

## Ancient Religions

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### Babylonians (Sumer)

- Civilization developed out of tower of Babel
- Discovered writing, numbers, astronomy, science
- Temples are observatories of the stars, which are gods
- They claim that their knowledge came from the gods

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### Egyptian Mythology

- Gods were a part of the creation
- **Osiris** (father) judge of the dead
- **Isis** (mother) goddess of nature and magic
- **Horus** (son) god of sky and war
- Horus was represented by the star Sirius
- He later replaced Ra the sun god



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### Egyptian Mythology

- **Thoth** moon god of wisdom (visions magic, language, writing, astronomy, mathematics, science)
- Developed ceremonial magic (spells)
- Mixed music, numbers, and astrology



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### Zoroastrianism

- Founded by Zoroaster (500's BC)
- There coexists two conflicting god principles
- Light (Ormuzd) and darkness (Ahriman)
- Ahriman placed darkness in creation
- Prevent chaos through good thoughts and deed
- Saoshyant will bring renovation of the world



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### Hinduism

- God is everything, and impersonal
- Triune—Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva
- Material realm is illusion (Maya)
- Works salvation (karma/reincarnation)
- Realize you are a part of god
- Rejoin god force (Nirvana)



**Hinduism**

- Tilaka-Third Eye



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**Mystery Religions**

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**Mystery Religions**

**Exoteric**

- Knowledge outside of and independent from experience. Can be ascertained by anyone. Surface meaning.

**Esoteric**

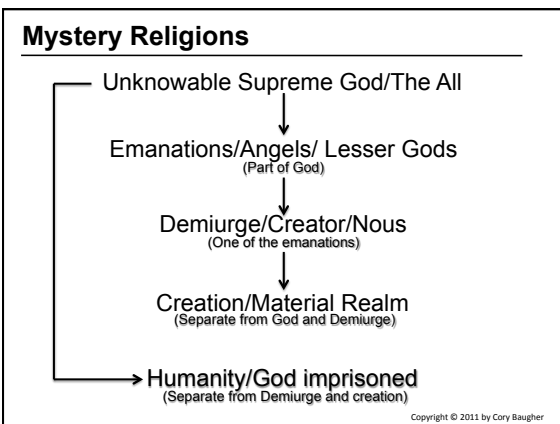
- Knowledge from the inner consciousness; the contemplative, mystical or meditative perspective. Hidden or secret meaning.

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**Mystery Religions**

- Characteristics of mystery religions:
  - Esoteric knowledge to gain enlightenment
  - Knowledge keep secret from all others
  - Knowledge is earned
- Many focused on Sun as an image of God
- Began to disappear in 300's AD

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**Mystery Religions**

- Material realm is not evil for God created it
- Material is inferior since it is not God
- Man as God trapped in material realm is evil
- Goal is to escape material realm

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### Eleusinian Mysteries

- Based on cult of Demeter (began in 1600's BC)
- God is all-encompassing and impersonal
- Persephone = soul of man (psyche)
- Hades = material realm
- Above ground = spiritual realm: true home
- Birth into material realm is death
- Salvation is escaping the material
- Knowledge frees from ignorance
- Rejoin the Supreme Mind



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### Pythagoreanism

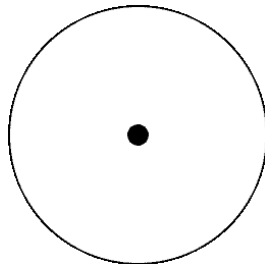
- Started by Pythagoras (570-495 BC)
- God was one with the universe
- Supreme, Superior, and Inferior Worlds
- Mathematics was the language of God
- Esoteric mathematics, music, astronomy
- Man was not ruled by fate
- Taught transmigration of the soul



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### Pythagoreanism

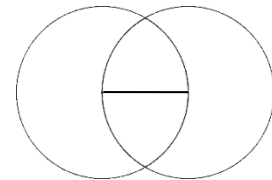
- **Monad** is (first being)
- Eternal all
- Male and female
- Wisdom
- Spiritual realm



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### Pythagoreanism

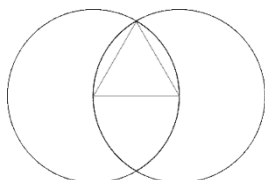
- **Duad** is duality
- Female split from male
- Father and mother
- Ignorance
- Material realm



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### Pythagoreanism

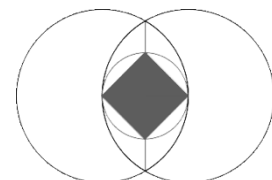
- **Triad** is unity
- Androgynous (son)
- Cause of wisdom
- Creativity
- Salvation



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### Pythagoreanism

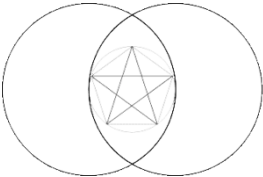


- **Tetrad** is perfection
- Four elements (nature)
- Master of nature
- $3+4=7$
- Planets, colors
- Dragon



