

The Death of Gilgamesh

(Manuscript of Tell Haddad)

The Great Wild Bull is lying down; never to rise again,
The Lord Gilgamesh is lying down; never to rise again.

He Who Was Perfect in Combat is lying down; never to rise again,
The Warrior Girt with a Shoulder-Belt is lying down; never to rise again.

He Who Was Perfect in Strength is lying down; never to rise again.
He Who Diminished the Wicked is lying down; never to rise again.

He Who Spoke Wisdom is lying down; never to rise again,
The Wakeful One of the Land is lying down; never to rise again.

A He Who Climbed the Mountains is lying down; never to rise again,
A The Lord of Kullab is lying down; never to rise again.
 B He is lying on his Death-Bed; never to rise again,
 B He is lying on a Bed of Woe; never to rise again.

A He is not capable of standing,
A He is not capable of sitting,
 B He can only groan.
A He is not capable of eating,
A He is not capable of drinking,
 B He can only groan.

The Lock of Namtar holds him fast,
He is not capable of rising.

A Like a small fish in a pond,
 B He is hoisted in a net.
A Like a gazelle caught in a snare,
 B He is held fast where he lies.

Namtar:

A Who has no hands,
A Who has no feet,
A Who snatches a man by night,
A Who gores,
 B Has hold of the Lord Gilgamesh.

- A For six days he lay sick, in his bed chamber,
- B The sweat rolled from his body like melting fat.
- A The Lord Gilgamesh lay sick, in his bed cast of bronze,
- B Uruk and Kallab mourn him as a river flowing into a chasm.

Then:

The young Lord Gilgamesh fell into slumber,
As he lay on the Bed of Namtar he dreamed a dream.

In that dream, the God Nudimmud opened his eyes:

**In The Assembly, The Place of the Gods' Ceremonial, the Lord
Gilgamesh having drawn nigh, they said to him; to the Lord
Gilgamesh, on his account; regarding his matter:**

- A 'Having travelled each and every road,
- A Having fetched that unique cedar down from its mountain,
- A Having smitten Humbaba in the forest,
- A Having set up monuments for future days,
- A Having founded temples of the gods,
- B You reached Uta-napishti in his abode!
- A The Rites of Sumer, forgotten there since distant days of old,
- B You brought back the rituals and customs; it was you brought them
down to the land.
- A The Rites of Hand-Washing and Mouth Washing you put in good order,
- B After The Deluge; it was you made known all the tasks of the land
towards the gods.

'Now Gilgamesh:

You are brought here for counsel,
The will of Enlil to Enki they spoke.

To An and Enlil, Enki responded:

In those days,
in those far-off days.

In those nights,
In those far-off nights.

In those years,
In those far-off years.

**After the assembly had made The Deluge sweep over so we could
destroy the seed of mankind:**

In our midst a single man still lived,
Uta-napishti, one of mankind still lived!

From that time, we swore by the life of heaven and the life of earth,
From that time, we swore that mankind should not have life eternal.

**And now we look at Gilgamesh; despite his mother, we cannot show
him mercy:**

Gilgamesh:

In the form of his ghost,
Dead in the Underworld.

Shall be the Governor of the Netherworld,
Shall be the Chief of the Shades.

He will pass judgement; he will render verdicts,
What he says will be as weighty as the Word of Ningishzida and Dumuzi.

The Dream God Sissig, shall provide light for him in the Netherworld,
He shall provide light to the Place of Darkness.

**A Men, as many as are given names, when their funerary statues are
fashioned in future days:**

B The warrior-youths and the onlookers shall make a semicircle
around a doorway, and in front of it wrestling matches and trials
of strength will be conducted.

A In the Month of Torches; the Festival of Souls:

B Without Gilgamesh being present, light will not be provided before
them.

**Great Mountain Enlil, the Father of the Gods, conversed in the dream
with the Lord Gilgamesh:**

'O Gilgamesh:

I made your destiny a destiny of kingship,
I did not make it a destiny of eternal life.

