

***Contemporary Mystic Christianity***  
**Bible Self-Study Supplement**

**Initiation In Ancient Chaldea**

**The Gilgamesh Epic**

There are two epics dating from Sumerian times which are of particular interest to the initiatory tradition. The first of these is the Gilgamesh Epic, a compilation covering a long period of time and consisting of twelve parts or books which correlate with the passage of the Sun through the twelve constellations of the Zodiac. They were engraven in the customary fashion upon clay tablets about the size and shape of a modern brick, and they are comparable in many particulars with the Bible of the Christian world.

Since the world's beginning messengers from heaven have been sent earthward from time to time to reawaken man's memory of his divine heritage and to inspire him to unite himself with his divinity. From the earliest dawn of civilization the path of preparation and progress has been described as Initiation, and Schools were Established in which wisdom doctrines and disciplines might be imparted to those ready to receive them. Initiatory truths taught in such Schools were the basis of most legends woven about the lives and deeds of national heroes. Thus, the hero Gilgamesh is discovered questing for immortality.

Gilgamesh was one of the Initiate-Kings who lived and ruled in the city of Erech, "the House of Waters." Although the First Dynasty of Kish is given as the first of the antediluvian dynasties, evidently the Temple-center from which the Mysteries of Atlantis went forth through the land was Erech, for the city was sacred to the first and highest aspect of the Trinity, Anu, "Our Father in Heaven." Erech was called "the City of Books" and it supplied Sargon with many of his texts. Sargon seems to have regarded it with the deepest reverence, for he restored old and

built new libraries there. Esotericists look upon Erech as the seat of a great Brotherhood of Light. Annals state that Gilgamesh, son of the High Priest of Kullab and the Goddess Ninsun, ruled in Erech for one hundred and twenty-six years.

It has been previously observed that the people often gave Initiates of high rank the title of God or Goddess. It is further stated that the father of Gilgamesh was subsequently deified, so the hero himself is described as two-thirds divine and one-third human. Gilgamesh enlightens us by stating that his teacher was his uncle Ut-Napishim — whose title Khasisatra means "the very wise" and from whom he learned the ancient lore of his race.

Thus we are able, with the aid of these few and incomplete texts, to piece together a fairly accurate picture of the lofty sources from which the Epics were derived, and to learn something of the sacredness of the doctrine and the universality of the Truth which they impart — and which is available to all who have eyes to see, ears to hear, and the will to search.

Subsequently the line of priest-kings (Initiates) was transferred from Erech to Ur, the City of Light. The central activity of the Brotherhood of Light was also removed to Ur, and from it Abraham was sent forth as the Master-Teacher of the Aryan Age. The name Abraham, Father of Multitudes, is a cryptogram of power. Abram, the pioneer, came to do much more than merely teach the Mysteries of the Christ Dispensation. He has always stood as a symbol of the unifying golden thread of spirit which binds men and nations together in oneness.

Of similar high degree of attainment as the priest-kings of Erech and Ur was the priest-king Melchizedek of Salem. He received Abraham into the great School of Light of Salem and instructed him further in those Christ Mysteries represented by the Sacrament of Bread and Wine. This was the origin of the first School of the Hebrew Mysteries in Canaan. In

the Epic Gilgamesh, the Hero of Erech is discovered living a joyous life until one day he is brought face to face with the mystery of death and he rebels bitterly. "Must I die too? But I will not die, for I know that I shall never come to life again."

Significantly comes the reply: "The life which thou seekest thou shalt not find, for when the gods built mankind they laid death upon it. They kept life for themselves."

So also in Genesis, Adam is forbidden to eat from the fruit of two trees; he eats of the Tree of Knowledge and is then driven from the Garden to prevent his eating from the Tree of Life as well. Like the Gods of Chaldea — with whom, indeed, they are identifiable — the Elohim of Genesis kept life for themselves. (The word Elohim in the Bible is interpreted as "the gods" or "God.")

