

Sophia's Passion: Sant Mat and the Gnostic Myth of Creation

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The creation story of the *Gnostics*, as with all creation myths, is meant to define the existential position of humanity – where did we come from, where are we, who are we. In this article we will discover how closely this unique story from the Middle East dating almost two thousand years, is paralleled by the creation stories of Kabir (d. mid-1500's) and Soami Ji (Swami Shiv Dayal Singh Ji Maharaj d.1878) and his spiritual Master, Tulsi Saheb of Hathras (d.1843). These related creation stories are of great antiquity, having survived through long ages and various cultures and still resting near the center of a modern spiritual tradition known as *Sant Mat*.

1) What is a Sant?

Before we continue forward, a few words about *Sant Mat*. The term literally translates as the Path of the God-Realized. Although the term *Sant* is usually translated as “Master” or “Saints”, the term “God-realized” is more precise, as this indeed is the specific meaning of the term *Sant* as used by the Spiritual Masters of this tradition. In *Sant Mat*, a *Sant* is defined as an individual that has attained to the highest spiritual potential to which any human can aspire – complete self-knowledge and God-realization. This spiritually transfigured being, is commissioned by his own *Sat Guru*, as the literal embodiment of the *Sat Purusha*, the True God, sitting in all humility amongst humanity. His way, according to *Sant Mat*, is that of love, forgiveness and compassion. He teaches the necessity of individual spiritual awakening through certain methods of meditation practice. He also teaches the cultivation of ethical virtues including strict vegetarianism as an essential aspect of *ahimsa*, the virtue of non-violence.

One of the cardinal functions of a *Sat Guru* is to absolve through his own grace, sympathy and suffering, the accumulated karma of the spiritual aspirant, referring to the cycle of action and reaction that keeps the soul bound in creation, and is the motor force of the wheel of birth and death, the cycle of reincarnation. This general concept is identical to the Christian concept of the forgiveness of sins. Without this forgiveness of the karmas of the past, there can be no liberation, for the soul remains ever bound in the karmic wheel. Therefore the guru, as the Word-made-flesh, the embodiment of Spirit incarnate in human form, plays a critical and central role in *Sant Mat*, and is regarded as an absolute prerequisite on the path of spiritual liberation.

2) The Spiritual Practices of Sant Mat

Sant Mat is also termed *Surat Shabd Yoga*, referring to the spiritual practices taught by the Sant: meditation on the inner spiritual Light and Divine Music. The spiritual practice is based on the belief that creation emerges as a state of vibration having two aspects: Light and Sound, termed the God-Into-Expression power, as its true nature is consciousness itself, the Holy Spirit of the Triune Godhead. The spiritual aspirant is guided into contact with the lowest links of these spiritual principles, as they represent the fundamental and formless nature of spirit and regarded as a direct contact with spirit. The first method involves meditation on the *Ajna Chakra* or third eye, while repeating a mantra consisting of five names, given by the Spiritual Master. These five names relate to the five major divisions of creation and are imbued with the spiritual power of the *Sant* who has attained each of these stages. They are also said to confer protection on the inner spiritual planes. Meditation at this centre leads to the awakening of inner vision and revelations of light, etc.

The second spiritual practice is meditation on the inner spiritual sound. This practice does not involve any mantra, but attunement within to inner harmonics that first are heard on the right side, then gradually seems to come from above, changing character at each stage and having the quality of dramatic musical tones. The sound is regarded as the supreme transcendental principle, capable of

drawing the soul rapidly upward into the spiritual planes, and absolutely silencing the mind and its incessant vibrations.

The practice of meditation on the Light and Sound principle as the fundamental worship of spirit, can be traced through various schools of Sufism, through the ancient Upanishads of India, through the practices and references of the Pythagorans and in the Egyptian Book of the Dead itself. It can also be found in the writings of the Gnostics: "I cast a Sound into the ears of those who know me. And I am inviting you into the exalted perfect Light." (Trimorphic Protennoia – Nag Hammadi)

3) Sant Mat: A Direct Descendant of Near East Gnosticism?

Is it unreasonable to imagine that certain strains of what we term Near Eastern Gnosticism, its spiritual concepts and practices, traveled west and east and survive today under different names and guises, possibly manifesting different schools of Gnostic thought? Notably, the *Sants* teach that their path has been maintained in its pristine form, unchanged and unchanging in its spiritual principles and practices, and as ancient as humanity. However, its outer expression and terminology has taken different forms according to the circumstance of the time. Kirpal Singh quoting Hazur Baba Sawan Singh in his biography of Hazur: "True Saints are not fastened to any religious sect or dress. They are free personalities. They are neither a party to one nor a foe to the other."

