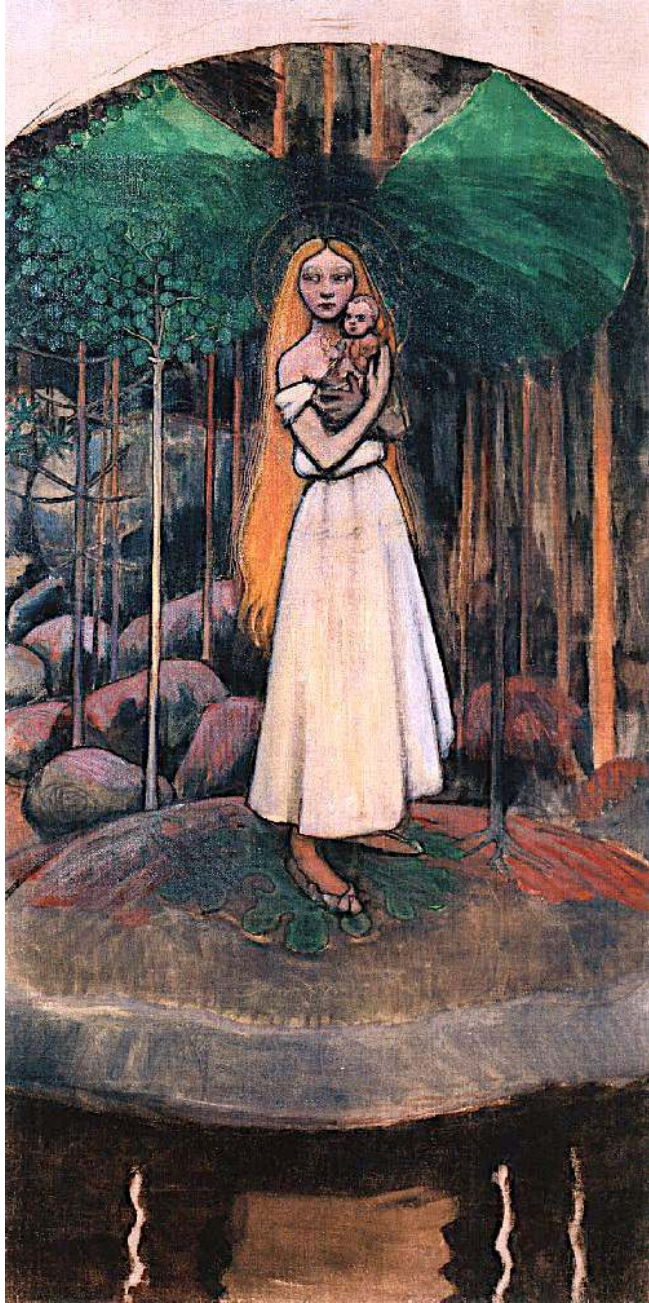


In Advent time we are preparing our souls for the wonder of Christmas. Just recently I was told that earlier in history, Advent was a time of turning the attention towards Parousia, The Second Coming of Christ. Hearing this reminded me of the story of Marjatta in the ancient Finnish epic Kalevala, which starts from the creation of the world and ends with the birth of



Marjatta and the Christ Child
by Akseli Gallen-Kallela

the new King. Marjatta is a Virgin who becomes pregnant by a red berry. She is subsequently rejected by all the people and must flee to the forest to give birth. She looks for shelter and help from a horse which gives its warm breeze of breath for her comfort. Marjatta stays in hiding and nurtures her infant. One day the boy jumps from her lap and disappears. The mother searches for him desperately, asking the moon and a star if they would know of her son. Finally she comes to the sun:

*"Dost thou know and wilt thou tell me
Where my darling child has wandered,
Where my holy babe lies hidden?"
Wisely does the Sun make answer:
"Well I know thy babe's dominions,
Where thy holy child is sleeping,
Where Wäinölä's light lies hidden;
'Tis thy child that me created,
Made me king of earth and ether,
Made the Moon and Stars attend me,
Set me here to shine at midday,
Makes me shine in silver raiment,
Lets me sleep and rest at evening;
Yonder is thy golden infant,
There thy holy babe lies sleeping,
Hidden to his belt in water,
Hidden in the reeds and rushes."*

From the last rune of Kalevala,
transl. John Martin Crawford, 1888

Aren't we guided to find in this answer of the Sun a connection with the holy babe as the Creator of the Cosmos who is now to be found "hidden to his belt in water," the element most often connected to the ether world? One may just wonder how this image came to be. During his second coming, Christ is to be recognized as the Cosmic Christ, and we are to renew our connection to planets and stars with him and Sophia, the Bride of the Lamb.

Steiner on his visit in Helsinki in 1912 said about Kalevala: "I find the conclusion of Kalevala particularly moving.... I would even say that for my feeling, the conclusion of Kalevala has no parallel as a delicate and miraculously impersonal portrayal of Christianity. The Christian principle is freed from all geographical limitations...."

This painting of Marjatta was done in 1865 by the Finnish painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela, and it is called *Marjatta and the Christ Child*. How has the painter portrayed Marjatta, then? The first impressions are perhaps a woman with a child, worried about something. Knowing the story, one could think she is aware that something could happen to her child, or that she has just found him after searching for him. For me, she reminds one also about the woman in the Apocalypse who was threatened by the dragon and had to flee to the desert. She could also deliver the picture of a modern human being giving birth in the loneliness of the soul to the Spirit Self or the Spirit Child. Or maybe she is Sophia capturing us in her protecting embrace. Maybe she wonders how the freedom given to the child will be used.... There can be many ways to reflect on this image. Could one of them be still a kind of worried hope on the part of the Woman that humanity would not allow Christ to go unrecognized in his second coming, when Christ brings hope not just for humans but for all of Nature?

On Christmas night, the Spirit child is born in us! We are blessed to receive new forces from the Mother in the depths during the Holy Nights. We are hopefully well-renewed in our souls with Love, Hope and Faith! May our vows and good intentions be strengthened so that they may be turned into good deeds in the coming year for the benediction of our fellow human beings and Nature.

— Natalia Haarahiltunen

*On Christmas Day God was born
the best boy when there was frost:
the moon rose, the sun came up
the dear sunlight woke
and the stars of heaven danced
and the Great Bear made merry
when the Creator was born
the most merciful appeared.*



From the collection of old Finnish ballads and poems called *Kanteletar*, transl. Keith Bosley.

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Editor's Welcome

Dear Readers of Starlight!

In my first editorial letter to you I can't stay anonymous, I guess! I am Natalia Haarahiltunen, 42 years old from Finland. My special interest is to try to understand how we communicate and interact with each other. I am also fascinated to see how karma brings people together. I love to study and teach Astrosophy and wish that more people would find interest in it. This summer I was asked to take care of the Advent issue of *Starlight*, which first surprised me. After all, I am European, and English is not my mother tongue, but that seemed not to be so important after all. There had been discussions in the Sophia Foundation about the Europeans being allowed to express themselves without too much editing language-wise. In our cosmopolitan times English has become our bridge towards different cultures and people. I myself have worked a lot internationally in Europe, lately trying to help to nurture Sophia-inspired communities. There have been growing activities in Northern Europe, where we had first a conference in Sweden in 2018, and the second time an international seminar took place last summer in the Eastern part of Finland by the Lake Saimaa, where also the sophiologist Vladimir Solovyov had been inspired by Sophia. The third Nordic meeting will take place next June in Oslo, Norway. Probably I will meet some of you there.



In this issue of *Starlight* there is gathered some of the nectar of the different summer conferences held by Karen Rivers in United States and Robert Powell in Europe, they being the two co-founders of Sophia Foundation to whom we owe so much. There shines through the deep inner experiences of the participants who wrote for this issue. I am deeply moved by the wisdom-filled words one can find in each contributor's texts. There are to be found reflections on the experiences people went through in the Archangel Jesus conference by Richard Reho and Kristi Albright, illuminating words about selflessness, charity and "The First Love." Themes that may touch our hearts naturally in the Christmas time we are now in.

There are also reflections included from the Sophianic events in Finland and Bulgaria, where one can hear the social Grail sounding through in meetings between people, in sharing and in encounters. Sophia is gathering her honey from different cultural spiritual flowers. Lizz Daniels shares her "most memorable experience" from Rila Mountains on her way to a prayer ritual. We definitely have brothers and sisters to be found in many directions. "Holy Grail inspires human relationships and spiritual destiny," as Harrie Salman writes in his article. We are called to be awake to our encounters with each other. This is what I see sounding through many of the sharings: Aura Aalto writes: "In the social world we are challenged to recognize the universal in the individual." In the approaching next cultural epoch we are coming to realize a real deepening in our encounters with each other, even a sacramental quality of seeing Christ in the other person. We may already now be able to live that state of consciousness in some blessed moments.

Joel Park gives us a guiding image for the future based on Christ's fourth healing miracle, the feeding of the five thousand. This is another bell ringing for us through these pages: How do we meet the future? How do we need to work individually and collectively? Karen Rivers gives us tools for releasing and healing our karmic past through the grace of forgiveness.

Joel goes on introducing us also to *Star Wisdom, Volume 2* and showing us how certain stellar configurations have lately called us for catharsis. The coming year 2020 comes with increased new inspirations from the Saturn-Jupiter conjunction which may even "portend a cultural renaissance."

What I have witnessed around me makes me think that we all have been going through, and probably still do, our own individual catharsis processes which may have asked us also to grow in selflessness as the Virtue of Cancer teaches us: selflessness becomes catharsis. Could that have opened us to something new ahead of us now?

I hope the reader may find him or herself many more inspiring words to be taken to the coming year 2020!

— Natalia Haarahiltunen

A Brief Addendum from the Consulting Editor

Greetings to all readers. This is Joel Matthew Park, editor of the Star Wisdom series and a member of the Sophia Foundation's Board of Trustees. As many of you may already know, John O'Meara, the former editor of *Starlight*, has stepped back from this role in order to focus on other projects. He still plans to compile, edit, and release a collection of writings independently around Easter 2020, focusing on the Russian/Salvic Mission, Russian spirituality and its connection to the Grail stream, the challenges of modern evil, the role of the anti-Christ, and the future Sophia culture of the Rose of the World for which we are preparing now. Those who might wish to contribute something in this regard to John's project can email me at joelpark77@gmail.com, and I will forward contributions to John. Once complete, John's collection of writings will be announced in the bulletin of the Sophia Foundation. We have the warmest gratitude for the work John offered to Starlight over the past year and a half, and wish him all the best in his future activities.

Pax et Bonum,
Joel

Sophia and the Agency of Love and Forgiveness

Karen Rivers

As we approach the manger at Christmas time, seeking to give birth to the Christ Child within, the spirit of love halos the world. An aura of peace in human hearts, in families, in communities, in nations, and in the world, rays out from the Star of Bethlehem. Peace on Earth. The presence of Christ through the agency of human beings can bring to manifestation Peace on Earth. Yet, we look at the condition of our Earth with aching hearts. Rudolf Steiner called upon humanity with the following words:



It is the mission of every single human being and of the whole of humanity to fill themselves with the Christ Spirit [and the Spirit of Sophia] and to recognize themselves as a center living in this Spirit, through which spiritual light, spiritual strength and spiritual warmth can flow into the Earth, thereby redeeming it and raising it aloft into spiritual realms.

The whole organism of the earth suffers from every immoral and harmful deed perpetrated by humans, and as individuals every such act we commit affects the whole earth. The Earth cannot continue to progress in its evolutionary path under the accumulating weight of humanity's transgressions.

Transgressions needing karmic adjustment exist on two planes. They not only occur on a personal level that must be compensated through our karma in the future, but also live as objective cosmic facts in the universe—world karma amalgamating all individual deeds perpetrated on earth, in which we all play a part as citizens of the world (Steiner, *Occult Science*). On a personal level, we make reparation for our misdeeds at a later time; the debt that we have personally contracted will be adjusted by our karma. But we cannot efface the misdeeds from the cosmic plane that are borne in the Earth by balancing our own transgressions. We must discriminate between the consequences of our misdeeds for ourselves, and the consequences of our misdeeds for the objective course of the world and the evolution of the Earth.

On the cross, Christ Jesus uttered an immortal plea on behalf of humanity: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This plea of supreme forgiveness demonstrates Christ Jesus’s sense of oneness with humanity that enabled Him to make such a universal entreaty. He empathized with the limited human perspective and at the same time did not want those living in ignorance (the Roman soldiers and the whole of humanity) to remain bound. Not only did He plea for God's mercy for humanity, an equally important subtext implies that He aspired for humanity to transcend ignorance and comprehend world existence with knowledge of the law of karma and the wisdom to live by the commandment of love.

