

The Demiurge

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March 2008

As stated in the previous article, Gnosticism taught three kinds of existence brought forth by Achamoth:

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

Achamoth's next task was to give form to these. And as it turns out, she was unable to do this with the third type of existence – spiritual – because it was too much like herself. Therefore, she focused her attention on the second – animal.

From animal substance, she first formed a being who is "*Father and King*" of all things that are (like himself) of an animal substance and of all things that are of a material substance. He is the one who gave form to all of these substances. This being has several names including *Father*, *Metropator* (meaning "Mother-Father"), *Apator* (meaning "without father"), *Demiurge* (meaning "Craftsman" or "Framer" of the material universe), *Protarchontes* (meaning "First Ruler") and *Ialdabaoth* (meaning Lord God of the Fathers). Thus, in Gnosticism, the Demiurge was the Father and God of everything outside of the Pleroma, being the "framer" of all animal and material substances. He also framed seven heavens and dwells above them. He is identified by Gnostics as the God of the Jews in the Old Testament.

In actuality, the Demiurge was merely the instrument of Achamoth in accomplishing these, a fact of which he was ignorant. He did not know of the existence of Achamoth his mother or of any of the other Aeons. He did not possess any creative ability of his own, although he imagined that all these things were his own works. Furthermore, being merely animal and not spiritual, he was incapable of perceiving any spiritual essences. Therefore, he imagined himself to be God alone and mistakenly declared through the prophets, "*I am God, and besides me there is no other.*"

The Demiurge is also the creator of the Devil, whom they call *Cosmocrator* (meaning "ruler of the world"), and of all the spirits of wickedness. Unlike the Demiurge, however, the Devil has knowledge of what is above him because he is a wicked *spirit*, whereas the Demiurge is only an *animal*

(soul) and not a spirit. Thus, the Devil has much greater knowledge than the Demiurge. Finally, the Demiurge formed the earthy part of man and breathed into him the animal part of his nature.

Because he is incapable of perceiving spiritual essences, the Demiurge was ignorant of those spiritual offspring of Achamoth which she produced in her ecstasy. Achamoth took advantage of this ignorance and deposited a spiritual substance in man. Thus, man has an animal soul from the Demiurge, his body from the earth, his fleshy part from matter, and his spiritual substance from Achamoth. This spiritual substance is a "spark of divinity." Consequently, there is a dualism in both the creation and in man himself. One part is animal (soul) and fleshy (body) and is subject to corruption. The other part, which is possessed by only certain persons, is spiritual and is not subject to corruption.

The Demiurge seeks to keep men imprisoned in ignorance and in the physical creation. He does this with the help of (evil) angels and by means of religious and moral laws, all the time trying to convince them that he is the real God. The goal of every spiritual man is to be liberated from the Demiurge and to escape his physical creation. Because the Demiurge uses rules of morality (such as the ten commandments) to impose his will, Gnostics see rebellion against the Demiurge and disobedience to his laws as a spiritual duty.

The Demiurge is described by Gnostics as intensely jealous. He had some perception of something infinite, eternal, immense, permanent, and free from measurement by time, and he desired to imitate this in what he framed. But because he was merely the fruit of a defect, he could not truly reproduce these qualities in the physical creation. Instead, he spread out the creation into vast numbers (millions) of years and seemingly endless successions of seasons in an effort to give the resemblance of immensity, permanence, infinity and eternity. But because the truth was beyond him, everything he produced was false and flawed. The physical world is therefore flawed because its creator is flawed and evil. For this reason, when the times set by Bythus are fulfilled, all his work will be destroyed and perish.