In other words, in the mind of the *Sants*, they regard the spiritual teaching as universal, not a distinct sect or cult, but a basic spiritual dharma or truth teaching that is for all humanity regardless of their cultural/religious background. Therefore, they are not tied to any place, time or religious identity but adapt to the environment of the time.

4) Egypt, Gnosticism and the Advent of the Piscean Age

Gnosticism is a general term for a number of spiritual schools appearing in relationship or proximity to Christianity in the earliest period of Christian evolution. How did Gnosticism arise? Within the Egyptian temple orders, core spiritual knowledge and doctrines

existed in a stable way over great spans of time. The gradual breakdown of the ancient Egyptian temple system accompanied the loss of Egyptian political power to a succession of ruling foreign states. This interaction of cultures, particularly the Greeks and later the Romans, led to a diffusion of the beliefs, knowledge and practices of the Egyptians and the resulting rise of numerous spiritual schools along an arc extending from the banks of the Nile and across the Mediterranean basin, all incorporating various aspects of Egyptian esotericism. This is not dissimilar to the last four hundred years of religious history in Europe and North America, where one enormous religious structure (Roman Catholicism) spawned hundreds. (2)

Gnosticism and Christianity in general also must be seen as arising from the turning of the ages, defined as the precession of the equinoxes, the twenty six thousand year cycle, the fabled Great Platonic Year, wherein the angle of the earth against the plane of the ecliptic appears to pass backwards through one astrological sign approximately every two thousand years. Around two thousand years ago, we passed into the sign of Pisces, the fish, that occurred simultaneously with the storied birth of Christ, who was the Fisher of Men, who handed out the loaves and fishes, who walked on water and whose apostles were chiefly fishermen, who is symbolized by a fish, and whose mother, Mary, is related to Mara, an ancient Goddess of the sea. Without a doubt, the breakdown of the Egyptian Temple system, the rise of Alexandria as the centre of spiritual and philosophic culture, and the design and evolution of the Christ mythos and its scriptures, whether in Gnostic or Orthodox form, represented a deliberate restructuring of esoteric knowledge in preparation for the dawning new age of Pisces.

5) Religion vs. Mysticism in Early Christianity

The common root of the various Gnostic schools was a mystic salvational path based on techniques for the achievement of direct personal spiritual experience. *Gnosis* is a term synonymous with the Sanskrit term *Gnana*, and distinguishes direct spiritual realization from belief based on faith alone. As the Christian church grew and attempted to standardize, socialize and politicize its beliefs and doctrines, these mystic schools of Christian thought were increasingly

viewed as heretical. Early church fathers such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus, wrote many volumes criticizing Gnostic thought, quoting extensively from Gnostic writings in order to refute their doctrines. Over several centuries, the church gained political power, suppressed the Gnostics and systematically destroyed their works these detailed polemics were, for the most part, the primary source of information on the nature of Gnostic beliefs. It was only in the latter part of the nineteenth century that original Gnostic writings came to light. In the early nineteen forties the remains of an entire library of Gnostic literature was found buried near the village of Nag Hammadi in Egypt. Though at first being fed to the kitchen fire by the mother of the discoverer, someone fortunately recognized that it had the potential to buy far more fuel than it made.

6) The Captivity of Souls in Lower Creation

The esoteric spirituality of the Gnostics existed within the setting of a great cosmic drama in which humanity is held captive by a creator God who functions through the rule of law (*karma*), and seduces man into his false worship. Yahweh is one of the many names of this false God). The True God on the other hand is a transcendent and Unknowable Absolute whose realm is the true place of spiritual liberation and whose nature is truth, love and forgiveness. Beyond these few common elements the theological response of the various Gnostic schools is diverse, ranging from the ascetic to the libertine. Nevertheless, the general theology, cosmology, and spiritual technique find many analogies with later and contemporary *Sant Mat* teachings. Gnostic concepts and methods such as the Five Names (3) or passwords, the Word or Sound that enlivens and sustains all creation, the Alien Man, the *Sat Guru*, who, though alien to this world, carries the message of the True God to the souls trapped in creation, are all central to *Sant Mat* teaching. (4)

7) The Story of Creation in Modern Sant Mat

The ancient creation myth of *Sant Mat* has found little place in the modern presentation of *Sant Mat* teachings. In the desire to adapt to a more rational era, this has been for the most part tucked away. (1) As with most of the great myths and “fairy tales” of the old world, story and allegory are meant to speak to the innermost recesses of

the heart, mind and spirit. These are esoteric tales regarded as a symbolic/mythic rendering of the actual process and structure of creation. Some of the chief characters such as *Sat Purush* (The True Form of God/Gnostic: The Only-Begotten) and the opposing force, the energy that gives rise to materiality and rules the realms of karma, known as *Kal* (*Dharam Rai*, the Negative Power/Gnostic: *Ialdabaoth*, the Demiurge, etc.) are a very real presence in the discourses of the Gurus of *Sant Mat* even today.

