

THE THUNDER, PERFECT MIND (VI, 2)

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The short tractate entitled *The Thunder Perfect Mind* is a revelation **discourse** delivered by a female revealer in the first person. It is characteristic of the revelation imparted that the self-proclamation ("I am . . .") is of an antirhetorical or **paradoxical sort**: "I am the whore and the holy one. I am the wife and the virgin." In addition **there are added various exhortations to hear and reflect, and reproaches for failing to do so.**

In terms of religious tradition *Thunder, Perfect Mind* is difficult to classify. It presents no distinctively Jewish, Christian, or Gnostic themes, nor **does it** seem to presuppose a particular Gnostic myth. While the Jewish wisdom literature and the Isis aretalogies provide texts which are parallel in tone and style, the particular significance of the self-proclamations of *Thunder, Perfect Mind* may be found in their antithetical character. Antithesis and paradox may be **used** to proclaim the absolute **transcendence of the** revealer, whose greatness is incomprehensible **and** whose being is unfathomable.

THE THUNDER, PERFECT MIND

VI 13, 1-21, 32

The Thunder, Perfect Mind |

| was sent forth from | [the] power,
and I have come to those who | reflect upon me,
and I have **been** found 6 among those who seek after me. |
Look upon me, you (pl) who reflect upon me, |
and you hearers, hear me. |
You who are waiting for me, take me | to **yourselves**,
And do not banish me 10 from your sight. |
And **do** not make **your** voice hate | me, nor your hearing. |
Do not be ignorant of me anywhere | or any time. **Be on your**
guard! 16
Do not **be** ignorant of me. |
For I am the first and the Last.
| I am the honored one and the scorned one. |
I am the whore and the holy one. |

I am the wife and the ²⁰ virgin.
 I am (the mother) ' and the daughter.
 I am the members ' of my mother.
 I am the barren one '
 and many are her sons.
 I ' am she whose wedding is great, —
 and ²⁵ I have not taken a husband. -
 I am the midwife ' and she who does not bear.
 I ' am the solace of my labor pains.
 I ' am the bride and the bridegroom, '
 and it is my husband who ³⁰ begot me.
 I am the mother of ' my father
 and the sister of my ' husband,
 and he is my offspring. '
 I am the slave of him who ' prepared me.
 I am the ruler ¹⁴ of my offspring.
 But He is the one who [begot me] ' before the time
 on a birthday. '
 And He is my offspring [in] ' (due) time,
 and my power [■] is from him.
 I am the stall ' of his power in his youth,
 [and] ' he is the rod of my ' old age.
 And whatever he wills ' happens to me.
 I am the silence "' that is incomprehensible
 and the idea ' whose remembrance is frequent. '
 I am the voice whose sound is ' manifold
 and the word whose appearance ' is multiple.
 I am the utterance of ¹⁵ my name.

Why, you who hate me, ' do you love me,
 and ' you hate those who love me? '
 You who deny me, confess ' me,
 and you who confess ²⁰ me, deny me.
 You who tell ' the truth about me, lie about me,
 and you ' who have lied about me, tell the truth about me. '
 You who know me, be ignorant ' of me,
 and those who have not ²⁵ known me, let them know me. '

For I am knowledge and ' ignorance.
 I am ' shame and boldness. '
 I am shameless; I am * ashamed.

Hear me, you hearers, ' and learn of my words, ' you who know me.
 ■ am ' the hearing that is attainable to everything;=
 ■ am the speech that cannot ' be grasped.
 ■ am ' the name of the sound and the sound ' of the name.
 ■ am the sign ' of the letter and the designation -6 of the division.

And I [...].

[.. .] 21i light [...].

[.. .] I6 hearers [...]' to you

[.. .]' the great power.

And [...]' will not move the name.1Â

(.. .) to the one who created me. '

And I will speak his name. '

Look then at his words

and all *the* ' writings which have been completed.

Give ' heed then, you hearers

and 16 you also, the angels ' and those who have been sent, '

And you spirits who have arisen from ' the **dead**.

For I am the one who ' alone exists,

and I have no one ²⁰who will judge me.

For many ' are the pleasant forms which ' exist in

numerous sins, ' and

incontinencies, ' and

and disgraceful **passions**,²⁵ ' and

fleeting pleasures, ' which

(men) embrace ' until they become sober

and ' go up to their resting-place. '

And they will find ~~me~~ there,

and they will ' live,

and they will not die ' again.

I am the one whom they call ' Life,
and you have ' called Death.

I am the one whom ' they call Law,"
and you have called Lawlessness. '

I am the one whom you have pursued, '
and I am the one whom you have seized. '

I am the one whom you have scattered, '
and you have gathered me together. 20

I am the one before whom you have ' been ashamed,
and you have been ' shameless to me.

I am she who does not keep festival, '
and I am she whose festivals are many. '

I am godless,
and I am the one whose God is great. '

I am the one whom you have reflected upon, '
and you have scorned me.

I am ' unlearned,
and they learn from ' me.

I am the one whom you have * despised,
and you ' reflect upon me.

I am the one ' whom you have hidden from,
and you appear to me.

But whenever ' you hide yourselves, 36
I myself will appear. 17

For [whenever] you ' [appear],
I myself ' [will hide] from you.

