

Jesus said, "If those who lead you say to you, 'See, the kingdom is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty."

- *The Gospel Of Thomas, verse 3*

(Translation by Thomas O. Lamdin)

I encourage the reader to research the topics that I'm going to discuss. The internet is a great source. And I highly recommend [*The Gnostic Gospels*](#) by Elaine Pagels.

Before I drop some knowledge, I want to drop the bottom line on top of you. I think that Elliot knows Gnosis. Put that on the back burner...I'm getting to that.

In 1945, a cache of ancient scriptures were discovered outside of near the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi. Found in a large earthen jar, the thirteen leather-bound volumes of papyrus codices would set the scholarship of Christianity on its ear.

For nearly two millennium, the existence of an early Christian theology was debated – a school at odds with the proto-orthodoxy (which developed into the modern faith). Now, this is not exactly true. It was known that it did exist. However, the size and relevance of this alternate view was in question. This view was not a salvation-by-faith theology that posited that belief in Jesus Christ was needed to realize eternal reward. This alternate take – couched in a complex set of metaphysics – was said to be an enlightenment philosophy: salvation-by-individual-effort. It was said to have more in common with Buddhism than the proto-orthodoxy. In fact, the proto-orthodox Christian groups called this theology a heresy of Christianity.

Bishop Irenaeus (130 – 202) was Greek. His intellectual leadership expanded Christian communities in the southern regions of present-day France. He largely did so by refuting the heterodoxy, a deviation from the proto-orthodoxy that he championed. He would describe – accurately – the teachings found in the scriptures of this upstart school: after doing this, he would pick the arguments apart. It was said that these scriptures were excluded from the canon that later became the New Testament. But there were no physical scriptures. There were only accounts of them. The writings of Irenaeus. That changed in 1945 when a farmer – a boy, actually – named Muhammad 'Ali al-Samman was collecting good soil that could be used in his family's farming. He dug up the earthen jar that contained the texts in the desert's graveyard, near tombs of the Sixth Dynasty of Egypt.

And Christian scholarship forever changed.

In the 1970s, James Robinson interviewed Muhammad 'Ali al-Samman (now an old man). Al-Samman told Robinson that the story was much more than him simply stumbling across the cache of scriptures. It was, in fact, part of a complex tale that involved a blood feud, cannibalism, and superstitions about a jinn (an invisible creature that is found both in early religion in pre-Islamic Arabia and later in Islamic culture and beliefs).

In his introduction to [*The Nag Hammadi Library in English*](#), Robinson argued that these codices may have belonged to a nearby monastery. The scriptures were buried after Athanasius I of Alexandria (approximately 296– – 2 May 373) – also called Athanasius the Great and Athanasius the Confessor – condemned the use of non-canonical books in his Festal Letter of 367.

And Christian scholarship forever changed. It was long believed that there was unbroken line of transmission – from the apostles to the modern church – of the theology of salvation by faith. This assumption was always pointed to by believers to buttress their claim that Christ's divinity emanated directly from the mouth of God. The growing scholarship about a competing heterodoxy paints a different picture. Christianity is a wholly man-made system birthed in an Internecine conflict, where members of a group were fighting against each other (rather than an external enemy). It would reinforce in people – like myself – the conviction that Christianity was no more valid than al-Samman's jinn.

It would deepen a historical narrative that this man-made institution was defined by cruelty, the torture and murder of perceived heretics. It was not a moral authority. It did not speak to human sexuality in a *meaningful* way.

What was the name of the heterodoxy that showed Christianity to be a man-made invention? It was Gnostic Christianity.

In early Christianity, the word 'apocrypha' referred to writings which were to be read privately rather than in the public (such as church services). According to Robinson, the monks were forced to hide – but refused to destroy – the unapproved scriptures that Athanasius I ordered destroyed. This cache of writings was discovered in 1945. Among these gnostic apocryphal writings was *The Gospel of Thomas*. Unlike the four gospels of the New Testament, it was not a narrative: it was a series of aphorisms that were credited to Jesus.

The term 'gnosis' was a term that described the spiritual knowledge that led to salvation. Unlike the salvation of both the proto-orthodoxy and the modern church (salvation by faith), gnosis was divine knowledge – beyond the confines of linear thought – that was realized through personal effort. For Gnostics, self-knowledge was knowledge of God.

There is popular speculation that gnostic philosophies – Christian and other – had their genesis in Eastern mysticism. I've read speculation that Christ travelled to India. To my knowledge, there is no hard evidence of this.

While I find the more convoluted metaphysics of Gnostic Christianity to be no more valid than that of the modern church, I do subscribe to my own concept of 'gnosis'. I want to be clear; I reject all metaphysics as manmade drivel. As an aside, I do feel that some metaphysics are valuable as metaphor. Wicca illustrates the interconnectedness of existence. The notion that personal worth is determined by a belief in a nonexistent being? That's gibberish.

