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Paul, The Apocalypse of - A Coptic manuscript describing St. Paul's ascent into the heavens in the company of his angel guide who takes him on a tour of hell and heaven. When in hell, Paul sees the torments of the inferno. Heaven has seven levels, the first containing angels with frightening faces and who use something like cattle prods (ox goads) to drive the condemned to their punishment after their souls have been interrogated and found wanting. Paul rises through the levels of heavens until he is met by the apostles. He continues to rise to reach the seventh heaven where he converses with an old man who gives him a sign. Literature such as *The Apocalypse of Paul* inspired Dante's *The Divine Comedy*.

Perfect, The - Those who have received the gnosis. The Perfect are guided by certain powers sent from the Father. The first Perfect person was Seth, and the seed of the great Seth, the human race, are the Perfect. The Imperishable Generation of the Perfect are descended also from Seth's sister Norea. Abraham is the head of the Generation of the Perfect, which included Zoroaster in Isma'ilite belief. Time was created to protect the Incorruptible Generation of the Perfect from the Archons, and all the celestial beings are devoted to the redemption of the Perfect. Jesus dictated to the Apostle Thomas *Book of Thomas the Athlete* for the Perfect, who call Ialdabaoth Ariael, because he looks like a lion.

In rabbinical literature, The Perfect one, at the completion of his ascension, becomes a little Iao, who reins with Iao the Great over the intermediate region of the lower zone. The "Portal of Life" opens onto the lower zone. When the lower universe is consummated, it becomes Perfect. The Christian Gnostics believed that before a Hebrew may become Perfect, he/she must first become Christian. In Gnostic and rabbinical literature, the perfect teachers are caught up into heaven, in the body and out of the body.

Great rewards await those who strive to become spiritually Perfect. The hidden Mysteries are reserved for the race of the Perfect and the Gates of Heaven are opened for them. The Generation of the Perfect will attain to the supreme Ogdoad, the holy place of the Father, and come to rest. The Perfect unite with the angels or are absorbed into Jesus, who sits at the right hand of Ialdabaoth helping the souls of the Perfect escape by conducting them up

through the spheres. Celestial baptism assures the salvation of the Perfect by sealing the souls against the power of the Archons. Thus, the Perfect ascend the spheres freely and without hindrance, and attain to the Treasury of the Light.

"The Wisdom of God became a type of fool for you so that it might take you up, O foolish one, and make you a wise man." (*The Teachings of Silvanus*, Gnostic papyri)

"Then the sun will become dark. And the moon will cause its light to cease. The stars of the sky will cancel their circuits." (*On the Origin of the World*, Gnostic papyri)

Persia - In the Hellenistic age, the religions of ancient Persia were diffused under different forms all over the Orient, especially Asia Minor through the Maguseans. Gnosticism may have been, in part, a continuation of the Magusaeans. The importance of ancient Persian thought in the Mediterranean world is evidenced by the advent of the Magi (Maguseans) to the crib in Bethlehem, representing the bringing-on-board of the Persians to Christianity. Mithraism, with sanctuaries to Mithra all over the Mediterranean world, was born in Persia.

The Persians conceived of the universe as having been formed by the interaction of the two opposing principles, Light and Darkness.

The Persians believed in the sending down of a savior for the redemption of humanity, and in the savior saved: the higher light-power at work freeing the sparks of his own light which are dispersed throughout the lower creation. They believed in a celestial goal, thought of as a Treasury, and taught that the most mystic and secret spot in the universe is on the dark shores of the eastern ocean, the Mountain of Lights containing The Cave of the Magi. The Zurvanist idea of two souls pre-dated the Gnostic idea of the counterfeiting spirit.

First Babylon, then Hellenic and Judaic conceptions, superimposed themselves on Persian beliefs. The Gnostics reinterpreted the teachings of Zoroaster (600 BCE) and claimed, anachronistically, that Zoroaster was the biblical Abraham's astrology student. In the Sethian books, the elements of Persia are the Three Primordial Principles - the highest, infinite god; the supreme tetrad; and all-powerful Wisdom. The ancient Persians detailed ascensions through the spheres and the creation of body parts by them. As the soul passed through the spheres, it was dispensed Fate and Fortune by the planets.

