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Hebdomad - The lower heavens of the material world. The Ogdoad is the higher world and the Ennead is a still higher world above. These are the three levels or categories of the universe. The Hebdomad, as the lower heavens of the material world, refers to the seven planets and their respective heavens. The Hebdomad also refers to the seventh heaven.

Hermes - Historically identified with Thoth (Tat). Hermes is the only Egyptian deity to be recognized as a prophet in Gnostic literature. The Sabians, a baptist sect of Mandaeans of Lower Mesopotamia, recognized Hermes as a prophet of the same stature and importance as Enoch, Seth, and Asclepius. Hermes wrote *The Wing*. He is also the spirit whom Tat channels in the *Authentic Discourse of Hermes to Tat*. In these traditions of the teachings of Tat by Hermes, Tat receives the teachings "upon the mountain," like Moses on Mt. Sinai. Scholars suggest that some Jewish myths were stolen by the Egyptians and stamped as written by Hermes.

In the Hermetic literature of alchemy and astrology, there is a predilection for themes touching on the miraculous discovery of secret texts inscribed on stone. In the Roman catacombs, there is the frequent occurrence of Hermes as the last name of those entombed there.

Hermes Trismegistus - Long considered the "Father of Alchemy" and the most important figure of alchemy through the ages. Many have researched the real identify of Hermes Trismegistus. The name may signify an ideology or school of thought rather than one single person. In Popular Hermeticism, Hermes Trismegistus is identical to the Egyptian god Thoth (Tat). This Hermes is also thought to be Hermes Mercurius of alchemy.

Trismegistus in translated variously to mean "Thrice-greatest," "Thrice-engendered," "Thrice-blessed," and "three parts of the philosophy of the whole world, poet, prince and philosopher." The Gnostic Naasenes venerated Hermes as the Word (Logos), who has expressed and fashioned the things that have been, that are, and that will be. Trismegistus may mean, as the Naasenes defined it, "the things that have been, that are and that will be." Trismegistus may mean "born, born again, and reborn."

The writings under the name of Hermes Trismegistus bear little relation to Gnosticism, yet the eclectic Gnostics included several Hermetic treatises in their buried library for future

generations to find. In *Authentic Discourse of Hermes to Tat*, Hermes, the Nous (Mind), tells his son Tat that he has seen that speech is impotent to reveal the mysteries and that the entire hierarchy of heaven sings the hymn in silence. The Gnostics may have liked this treatise in particular because it records the telepathic conversation of spirit guide and physical person, and because Hermes prophesies to Tat that the world (earth) will subside into disorder, marked by three seals - atheism, dishonor and unreason. The world will then end by calamity and be restored for a new cycle.

Historically, Hermes and Tat are considered to be the same person. Alchemically, they are symbolized as Mercurius, the Divine Messenger who is half-human and half-divine. It may be that the Hermes/Tat duality represents an instance of two souls occupying one body, that of Tat's.

The Hermes Trismegistus literature expresses a clear and tranquil Hellenic philosophy, Greek Hermeticism. This philosophy, to which Plotinus, for one, was devoted, regards creation as a beautiful, good and ordered universe. Gnosticism, tempered by Hellenism, becomes an expression of the sheer beauty of the world.

"He is not manifest, but invisible to those remaining with Limit. And he possesses four powers: a separator and a confirmer, a form-provider and a substance-producer." (*A Valentinian Exposition*, the Gnostic papyri)

Hermeticism - There is a distinction between Greek Hermeticism of Hermes Trismegistus and popular Hermeticism of astrology, magic and alchemy, elements of Fate and the occult. Greek Hermeticism sees the universe as a beautiful creation-in-progress. Hermeticism, of Egyptian appearance, is typified more by abstract reasoning than cosmogonies or evocation of prophets living at the dawn of human history. The Hermetic manuscripts, widely influential in the 3rd century CE, know nothing of the unrighteous creators or corrupt demiurge of early Common Era Gnosticism.

In modern times, popular Hermeticism is not traceable to Gnosticism, with its Persian and Chaldaean ideologies, but to alchemical literature and Jewish cabalistic sources of relatively easy access. An extensive alchemical iconography developed in the Western world from the 14th to the 18th centuries.

In *Poimandres*, a Hermetic treatise most like Gnosticism, the Nous (Mind, Intellect, Divine Genius) channels information on Dualism to the anonymous narrator. The Light is on high, the Darkness in below, coiled into spirals like a serpent. The Darkness is a moist abyss out of which fire arises. The Light sends a holy Word to cover up the lower inferior abyss where the fire flames up over the waters. The Nous, Poimandres, explains to the narrator the meaning of this vision of the Light and Dark and the place of transformation between them.

Out of the Light, the supreme Nous, came forth the Word, his son Nous the Father. Nous the Father, an androgyne, created with Life and Light a second Nous, the demiurge, god of fire and wind. The demiurge formed the seven rulers of the planetary circles, the masters of Fate. Through the association of the Word with the demiurge, the seven circles were made to revolve, and their rotation produced the lower elements and caused the birth of various animals. Then, the first Nous created a primordial man in his own image. This newly created Anthropos saw his own reflection in the water and on earth. Admiring it, he was lured into the abyss by an illusion and ensnared by matter. Thenceforth, humanity is a duality; mortal in body, immortal in soul. Nature then gave birth to seven terrestrial hermaphrodites. The divinity began to separate all the creatures which are bisexual into males and females. Thus began the humanity to which we belong. At death, the material body is abandoned and the soul re-ascends through the planetary circles, discarding layers of passions as though layers of clothing. These layers of passions had been taken on by the soul during its descent to the body that it was to animate at birth. The soul attains to the Ogdoad and becomes one with God, the goal to which Hermetic gnosis aspired.

"The holy spirit is in the revealed: it is below. It is in the concealed: it is above." (*The Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic papyri)

Holy Spirit - The heavenly partner with whom a union, a marriage, is formed. The Holy Spirit delivers its human partner from death and seals that soul so that it will no longer be capturable by the lower powers (Archons). Holy Baptism, a ritual much older than Christianity, is a purification by fire and by water to assist one to receive the heavenly partner, the Spirit.

"We rejoice because while we were in the body, You have made us divine through Your knowledge." (*The Prayer of Thanksgiving*, Gnostic papyri)

Isaac Luria, the 16th century cabalist, defined the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God that was left behind as an essence when God withdrew from the Creation, so that the universe would be free to follow the Process of Creation. The Holy Spirit is also named at-Taum (twin). In the *Pistis-Sophia*, the Holy Spirit visited Jesus while he was a child and mysteriously merged with him. The Holy Spirit is also called Zoe, Mother of the Living, and is sometimes described as feminine, and often symbolized as a dove.

In the *The Gospel according to Thomas*, a Gnostic manuscript, Jesus says, "He who has blasphemed the Father will be forgiven, and he who has blasphemed the Son will be forgiven: but he who has blasphemed the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven either on earth or in heaven."

Homer - Homeric texts were fashionable during the first centuries of our era. Homer's images of Hades have influenced Christian and Jewish concepts of hell. The *Odyssey*

attracted the attention of the Gnostics, particularly the episodes of Odysseus and Calypso, and Odysseus, Penelope, and the Suitors. The Greeks interpreted Homer's poems as allegorical. The Gnostics applied a mystical interpretation to The Odyssey: the experiences of Odysseus were interpreted as the soul wandering through the world here below; Calypso was interpreted to be the imprisoning body from which Odysseus did, and did not, want to escape; Penelope represented Philosophy, which Odysseus regained after Reason (Hermes) had secured his release from Calypso.

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