8) Formless God and the Eternal Realm of God's Attributes

The Eternally Unmanifested Absolute takes form as the Timeless, Changeless and Perfect Realm, known as *Sach Khand* (the True Realm) in *Sant Mat* or the Pleroma (fullness) of the Gnostics. Its inhabitants are the Perfect, Eternal and Distinct Elements of the Divine Totality. According to the teaching of *Sant Mat* in all ages, it is not given to the hypostasized elements of the Absolute to have the experience of the Wholeness from which their distinction takes its value. (5) In other words, the gods, right from the denizens of *Sach Khand* to the Gods and angelic ministrants of the lower creation, cannot know God, for they are cosmic archetypes, discreet expressions of the whole. The parts take their life from the whole, but they are not the whole and cannot be the whole. They are blessed or cursed to be a part, and can only be fully conscious within their inherent character. It is an irredeemable paradox that despite the non-dual nature of creation the parts are ever only that. Complete consciousness of their participation in the Divine Plan is their highest blessing.

Again and again in his discourses, Kirpal Singh, one of the greatest exponents of *Sant Mat* in the twentieth century, alighted on the comment that only human beings, of all creation, can realize God within their lifetime. According to these teachings, in the mystery of humanity is the opportunity for reconciliation between the parts and the whole and in this is hidden the very purpose of creation. It has been said that if even the angels wish to realize God, they too must take on human form, through which the potential for God-consciousness may be fulfilled.

The several creation myths developed by the Masters serve to describe the relationship between the Absolute in its non-attributive formless essence, known in modern *Sant Mat* as *Anaami* or *Radhasoami*, and its manifested attributes that inhabit *Sach Khand*, which it is the expansion into distinct being of the eternally perfect and fully elaborated attributes of the Absolute, the realm in which the Word, the Holy Spirit, the Cosmic Music, is all in all. As Kirpal Singh has written, "In one there is always the delusion of many, and the totality does signify the existence therein of so many parts. The idea of a part and of the whole go cheek by jowl, and both the part as well as the whole are characterized by the similarity of the essential nature in them.

The essence of a thing has its own attributive nature and the two cannot be separated from each other. Just as the essence is both one and many, so is the case with its attributive nature."⁶

In this article, the Gnostic term, Pleroma and the eastern term, *Sach Khand*, are used interchangeably.

These cosmic attributes are known as the Sons of *Sat Purush* in the East and the Aeons in Gnosticism. *Sat Purush* or the Only-Begotten is the Aeon that is the Being or the Mind, of the Absolute: pure consciousness and consciousness on all planes, thus also the bridge to creation proper. As Hans Jonas has written, "The Only-Begotten Mind alone, having issued from him directly, can know the Fore-Father: to all the other Aeons he remains invisible and incomprehensible. 'It was a great marvel that they were in the Father without knowing Him.' (Gospel of Truth 22.27) ⁷

The number of these eternal emanations of the divine varies according to reference. The Gnostic version described by Hans Jonas gives four Aeons with their consorts to make eight, "the original Ogdoad", who then further elaborate to make another seven pairs for a total of thirty. The Kabiran version gives sixteen with *Sat Purush* being the first emanation.

9) Version One: The Part Desires Its Own Domain

The myths now run in distinct and precisely opposite directions, at least in the Gnostic forms. The Kabiran version and one of the Gnostic versions states that there was an Aeon that cherished a desire for its own creation as an inherent part of its nature. *We could say that the potential for separation from God is itself an Aeon.* This leads ultimately to a creation existing in negative polarity with eternal *Sach Khand*, spinning the universes that exist in Time.

This separative Aeon, known as Mind or Time (Kal), is *Sat Purusha's* first expansion in the Gnostic version and fifth in the Kabiran version. Kabir's Anurag Sagar states that "He is created from the most glorious part of the body of *Sat Purush*". Thus *Sat Purush* is cosmically linked to the "lower" creation, which eventually develops through Kal's activity. In this we are warned away from value judgements of good/evil, and reminded that this entire process is under Divine Will (*Hukam*).

In Soami Ji's version, Kal first emerges as a worrisome presence after all the other "*Surats*" (Surat means "attention". The term is synonymous here with Soul, but in a perfected sense of pure attention) had been elaborated.

Soami Ji tells us:

"There appeared a dark colored current from the gate of the region of lotuses.

This current appeared like a dark colored stone set in a white one and was absorbed in the Darshan of *Sat Purush*.

