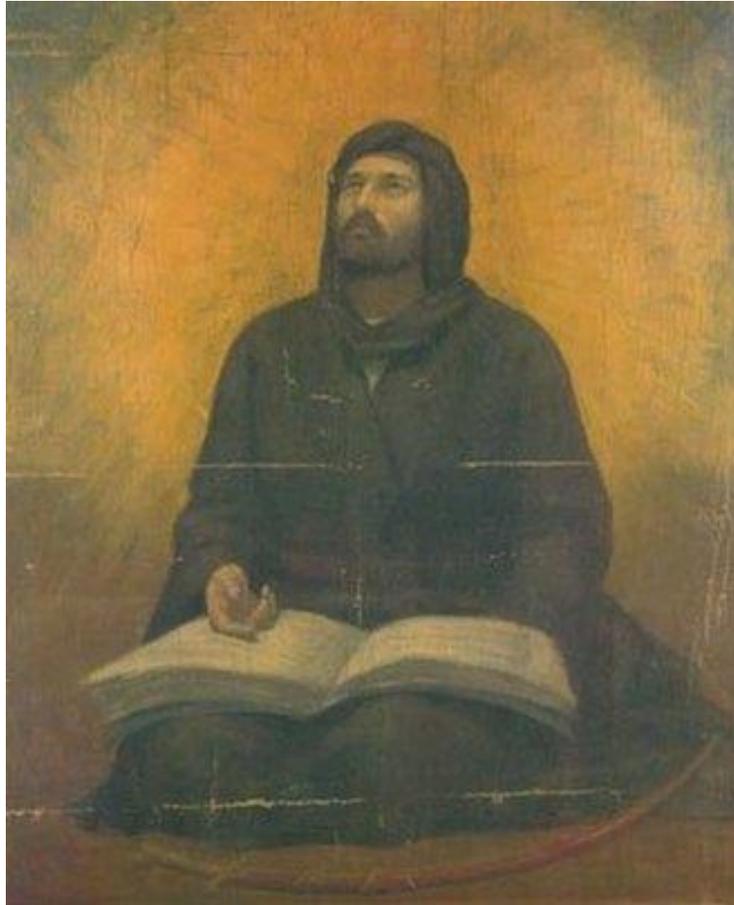


## Gnostic Musings #3: Gnosis and Creation

by Sahib, July 22, 2020



*This article was written by a good friend and fellow forum member of ours, who goes under the pseudonym “Sahib.” This is, in our opinion, a well-written and well-researched article, and we want to include it here. After all, this Gnosis Musings Series is all about people musing together, and therefore, we welcome other’s perspective of the gnostic texts, as well.*

**I**n recent years, Gnosticism has become very popular, also due to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Codex in 1948. But before I explain what Gnosticism means, I will first have to make clear what it is.

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Many people are familiar with the Christian faith, the Bible and Jesus Christ, and we all have our opinions about it depending on our religious background or simply because of our parenting, and others as a conscious choice. Very often you hear people, out of interest in the meaning of life, take the stories in the Bible as a guide to know more about it.

For a long time, long before Christianity came into being, some people thought about the meaning of life and sought answers to the longstanding questions such as, who am I, where do I come from, where do I go after death? These people, who were often called philosophers, were very busy with these questions and especially the Greek philosophers are the ones who stuck closest to us. Men like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were all thinkers, who often combined their information from various corners of the world and forged it into a whole. But that's not what I want to talk about here.

The only thing we have to take into account is the fact that what was taught by the central figure of Christianity, Jesus Christ, was a teaching that was already hundreds and perhaps thousands of years old. During his time on Earth, there were already many variations of knowledge, called gnosis in Greek. And several of these ancient teachings are interwoven in Christian doctrine.

Christian faith began about 2,000 years ago and has survived the centuries in almost the same format as it started. What one does not consider is that it has evolved into what we know today. I would like to say a few words about that briefly.

As is always the case with people, there are proponents and opponents of a certain vision of life issues. So too with the gnosis/knowledge of that time. As a result, many bishops discussed in 325 AD which texts and writings would be included in a collection called the Bible. And thus, the choice was made to publish the book we know today.

Over time, some 2,000 years later, the idea of different visions within Christian teaching disappeared somewhat into the background, with the occasional small revival in which the separate texts were bundled in the Apocryphal Scriptures. But with the discovery of the Nag Hammadi Scriptures it became clear that there were also many other versions of the Christian teaching, and after translations of these mostly in Greek and

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Coptic papyrus scrolls became publicly accessible, one could finally take a closer look at the time of 2,000 years ago and find out what these other interpretations actually meant.