Forgiveness has the potential to be of immeasurable significance for human evolution. It is among the most pressing spiritual issues of our time as well as a preeminent method of furthering spiritual evolution, both for individual human beings and for the Earth. To comprehend the metaphysics of love and forgiveness requires an awareness of a collaborative effort between human beings and the activity of spiritual beings that actively engage in the evolution of life on the Earth within the law of karma. Karma unfolds through successive incarnations both as it concerns individual karma and the collective karma of humanity. Individual or personal karma arises from the principle of action and reaction—the law of cause and effect. This unerring law of justice governs existence from the microcosmic dimension of the atom to the outermost cosmic spaces. The law of karma establishes that every thought and deed sets up a chain of causation that acts on every plane to which that chain of causation reaches. Constantly and progressively every human being becomes the result of her or his thoughts, emotions, and actions. We stand at every moment as our own autobiographer, with the tools of destiny in hand to carve our own life as a work of art, and compelled under the laws of being, to carve and carve until the outer becomes a worthy temple for the god within us. Life then becomes the highest art.

Forgiveness creates a means of experiencing divine love. True forgiveness refuses to harbor resentment, nourish a grudge, or foster hatred. Forgiveness also cleanses one's heart of these harmful impulses. By definition, common English language understands forgiveness as the action of granting someone else, who is guilty of committing a wrong, a release from all further punishment. The aggrieved party graciously absolves the offender, releasing him or her from all obligations to provide recompense or to suffer any further punishment or karmic restitution for past misdeeds. Forgiveness, therefore, is an action, the deed of releasing another of his/her deserved punishments and obligations.

True forgiveness always has a sacrificial character, namely, the overcoming of the lower ego by the higher ego. Through the force of egoism the lower ego resists forgiveness in every possible way and grasps at any opportunity to avoid this step. The difficulty or ease in forgiving is determined above all by the extent of the activity of the higher ego exerting mastery over the lower ego. Each individual's capacity to forgive acts as an inner barometer that indicates the extent of the presence and maturity of the higher ego. The present mindset of contemporary western culture alternates between the thought of *guilt* and *forgiveness*. The battle between guilt and forgiveness reflects the dilemma in modern consciousness between an old moralistic thinking that blames and punishes, and the advent of a new moral thinking that embraces a greater context of freedom, responsibility, and love. To attain to a new moral thinking requires a shift into a spiritualized consciousness out of free volition, in which responsibility becomes the foundation of a new understanding of forgiveness, a necessary step to realizing a new level of moral awareness and evolution.

True forgiveness addresses the healing of both the aggrieved party and the offender. It is a deed of selfless charity to grant full absolution to one who transgressed, to surrender one's rights to be compensated or be given reparations, or to seek rightful punishment. To forgive

in the face of long-standing social injustice and horrific personal tragedy requires spiritual presence. Genuine forgiveness occurs when the injured person can look the offender in the eyes and with honesty state:

I hereby extend God's mercy to you and waive any further punishment you rightly deserve and eliminate any further restitution or reparations you may owe to me. Your debt is entirely and fully gone. You are free of any further liability in this matter.

The offender is pardoned.

Due to its potential to transmute karma, forgiveness plays a unique role in human relations. The *Mahabharata* teaches that one should forgive every injury regardless of the surrounding conditions. It holds that the continued survival of our species depends upon the attainment of human forgiveness. Those who conquer their wrath and show forgiveness when insulted, oppressed, and angered by those in positions of power, perform sacrifices for the furtherance of human evolution and survival. "By forgiveness it is that the universe is held together" (*Mahabharata*, Udyoga Parva Section XXXIII). Forgiveness creates a means of experiencing divine love.

As humans struggle to develop the capacity to forgive one another, the spiritual world longs for human consciousness to increase and receptivity and oneness with the Divine to grow. True forgiveness not only pardons adverse actions, it sparks an awakening of consciousness within both the forgiven and the forgiver. Ignorance becomes not just temporarily absolved, but transformed. Forgiveness engenders illumination and initiates a process of purification that transpires in the relation of one to another. Forgiveness also leads to transcendence and responsibility. Transcendence denotes moving beyond the moment of hurt, fear, trauma, anger, judgment, and criticism to a condition of inner harmony and love. It requires personal strength and the ability to initiate action from love.

We have the power to be each other's redeemers. The experience of being forgiven lifts us to a new dimension of life, to a higher, more subtle frequency of consciousness where we experience a veiled encounter with the Lord of Karma. His potent love assists us beyond measure in our climb up the steep side of life's mountain where karma can be balanced with much greater awareness and alacrity. The experience of being forgiven leads to cognition of the reality that in bestowing forgiveness upon another, an agency of divine magic occurs, the science of love. This requires selflessness. In relation to our moral life, our understanding of the world, and in relation to all the activities of our consciousness soul, we must first overcome the self-seeking desires that still influence our moral, intellectual and emotional life. This is a duty of our present culture to the future. Humankind must become more and more selfless; therein lies the future of right living, and of all the deeds of love possible to earthly humanity. Our conscious life is and must be on its way to selflessness.

Human acts of forgiveness have the power to transform individual karma. Forgoing the inclination for revenge and renouncing the recompense that is due initiates far-reaching spiritual consequences. Sacrifice of self-interest through forgiveness liberates boundless forces of spiritual beings from the necessity of creating new future situations on Earth for the

compensation of past karma, and allows others to receive needed help by means of these liberated forces. These spiritual forces are freed to work in completely new forms or structures to promote evolutionary impulses.

Through our personal karma we can make restitution for ourselves, but not for the Earth-evolution connected with the whole of humanity. The objective karma resulting from every human misdeed becomes a debt to all humanity that the perpetrator is unable to repay, erase, or redeem through karmic restitution.

As human forgiveness functions on the level of personal karma, it mirrors Christ's forgiveness of the objective karma of humanity, transmuting human transgressions. As a result of every act of true forgiveness, a liberated space, no longer filled with karmic substance opens, into which Christ can enter and work, and to which the luciferic and ahrimanic powers have no access. A new field of grace emerges under the guidance of Christ as the Lord of Karma.

When Christ took upon Himself the karma of the Earth through His sacrifice on Golgotha, He became a surrogate for humanity to the claims resulting from human misdeeds. In Rudolf Steiner's words, "Christ is the only forgiver of sins because he is the bearer of sins" (Steiner, *Christ and the Human Soul*). Therefore, Christ alone has the ability to require recompense or to forgive the objective karma borne by the Earth. Through what occurred during the Mystery of Golgotha,¹ it has become possible that our debts can be wiped out from the cosmic level of Earth-evolution.

While Christ assumes all the objective karma of those who have aligned themselves with the Earth's mission of love, He has not made reparation for all the subjective consequences of those same misdeeds. The only one who can absolve these deeds are the individuals who were injured. That absolution, i.e., release of debt, can be given by the injured individuals either through their generosity in the present life or when incarnated in a later one. But Christ can transform the unredeemable consequences of human misdeeds on the objective plane so that in the distant future a healthy balance will be restored to the Earth. For this to occur a certain consciousness is necessary, a consciousness of our individual guilt, and consciousness that objectively Christ has the power to take these deeds upon Himself and forgive them. The expression, "Thy sins are forgiven," therefore, denotes a cosmic fact and not a karmic fact.

The collective karma of humanity that exists on the cosmic plane imposes a consequence to the Earth. Steiner perceived the earth as a living being. He stated that

¹ The physical event that took place at the moment of the Crucifixion when the Christ's blood flowed onto the Earth on the hill of Golgotha is the physical expression of a spiritual event that, according to Rudolf Steiner, stands at the central point of all earthly happenings. Through this great Event, the force of the Logos (The Word, as embodying the Divine Will, the idea of God, who is in His own nature hidden, revealing Himself in creation), which formerly radiated down upon the Earth from the sun, was taken up into the Earth's spiritual being. Since that event on Golgotha, the Logos itself has become the spirit of the Earth.

When something immoral is done anywhere on earth it amounts to the same thing for the whole earth organism as a little festering boil on the human body, which makes the whole organism sick (Steiner, *The Significance of Spiritual Research for Moral Action*).

The whole organism of the earth suffers from everything immoral, and as individuals every immoral act we commit affects the whole earth.

As human beings strive to balance their individual karma, Christ works to transmute the collective karma of humanity borne within the Earth. Were it not for Christ bearing the *sins of the world*,² all the transgressions that otherwise would have amassed would cast the Earth into darkness, and there would not be a planet for humanity's further evolution.

Rudolf Steiner explained that Christ may efface the karmic debts that live on the cosmic plane for human beings who inwardly have an alliance to the cosmic mission of Love. Divine Love must be active in the souls and deeds of those whose misdeeds are blotted out from our external world by Christ. His transmutation of world karma never encroaches upon personal karma (Steiner, *Christianity as Mystical Fact*). To grasp the significance of this cosmic reality we must realize that the Earth cannot continue to progress in its evolutionary path under accumulating weight of humanity's collective negative karma. Consider the far distant future when every human being will have completed his or her earthly incarnations, all karma will have been resolved to the last iota. Rudolf Steiner indicates that even though human souls will have had to balance their individual karma, the collective guilt of humanity's misdeeds will continue to live on the cosmic plane, working in the Earth. Therefore, at the end of the Earth stage of evolution, even though human beings would have balanced their Karma, the Earth would not be ready to develop into a future stage of evolution because of the burden of the unredeemed collective misdeeds of human beings; humanity would be without a dwelling place.

When every person understands that "no man can live unto himself alone" (Romans, Chapter 14:7), that with every act and thought each of us either raises or drags down the hosts of which we are a part, realization of the intimate ties binding us together can catalyze a sense of responsibility that will dignify life. Knowledge that human beings are one with all that exists, not merely united as members of a family or a community, or as individuals of a nation, but like all the molecules of an organism, composing one spiritual unity, can revolutionize the moral fiber of each soul and effect radical reform.

Valentin Tomberg addressed his concerns regarding the preeminence of human forgiveness in the workings of the spiritual hierarchies.

Cosmic karma is a balance that weighs accurately; it is only when "forgiveness" lies on the one scale of human initiative that the spiritual world can place "redemption" on the other side of the balance. The spiritual world has waited nineteen centuries

² The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, ESV).

for this moment—the solemn moment, long desired, in which humankind will make forgiveness possible. If the karma of the past is a burden to insolvent humanity, it is an even heavier burden to the spiritual world.

To the world of love, not being allowed to forgive causes greater suffering than the expiation of guilt causes to human beings. This is why the Christ became human and offered the awful sacrifice; it was done to emancipate both worlds by bringing freedom from guilt to the world of earthly humanity, and by bringing to the spiritual world freedom from the bondage of the will to give. For endless ages, the beings of the spiritual world have held inestimable gifts ready for humankind; they await the hour when they may overwhelm humanity with happiness, but that hour will not strike until the voice of humanity rings out with truth with, “Father, forgive us our debt, as we forgive our debtors.”

Therefore, we may never comment on the misfortune of another by saying, “It is that person’s karma.” The gods may say this, because they do so with divine pain; it is our business, however, to mobilize all the initiative and force we possess to mitigate—indeed, to prevent—any negative karma that has been earned by another.

—Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia*

The supreme deed of sacrifice by Christ formed the basis for a new Christ consciousness to arise in the human being. Christ, as the great Sun Spirit, descended from super-physical worlds through the Mystery of Golgotha in order to find a dwelling in the souls of human beings. If Christ will find His abode in human earthly souls, then the Christ power will stream back from the earth's aura into the worlds that He forsook for the salvation of humankind, and the whole cosmos will be permeated through and through by Him.

Wishing you all a season of holiness with Christ cradled in your heart under the protection of Mary’s mantle.



Mary Queen of Heaven
Timothy Jones

Karen Rivers, PhD, co-founder of the Sophia Foundation with Robert Powell, loves to tend the earth, tend to her grandsons, serve the community of children and families, pray for the earth and humanity, and sing God’s glory.

The topic of Forgiveness will be the central theme of the July 22-26, 2020, Choreocosmos workshop in Chapel Hill, NC.