All the *Hansas* (literally "Swans" – a term for pure souls) enquired of the *Purush* as to what the emanation was that they could not comprehend.

The *Purush* replied, "Do not worry. Go on enjoying the bliss and happiness. This emanation will create a different spectacle.

Hansas were taken aback; they were unable to comprehend what this emanation was going to bring about. It was engaged in the service of *Purush*, but inwardly it cherished some other desire.

That desire went on expanding. The emanation did not check it. By the Will of *Purush*, the emanation ventured to submit thus:
I wish to bring about a separate dominion of my own. This creation of Yours, I like not.

I wish to create three worlds and rule over them. I will then however engage myself in *Yourdhyan* (contemplation).

The *Purush* turned out the *Kala* (the emanation). On being turned out, the *Kala* was in a great dread and alarm."⁸

The Kabiran version goes in a similar vein, wherein the *Kala*, known in this version as *Dharam Rai*, also nurtures a desire for a separate creation. However, greater emphasis is laid on his long and continued devotions to *Sat Purush*, over vast spans of cosmic time, to which *Sat Purush* responds by giving him the means to fulfill his separative desire.⁹

In the Gnostic version of this myth quoted by Hippolytus, we find a very close reflection of Soami Ji and Kabir. However, we first meet this Aeon, whose nature sets the stage for all subsequent creation, as a female form:

"Rushing up to the depth of the Father, she perceives that whereas all the begotten Aeons generate by copulation, the Father alone generates out of himself (being in this version without consort); in this she wants to emulate him and also generate out of herself without spouse, so that she may not fall short of the Father's achievement. She failed to perceive that this is the power solely of the Unbegotten One, and so she managed only to bring forth a formless entity."¹⁰

This then is the first version, prominent in both East and Near East, where a desire for self-expression leads to separation and then to the lower creation. In all three, the motive for separation is, as noted by Jonas, pure hubris.

10) Version Two: The Part Longs to Merge in the Whole

In the second Gnostic version, the motivation is exactly the opposite; rather than a desire for separation, there is a longing for union. Structurally the tale is very similar in many respects. Here the longing of the Aeon, Sophia, to know the Absolute completely, is the primary force that sets in motion the process that eventually leads to the development of the lower creation. We will now dwell on this intense and evocative tale at greater length.

So it was that: "The Aeons longed only secretly to behold the begetter of their seed and to search for the root without beginning." This longing is "the beginning of a crisis in the Pleroma"...since the Aeons "cannot forgo the aspiration to know more than their limits permit and thus to abolish the distance separating them from the Absolute. The last and youngest (and therefore outermost of the Aeons), the Sophia, leapt farthest forward and fell into a passion apart from the embrace of her consort. That passion had originated and spread from the vicinity of the Mind and Truth but now infected the Sophia and broke out in her so that she went out of her mind, pretendedly from love, actually from folly or presumption, since she had no such community with the Father as the Only-Begotten Mind...The passion was a search for the Father, for she strove to comprehend his greatness. This, however, she failed to achieve, because what she attempted was impossible, and so she found herself in great agony; on account of the depth of the Abyss, into which in her desire she penetrated more and more, she would in the end have been swallowed up by its sweetness and dissolved in the general being, had she not come up against the power that consolidates the All and keeps it off the ineffable Greatness. This power is called Limit: by him she was consolidated, brought back to herself, and convinced that the Father is incomprehensible. Thus she abandoned her previous intention and the passion engendered by it. These, however, now subsist by themselves as a 'formless entity.'"

Sophia's return to harmony in the Pleroma is, as noted by Jonas, "..the first restoration and salvation in the spiritual history of total being, and it occurs entirely inside the Pleroma, though as we shall see it is the cause of a chain of events outside it."

The image of what has taken place in the Pleroma itself, indicates that the Aeon's longing, which will 'later' lead to the lower creation, is eternally latent, eternally activated, and eternally reconciled. This certainly casts the mold for the triune attributes of creation described by Hinduism, that is, the triple Godhead and the three gunas. However, Kabir and Soami Ji assert that Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, satogun, rajogun, and tamogun come much later, far outside *Sach*

Khand. In the meantime, 'the formless entity' created by Sophia's passion, as we shall see, becomes the basis of all subsequent creation outside the Pleroma.

11) Creation Born of Sophia's Passion

Once the "integrity of the Pleroma" had been restored and Sophia rejoined to her consort, she contemplated on her fate and the 'formless entity' to which her passion has given birth. This gives rise to various emotions, which also become embodied in the formless. The emotions evoked vary according to different Gnostic authors, but include grief, fear, bewilderment, shock, and repentance. A lesser Aeon is thus created out of the admixture of the Sophia's longing for union, as well as her emotions in the wake of her failure.