The Persians, like the Gnostics after them, refuted the Old Testament, giving it an anti-biblical interpretation. They thought the God of the Old Testament not from Light because he admires it so much (Genesis 1,4). They criticized God for not sharing out his

knowledge with Adam and Eve. Judaism received from Persian religion the themes of salvation and apocalypse, eschatology of archangels, angels and demons, belief in the enmity between light and dark, and holy man caught up into heaven. The *Apocalypses of Adam* is a group of Gnostic texts containing concepts believed to be of Persian origin during the time (44 CE) when Judaism became infused the Persian beliefs.

Philo - (20 BC - 40 CE) Some Gnostic concepts began with the Greek Philo; the counterfeiting spirit, the transcendent deity, and the idea of the earth and the heavens as existing in Darkness. Philo wrote *Questiones in Exodum*. Philosophy means love (philo) of wisdom (sophia).

Philosophers, Akhmim - In 370 CE, these Gnostics from the town of Akhmim, Egypt, on the Upper Nile, foolishly challenged Theodore the Coptic Monk to prove his knowledge of the spiritual world. This challenge provided Theodore's followers with such an exciting story to tell that it is repeated even today.

By giving Theodore a riddle to solve, the Akhmim Philosophers challenged him to prove his knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. They asked him, "Who died, but was never born? Who did not die, but was born? Who died, but never putrified?" Telling them they had minds like leaky casks, Theodore answered to the first question, "Adam", to the second question, he answered, "Enoch"; to the last questions he answered, "Lot's wife, who became a pillar of salt to season the foolish such as these philosophers who glorify the themselves." The philosophers did not realize the riddle was widely known, just as today the answer to the riddle of the Sphinx is well known. "Who walked first on four legs, then on two legs, and then on three legs?"

In 1886, an archeologist excavated the grave of a monk in Akhmim. In the grave he found a parchment codex that came to be known as *The Lost Gospel According to Peter*. The codex seems to be an objective, factual account of the crucifixion of Jesus. Claimed as a Christian document by the early heresiologists, it may be Gnostic because it contains a description of the sepulcher affixed by seven deals, it identifies Mary Magdelene as a disciple of Jesus, its tone and quality of writing is that of the Gnostics, its burial location is in the Gnostic community of Akhmim, and it is a parchment codex. If it was written by Peter, when he was a Christian Gnostic, just as the Gnostics claimed. If not by Peter, then perhaps it was written by a Christian Gnostic and attributed to Peter.

Plato - (427-347 BCE) - The Greek philosopher had a wide influence on Gnosticism, Judaism, and Christianity. Plato spent much time speculating on the destiny of souls. and formulating theories regarding the afterlife. Expressed in the *Republic* is his concept of the reincarnation of souls into the bodies of men or animals. He believed that spirits first drink the waters of Lethe before returning to this world reincarnated. Plato wrote of the architecture of heaven in which there are "ways of the right" leading upward and "ways of

the left" leading downward. He wrote of the accidental fall of the soul, causing it to be cast out of the supra-sensible world into the materiality of the body, and conceived of the soul as having fallen into a corpse. The fallen soul retains memories of the absolute realities it had contemplated at its beginning. In Platonic Dualism, there is a distinction between a world of being (including the Good) and the sphere of becoming and corruption, as well as between an "intelligible world" and a sensible world."

Plato espoused a Doctrine of Images, also called Theory of Ideas. He believed that images here below are designed on models or primordial unattainable ideas which exist in the mind of God (Theory of Ideas). This doctrine includes souls, which he envisioned as being pre-existent. He wrote of the veil of the supreme divinity. He said the admiration of the divinity leads to a complete knowledge of it, and knowledge of it leads to the royalty promised to the Elect. The idea of "the Limit" comes from Plato. He wrote of the need to practice for dying.

