Vedic gods; Asari (B), chief god Marduck; Asshur

(As), chief god and country of Assyria/ Bhaga (S), Lord; Baal, Bel (B), supreme God/ Barhah (S); Bir (As), fire god/ Dhuni (S), storm god, tadid (S), lightning; Dadu (B), storm god/ Anila (S); Enlil (B), wind god/ Ganesha (S); Gad (B), god of good fortune, troops/ Hidima (S); Humaba (B), forest demon/ Ushas-(taraka) (S), (lit. dawn star); Ishtar (B), chief dawn goddess, child of sky god, morning star/ Ganas (S), gods; Jaoth (B), god/ Matri (S); Mah (B), mother goddess/ Martanda (S); Marduk (B), sun god/ Maruts (S); Murtaznu (B), god of rain, lightning, thunder/ Narasimha (S), man lion avatar; Nadushu (C), man lion deity/ Naga (S), semi divine snakes; Ningishzida (B), serpent deity/ Nasatya (S); Ninurta (B), twin gods/ Sachi (S); Shaushka (B), wife of thunder god/ Surya (S); Shullat (B), sun god/ Suvetar (S), goddess of south wind; Shutu (B), demoness of southwest wind/ Sinivali (S), moon goddess; Sin (B), moon god/ Tamas (S), primeval darkness; Tiamat (B), primeval chaos/ Dhatri (S); Tutu (B), creator god/ Nabha-Nedishtha (S) son of flood hero; Uta-Napishtim (B), flood hero.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Indian Sanskrit terms and Mesopotamian deities: ambu (S), water; Amanki (B), water god/ antar (S), celestial world; Anshar (B), god of celestial world/ usri (S), light; Aos (C), light god/ golaka (S), bull; Gallu (As), bull demon/ gval (S), fire; Gibil (B), fire god/ gana (S), bull; Gudanna (B) heavenly bull/ jiva, giva (S), life; Gula (As), life goddess/ kha (S), sun; Karnu (As), sun god/ mantra (S), sacred word; Mummu (B), creative word/ naraka (S), underworld; Nergal (B), god of the underworld/ nana (S), mother; Ninur (B), mother goddess/ sarit (S), river, stream; Sabitu (B), sea goddess/ sudra (S), nectar, sura (S), wine; Siduri (B), wine goddess/ ushna (S), burn; Uras (As), fire god.

There is also some correspondence between the numerical system of the Indian Sanskrit and the Mesopotamian language as shown in the following list: trita (S); telatha (C), three, third/ turiya (S); arba (C), four/ shashtha (S); sissu (As); sheth (C), six/ sapta (S); shibah (C), seven/ matra (S); mana (C), number/ mana (S); manu (Ak), weight of about one pound/ sama (S); shenah (C), year.

## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> *Sacred Books of the East, Satapatha Brahmana* (hereafter SB), tran. Julius Eggeling (50 vols.; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1882, 1978), XII, pp. 216-18; xlv, p. 12; *Mahabharata* (hereafter MB), tran. Pratap Roy (12 vols.; Calcutta: Oriental Publishing Co., 1962), III, 393-96; *Gilgamesh* (hereafter G), tran. John Gardner and John Maier (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), pp. 226-44.

<sup>ii</sup> Gertrude Jobes, *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols* (hereafter DM) (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1962), p. 1422; Asko Parpola, "The Sky-Garment," *Studia Orientalia* 57 (1985), pp. 152-53.

<sup>iii</sup> G, pp. 220, 228.

<sup>iv</sup> G, pp. 220, 228; A. Kalyanaraman, *Aryatarangini The Saga of the Indo-Aryans* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969), p. 106.

<sup>v</sup> S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1905), p. xxviii; Duncan MacNaughton, *A Scheme of Babylonian Chronology* (London: Luzac & Co., 1930), pp. 1, 12, 20; A. D. Pusalker, "Traditional History from the Earliest Time to the Accession of Parikshit," in *History and Culture of the Vedic People, the Vedic Age* ed. R. C. Majumdar (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965), p. 273.

<sup>vi</sup> S. B. Roy, *Mohenjodaro and the Lanka of Ravana* (New Delhi: Institute of Chronology, 1982), p. 2; Pusalker, "History," pp. 272-74. According to an old South Indian record, 10,000 Jews came to Malabar in South India soon after the destruction of the second temple in 68 A.D. They referred to this as the 3168 year of the tribulation, which occurred in 3100 B.C. T. Parasuram, *India's Jewish Heritage* (New Delhi: Sagar Publications, 1982), p. 10.

<sup>vii</sup> The sources of the *Enuma Elish* (hereafter EE) are, L. W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation* (London: Luzac and Co., 1902); and Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). Indian material is from: *Sacred Books of the East, The Laws of Manu* (hereafter LM), trans. Georg Buhler (50 vols.; New York: Dover Publications, 1886, 1969) xxv; *Hymns of the Rig Veda* (hereafter RV) trans. Ralph Griffith (2 vols.; Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1889-96, 1963); Ralph Griffith, *Hymns of the Artharvaveda* (hereafter AV) (2 vols.; Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1894, 1968); *Vishnu Purana* (hereafter VP) trans. H. H. Wilson (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1840, 1961).