Sophia Illumining the Way of Forgiveness and Love A True Account That Points Toward Sophia's Ineffable Touch

Karen Rivers



Dr. Ihaleakala Hew Len, a consulting clinical psychologist, spent four years at the Hawaii State Hospital in the 1980's, overseeing a ward of the most dangerous, violent "mentally ill" criminals in Hawaii. It was an untenable work environment where psychologists quit on a monthly basis. The staff often called in sick, and when on duty, would walk through the ward with their backs against the wall, afraid of being attacked by patients. Fresh paint peeled off the walls and all plants in the facility died. Dr. Len accepted the position on the condition he didn't have to have direct contact with the patients. After a few months of Dr. Len's presence at the hospital, patients that had to be shackled were being allowed to walk freely. Others who were heavily medicated were being taken off their medications. Staff absenteeism and turnover disappeared. Patients who had no chance of ever being released were set free. After four years the ward was closed.

When asked, "How did you cure a complete ward of mentally ill criminals without ever seeing any of them?" Dr. Len replied, "I simply worked on healing the part of myself that created them." When asked how he went about healing himself, Dr. Len answered, "I just kept saying, 'I am sorry' and 'I love you' over and over again." He would read the patients' charts, write down their names, and then work to transform himself. He cleansed his judgments, beliefs, and attitudes, and asked the Divinity what he could do for the patients. As he worked on himself, patients began to heal.

Dr. Len used a Hawaiian healing process called ho'oponopono, a process of repentance, forgiveness and transmutation developed by Kahuna Lapa'au Morrnah Nalamaku Simeona, where erroneous thoughts within oneself and within another person are transmuted into perfect thoughts of Love. He describes that the process of repentance and forgiveness is achieved through the inner dialogue, "I am sorry for the erroneous thoughts within me that have caused the problem for me and for the client; please forgive me." In response to the repentance and forgiveness appeal of the therapist, Love begins the mystical process of transmuting the erroneous thoughts. In this spiritual correction process, Love first neutralizes the emotions that have caused the problem, be they resentment, fear, anger, blame or confusion. In the next step, Love then releases the neutralized energies from the thoughts, leaving them in a state of void, of emptiness, of true freedom, so that Love can stream in, and healing is possible.

Dr. Len explained that because he is fully responsible for everything in his life, it is possible to transform everything in his life. He uses the healing words: "I love you, I am sorry, please forgive me, thank you." This transmuting power of love and forgiveness aligns with Christ's deed of taking upon Himself the sins of the world. Mary took upon herself the sins of others to help heal them. This is the work of the Holy Soul, and the future destiny of humanity, to share the guilt of the world, and thereby be able to heal it.

The Archangel Jesus and The School of Selflessness

Kristi Albright

As I see and hear about so many events of divisiveness around the world—apocalyptic disasters, weather, and rumors of war—I was greatly strengthened and filled with hope after attending the Choreocosmos Workshop in North Carolina on the Archangel Jesus. It is unfathomable to me the depth of the sacrifices of such lofty spiritual beings on humanity's behalf. Estelle Isaacson's words about the Archangel Jesus convey this depth.

... every step and sacrifice was accomplished by certainty with full confidence in humanity. He does not fail to see the Divine in all and sees the ultimate goodness. He has always known this and he knew it first.

The Archangel Jesus agreed to go down into the darkness so that the Christ could enter the darkness and bring the light. What depth of selflessness I had never imagined before!

For many years I have lived in the question *what is true charity?* Paul (1 Corinthians 13:4-8) says that "charity *never* faileth, but beareth all things, and endureth all things." Moroni (7:47) states that "true followers of Jesus Christ are filled with the pure love of Christ and to pray with all the energy of heart to be filled with this love." These words resound in the acts of the Archangel Jesus who, full of this love, saw the danger of humanity falling prey to Lucifer and cried out to Christ. Christ heard and responded to these cries, and merging with the Archangel Jesus, was able to harmonize our twelve senses through the first sacrifice of the Archangel Jesus. Now we can truly say, "In our senses Christ lives in us! Not I, but Christ in me." Christ lives in our senses through this deed. What depth of selflessness I had never imagined before!

I felt awakened, not only by the deep humility with which these great spiritual beings act on behalf of humanity, but by the depth of charity they embody. In light of their great sacrificial deeds, I am keenly aware of my own weaknesses and selfishness. Yet in the Sophia work of coming together, I felt this immense gratitude and joy that through our prayers, dances and enlightened thoughts, our efforts could rise to the spiritual world to be gathered by spiritual beings to create the macrocosmic sheaths of Christ—the sacrifices of His macrocosmic sheaths in our behalf had to be created anew! This thought had never entered my consciousness, and I was then convicted, on a deep level, of the significance of all that we and others do in our prayer and meditative life to bring truth, beauty, and goodness not only on earth but in heaven. These acts are acts of charity, for what I do, I do for many and not just myself.

How can we live this kind of deep charity as human beings? The more one sacrifices, the more Christ lives within—the Kingdom of Heaven lives in us and that brings joy. We can be co-creators and participants with our thoughts, feelings, and actions. This is the School of Selflessness—to bring consciousness of the great deeds of sacrifice and charity to human beings. The more who are aware and deeply moved to engage in an active prayer and meditative life, the more this light can be gathered to heal not only ourselves, but humanity and the spiritual world. Just holding in consciousness that the Archangel Jesus weaves a new

astral light body from humans who send prayers and love into the macrocosmic body of Christ brings a degree of joy and renewed commitment to me. My prayer and meditative efforts now seem to have taken upon themselves a “life of their own.” I cannot express in language the deepness of feeling I experienced through the grail circle on the Archangel Jesus, the readings, the dances, and the moving music of Rachmaninoff. I only know that this feeling has remained with me and has enlivened my prayer life immensely. Can I translate this kind of charity by going down into the depths of darkness to bring light? I am immensely grateful to Karen Rivers for sharing this very rich and light-filled grail circle celebration and bringing a keener awareness to being a student in the School of Selflessness. May we too, like the Archangel Jesus, not fail to see the Divine in all and the ultimate good.

I live in Manti in Central Utah and am a seed sower and saver who teaches biodynamic gardening at the local college. I also work in the Global Engagement Center as an ESL professor. I feel women in Utah are ready for a harvest of Sophianic teachings, and my goal is to sow the seeds of the prayers and meditations, choreocosmos dancing, book groups on Meditations on the Tarot, and to encourage Waldorf consciousness in our area. The women in Utah are a powerhouse of strength for family virtues, and I see Sophia working in a very strong way at this time here.

—Kristi Albright

**Choreocosmos, July 2019, Durham North Carolina:
The Archangel Jesus**

Richard Reho

This past July I was most grateful to have the opportunity to attend the choreocosmos workshop on the theme of the Archangel Jesus facilitated by Karen Rivers. Though unable to participate in the afternoon sessions, which dramatically explored mysteries of the new Isis and their relationship to the Archangel, what I experienced in the morning sessions devoted to the Archangel, and through the two evening Grail Circles, was powerful and rich beyond measure and has proven to be ongoing. Here are some impressions, reflections, repercussions—though words in this regard are still rather weak.

Almost two months after this most profound and significant choreocosmos event, nothing regarding it is at all settled or remains static. The essence of the experience flows onward, a wisdom stream bearing deeper down into the heart, into the mysteries of time, space and being, into the very shape, sound and light of Being itself. Our human being, now as never before, and the radiant being of the Archangel Jesus, an etheric stream of faith of ever more selfless and intimate sacrifice in our name, in the name of Creation, the name of Christ—Christ in us and Christ in the etheric realm and in all realms—the unfathomable dance, the luminous spiraling axis of the Human and the Divine, experienced so deeply, felt so profoundly through the week as we danced.

The axis on which all future evolution turns, and Karen Rivers' inspired, embracing and rather courageous elucidation of the School of Selflessness, the sacrificial path of the Archangel Jesus, past, present and future unveiled essential mysteries of that evolution and shed profound light on who and what we, in essence, are as divine-human beings, on the nature of angelic consciousness, and on the meaning of what Valentin Tomberg has referred to as the "First Love," our primal connection, through selflessness, through the heart, with the mission of the earth. Through the course of this event and now beyond, I have come to experience this "First Love" with greater depth and intimacy, with greater urgency and presence than I ever have before; something has awakened within and opened: a source of loving Inspiration that now seems endless.

Eternal Israel: A burgeoning stream of Being which, at every crucial point in the evolution of the earth and humanity, reveals itself angelically, majestically and sacrificially, becomes itself, gazing lovingly at Christ and speaking out, into the furthest reaches of the cosmos and into the depths of human hearts, an ever-more resounding and selfless "Yes!" A Being, then, who speaks to us and enlightens, speaks in us and ensouls, speaks through us and redeems, dies in us and breathlessly awaits. The Holy Grail: the sacrifice of our being that is Being, radiant, pure and eternal.

What a gift this week was! And given, through Karen, with great love and selfless devotion. The music of Rachmaninov was a truly inspired choice, and played so beautifully by Clair Hiles, it helped us all to feel deeply into the heart of this great Being—into our own and each other's hearts, and dancing to it, heart to sacred heart, was truly a revelation. A gift given; and together with the new Sophia Grail Circle on the Archangel Jesus, a rather daunting deed of great significance accomplished in a manner echoing the faith and selflessness of the Archangel himself. A vessel created for the Archangel to touch into, touching the hearts of all present, and of presence itself. And with great love, patience, and faith in who and what we are, awaiting the liberating waves of our response...

With much gratitude,
Richard Reho

Richard is a Priest of the Sophia Grail Circle and, together with his wife Gail, a facilitator of the Sophia Foundation's Grail Knights' Training. Richard and Gail currently live in Vilcabamba, Ecuador, where, as part of their ongoing spiritual work they have helped to found and grow a first of its kind organization in Ecuador with the purpose of supporting people with disabilities in their local area.

Washing of the Feet

L.S.

A wonderful group of people met at Synergia Ranch in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for the 25th Annual Sophia Foundation Retreat in June 2019. Our days were filled with deepening conversations on *Meditations on the Tarot*, the Foundation Stone Meditation in sacred dance, singing, sacred drama, and the evening Rose of the World and Peace celebrations, all in honor of St. John's Tide and World Peace Day. It was my first meeting with Joel Park, and I appreciated his sharing insights and facilitating "open conversations" that *Meditations on the Tarot* initiate. And we were treated to delicious organic cuisine at every meal!

This article is written especially in regard to the sacred drama Karen Rivers had written for us to work with, "The Washing of the Feet." It is a simple yet profound enactment of Jesus's washing of the disciples' feet before the Last Supper. At our initial discussion, the roles of the disciples and Jesus were being decided. Karen's first question was "Who wants to play Judas?" There was a long pause as I waited to see if anyone would respond to the question, and when no one spoke up, I said I would play the role. The following vision, which came to me during deep meditation in August of 2009, is the reason why I agreed to play the part of Judas.

Christ asks Judas to meet him in a garden, secretly when no one else will be present. This garden is in the spiritual world. The two embrace, Christ lovingly and warmly, Judas with hesitation but overwhelming love for the Lord. They sit side by side on a stone bench. "Judas, I asked you to meet me because I must ask for a great deed from you." "Whatever you ask, Lord, it will be done." "I know that you would wish me to exert the Father's will materially, to better the earthly existence for human beings, but I am not among you for this purpose. The Father has sent me as the Anointer of Souls, Redeemer of Spirits. Our community feels this tension of will in your heart, your desire for my earthly Kingship. So you will understand why I ask you to make the unfathomable sacrifice I will ask of you." "You ask a sacrifice of me, Lord? Yes, yes, I will do anything you ask of me." "Judas, I ask you to betray me to those who will come to arrest me. This will be the act that will begin my condemnation and crucifixion," Jesus says softly. "My Lord, I will never betray you!" exclaims Judas. "Judas, brother, hear me. I have come to fulfill my Father's will, and He has sent you to me as a part of His Divine Plan. Can you surrender your will to the Father's will? He brought us together in order that this may be so." "Lord, I do not know if I have the courage to do what you ask of me."

Judas breaks down in heart-wrenching sobs. Jesus embraces him and holds him to his heart while stroking his head and brushing Judas's hair from his tear-streaked face. Jesus lets Judas cry until he has exhausted his soul. Then Jesus wipes Judas's tears with his own hands and anoints his own heart, mouth, brow and crown with Judas's tears. He dries Judas's face and his own hands on his robe, sending Judas's sorrow to the Mother for purification. They remain in an embrace, though now there

is complete peace between them. "Judas, you will be known on earth as the greatest betrayer; your name will be synonymous with betrayal. The memory of this meeting will be dissolved from your soul, and you will incur a great spiritual burden. Fear not, though, for in the appointed time those who know the secret name Judas will know that you have made this great sacrifice of surrender to the Father's will, and you will one day sit with me at His hand amid great rejoicing." "My dear Lord, You have given me courage and I am humbled to do this deed for You," Judas softly replies. "Beloved Judas, go now to the great event about to unfold." Jesus and Judas embrace for a long time, holding each other to their hearts. Then Jesus kisses Judas on both cheeks and they depart. Mary has been clairvoyantly watching these events, and at his death she takes Judas into her heart.



