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Mandaeans - In the legends of the anti-Christian, Gnostic Mandaeans, a late Gnosticism sect, 60,000 Mandaeans were established by King Ardavan in the land of Medes, where the White Mountain (Mountain of Lights) is widely renown. On that mountain, Anosh-Uthra gave guidance and instruction to the child Yohanna, who is John the Baptist.

The Mandaean prophets were Enoch (Idris), Hermes and Seth, the son of Adam who they identified with Agathodaimon of Greek Hermetic literature. They called Shem Shum-Kushta and wrote of the ships of the sun and the moon. They believed Norea, the wife of Noah to be the mother of Shem. The eagle was the Mandaean symbol of the soul (from Plato). Some Mandaeans were of Jewish origin. The baptist sect of the Mandeans, Christians of St. John, still exists today in Lower Mesopotamia.

The Mandaeans taught that the planets were distributed among seven aeons (seven cycles), each reigning for 1,000 years. -They said the Mountain of Lights had seven Guardians, a serpent with seven heads. They taught of the Limit, the frontier separating the temporal world from the timeless world. The Mandeans refuted the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus, saying that their prophet Anosh-Uthra denounced the falsehoods of Jesus. They believed instead in the mystical union with the heavenly partner, the Holy Spirit. The Sabian Mandaeans taught the doctrine of the descent of the soul into Matter and the subsequent re-ascent of the soul to the spiritual world.

When the soul saw Matter she fell in love with it and burned with desire to experience bodily pleasures. Thus, the world was born to fulfill her desires. The soul forgot herself, her original dwelling, her true center, her everlasting life. But God would not abandon the soul to the degradations of Matter and gifted the soul with understanding and the faculty of perception; these would remind her of her high origin, the spiritual world, and would restore to her consciousness of herself, would make her see she is a stranger here below. As soon as the soul gains realization of these things, she feels an exile in a strange land and longs for her spiritual home. As the first step to re-obtaining her spiritual heritage, she denounces the bonds of the material.

Manes - (215-275 CE) The founder of the Gnostic Manichaean sect. Manes equated

himself to Buddha of India, Zoroaster of Persia and Jesus, because he had a "twin spirit," a spirit guide named at-Taum (Twin) whom he called a messenger of God. Manes had a controversy with the Bishop of Kashqar in Mesopotamia and left to establish believers in his own teachings. He was crucified. At his death, Manes is said to have left Egypt (Matter).

According to the legend surrounding Manes, a 2nd century Saracen believed in the ideology of the two opposing principles of creation. He married a slave, a prostitute, in Upper Egypt and she persuaded him to live in her native country, the Thebais, where he learned the wisdom of the Egyptians and dictated four books to his disciple, Terebinth. The Saracen went to Judea but died there, and Terebinth took refuge in Babylon, saying he was born of a virgin, fed by angels on the mountains and that his name was Buddha. A wealthy woman believed in him and took him in, but Terebinth died by falling off the roof of her house. The woman later bought a child named Corbicius, had him educated, and gave him Terebinth's books dictated by the Saracen. Enriched by these revelations, Corbicius changed his name to Manes and began his career as a great Gnostic teacher.

Manichaeism - A dualist mysticism of Gnostic derivation taught by the sect founded by Manes. Manichaeism lasted for 15 centuries. Batai, the Kantean prophet, once lived among the Manichaeans. Manichaean monks were strict ascetics, depriving themselves of all comfort and eating only fruit and that which had not been killed to become food for humans. The Manichaeans did not require all their devotees to practice strict asceticism, but established a second level group of devotees called "hearers." St. Augustine was a Manichaean "hearer" for nine years. Drawing upon Christianity and Gnosticism, the Manichaeans developed a large following, threatening the Church with loss of membership by conversion to Manichaeism. The Church responded by persecuting them.

They believed in Ialdabaoth-Sacla, the trees of Paradise, including the Tree of Death, the creation of Adam, member by member, by the Archons, and the vain attempt of the Archons to stand Adam upright. They believed in a succession of enlighteners and saviors including Shem, Seth and Nicotheus. According to the Manichaeans, Nicotheus was caught up into heaven. Nicotheus called the supreme divinity the Monogene (the only begotten), who cannot be described with words. The Monogene is hidden in the abyss radiating light, and surrounded by 12 powers, each of whom has three aspects. Above these are 12 more powers.

The Manichaeans taught reincarnation, saying the salvation of souls was affected by transmigration through the world of spheres, by the Sun and the Moon, and by the Virgin of Light, who purifies souls and raises them up into the heavenly Treasury. They believed in the final consummation of the Universe and the end of the world, and that Jesus had come to earth at age seven with his senses already organized. The Manichaeans said Eve was pursued by the creators, that the planets were perverse while the sun and the moon were good, and that powers came out of the ships of the sun and the moon to seduce the

Archons. The Manichaeans said the Archons had been flayed, their outstretched skins used to form the sky. They believed the earth's shape to be that of a rectangular parallelepiped enclosed by walls of crystal, above which three domes rose one above another (ancient Chaldaean cosmogony). Their beliefs spread to the eastern limits of Asia and to western Europe. The Albigensians were their last successors.

