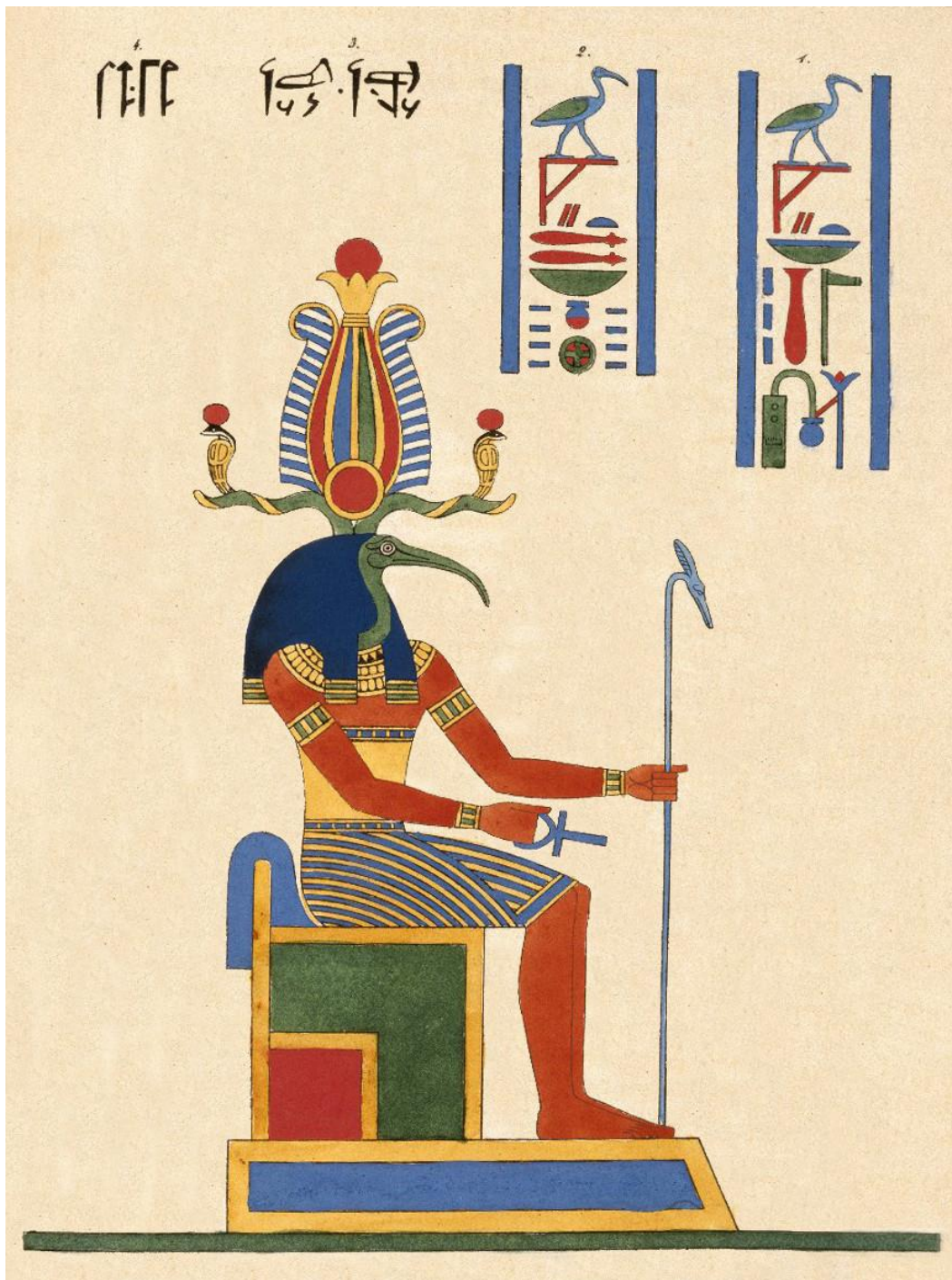


# *A dire prophecy about Egypt*

**A passage from the Asclepian Dialogue  
Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus**



## Who is Thoth-Hermes?

**Wisdom is inseparable from Divinity. The Babylonian Nebo, the Thoth of Memphis, the Greek Hermes, were all gods of Esoteric Wisdom.**

