

A Not-So-Divine Tragedy

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As previously mentioned, only Nous (also called Monogenes) was capable of contemplating and comprehending Bythus and this was a great pleasure to Nous. At one time, Nous had a desire to make Bythus fully known to the rest of the Aeons, and they also desired this knowledge. But Sige restrained Nous from doing this because it was not the will of Bythus to be made known in this way, and furthermore, it was impossible for him to be known to any others. They all accepted this as the will of Bythus. All, that is, except for one of them – the youngest.

This youngest was the feminine Aeon, Sophia. She left her consort, Theletos, and resolved to know her unknown Father. She gave herself unreservedly to this pursuit of knowledge, not understanding that her goal was impossible to attain. In the midst of her passion, she gave birth. But because she had left her consort, Theletos, and thus had no male contribution to her “pregnancy,” her offspring was a defective, amorphous substance, without form and shapeless, and also called “an imbecilic child.” According to Gnosticism, this was the origin of all material substance. This will be elaborated in the next article.

When Sophia looked at this offspring, it produced a great emotional crisis and Sophia was in danger – because of the extremity of her grief, ignorance, fear and bewilderment – of ceasing to exist. The other Aeons began to plead on her behalf to Bythus. In response, Bythus produced another Aeon from himself, without Sige. This new Aeon is called by several names including *Horos* (“Boundary”), *Stauros* (“Cross”), *Lytotes* (“Redeemer”), *Carpistes* (“Liberator”), *Horothetes* (“One Who Establishes Boundaries”) and *Metagoges* (“One Who Leads Back”).

Horos rescued Sophia by purifying her. This purification involved removing the defective offspring from her and expelling it from the Pleroma. This defective offspring, the “enthymesis” of Sophia, was termed *Achamoth* (from the Hebrew word for wisdom). In this way, Sophia was restored to her former state.

After Sophia had been rescued, Monogenes produced another pair of Aeons – Christ and the Holy Spirit. The purpose of this production was to ensure that none of the other Aeons would fall into the error of Sophia.

Christ did this by teaching the Aeons about their true nature – such as perpetual existence. He also taught them what was necessary to know about Bythus, principally that he cannot be understood or comprehended, except of course by Monogenes.

In addition, the Holy Spirit taught them thankfulness, equality among themselves, and true rest. This brought great joy and praise to Bythus. So great was the exaltation, that Bythus himself joined in the praise. Out of this great exaltation, it was decided that each of the Aeons would contribute that which was most beautiful and precious from his or her nature and that from what was contributed by each of them, one more Aeon would be formed – a being of most perfect beauty, the very “Star of the Pleroma.” This being was *Jesus*, also named *Savior*, *Christ*, *Logos* and *Everything*. At this time, the angels were also created to act as bodyguards for Jesus.

Meanwhile, Achamoth, being banished from the light of the Pleroma into darkness and vacuity, was violently excited. Christ took pity on Achamoth and gave her substance, but not intelligence. He then withdrew and left Achamoth to herself. This gave her just enough of the nature of the Aeons that she strained herself to discover the light which had forsaken her, but she could not accomplish this. Even if she had been able, she was restrained by Horos. To thoroughly obstruct her progress in trying to discover the light, Horus exclaimed the name YAO (that is, Yahwe or Jehovah) over her. This resulted in various passions in Achamoth – namely, grief, fear, perplexity, ignorance and desire.

This collection of passions became the substance of all matter from which the world was formed. For example, from her desire, every soul of human beings and that of the Demiurge¹ were derived. Everything else material derived from her grief, fear, perplexity and ignorance. From her tears, all liquid substances (rivers, oceans) were formed. From her smile all that is bright was formed. From her grief and perplexity, all the solid elements were formed.

After thus forming the material universe, Achamoth turned herself to supplication to Christ. He was unwilling to personally help her any further, but instead sent the Paraclete and the angels to her. Achamoth was “converted” by the Paraclete. The Paraclete imparted to her intelligence and brought healing to her passions by separating them from her in two distinct substances. The first, the material universe, was separated from Achamoth as unorganized matter, originating from her passions, and was evil. The other originated from her conversion and was subject to suffering. Being thus freed from her passions, Achamoth gazed with

rapture at the Paraclete and the angels. In her ecstasy, she conceived and brought forth new beings, partly after her own image, and partly as a spiritual progeny after the image of the Savior. These spiritual progeny became consorts of the angels. Thus, there are three kinds of existence:

1. Matter – formed from passion and evil;
2. Animal – formed from her conversion;
3. Spiritual – brought forth by Achamoth herself.

Her next task was to give form to these.

1. The Demiurge is the subject of the next article.