The Manichaeans did not write pseudonymously, but under Manes and his disciples. Their writings are of an intensified Persian dualism used by Gnostics before them. They wrote a Theory of Three Phases of the history of the Universe: Phase One is the Anterior Phase, when the two opposing principles exist separately; Phase Two is the Middle Phase, wherein light is attacked by darkness, creating a muddle; Phase Three is the Conclusive Phase, involving the restoration of the primordial principles. The Three Phases (Ohrmazd-Ahriman-Mithra), of Persian *Bundahisn* origin, underlie all Gnostic systems. The Manichaeans taught that St. Michael had been substituted for Satan.

"Have I not told you that like a visible voice and flash of lightning will be good be taken up to the light?" (*The Dialogue of the Savior*, Gnostic papyri)

Marcus - A disciple of Valentinus who borrowed from Pythagoras mystical numerology, a method of attaching numerical values to letters. The numerical values describe the relations and harmonies of the letters to the name. Marcus used the system to comment on each entity of the supernal universe and its function according to the numbers. In Hebrew Gematria, a system incorporated into tarot divination, numerical values are attached to Hebrew letters.

The mysticism of numbers is evidenced throughout the Bible and ecclesiastical literature. On the 40th day of the birth of Jesus, he was presented in the temple. When he was 40 years old, he fasted for 40 days in the desert. After his resurrection, he told Joseph of Arimethea to stay inside his home for the next 40 days. During the Great Deluge, it rained for 40 days and 40 nights. Moses and the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 days. Seth was taken up into heaven for 40 days.

When Ptolemy Philadelphus commissioned the *Septuagint*, 72 scholars translated 72 pages in 72 days. Jesus said the Aeons have 72 powers. Jesus mixed 72 colors in a dyer's vat.

Mariamne - Mary, the mother of Jesus, or Mary Magdalene. The Mariamne of Gnosticism conversed often with the resurrected Jesus. James the Just, "brother of Jesus," passed along the sayings of Jesus to Mariamne.

In one Gnostic account, Mary, mother of Jesus, was born without father or mother, like Melchizedek. In another, her parents are Joachim and Anna. Mary tells Jesus of an

episode in his life which occurred when he was little. When the Spirit came to their home asking for Jesus, Mary seized the spirit, tied him to the foot of the bed, and went into the vineyard where Joseph making a fence. As she told Joseph about the Spirit, Jesus overheard her and joyously ran inside the house. He untied the Spirit, who was his twin, and they hugged and kissed and became as one.

Mary - The Gnostic *Gospel According to Thomas* relates that Mary (Mary Magdalene) told the Apostle Peter that Jesus told her the soul, during its ascension from heaven to heaven, is questioned by Darkness, Concupiscence, Ignorance, and others trying to detain the soul. Peter, in a temper, accuses Mary of having imagined all of it, causing Mary to burst into tears, and Levi to intervene to defend her. Then they all disperse to preach the Gospel.

In the *Gospel according to Thomas* Mary questions the resurrected Jesus as though he is not her son, leading one to believe she is Mary Magdalene, the unconfirmed female disciple of Jesus. Simon Peter tried to exclude her from their midst as they received the gnosis, saying women are not worthy of Life (after death). Jesus responds that he "will draw her so as to make her male so that she also may become a living spirit like you males, for every woman who has become male will enter the kingdom of Heaven."

Matter - Gnostics believed that Matter is something from which to be liberated. In *Marsanes*, the descent of the soul into matter is not regarded as a fall but as a demiurgic function, a doctrine based on Plato's discussion of the soul and its descent. In Marcionism, Matter is one of three heavens: The first heaven, highest and inaccessible, is the habitation of the God of Salvation, unknowable until the revelation of the Now Testament; the second heaven contains the God of Genesis and of the Law, who looks like the devil; the third heaven is the world of Matter, of the Earth and their powers.

Matter is the mother of the four demons of the body; heat, cold, wetness, and dryness. These are Aristotle's four qualities shared by the four elements. Each element possesses two qualities. Fire is hot and dry with heat predominating. Air is hot and moist with moistness predominating. Water is moist and cold with cold predominating. Earth is cold and dry with dryness predominating. When the qualities intermingle and an action results, transmutation, the changing of one element into another, becomes possible. The study of transmutation is the basis of alchemy.