It should be noted that among the Nag Hammadi Scriptures there are hermetic writings, which are Greek gnosis or knowledge. The purely gnostic writings, that are a result of transcendental insight and are also often historically and culturally bound, can be considered Christian influenced. However, both know Christ as the Redeemer. The Nag Hammadi Scriptures also contain Gnostic-Christian texts that are gnosis but clearly not gnostic. Sounds a bit confusing but it shows that the Nag Hammadi Scriptures are a collection of texts that contain Greek gnosis and also texts that contain Christian gnosis. So texts that see Christ as the Redeemer and texts that don't interpret it that way.

Before I tell you what gnosis is all about, I would like to give a summary to clarify the differences in perceptions.

Gnosis is the Greek word for knowledge, especially insight as a result of that knowledge. It is not an outer, cognitive knowledge but much more an 'inner' knowledge. And as far as that is concerned it is already very old, ever since mankind existed, people searched for knowing, for knowledge within, inner knowing.

Gnosis is an experience, not a philosophy.

Gnosis is not a goal to pursue but it's a path.

Gnosis leads you inward and then outward again.

Gnosis is an inner connection with God that will never be broken again.

Because the word God often becomes a 'loaded' word, you can also say that by gnosis of your soul, you also have gnosis of the origin of your soul, the 'aliveness' of your soul, your spirit.

Gnosis is a knowledge and a connection of your spirit with the Spirit of the Supreme.

Unfortunately, Christian doctrine has personified the Godhead and thereby placed God outside of man, somewhere in Heaven. And that is the main difference with Gnosis that there is a connection of the Divine within you.

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Let's take a closer look at the information from the Nag Hammadi Scriptures to get an overview of what we are dealing with.

God, the source of life, the primordial energy, the power from which everything originates, and to which everything returns. God, the Source, represented here as masculine, transcends the masculine and the feminine and is incomprehensible in His totality because He's always more than what can be known. For the spiritual seeker, however, that primal force is somewhat known by the forces (Aeons) that emanate from Him.

In the Bible we can read that God is love. From the stillness of 'absolute being,' comes a dynamic movement of radiance. Like the sun, while we catch the sun rays and cherish it and let our crop blossom. The sun is the stillness, the rays are the movement. This is how God, the peace, the silence, moves. Countless forces, emanations, emerge from the 'primal principle'. Gnostics gave these forces names, such as Truth, Wisdom, Reason, Goodness, Life, Love, Communion, Providence, and many, many more. In Gnosticism, these names were also referred to as Aeons, eternities, sometimes they are also called Angels.

In many ancient writings about the creation and genesis of the world and man, these forces are often called emanations, coming out of God. God is flowing over, so to speak. Many writings also talk about the 'uncreated One' creates 'things' into existence. They also talk of conceptions, God generates forces that reflect His existence.

All these reflections of God together form an environment, also referred to as the 'world of light' but often as the Pleroma, which means fullness.

But there's no fullness without emptiness. Light doesn't exist without darkness. A statement of Jesus in the 'Conversation with the Redeemer' says: "If one doesn't stand in the darkness, he won't be able to see the light." (NHC, Conversation with the Redeemer, fragment 133, last sentences).

### About Creation

Let's talk about what is written in the Nag Hammadi Scriptures about creation and let us start in the fullness of the region God resides. In the Pleroma, there's fullness and there's light and Source wants to become

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aware of himself. Everything is present in unconsciousness and is still at peace, but that will change.

In the Gnostic creation myths, which show parallels with wisdom literature and many religious narratives all over the world, a fall is taking place. Some say that one of the last forces of God 'starts creating for himself'. Some call it the devil or Satan; others speak of Lucifer and Gnostics preferred to call it Sophia. Don't forget God remains present in this event also.

At the edge of the Pleroma, an emanation of Source creates something as an individual which isn't according to the Divine principle. The forces of God, the emanations all have a 'masculine' side and a 'feminine' side. There are no men and women, these emanations are purely spiritual forces and they have no forms.

Sophia in her feminine capacity creates without the consent of her male companion. So, her creation cannot be perfect. It appears to consist of 'darkness', of chaos. And chaos must be ordered and that is why Sophia appoints a ruler over this darkness who will bring order. He starts to create other gods, also called lower angels or archons. They together create a cosmos, a zodiac, a visible world. This ruler and his created powers often described as his sons who he created, create the planets, the earth, and finally man.