The residue of this disturbance in the Pleroma "has become hypostatized as a positive realm by itself. Only at this price could the Pleroma be rid of it." Thus the Limit ('which separates the Aeons from the unbegotten Father" above and the 'formless entity', soon to be below - NT.) was not planned in the original constitution of the Fullness, i.e., of the free and adequate self-expression of the godhead, but was necessitated by the crisis as a principle of consolidation and protective separation."

I mention the above, since both here and in the Eastern version we see emphasized the idea of creation as, on the one hand, wholly unrelated to the natural perfection of the Pleroma, yet paradoxically percolating from within it.

12) The Differing Roles of Christos and Jesus

As ignorance and formlessness had appeared within the Pleroma, deep perturbation remained among the Aeons, who no longer felt safe, fearing like happenings to themselves." A collective prayer to the Father invokes a new pair of Aeons whose purpose is to restore true serenity to the Pleroma and take care of the residual formlessness. These are Christos and Holy Spirit. The Christos imparts to the Aeons knowledge of their relationship to the Father that leads them to perfect repose. "As a fruit of their new unity, they all together, each contributing the best of his essence, produce an

additional (and unpaired) Aeon, Jesus, in whom the Fullness is, as it were, gathered together and the regained unity of the Aeons symbolized. This 'perfect fruit of the Pleroma,' who contains all its elements, has later, as Savior, to carry in his person the Fullness out into the Void, in which the residue of the past disturbance, meanwhile "formed" by Christos, still awaits salvation."

Here we find a reflection at the level of the Pleroma of the maintaining function (Christos) distinguished from the salvational function (Jesus). This is similar to the distinction in *Sant Mat* between an *Avatar* and a *Sant*. In the theology of *Sant Mat*, an *Avatar* is a Divine incarnation of the Negative Power, whose purpose is to stabilize and maintain creation, whereas the *Sant Sat Guru*, as the incarnation of the *Sat Purush*, carrying "the Fullness out into the void", brings deliverance to the souls enmeshed in creation. "The incarnations of the Positive Power, the Saints, look after the souls and take them back to God."(11)

13) Grief, Fear, Bewilderment, Ignorance and The Turning

The new Aeon, the Desire of the Sophia, is now separated as an entity unto itself, is called the Achamoth or the lower Sophia. Together with the Passions she is cast "outside" the Pleroma. Energized by the Christos reaching out from the Pleroma, she is left "with the awakened awareness of her separation from the Pleroma and the aroused longing for it. This initiates a redemptional task whose accomplishment requires a long detour of suffering and successive divine interventions." In other words lower creation now becomes an inevitable development, yet paradoxically essential for the higher purpose of reconciliation.

"The deserted Sophia impetuously sets out to seek after the vanished light, but cannot reach it, for the Limit obstructs her forward rush. She cannot penetrate through him, because of her admixture of the original Passion, and forced to remain alone in the outer darkness she falls prey to every kind of suffering that exists. In this she repeats on her own level the scale of emotions which her mother in the Pleroma underwent, the only difference being that these passions now pass over into the form of definitive states of being, and as such

they can become the substance of the world... grief, because she could not get hold of the light; fear, lest besides the light also life might leave her; bewilderment, added to these; and all of them united in the basic quality of ignorance (itself counted as an 'affection'). And still another state of mind ensued: the turning (conversion) toward the Giver of Life."

This then is the foundation of creation, the endless admixture of the four "negative" emotions pervaded by the positive element of longing for the Source. The four represent the Negative Power in its definitive form as a force going into expression or manifestation. The turning, on the other hand is the salvational aspect, leading back toward the True God. It is the source of all prayer and spiritual effort within creation. This is also known in *Sant Mat* as '*bireh*', the intense anguish of separation, which has given the world so much exquisite spiritual literature.

14) The Further Genesis of Creation

In the next act, the Achamoth is herself "detached" from the passions she has generated, by the intervention from the Pleroma of "the common fruit", i.e., Jesus. Through "Jesus" she is drawn into a higher consciousness and thus a greater awareness of her position.

Oddly enough, now we find the lower Sophia building on the energy of 'turning back' to generate a son, the Demiurge, through whom further creation proceeds. Does it not at first seem strange that at this stage the force of longing gives even greater impulse to the movement away from the Pleroma? Here we have another hint that somehow the generation of the lower worlds is connected to the desire to return to the Source.

15) Ialdabaoth: The False God That Enslaves Humanity

We will come back to this point, but in the meantime much is made of the essential ignorance of the Demiurge, which leads him to declare himself to be the "unique and highest God". "Ialdabaoth was boastful and arrogant, and exclaimed: 'I am Father and God, and beyond me is none other.'"(12) However, the processes he sets in motion, believing them to be his own, are in fact, fashioned by his mother. In

this it is again suggested that no matter how 'fallen' creation ultimately becomes, the entire process is an expression of Divine Will.