"Peter" has his feet washed.

There was very little dialogue in the play. Most of scene was the representation of Jesus, played by Joel Park, reenacting the washing of the disciples' feet. Each of us playing the part of disciples had a profound experience witnessing the washing of each one's feet. Many shared the feeling that it was hard to allow Joel to wash our own feet, and how much harder it was to embody the disciple having his feet washed by the Master (Michael Cohen did a wonderful job enacting Peter's initial refusal of allowing Jesus wash his feet). In my role, I could feel the resentment and betrayal in Judas's heart, but I also experienced a mysterious exchange of love and benediction pass from Christ to Judas as he looked into Jesus's eyes.

I can't explain why this vision was revealed to me as it was, but almost ten years later, the experience of connecting Karen's drama to my vision left me with questions around betrayal: Who and how have I betrayed and/or been betrayed by? What is the great betrayal that seems to be happening to the Earth now? And then blooming above and beyond questions of betrayal, I begin to feel the overwhelming love and compassion Christ held for Judas. I get a glimmer of the cosmic dimension of Christ's love for all of creation, and I offer this vision to you in humility and gratitude.

**The Seven Miracles:
A Guiding Image for the Future of Our Movement**

Joel M. Park

That which was is as that which will be, and that which will be is as that which was, to accomplish the miracles of eternity. – Anonymous, Meditations on the Tarot, p. 13

Those of our readers (and I feel there are quite a few of you) who are familiar with the works of Valentin Tomberg and Robert Powell will likely be aware of a perspective that has developed from the research and experience of these two spiritual teachers. This perspective

describes a line of transmission from Rudolf Steiner to his successor, Valentin Tomberg, and from Tomberg to his successor, the Novalis individuality—an anonymous woman acting as the spiritual inspiration for a number of other modern spiritual teachers. Perhaps of all of them, Robert Powell experiences this latter inspiration with the highest degree of *consciousness* (this is, of course, my own private intuition; others may feel quite differently).

For the past decade, this perspective has been foundational for me in my studies of the development of modern spirituality. Akin to other spiritual content I've come across, this perspective felt correct from the first time I read about it; I *knew* it was true. That being said, lingering questions have remained regarding the details of this “line of transmission,” and rightly so. My feeling for truth may be spot on, but that in no way removes the responsibility I and anyone else has to give due scrutiny to any piece of spiritual information. It is only in this way that we can unite with that which streams from our “truth-sense,” our intuition, in freedom.

And so, despite the obvious, intuitive correctness of this line of transmission, problems arise—questions that ought to be held and offered to the spiritual world. For example (and this is a common question), just why *did* Valentin Tomberg become Catholic? Some (e.g., Sergei Prokofieff) have gone so far as to say that Tomberg was a possessed Jesuit who completely turned his back on Steiner and Anthroposophy.¹ Anyone who has read Tomberg's work from the 1950's through the 1970's should know that this is untrue; yet the shift in explicit orientation from Anthroposophy to Catholicism is still odd. On the same note, if Tomberg in his Catholic years emphasized the unity of the exoteric Church of Peter and the esoteric Church of John, highlighting in particular the sanctity and eternal nature of the seven sacraments, how can the Sophia Priesthood and the new sacraments originating from the Sophia Foundation (co-founded by Robert Powell in 1994) be justified? Is this not once again a 90° turn? From reading the description of the three teachers in, for example, Robert Powell's *The Most Holy Trinosophia*, one pictures a seamless transition from one teacher to the next, each carrying on the fundamental impulses of his predecessor. And yet when we look at the reality, it seems that each teacher has re-written the playbook. How can we possibly resolve this apparent contradiction? Having lived with both an unwavering commitment to the spiritual impulses of the three teachers, while carrying these questions and contradictions in the background of my commitment for some eight years, I was relieved to be given an answer a few years ago.² I will not say *the* answer, but certainly for me a new perspective has opened up that I find incredibly fruitful.

Valentin Tomberg answered the question as to why he entered the Catholic church some nine years before he ended up doing so. Yes, you read that sentence correctly, and it is deliberately confusing. Let me explain. In his *Meditations on the New Testament* found in the volume *Christ and Sophia*, Tomberg comes to the seven archetypal healing miracles of

¹ See for example Prokofieff's *The Case of Valentin Tomberg: Anthroposophy or Jesuitism?*, published in 1998.

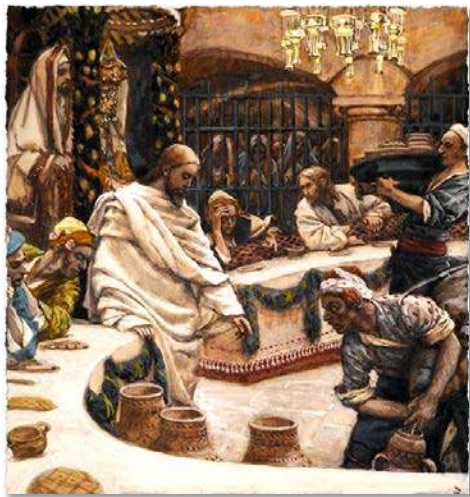
² These articles were originally written in 2017, and published on www.treehouse.live.

Christ in the seventh meditation. There he describes these healing miracles as depicted in the Gospel of St. John as follows:

If we allow John's Gospel to speak to our souls in silence, it tells us through its whole composition that the seven miracles of Christ are acts of healing that were performed for a few so that, after the Mystery of Golgotha, they might be manifested to the many. Thus those miracles are not *just* miracles; they are also signs of the future spiritual and bodily healing processes within the human organism, which is sick as a consequence of the fall of humanity.³

After reading Tomberg's meditations on the first, second, and third healing miracles following on from this quote, what began to dawn on me was that the esoteric, future-oriented aspects of these miracles apply respectively to the missions of the first, second, and third great teachers of the 20th century. It is not simply an uninterrupted stream of transmission at work; nor is it the haphazard and independent work of three great leaders. They are at once distinct yet part of a united whole, in exactly the same way as are the miracles of Christ. The seven miracles of John's Gospel do not describe Christ changing water into wine seven times, nor healing seven different paralyzed men. They are seven totally different organs of one body. They are seven distinct tones of one scale, made to play the song of the Passion and Resurrection. These same miracles, seeded on the physical level almost 2,000 years ago, are now sprouting in the etheric realm. The vessels through which Christ performs these seven miracles in our time, on a new level, are the Great Teachers.

Tomberg emphasizes that the first miracle, that of changing water into wine, was more than anything else a *healing of the future*. The transformation of human relationships and spiritual destiny is what is at question here; this concern was equally that of Rudolf Steiner in the development of Anthroposophy. The imagery is of old wine exhausting itself, replaced by water — this being the natural course of events — only to be miraculously transformed into the "new wine" through that which wove between Jesus and Mary. Can we think of a more beautiful and succinct way of describing the advent of Anthroposophy? The old clairvoyance runs dry, replaced by the cool, clear logic of scientific materialism, which is then magically transformed into the new clairvoyance in the form of a "Science of the Spirit" via the agency of *Anthropos* (Christ) and *Sophia* (Mary). And just as the first miracle was a sign pointing to the future, so is Anthroposophy more than anything a deed for the sake of the future. It will not be understood nor come to its full flowering for many years; indeed, one might say it is the first product of the future Age of Aquarius. The Christmas Conference and the Foundation Stone



The Marriage at Cana
James Tissot

³Tomberg. *Christ and Sophia*, page 245. Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006.

Meditation, the General Anthroposophical Society and the First Class, and the two Goetheanums represent the hallmark of the first miracle, accomplished through the vessel of Rudolf Steiner.

After Rudolf Steiner's death, Valentin Tomberg came to fulfill his prophesied mission as proclaimer of the Etheric Christ, a role he filled for over 10 years (the entirety of the 1930's). Over the course of these years, he was increasingly ostracized by the leadership of the General Anthroposophical Society, the Free Anthroposophical Movement, and the Christian Community. He resigned his membership officially in 1938, stopped working in an anthroposophical context entirely by 1940, and by 1945 had formally entered the Catholic Church. Many justifications have been given for this sequence of events. For many years, my understanding (and that of quite a few others, as far as I know) had been that Tomberg sought for a connection first to the Christian Community and then to the Russian Orthodox Church in order to bring Sophia (the Divine Feminine) more explicitly into Christianity. Only upon failing on both of those fronts did he join the Catholic Church, where devotion to the Virgin Mary was already so present and powerful. But were there only *negative* reasons for Tomberg to become Catholic? The narrative almost always seems to revolve around "if only" statements: if only Steiner had lived until the 1930s; if only Tomberg had been recognized as the successor to Steiner; if only the split in the society in 1935 hadn't occurred; if only the Christian Community had been more receptive, etc. *ad infinitum*—possibly events could then have taken their (supposedly) pre-destined course. Now, as the sentiment goes, we are off track, and perhaps humanity is doomed!

However, when we read Tomberg's description of the second miracle in *Christ and Sophia* (which was published in 1936), we come to realize that the pre-destined course was *always* that Tomberg would become Catholic (which he did not do until 1945—therefore my claim that he gives the reason for joining the Catholic Church nine years prior to doing so!). He characterizes the second miracle as a reversal of the first: rather than a healing of the future, the second miracle is Christ's healing of the *past*. The healing power of Christ moved backwards through the hereditary stream, bestowing the Sun-power of the "I" to the nobleman, who had sacrificed his own ego for the sake of serving his master's. This resulted in the healing of the body of the nobleman's son, which had become ill due to the weakness of the father's "I."



The Healing of the Officer's Son
James Tissot

The modern equivalent of this miracle was accomplished on a new level through the activities of Valentin Tomberg from 1945 until his death in 1973. The task of healing the future had already been initiated by Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical movement. It was now left to Tomberg to heal the "hereditary stream" of the past. When it comes to heredity, we are reminded of Tomberg's characterization of the law "Honor thy Father and thy Mother" in *Meditations on the Tarot*, in which this law is applied to Tradition (see the 11th Letter-Meditation on Force). Tradition is the "hereditary stream" that Tomberg healed: Catholic, Martinist, French Occultist, and Hermetic Tradition were all infused with the healing power

of the Etheric Christ over the course of 28 years. Steiner accomplished the task of seeding the *future* in the present; Tomberg counterbalanced this task by *infusing the past with the future*— actually transforming the past! Tomberg worked on his magnum opus, *Meditations on the Tarot*, between 1957 and 1967; this is the hallmark, the paramount expression, of the second miracle of the Etheric Christ.



*The Piscina Probatica
or Pool of Bethesda*
James Tissot

In the previous section, we looked at the unfolding of the first two miracles of the Etheric Christ. Now we come to the third miracle. In *Christ and Sophia*, Tomberg characterizes this miracle as extending even further into the past than the second miracle (which healed the hereditary past). This miracle heals the *karmic* past of humanity. Christ comes to a paralyzed man who has been waiting for 38 years to be healed by activity of the Angel stirring water in the five-sided Pool of Bethesda. He heals this man, restoring movement to his limbs, by giving a call to the man’s conscience, healing “the dead” within him (i.e., his karmic history that lay at the root of his physical malady).

Once again, we are given an image-word, an Arcanum, that perfectly expresses the task and mission of Robert Powell over the past 43 years as “public representative” of the Novalis individuality. The two largest pieces of Robert Powell’s life work have been astrological karma research and eurythmy as a spiritual path. “Rise! Take up thy bed, and walk” —that is, align yourself with the stars above, take up your karmic burden, and move into the etheric realm. The Etheric Christ, via Novalis, via Robert Powell, has accomplished the task of transforming human karma by realigning it with the stars (the physical expression of the Hierarchies). He has accomplished the miracle of re-establishing our lost mobility, a mobility that extends into the etheric realm through eurythmy, creating the possibility of making a connection with the Etheric Christ. Between 1994 and the year 2000, Robert Powell founded both the Sophia Foundation and the School of Choreocosmos. These organizations in particular are the focal point of the third miracle of the Etheric Christ.