The Gnostics considered the creation story, which is described in the Bible in Genesis, to be a second creation. It is clear to them that Genesis is preceded by another era, the Pleroma. As a consequence, the Elohim, the gods from Genesis, are essentially lower gods. Yahweh is called a 'jealous God' because 'above' him there is a higher God, an 'immortal Light Being'. And man, as far as the body and soul is concerned, is a creation of a demiurge, a lower god, but the essential core, the spirit of man, is inextricably connected to the Pleroma.

Originally the spirit of man is a spiritual force, and in the myth of the creation it is represented as the Spirit of Sophia is blown into the body of man. Through Gnosis man can discover his spirit. To do this, he has to transform and transcend his material state and his psychic, which are products of the demiurge and his archons.

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Some interpret this as a negative appreciation of creation and begin a rigorous, devout walk of life without passionate desires. Some Nag Hammadi writings and also other apocryphal writings tend in this direction. But it could also be interpreted as a spiritual 'rebirth', which can also be found in many Nag Hammadi writings, by letting go of matter and its emotional ties. This is a different view than denying matter and trying to escape from it. You could say it's living in the world without being of the world. This means 'freedom of mind'.

Jesus gave his disciples in the NHC the advice:

"Listen to the word! Understand the gnosis! Love life!" (Secret Book of James, fragment 9, Understand the Light)

As long as we don't experience "freedom of mind", and haven't approached the 'place of Truth', we remain a prisoner in the underworld of the demiurge and his archons. Gnosis teaches us to transcend these forces to achieve salvation, in other words, Gnosis is a movement, an ongoing process.

The first paragraph was about Gnosis, starting with Source and its Aeons and the Pleroma. The second paragraph was about the creation that took place afterwards. This third paragraph, which is part of the other two, discusses man's path back to Source based on what the gnostic literature says about it.

I think that's how it was originally meant to be, but something has changed in the way souls can return to Source. Instead of as the original was intended, there is now a 'shortcut', through a 'hole' in the Grid to return to Source. Not directly to the Pleroma, but to Orion, the 8th, the Ogdoad, and via the 9th, the Ennead<sup>1</sup>, back to the fullness of God in the Pleroma.

In order to get a clear picture of this, we will first have to take a closer look at the original intention of the soul returning back home, which I have called "The Journey to Heaven".

### **The Journey to Heaven**

When searching about Gnosticism on the internet you probably find many images depicting 'the journey through the spheres of heaven'. Spirit

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<sup>1</sup> The Ninth Heaven *[editor's note]*

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accompanied the soul while descending from the 'world of light' through the different spheres of the Kenoma. When at the end of his life the body has been left behind and perishes, the soul which strives for salvation will go exactly the same way up as it has descended. By doing so, it will pass through all seven heavenly spheres. During the descent through these spheres, the soul was clothed with the properties of the sphere in involved.

Every sphere is guarded by archons and will try to block the ascending soul his passage and try to keep this soul trapped in matter to prevent this soul from traveling back to the 8th sphere, the Ogdoad or to the 9th sphere, the Ennead. In Poemandres, the first treatise of the Corpus Hermeticum, this is explained very clearly:

“First of all, at the dissolution of the material body, you surrender the body to the change, and your outward appearance becomes invisible, and your personality, which no longer has any charisma, you surrender to the demon. The senses of the body go back to their own sources, they become part of them again, and rejoin their energies. And the drift and desire return to senseless nature.

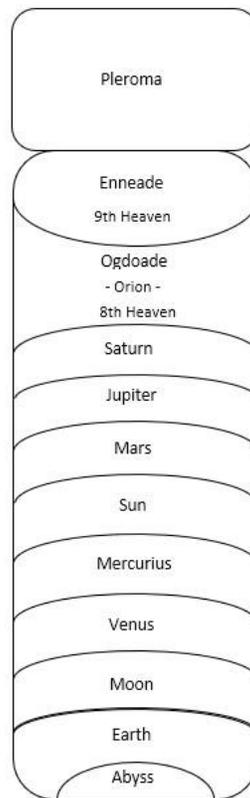
And thus man ascends through the assembly of the spheres: to the first sphere he gives his capacity for growth and reduction, to the second the instrument of evil, the now ineffective cunning, to the third the powerless deceit of desire, to the fourth the outward display of the mastery of society, now without greed, to the fifth the ungodly overconfidence of the rash madness, to the sixth the wicked drives of wealth, which now gives no more control, and to the seventh sphere the lie which sets traps.