Gilgamesh asks sadly, "Whither then shall I go, since death awaits me on my bed?" And forthwith he goes forth to search over the whole earth for the Plant of Life (the Tree of Life of Genesis). He is successful in his quest, but has no sooner discovered and obtained the Plant than a snake steals it from him. Gilgamesh now gives up all hope of immortality, resigning himself to death, the inevitable lot of mortal man.

This story indicates that the Sumerians, like other members of the Fifth Root Race in Aryana, had descended so far into materiality that death had become a mystery and a terror. In Schools of Initiation it was then necessary to put a candidate into a deep cataleptic trance before his soul could be released from its body in full consciousness, to roam and explore inner planes and thus come to know that death is not the end of life. Since the coming of the Christ, whose influence upon the etheric and astral envelopes of the earth served to spiritualize corresponding envelopes of the human ego, catalepsy is no longer prerequisite to Initiation.

The Descent of Ishtar into Hades, to which reference has already been made, complements and completes the story of Gilgamesh. Adonis, the slain one, stands in the place of every mortal to whom death comes, but he reappears through the love of Ishtar, the Divine Feminine or the Wisdom of Nature, through whose ministrations an ego is reborn upon earth in bodies of flesh until perfection or godhood is achieved. Thus, the slain Abel is reborn as Seth.

This story of Ishtar's descent was the central Mystery of many Gnostic groups before and after Christ. It is deeply significant that the legend can be interpreted allegorically and in conformity with the philosophy of the Greeks. Ishtar's journey through the Underworld is described step by step, revealing Chaldean concepts of life after death. She lays off her garments and ornaments by degrees so that, passing the seventh gate, she has none left. So is the soul of the newly dead "clad like a bird with no garments but his wings," for at death the soul takes with it nothing of the riches, fame and glory of the material world; it is clad only in its wings" — radiations of the aura.

Hades is shown to be a dark and gloomy abode in which souls exist in misery, remembering only their homes in the world above — another proof of the materialism of the Babylonian civilization. To a materialist who lives wholly in the sensations of the body and the associations of the material world, the after-death state is one of utter boredom. Lacking a body, he is totally bereft of pleasure and continually yearns for the life he left behind.

As it appears in the legends, heaven pertains only to the lowest Heaven of esoteric Christianity: the so-called first heaven, where the soul enjoys the fruitage of the good he has thought, said, felt and done. This is the Summerland of Spiritualists. Hence, as the Chaldean legends show, the material minded and the evil find themselves in a condition of

misery and discomfort; the spiritually minded and good find themselves in a realm of comfort and beauty.

Wash thy hands, purify thy hands!

The gods, thy elders, will wash their hands and purify their hands.

Eat the meat on the pure platters,

Drink the pure water in the pure vases,

Prepare thyself to enjoy the peace of the righteous!

Antum, the great wife of Anu, hath held thee in her holy arm;

Itu hath translated thee into a circle of holiness.

He hath poured the magical water into thy mouth

And the virtue of the water hath opened thy mouth.

— Ishtar and Izdubar

Enter the Path! There spring the healing stream

Quenching all thirst! There bloom the immortal flowers

Carpeting all the way with joy! There throned

Swiftest and sweetest hours!

— Sir Edward Arnold, *The Light of Asia*

For further Chaldean teachings on Initiation we turn to the Epic of Izdubar, another name for Gilgamesh. As the latter he is the hero whose labors are accomplished under the tutelage of the divine Ishtar of the Stars. This Epic covers a long period of time and was the work of many writers.

In character Izdubar is analogous to the Greek Hercules and the biblical Samson. Before the royal palace of Assyrian monarchs in the city of Dur-Sargina stood two magnificent figures of this hero, colossi in robes of dignity standing between winged bulls while pressing huge lions to their side. These winged bulls are the Kiribu, the Hebrew Cherubim, symbolical of heavenly spirits — for the starry heaven was symbolized by a great bull upon whose back was inscribed the Sun,

Moon and stars. The Kiribu guarded portals against the entry of evil spirits, thus corresponding to the astronomical gate of the constellation Taurus, which opens the solar year when the Vernal Equinox is in that sign. Venus is the ruler of Taurus.