The polarity between an ignorant creator God, well removed from even his Mother, and a far distant Eternity of Consciousness, i.e., the True God, is at the center of Gnostic and Sant Mat theology. Soami Ji repeatedly asserts, as did the Gnostics, that the God of the various world religions is none other than Kal or the Demiurge at best; more likely one of his provincial expansions. Therefore, his worship is false and leads to ever-greater enmeshment rather than true liberation. "I do not abide in the three worlds. Only a drop of my ocean-like form is here. All the religions prevalent in the world speak and talk of this drop as (if it were) the ocean."(13)

16) Salvation by the Common Fruit of the Pleroma: Jesus

The Achamoth, the lower Sophia, leads the Demiurge into the knowledge of what is above him; "however, he keeps to himself the great mystery of the Father and the Aeons into which the Sophia has initiated him and divulges it to none of his prophets." Imparting knowledge of the Father to the lower creation itself is left to "the incarnation of the Aeons Jesus and Christos from the Pleroma in the person of the historical Jesus." This, at least, is an interpretation of the Valentinian perspective, that being the Christian Gnostic tradition from which this story is derived. However, the extension of this concept in other Gnostic circles and so essential to *Sant Mat*, is that the incarnation in the world of "the common fruit" of the Pleroma, to bring salvation to the lower creation, is a perpetual manifestation, somehow essential to the structure of the world. This is none other than the Living Master, the Grace bearing manifestation of *Sat Purush*. In this conception, the Godman, or Word-Made-Flesh, is ever present in the world, not a periodic incarnation as with *Vishnu*, or one that appears once in history and then again at the end of time, returning as judge and savior, as in the Christian conception.

Though we have skipped various steps and details for which the reader is invited to review Hans Jonas's writings or the original works such as the *Gospel of Truth* as found in the Nag Hammadi collection,

we are ready to proceed to the position of humanity in this total process.

17) Primal Humanity Cast Out by Ialdabaoth

Unwittingly, the Demiurge, also known as Ialdabaoth, is led to the creation of godlike, yet innocent primal humanity, but leaves them in ignorance of their true origin and potential. His mother, the lower Sophia, however, working through the snake of wisdom, imparts Adam with gnosis, the spiritual knowledge of his true station. Seeing this awakened state, the jealous and angry Demiurge casts humankind farther into matter, where human nature recapitulates the passions and longing of its high progenitors. This, of course, is the tale of Adam and Eve turned on its head. The first children are banished, not by God, but their apparent creator, who is, in fact, an impostor.

Despite the jealous machinations of the Demiurge it is the destiny of humanity to be the receptacle of the highest mysteries.

"...Listen to me, the Sound of the Mother of your mercy, for you have become worthy of the mystery hidden from the Aeons.." (Trimorphic Protennoia Nag Hammadi Library p.467)

"Behold, Zostrianos, you have heard all these things of which the gods are ignorant.."
(Zostrianos Nag Hammadi Library p.392)

18) Sophia's Longing Fulfilled

According to the Gnostics, the hope for salvation from the bondage of Time proceeds from the original passion for mergence in the Absolute God of the primal Sophia, which necessitated creation in the first place.

Furthermore:

"Since Oblivion (the lower world) came into existence because they (the Aeons) did not know the Father, therefore if they attain to a knowledge of the Father, Oblivion becomes at that very instant non-existent" (Gospel of Truth 18. 7-14).

"Thus the world, unbeknown to its immediate author, is for the sake of salvation, not salvation for the sake of what happened within creation and to creation."

In other words, in Gnostic theology there is no primal act, such as Eve's so-called sin against God's commandment, for which, all of humanity collectively partakes in guilt and for which salvation exists as a path to restoration, according to Christian doctrine. Indeed, true Gnosis is not the reconciliation of God and his rebellious creation, but in the poignant metaphor of the Gnostics, the vicarious fulfillment of the longing of the eternal Children of God, the Aeons, to merge in the Absolute. In this noble vision, though creation is a bridge extending from the fully illuminated realms to the dark, density of matter, this long journey out into Time and Mind generates a path of return transcending all attributes and merging in the undifferentiated Source.

19) The Sat Guru Embodies Eternal Longing & Eternal Union

Through this story we can come to understand another small piece of the mystery of the *Satguru* in *Sant Mat*. Before he is *Satguru*, he is a *gurumukh*, a complete and perfect disciple. He is immersed in the blissful *darshan* of the *Satguru* on all planes including the physical. When he becomes *Satguru*, he loses this absolute of gifts, and he is now gazing through the eyes he formerly looked into:

"In Your Absence,
where is the once blooming
and ecstatic state of my heart?
I'm afraid lest the secret of our love
may be disclosed now.