In the 1920s, the School of Archangel Michael came into earthly manifestation; in the 1960s, the School of Christ (as Christian Hermeticism). In the 1990s, the School of Sophia was founded. These are not rivals; they are portions of a single organism: head, heart and limbs. These Schools were founded about 35-36 years apart from each other. We might wonder, is there a specific cosmic rhythm to the unfolding of the miracles? The unfolding of the miracles follows the rhythm of Christ’s ego. I will not lay out the details of this rhythm here, but refer the reader to the *Journal for Star Wisdom 2017*, in which Robert Powell goes into some detail around this rhythm, which is that of the Jupiter Return. From 1861 through 1932, Jupiter’s ingress into Leo marked the descent of Christ’s “I” into a new planetary sphere. Since 1945, it has been the ingress into Virgo marking the transition of his “I” through the sub-earthly spheres, on his journey to the Mother in Shambhala at the heart of the Earth.

The seven miracles of the Etheric Christ play themselves out over the course of 22 of these Jupiter returns: 22 phases related to the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot. Here we will remind ourselves of the divine Name YHVH as described in *Meditations on the Tarot*. The first letter of the divine Name is Yod, which is Mysticism (the inexpressible, intuitive experience of the divine). The second letter, Heh, is Gnosis (the experience brought to consciousness). The third letter, Vau, is Sacred Magic (the conscious experience manifested externally through deeds). The fourth letter, the second Heh, is Hermeticism, the summary of the prior three in an established and generally accepted tradition or schooling. These four letters repeat themselves over and over again in the 22 Major Arcana, yet the second Heh always becomes the Yod of the next iteration of the Name. Whereas the first iteration expresses:

Yod = Magician (Mysticism)
Heh = High Priestess (Gnosis)
Vau = Empress (Sacred Magic)
Heh = Emperor (Hermeticism)

The second iteration expresses:

Yod = Emperor (Obedience)
Heh = Pope (Poverty)
Vau = Lover (Chastity)
Heh = Chariot (Self-Mastery)

And so on. So we see that while the Emperor (Hermeticism) is the ultimate goal of the first three Arcana (Mysticism, Gnosis, Magic), he is also the mystical origin of the next Name (Obedience, leading to Poverty, Chastity, and Self-Mastery). The same holds true for The Chariot, Wheel of Fortune, Death, Tower of Destruction, and The Sun: they are both beginnings of and conclusions to iterations of the Divine Name YHVH. The same principle is at work throughout the 22 Jupiter cycles in question for the accomplishment of Christ's miracles. The first four are:

September 21, 1896 – August 4, 1908 (Sphere of Archai)
August 4, 1908 – June 15, 1920 (Sphere of Archangels)
June 15, 1920 – April 25, 1932 (Sphere of Angels)
April 25, 1932 – April 1, 1945 (Sphere of Humanity/Mineral Earth)

The first phase, from 1896 through 1908, was a time of mystical experience, when Rudolf Steiner first encountered the Mystery of Golgotha in 1899. Gradually, from 1902 onwards, his mystical experience came to expression in his lectures to the Theosophical Society. This time period *transitioned* mankind into the time of miracles.

The second phase, from 1908 to 1920, was a time of gnosis. That which had been the inner experience of Steiner (i.e., the Presence of Christ) became his teaching. This time period saw not only his greatly increased focus on the Gospels and the imminent Second Coming, but of separating from the Theosophical Society to form the Anthroposophical Society, primarily on

the grounds that Christ and Christianity were not understood at all correctly by the Theosophists. This was a time of *preparation* for the coming miracle.

The third phase, from 1920 to 1932, was the time of sacred magic—in other words, of a miracle. This was the time of the completion and destruction of the first Goetheanum, the founding of both the General Anthroposophical Society and the School of Michael, the laying of the Foundation Stone Meditation, the construction of the second Goetheanum—and ultimately the appearance of Christ in the Etheric and his proclaimer, the Maitreya Boddhisatva. This was a time of *fulfillment* in terms of the first miracle. The first miracle falls under the sign of the 3rd Arcanum, The Empress. This image is strongly related to the Moon, and it is the Root Chakra, the Lunar Chakra that is especially related to the first miracle (as described in Valentin Tomberg's *Lord's Prayer Course*, available from the Sophia Foundation).

The phases of transition, preparation, and fulfillment have continued to unfold in the same fashion since then. The time period from 1932 through 1945 was again a time of transition: a time of Hermeticism (in terms of becoming established/institutionalized) in terms of Anthroposophy, yet Mysticism (in terms of the flowing in of a new impulse) in terms of the work of Valentin Tomberg. Anthroposophy became increasingly institutionalized in the wake of Steiner's passing and the threat of World War II, reaching a kind of zenith in April 1935 during the cataclysmic split in the Society and resultant expulsion of many prominent members. By then it had established itself as a relatively fixed tradition in its own right.

On the other hand, for Valentin Tomberg this was a time of Mysticism. His experience of the Etheric Christ occurred between 1932/33. His writings from 1933 through 1943 display a remarkable depth of inner experience during this time period. In October of 1938, however, after increasing friction with the Society, he withdrew his membership. By 1940, he had ceased his Anthroposophical work altogether; in 1943 he ceased his group esoteric work on the Lord's Prayer; and in 1944 he began his work on law and jurisprudence.

The next time period in the rhythm of Christ's descent through the sub-earthly spheres was from April 1, 1945 through February 10, 1957 (the Fluid Earth). This was Tomberg's time of preparation. By the summer of 1945 he was officially a member of the Catholic Church. He spent these years writing his works on jurisprudence (published in 1946 and 1947), entering ever more deeply into Catholicism, and privately cultivating what would in 2012 become the Grail Knight's Practice, a series of complex mantra distilling the entirety of his course on the Lord's Prayer.

All of these separate pieces are woven into a magnificent tapestry in the next time period, from February 10, 1957 through December 21, 1968 (the Air Earth). It was almost exactly during this time period (from Advent 1957 through May 1967) that Tomberg wrote his 22 Letter-Meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot. Once again, this is a period of fulfillment, of accomplishing a deed of sacred magic, the equivalent of the second miracle of the Etheric Christ. This time period falls under the sign of the 6th Arcanum, The Lover, which corresponds to the planet Venus. Venus is the ruler of the Sacral Chakra, with which the second miracle is particularly related.

Christ's passage through the Form Earth from December 21, 1968 through November 1, 1980 was again a time of transition. During the first four years of this time, Tomberg wrote the meditations contained in the book *Lazarus, Come Forth!* He crossed the threshold into the spiritual world on February 24, 1973. Robert Powell first became aware of Anthroposophy and Valentin Tomberg between 1972 and 1973. He then spent the final seven years of this time period (from 1968 through 1980) working with Willi Sucher in the realm of astrosophy, translating *Meditations on the Tarot* into English, and training to be a eurythmist in Dornach. It was in 1978 that he had a spiritual encounter with Rudolf Steiner in which he was given the task of fleshing out the science of karma and reincarnation in astrosophical terms.

From 1980 through September 11, 1992, Christ passed through the Fruit Earth, and Robert Powell began the time of preparation for the third miracle. The gnosis that was the fruit of his mystical encounter with Rudolf Steiner in 1978 is contained in his three volumes on Hermetic Astrology, published between 1987 and 1991. It was also during this time period that his teaching concerning the various rhythms of Christ's bodies as well as that of the three teachers of the 20th century came to light (to both of which this article is indebted). The first attempt at establishing a communion dedicated to Sophia occurred in 1988.

The third miracle occurred over the course of Christ's passage through the Fire Earth, from 1992 through July 23, 2004. The Sophia Foundation was founded on New Year's Eve, 1994. From that point onward, the Mass of the Lamb and His Bride and, over time, many other Grail Celebrations were established. Eventually, the School of Choreocosmos was founded in 2000. A great variety of sacred practices, movements and ceremonies dedicated to Sophia and the Etheric Christ unfolded during this time period. This time falls under the sign of the 9th Arcanum, The Hermit. The Hermit is related to The Archer, Sagittarius, but is also clearly an image of Hermes Trismegistus. Hermes is another name for Mercury, and it is the Mercury Chakra in the solar plexus that is related to the third miracle.

Before we take a look at the most recent period of Christ's descent through the sub-earthly spheres, we should refresh ourselves on Tomberg's characterization of the fourth miracle of Christ, the Feeding of the 5,000:

The conversion of the senses brought about by the Christ impulse is shown in the sign of the feeding of the five thousand. It shows how *hungry* senses can become *productive* senses. After being blessed, the five loaves and two fish produced twelve baskets full of fragments; likewise, the five day senses and the two twilight senses having received the Christ impulse and taken it into the heart, lead to twelve currents that will flow from the heart and affect the whole sensory system. This sign deals mainly with the mystery of the human heart, which can receive the Christ impulse from without, and, as a result, begin to radiate through all twelve senses.⁴

⁴Ibid., page 252.

The above quote encapsulates one of the central purposes in writing this article, viz., to share a guiding image as we head into the future. It is one thing to work out of “pure faith,” hoping that our inspirations are true, without certainty of whether what we are doing is right or not. It is another thing altogether to rely completely on the instruction and guidance of an authority. In the first scenario, one has no security; in the second, one has no freedom. The blessing of a guiding image is that it falls into neither trap. It offers a centralizing focus to those who take it up, while leaving them in freedom to be inspired by it in their own individual way. For me, this guiding image carries a great deal densely packed within it. Tomberg emphasizes the centrality of the spiritualization of the senses. Above and beyond this, the spiritualization of *nourishment* and *economics* are surely key features. Of particular note, however, is the presence of the masses of people. No other miracle gives record of many people present (excepting possibly the Wedding at Cana and the Raising of Lazarus), and certainly not as many as 5,000. This seems to indicate the question of spiritual *community* on the one hand, and on the other indicates the *collaborative* nature of this miracle. Each of these areas of potential sacred magic (food, economy, sensory content, community) is in dire need of spiritual reformation in our time. Can’t we hear our age crying out for the healing this miracle offers?



The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes
James Tissot

From another aspect, we can observe how the latter half of the times of transition (1902-1908, 1939-1945, 1974-1980) planted the seeds for the miracle to come; each period of transition is sharply divided in the middle. In this light, how can we look at the latter half of Christ’s descent through the Earth Mirror from July 23, 2004 through June 3, 2016? Before focusing on the activity of Robert Powell during this time period, we should engage in a more reflective exercise. Robert Powell has to a certain degree prophesied the coming of the successor to the Third Teacher, the Maitreya Bodhisattva, whose public activity began in 2014. Surely it would be desirable for the sake of envisioning the coming fourth miracle to know the nature of this individual’s activity during this time period. That being said, it may be of even greater value to remember that the Maitreya is not just an individual, but a source of great inspiration for different groups of people. Indeed, I am quite certain that for anyone who has gotten this far in reading this article, the Maitreya is an inspiration in the endeavors you have taken up in your life. Rather than speculating on what the Maitreya might be doing, we should ask ourselves, “What has changed for *me* since 2010? What new strivings, impulses and initiatives have begun or come to fruition?” Keeping in mind the essentially collaborative nature of the fourth miracle, we can be sure that whatever new activities we have engaged in are part of the soil in which this miracle will grow.



Kaspar Hauser

For myself, this time period (2010 onward) brought me into connection with the Camphill stream. It is remarkable how applicable the imagery of the fourth miracle is to the striving in a Camphill: feeding the senses, redeeming agriculture, discovering a new form of economy, and building a truly collaborative community. It has become my conviction that there is an intricate and thus far unrecognized relationship between the Christ School of the Maitreya and the impulse connected to Kaspar Hauser (the guiding light of the Camphill Movement). This relationship has thus far lived only spiritually, in potential, not yet fully realized explicitly. The question I've been living with increasingly concerns how the impulses of the Maitreya could be

woven *consciously* into the fabric of Camphill, and whether this would open up the possibility for an infusion of new life and new forms. Again, I feel certain that what is true for me is true for many reading this article: in some way that which *you* have each been engaged with over the past decade or so can be laid on the altar of preparation for the fourth miracle. The time for a central authority upon which the burden of initiative of a spiritual group rests (e.g. Rudolf Steiner) is over. The time has come for us to work from the periphery, as pillars in an Etheric Temple into the center of our mutual striving.

