



# Hydrogen and Oxygen

The conflict between the larger planets resulted in long-stretched filaments ejected by a disturbed Saturn to cross the Earth's orbit. The hydrogen of the planet combined with the oxygen of the terrestrial atmosphere in electrical discharges and turned into water.

There are definite indications of a drastic drop in the atmospheric oxygen at the time of the Deluge—for instance, the survivors of the catastrophe are said in many sources to have been unable to light fires.<sup>(1)</sup>

The consumption of the oxygen in the air by its conversion into water could not fail to have a marked effect upon all that breathes. The animal life that survived needed to accommodate itself to the changed conditions.

According to rabbinical sources, before the Deluge man was vegetarian; but the post-diluvian population did not continue the vegetarian habits of the “sinful” population of the earth. The Talmud and the Midrashim narrate that after the Deluge a carnivorous instinct was awakened in animal and man, and everyone had the impulse to bite.<sup>(2)</sup>

The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the air. . . . Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I will give you everything.<sup>(3)</sup>

The prohibition against quenching the thirst for blood<sup>(4)</sup> is an ordinance said to have been introduced immediately after the Deluge.

In a teleological program this result of the Deluge does not seem appropriate for a catastrophe brought about to chastize the human race and the animals, to cleanse them of their vices and make them better. Because of its non-program appearance the carnivorous urge must have been not a mythological motif, but a result of physiological changes. Most probably an anemia connected with the diminution of oxygen in the air was responsible for the new inclination.<sup>(5)</sup>

## References

1. [Such were the accounts of the Sioux, Menomini, and other Indian tribes as told by J. G. Frazer in his “Remarks” to Volume II of Apollodorus’ *The Library* in the Loeb series, p. 342. Cf. Skanda Purana, describing the deluged world in which “nothing could be seen . . . fire there was not, nor moon, nor sun.” (Shastri, *The Flood Legend in Sanscrit Literature*, p. 88). Even in the relatively slightly rarefied atmosphere of La Paz, Bolivia, “because of the reduced oxygen content . . . fires start with such reluctance that there is little work for the city’s fire department.” (*Area Handbook for Bolivia* [Washington, 1974], p. 55.).
2. *The Book of Enoch* 89:11: “After the deluge they began to bite one another.” According to Midrash Aggada to Genesis 10:8, Nimrod was the first to eat meat.
3. Genesis 9:2-3

4. Genesis 9:4ff.

5. [One might speculate that the diet of meat would be conducive to the production of the additional red blood cells needed by the body to absorb more efficiently the diminished amount of oxygen entering the lungs. In Tibet the high altitude and rarefied atmosphere is said to make it impossible to follow the vegetarian diet advocated by Buddhist teaching. Cf. *Science* Vol. 203, no. 4383 (March 23, 1979), p. 1230: “At high altitudes all animals hyperventilate—an involuntary mechanism of fast breathing in which carbon dioxide causes the *ph* of the blood to become alkaline and constricts blood vessels. This, in turn, reduces the blood flow to the brain and brain cells become starved of oxygen, eventually dying. An alkaline *ph* in the blood can also produce other fatal effects.” ].