Some ancient writings known to Bibliophiles, personify WISDOM, representing it as emanating from AIN-SOPH, the Parabrahman of Jewish Kabbalists, and being an associate and companion of the manifested deity. Hence its sacred character among all nations. Wisdom is inseparable from Divinity. Thus we have the *Vedas* emanating from the mouth of the Hindu Brahmā (the *logos*). Buddha comes from *Budha*, “Wisdom,” divine intelligence. The Babylonian *Nebo*, the *Thoth* of Memphis, the Greek Hermes, were all gods of esoteric wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

**Ammonius Saccas declared that all moral and practical wisdom was contained in the Books of Thoth-Hermes Trismegistus.<sup>2</sup>**

*Thoth means a college, school, or assembly, and the works of that name were identical with the doctrines of the sages of the far East.*

“What then is your religion or your belief?” we are asked. “What is your favourite study?”

“TRUTH,” we reply. Truth wherever we find it; for, like Ammonius Saccas, our great ambition would be to reconcile the different religious systems, to help each one to find the truth in his own religion, while obliging him to recognize it in that of his neighbour. What matters the name if the thing itself is essentially the same? Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Apollonius of Tyana, all three, had, it is said, the wonderful gifts of prophecy, of clairvoyance, and of healing, although they belonged to three different schools. Prophecy was an art cultivated by the Essenes and the *benim nabim* among the Jews, as well as by the priests of the pagan oracles. The disciples of Plotinus attributed miraculous powers to their master. Philostratus has claimed the same for Apollonius, while Iamblichus had the reputation of surpassing all the other Eclectics in Theosophic Theurgy. Ammonius declared that all moral and practical WISDOM was contained in the Books of Thoth or Hermes Trismegistus. But “Thoth” means a “college,” school or assembly, and the works of that name, according to the Theodidaktos,<sup>3</sup> were identical with the doctrines of the sages of the extreme East. If Pythagoras acquired his knowledge in India (where he is mentioned to this day in old manuscripts under the name of *Yavanāchārya*,<sup>4</sup> the “Greek Master”), Plato gained his from the books of Thoth-Hermes. How it is that the younger Hermes — the god of the shepherds, surnamed “the good shepherd” — who presided over divination and clairvoyance, became identical with the Thoth (or Thot), the deified sage and the au-

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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN – I) XI p. 257

<sup>2</sup> [Thrice Great]

<sup>3</sup> [i.e., “God-taught,” a prosonym of Ammonius Saccas.]

<sup>4</sup> A term which comes from the words *Yavana*, or “the Ionian,” and *Āchārya*, professor or master.”

thor of the *Book of the Dead* — only the esoteric doctrine can reveal to the Orientalists.<sup>5</sup>

**Therefore, Thoth-Hermes never was the name of a man, but a generic title. It is the Voice of Egypt's Great Hierophants that speaks.**

*Even in the time of Plato, Hermes was already identified with the Thoth of the Egyptians. But in reality Thoth-Hermes is simply the personification of the sacred teachings of Egypt's sacerdotal caste.*