As I mentioned in the previous substacks [*The Intellectual & the Sexual*](#) and [*We are all Transitioning*](#), I do believe that a person finds meaning through a connection to the Unknowable. This is completely different than the unknown. The unknown – by definition – can become known. The Unknowable is beyond linear thought. Thought is simply too blunt an instrument. The Unknowable does exist. It ties perceived reality together: the genesis of Creation is found there. Since it cannot be logically known, it is known through direct experience. This is a belief – I own that – but is my only belief.

Over time, as a person approaches enlightenment – which is never consistently realized – that individual has more and more of these moments of direct connection. I have far more of these moments than one year ago. If my spiritual essence continues to grow, I will have more of them in one year hence. I've been making feeble attempts to describe the experience – talking about things like Primordial Essence. In the substack [*We are all Transitioning*](#), I mention something that I read in some book on Philosophical Taoism. Sometimes a concept is greater than a concept. The term *Tao* represents the totality of reality. But that is a 'placeholder word' for no word – or series of words and symbols – can hold it. In that same essay, I say that I am a 'non-metaphysical mystic'.

It's time to take Elliot Page off the back burner.

I must repeat what I've said in previous substacks, I believe him wholeheartedly. The term 'gender dysphoria' refers to the distress a person experiences due to a mismatch between gender identity (a personal sense of gender) and the sex assigned at birth. It is his position that this existential tension defines him: I believe him.

The global scientific community has been embracing the validity of this concept. The Swedish medical establishment was at the forefront of providing gender-affirming care to transgender and gender diverse individuals.

It is my contention that a clear headed person seeks to connect with his or her Authentic Self. Each Authentic Self is as distinct as a fingerprint. While encompassing one's sexual essence, it is simply more.

As I discuss in the [Prologue](#) to 'Brandon', I was blocked from being my pursuit of my personal Authentic Self by a decades long problems caused by my former alcoholism and drug abuse. The drug problem was a combination of street drugs and a massive overprescription of powerful drug. This overprescription caused foreseeable side effects: suicidal ideation, depression, acute confusion, behavioral disorders. I was very literally insane for that period. Long story short – very short – I overcame most of this. Now, I am at clear headed enough to pursue my Authentic Self. This connects me to the Primordial Essence. This connection produces gnosis – wordless knowledge – of the Divine.

And Elliot Page is a clear headed man.

Due to a completely different set of barriers, each of us experienced a significant delay in the realization of the Primordial. Delayed but not denied. And – in each case – it was painful and difficult to overcome the barriers. I feel a kinship with Page. And it is important to me to say so.

As I said, the word 'gnosis' has value to me. I use it in a way that is fundamentally different than how it was used by the Gnostic Christians. They believed in a 'gnosis' that was the knowledge of spiritual mysteries and the divine nature of humanity (a knowledge beyond words). According to them, the material world is a prison that traps the divine spark within a person. The goal of life was to liberate this divine spark and return it to its source, which is the Divine Light. It is understandable that people speculate that there is a connection between Buddhism and Gnostic Christianity. The former argued that a person connects to *Dharmanature* – the overarching reality that is beyond linear understanding – by breaking attachments emotions and the alleged delusion of self.

I believe that self is very, very, real. To me 'gnosis' is the connection to the purest expression of self. This pure self – Authentic Self – is rooted in the very genesis of Creation.

As I said at the outset of this essay: *Elliot knows Gnosis*. He knows who he is. I am really starting to come to know who I am as well. That knowledge is my gnosis. To the Gnostic Christians, 'gnosis' was an absolute state that connected one to that beyond him or her. My 'gnosis' is the knowledge of self at the most elemental level. This knowledge of self connects one to the Primordial. Gnostic Christians felt that once a person realized gnosis that was that person's state of being: that person had divine knowledge 24/7. My 'gnosis' is experienced sporadically. It is so easy to be taken out of one's gnosis (the wordless knowledge of Authentic Self). Emotions like anger and hate takes you away from it. Regret takes you away from it. Over time – through discipline and focus – a person resides in gnosis more and more. A person never realizes gnosis 24/7.

Carl Sagan, the renowned astronomer and science communicator, said in his book [*The Cosmic Connection: An Extraterrestrial Perspective*](#) that 'All of the rocky and metallic material we stand on, the iron in our blood, the calcium in our teeth, the carbon in our genes were produced billions of years ago in the interior of a red giant star. We are made of star-stuff'.

I maintain that – not only one's physical being – a person's fundamental psychological and emotional being (Authentic Self) is made of star stuff.

When reading my free online novel [*Brandon Gets His Big Break*](#), the characters need to be viewed from this perspective: people who are being denied the realization of their Authentic Self. Amy and Jane are especially dramatic examples of individuals fighting to realize their personal gnosis.

Verse 3 of [*The Gospel Of Thomas*](#) argues that self-knowledge is a prerequisite for spiritual enlightenment. When one knows oneself, that person understands his or her true nature as a child of God. Conversely, a lack of self-knowledge leads to spiritual poverty.

Namaste & Shalom,

John Eisenhauer