

Epic of Atrahasis

2450 B.C.E.

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Chapter - 1

- 1 When the gods instead of man,
- 2 Did the work, bore the loads,
- 3 The gods' load was too great,
- 4 The work too hard, the punishment too much,
- 5 The great Anunnaki made the Igigi ("evil minded ones ")
- 6 Carry the workload sevenfold.
- 7 Anu their father was king,
- 8 Their counselor warrior Ellil,
- 9 Their Chamberlain was Ninurta,
- 10 Their canal-controller Ennugi.
- 11 They took the box of lots
- 12 Cast the lots; the gods made the division.
- 13 Anu went up to the sky,
- 14 And Ellil took the earth for his people.
- 15 The bolt which bars the sea
- 16 Was assigned to far-sighted Enki.
- 17 When Anu had gone up to the sky,
- 18 And the gods of the Apsu had gone below,
- 19 The Annunaki of the sky
- 20 Made the Igigi ("evil minded ones ") bear the workload.
- 21 The gods had to dig out canals,
- 22 Had to clear channels, the lifelines of the land.
- 23 The gods dug out the Tigris river
- 24 And then dug out the Euphrates.
- 25 ...in the deep
- 26 they set up
- 27 ...the Apsu
- 28 ...of the land
- 29 ...inside it
- 30 ...raised its top
- 31 ...of all the mountains
- 32 They were counting the years of loads
- 33 ...the great marsh,

- 34** They were counting the years of loads.
35 For 3,600 years they bore the excess,
36 Hard work, night and day.
37 They groaned and blamed each other,
38 Grumbled over the masses of excavated soil:
39 Let us confront our Warden
40 And get him to relieve us of our hard work!
41 Come, let us carry the Lord
42 The guard of the [prisoner] gods, the warrior from his dwelling.



Chapter - 2

- 1** Then [Kingu] made his voice heard
2 And spoke to the gods, his brothers:
3 Come, let us carry
4 The guard of the [prisoner] gods, the warrior, from his dwelling.
5 Come, let us carry Ellil,
6 The guard of the [prisoner] gods, the warrior, from his dwelling.
7 Now, cry battle!
8 Let us mix fight with battle!
9 The gods listened to his speech,
10 Set fire to their tools,
11 Put aside their spades for fire,
12 Their loads for the fire-god.
13 They flared up.
14 When they reached the gate of warrior Ellil's dwelling,
15 It was night, the middle watch,
16 Ekur was surrounded, Ellil had not realized.
17 Yet Kalkal was attentive, and had it closed,
18 He held the lock and watched the gate.
19 Kalkal roused Nusku.
20 They listened to the noise of the Igigi.
21 Then Nusku roused his master,
22 Made him get out of bed:
23 My lord, your house is surrounded,
24 A rabble is running around your door!
25 Ellil, your house is surrounded,

- 26** A rabble is running around your door!
27 Ellil had weapons brought to his dwelling.
28 Ellil made his voice heard
29 And spoke to the vizier Nusku,
30 Nusku, bar your door,
31 Take up your weapons and stand in front of me.
32 Nusku barred his door
33 Took up his weapons and stood in front of Ellil.
34 Nusku made his voice heard
35 And spoke to the warrior Ellil,
36 'O my lord, your face is sallow as Tamarisk!
37 Why do you fear your own sons?
38 'O Ellil, you face is sallow as Tamarisk!
39 Why do you fear your own sons?
40 Send for Anu to be brought down to you
41 Have Enki fetched into your presence.



Chapter - 3

- 1** He sent for Anu to be brought down to him,
2 Enki was fetched into his presence,
3 Anu, king of the sky was present,
4 Enki, king of the Apsu attended.
5 The great Anunnaki were present.
6 Ellil got up and the case was put.
7 Ellil made his voice heard
8 And spoke to the great gods:
9 Is it against me that they have risen?
10 Shall I do battle...?
11 What did I see with my own eyes?
12 A rabble was running around my door!
13 Anu made his voice heard
14 And spoke to the warrior Ellil
15 Let Nusku go out
16 And find out the word of the Igigi Who have surrounded your door.
17 A command...