As thus far discovered, Chaldean history spans four astronomical ages: Cancer, Gemini, Taurus and Aries. The rise and fall of Babylon (Hammurabi to Nabonidus) occurred largely in the Arian Age, during the latter half of which Greece and Rome rose to power. The purely Sumerian Age belongs to Cancer, hence the importance of the Moon God in Sumerian culture. Cancer rules the ocean and is governed by the Moon. During the Geminian Age following the Deluge, Mercury, the God Nabu, arose to pre-eminence along with Akkadian influence; and with him rose the science of astronomy over which he presides. The Semitic element rose to power with the Taurean Age. Taurus is a very earthy sign so Semitic civilization was characterized by increasing materiality and that earthy nature which the bull signifies; hence, the prominence accorded to the Winged Bull. There is, however, a side to Taurus which is estimable in every way. Ruled by the planet Venus, it confers a great love of beauty in all of its sensuous and earthy forms: the beauty of gardens and Orchards, of the rich earth, of all that contributes to physical existence. It is not strange, therefore, that in this aspect of her divine being Ishtar is passionately loved and worshipped by the people. It is she who makes earth beautiful; without her influence there would have been no Hanging Gardens in Babylon.

Izdubar is the central character of Assyrian poetry and sculpture; he is the theme of minstrelsy, the hero of the people, the beloved of the Gods. By his high merits he won the love of Ishtar, who gave to him twelve labors to perform. These he accomplished successfully and was lifted to godhood without having to pass through the gates of death, always the fruit of Initiation. Thus, in Izdubar is seen the consummation of the Quest begun by Gilgamesh.

The Epic, as before stated, is arranged in twelve books, each correlated with one of the twelve zodiacal signs. The central theme of the cycle is the fourfold Path of Initiation, described as it occurs in the experience of the hero. That Izdubar comes properly within the category of initiatory heroes is shown by an analysis of his name. The first and last character form a compound ideograph signifying fire (Gibil); the middle character means a mass. The name thus stands revealed as meaning "a moving mass of fire" — that is, a solar hero.

For our discussion of the twelve labors of Izdubar we are using a romanticized and very freely translated poetic version of the Izdubar narrative by Leonidas H. Milton, in which the poet has been successful in transmitting something of the spirit of the ancient text so that its esoteric meaning is more easily deciphered.

Initiation is the keynote of all world Bibles including the Christian. To learn to walk in the fourfold Path of Fire, Air, Water and Earth is to learn the most profound of earth's lessons, the lesson of self-conquest. In the Old Testament it underlies the important events in the life of Moses and is discovered in experiences related of the four major prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. In the New Testament it is fundamental to the teachings and experiences of the Christed Master, Jesus of Nazareth.

The Sun hero figures in Samson, the "little Sun Man," as described in Judges, He and his attainments are found again in the Greek Hercules and his twelfefold Mysteries. All such legends are built according to the archetype or "Akashic Pattern," as it were, of that great, all-encompassing Being who, as Light Personified, was to come in the fullness of time to dispense life and wisdom to mankind.

Each of the twelve tablets containing the Izdubar Epic holds six columns of writing and each column consists of from forty to fifty lines,

the poem as a whole containing approximately three thousand lines of cuneiform text.

The first tablet deals with the coming of Izdubar. It correlates with Aries and the mystic powers of the, Spring Equinox as the divine hero appears accompanied by "Akkad's grand battalions of the Sun." Aries, Leo and Sagittarius constitute the Triad of the Fire Initiation.