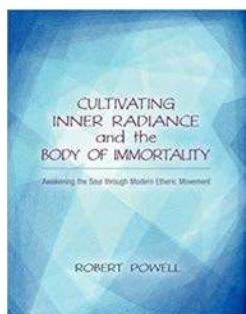
What do I mean by integrating the work of the Maitreya with the Camphill Movement? Well, let's go back to 2010. This was the year that I first read *Meditations on the Tarot*, a book which has completely changed my life. In 2014 I became close friends with a fellow anthroposophist/hermeticist/Sophian, Phillip Malone. Since 2016 the two of us have taken up the work of diving deeply into the Tarot of Marseilles in order to eventually pen 56 Letter-Meditations on the Minor Arcana, as requested by the anonymous author at the end of *Meditations on the Tarot*. Over the course of this process, we have discovered the spiritual fecundity of the Arcana, and their ability to facilitate spiritual conversation. According to Rudolf Steiner, conversation is the archetypal social phenomenon. This activity could become of great value in the forming of community, including both the Sophia Foundation and Camphill.

On the other hand, Karl Koenig (founder of the Camphill Movement) emphasized that the social therapist does not instruct, diagnose, or practice any kind of direct therapy on another adult human being. What he does is cultivate archetypes within himself; these archetypes then become the Shepherd of the other individuals in the community. It is my conviction that a sure path to digesting and internalizing these Shepherding Archetypes is through developing a relationship with the Tarot of Marseilles. Phillip and I began work on this process in June, 2016. Three years later, at this year's Annual Retreat of the Sophia Foundation, we presented our process to a wider audience for the first time. The results were magical and immediately tangible—a hermetic conversation arose spontaneously out of a group of people who had never participated before. We hope to introduce this process to more people in the near future.



Karl Koenig

I met Robert Powell in 2015, and since then we have developed a strong relationship. My intention is to carry on the work he began in terms of resurrecting Astrosophy in the light of karma and reincarnation. Further volumes akin to *Elijah, Come Again!* will be forthcoming in the next few years. Here too, we see an expression of the 12 directions of the zodiac converging on the human heart: the laws of karma and reincarnation as expressed in the starry heavens. During the time of Christian Rosenkreuz, fairy tales were created that would prepare us for our current incarnations. Karl Koenig claims that the fairy tales of our time are karmic biographies; it is through hearing them that we facilitate the capacity for karmic memory in our next life. Over the Holy Nights of 2017-18, I delivered the karmic biography of Willi Sucher to a group of people with developmental differences. I feel it made a great impression, and plan to bring this more into practice in the coming years.



What about the work and experiences of spiritual teachers like Robert Powell over the past 10 years? This most recent time period of transition (from 2004 through 2016), again one of Mysticism, brought with it several strong experiences of the Christ for Robert Powell himself (as he describes in the introduction to *Cultivating Inner Radiance*) as well as for modern seers such as Judith von Halle and Estelle Isaacson. In fact, when it comes to these two latter individuals, are they not a perfect example of forerunners for the “moral sense impressions” described above? Over the course of this time period, Judith von Halle produced over 20 volumes, at least half of which have to do with her sense impressions from the time of Christ. Estelle Isaacson’s work is more recent, falling during the latter half of the time of transition. She too describes her sense impressions from the time of Christ as well as that of Parzival.

This special time period from 2010 through 2016 (the latter half of the transition emphasized above) shows an outpouring of new impulses from Robert Powell: the unveiling of the Mysteries of Evil in our time; the announcement of the baptismal event of Kalki Avatar/ Maitreya Bodhisattva in 2014; and the new science of *Astrogeographia* (the 12 signs of the zodiac shaping Mother Earth, another excellent derivation of the Feeding of the 5,000).⁵ Possibly of greatest significance, Robert has cultivated several new ways of working with eurythmy: the Inner Radiance practice, the Grail Knight’s practice, and the beginnings of the Path to Shambhala. Indeed, this time period fell under the sign of the Wheel of Fortune (marking this as a time of the Second Fall). Now we have entered a new 12-year period: from June 3, 2016 through April 14, 2028, Christ is descending through the 8th sub-earthly sphere, the so-called Divisive Layer. We are now under the sign of the 11th Arcanum, Force. She is Purity, she is Virginal, Unfallen Nature. It is the Force of Purity with which we adorn ourselves when we put on the Resurrection Body through a practice like Inner Radiance or the Path to Shambhala. It is this same Force that can lead to a transformation of the senses. Deepening our relationship to these practices is crucial to our work at the present time.

⁵I plan to apply this science of Astrogeographia to Central and Eastern Europe within the next few years, with the hopes of inaugurating regular pilgrimages to “Grail Sites of the Future” in Scandinavian, Baltic, and Slavic countries in particular.

With the incredible timing that seems to be second nature to him, Robert Powell remarkably enough signified in quite a conscious way that the time of transition was finished, and that we were entering a time of preparation for the fourth miracle. In April of 2016, he chose to step back from many of the activities he had led or co-led in North America as part of the Sophia Foundation, passing the leadership roles of these different initiatives to others over the course of 2016-17 (see sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Choreocosmos_ConsiderationsEaster_2016.pdf for the full letter explaining his decision).

Our task in light of Robert Powell's shift in his activities is twofold: on the one hand, to carry forward that which has been established in the aftermath of the third miracle (just as Christian Hermeticism and Anthroposophy have been maintained in the time since their flowering); on the other hand, we must seek in the activities and teachings brought forth since 2010 for our sources of inspiration in terms of this new phase of preparation for the fourth miracle (and not only the activities and teaching brought forth by those we consider our spiritual leaders, but perhaps especially those that have arisen out of our own creative conscience—out of pure *love of the deed* and guided by the *needs of the other person*). Over and above this, it would be of great benefit to contemplate Valentin Tomberg's description of the fourth miracle in *Christ and Sophia*, to the point that it has become a matter not just of memorization, but of heart and will, a driving force in our various initiatives. What he describes in just few pages contains in seed form the potential of our work for the next twenty years.



The Pilgrims of Emmaus on the Road
James Tissot

With the threefold inspiration of Tomberg's meditations, the work of our spiritual leaders, and our own individual strivings over the past decade, we can work from the periphery to the center in the accomplishment of the fourth miracle. This has the possibility of occurring between April 14, 2028 and February 24, 2040 (Christ's passage into the Earth Core). By the end of this time period, Christ will have completely re-opened the Path to Shambhala, to the lost Paradise of the Mother. This time period falls under the sign of the 12th Arcanum, the Hanged Man—he

who has united the 12 impulses streaming from the zodiac into his radiant heart, the burning heart of the Road to Emmaus.

The final miracle (the Raising of Lazarus) will begin to be accomplished starting on January 20, 2135, a date whose significance was emphasized by Robert Powell in his article "The Descent of Christ" in the *Journal for Star Wisdom* 2017 as a time when "Christ's 'I' will reunite with his ether body, an event analogous in importance to the resurrection on Easter Sunday morning in AD 33." By 2157, Christ and humanity will have transitioned out of the time of miracles (at least in this particular form of them; one mustn't limit the miracles accomplished by the Christ!). This time period from 2135 through 2157 will fall under the signs of The Fool and The World: Christ and Sophia.

Why is this time period (1896-2157) of such importance in terms of the accomplishment of the seven miracles? This cannot be an arbitrary decision on the part of the spiritual leadership of humanity. One reason has to do with the activity of the forces of opposition, the Hierarchies of the Left. Their activity during this time period is described in the 12th and 13th chapters of the Book of Revelation; we could imagine the following 22 verses as counterparts to the 22 Jupiter returns we have been contemplating. Sacred Magic, the miraculous, is the only force that can dismantle what is described here. May the gravity of this passage permeate our hearts, and steel our will to aid in the accomplishment of the “miracles of eternity.” (Chapters are in bold; verses in bold italics.)

12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.’ **13** When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. **14** The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach. **15** Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. **16** But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. **17** Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

13 The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. **2** The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. **3** One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. **4** People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?” **5** The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. **6** It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. **7** It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. **8** All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world. **9** Whoever has ears, let them hear. **10** “If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.” This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God’s people.

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. **12** It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. **13** And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to

the earth in full view of the people. **14** Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. **15** The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. **16** It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads....

— Revelation 12:12-17, 13:1-16

Joel Matthew Park is a Christian Hermeticist, astrophysicist, social therapist, and father of two young children. He lives at Camphill Village Copake in the beautiful Hudson region of New York state, spending most of his time with folks with special needs at "Ita Wegman," one of the three elder care houses in the village. He also enjoys spending time with his family at their rustic family cabin in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

Some Ink Spilled

James Wetmore

For this issue of *Starlight* I was asked for news on the publishing front. Many will already be familiar with several publishing imprints that I direct, among them The Sophia Foundation Press and LogoSophia, as many books of immediate interest to readers of this journal have appeared under these imprints. Less known here is my original publishing company, Sophia Perennis, founded in 1994, primarily to bring to press over the span of a decade the *Collected Works of René Guénon*, along with books by other authors of the so-called "traditionalist" school.

This latter Press may be a cause of consternation to some as, on the face of it, the "position" adopted by these traditionalist authors, a kind of über-Platonism, in many ways stands at the antipodes of the more "evolution of consciousness"-oriented works of Rudolf Steiner and other anthroposophical authors. As we know, it is well, however—to the extent it may lie within the compass of our calling—to strive to see the world from many points of view, for to each such perspective corresponds an aspect of Truth or Reality that might not come into such stark relief from another point of view. This, precisely, accounts for my preoccupation with these traditionalist writers to the extent that I would devote such time and energy to them.

There is a longer story in all this, but for this overview it must suffice to say that even as the cross establishes the point of intersection between the vertical and the horizontal, so, we might say, does it represent the intersection of the eternal and the temporal, the simultaneous and the sequential, the static and the dynamic, the ontological and the cosmological, the active and the passive (or *purusha* and *prakriti*, or *atma* and *maya*); or, to use two terms all too often rather vaguely cited, Aristotelian and Platonic. In this context, the books of Sophia Perennis represent the "vertical" perspective, to the degree in fact that the "horizontal" very nearly drops entirely out of the picture. Of course, this represents the lopping off of one side

of a living reality; but then sometimes, in order to gain a clear view of one aspect of things, we need to sacrifice perspectives on other aspects. We may even extend this consideration to the sometimes puzzling phenomenon of respected spiritual teachers exhibiting, alongside their unquestioned depth and stature, otherwise unexpected “all-too-human” characteristics— what another primary traditionalist author, Frithjof Schuon, calls the “human margin.”

The intention here is not to be tedious, but to sketch, however breathlessly and inadequately, the backdrop for the current publishing activities, upon which I have been asked to report. My own biography, up to this point, first entailed decades of immersion in Rudolf Steiner’s work, then another decade of provisionally letting that go in order to fill my lungs with what was, for me at the time, the bracing mountain air of the traditionalists. Then there came a time, in the mid-1980s, when the polarity of points of view described briefly above, was suddenly resolved for me, at least as a first stage, in a startling higher synthesis. I refer here to the work of Valentin Tomberg, in particular his text, published anonymously, *Meditations on the Tarot*, which I first read as an unpublished manuscript in 1985, shortly before its first publication in English that year by Amity House, in hardback.

In this extraordinary text I sensed the presence of a man, a spirit, whose “perspective” seemed zodiacal; that is, by representing, so to say, the full circle of possible points of view, spiral-wise one was raised up to higher circle of insight, so that with the help of such a master, it was possible to receive intimate counsel regarding my biographical conundrums. There were some familiar landmarks scattered throughout the text—references to Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy—but also to the traditionalists, not only to particular authors (Rene Guénon, Leo Schaya, Titus Burckhardt, S. H. Nasr), but also to a marked focus on restoring positive readings of three well-known authors severely derogated by most traditionalist authors: Henri Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, and C. G. Jung. It felt as though *Meditations on the Tarot* had been written especially for me! (Of course, over the years many others have expressed a similar feeling, *mutatis mutandis*, regarding this book’s role in their own destinies.) Another point of junction between Tomberg and the traditionalists was their mutual respect for tradition; in Tomberg’s case (in this book), primarily Catholicism; in the case of the traditionalists, all the world’s “authentic” traditions (what Schuon called the transcendent unity of religion), considered as paths leading to the same summit, from exoteric valley to esoteric peak.

At about this same time, destiny brought to my attention the visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich, and also led me to first cross paths with Robert Powell. After a lapse of some twenty years, during which we remained in touch, Robert and I collaborated on some of his publications, in particular *Chronicle of the Living Christ* and the first edition of *Most Holy Trinosophia*). I also collaborated and participated with him in activities associated with the since-formed Sophia Foundation of North America, in which connection the imprints mentioned at the outset of this article came to be established. In due course, I was led to commence the extensive editions of Anne Catherine’s visions that have been reported on previously in this journal.