<sup>viii</sup> Kalyanaraman, *Aryatarangini*, pp. 102-03.

<sup>ix</sup> AV, I, p. 209; R. N. Dandekar, "Some Aspects of the Indo-Mediterranean Contacts," *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* 50 (1969), pp. 57-74; Henry Heras S. J., "The Devil in Indian Scriptures," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay* 27 (1951), pp. 229-30.

<sup>x</sup> H. D. Sankalia, "The Starting Point of Aryan Migration," in *The Glory That Was Gurjaradesa* ed. K. M. Munshi (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1943), pp. 76-78; R. A. Jairazbhoy, *Foreign Influence in Ancient India* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963), p. 26.

<sup>xi</sup> Heidel, *Babylonian*, p. 89; John Dowson, *Hindu Mythology and Religion* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul LD, 1968), p. 199.

<sup>xii</sup> Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 257-58; Samuel Kramer, "The Indus Civilization and Dilmun, the Sumerian Paradise Land," *Expedition* 6 (1964), pp. 44-52.

<sup>xiii</sup> Bartel Van der Waerden, *Science Awakening II The Birth of Astronomy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 113-114, 306-08; David Pingree, "Astronomy and Astrology in India and Iran," *Isis* 54 (1963), pp. 238-41; Zacharias Thundy, *Buddha and Christ* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1993), p. 220; H. H. Wilson, *The Vishnu Purana* (1:3) (Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1840, 1961), pp. 21-24.

<sup>xiv</sup> Henry Heras, "The Age of the Mahabharata War," *Journal of Indian History* 26 (1948), pp. 1-20. The article also compares Gilgamesh and Bhimasena with the Greek hero Hercules.

<sup>xv</sup> DM, pp. 1422, 1424-25; Jairazbhoy, *Foreign Influence*, p. 36; Parpola, "Sky-Garment," pp. 152-53.

<sup>xvi</sup> Frank Bray, *The World of Myth* (hereafter WM) (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1942), pp. 146-152.

<sup>xvii</sup> The Sanskrit and corresponding Babylonian term are provided to illustrate the similarity of their languages. The first letter is capitalized for the deities only. See the Appendix for a longer list of deities with similar sounding names. Simo Parpola, "Cultural Parallels Between India and Mesopotamia: Preliminary Considerations," *Studia Orientalia* 70 (1993), pp. 57-60; DM, pp. 1072, 1094.

- <sup>xviii</sup> Parpola, "Cultural Parallels," p. 59; Hannah Fane, "Sumerian-Dravidian Interconnections," *International Journal of Dravidian Linguistics* 9 (1980), pp. 291-92; Parpola, "Sky-Garment," p. 143; A. D. Pusalker, "Cultural Interrelation Between India and the Outside World Before Asoka," in *The Cultural Heritage of India* ed. Suniti Chatterji (5 vols.; Calcutta: The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 1937, 1958), I, p. 148.
- <sup>xix</sup> Parpola, "Cultural Parallels," p. 59; R. S. V. Ayyar, *Manu's Land and the Trade Laws* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers & Distributors, 1976), pp. 47-48.
- <sup>xx</sup> Henry Heras, *Studies in Proto-Indo-Mediterranean Culture* (Bombay: Indian Historical Research Institute, 1953), pp. 186-91, 243; Swami Sankarananda, *Hindu States of Sumeria* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhapadhyay, 1962), p. viii; H. R. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East* (London: Methuen, 1913), pp. 173-74.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Heras, *Studies*, pp. 184-91, 197-98.
- <sup>xxii</sup> George Barton, "Whence Came the Sumerians?," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 49 (1929), p. 264; Heras, *Studies*, p. 198.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (9 vols.; Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1962), iv, pp. 301-02; VII, pp. 52, 331, 365-67.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> David McAlpin, "Toward Proto-Elamo Dravidian," *Language* 50 (1974), pp. 89-101; David McAlpin, "Elamite and Dravidian: Further Evidence of Relationship," *Current Anthropology* 16 (1975), pp. 105-14.
- <sup>xxv</sup> McAlpin, "Proto-Elamo," p. 90; David McAlpin, "Elamite," p. 105.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> N. Lahovary, *Dravidian Origins and the West* (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1963), pp. 1-3, 16, 26, 32-36, 366-70; Heras, *Studies*, pp. 63-64, 132-33.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Upadhyaya, "New Dimensions," II, pp. 89-90; Ayyar, "Sumero-Dravidian," p. 304; K. L. Muttarayan, "Sumerian: Tamil of the First Cankam," *Journal of Tamil Studies* 8 (1975), pp. 40-61.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> R. S. V. Ayyar, "The Dravidian Civilization in Palestine," *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* 19 (1929), pp. 171-79; N. K. Kadetad, "Dravidian Cultural History" in *Dravidian Encyclopedia* (Thiruvananthapuram, India: International School of Dravidian Linguistics, 1990), I, p. 239.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Heras, *Studies*, pp. 125, 181-201, 301-02, 313, 412-13, 421, 437; U. P. and Susheela Upadhyaya, "New Dimensions of the Dravidian Problem Negro-Dravidian Affinities" in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies* ed. M. Arunachalam (Madras: International Association of Tamil Research, 1981), II, pp. 91-92; John Mitchiner, *Studies in The Indus Valley Inscriptions* (New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 3-4.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Heras, *Studies*, pp. 181-86; Gilbert Highet, *Migration of Ideas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 56-57.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> For more details on this subject see: Sankarananda, *Hindu*, pp. xv, 38-68; Pusalker, "Cultural Interrelation," I, pp. 147-48; Ernest Mackay, "The Indus Civilization: Some Connections With Sumer, Elam and the West," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 21 (1934), pp. 428-33; Ernest Mackay, "Further Links Between Ancient Sind, Sumer and Elsewhere," *Antiquity* 5 (1931), pp. 463-70. For an opposing view see, Radha Mookerji, *Hindu Civilization*, (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan), pp. 31-33.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Philip Kohl, "The Balance of Trade in Southwestern Asia in the Mid-Third Millennium B.C.," *Current Anthropology* 19 (1978), pp. 463-92.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Heras, *Studies*, pp. 183-86; H. S. David, "Some Further Contacts and Affinities Between the Egypto-Minoan and the Indo-Dravido-Sumerian Culture," *Tamil Culture* 5 (1956), p. 59.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> V. Gordon Childe, *The Aryans* (London: Kennikat Press, 1926, 1970), pp. 18-20; Bata Ghosh, "The Origin of the Indo-Aryans," in *Cultural Heritage*, Chatterji, I, p. 140; Mookerji, *Hindu*, p. 68.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> D. Singhal, *India and World Civilization* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1969), p. 8.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Shashi Asthana, *History and Archeology of India's Contact With Other Countries* (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corp., 1976), pp. 167-68, 172-74; Pusalker, "Cultural Interrelation," I, p. 149; Jairazbhoy, *Foreign*, p. 30; Kalyanaraman, *Aryatarangini*, p. 155; R. S. V. Ayyar, "The Sumero-Dravidian and the Hittite-Aryan Origins," *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* 19 (1929), p. 300.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> The Sanskrit words are from Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); the Akkadian words from I. J. Gelb, *Glossary of Old Akkadian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957); the Assyrian words from W. Muss-Arnolt, *A Concise Dictionary of the Assyrian Language* (New York: Lemcke & Buchner, 1905); and the Chaldean words from James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), Appendix.