Matter allows the God of Genesis to borrow some of its earth to make Adam. Pleased with his creation, God tries to steal Adam away from Matter, and Adam turns away from it. In retaliation, Matter distracts humanity, represented by Adam, by multiplying innumerable gods around him to confuse him so he cannot recognize which of them is his master. Enraged by this, the God of Genesis thrusts primitive mankind down into hell. In another account, the universe is composed of the holy trinity of the Father, the Son, and Matter.

The Son, the median principle between the unmoved mover, the Father and moveable Matter, receives templates of forms from the Father to give to Matter to make manifest.

Melchizedek - The priest-king of the Old Testament born without mother or father. Four biblical personalities were born this way: Melchizedek, Adam, the Virgin Mary and, sometimes, Eve. Of the four, only Melchizedek did not experience physical death but was taken up into heaven. The Melchizedekians were a non-Gnostic sect. Melchizedek is important in Judaism, Gnosticism and Christianity, with all three naming him as a prophet. He is also recognized as a prophet in Islam, in the Mohammedan Middle Ages among the Ishmaelites, who taught a Gnostic doctrine. Melchizedek is also called the mysterious King of Salem and Zorokothora. In the *Haggada*, Shem is identified with Melchizedek.

Melchizedek resides in the heaven with Sabaoth the Good. He intervened on behalf of Abraham, who had fallen from his heavenly position. Melchizedek appealed to the Father of Greatness and had Abraham reinstated.

"His resemblance in kind is within what is his own. He can see it, understand it, enter it, and take a resemblance from it." (*Zostrianos*, Gnostic papyri)

Messenger, Divine - Humanity will receive "angels as guides." (*The Tripartite Tractate*, Gnostic papyri) The Divine Messenger is a celestial being in whom divine and human qualities are combined; an angel or spirit guide. First described in the ancient Persian religion, the Divine Messenger is the entity upon whom the Egyptian Hermes, the Roman Mercury and the alchemical Mercurius are based. The Gnostic Jesus said there is forgiveness for those who blaspheme the Savior and/or God, but none for those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

The Messengers appear as beings with multiple forms, not as pluralities but as single representations of multiplicities. By experiencing the Divine Messenger, a person receives a foretaste and assurance of ultimate union with an angelic, heavenly counterpart.

The Persians believed in a parallelism between the macrocosm and the microcosm, in which the Divine Messenger is significant. The Supreme Divinity on high rediscovers itself scattered among the population and throughout the universe. At the same time, an analogous relationship develops between the heavenly primordial Man and the Divine Messenger, who functions as a savior.

"I am a mute who does not speak, and great is my multitude of words." (*The Thunder: Perfect Mind*, Gnostic papyri)

Mithra - A Persian god whose mysterious sanctuaries appeared all over the Mediterranean world. Mithra is the Intermediate Principle between the two opposite Principles of Ohrmazd (The Endless Light) and Ahriman (Endless Darkness), from an old Persian belief in Three Principles. In the Persian theology elucidated in *Bundahisn* (the Good Religion), Mithraism, the philosophy of the "Middle Way" is accepted by a large population and eventually exported to the rest of the Mediterranean world.

"They (the Jews) espoused the middle course - and this is always the best course to pursue." (*Letter of Aristeas*, 250 BCE)

Based on a concept of the macrocosm and microcosm, the Persian theology described the human body as composed of the elements of the planets. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, Mithraism, which glorified the biblical Adam, spread into Rome.

Moses - The Moses of the Exodus, a patriarch of Judaism. Early Jews claimed Moses was the same person as Musaeus, from whom Plato and Pythagoras derived their doctrines, and of whom Orpheus was a disciple. The Greek historian Manetho said Moses had been a priest of Osiris in Egypt. One Gnostic text says Moses was wrong about his account of the withdrawal of Noah and his family into the Ark. They were, instead, protected from the Deluge by being taken up into a cloud of light.

Mountain of Lights - The legendary holy place of Persian and Gnostic religions, the mystic mount of the Zoroastrian revelations. Mountain of Lights is the most mystic and secret spot in the universe, the mountain on which the sun has not risen, nor is it possible. In this mountain, also called the Mountain of Seir, is the Cave of the Magi, also called the Cave of Adam and Cave of Treasures, where Adam deposited his treasures for the Magi, and where Adam and his successors are buried. The holy mountain, also called the Mountain of Victories and Mount of the Lord, is said to be in Persia (Iran). Also called the White Mountain, Svetaparvata, it is situated in the regions beyond the darkness of this world and guarded by seven Guardians, serpents with seven heads.

The resurrected Jesus took his disciples onto another mystic mountain, called "Divination and Joy," in Galilee. There they questioned him about the underlying reality of the universe and the divine plan.

"Then a great light appeared so that the mountain shone from the sight of him who had appeared." (*The Letter of Peter to Philip*, Gnostic papyri)

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