Those who have [...] ' to it [...] senselessly [...]. '

Take me [...] ' understanding] from grief, '
and take me ' to yourselves from understanding to [and] grief.
And take ' me to yourselves from places ' that are ugly and in ruin
and rob from those ' which are good even though in ugliness
Out of shame, take me ' to yourselves shamelessly; '
and out of shamelessness and shame, upbraid my members '
in yourselves.

And % come forward to me, ' you who know me
and you who ' know my members,
and ' establish the great ones among the small ' first creatures
Come 36 forward to childhood, '
and do not despise it ' because it is small and it is little. '

And do not turn away ' greatnesses in some parts from^w the
smallnesses,
for ' the smallnesses are known ' from the greatnesses.

Why ' do you curse me ' and honor me? 3

You have wounded and you have ' had mercy.

Do not separate me from the first 18 ones whom you have [kno

[And) ' do not cast anyone [out nor] ' turn anyone away

1.. .] ' turn you away and [... 5 know] him not.

(... ' him).

What is mine [...]. '

1 know the [first ones] and ' those after them [know] me. '

But I am the mind of [...]¹⁰ and the rest of [...]. '

I am the knowledge of my inquiry,

and ' the finding of those who seek after me,

and ' the command of those who ask of me, '

and the power of the powers in my knowledge ¹⁵

of the angels, who have been ' sent at my word,

and of gods ' in their seasons by my counsel, '

and of spirits of every man who ' exists with me,

and of women ²⁰ who dwell within me.

I am the one who ' is honored, and who is praibcd, '

and who is despised ' scornfully.

I ' am peace,

find war ²⁵ Itas come because of me.

And I ' am an alien and a citizen. '

I am the substance and the one who ' has no substance.

Those who are ' without association with me are ignorant ³⁰ of

and those who are in my ' substance are the ones who know 1

Those who are close to me have been ignorant ' of me,

and those who are far ' away from me are the ones who hav

known æ me.

On the day when I am close to 19 [you],

[you] are far away ' [from me],

[and] on the day when I ' [am far away] from you,

[I am ' close] to you.

[I am ⁵ ...] within.

[I am ' ...] of the natures.

I am ' [I. . .) of the creation of the [spirits]. '

[...] request of the souls. '1

[[I]am] control and the uncontrollable.10

I am the union and ' the dissolution.

■ am the abiding ' and ■ am the dissolving.

■ ' am the one below,
and they come up*to me.

I am the judgment 16 and the acquittal.

I, I am sinless,

' and the root' of sin derives from me.

' I am lust in (outward) appearance,'

. and interior self-control ■■ exists within me.

I ' am the hearing which is attainable to ' everyone
and the speech which cannot be ' grasped.

I am a mute ' who does not speak,
and great 26 is my multitude of words.

Hear ' me in gentleness, and ' learn of me in roughness. '1

■ am she who cries out, '1
and I am cast * forth upon the face of the earth. '1

■ prepare the bread and ' my mind within.

I am the ' knowledge of my name.

I am the one ' who cries out,
and ■ listen. 20

I appear and [...] ' walk in [...] ' seal of my [...].⁵

■ am [...] ' the defense (...). '1

I am the one who is called ' Truth,
and iniquity I..I. '1

You honor me [...] ■■ and you whisper against [me],
(...) ' victorious over them.

Judge them ' before they give judgment against you, '1
because the judge and partiality ' exist in you. .

If you are condemned 16 by this one, who will ' acquit you?

Or if you are acquitted ' by him, who will be able to ' detain

For what is ' inside of you is what is outside of you, 20

and the one who fashions you on the outside '1

is the one who shaped ' the inside of you.

And what ' you see outside of you, '1

you see inside of you;

it is visible and it is your garment. '1

I am strength and ' I am fear.

I am ' war and peace.

Give heed ' to me.

I am the one who is disgraced ' and the great one

Give heed to niy 15 poverty and my wealth. '

Do not be arrogant to me when I am ' cast out upon the earth,
[and] ' you will find me in [those ⁵ that] are to come.

And do not look ' [upon] me on the dung-heap

nor go ' and leave me cast out, '

and you will find me in ' the kingdoms.

And do not look ¹⁰ upon me when I am cast out among those who
are disgraced and in the least ' places,
nor laugh at me. '

And do not cast me out among those who ' are slain in violence.
But I, I am compassionate ' and I am cruel.

Be on your guard! '

Do not hate my obedience '

and do not love my self-control. '

In my weakness, do not ²⁰ forsake me,

and do ' not be afraid of my power. '

For why do you despise ' my fear

and ' curse my pride? **zs**

But I am she who exists in ' all fears

and strength ' in trembling.

I am she who is ' weak,

and I am well in a ³ pleasant place.

I am ³⁰ senseless and I **am** wise. '

Why have you hated me ' in your counsels?

For I shall be ' silent among those who are silent, '

and I shall appear and speak. 16

Why then have you hated me, you Greeks? '

Because I am a barbarian among [the] ' barbarians?'

For I am the wisdom ' [of the] Greeks

and the knowledge of [the] ⁵ barbarians.

I am the judgment of [the] ' Greeks and of the barbarians.

[I] ' am the one whose image is great in Egypt '

and the one who has no image among the ' barbarians.

I am the one who has been hated ¹⁰ everywhere

and who has been loved ' everywhere.