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The Indian deities are from Dowson, *Mythology*, and the Middle Eastern deities from DM and WM.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Viewed from a larger perspective: Indra (S)-Adad (B) are analogous to the storm gods, the Hittite Indar and Semitic Idrmer; Aptyas (S)-Apsu (B), to the water gods or primordial waters, the Sumerian Aaba, Iranian Apo and Egyptian Hapi; Ashura (S)-Asari (B)-Asshur (As) to the chief gods and deities, the Iranian Ahrua-Mazda, Armenian Ara-Mazd, Mongolian Hor-Musda, Egyptian Asar (Osiris), Turkish Esar, Nordic Aesir, Chinese Buddhist Asolo and Tibetan and Japanese Asura; Bhaga (S)-Baal (B), Bel (B) to the word God, the Iranian Baga, Phoenician and Hebrew Baal, Arabic Bal and Slavic Bog; Ganesha (S)-Gad (B) to the gods of good fortune and troops, the Syrian and Hebrew Gad, Roman Janus and Southeast Asian Ganesha; Ushas-(taraka) (S) (literally the dawn star)-Ishtar (B) to the dawn goddesses', the Egyptian Aset (Isis), Phoenician Ashtarte, Abyssinian Ashdar, Greek Eos, Lithuanian Ausera, Roman Aurora, Teutonic Ostara, Celtic Uathach and the Anglo-Saxon Eostre; Ganas (S)-Joath (B) to the word for God, the German Goot, Nordic Guo and English God; Matri (S)-Mah (B) to the Mother goddesses', the Sumerian Mami, Egyptian Mut, Slavic Mati, Roman Mater Matuta, Gaulish Matres and British Modron; Martanda (S)-Marduk (B) to the sun gods, the Egyptian Mentu, Hebrew Merodach and British Meriadek; Maruts (S)-Murtaznu (B) to the storm gods, the Sumerian Mer, Greek Ares, Roman Mars and Siberian Mordo-Khan; Surya (S)-Shullat (Shamash) (B) to the sun gods, the Iranian Hvar, Egyptian Hor (Horus), Hebrew Shemesh, Greek Helios, Roman Sol, Nordic Sunna, British Hoel, Java and Vietnam Surya and Japanese Hiruko; Tamas (S)-Tiamat (B) to primeval darkness or abyss, the Egyptian Tahamu or Tehem, and Hebrew Tehom and Nabha-Nedishtha (S)-Uta-Napishtim (B) to the flood heroes, the Hebrew Noah and Central Asian Noj. Many of these deities are discussed in DM.