To what epoch may we ascribe the origin of Alchemy? No modern writer is able to tell us exactly. Some give us Adam as its first adept; others attribute it to the indiscretion of “the sons of God, who seeing that the daughters of men were beautiful, took them for their wives.”<sup>6</sup> Moses and Solomon are later adepts in the science, for they were preceded by Abraham, who was in turn antedated in the *Science of Sciences* by Hermes. Does not Avicenna tell us that the *Smaragdine Tablet* — the oldest existing treatise on Alchemy — was found on the body of Hermes, buried centuries ago at Hebron, by Sarah, the wife of Abraham? But “Hermes” never was the name of a man, but a generic title, just as the term *Neo-Platonist* was used in former times, and “Theosophist” is being used in the present. What in fact is known about Hermes Trismegistos, “thrice-greatest”? Less than we know of Abraham, his wife Sarah and his concubine Agar, which St. Paul declares to be *an allegory*.<sup>7</sup> Even in the time of Plato, Hermes was already identified with the Thoth of the Egyptians. But this word *thoth* does not only mean “Intelligence”; it also means “assembly” or *school*. In reality Thoth-Hermes is simply the personification of the voice (or sacred teaching) of the sacerdotal caste of Egypt; the voice of the Great Hierophants.<sup>8</sup>

**The first hour for the disappearance of the Mysteries struck on the clock of the Races with the Macedonian Conqueror. The Adepts of Egypt were then compelled to recede further and further from the laurels of conquest into the most hidden spots of the globe.**

*And her sacred Scribes and Hierophants became wanderers upon the face of the earth.*

As was predicted by the great Hermes in his dialogue with Aesculapius, the time had indeed come when impious foreigners accused Egypt of adoring monsters, and naught but the letters engraved in stone upon her monuments survived — enigmas unintelligible to posterity. Her sacred Scribes and Hierophants became wanderers upon the face of the earth. Those who had remained in Egypt found themselves obliged for fear of a profanation of the sacred Mysteries to seek refuge in deserts and mountains, to form and establish secret societies and brotherhoods — such as the Essenes; those who had crossed the oceans to India and even to the (now-called) New

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<sup>5</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BEACON OF THE UNKNOWN – IV) XI pp. 254-65

<sup>6</sup> [Genesis vi, 2]

<sup>7</sup> St. Paul explains it quite clearly: according to him, Sarah represents “Jerusalem which is above” and Agar “a mountain in Arabia,” *Sinai*, which “answereth Jerusalem which now is” (*Galatians* iv, 25-36).

<sup>8</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ALCHEMY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY) XIV p. 534

World, bound themselves by solemn oaths to keep silent, and to preserve secret their Sacred Knowledge and Science; thus these were buried deeper than ever out of human sight. In Central Asia and on the northern borderlands of India, the triumphant sword of Aristotle's pupil swept away from his path of conquest every vestige of a once pure Religion: and its Adepts receded further and further from that path into the most hidden spots of the globe. The cycle of \*\*\*\* being at its close, the first hour for the disappearance of the Mysteries struck on the clock of the Races, with the Macedonian conqueror.<sup>9</sup>

## The prophecy

From Thomas Taylor (*Tr. & Com.*), *Select Works of Plotinus, the Great Restorer of the Philosophy of Plato; and extracts from the Treatise of Synesius on Providence*. London: Printed for and sold by the Author, 1817; pp. 550 fn., & 553-57 fn.

**Egypt shall be forsaken when divinity returns back from earth to heaven.**

[There now follows an] extraordinary prophecy in the Asclepian dialogue,<sup>10</sup> ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus, a Latin translation only of which is extant, and is generally believed by the learned to have been made by Apuleius. The passage I allude to is the following:

“Are you ignorant, O Asclepius, that Egypt is the image of heaven, or, which is more true, a translation and descent of everything which is governed and exercised in heaven? And if it may be said, our land is truly the temple of the whole world. Nevertheless, because it becomes wise men to foreknow all things, it is not lawful you should be ignorant that the time will come when it may seem that the Egyptians have in vain, with a pious mind and sedulous religion, paid attention to divinity, and all their holy veneration shall become void and of no effect. For divinity shall return back from earth to heaven, Egypt shall be forsaken, and the land which was the seat of divinity, shall be destitute of religion, and deprived of the presence of the Gods.

