



Arrival of the Waters

Following the “seven days” when the world appeared to be ablaze in “the radiance of a thousand suns” the Deluge started.

First, according to the Hindu account, vast clouds gathered which “overshadowed the entire world.” ⁽¹⁾

“These ominous clouds . . . rumbling and shooting lightning, overspread the sky.” ⁽²⁾ They were “as vast as mountains.” “Some were dusky, some crimson, some white, some brilliant (in hue).” ⁽³⁾ Other sources describe them as yellow, or azure, or red. “Loud in roar and mighty in size they fill the entire sky.” ⁽⁴⁾ They were “fringed with lightning, meteors and thunderbolts.” ⁽⁵⁾ Then, “rumbling aloud with lightning [they] poured torrential streams thick like chariot wheels.” ⁽⁶⁾ They “rained with a sullen roar, inundating the three worlds with ceaseless downpour of torrents. . . .” ⁽⁷⁾ “And then there were seen on all sides the four oceans engulfing with tempestuous waves the whole surface of the earth.” ⁽⁸⁾ All creation was “smitten by the luminous dense floods.” ⁽⁹⁾

In the beginning of the deluge the nova in the sky shone through the splendor of the illuminated skies and through the sheets of rain, ever increasing in intensity. ⁽¹⁰⁾ The Biblical expression “the Lord sitteth upon the flood” ⁽¹¹⁾ was an apt description of the blazing nova above the waters of the Deluge. It has a Babylonian counterpart in the title of Tammuz as *bel girsu*: “lord of the flood.” ⁽¹²⁾ The nova blazed terrifically, but soon the light became diffused, the shadows grew ever dimmer, the world that was all splendor and light turned gloomier and gloomier; the outpouring waters grew ever thicker; the clouds of dust darkened ever more the sky, and finally the drama of what was taking place on earth went on in darkness.

The Deluge was not a peaceful though abundant rain filling the earth with water, rising ever higher. Ancient sources give a description of the Deluge that differs greatly from the pageant of showers pouring from above on a peaceful land and peaceful sea.

References

1. Skanda Purana in S. Shastri, *The Flood Legend in Sanscrit Literature* (Delhi, 1950), p. 87.
2. Agneya Purana in *ibid.*, p. 50.
3. Kalika Purana in *ibid.*, p. 103.
4. Vishnu Purana in *ibid.*, p. 50.
5. Skanda Purana in *ibid.*, p. 88.
6. Bhagavata Purana in *ibid.*, p. 61.
7. Kalika Purana in *ibid.*, p. 103.
8. Bhagavata Purana in *ibid.*, p. 61.

9. *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

10. Cf. the Babylonian expression in the wailings for Tammuz: “The shining ocean to thy perditions has taken thee.” (S. Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar* [Oxford, 1914], p. 15).

11. Psalm 29.

12. S. Langdon, *Babylonian Liturgies* (Paris, 1913), p. 96.

