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🌀 Gnosis 🌀 Gnosticism

"Ignorance is the mother of all evil." (*The Gospel of Philip*, the Gnostic papyri)

Gnosis - The Greek word meaning knowledge, also intended to mean spiritual elevation. The Gnostic position is the root of all occult philosophy. Gnosis, with Wisdom (Sophia), are the highest virtues and the path to immortality. Gnosis is the revelation of the higher world, not so much a knowing as a remembering of one's original nature, superior to matter, a remembering of one's identity and position, original purpose and origin. Through gnosis, a person knows that spiritual origin and destination are the same. The result of gnosis is a restoration to the everlasting part of one's self beyond the powers of Fate and Time. The Saviors, Divine Messengers who bring this revelation, remain strangers in this world of Time. Gnostics venerated the serpent because a Divine Messenger, disguised as a serpent, brought gnosis to Adam and Eve and taught them complete knowledge of the mysteries from on high.

A human soul is composed of three elements; hylic, psychic and spiritual. The spiritual element of a human can be perfected through gnosis. Hermeticism defined itself as a gnosis.

Gnosticism - "Lord, whence have thy disciples come, whither are they going, and what will they do down there?" This is the fundamental question which begins all Gnostic meditations. Gnosticism is an eclectic, mystical, religious and philosophical doctrine of early Christian times, at its height during the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. The Gnostics were the first mystics within the Christian environment who appear in the history of religions under the names of Gnostics and Hermetists.

At the root of Gnosticism is Dualism, the concept that the creation of the universe is brought about by the interplay of opposites; Light and Darkness, Male and Female, Truth and Error. Some Gnostics maintained that this interplay creates a kind of womb from which is born creation, and that built into creation are equal proportions of its parents, the opposites. From this comes the philosophy of the "middle ways." It is in the best interest of all created things to keep to the middle way, not favoring one opposite over the other.

The Gnostics are known for their professed belief that all things become the greater besmirched the closer they get to Earth. Their initiates received the Gnostic sacraments in

order to escape the corrupt influences of the planets and to return to the heavenly origin.

In an important Gnostic belief, this world of Time and Fate is accompanied by a parallel dimension of Timelessness. The temporal and the timeless are interactive opposites. The denial of the timeless, the unmanifest world, amounts to polarization toward a belief in death everlasting. The Gnostic Eugnostos taught that it is Faith in the invisible things which brings them manifest. Gnostics, especially Eugnostos, developed the theory that everything which exists in matter comes into being first as an idea or template upon which matter then patterns and substantiates itself. Everything that exists is composed of the corrupt and the incorruptible, the destructible and the indestructible, the spiritual and the material. The opposite of a Gnostic is an Agnostic (a-gnostic), a person who believes that nothing can be known first-hand about the existence of the spiritual world or about things outside of human physical experience.

Because the Gnostics believed in a direct, personal experience of the spiritual realms, and because many of their books were channeled, their literature is passionately subjective and richly diverse. They professed knowledge (gnosis), rather than Faith, to be the key to life's mysteries, and that such knowledge comes from spiritual insight gained through the inner mystical experience. Gnostics are the "sons of interior knowledge." Gnosis takes religion out of the realm of Faith and places it in the realm of personal experience. Gnosis brings a state of wakefulness contrasted with the nightmarish existence of those in ignorance. Christianity was an added element in the Gnostic religious environment.

The Gnostics were true eclectics. The Tomb of Aurelii, a burial tomb for Gnostics in Rome, unearthed in the early 20th century, is a testimonial to their eclecticism. On the walls of this tomb are scenes of the Last Supper juxtaposed to Odysseus, Penelope and Suiters; the Apostles John, James and Matthew are near the figures of Sophia and Mariamne. Adam and Eve receive gnosis from the Serpent near the Triad of the Pleroma.

The Gnostics appreciated any literature which expressed their beliefs. Because of their eclecticism and the subjectivity of their literature, and because of the appeal of their religious philosophy to the populations of the Mediterranean world, the Christian doctors branded them heretics and placed their books on the Index.

The Gnostics posed a serious throat to the Church that St. Paul had worked so hard to establish, a Church the Gnostics inadvertently established by spreading the name of Jesus throughout the ancient world. The Christian heresiologists furiously refuted Gnosticism, solidifying Christian theology into orthodoxy. Many Christian leaders of that time had been Gnostics and had abandoned that philosophical position. The Phoenix is one of the most important symbols of that era, and it probably represents both resurrection from death and resurrection of the Christian leaders from their own Gnostic ashes.

It was not until the Gnostic manuscripts were discovered that historians and scholars gained a good knowledge of the subject. Although there was a quantity of Christian writings refuting Gnosticism, these were deemed unreliable because it was believed they lacked objectivity.

Gnosticism was wide-spread during a period of time which is described as an important age in the development of human consciousness, that period in history before and after the birth and crucifixion of Jesus, when Rome ruled most of the civilized world. As far as the Gnostics, people of conscience, were concerned, the Sons of Darkness, the tyrannical Romans, were installed upon the throne of the world. Gnostics were people who were very sensitive to the problems of human destiny.

One of the main doctrines of Gnosticism relates that the Invisible Father emanated a Thought, which became the Mother. She fell into Matter from which she had to be rescued. The Gnostics conceived of the visible world as being the corrupt creation of unrighteous powers whose activity is recorded in Genesis, but meaning the opposite of its customary meaning. The Old Testament thus represents the doctrine of the falsity of the god of the Old Testament and of the Law to which humanity is subjected. Some Christian doctors expressed their belief that Mosaic Law was unfortunate, but necessary because humanity, by its deeds and thoughts, placed itself in need of subjugation to such laws.

Gnosticism makes an important contribution to the history of religion and to the history of philosophy by bringing ancient beliefs out of the dim corridors of time and infusing them with life. In Gnosticism, the Aeons of the Powers, ancient entities of the supernal universe as old as time, strive against each other to create the physical world, and by their very striving do so. Their continued striving keeps the world in motion. These eternal beings of the Light and the Darkness are emanations from the Supreme Unknowable Divinity. They are God's Victory, Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, Will, Thought and Word. They co-exist in beauty and harmony as a philosophical system. They are the occult forces of the universe.

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