

The Immortal Within

"The Modern Gnostic Philosophy"

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Chapter 1

What Is A Gnostic?

The words Gnostic or Gnosticism are perhaps the most misunderstood words in the English language. Often they are confused with Agnostics or Agnosticism. Therefore, before we go any further, I must make the meaning of these words perfectly clear. To do this we should first check with Webster's Dictionary.

Agnostic: < Gr. *agnostos*, unknown, unknowable; a person who believes that the human mind cannot know whether there is a God or an ultimate cause, or anything beyond material phenomena.

Agnosticism: the doctrine of agnostics.

To reach a definition for a Gnostic or Gnosticism we must first seek the word "Gnosis".

Gnosis: < Gr. *gnosis*, knowledge < *gignoskein*, to Know] positive, intuitive knowledge in spiritual matters, such as Gnostics claim to have.

Gnostics: < Gr. *gnostikos*,] 1. of or having knowledge 2. a believer in Gnosticism.

Gnosticism: a system of belief combining ideas derived from Greek philosophy, Oriental mysticism, and ultimately Christianity, and stressing salvation through gnosis.

With these simple definitions our journey begins. I can assure you that it will be truly a marvelous journey. However, the journey is not for everyone. Unlike many of the world religions Gnosticism was never designed for the many. Centuries ago our early Gnostic fathers realized that the destiny of Gnosticism would be one of exclusivity and individuality. It still is, but time has a way of changing destiny.

This is perhaps the most unique feature about Gnosticism. Unlike other religions, Gnosticism thrives on change. By its very nature it seeks new knowledge, new experiences. But now it is time for Gnosticism to assume a new responsibility.

Gnosticism is one of the oldest belief structures in the world. It has appeared in both the old world and the new world. It is found in every religion, in every civilization, and in every country. It has continued in both written and oral traditions in spite of the best efforts of its detractors to eradicate it from the face of the world. Fortunately, it is still alive today.

Why? Because we are born with its memory embedded in our DNA. Not everyone can recognize it, or use it, but it is still there. There are many who are seeking it. There are also those who refuse to believe what they already know. The good news is that no matter where we are on the path of knowledge, all of us will eventually reach that level of knowledge called "Gnosis". However, the task of reaching that level of realization called "Gnosis" could take days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries or eons.

Yet, do we still have the luxury of time to wait for that to happen? The obvious answer must now be an unequivocal - NO! Within the last century there has been an explosion of scientific and technical knowledge. This knowledge has made us masters of our environments, space, and, to a smaller extent - time.

The modern Gnostic has a greater knowledge and understanding of space and time than his predecessors. And yet, the modern Gnostic must marvel at the depth of spiritual understanding that the ancients derived with their limited knowledge of space and time. The ancient Greeks, the Chinese, or the Maya did not possess our current knowledge and technology. Still, they somehow managed to ascertain that man, his world, and the universe were all connected.

The minds of the ancient philosophers, mathematicians, physicians, and inventors were not restrained for lack of the will to know. However, they were restrained by the times, governments, and even their own fellow man from freely sharing their knowledge. Socrates was allowed to commit suicide. Galileo barely escaped death from the Inquisition. In the early

centuries of the Common Era, thousands of Gnostics were put to death for their heresy. This is why those enlightened few went "underground". They knew their message would find no immortality in a martyr's death. And so they wisely chose to wait.

However, the message in their hearts and minds could not. It quickly became apparent to the "knowers" that the best way to enlighten the world was to hide their message in plain sight. Gnostics placed their message in art, music, literature, science, and more recently electronic media. Individually, they knew what they were doing. Still, they seldom acted collectively or openly. But times change.

The world is still not ready to accept a concerted, collective action by Gnostics. Considering the highly individual nature of a Gnostic, that will probably never happen in my lifetime. Nonetheless, the world is ready to accept a more open and overt action by the Gnostics that live among us. There is at least one Gnostic who has decided to undertake that task.

The primary purpose of this book is to spread the word to the Gnostic community that, "The time is now!" Since the sixties the message of Gnosis has been seen more frequently in books, films, television, and now even on the information super highway. We are having an effect on humankind, but we must do more before our technological development supersedes our spiritual development.

The secondary purpose of this book is to bring older concepts of Gnosticism in line with our more advanced knowledge of space, time and the universe. The ancient Middle-Eastern version of Gnosis stressed salvation through "Gnosis", but its proponents, Zoroaster and Plato, were not acquainted with the atom. Einstein did, but he is a child of the twentieth century. He laid the foundation for our present knowledge of alternate universes, black holes, and the concept of time as being circular rather than linear.

The beauty of Gnosticism is that it encourages the pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge poses no danger of shaking the very core of Gnostic philosophy. The same cannot be said for other world religions.

Perhaps one day, our knowledge of space and time will eliminate the need for religions based on fear, punishment, or eternal rewards. When that day comes humankind will become truly "civilized". The journey toward that time begins now. If you have the courage to take one quantum leap, or even "one small step for mankind", the following pages will speed you on that journey. If you have already embarked on that journey, I invite you to share the insights of a fellow Gnostic.