The second tablet recounts the meeting of Izdubar and Heabani. The latter, whose name Hea implies his divine nature and mission, is represented as half man and half bull. He becomes Izdubar's teacher in the labor of the second Degree, Taurus, termed "the directing bull." Heabani typifies a group spirit of the animal kingdom, of archangelic origin like the race spirits of the human kingdom. Taurus represents the month of fecundation in which these Spirits are most active. The work of "the directing bull" is a phase of initiatory activity of profound mystical significance familiar to all partakers of inner plane mysteries related to the growing season, when nature spirits are extremely active under the guidance of their angelic directors. The life forces of the planet are then surging upward through greening vegetation. The human kingdom also responds to these impulses making for the physical well-being of all earth's living things. The influences flowing through physical channels have their spiritual counterpart and these are important to the work of Initiation, for such life forces must be directed into spiritual work if Liberation is to be achieved, a labor that belongs to the degree of Earth Initiation. Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn are the signs of the Zodiac that constitute the Triad of Earth Initiation.

The comradeship between Heabani and Izdubar is close and beautiful. To the latter is imparted many hidden things belonging to heaven and earth. Heabani is delegated by Samash, the Sun God himself, to instruct Izdubar.



The third tablet depicts the Gemini labor, symbolized by Izdubar's hand-to-hand conflict with Dibbara upon the banks of the Euphrates. Dibbara is the Darkening One. He is aided in the conflict by the seven black ravens of the air, a reference to Air Initiation whereby the lower or mortal mind is lifted up to become Christed. St. Paul terms this mind a prince of darkness. Izdubar is victorious in the conflict and is therefore ready for the next step. Gemini, Libra and Aquarius are the Triad of Air Initiation.

The fourth tablet describes Izdubar's preparation for a certain mystic dream; it correlates with the fourth zodiacal sign, Cancer. The scene is laid upon the banks of the Euphrates, where the hero prays to Hea, Spirit of the Waters, for the protection always given to a disciple who has learned to still his emotions. Pouring upon the sands sparkling drops of water, he asks that this divine protection be granted him. Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces make up the Triad of Water Initiation. The dream follows:

"I dreamed the stars from heaven fell from yonder deep to earth, and one with forceful heat my back did pierce as molten fire, and left its track of flames like some huge ball along my spine. Transformed, a Being turned its face to mine. As some fierce god it glowed before my sight, till agony was lost in dread. . . . I rooted stood in terror for its face was horrible. I saw in its feet's place a lion's claws. It sprang, my strength it broke and slew me, gloating over me. I awoke. I thought I was a corpse."

The Water Initiation confers clairvoyance and consequently opens contacts with inner planes. The fire which plays upon the spine is the Kundalini spirit Fire that is always awakened and lifted in initiatory work.

The Epic next describes the coming of Heabani to interpret Izdubar's dream. This has reference to the appearance of a neophyte's Teacher,

who is always alert and ready to guard and instruct his charge in times of crisis, especially when through enlarged perception he glimpses for the first time that dread figure, the Guardian of the Threshold.

The fifth tablet correlates with Leo. Izdubar slays a lion in the festival hall and Heabani declares him a God, One of the most striking of the inscriptions found upon ancient Babylonian cylinders is the figure of Izdubar in the act of slaying the lion.

All Schools of Initiation contain in their ritual certain representations or symbolic acts having reference to the slaying of a beast. Slaying a lion is one of the most important stages in spiritual progression, for Leo rules the cosmic Heart Center and its human correlative in which powerful spiritual forces are brought into focus.

The scene wherein Izdubar slays the lion is one of great drama. Esoterically it refers to self-conquest by the love-power of the heart (Leo). The beast is brought chained before the King as he sits in the midst of his court. Heabani unchains the lion and points toward the King. The Beast springs, Izdubar grips him by the throat with his bare hands and holds him high in the air until he is dead, while the assembled courtiers applaud vociferously.

Here again is a similarity to the Greek Hercules and to the Hebrew Samson. A crucial event in the lives of both of these heroes was symbolized in the slaying of a lion. Leo is a fire sign; and therefore this achievement hints of the complete transmutation of the fire force within the aspirant's body temple — a sublimation placing the Initiate in the vanguard of spiritual evolution. It marks the highest phase of Initiation by Fire. An ancient wisdom axiom thus makes reference to this attainment:

"Many talk of the Lion, but few know him."