"But when they are 'perfected' with a martyr's death, this is the thought that they have within them. 'If we deliver ourselves over to death for the sake of the Name we will be saved.' These matters are not settled in this way." (*The Testimony of Truth*, the Gnostic papyri)

Pleiades - Considered by the ancients to be the hub of the universe. The hidden, central axis of the universe is thought to be in the Pleiades, the world of the Thirteenth Aeon, called the world of the Thirteen. When Shem (Seth) travels out of his body during sleep, he passes through the clouds of the Pleiades, which he describes as being colors of beryl, emerald, amaranth and hyacinth. In the Pleiades may be located a world which has experienced a full planetary ascension, where all beings there live in a dimension of reality inconceivable to humanity of Earth.

"The pleromatic congregation...is a single representation although many... They are minds of minds, which are found to be words of words, elders of elders, degrees of degrees, which are exalted above one another. Each one of those who give glory has his place and his exaltation and his dwelling and his rest, which consists of the glory which he brings forth." (*The Tripartite Tractate*, Gnostic papyri)

Pleroma - The Plentitude, the fullness of deity, the shining sphere of the divinity with all its powers, its aeons, Archons and denominations. The Pleroma is to the Greek mystics and to the Gnostics what the Merkaba is to the Jewish mystic. The Pleroma, with thirty aeons and Wisdom as the intermediate plane, has portals, monads, guardians and powers, and there dwells Aphredon with the twelve Just Ones, Adam-Light with 365 Aeons, and the abyss where the only-begotten is hidden. In another abyss there are three Paternities; one is the hidden God; one has the Five Trees; one, in which are the Five Seals, encloses a

Silence and a Source in which the twelve Just Ones behold themselves.

The Pleroma goes in search of the Elect in the abysses of Matter to offer salvation. The Gnostics believed that feminine elements must become masculine in order to unite themselves with the angels and enter into the Pleroma. It was from the Pleroma that Sophia fell when she desired the Treasury of the Light. The Pleroma is strengthened by Horos, the Limit, and Stauros, the Cross. The sphere atop the Tau cross, the Limit-Cross, of the Egyptian represents the Pleroma.

Plotinus - Devoted to the conception of a beautiful, good and ordered universe, Plotinus was a defender of Hellenic philosophy and accused the Gnostics of having departed from it. Opposing the belief in a corrupt terrestrial and celestial world, he directed criticisms against Gnostic dualism in his text, *Ennead*, written between 263-276 CE. He said the Gnostics had supplanted the authentically philosophic writings of Alexander of Libya, Philocomus and Demostratus of Libya with some apocalypses attributed to Zoroaster, Zostrian, Nicotheus, Allogenes, Mesos, and other Magi.

Plotinus had no patience with the Gnostics whom he said conceived of soulless celestial regions, devoid of all but the demiurge whom they heaped abuse upon, but at the same time, these Gnostics, whose hearts were filled, he said, with vice, desire and anger, pretended to be capable of contact with an intelligibility higher than the heavens. He said their use of incantations and hymns were meant to bewitch and charm the heavenly powers. According to Plotinus, the Gnostics possessed an absurd hatred of our physical nature but at the same time borrowed what they liked from Greek philosophy which espoused the opposite. The School of Plotinus refers to the followers of Plotinus.

Porphyry - A disciple of Plotinus who wrote *Life of Plotinus* and *Nymph's Grotto*. Porphyry refuted Gnosticism, saying the Gnostics had departed from the ancient philosophy and that they had made up the *Book of Zoroaster* to make people think the dogmas therein are those of the ancient Zoroaster. Porphyry also wrote *Philosophy of the Oracles*, in which he translated a Greek hymn describing the beneficent Lord enthroned upon the ethereal Zenith, the Pole, around which the celestial spheres revolve.

"Fight the great fight as long as the fight lasts." (*The Teachings of Silvanus*, Gnostic papyri)

Principle of Opposites - The philosophy of Dualism is bound up in the idea of two opposing principles, thesis and antithesis, which must be reconciled, synthesized, for unity and harmony to exist. New Age spiritualism is said to be an age in which synthesis is nearer to achievement. The Gnostics believed, as did the Persians, the Hermeticists, and others, that it is the continuous conflict of the opposites, the force of attraction/repulsion of polarity, which results in the physical manifestation of the visible universe and all

within.

