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## **Three Forms of First Thought (Trimorphic Protennoia)**

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**Translated by Willis Barnstone**

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*Headings in bold type have been added to the text for clarity by the translator.*

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### **THE WORD OF FIRST THOUGHT: THE FIRST DESCENT**

I am first thought, the thought that is in light. I am movement that is in all, she in whom the realm of all takes its stand, the firstborn among those who came into being, she who exists before all. She is called by three names, although she exists alone, since she is perfect. I am invisible within the thought of the invisible one. I am revealed in the immeasurable, ineffable things. I am intangible, dwelling in the intangible. I move in every creature.

I am the life of my afterthought that is within every power and every eternal movement, and in invisible lights, and within the powers and angels and demons and every soul in Tartaros, and in every material soul. I live in those who came into being. I move in everyone and I enter them. I walk upright, and those who sleep I awaken. And I am the sight of those who dwell in sleep.

I am the invisible one in all. I counsel those who are hidden, since I know the whole realm of all that exists in it. I am numberless beyond everyone. I am immeasurable, ineffable, yet whenever I wish, I shall reveal myself. I am the head of all. I am before all, and I am all, since I am in everyone.

I am a voice speaking softly. I am from the beginning. I am in the silence that surrounds every one of them. And the hidden voice is in me, in intangible, immeasurable thought, in the immeasurable silence.

I descended into the underworld and shone down on the darkness. I poured water. I am hidden in radiant waters. I gradually dawn on all by my thought. I am weighed down with the voice. Through me knowledge comes. I am in the ineffable and unknowable. I am perception and knowledge, uttering a voice by means of thought. I am the real voice. I cry out in everyone, and they recognize it, since a seed lives in them. I am the father's thought, and through me came the voice: the knowledge of everlasting things. I am as thought for all. I am joined to unknowable and intangible thought. I revealed myself in all who know me, for I joined everyone in hidden thought and exalted voice, and in a voice from the invisible thought.

It is immeasurable, since it is in the immeasurable one. It is a mystery, unrestrained by the intangible. It is invisible to all who are visible in the realm of all. It is light in light.

We also have left the visible world since we are saved by hidden wisdom mediated by the ineffable, immeasurable voice. And the one who is hidden within us pays a tribute of fruit to the water of life.

The son is perfect in every respect. He is the word who originated through that voice, who came from on high, who has within him the name, who is light. The son revealed the everlasting, and all the unknown was known. He revealed what is hard to interpret and what is secret, and he preached to those who live in silence with first thought, and he revealed himself to those who are in darkness, and he clarified himself to those in the abyss. To those in the hidden treasures he told ineffable mysteries, and he taught unspeakable doctrines to all those who became children of the light.

Now the voice that came from my thought exists as three permanences: the father, the mother, the son. The voice is perceptible speech containing a word rich in every glory. It has three masculinities, three powers, and three names. They are in the manner of the triad of three [shapes], which are quadrangles, secretly in silence of the ineffable one.

He alone came into being as the anointed. I anointed him with goodness as the glory of the invisible spirit. I established these three alone in glory over the eternal realms in living water: glory surrounding him who first appeared to the light of the exalted aeons and realms. He persists in light. And he stood in a light surrounding him who is the eye of light gloriously shining on me. He gave aeons for the father of all aeons, I the thought of the father, first thought, Barbelo, the perfect glory and the immeasurable invisible hidden one. I am the image of the invisible spirit. Through me all took shape. I am the mother as well as the light whom she appointed as virgin, she who is called Meirothea, the intangible womb, the unrestrained and immeasurable voice.

Then the perfect son revealed himself to his aeons who came through him. He revealed, glorified, and enthroned them, and stood in the glory made for himself. They blessed the perfect son, the anointed, the god who came into being by himself. And they gave glory, saying, "He is! He is! God's son! God's son! He is! The being of eternal beings! He sees the eternal beings that he conceived. For you have conceived by your own desire! So we glorify you: MA! MO! You are O, O, O. You are A. You are being! The eternal realm of the eternal realms! The eternal realm he gave!"

Then the god who was conceived gave the eternal realms a power of life for them to rely on, and he established them. The first eternal realm he established over the first—Armedon, Nousanios, Harmozel; the second he established over the second eternal realm—Phaionios, Ainios, Oroiael; the third over the third eternal realm—Mellephaneus, Loios, Daveithai; the fourth over the fourth: Mousanios, Amethes, Eleleth. Now, those eternal realms are the ones conceived by the god who was conceived—the anointed—and these eternal realms received and gave glory. They were the first to appear, exalted in their thought, and each eternal realm gave ten thousand glories in great unsearchable lights, and as one they blessed the perfect son, the god who was conceived.

Then came a word from the great light Eleleth, and said, "I am king! Who is of chaos and who is of the underworld?" And suddenly his light appeared, shining forth, given afterthought. The powers of the powers asked nothing of him. Suddenly there appeared the great demon who rules over the lowest part of the underworld and chaos. He has no form or perfection. Rather, he has the form of the glory of those conceived in darkness. Now, he is called Sakla, Samael, Yaldabaoth, he who took power, who stole it away from innocent Sophia. Originally he overpowered her; she is the light's afterthought who descended, from whom the great demon came from the beginning.