Heabani thus addresses Izdubar, "Immortal king and most illustrious of men! Thy glorious strength reveals the gods again on earth."

The crowning of Izdubar now occurs amidst great rejoicing — which brings to mind the Triumphal Entry into the City of Peace upon the way of the Christ Initiation. To the accompaniment of music from harps and lutes, the hero descends from his chair and bows "before the sacred altar of the Sun and prays to Akkad's holy one."

Initiation by Fire renders the Initiate immune to obsession or any of the hypnotic influences of evil. Hence, the triumphant chant of Izdubar: "From all who invoke evil spells the Holy Fire makes immune." He is answered by singing vestals: "From dross thy fire changes thee to purity. Bless our Fire King, round him shine, with heaven's vast sublimity."

The sixth tablet, recounting the love of Ishtar and Izdubar, correlates with Virgo, the month dedicated to the virgin Goddess-Mother of all world religions. In the Akkadian calendar the sixth month was termed "the month of the errand of Ishtar." This tablet is in fairly good condition and lends itself to a more accurate translation than any of those preceding.

Amidst an enchanting garden scene, the beautiful Ishtar, accompanied by two maids, joy and Seduction, awaits Izdubar. "A radiant vision all white and gold, Ishtar greets him and love spreads for Izdubar its sweetest lure." She parts the azure waves and bids him follow her into the waters. Initiation by Water teaches control of the emotions, here typified in Izdubar's temptation.

Izdubar remains steadfast when "Lo, the goddess is transformed, her crown shines like the Sun and over her dazzling robe a halo falls ..... Above her brow there gleams a single star."

The descent of Ishtar into Hades and her re-ascent into heaven was a most important Mystery of the Babylonian School, for it involved the inner significance of the four Sacred Seasons. Ishtar (Venus) follows the course of the Sun, remaining in heaven six months of the year and in the nether world (earth) during the other six months. Light and darkness (change of seasons) accompany her journeying as light or darkness accompanies the aspirant upon his journey through life, according as his choice rests with spirit or with flesh (higher or lower feminine). The legend of Ishtar and Izdubar is the story of all mankind in the great quest for wisdom, whereby each ego learns to distinguish the true from the false, the real from the unreal.

The seventh tablet correlates with Libra, month of the Autumn Equinox when earth is brought under the sway of winter's darkness. This step is marked by the grief of Izdubar for the death of Heabani. Beings of angelic origin cannot know death — which is but a separation — so the poet writes: "Light of love which death touched not lingered upon his face."

Izdubar now begins his journey to find the great Being (translated God) who escaped the Flood. Xisuthrus, it will be remembered, was the Babylonian Noah whose life and experience were an almost exact parallel of Noah's in the biblical story of the Deluge. He was one of the ten antediluvian kings noted for longevity. Noah, who found favor in the eyes of the Lord for his good works, was chosen to become the leading pioneer and first type-pattern for the new Fifth Root Race, the Aryan peoples. Izdubar, through his labors, qualifies to serve this new race; therefore he is sent for instruction to Xisuthrus, who replaces Heabani as his teacher.

The hero's path now leads through realms of darkness and despair comparable to the dread pictures of Dante's Inferno. He passes in safety by means of an uplifted torch — the awakened inner light that

lighteth every man that cometh into the world. In these dark realms Izdubar meets the God of Hope, who appears so that "hope may rule despair." On one occasion Izdubar slips and drops his torch. An evil spirit quickly snatches it up and throws it into the black waters. This is a familiar experience in the life of every aspirant. The hero succeeds in regaining his torch and struggles on, when suddenly he sees light beyond: "Trees, pure amber from their trunks distill, sweet perfumes groves and arbors fill." He glides into this enchanted world where trembling leaves chant arias. These are some of the experiences belonging to glorious inner-plane feasts of the Autumn Equinox.

The eighth tablet depicts the battle with Khubaba in the Black Forest. Khubaba is an evil giant like Goliath who confronted David. The conflict and the victory in the two instances are spiritual parallels. Scorpio, the eighth sign of the Zodiac, is represented by both the scorpion and the eagle. Under its influence the ego experiences the full of the opposites; here it is he must choose whether he wishes to be identified with the old Adam or the new Christ-man.