"They exist in the manner of three...quadrangles - secretly within a silence of the Ineffable One." (*Trimorphic Protennoia*, Gnostic papyri)

Primordial Principles, Three - In Gnosticism, the three primordial principles are Light, Darkness, and Intermediate Spirit. In Persian religions, they are Endless Light (Ohrmuzd), Endless Darkness (Ahriman), and the Void between also called Vay. In Greek philosophy, they are Light, Dark, and Air or Fate. In Manichaeism, they are Father of Greatness, dwelling in the Light, the impure empire of the King of Darkness, and the Shadow between like a wedge.

Human philosophy began as Dualism, the idea of the tension of two opposing principles as responsible for creation. But polarity is fundamentally static. Before anything can happen, a relationship or interaction must be possible. Man-woman is not a relationship, but man-woman-desire is. In ancient Persia, Dualism is succeeded by the Three Primordial Principles. Three is the number of creativity and self-expression on the planes of the divine and the human. The great Greek philosophers, Pythagoras and Aristotle, realized that a relationship of three remains but potential. Four principles are required to account for the fact of matter, of substance. The Three Primordial Principles is followed by the philosophy of the Four Elements. The meaning of the number four is substantiality.

The Gnostic sects taught Dualism or the Three Principles, or sometimes both. The Sethians, the transcribers of the Chenoboskion manuscripts, taught an advanced philosophy of the Four Elements that included the next stage of evolution, the concurrence of the forces. At the level of the five's, that which was stable breaks apart and becomes many-sided. The sixes, sevens and eight's represent the following stages of reformation and complexity.

Pythagoras - Greek mathematician and philosopher who may have originated the mysticism of numbers. Gnostics said the supreme divinity has a numberless name because no one has given him his name. He has not received a "name on loan" because no one proceeded him. Pythagoreanism influenced the Essenes and the Gnostics. The Pythagoreans and the Essenes both used the mason's trowel as their emblem. Pythagoras believed the Sun and the Moon were isles of the Blest, and he wrote of the mystical union by which one receives a heavenly partner, the Spirit. He ascribed an allegorical meaning to the Homeric texts, and thought that women were too weak to resist cosmic powers, that the strength of the male was required. The early Jews said Pythagoras was a student of Moses.

According to Aristotle, Pythagoras said the principle of order in the entire universe is numerical, that the whole universe is number. Pythagoras intellectualized and

mathematized ancient concepts regarding god. Pythagoreanism, which captured the imagination of the ancient Mediterranean world and dominated the religious philosophies of that time, is the origin of modern numerology.

The Pythagorean organization and interpretation of numbers 1-9 is compared below to the Kabalistic organization of numbers 1-10.

Pythagorean Greek	Kabalistic Gnosticism Hebrew
	1 = Source
1=Active	2=Active
2=Receptive	3=Receptive
3=Creative	4=Creative
4=Uncreative	5=Destructive
5=Adventurous	6=Balance
6=Stable	7=Intellect
7=Emotion	8=Emotion
8=Intellect	9=Foundation
9=Achievement	10=Achievement

An initial duality is expressed in the configuration on the left. The right shows an initial unity, which becomes a duality. The left expresses strict dualism and no hierarchical monism, with the only synthesis being achieved at the 9. In Greek mythology, strict dualism and no hierarchical monism is Zeus and Hera, who are always at odds. The configuration on the right is an expression of an on-going synthesis, with the central area between 1 and 6 containing a hidden synthesis, the area known Kabalistically as Daath. The columns of the configuration on the left are described as left - odd numbers, male, and good; right - even numbers, female and evil. The configuration on the right is interpreted to be the reverse, with the odd-even numbers changing columns at 7 and 8.

When these numbers are connected by lines, the configurations become more meaningful.

Numerologically and aesthetically, the figure on the left disproves the theory that a strict dualism is responsible for the creation of the world. The figure on the right, the paradoxical combination of dualism and hierarchical monism, is a crystalline structure, evidenced in all matter.

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