As has been said, alongside the esoteric character of *Meditations on the Tarot* (and other works by Tomberg) runs a concomitant reevaluation of the more exoteric, or traditional side—a point that would require a great deal more space than is available here to grapple with. But in this connection, some will know that a number of representatives of Catholicism have written appreciatively, even enthusiastically, about *Meditations*. Indeed, Tomberg’s literary executor Martin Kriele and several leading figures in the translating, editing, and publishing of *Meditations* are also, though perhaps with varying nuances, Catholic. One knows that Pope John II was aware of the book (there is a photo of him with the two volumes of the German edition lying on a desk beside him), and citations from other well-known Catholic or Orthodox writers are to be seen on the back covers of its various printings.

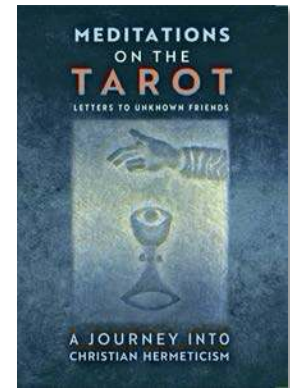
Now, my efforts with Sophia Perennis, and later with Sophia Foundation Press and LogoSophia (the latter largely serving as a vehicle for the works of Estelle Isaacson), while of the utmost spiritual importance, were from a *practical* point of view unfeasible financially. And so I was receptive when, around 2010, a long-time friend who had shared many of my earlier enthusiasms (traditionalist authors, Owen Barfield, and especially *Meditations on the Tarot*) proposed a publishing partnership. This partnership led, after some changes of direction, to the establishment of Angelico Press, which has now grown into a significant force, especially in the Catholic world. This was, to put it mildly, a rather unexpected twist of fate in my journey, for although my preoccupations had for decades been aligned with gaining a deeper understanding of how “evolution” can enter into and metamorphose “tradition,” I had not taken the step into a formal traditional affiliation (or at least, I had not taken such a step in the direction of Catholicism or Orthodoxy). To my surprise, however, authors began to appear within the orbit of Angelico Press who were aligned with Catholicism or Orthodoxy (naturally, to varying degrees and in differing ways), and more specifically, deeply immersed in the themes presented in *Meditations on the Tarot* and also in sophiology. It was as though I had switched over to a new set of rails, and yet before I knew it, another company of writers touched on a different shoulder by Tomberg was chugging down the tracks to Angelico Press with books for publication. Two such authors spring to mind immediately: Michael Martin, several of whose books have now appeared through Angelico Press, and Therese Schroeder-Sheker, whom we will be publishing in the near future.

Now, through LogoSophia I had published various works by Tomberg, including my translation of a set of his notes recently discovered that represented his early thoughts on what later grew into *Meditations on the Tarot* (these notes were published along with related lectures by Robert Powell as *The Wandering Fool*). In this connection, the idea surfaced in discussions with John Riess, of adding to Angelico Press’s list some of Tomberg’s work—to start with, *Meditations on the Tarot* (and perhaps later an edition of the so-called Lord’s Prayer Course, which might be reported on in some future edition of *Starlight*, if desired). My idea was to introduce some corrections to the text and also magnify it somewhat, as many had mentioned having difficulty with the compact typography. Another project begun several times but never effectively realized, was a truly comprehensive index—as the book is rather like an entire universe, for which some “map” could prove useful. And so, over an extended

period such an index was created. Likewise, there were useful supplemental texts from other editions that I felt should be offered in a new edition, as well as some information on the history of the manuscript and early editions, now that roughly a half century has elapsed since the author's work on this text began. Also, taking the lead from a German edition, an extended table of contents was created so that the reader can return as needed to a brief topical orientation to a given Letter.

Finally, in conclusion, the point has been reached where I can announce that within weeks of this writing (and surely by the time this issue of *Starlight* is available), the new edition of *Meditations on the Tarot* will be available, in both paperback and hardback. The text is eight percent larger than in the original edition. Included is a seven-page extended table of contents, along with a 30-page comprehensive index.

Supplemental material includes a translator's preface (by Robert Powell) along with translations of the preface to the first German edition by Tomberg's close friend Ernst von Hippel, and an introduction to the second German edition by Robert Spaemann; also included is the original full afterword by Hans Urs von Balthasar, an appended history of the manuscript and printed editions, and a 36-page section entitled "Early Studies on the Fourteenth through the Twenty-Second Major Arcana of the Tarot." This enlarged edition comes to 768 pages.



Hermeticism and Hope in the High Desert of Santa Fe, New Mexico

A Report on the 25th Annual Sophia Foundation Meditation Retreat

Marcia Burchard

Introduction

After deciding to write an article for *Starlight* on the 25th Annual Sophia Foundation Meditation Retreat in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I began searching for my notes. Having just moved for the second time in less than a year, I realized to my dismay that they must have gotten lost in the shuffle, and so I began to listen to recordings of the lectures. As the content took hold of me, I couldn't help but transcribe all of the fascinating material I was hearing. Along with the beautifully structured lectures given by Karen Rivers, Joel Park was taking us into new territory with riveting accounts of the work he and Phillip Malone were doing on the Minor Arcana of the Tarot, so much of what you will read here regarding the content of their lectures is just as they spoke it.

Upon arriving at the Synergia Ranch in the Turquoise Trail region outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico, I was delighted to be greeted by old friends who showed me to my casita, which had beautifully painted walls depicting hummingbirds, flowers, and desert scenes, and opened up onto a patio surrounded by adobe walls. After relaxing on the patio, chatting and catching up, we took the path to the dining room, which led past a gorgeous view of distant mountains

surrounded by the high desert in bloom. Once we'd all gathered around the buffet, the chef—a culinary artist extraordinaire, it turned out—described what she had prepared. What she offered us that evening and for the rest of the workshop was truly exceptional.

Thursday Evening Opening Talk — Karen Rivers

After a cup of tea, we made our way to the geodesic dome for the evening presentation. Once inside the dome and after we'd adjusted to the fascinating acoustics that made it sound as if someone across the room was speaking directly into our ears, Karen Rivers began her talk. She gave a brief introduction, and then cut right to the chase by asking us how our karma directs us either toward suffering or abundance and the love of life. She proposed that the Seven Petitions of the Lord's Prayer are like a New Law of Karma, which are initiatives for a karma of the future. Karen explained that she'd had the inspiration to weave together—from the capacity for spiritual development—each petition of the Lord's Prayer by viewing it through the eyes of the Unknown Author of *Meditations on the Tarot (MOTT)*. She did this by meditating on and then pairing each petition of the Lord's Prayer with one of the Letters on the Major Arcana that either aligned with the petition or was an explication of it. She read aloud key passages from *MOTT* that supported her choices, reminding us that those choices were only *one* possible way of connecting the petitions and the Letters, and that everyone present might have a completely different list of Arcana.

Despite a long day of travel, I was engaged in the material and found it to be a great way to get reacquainted with *MOTT*, since I'd not been in a study group for years. Karen's pairings were as follows: *Hallowed be Thy Name* with The Sun; *Thy kingdom come* with Force; *Thy Will be done* with Judgment; *Give us this day our daily bread* with The Fool; *Forgive us our trespasses* with Justice; *Lead us not into temptation* with The Lover, and *Deliver us from evil* with the Tower of Destruction. To close the presentation, she read from Letter XII, which likened the Hanged Man to the "...eternal Job, tried and tested from century to century, who represents humanity towards God and God towards humanity."

The next morning after a delicious breakfast, we headed back to the dome to work with the Foundation Stone Meditation, which was how each day of the workshop began. I was very moved by the new words and gestures Robert Powell added to his original eurythmy choreography, and I felt they brought a new depth to the work.

Summer Solstice: Morning and Afternoon Sessions – Joel Park

After a short break, we gathered for a talk by Joel Park. Having read and heard about Joel for years, I looked forward to hearing what he would share with us about the work he and Phillip Malone were doing with *Meditations on the Tarot* and the Minor Arcana. Because it was the summer solstice that day, Joel told us he'd had the inspiration to lead us through Steiner's Imaginations of the Four Seasons and the Four Archangels, which he did quite poetically and without notes while pacing around our circle, his preferred way to present material. I was most intrigued by the Fourth Imagination under the influence of Uriel, the archangel of morality and the social world, and the archangel with which the majority of us are least

familiar. Joel recounted Steiner's imagination that in the high summer, our spirit vision of the depths opens up and we see the blue crystalline realm of the Mother suffused with silver, which is drawn up to the reddish/golden realm of the Father in the heights by a white dove. In between these realms with this form of the dove is the admonishing gesture of Archangel Uriel looking at the disturbing realm of human error. As the silver quality of human vice is drawn up to the heights, it is redeemed and becomes the gold of human virtue.

Joel told us that Steiner encouraged everybody to practice this festival by imagining an arch or vault with the image he'd just given appearing out of nowhere—portrayed through the use of modern, vaporous paints—and rather than being accompanied by drama, the image would arise with triumphant music resounding from the vault. (Needless to say, the composer in me was quite intrigued and inspired by this vision.) Joel then tied this imagination together with the work we'd done on the Foundation Stone that morning and the Tarot activities we'd be doing that afternoon. He said that the image of vice and virtue being redeemed through Archangel Uriel and the connection being established between the realms of the Father and Mother are part and parcel of the *heart* of the Foundation Stone Meditation and our work with the Tarot. To close the session, Joel asked each of us what made us excited enough to come to the retreat. He prefaced this question by recalling Steiner's view (given in a 1918 lecture) that the archetypal moral/social phenomenon is conversation, and therefore if we want to engage with this moral realm of the Tarot, conversation is the key.

That afternoon Joel shared his biography, of which I'll recount a portion here, beginning with the period of time when he and his wife Molly moved from the West Coast to New Hampshire and he was invited to his first Sophia Grail Circle given by Richard Reho and Gail Dupre. Upon meeting Phillip Malone there, Joel felt as if he'd been hit with a lightning bolt and knew he'd found his spiritual brother. Through this new circle of friends, he went on to become a colleague and friend of Robert Powell. Joel told us that during this time (2013), Robert had co-written the book *Gautama Buddha's Successor* with Estelle Isaacson, who was receiving messages from the Maitreya Bodhisattva. Estelle was in regular communication with their New Hampshire group through phone conversations, and they asked her how they could work with the Maitreya in *this* time period. She talked to them about thinking in unison, which reminded Joel of Temperance, the 14th Letter of *Meditations on the Tarot*, in which something thinks *through* you with two simultaneous currents of thought that mingle together and constitute authentic inspiration, which in turn creates Hermetic community. Estelle emphasized that tasks and answers would be given to them through *symbols* and not words. By 2015, Estelle had stepped back, and two things happened: Joel suggested to the group that in their thinking together they focus on the symbolic content rather than the intellectual by dwelling on the *arcana themselves*; and he proposed they begin a life-long project of working towards writing fifty-six Letters on the Minor Arcana.

Joel had a hunch that what Valentin Tomberg brought to the work of writing *MOTT* at the end of his life was everything spiritual that lived in his heart, including the work of Teilhard de Chardin and Rudolf Steiner. When Tomberg brought this disorganized mass of knowledge

and experience to each of the Major Arcana, the *arcana themselves* took that knowledge and experience and organized it into the twenty-two letters of *MOTT*, which is why the book is written anonymously and not by Tomberg. The process Joel encouraged their group to engage in was not specifically to study *MOTT* or anything else, but each week to come together around an Arcanum, one Arcanum per month, and for each person to bring his or her biography, particular knowledge, and anything that lived in his heart as an offering to the conversation. No single one of them would guide the conversation; rather, the Arcanum itself would be the facilitator.

That was the experiment they launched into, and Joel said it was similar to what is found in Letter XVIII, the Moon: the idea that you will never learn to swim by walking, but that you just have to jump in. Embracing this idea made for a very free-wheeling, uncertain process for a very long time. In April of 2018, Joel and Phillip went deeply into a study of the Minor Arcana and came to know these images very intimately, so that now when they look at the images, which have been invested with a great deal of spiritual content and spiritual life, they find that the images have become a language to them.

