

What is the nature of the gods in the "epic of gilgamesh"?



The Epic of Gilgamesh is considered to be one of the most captivating and really worthwhile pieces of ancient works in Mesopotamian literature. The years of its original creations and creators are still unknown, and this is what makes this epic poem so unique and interesting to read.

Lots of themes are raised in this poem as it should be in any epic work: the fear of death, desire to have unbelievable powers and control all people in the world, path that may lead to complete disaster or necessary wisdom, and the steps, which lead to success or failures (George, 2003, p. xiii). The attention to god's role in the lives of ordinary people is certainly paid in this work.

Very often, in epic poems, gods are presented as selfish and powerful creatures, which have unbelievable control over people; however, The Epic of Gilgamesh, the epic poem under consideration, discovers a true nature of gods and their care for humans and proves that even the creation of Enkidu, in contrast to Gilgamesh's cruelty, has a kind of catch that helps gods to get more power over people.

In order to help people and save them from terrible and powerful Gilgamesh, gods decided to create " valiant Enkidu/born in Silence, endowed with strength of Ninurta" (Kovacs & Carnahan, 1998).

However, such decision may be analyzed from different perspectives and demonstrate how selfish the gods are. They create a wild creature in order to prevent another person from being more powerful than gods are: for people, they create a kind of savior, who may challenge the proud Gilgamesh; for themselves, they create another slaver, who will serve them sooner or later.

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In The Epic of Gilgamesh, gods have unbelievable connection to people: people get a chance to learn something from gods, and gods can easily analyze the nature of people and use their values in for own benefits. From the very beginning, gods directed own powers to protect, support, and help people to live and achieve the desirable success.

However, time is the only unchangeable factor that can change everything. With time, gods realized that their powers are really huge and they can not only care for humans but also control them. " When the gods created man they allotted to him death, but life they retained in their own keeping" (Brown, 1996). This is why gods' care for people may be viewed from different perspectives, and some of these perspectives are not that positive and caring.

Did gods really care for people in The Epic of Gilgamesh or it was one more mask to present and get more time for control and power? Sometimes, blind faith in gods prevented people to comprehend true intentions of gods. People asked for help and saving, and gods could provide them with the necessary savior, but this time, turned that very savior into one more means to order and control. The Epic of Gilgamesh demonstrates that nature of the gods and their support has always one direction - to control.

In general, true nature of gods' intentions and care for people, described in The Epic of Gilgamesh may be interpreted in many different ways.

Considering the fact that each person has his/her own points of view and moral principles, it is impossible to make one general conclusion as for nature of gods' care for people, but still, it is necessary to remember that

selfishness and desire to have more power will be inherent to any person and those people and creature, who surround them.

Brown, Arthur, A. *Storytelling, the Meaning of Life, and The Epic of Gilgamesh*. 1996. Web.

George, Andrew. *The Epic of Gilgamesh: the Babylonian Epic Poem and Other tests in Akkadian and Sumerian*. Penguin Classics, 2003.

Kovacs, Maureen, Gallery & Carnaham, Wolf. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. 1998. 28 Aug. 2009, from