

Gnosis 6: Yaldabaoth

by Wes Penre, May 26, 2020



In the last article, we told the initial story about Pistis Sophia, one of the Aeons in the Pleroma, whose main attribute is the search for Wisdom. Her consort's attribute is *desire*. This attribute is what is driving Sophia to gain Wisdom—she wants to know who the Monad is and experience things from the Monad's perspective. However, she wanted to do this by herself and without her consort—it was meant to be an “inner journey.”

When Pistis Sophia noticed what she had created, she was flabbergasted because her creation was not what she had expected. In the center of her creation was a being that was created from her Spirit but lacked knowledge—it was ignorant and strange-looking. Like you and I would perhaps do if a big spider would crawl on our arm and we would shake it off, Sophia “cast out” her creation and separated it from herself.

When she saw (the product of) her will, it was different, a model of a lion-faced serpent. His eyes were like flashing fires of lightning. She cast him out from her, outside of those places so that none among the immortals might see him, for she had created him in ignorance.

--The Secret Book of John

This creature “fell” into the Void that came along with Sophia’s creation into the lower dimensions (vibrations), perceived by Sophia as being external to her and the rest of the Pleroma, although it was still part of the Pleroma, which encompasses everything (All That Is). At first, Sophia’s creation was darkness/ignorance—a manifestation expressing what was still unknown to her. It was like a realm of shadows—it was limitless chaos¹. However, “[m]atter did not come out of chaos, but it was in chaos, existing in a part of it.”²

Metaphorically speaking, when this being became more and more “distant” from Sophia, who had spontaneously disowned this creature, and it had slowed down in its outward movement, its environment became more solid, and the physical, energetic universe was created.

One of Sophia’s initial thoughts was to protect the Pleroma from her unexpected creation, so she built a veil/boundary between the Pleroma and her creation. However, parts of her essence thus became stuck within the creation. The creature was manifesting as a part of Sophia, and it had some of her Spirit but was ignorant. Sophia had created with only half of herself, excluding her consort, and therefore, both the creature and the entire universe that came about from her creation are parts of her, and to that degree she is stuck in her own creation. In other words, this creature, and the universe, called the *Kenoma* in the Valentinian Gnostic texts (and in the Wes Penre Papers called the *KHAA*), are Sophia.

The metaphor used in the Gnostic texts to describe this creation is that Sophia “cast away” her creation outward, and, consequently, this movement turned into a universe of energy. For Sophia to be able to participate and explore her own creation, she left a part of her in the upper realm of the Universe—the section closest to the Pleroma. This aspect of her became the souled Sophia, in the Gnostic texts called Zoë Sophia³. This aspect of her is what I called the Orion Queen, Queen of the Stars, and the Mother Goddess in the Wes Penre Papers. Zoë Sophia was now able to move freely within her own creation. Now the reader who is familiar with the Wes Penre Papers might realize why the entire Universe/KHAA/Kenoma is feminine in nature, and so is the soul.

Sages gave the soul a feminine name. In nature she is also feminine. She even has a womb.

-- The Exegesis of the Soul

¹ See the gospel, “On the Origin of the World.”

² *Ibid.*

³ The “ë” symbol denotes that the *e* should be pronounced.

Pistis Sophia, the Aeon still in the Pleroma, noticed that the creature she had accidentally created was alone in this vast void. He was androgynous but a half-creation, as he was ignorant (we will call this creature "he" because that's how he decided to portray himself most of the time from thereon). Because Sophia had been on a quest to find God, this creature therefore thought the *he* was God. After all, there was no one else in this void besides him. Instead of approaching his Mother, he withdrew and became envious that there was someone stronger than him.⁴

When Zoë Sophia saw this creature being all alone, she called upon him and told him to approach her so she could enlighten him, but the creature didn't come. However, he now realized that he was not entirely alone—there was someone else, besides him. He saw the likeness of Sophia as a reflection in the universal water but didn't know where she came from and who she was.

He did not see her face, but he saw in the water the likeness that spoke with him. And from that voice he called himself Yaldabaoth...he was like a lion. And after he came to possess authority over matter, Pistis Sophia withdrew up to her light.

--On the Origin of the World

Realizing that this creature would not come forth, she put him upon a throne within a "cloud" and gave him authority to rule over her creation—the physical universe.

And she placed a throne in the midst of the cloud in order that no one might see him except the holy Spirit, who is called the mother of the living. She named him Yaltabaoth. This is the Chief Ruler, the one who got a great power from his Mother.

--The Secret Book of John (long version)

In this sense, the creature became God of the material realm. His name became Yaldabaoth, and in the Wes Penre Papers, one of his titles is En.ki. He is also called the Demiurge in the Gnostic texts—demi meaning "half" and urge meaning "a strong desire or impulse." He is a half-creation, created from Sophia's desire/impulse to know and gain Wisdom. This is what was implied in the Wes Penre Papers, when I wrote that En.ki is the firstborn son of the Queen. He was, symbolically speaking, born from an "unfertilized egg," i.e. there was no "intercourse" between the Queen and her consort. This was a metaphor for Pistis Sophia creating without her "masculine" consort, and the result became Yaldabaoth/En.ki—born only from the feminine side of Pistis Sophia. "Intercourse" does

⁴ On the Origin of the World

not mean sexual intercourse as we look at it—intercourse in other realms usually means the interaction and correlation between a beings' androgynous sides, such as Sophia not having "intercourse"/interaction with her consort—the other half of herself.

When the ruler saw his greatness, he saw only himself; he saw nothing else, except water and darkness. Then he thought that he alone existed. His thought was made complete by means of the word, and it appeared as a spirit moving to and fro over the waters. And when that spirit appeared, the ruler separated the watery substance to one region and the dry substance to another region. From matter he created a dwelling place for himself and called it heaven.

--On the Origin of the World

In the next article, we will discuss how Yaldabaoth copied and mimicked what he saw as a likeness of the Pleroma in the waters when Sophia appeared in the waters. From that vision, he created his own "Pleroma" in certain sections of the Void.

References:

On the Origin of the World

The Secret Book of John (short version)

The Secret Book of John (long version)

The Exegesis of the Soul