

Marduk was thus ascribed the work of creation, an idea evidently borrowed from the Sumerians, but modified by the introduction of a great combat to suit the more warlike spirits of the fighting and conquering Shemites.

Marduk became the supreme god at Babylon. He was often called Bel-Merodach, or the Lord Marduk. You may remember that Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, was succeeded by his son, "Evil-Merodach," in 561 B.C. Efforts were made at one time to give to the god Marduk a sort of Monotheistic position. It is of much interest to find that in judicial proceedings under the great code of laws of Hammurabi, published about 2,250 B.C., the oath imposed in court on witnesses, claimants, &c., was always in the name of Marduk. But in the earlier days of the Babylonian Shemites, Marduk had the attributes of an intercessor between man and his father EA, just as had Mirri-Dugga with the Sumerians.

The Shemite account of the creation in cuneiform inscriptions is supported by fragments that remain of a history of Babylonia written in Greek about 250 B. C. by Berósus, a priest of Belus in Babylon. Berósus says the materials for his work were derived from the records of the temple of Belus. He writes: "Then came Bel (Merodach) and cleft the woman monster (TI-AMAT the representative or personification of the ancient floods of Chaos) in two; from one half thereof made he the earth, from the other the heavens, and extinguished her existence."

In this connection it is also of deep interest to find that the most ancient Egyptians brought with them to Egypt old Babylonian architecture and religion. The earliest Egyptians had also in their account of the creation, according to Erman, the floods of Chaos, bearing the ancient Sumerian name of NUN. We find in the Egyptian Book of the Dead this sentence: "On the dark ocean of the god Nun in the earliest age of time the Sun-god Ra appeared and took over the government of the world." According to another ancient legend of Egypt, Ra, when man had rebelled against him, went to the god Nun and addressed him with the words: "O, thou eldest of the gods, from whom I sprung, and ye ancestral spirits, behold man, who has sprung from my eye, how he deviseth evil in spite of me." Here, therefore, we find the son of the supreme god performing the work of creation; and we see the son similarly consulting the father with respect to man. Just as the Shemitic North Babylonians assimilated their solar god Merodach to the Sumerian Mirri-Dugga, so did the ancient Egyptians assimilate also their solar god Ra to Mirri-Dugga. But Ra, differing from the peaceful Sumerian Mirri-Dugga, and resembling the warlike Shemitic Merodach, fought and slew the monster Chaos, as we