In preparation for the conquest, Izdubar eschews the flesh of birds and all food prepared by fire. He repairs to the temple at night to pray, where he entreats the masculine Bel and the feminine Ishtar for success. In other words, he endeavors to strengthen and equalize the positive (masculine) principles of courage, perseverance, and fearlessness with the negative (feminine) principles of love, gentleness and forbearance. Ishtar bids him begin the conflict in the harvest month at the Full Moon, meaning that the disciple should learn to attune himself with the spiritual inflow of cosmic force that occurs at the sacred season of the Autumn Equinox.

From the veiled inner shrine of the oracle, Ishtar sweetly sings: "The harvest month propitious shines." And Bel makes answer: "The Moon god on thy right shall ride, and Samos (Sun) on thy left" — a promise

of success found in many esoteric legends as the standing still of the Sun and Moon. The true esoteric interpretation of this is here revealed as the abiding protective presence of the Sun God and Moon God respectively, or the achievement of that divine polarity which is the mark of Adeptship.

Fortified with righteous power and sustained by the influence of the stars in their courses, nothing but victory is possible, whether an enemy be without or within. Izdubar is victorious. The narrative continues: "Khubaba fled when he beheld the gods rushing from their bright abodes." In other words, the great transformation under Scorpio has been accomplished. The forces of the lower man have been lifted and sublimated into a twofold power of the soul.

The ninth tablet is concerned with the coronation of Izdubar and his divine at-one-ment with Ishtar, who now sues for his hand. The ninth sign is Sagittarius, ruler of the higher mind. When an aspirant learns to embrace the highest potencies of this sign he is ready and worthy to attend the great spiritual feast symbolized in the New Testament by the Marriage Feast at Cana, wherein water was changed to wine. At this banquet of spirit those qualified must know the divine union in which one is crowned by the spirit (Goddess) of Love.

"Queen Ishtar with her train in splendor comes, her radiant form with glistening gems ablaze. The richest robes of God her form enshrines, with every charm of heaven and earth she shines."

With gracious salutation she greets the noble Izdubar with words the Queen of Sheba might well have spoken to Solomon: "Thy wisdom far surpasses all mankind. In thee, O King, no blemish do I find."

The ecstasy and divine at-onement that await a victorious candidate at the end of the long and difficult Path is compensation for all the trials and sufferings he has encountered along the way. In this high

adventure of spirit he hears the words spoken by the world's Blessed Master: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The tenth tablet describes Izdubar's new birth as he bathes in the Eternal Waters of the eastern sea and gains conscious immortality. Capricorn, the tenth sign of the Zodiac, heralds the Sacred Season of the Winter Solstice and the coming of the divine Messenger of Light.

In the mystic sunrise *Mua*, his higher self, leads Izdubar to a bright place, beside a jasper sea, to a sacred altar where golden flames are curling. There he prays: "Thou spirit of this man arise, come forth with joy, come to the skies!"

Izdubar is now ready to enter into the presence of the great Teacher whom he has come so far to seek. Beneath an arch of gems he espies a form immortal, the Sage who has defied death. As he advances, the Sage welcomes him: ... Tis Izdubar who comes to me, and lives." To wisdom's hall the Sage leads the hero. In the room of scrolls is spread a feast consisting of celestial bread and wine, the ambrosia and nectar of the Immortals.

The feast has reference to the ceremonial of the Winter Solstice. The supper of bread and wine is the Feast of Memory, whereby an Illumined One reads the eternal scrolls (Akashic Records). He sees how, in the beginning, spirit united with matter and how the invisible becomes visible. These scrolls proclaim the truths uttered by another Illumined One who trod this same Path centuries later and in an identical transport of spirit declared: "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

The eleventh tablet correlates with Aquarius and the impulse of the Aquarian Age. This tablet describes the destruction of the Old in the waters of the Flood and the founding of the New as the Ark comes to rest upon the dry land of a new continent. Xisuthrus (Noah) and all the

inhabitants of the Ark set vessels by sevens upon the altar of sacrifice and chant in thanksgiving.