18 To...

19 Ellil made his voice heard

20 And spoke to the vizier Nusku,

21 Nusku, open your door,

22 Take up your weapons and stand before me!

23 In the assembly of all the gods,

24 Bow, then stand and tell them,

25 Your father Anu,

26 Your guard, warrior Ellil,

27 Your warden Ninurta

28 And your canal-controller Ennugi

29 Have sent me to say,

30 Who is in charge of the rabble?

31 Who is in charge of the fighting?

32 Who declared war?

33 Who ran to the door of Ellil?

34 Nusku opened his door,

35 Took up his weapons, went from Ellil

36 In the assembly of all the gods

37 He bowed, then stood and told the message.

38 Your father Anu,

39 Your guard warrior Ellil,

40 Your warden Ninurta,

41 And your canal controller Ennugi

42 Have sent me to say

43 Who is in charge of the rabble?

44 Who is in charge of the fighting?

45 Who declared war?

46 Who ran to the door of Ellil?

47 Ellil...

48 Every single one of us declared war!

49 We have put a stop to the digging.

50 The load is excessive, it is killing us!

51 Our work is too hard, the trouble too much!

52 So every single one of us gods

53 Has agreed to complain to Ellil

54 Nusku took his weapons

55 Went and returned to Ellil
56 My lord, you sent me to...
57 I went...
58 I explained...
59 Saying every single one of us gods
60 Declared war
61 We have put a stop to the digging.
62 The load is excessive, it is killing us!
63 Our work is too hard, the trouble too much,
64 So every single one of us gods
65 Has agreed to complain to Ellil!
66 Ellil listened to that speech.
67 His tears flowed.
68 Ellil spoke guardedly,
69 Addressed the warrior Anu,
70 Noble one, take a decree
71 With you to the sky, show your strength-
72 While the Anunnaki are sitting before you
73 Call up one god and let them cast him for destruction



Chapter - 4

1 Anu made his voice heard
2 And spoke to the gods his brothers,
3 What are we complaining of?
4 Their work was indeed too hard, their punishment was too much.
5 Every day the Earth resounded.
6 The warning signal was loud enough, we kept hearing the noise.
7 ...do
8 ...tasks
9 While the Anunnaki are sitting before you
10 And while Belet-Ili the womb goddess is present,
11 Call up one and cast him for destruction!
12 Anu made his voice heard and spoke to Nusku
13 Nusku, open your door, take up your weapons,
14 Bow in the assembly of the great gods, then stand

15 And tell them...

16 Your father Anu, your guard warrior Ellil,
17 Your warden Ninurta and your canal controller Ennugi
18 Have sent me to say
19 Who is in charge of the rabble? Who will be in charge of battle?
20 Which god started the war?
21 A rabble was running around my door!
22 When Nusku heard this,
23 He took up his weapons,
24 Bowed in the assembly of the great gods, then stood
25 And told them
26 Your father Anu, your guard warrior Ellil,
27 Your warden Ninurta and your canal controller Ennugi
28 Have sent me to say,
29 Who is in charge of the rabble? Who is in charge of the fighting?
30 Which god started the war?
31 A rabble was running around Ellil's door!
32 Ea made his voice heard
33 And spoke to the gods his brothers,
34 Why are we blaming them?
35 Their work was too hard, their punishment was too much.
36 Every day the earth resounded.
37 The warning signal was loud enough, we kept hearing the noise.
38 There is...
39 Belet-ili the womb goddess is present-
40 Let her create a mortal man
41 So that he may bear the yoke...
42 So that he may bear the yoke, the work of Ellil,
43 Let man bear the load of the gods!
44 ...
45 Belet-ili the womb goddess is present,
46 Let the womb goddess create offspring,
47 And let them bear the load of the gods!



Chapter - 5

1 They called up the goddess, asked

2 The midwife of the gods, wise Mami,
3 You are the womb-goddess, to be the creator of Mankind!
4 Create a mortal, that he may bear the yoke!
5 Let him bear the yoke, the work of Ellil
6 Let him bear the load of the [prisoner] gods!
7 Nintu made her voice heard
8 And spoke to the great gods,
9 On the first, seventh, and fifteenth of the month
10 I shall make a purification by washing.
11 Then one god should be slaughtered.
12 And the gods can be purified by immersion.
13 Nintu shall mix the clay
14 With his flesh and blood.
15 Then a god and a man
16 Will be mixed together in clay.
17 Let us hear the drumbeat forever after,
18 Let a ghost come into existence from the god's flesh,
19 Let her proclaim it as her living sign,
20 And let the ghost exist so as not to forget the slain god.
21 They answered yes in the assembly,
22 The great Anunnaki who assign the fates
23 On the first, seventh, and fifteenth of the month
24 He made a purification by washing.
25 Geshtu-E, a god who had intelligence,
26 They slaughtered in their assembly.
27 Nintu mixed clay
28 with his flesh and blood.
29 They heard the drumbeat forever after.
30 A ghost came into existence from the god's flesh,
31 and she proclaimed it as his living sign.
32 The ghost existed so as not to forget the slain god.
33 After she had mixed that clay,
34 She called up the Anunnaki, the great gods.
35 The Igigi, the great [prisoner] gods,
36 Spat spittle upon the clay
37 Mami made her voice heard

38 And spoke to the great gods,
39 I have carried out perfectly
40 The work that you ordered of me.
41 You have slaughtered a god together with his intelligence.
42 I have relieved you of your hard work,
43 I have imposed your load on man.
44 You have bestowed noise on man,
45 You have bestowed noise on mankind.
46 I have undone the chains of imprisonment and granted freedom.
47 They listened to the speech of hers,
48 And were freed from anxiety, and kissed her feet:
49 We used to call you Mami,
50 But now your name shall be Mistress of All Gods.