For mankind, whatever life it has:

Be not sick at heart,
Be not in despair,
Be not soul-stricken!

The bane of mankind is thus come; I have told you,
What was fixed when your navel-cord was cut is thus come; I have told
you.

The darkest day of mortal man has caught up with you,
The solitary place of mortal man has caught up with you,
The flood-wave that cannot be breasted has caught up with you.

The battle that cannot be fled has caught up with you.
The combat that cannot be matched has caught up with you.
The fight that shows no pity has caught up with you.

But do not go down to the Great City with heart knotted in anger:

Let it be undone before Shamash,
Let it be unraveled like palm-fibre and peeled like an onion!

Go ahead when the Great Anunnaki sit down to the funerary banquet:

To the place where the en-priests lie; where the lagar-priests lie,
To the place where the lumah-priests and nindingir-priestesses lie,
To the place where the nindingir priestesses lie; where the "True One" lies,
To the place where the guda-priests lie; where the linen-clad priests lie.

To the place where your father is; and your grandfathers,
To the place where your mother, your sisters and your brothers are.

To the place where your precious friend; your little brother is,
To the place where your friend Enkidu; the young man, your companion is!

Where in the Great City dwell:

Governors and kings,
Chiefs of armies and captains of troops.

When in the Great City, Aralli, a man may dwell, the man shall not go out, but the great will come to him:

From the sister's house, the sister will come to you,
From the brother's house, the brother will come to you.

Your own will come to you,
Your precious one will come to you.

The young men of your city will come to you,
The elders of your city will come to you.

Be not in despair,
Be not heart-stricken.

For now you will number among the Anunnaki:

You will be accounted one of the lesser gods.
You will act as the governor of the Netherworld.

You will pass judgement; you will render verdicts.
What you say will be as weighty as the word of Ningishzida and Dumuzi.'

Then the Young Lord; the Lord Gilgamesh arose:

It had been a dream; he shuttered; it had been a deep sleep,
He rubbed his eyes with his hands; there was desolate silence.

The Lord Gilgamesh; Lord of Kullab,
The Lord Gilgamesh; Hero of the Shining Mountain.

The Lord of Uruk; Smithy of the Great Gods, took counsel with the Anunnaki:

'By the life of the mother who bore me,
By the life of the Goddess Ninsun!

By the life of my father; the Pure Lugalbanda,
By the life of my God Enki; the Lord Nudimmud!

Should I behave as if awe-struck, on the knees of Ninsun; the mother who bore me?

Should I behave as if fear-struck, touched by Namtar, who has no hands, who has no feet, who knows not how to spare a man.

In the fever of my illness I have had a dream,
In that dream, the God Nudimmud opened my eyes.

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To the place where your father is; and your grandfathers,
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To the place where your precious friend; your little brother is,
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Where in the Great City dwell:

Governors and kings,
Chiefs of armies and captains of troops.

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Be not in despair,
Be not heart-stricken.

For now, you will number among the Anunnaki:

You will be accounted one of the lesser gods.
You will act as the governor of the Netherworld.

You will pass judgement; you will render verdicts.
What you say will be as weighty as the word of Ningishzida and Dumuzi.'

After the Young Lord, The Lord Gilgamesh, the Lord of Kullab, had related that dream, the counsellors to whom he related it; to Gilgamesh, gave answer:

'O, Lord Gilgamesh, what is the cause of your tears?
For what reason are your eyes made wet?

The man death did not seize; the Mother Goddess has yet to bear him,
Since the seed of man first began to come forth; the one to escape death
does not exist!

The mighty wrestler can be caught in a throw-net,
A bird of the sky, once fenced in by the net, does not escape one's hand.
A fish of the deep sees the reeds and feels the rushes no more, when the
young fisherman casts his net, it is trapped within!

No man, whoever he may be, can ascend up from the midst of the
Netherworld,
From days of old whoever saw such a thing?