The afterthought of light knew the great demon had begged Eleleth for another order, though he was lower than afterthought, and she said, "Give me another order so that you may be a place for me to live, so I will not fall into endless disorder." And the order of the entire house of glory agreed with her word. She was blessed, and the higher order yielded to her.

Now the great demon began to make aeons in the likeness of the real eternal realms, except that he produced them out of his own power.

I too revealed my voice secretly, saying, "Stop, stop, you who walk on matter. Look, I am coming down to the world of mortals for my portion that was there from the time when the innocent Sophia was conquered. She descended so that I might counter their plan, which was determined by the one who reveals himself through her." Everyone in the house of the ignorant light was disturbed, and the abyss trembled.

The chief creator of ignorance reigned over chaos and the underworld and produced a human being in my likeness. But he didn't know that his creation would be a decree of his annulment, nor did he recognize the power in him.

But now I have come down and reached chaos. I was there with my own. I am hidden in them, empowering them, and giving them shape. From the first day until the day I grant enormous power to those who are mine, I will reveal myself to those who have heard my mysteries, the children of light.

I am their father, and I shall tell you an utterly ineffable and unspeakable mystery: I tore off from you the bonds and broke the chains of the underworld demons, the same restraints that bound me. I overthrew the high walls of darkness, and I broke the secure gates of those pitiless ones and smashed their bars. And I spoke of the evil force and the one who beats and harms you, the tyrant, the adversary, the king, and the real enemy. I informed all who are mine, who are children of light, how to nullify the enemies, be free of bonds, and return to where they first were.

I am the first who descended for my portion of what was left behind: the spirit in the soul, which came from the water of life and the immersion of the mysteries. I spoke and the archons and authorities spoke. I went under their language and spoke my mysteries to my own—a hidden mystery—and the bonds and eternal oblivion were nullified. And I bore fruit in them, the thought of the unchanging eternal realm, and my house, and their father. And I went down to those who were mine from the first, and reached them and broke the first strands that enslaved them. Then everyone in me shone, and I made a pattern for those lights that are ineffably in me. Amen.

**ON DESTINY: THE SECOND DESCENT**

I am the voice that appeared through my thought. I am one joined to another. I am called the thought of the invisible one. Because I am called the unchanging speech, I am called she who is joined to another.

I am alone and undefiled. I am the mother of the voice, speaking in many ways, completing all. Knowledge is in me, a knowledge of things everlasting. I speak in every creature, and I was known by all. I lift up the speech of the voice to the ears of those who have known me, the children of light.

Now, I have come the second time in the likeness of a female and have spoken with them. And I shall tell them of the coming end of this realm and teach them of the beginning of the eternal realm to come, the one without change, the one in which our appearance will be changed. We shall be purified in those eternal realms from which I revealed myself in the thought of the likeness of my masculinity. I settled among those who are worthy in the thought of my changeless eternal realm.

I shall tell you a mystery of this realm and of its forces. Birth cries out; hour gives birth to hour, and day gives birth to day. Months reveal months, time follows time. This realm was completed in this fashion, and as quickly, it is thought, as a finger releases a finger and a joint separates from a joint. When the great authorities knew that the time of fulfillment had appeared—just as the time of the birth pangs came, the time of destruction approached—the elements trembled, and the foundations of the underworld and the ceilings of chaos shook, and a great fire shone in their midst, and rocks and earth were shaken like a reed by the wind.

And a great thunder disturbed the allotments of fate and those who apportion the houses. The thrones of the powers were disturbed because they were overturned, and their king was afraid. And those who follow fate paid their allotment of visits to the path, and said to the powers, “What is this disturbance and this shaking we have felt through the voice of exalted speech? And our entire world has been shaken, the entire circuit of our path of ascent has been destroyed, and our way up to the chief creator of our birth no longer exists for us.”

Then the powers answered, saying, “We too are at a loss about it because we did not know what caused it. But get up and let’s go to the chief creator and ask him.” And the powers gathered and went up to the chief creator. They said to him, “What kind of boasting is this? Didn’t we hear you say, ‘I am god, and I am your father and it is I who produced you, and there is no other god but me’? Now look, the aeon’s voice of invisible speech has appeared. We don’t recognize the voice, nor to whom we belong, for the voice that we heard is foreign and its origin unknown. It came and terrified and weakened our arms. So let’s weep and mourn bitterly! And let us fly away before we are forcibly imprisoned and taken down to the bowels of the underworld. Already the slackening of our bondage is near, and time is short, and the days are brief, and our time fulfilled. The weeping of our destruction is near and we may be taken to the place we recognize. The tree from which we grew has fruit of ignorance. Death is in its leaves, and darkness under the shadow of its boughs. In deceit and lust we harvested the tree through which ignorant chaos became our home. For look, even the chief creator of our birth, about whom we boast, did not know this speech.”

O children of thought, hear me, hear the speech of the mother of your mercy. You have earned the right to own the mystery hidden from eternity. Now accept it. And the end of this realm and of the life of injustice is near, and the beginning of the coming eternal realm dawns and will never change.