*For when strangers shall possess and fill this region and land, there shall not only be a neglect of religion, but, which is more miserable, there shall be laws enacted against religion, piety, and divine worship; they shall be prohibited, and punishments shall be inflicted on their votaries. Then this most holy land, the seat of places consecrated to divinity, and of temples, shall be full of sepulchres and dead bodies. O Egypt, Egypt, fables alone shall remain of thy religion, and these such as will be incredible to posterity, and words alone shall be left en-*

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<sup>9</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE LAST OF THE MYSTERIES IN EUROPE) XIV p. 294

<sup>10</sup> [Endnote 34 to *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 246-47, by Boris de Zirkoff, *ibid.*, p. 640: *The Asclepian Dialogue* . . . is also known under the title of “The Perfect Sermon, or the Asclepius,” and “A Sermon of Initiation.” It has also been referred to as “Thrice-greatest Hermes Concerning the Nature of the Gods.” The Greek original which, according to Lactantius (*Divine Institutes* iv, 6, and vii, 8), was known as the *logos teleios*, is lost, and only a Latin version has come down to us. Taylor's English rendering is from the Latin translation of extant Hermetic writings by Marsiglio Ficino (Marsilius Ficinus) which were originally published in 1471.

Consult the scholarly translation of G.R.S. Mead, together with his Commentary, in Vol. II, pp. 307 *et seq.*, of his *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. London and Benares: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1906; 2<sup>nd</sup> impression, 1949; 3<sup>rd</sup> impr. (reset), John M. Watkins, London 1964.]

*graved in stones, narrating thy pious deeds. The Scythian, also, or Indian, or some other similar nation, shall inhabit Egypt.*

For divinity shall return to heaven, all its inhabitants shall die, and thus Egypt, bereft both of God and man, shall be deserted. I call on thee, O most holy river, and predict to thee future events. Thou shalt burst forth with a torrent of blood, full even to thy banks, and thy divine waters shall not only be polluted with blood, but the land shall be inundated with it, and the number of the dead shall exceed that of the living. He likewise who survives, shall only by his language be known to be an Egyptian, but by his deeds he will appear to be a stranger. Why do you weep, O Asclepius? Egypt shall experience more ample, and much worse evils than these, though she was once holy, and the greatest lover of the Gods on the earth, by the desert of her religion. And she who was alone the reductor of sanctity, and the mistress of piety, will be an example of the greatest cruelty. Then also, through the weariness of men, the world will not appear to be an admirable and adorable thing. This whole good, a better than which, as an object of perception, there neither is, nor was, nor will be, will be in danger, and will be grievous to men. Hence this whole world will be despised, and will not be beloved, though it is the immutable work of God, a glorious fabric, a good compounded with a multiform variety of images, a machine of the will of God, who in his work gave his suffrage without envy, that all things should be one. It is also a multiform collected heap, capable of being venerated, praised and loved by those that behold it. For darkness shall be preferred to light, and death shall be judged to be more useful than life.

*No one shall look up to heaven. The religious man shall be accounted insane, the irreligious shall he thought wise, the furious brave, and the worst of men shall be considered a good man.*

For the soul and all things about it, by which it is either naturally immortal, or conceives that it shall attain to immortality, conformably to what I have explained to you, shall not only be the subject of laughter, but shall be considered as vanity.

*Believe me, likewise, that a capital punishment shall be appointed for him who applies himself to the religion of intellect. New statutes and new laws shall be established, and nothing religious or which is worthy of heaven, or celestial concerns, shall be heard, or believed by the mind. There will be a lamentable departure of the Gods from men,<sup>11</sup> noxious angels<sup>12</sup> will alone remain, who being mingled with human nature will violently impel the miserable men [of that time] to war, to rapine, to fraud, and to everything contrary to the nature of the soul.*

Then the earth shall be in a preternatural state, the sea shall not be sailed in, nor shall the heavens accord with the course of the stars, nor the course of the

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<sup>11</sup> Proclus finding that this was partially the case in his time, says prophetically, in the Introduction to his MS. *Commentary on the Parmenides of Plato*, "With respect to this form of philosophy [viz. of the philosophy of Plato], I should say that it came to men for the benefit of terrestrial souls; that it might be instead of statues, instead of temples, instead of the whole of sacred institutions, and the leader of salvation both to the men that now are, and to those that shall exist hereafter."