Otherwise, who knew this hidden tale besides You."

- Translation of a portion a poem by Sant Kirpal Singh ji
Maharaj on the passing of Baba Sawan Singh (14)

To this irreparable loss, as with Sophia, he responds with an unbroken longing, a longing that cannot be fulfilled, except vicariously through his own *gurumukh*. Baba Sawan Singh once said, "If my *Satguru* would come and give me *darshan* even for a minute, I would gladly give away everything I have."(15)

Thus we are led to understand that the *Satguru* embodies the eternal nature of longing, the cause of creation itself, just as he also manifests the eternity of love and union with the Beloved that is the fulfillment of all longing.

- 1 The major exception is the publication of the first English translation of Kabir's *Anurag Sagar* by the Sant Bani group. Russell Perkins offers an extensive commentary in which he mentions Gnostic and other connections to the Kabiran myth. In several published talks, Perkins has commented on this myth of the Gnostics, as well as similar ideas in the writings of William Blake, who specifically drew a distinction between God the artificer, the Lord of Time and Space as it were, and the True God of Eternity. Reading Perkins commentary it soon becomes clear that the publication of *Anurag Sagar* by Sant Bani, was intended to buttress the claims of Ajaib Singh as successor of Sant Kirpal Singh. Sant Darshan Singh periodically recounted Kabir's tale of the "three boons" given to Kal (the Negative Power) by Sat Purush (God) in order to help preserve the lower creation.
- 2 One must not forget that by the time of the Christian era, the Egyptian civilization had maintained a more or less consistent structure for at least three thousand years. Yet, despite this, the deeply foreign appearance of Egyptian religious symbolism led to a history that eulogized the Greeks as the ancient source of modern Western culture. This is true in some respects, as with the Greeks we eventually see the breakdown of enchantment, the emergence of doubt, and the rise of rationalism. The art and literature of ancient Greece reflects this shift to modernity, and a result are much more comfortable to the modern eye. Nevertheless, most of the great Greeks, as one voice, point to Egypt as the source of their knowledge and mysteries. A tour through the National Archaeological Museum in Athens followed by a journey to the major antiquities museum in Cairo is most revealing. After fulfilling this task in 1987, it is this

writer's opinion that the Greek antiquities, for all their beauty and elegance, appear almost trivial by comparison.

The last active Egyptian temple was the temple of Isis on the island of Philae, about six hundred miles south of modern Cairo. The Christian Romans shut down the temple of Philae around 400 C.E, though it remains one of the most beautiful monuments of ancient Egypt even today. It is a fact that there were cults of the Egyptian Goddess, Isis, all along the Mediterranean, holding much influence in Rome and penetrating deeply into France and as far north as Switzerland (See *The Golden Ass*, Lucius Apuleus, written around 400 C.E.). The impress of cult of Isis can be directly related to the gradual rise of Mary as a figure of unique importance in the Church.

As for Judaism, the fundamental Hebraic corpus of esoteric knowledge known as *Kaballah* must certainly have been born from Egypt. The *Ka* and the *Ba* in the term Kaballah are the spirit and the soul respectively in Egyptian terminology. The linguistic structure of Jewish and Christian scripture and the basic Christian story rely heavily on initiatic knowledge and mythic allegory derived from Egypt. (See *The Dimensions of Paradise*, Harper and Row, 1988 or *The City of Revelation*, Garnstone Press 1971(out of print) both by John Michell. Also *Mystery Religions of the Ancient World*, by Jocelyn Godwin, Harper and Row, 1981, *The Egyptian Mysteries* Arthur Versluis, Arkana Books 1988, *The Apostolic Gnosis*, Thorsons Publishers, 1979 (First edition 1919), *The Temple In Man*, R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, Inner Traditions Intl., 1977 (First edition 1949), and so many others.

3 The Five Names are the names of the Lords of the inner divisions of creation. The repetition of these names serves to carry the life impulse of the one who has conveyed them, that is to say, the Master or the Alien man. They act as passwords and protection against the Archonic lower powers. "He who possesses the Five Seals of these particular names has stripped off the garments of ignorance and put on a shining Light! And nothing will appear to him that belongs to the Powers of the Archons.....And I proclaimed to them the Five Seals in

order that I might abide in them and they also might abide in me." (The Trimorphic Protennoia, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, page 470) "Repeat the Five Names and fix your surat (attention) in the illumined darkenss within" (*Sar Bachan Poetry XXVI*, as translated by R.K.Khanna in *Truth Eternal*). "...they are charged with a tremendous spiritual power which negative powers can hardly put up with and from which they flee as from an enchanter driven. Immortal and everlasting as these words of the Master are, they bestow life everlasting to the soul in which they sink and take root." (Kirpal Singh, *Way of the Saints*, page 110, Sant Bani Press, 1975) "there are five planes and the **Names** given are according to these planes, one by one" Kirpal Singh, Sat Sandesh discourse "Five Dacoits Are Looting"