Seven was, the most sacred of all numbers to the Babylonians, and it figures prominently in the Deluge legend. The Ark was seven days upon the waters and seven days upon the mountain. Seven is the number of regeneration by means of the four (matter) being purified through the three (spirit). The Flood was brought on by the sins of man but a purified remnant was preserved to found the new Aryan or Fifth Root Race.

Izdubar, now an Initiate-King-Priest, is commissioned as a teacher of the new race. Under the guidance of Xisuthrus he builds his own ship in which he passes unharmed through the flood waters, although he is pursued by a dread spectre. The highest ideal given in the Noachic Dispensation was the building of a soul body (the Golden Wedding Garment of Paul). One who learns to function in this luminous vehicle overcomes death. In Hebrew the word Ani means both ship and me or myself.

Izdubar spends thirty days and fifteen days upon the sea. The number forty-five adds to nine, the number of mankind and the Path of Attainment for the Aryan peoples. The biblical "rainbow of promise" is symbolized in the vision of Izdubar: "How bright this land doth look beside the sea . . . At last I'll reach the glittering domes. Waters of Dawn sweep o'er the sea. The blissful haven shines upon their way."

The twelfth tablet contains the lament of Izdubar. having gained heaven, he must now renounce it that he may serve his fellowmen upon the earth. Mua gives him a choice between remaining in celestial spheres, free from the great wheel of necessity (birth and death), and returning as a Brother of Compassion to minister upon this sorrowful star.



Pisces, the twelfth sign, is the point of self-renunciation, the Garden of Sorrow wherein personal life dies to be resurrected into universal life. Izdubar says: "My dear love, I must return to men. My duty calls me to my throne again."

Mua replies: "Our spirits often leave this glorious land and, invisible, reyrun to earth to stand amid its flowers and beneath its skies. Thus knowest spirits come to us from earth."

Izdubar's lament is that he must now be in the of it: "From these dear planes how can my soul depart? Thy love is sweeter than all earthly things. I would I were not crowned a king, away from this bright land. Here would I ever stay. When my allotted time shall end, hitherward how happy I will wend."

The encircling and protecting aura of the higher self is evidenced in Muds parting words: "Where thou goest my love will guard thee. Leave thy heart with Mua here."

The impersonal love of Pisces is voiced by Izdubar when he replies: "Thy presence in our soul imparts a sweeter joy than selfishness can give. . . . True love in palace or hovel is the same sweet joy, the holiest of sacred things . . . for this (attainment) we worship Ishtar."

In correlating the experiences of Izdubar with the twelve zodiacal signs there has been given at the same time a kaleidoscopic preview of a neophyte's initiatory experiences when he turns toward the East and continues his quest for Light. Externals may vary and change with different ages, races and climes, but the eternal truths encountered on the Path remain forever the same.

The closing lines are descriptive of the Babylonian Temple wherein Izdubar concludes his great testing and becomes one with that "true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world":

"Brazen gates lead to the Temple's side,  
The stairs ascend and up the stages glide.  
The first is painted of darkest blue;  
The second stage is of orange hue;  
And crimson third-from whence a glorious view.  
A thousand turrets far beneath are spread;  
Golden harvest sweep away in sight;  
And orchards, vines, and on the left and right,  
Euphrates stream, a broad and silver band,  
Sweeps grandly through the golden glowing land,  
Till like a thread of silver still in sight  
It meets the Tigris gleaming in the light.  
The fourth stage, plated o'er with beaten gold,  
We pass, and Topaz, the fifth, we behold.  
The sixth of azure blue; to seventh glide,  
That glows with silver summit. There the Gods abide."

*Seek ye the Truth? From me the Truth receive;  
And thus instructed, listen and believe.*

*— Zartusht Ne-Mah.*

**— Corinne Heline**