<sup>12</sup> i.e., evil demons.

stars continue in the heavens. *Every divine voice shall be dumb by a necessary silence*, the fruits of the earth shall be corrupted, nor shall the earth be prolific, and the air itself shall languish with a sorrowful torpor. These events and such an old age of the world as this shall take place, such irreligion, inordination, and unreasonableness of all good. When all these things shall happen, O Asclepius, then that lord and father, the God who is first in power, and the one governor of the world, looking into the manners and voluntary deeds [of men], and by his will which is the benignity of God, resisting vices, and recalling the error arising from the corruption of all things, washing away likewise all malignity, by a deluge, or consuming it by fire, or bringing it to an end by disease and pestilence dispersed in different places, will recall the world to its ancient form, in order that the world itself may appear to be an adorable and admirable production, and God the fabricator and restorer of so great a work, may be celebrated by all that shall then exist, with frequent solemn praises and benedictions. For this *geniture*<sup>13</sup> of the world, is the reformation of all good things, and the most holy and religious restitution of the nature of it, the course of time being accomplished;<sup>14</sup> since time is perpetual, and always was without a beginning. For the will of God is without beginning, is always the same, and is everywhere eternal.”

Of this very remarkable extract, it is necessary to observe:

[1] In the first place, that it was principally made by me from the edition of the Asclepian Dialogue, by Ficinus, as he appears to have had a more correct manuscript in his possession than any that have been consulted by more modern editors. Of this the learned, and at the same time philosophic, reader, will be immediately convinced, by comparing this extract with the same part of that dialogue in the most modern editions of it.

[2] In the second place, that this dialogue is of genuine antiquity and no forgery, is, I think, unquestionably evident from neither Lactantius nor Augustin having any doubt of its authenticity, though it was their interest to have proved it to be spurious if they could, because it predicts, which is —

[3] The third thing especially deserving of remark, that the memorials of the martyrs should succeed in the place of the temples of the Gods. Hence Augustin concludes this to be a prophecy or prediction made *instinctu fallacis spiritus*, by the instinct or suggestion of a deceitful spirit. But that this prediction was accomplished is evident, as Dr. Cudworth observes in his *True Intellectual System of the Universe*, p. 329, from the following passages of Theodoret, which I shall quote as translated by the Doctor.

“Now the martyrs have utterly abolished and blotted out of the minds of men, the memory of those who were formerly called Gods.”

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<sup>13</sup> By the *geniture* [birth] of the world, the greater *apocatastasis* is signified, as is evident from Julius Firmicus; which restoration of things to their pristine state is, according to that author, accomplished in the space of three hundred thousand years. The great period comprehends in itself, according to Petosyrus and Necepsos, six less periods, the last of which is under the dominion of Mercury, and abounds with improbity of every kind and inventions full of evil.

<sup>14</sup> *i.e.*, a mundane period being finished.

**DOWN TO EARTH SERIES**  
**A DIRE PROPHECY ABOUT EGYPT**

And again,

“Our Lord hath now brought his dead (*i.e.*, his martyrs) into the room and place (*i.e.*, into the temples) of the Gods; whom he hath sent away empty, and bestowed their honour upon these his martyrs. For now, instead of the festivals of Jupiter and Bacchus, are celebrated those of Peter and Paul, Thomas and Sergius, and other holy martyrs.”

Antoninus, the philosopher, also, according to Eunapius, predicted the very same thing, *viz.* that after his decease, the magnificent temple of Serapis in Egypt, together with the rest, should be demolished, and the temples of the Gods be turned into sepulchres, *και τα ιερα ταφους γεννησεθαι.*

[4] And in the fourth and last place, the intelligent reader who compares this prediction with what is said about the philosophic stranger by Synesius in the foregoing extract will immediately see that the former wonderfully accords with the latter.



Egyptian Scene by David Roberts