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## The Cosmogony of Hermes

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Cosmogony is quite different than Cosmology. While cosmology is the science of stellar objects only, cosmogony comprises an understanding of the universe, of the human character and of the spiritual realm. Thus cosmogony includes natural sciences mathematics, geometry, psychology and mysticism. One of the oldest and maybe the first cosmogony is the one elaborated by Hermes. As he excelled in the knowledge of the cosmos, the human and the mystical, he came to be named **Hermes Trismegistus** (thrice greatest mega Hermes). "Megistus" is connected to mega and magisterial – showing impressive knowledge about a subject.

Hermes was, most probably a priest in ancient Egypt and lived in the times of **Akhenaton**. Akhenaton was a pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty who ruled from 1379 BC until 1362 BC. He abolished the religion of Amen and replaced it with the religion of **Aton** or Aten. Aton was the single god whose symbol was the sun. It is very probable that Hermes was a priest of Aton, as can be deduced from the first sentences of the **Hermetica** (\*):

**An enormous being completely unbounded in size seemed to appear to me and call my name and say to me: "What do you want to hear and see; what do you want to learn and know from your understanding?"**

**"Who are you?" I asked.**

**I am the mind of Aton; I know what you want, and I am with you everywhere."**

**I said "I wish to learn about the things that are, to understand their nature and to know Aton."**

**Then he said to me: "Keep in mind all that you wish to learn, and I will teach you." Saying this, he changed his appearance, and in an instant everything was immediately opened to me. I saw an endless vision in which everything became light –clear and joyful- and in seeing the vision I came to love it.**

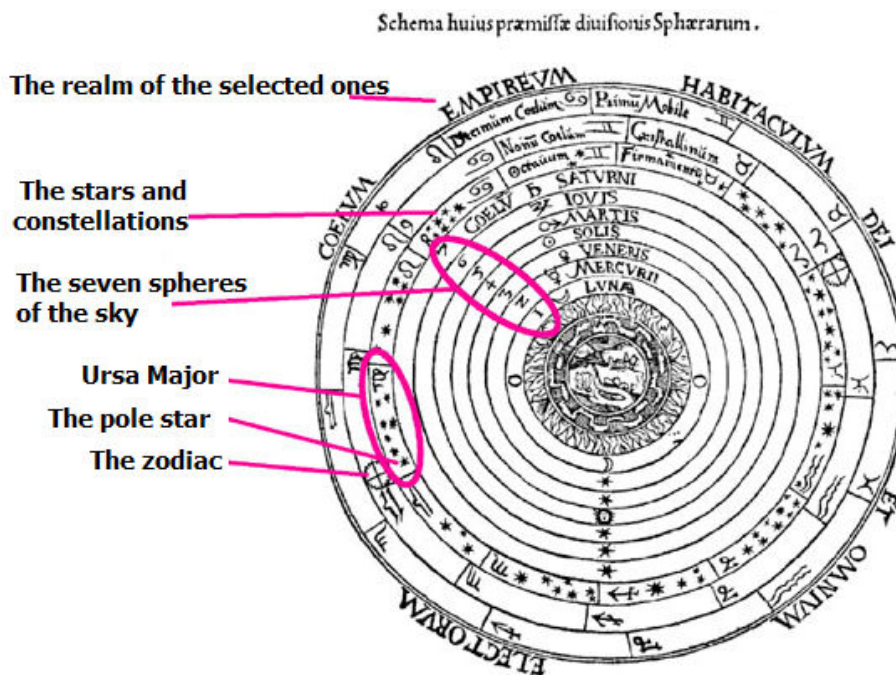
**Aton** is no other than the Jewish god **Adonai**, which came to be accepted as a title for a teacher or for a master, rather than as a given name. The teachings of Hermes were transmitted to selected people who could pass the tests of initiation. This is why the teaching of Hermes Trismegistus came to be equated with the body of knowledge imparted to a small closed group of people. This special education was taught in the shrines of Thebes and

Memphis until the collapse of the pharaonic Egypt. The name Hermes became to be accepted as the symbol of a closed group, and **Hermetic** came to mean "airtight".

The cosmogony of Hermes was transferred to ancient Greece through the intermediary of **Orpheus** (~1000 BC), **Solon** (~600 BC), **Thales** (~600 BC) and **Phytagoras** (~500 BC). This is why the teachings of Hermes, which were transmitted with the help of philosophy, mathematics and geometry, flourished in ancient Greece. It is believed that the **Lyre** was first designed by Hermes. The legendary musician Orpheus could charm all living things with his ability in playing this instrument and is credited with the composition of the **Orphic Hymns**, a collection of which still survives.

In the cosmogony of Hermes the human being is accepted to have seven layers or states of power. These are: 1. **Shat** (Material Power), 2. **Ankh** (Energy and Life), 3. **Ka** (Astral Body), 4. **Hati** (Animal Power), 5. **Sheybi** (Sacred Power), 6. **Bal** (Logical Power) and 7. **Kon** (Holy Power).

The number 7 is quite important in the teachings of Hermes. We find seven spheres of the sky, seven days of the week and seven **Chakras** of the human body; as well as seven notes of the musical octave: Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Si. Below we see the cosmic picture of the Hermetic cosmology, which came to be known as the universe of Ptolemy. **Claudius Ptolemy** (90 AD – 168 AD) was a Greco-Egyptian Astronomer and Astrologer of Alexandria.



In this model the earth is at the center and there are 7 layers surrounding it. These are the spheres of: 1. **Moon** (mind), 2. **Mercury** (nobility), 3. **Venus** (love), 4. **Sun** (beauty), 5. **Mars** (justice), 6. **Jupiter** (science) and 7. **Saturn** (enlightenment). These stellar objects are more than pure material formations; they represent the high values of the human race. They came to form the basis of the ancient Egyptian and Greek Mythology as well as of Astrology. This is why the Cosmogony of Hermes is a holistic approach, incorporating the observed universe, the realm of the humans and the realm of the superhuman selected ones, which came to be accepted as the gods of Mythology.

(\*) **Hermetica**, Brian P. Copenhaver, Cambridge University Press, 1992, UK.