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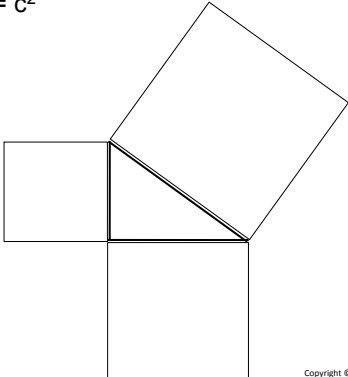
**Pythagoreanism**

- **Pentad** is union of odd and even
- Fifth element (ether)
- Equilibrium of realms
- $1+4=5$  (life, vitality)
- Monad & Dragon
- Symbol of religion

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$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$




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**Platonism**

- Started by Plato (427–347 BC)
- Ignorance results in wickedness
- The “good life” results in virtue
- “Good life” is found in reason and spiritual realm
- Reality cannot be known with senses
- Do not learn you recollect



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**Platonism**

- There is an absolute concept of “good”
- Material realm is a shadow of spiritual realm
- Material realm is eternal, inferior, and chaotic
- Free ourselves from chaotic material senses

**Form/Ideal**  
 Eternal Reason

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**Matter**  
 Eternal Formless Flux

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### Platonism

- God imposed rational Ideal Forms on matter
- Matter had independent properties God could not control
- So matter became a shadow of the real ideals
- Thus the reason for chaos and irrationality
- Even God is subject to the Ideal Form (“Good Life”) and must conform to it

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### Platonism

- The philosophers are to rule over those who do not have this reason or knowledge of the Ideals
- Thus the “good life” will bring virtue (“Ideal Life”)
- The normal life of marriage, work, and social life is inferior to celibacy, philosophy, and meditation
- The goal is for the soul to escape the body and return to the Ideal, the One (God as a concept)

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### Alchemy/Hermetism

- Renaissance “rediscovered” the ancient writings of the the Greeks and Romans
- Paracelsus (1493–1541) was an alchemist who gathered a knowledge of “what works” science and magic
- The Hermetica was translated by Marsilio Ficino
- Teachings of Hermes Trismegistus
- These writings never existed

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### Alchemy/Hermetism

- Hermes Trismegistus is a combination of Thoth and Hermes
- **Thoth** Egyptian moon god of wisdom
- **Hermes** (Mercury) Greek messenger god of wisdom
- All religions teach the same
- Humanity is God
- “As above so below”



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### Alchemy/Hermetism

- **The All** (Supreme Mind) everything that exist
- The All is masculine and feminine
- **Nous** (Mind, Dragon, Demiurge, Thoth) bridge between the All and its contents
- Nous created physical realm and humanity
- Word/Logos is Reason
- Word or Reason connects one to All

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### Alchemy/Hermetism

- Man was originally microcosmic, spiritual, divine
- Became entrapped by nature
- Two halves light/spiritual and dark/material
- Become cosmic man once again



### Alchemy/Hermetism

#### Three parts to wisdom:

- **Alchemy**— Study of nature to understand life, death, resurrection (transmigration)
- **Astrology**— Study of planets to understand the mind of the All
- **Theurgy**— Practice of magic to unite with higher beings to obtain divine consciousness: black magic (demons) and white magic (angels)

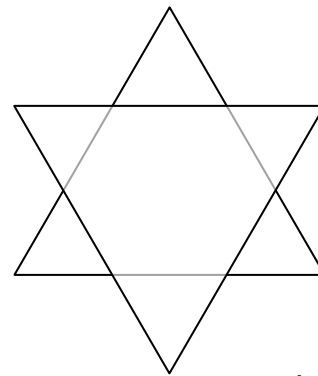
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### Qabbalah

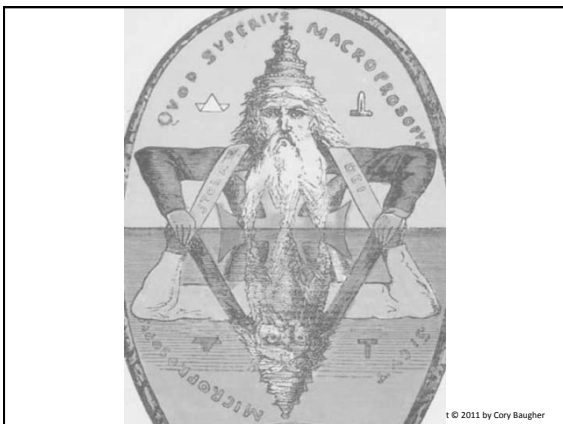
- Developed in 1st-2nd century AD
- Moses brought Law, Mishna, Qabbalah
- AIN SOPH is unknowable, eternal, unlimited
- Triune—Kether, Chokhmah, Binah
- God limited Himself then created
- Man is imprisoned in material realm



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