And then, in the eighth sphere, man, stripped of astral influences, comes into possession only of his actual self, and together with the spiritual beings he sings of the Father. And all those present rejoice at his arrival, and when he has become like his companions, he also hears how certain Powers above the eighth sphere sing to God with a sweet voice. Then they ascend in rank to the Father, surrender themselves to the Powers, and, having become Powers themselves, they come to God. That is the happy ending for those who possess the gnosis: to become God!”

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(The Corpus Hermeticum - I. Poemandres, the Shepherd of Men, 24-26 in modern translation)

According to the text, man must learn the 'passwords' in his life in order to ascend along the Powers and Guards, the archons. What are these 'passwords'? Esoterically, they are the result of all the experiences the soul has had in the life that has just ended. While the soul descends, each sphere gave its influence, 'clothed' the soul on his way to Earth. If one would leave the Earth the same way he came, and that specific influence or 'clothing' wouldn't have been transformed, it would be recognizable for that particular sphere.



In an Old Christian Apocryphal scripture, called 'Paul's Revelation', the apostle Paul describes how souls ascend and are held back by guardians, angels, at the gates of heaven:

“And an angel said, "Where are you going, soul? Do you dare enter Heaven? Wait, we'll see if there's any of us in you. "Alas, we'll find nothing in you.

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Less well is a wicked soul held back by... the other powers, who said to her, "Where do you want to go, unhappy soul? Do you dare rush into Heaven? Stand still, and we can see if we have something of ourselves in you, since we don't see a 'holy helper' with you..."

In another script belonging to the Nag Hammadi Codex you can read something similar:

"The soul spoke, saying, "What sin was it that I committed in the world?" The toll-collector who dwells in the fourth heaven replied, saying, "It was not right to commit all those lawless deeds that are in the world of the dead". The soul replied, saying, "Bring witnesses! Let them show you in what body I committed lawless deeds. Do you wish to bring a book to read from?"

And the three witnesses came. The first spoke, saying, "Was I not in the body the second hour [...]? I rose up against you until you fell into anger and rage and envy." And the second spoke, saying, "Was I not in the world? And I entered at the fifth hour, and I saw you and desired you. And behold, then, now I charge you with the murders you committed." The third spoke, saying, "Did I not come to you at the twelfth hour of the day when the sun was about to set? I gave you darkness until you should accomplish your sins." When the soul heard these things, it gazed downward in sorrow. And then it gazed upward. It was cast down. The soul that had been cast down went to a body which had been prepared for it. And behold, its witnesses were finished."

(The Apocalypse of Paul, fragment 20)

In the gospel of Mary Magdalene, which is very battered with several missing pieces of text, you can read a description of the ascension of the soul and in this case it's the soul of Jesus. It's very interesting to read I assure you.

The deeper meaning behind these mysterious words lies the message that man has a task in to change and transform while still being alive. If, for example, someone doesn't learn to overcome his temper in this life, his soul will not get past the guardian, the archon of the temper at death, because the 'archon of the temper' 'still finds something of his sphere in this soul.

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He who has overcome his temper in his life knows the 'password' to pass. If he didn't, the soul will have to return to Earth, reincarnate into another body, to get a 'second chance'. Eastern thoughts about reincarnation and karma are also found in gnosis.

In non-biblical early Christian literature you will find many teachings of Jesus how to pass safely through the Powers of Heaven and ascend to the 'kingdom of the Father'.

Jesus said:

“If they say to you, “Where have you come from?”, say to them, “We have come from the light,

from the place where the light came into being by itself, established itself, and appeared in their image.”

If they say to you, “Is it you?”, say, “We are its children and the chosen of the living father.”

If they ask you, “What is the evidence of your father in you?”, say to them, “It is motion and rest.” (The Gospel of Thomas, 50)

To his brother James he says:

“James, behold, I shall reveal to you your redemption. When you are seized, and you undergo these sufferings, a multitude will arm themselves against you that <they> may seize you. And in particular three of them will seize you - they who sit (there) as toll collectors. Not only do they demand toll, but they also take away souls by theft. When you come into their power, one of them who is their guard will say to you, 'Who are you or where are you from?' You are to say to him, 'I am a son, and I am from the Father.' He will say to you, 'What sort of son are you, and to what father do you belong?' You are to say to him, 'I am from the Pre-existent Father, and a son in the Pre-existent One.' When he says to you, [...], you are to say to him [...] in the [...] that I might [...].”