I am androgynous. I am mother and father. I copulate with myself. I copulate with myself and with those who love me, and through me alone all are standing firm. I am the womb that gives shape to all by bearing light shining in splendor. I am the coming eternal realm. I am the fulfillment of all, Meirothea the glory of the mother. I cast the voice's speech into the ears of those who know me.

I invite you into the high perfect light. When you enter light, you will be glorified by those who give glory, and those who enthrone will enthrone you. You will receive robes from those who give robes, the baptizers will baptize you, and you will become exceedingly glorious, the way you first were when you were light.

I hid in everyone and revealed myself in them, and every mind seeking me longed for me, for I gave shape to the full realm when it had no form. I transformed their forms into other forms until the time when form is given to everyone. The voice came through me. I created breath in my people. And I cast the eternally holy spirit into them, and I ascended and entered my light. I got on my branch and sat among the children of holy light. And I withdrew to where they lived. Amen.

#### **THE WORD OF APPEARANCE: THE THIRD DESCENT**

I am the word in the ineffable voice. I am in undefiled light, and thought came clearly through the great speech of the mother, though a male offspring is my foundation. Speech exists from the beginning in the foundations of the full realm.

But a light hides in silence, and it was first to appear. Whereas the mother alone exists as silence, I alone am the ineffable, incorruptible, immeasurable, and inconceivable word. The word is hidden light bearing fruit of life, pouring living water from the invisible, unpolluted, immeasurable spring. The source is the inimitable voice of the mother's glory, the glory of god's offspring, the male virgin in hidden intellect, silence hidden from everyone, inimitable, immeasurable light, the full source and root of the whole eternal realm. It is the foundation of every movement of the eternal realms that are of mighty glory. It is the base of every foundation, the breath of powers. It is the eye of the three permanences, which are a voice in thought. It is a word in speech. It was sent to illumine those in darkness.

Look, I will reveal my mysteries because you are my brothers and sisters, and you will know them. I told them about my mysteries that exist in the ineffable, inexpressible eternal realms. I taught them the mysteries through the voice of perfect intellect, and I became a foundation for all and I strengthened them.

The second time I came as my voice's speech. I shaped those who took shape before their completion.

The third time I revealed myself in their tents as the word. I revealed myself in the likeness of their shape. I wore everyone's garment. I hid in them, and they didn't know who strengthens me. For I am in all dominions and powers and among angels and in every movement in matter. I hid in them until I revealed myself to my brothers and sisters. None of the powers knew me, though I work in them. They thought they created everything, because they are ignorant. They didn't know the root and source of their growth.

I am light illumining all. I am light happy in my brothers and sisters. I came down to the world of mortals because of the spirit in what descended and came from the innocent Sophia. I came and delivered . . . and went . . . that which he once had. I gave him some of the living water, which strips him of chaos in uttermost darkness, in the whole abyss, which is corporeal and psychical thought. All these I put on. And I stripped him of inferior thought and clothed him in shining light: knowledge of the thought of fatherhood.

I delivered him to those who give robes—Yammon, Elasso, Amenai—and they covered him with a robe from the robes of the light; I delivered him to the baptizers and they baptized him—Micheus, Michar, Mnesinous—and they immersed him in the spring of the water of life. I delivered him to those who enthrone—Bariel, Nouthan, Sabenai—and they enthroned him from the throne of glory. I delivered him to those who glorify—Ariom, Elien, Phariel—and they glorified him with the glory of the fatherhood. And those who snatch away, snatched away—Kamaliel . . . Samblo, the servants of the great holy luminaries—and they took him into the place of the light of his fatherhood. And he received the five seals from the light of the mother, first thought, and it was granted him to partake of the mystery of knowledge, and he became a light in light.

So, now . . . I was in them, in each one's form. The rulers thought I was their anointed. Actually, I dwell in everyone. Indeed, within those in whom I revealed myself as light, I eluded the rulers. I am their beloved, for in that place I clothed myself as the son of the chief creator, and I was like him until the end of his regime, which is the ignorance of chaos. And among the angels I revealed myself in their likeness, and among the powers as if I were one of them, but among the human children as if I were a human child, even though I am father of everyone.

I hid in them all until I revealed myself among my members, which are mine, and I taught them about the ineffable ordinances, and about the brothers and sisters. But they are inexpressible to every sovereignty and every ruling power except to the children of light, decreed by the father. These are the glories that are higher than every glory, that is, the five seals, complete by virtue of intellect. One who possesses the five seals with these names has stripped off the garments of ignorance and put on shining light. And nothing will appear to one who belongs to the powers of the rulers. In them darkness will dissolve and ignorance die. And thought of the scattered creature will have a single appearance, and dark chaos will dissolve . . . until I reveal myself to my brothers and sisters and gather all my brothers and sisters in my eternal kingdom. I proclaimed the ineffable five seals to them so that I might live in them and they in me.

I wore Jesus. I carried him from the cursed wood and set him in his father's house.  
And those who guard their houses didn't recognize me. My seed and I are  
unrestrained. My seed is mine. I shall place it in holy light in intangible silence.  
Amen.