Chapter - 6

1 Far sighted Enki and wise Mami
2 Went into the room of fate.
3 The womb-goddesses were assembled.
4 He trod the clay in her presence;
5 She kept reciting an incantation,
6 For Enki, staying in her presence, made her recite it
7 When she had finished her incantation,
8 She pinched off fourteen pieces of clay,
9 And set seven pieces on the right,
10 Seven on the left.
11 Between them she put down a mud brick.
12 She made use of a reed, opened it to cut the umbilical cord,
13 Called up the wise and knowledgeable
14 Womb goddesses, seven and seven.
15 Seven created males,
16 Seven created females,
17 For the womb goddess is creator of fate.
18 He...them two by two,
19 ...them two by two in her presence.
20 Mami made these rules for people:
21 In the house of a woman who is giving birth

22 The mud brick shall be put down for seven days.

23 Belet-ili, wise Mami shall be honored.

24 The midwife shall rejoice in the house of the woman who gives birth

25 And when the woman gives birth to the baby,

26 The mother of the baby shall sever herself.

27 A man to a girl...

28 ...her bosom

29 A beard can be seen

30 On a young man's cheek.

31 In gardens and waysides

32 A wife and her husband choose each other.

33 The womb goddesses were assembled

34 And Nintu was present. They counted the months,

35 Called up the Tenth month as the term of fates.

36 When the Tenth month came,

37 She slipped in a staff and opened the womb.

38 Her face was glad and joyful.

39 She covered her head,

40 Performed the midwifery,

41 Put on her belt, said a blessing.

42 She made a drawing in flour and put down a mud brick:

43 I myself created it, my hands made it.

44 The midwife shall rejoice in the house of the qadistu-priestess.

45 Whenever a woman gives birth

46 And the baby's mother severs herself,

47 The mud brick shall be put down for nine days.

48 Nintu the womb goddess shall be honored.

49 She shall call their ...Mami

50 She shall ... the womb goddess,

51 Lay down the linen cloth.

52 When the bed is laid out in their house,

53 A wife and her husband shall choose each other.

54 Inanna shall rejoice in the wife-husband relationship

55 In the father-in-law's house.

56 Celebration shall last for nine days,

57 And they shall call Inanna Ishhara.

58 On the fifteenth day, the fixed time of fate

59 She shall call...



Chapter - 7

- 1 A man...
- 2 A man...
- 3 The son to his father...
- 4 They sat and...
- 5 He was carrying...
- 6 He saw...
- 7 Ellil...
- 8 They took hold of...
- 9 Made new picks and spades,
- 10 Made big canals,
- 11 To feed people and sustain the gods.
- 12 600 years, less than 600, passed,
- 13 And the country was as noisy as a bellowing bull.
- 14 The god grew restless at their racket,
- 15 Ellil had to listen to their noise.
- 16 He addressed the great gods,
- 17 The noise of mankind has become too much,
- 18 I am losing sleep over their racket.
- 19 Give the order that suruppu-disease shall break out,
- 20 Now there was one Atrahasis
- 21 Whose ear was open to his god Enki.
- 22 He would speak with his god
- 23 And his god would speak with him.
- 24 Atrahasis made his voice heard
- 25 And spoke to his lord,
- 26 How long will the gods make us suffer?
- 27 Will they make us suffer illness forever?
- 28 Enki made his voice heard
- 29 And spoke to his servant:
- 30 Call the elders, the senior men!
- 31 Start an uprising in your own house,
- 32 Let the heralds proclaim...

33 Let them make a loud noise in the land:
34 Do not revere your gods,
35 Do not pray to your goddesses,
36 But search out the door of Namtara.
37 Bring as baked loaf into his presence.
38 May the flour offerings reach him.
39 May he be shamed by the presents
40 And wipe away his hand.
41 Atrahasis took the order,
42 Gathered the elders to his door.
43 Atrahasis made his voice heard
44 And spoke to the elders:
45 I have called the elders, the senior men!
46 Start an uprising in your own house,
47 Let the heralds proclaim...
48 Let them make a loud noise in the land:
49 Do not revere your gods,
50 Do not pray to your goddesses,
51 But search out the door of Namtara.
52 Bring as baked loaf into his presence.
53 May the flour offerings reach him.
54 May he be shamed by the presents
55 And wipe away his hand.
56 The elders listened to his speech;
57 They built a temple for Namtara in the city.
58 Heralds proclaimed...
59 They made a loud noise in the land.
60 They did not revere their god,
61 they did not pray to their goddess,
62 But searched out the door of Namtara,
63 Brought a baked loaf into his presence
64 The flour offerings reached him.
65 And he was shamed by the presents.
66 And wiped away his hand.
67 The suruppu-disease left them.
68 The gods went back to their regular offerings.