'[...] of alien things?' You are to say to him, 'They are not entirely alien, but they are from Achamoth, who is the female. And these she produced as she brought down the race from the Pre-existent One. So

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then they are not alien, but they are ours. They are indeed ours because she who is mistress of them is from the Pre-existent One. At the same time they are alien because the Pre-existent One did not have intercourse with her, when she produced them.' When he also says to you, 'Where will you go?', you are to say to him, 'To the place from which I have come, there shall I return.' And if you say these things, you will escape their attacks."

(The (First) Apocalypse of James, fragment 33)

Summarizing: when the soul descends through the heavenly spheres into an earthly body, it will be covered with 'robes', a characteristic of the particular sphere. On the way back these 'robes' must have disappeared aka worked on during life on Earth. The soul must be stripped of these "blemishes" before it can ascend to "the eighth and ninth heavens" to enter the Pleroma with related souls.

Finally, a word about Sophia. If God is perfect in Himself and the Pleroma is a brilliant world of light, why did a separation have to take place? A separation that led to 'darkness and evil powers'. And why then is the perpetrator of all this called Sophia, wisdom?



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It is remarkable that in the Old Testament Wisdom is mentioned several times as a 'creative force'. The world is a creation of Wisdom, an idea many of us wouldn't understand. The deeper meaning behind this seems to be that Divine Wisdom provides the knowledge that God can only become aware of Himself through His 'likeness', i.e. man. Evolution offers man the possibility of a bodily form in which he can become conscious. Only when man is fully aware of his Divine state on Earth, he's able to transfer that awareness. Only then he can transform it, as Jesus says:

“When you make two into one, you will become human children.

When you say, ‘Mountain, move,’ the mountain will move.” (The Gospel of Thomas, 106)

To reach this Divine state is only possible, with self-knowledge. Knowledge of self leads to knowledge of all, to knowledge of God.

Jesus said:

” .... one who knows all but lacks within is utterly lacking.” (The Gospel of Thomas, 67)

Sylvanus (NHC) teaches us:

“For no one who wants to will be able to know God as he actually is, nor Christ, nor the Spirit, nor the chorus of angels, nor even the archangels, as well as the thrones of the spirits, and the exalted lordships, and the Great Mind. If you do not know yourself, you will not be able to know all of these.

Open the door for yourself, that you may know the One who is. Knock on yourself, that the Word may open for you.”

(The Teachings of Silvanus, fragment 117, almost at the end)

By learning to know yourself, man learns to know God and become conscious. That is the deepest essence of Gnosis. That knowledge (Gnosis) is the subject of almost all the writings found in the jug found in Nag Hammadi.

After having read this original plan of the salvation and returning to the 8th and 9th Heaven and finally to the Pleroma, we'll get an idea how complex and difficult it is for a soul to ascend home. This is why there are

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so few souls who accomplish this, especially since Yaldabaoth has immersed us so many times in a lower vibration, in more solid matter.

The original creation of the human soul group was meant to return to Orion, the Ogdoad, in 'one go'. This wasn't possible anymore after we had fallen so deeply into heavy dense matter.

I was very delighted to read in the WPP<sup>2</sup> that there was an 'easier' way to get back to Orion. As "John" the source of Wes Penre said, 'through a hole in the Grid'.

This could be the change of the divine plan to allow many more souls to return to Orion. But on closer examination, in my estimation, this won't yield many souls, so I'm not surprised at all that another possibility would come up also, and I've already brought that up in our latest discussion.

All souls, 'spirited-souls' and 'soul/spirits' are now allowed to return to the 'Ogdoad<sup>3</sup>' and there will be a preliminary assessment, and after a certain period of time (in my opinion 1,000 years) there will be a re-evaluation. This also applies to Yaldabaoth and some of his archons who have managed to enter the 'Ogdoad' by riding Avatars, they too will be kept 'on hold'.

Many of us already know the rest, which is based on information from Revelation 20, where Yaldabaoth and his archons and those that want to follow Yaldabaoth will end up in the Abyss.

This is my take on the 'Journey Home' for every soul to bring Sophia back to Her Divine fullness. Maybe I'm all wrong, but I enjoyed investigating all this.

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<sup>2</sup> The Wes Penre Papers, <https://wespenre.com/> [editor's note]

<sup>3</sup> The Eighth Heaven [editor's note]