4 See "The Trimorphic Protennoia" from *The Nag Hammadi Library* ed. James M. Robinson Harper & Row, 1981. pp.461-470

The meeting of cosmic metaphor and esoteric technique, of gnosticism and Sant Mat, is found in this revelation poem more plainly than in any other gnostic document. However, one significant point here is that the speaker, the Protennoia, or Primal Thought, who also identifies herself with the creative Sound, is feminine. This though is quite consistent with gender metaphor in much metaphysical literature where the 'male' principle is the seed, or otherwise the Uncreated aspect, whereas all that brings creation into being is 'female'. Since Naam, the Word, or the Sound Current is regarded as the substratum of creation, it too is spoken of in some gnostic literature as female. She says, "I cast a Sound into the ears of those who know me. And I am inviting you into the exalted perfect Light."

An essay on the relationship between *The Trimorphic Protennoia* and *Sant Mat* titled *The Gnostic Universe: Connecting Ancient and Modern Mysticism* was written by Katherine Grace and published in 1988 in David Lane's now defunct research journal, "*Understanding Cults and Spiritual Movements*." This is the only other discussion of the connection with which I am familiar.

5 "hy-pos-ta-sis: Gr. hypostatis, substance, nature, essence. A phenomenon or state of things conceived of as a real substance.

One of the ..real and distinct subsistences in the one undivided substance or essence of God." - from *New Webster's Dictionary*.

6 *The Crown of Life* Kirpal Singh Sat Sandesh Books Franklin New Hampshire 1974 p.10

7 *The Gnostic Religion* Hans Jonas Beacon Press Boston 1963
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Enough praise cannot be heaped upon this brilliant volume which, despite the many books that have been written since, and the great developments of scholarship in the field, still remains one of the most succinct and coherent discussion of essential Gnostic doctrines. Without the aid of the Nag Hammadi texts or an esoteric training, Jonas was able to put together a vivid interpretation that plainly echoes Sant Mat principles in detail. It is also beautifully written in an elegant and fluid prose particularly marvelous for the fact that Jonas was not a native English speaker.

8 *Sar Bachan Radhasoami (Poetry)Part 2* Soamiji Maharaj translated and published by S.D. Maheshwari Soami Bagh Agra 1970 pp.428-429 These volumes were originally published in Hindi long after the passing of Soami Ji. Although they contain many writings from the discourses of Soami Ji, Rai Sailgram added couplets at the end of many verses and dozens of his own devotional verses. Unfortunately these are integrated in the text to an extent that makes it difficult to differentiate them.

9 *The Ocean of Love: the Anurag Sagar of Kabir* Sant Bani Ashram, New Hampshire 1984

The Anurag Sagar has a most interesting history in the line of Masters from Tulsi Saheb onwards. One of the few English translations of Tulsi's writings is a long interpretation of aspects of this text (Param Sant Tulsi Saheb Soami Bagh, Agra 1979). It was recommended by Baba Jaimal Singh to the questioning Sawan Singh at their first several meetings. Baba Sawan Singh referred to this book in glowing terms, saying that it was essential for understanding the difference between the "Negative Power", as Kal is referred to, and the path of the Saints. Nevertheless, scholars contest the

authenticity of the volume, stating that it is a later work of the Kabir Panth, a religious sect loosely based on Kabir's writings. Yet, in so many respects, it accords very closely with Sant Mat as taught by Tulsi, Soami Ji, and his successors giving it a ring of authenticity that defies the opinion of scholars.

10 *The Gnostic Religion* ibid footnote p. 151 All unreferenced quotes are from this text.

11 A Very Intricate Matter Kirpal Singh *Sant Bani Magazine* Feb. 1978 page 17

This was a radio interview with Kirpal Singh in Mexico City in 1972 in which he was asked about the devil. His insistent reply, in which he swept aside the interviewers attempts to change the subject, was a potent discourse on the the nature and function of the Positive vs. the Negative Powers. In essence he focuses on the fact that both ultimately function under God serving essential though polarized roles.

12 *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten* G.R.S. Mead New York University Books 1960 p.188

13 *Sar Bachan Radhasoami (Poetry)* Ibid p.94
101 Portrait of Perfection Ibid page 46

14 Quoted from Sariya Duniya in *Sat Sandesh* July 1971 p.17