Another king there will never be, whose destiny is the same as yours,
Men, as many as are given names, will ask, "Where is he, the man whose
destiny is the same as yours?"

The governorship of the Netherworld is to be yours,
You; your soul, will number among the Anunnaki gods.

You will pass judgement; you will render verdicts.
What you say will be as weighty as the word of Ningishzida and Dumuzi.'

Like the architect that designed his tomb; his head in a spin,
His god, Enki, showed him the place where the dream could be solved.

That vision, the king's dog solved it,
No man solved it.

The Lord levied a workforce in his city,
The herald sounded his horn in the lands.

'O Uruk, arise! Breach open the River Euphrates,
O Kullab, arise! Empty the Euphrates of water!

The levy of Uruk was a deluge,
The levy of Kullab was a thick-settled fog!

Not even the middle of a single month had passed,
It was not five days; it was not ten days.

They breached the Euphrates,
They emptied it of water.

The pebbles gazed on the Sun God in wonder,
In the bed of the Euphrates the earth cracked dry.

He built his tomb of stone,
He built its walls of stone.

He made the stone doors of its entrance,
The bar and threshold were hardest diorite.

The bolts were hardest diorite,
The beams were cast in gold.

Into its center he moved a heavy block of stone,
Into its middle he moved a heavy block of stone.

Into its chamber he laid out victuals of every sort,
So that he might be prepared in future days.

All who entered the tomb would not discover,
All who searched would never discover its emplacement.

Thus the Young Lord; the Lord Gilgamesh established in the midst of Uruk a secure chamber:

His beloved wife,
His beloved child,
His beloved senior wife and junior wife,
His beloved minstrel; steward and friend,
His beloved barber,
His beloved attendants and servants,
His beloved goods and belongings,

Were laid down in their places,
Were laid down as if attending a palace-review in the midst of Uruk.

Gilgamesh, the son of the Goddess Ninsun:

Set out their audience-gifts for Ereshkigal,
Set out their presents for Namtar,
Set out their surprises for Dimpikug,
Set out their gifts for Bitti,
Set out their gifts for Ningishzida and Dumuzi,

For Enki and Ninki, Enmul and Ninmul,
For Endukuga and Nindukuga,
For Endashurimma and Nindashurimma,
For Enutila and Enmesharra; the mother and father of Enlil,
For Shulpae, the Lord of the Table,
For Shakkan and Ninhursanga,
For the Anunnaki Gods of the Holy Mound.

For the Igigi; Gods of the Holy Mound:

For the dead en-priests,
For the dead lagar-priests,
For the dead lumah-priests, and nindingir-priestesses,
For the dead guda-priests, linen-clad priests and priestesses,

The audience-gifts he placed on display,
The fine stones, cylinders seals, and large stele, he set out as presents.

Gilgamesh, the Son of the Goddess Ninsun:

Laid himself down, on a table, overlaid with the finest cloth of gold,
Where, with the priests, he poured an offering of water.

They took granite stone blocks inside the tomb,
They sealed its doorway.

They opened the Euphrates; its waters swept over,
The Lord's resting place, the waters removed from view.

Then for the Young Lord; the Lord Gilgamesh:

The people gnashed their teeth,
They tore out their hair.

The people wept of his city,
Not putting their own faces toward the sun; but smearing them with dirt.

Then for the Young Lord; the Lord Gilgamesh:

The mood despaired,
The heart was stricken.

A Men, as many as are given names, their funerary statues have been fashioned since days of old,

B They are stationed in chapels in the temples of the gods; their names are pronounced, and will never be forgotten.

A The Goddess Aruru; the oldest sister of Enlil, for the sake of his name gave men offspring; their statues have been fashioned since days of old,

B Their names are still spoken in the land.

O Ereshkigal, Mother of Ninazu, sweet is your praise!
O Gilgamesh, Lord of Kullab, sweet is your praise!



Netherworld - Gods



Ershkigal



Nergal



Inanna-Ishtar