In the final portion of Joel's talk he addressed two questions: What is it that makes for a Hermetic conversation, and how does it function in a healthy way? He began with some quotes. Here is a portion of the first one:

...Hermeticism has nothing to do with the desire to have ready-made answers to all questions obtained with minimum effort and maximum result. Its questions are crises, and the answers that it seeks are states of consciousness resulting from these crises. This is why Hermeticism, the art of becoming, the art of transformation, transubstantiation, and transmutation of human consciousness, cannot make use of any intellectual instrument. The symbols which it uses, or rather that Hermeticists let themselves make use of, are not intellectual instruments; there is nothing mechanical about them. Quite the contrary, the symbols are mystical, gnostic, magical ferments, or enzymes of thought, whose troubling presence disquiets thinking, stimulates it, and calls it to immerse itself to ever-new depths.¹

Joel went on to say that in the letter on the Tower of Destruction, the author brings up *attention* and *cordiality*, which stand at the core here. There has to be an unspoken agreement among all the people involved in the conversation that the *Arcanum* is the guide, not any one of the participants or their particular opinion or what they might be struggling with. Next, he said, you need to have a willingness to speak. It should be a conversation around an Arcanum; you look at the card and take in all the details. When you see a detail that doesn't make sense to you, it's good to remember that all of these images were made to create an internal crisis. You have to be able to speak out your observation, so there has to be a certain amount of boldness and vulnerability, but at the same time, you have to let go of your opinion. Cordiality is the

¹ See pages 452-453 of *Meditations on the Tarot*, from the 16th Letter-Meditation on the Tower of Destruction.

key, and you can't let a difference of opinion derail the conversation. He recalled that once when he and Phillip had what seemed like an irreconcilable difference of opinion, they had to live with that tension for eight months before a resolution finally came. When those engaged in a Hermetic conversation can allow the contrast of opinion to just sit without trying to fix it, magic can begin to occur.

Joel closed by saying that in the three years he and Phillip had been doing their work together, his hunch had been confirmed that Tomberg created these letter meditations *conversationally*, with maybe only his wife present on *this* side of the threshold and a whole constellation of others on the *other* side of the threshold, along with the arcana themselves. He said that when we come to this process, we are entering into the same process through which *MOTT* was written, because the way we learn to interact with someone over the course of a Hermetic conversation becomes the way we relate to the book itself and to the images themselves.

World Peace Day – Karen Rivers

The next day, a Saturday, was World Peace Day, and Karen began her talk by recalling that at last year's Annual Sophia Foundation Meditation Retreat in Estes Park, Colorado, the participants were with Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the founder of World Peace Day. About thirteen years ago, he and a group from his community began this tradition as they rode on horseback from their reservation in North Dakota to Wounded Knee. Now there are communities all over the world who are honoring this day. Meeting Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th Generation Keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe for the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Nations at last year's Meditation Retreat and hearing him speak in the pristine beauty of the Rocky Mountains (elevation 7,522 feet) was a life-changing experience for me in that the power of his words inspired me to redouble my vow to serve the Good. He told us of the "miracle" birth of a female white buffalo calf in 1994, which signaled a time of Earth changes and the coming of The Mending of the Hoop of all Nations. As he spoke, I could feel the wisdom and the vastness of the knowledge that he carried—"the Sacred Bundle"—which had been preserved and passed along to him from generation after generation of elders. His message was sobering yet hopeful, and I felt grateful to Karen for honoring the commitment she'd made to him to align our communities around this powerful Summer Solstice:

We have been warned from ancient prophecies of these times we live in today, but have also been given a very important message about a *solution* to *turn* these terrible times.

Karen began by speaking to us about moral imagination; she invited each of us to think about an aspect of ourselves that we would like to transform in relation to one of the symbols under discussion here. That evening at the beginning of the Peace Celebration, there would be a moment to cast into the fire (in an imaginary way) those aspects of ourselves that we wanted to change, and to make a resolve to transform them, thus becoming ever more capable of being peacemakers in the world. Since moral development and union with God are at the heart of *Meditations on the Tarot*, this practice would help us move toward those ends.

Karen then read a passage from Letter XVI, the Tower of Destruction, and I was all ears, because on the plane ride to Santa Fe I had asked my higher self which letter I needed to read in order to prepare myself for the upcoming retreat, held *MOTT* to my heart, and with eyes closed, opened the book to the Tower. Here are the opening and closing paragraphs of the full-page passage Karen read to us:

As it is the same with all the soul's faults and vices, we all have the mission of finding and bringing back to the flock (i.e., to the soul's choral harmony) the lost sheep in ourselves. We are missionaries in the subjective domain of our own soul, charged with the task of the conversion of our desires, ambitions, etc.

In order to concentrate, it is necessary to have attained a certain degree of freedom and detachment. In order to meditate, one must place oneself within the light from above. And in order to experience contemplation, it is necessary to become one with this light. For this reason, the states or stages of the soul corresponding to concentration, meditation, and contemplation are those of purification, illumination, and union. And it is the three sacred vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty which render concentration, meditation, and contemplation effective, with a view to the realization of the soul's purification, illumination, and union.²

Karen spoke about three different arcana: the Emperor, the Pope and the Lover, and their relationship to moral imagination, asking us to find one we resonated with that could serve as a symbol to help us in the process of choosing which aspect of ourselves we'd like to put into the fire that night. With the three vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, she said we're working with the monk's vows, a central theme of *MOTT*. She emphasized that though she connects the vows to three particular arcana and we'd be looking at them in relation to a specific choice *she'd* made, each of us might choose a completely different set. Here is a brief summary of what Karen presented:

The Cross – Letter IV, The Emperor – Obedience

The Emperor serves the community and must practice obedience to be a good servant. Two symbols are associated the Emperor. The first is the *crown*, which immobilizes personal thinking so that one can have a clear mind that is receptive to spiritual thoughts. The third verse of the Foundation Stone Meditation, *Through the world thoughts of the spirit, the soul awakens*, applies here. The crown can also be likened to the crown of thorns that Christ wore, which pricks our conscience to stand in truth and morality. The second symbol, the *scepter*, has a cross on it, and on top is the world, indicating that the Emperor's dedication is to the well-being of the world in alignment with vertical truth and horizontal truth, uniting the two with the cross of sacrifice. He has four wounds: His two feet are immobilized to keep him from advancing and maintaining power through personal ambition at the expense of others,

² Ibid., pages 455-56.

and his two arms are wounded in that they're crossed so he can't take or grasp things at the expense of others.

The Pentagon – Letter V, The Pope – Poverty

There are two images in relation to the Pope. First is his *scepter*, which has a vertical cross to it and three crossbars. The Unknown Author speaks of these crossbars as representing the Pope's three loves: the lowest bar represents the love of the kingdoms of nature; the second bar the love of humanity; and the top bar the love of the angelic or spiritual realm. The second is that of the *five sacred wounds*. Along with the four sacred wounds of the Emperor's immobilized limbs, the Pope has the fifth wound, the wound of the sacred heart. The Unknown Author speaks of wounds as doorways or openings through which something in the outer world may pierce us, opening us up for growth. These five wounds are described as the dark currents of the will in the human being, and with the Pope we have the fifth wound of the heart. The heart is an expression of the head, and has to do with egotism, and in some cases with megalomania. The healing of this wound leads to the inner gesture of humility.

The Hexagram – Letter VI, The Lover – Chastity

The principle of chastity in this case is not about sexual abstinence, but about devoting the whole of ourselves to love—body, soul, and spirit—by being pure and chaste in our dedication to our beloved, either on a personal level, as in a marriage, or on a spiritual level, to God. We lack chastity when there is a separation between what the body wants and what the soul or spirit wants. The sixth Arcanum is a summary of the two previous arcana: to be chaste, you also have to be obedient and practice poverty, chastity being the fruit of obedience and poverty. It summarizes the three vows by contrasting them with the three trials or temptations opposing these vows. There is the temptation of the Fall with its seven stages that correspond with the seven chakras, and the three temptations of Christ in the wilderness. So the Lover is an Arcanum that addresses the archetypal temptations that lie before all of us. We can either be led away from the three vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, or we can uphold them, depending on the level of commitment we have to our personal vows.

Karen concluded by reading passages from *MOTT* and the Lord's Prayer Course material: The hexagram is the vow and virtue of chastity, the sign and formula of love as the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul. The spiritual history of humankind is the way from the Cross to the Pentagon and from the Pentagon to the Hexagram. The Cross is the way of obedience and faith (and the Knight's Vow of loyalty); the Pentagon, the way of poverty and hope (and the Knight's vow of righteousness); and the Hexagram, the way of chastity and love (and the Knight's Vow of courage).

That evening, at the close of World Peace Day, we gathered for our Peace Celebration in solidarity with Chief Arvol Looking Horse and his community. After we had cast our vices into the imaginary fire and stated our virtues with which to replace them, I recalled the fire ceremony Chief Arvol had led us through at last year's Meditation Retreat. He spoke to us

about honoring our ancestors, and his wife Paula showed us how to reverently circle clockwise around the fire before making our offerings. The memory of that day was so engrained in my consciousness that I could almost smell the cedar wood smoke mingled with tobacco and sage that had enveloped us. And while the ceremony itself had been quite profound, the most powerful part of it for me happened the day *after*. On that day, as we gathered for our final afternoon conversation of the retreat, we decided to have the conversation outdoors while walking in small groups to the site of the previous day's ceremony. Walking and talking together amid the mighty ponderosa pine trees was invigorating, and I was delighted when our group passed a herd of elk grazing in a verdant meadow. As we assembled around the fire pit, still carrying on our conversations, the whole group suddenly became silent *all at the same time*, and I felt a peaceful spiritual presence surround us. A gentle breeze blew through my hair, and I looked up at the vast, blue Rocky Mountain sky and saw beautiful cloud formations moving and shifting ever so slowly overhead. I was transported to a timeless, eternal place where the ancestors dwelled, and felt their wisdom stream into me. I wondered if this could have been an experience of contemplation, as described in Letter XVI, The Tower, which the Unknown Author describes as

...a transition...made from consideration and discourse to the immobility and complete silence of supernatural communion, where one no longer thinks something from a distance, but where this Thing itself is present and reveals itself. Contemplation is the union of the thinker with reality. Here one does not arrive at a conclusion, but one receives—or undergoes—the *imprint* of Reality.

I had experienced something similar when viewing the total eclipse of the sun in the mountains of Idaho at the 23rd Annual Sophia Foundation Meditation Retreat, and realized that these experiences usually happened for me out in nature. I felt gratitude that along with the Idaho and Colorado retreats, this one was also being held in a natural setting far from the grid. The lack of light pollution allowed for ideal star gazing conditions, and as a group of us made our way back to our casitas after an inspiring Peace Celebration, we stopped to marvel at the planet Jupiter next to the dynamic constellation of Scorpio. Having just read Claudia Lainson's June 16th commentary in *Cosmology Reborn*, I knew that the position of Jupiter was part of a square with Neptune and Aquarius. Claudia wrote that this was one of the major planetary aspects of 2019, and that it recalled Christ casting out demons from the possessed. She wrote that in our times, "...demons have been given access to us through technological gadgets...[and]...it has become a dire necessity that we learn new etheric technologies for clearing demons from our personal energy fields...the work of sacred magic."

Staring up at the starry firmament, far away from the technological grid of Silicon Valley I now call home, where the stars are barely visible, I realized that the fire ceremony I'd participated in symbolically that evening and for real in the mountains of Colorado *was* sacred magic. Little did I know that more sacred magic was in store for us the next day in the form of a Hermetic conversation facilitated by Joel Park and Phillip Malone.

A Hermetic Conversation – Joel Park and Phillip Malone

Joel began the Sunday session by announcing that today would be the first time he and Phillip had introduced their work on the Minor Arcana to a circle of Hermeticists. He thanked us for being gracious, and said we were going to launch right into a Tarot conversation. He explained that there were ten geometrical numbered arcana along with four court arcana: the Knave, the Knight, the Queen, and the King, which was the same for all four suits. He said it was only when he and Phillip got to these four court cards that a potential structure for a Hermetic conversation began to crystalize. They went back and forth as to whether they should present what they'd discovered about the court cards to us *first*, or allow us to have our own experience and then talk about it afterwards. They settled on the latter approach.

As an introduction to the conversation, Joel read two quotes from Letter XI, Force, in *Meditations on the Tarot*. Here is a portion of the second one:

Now it is through the fusion of opinions that truth lights up. Con-versation, the process of together versing, flowing together, is the very opposite of controversy, the process of contra-versing, flowing against. Conversation is the operation of the fusion of opinions; it is a work of synthesis. True conversation always has in principle the underlying statement from the gospel, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." For all true conversation calls upon the transcendent center, who is the way, the truth, and the life.³

Clearly moved by these words, Joel said with some emotion in his voice, "On that note, I will introduce you to the Knave of Coins." He then passed out colored photocopied cards of the Knave for each of us to study and keep, and asked us the simple, leading question *What do you see?*

After some clarifying questions as to whether the Knave was the Page (yes) and whether the Knight was the Jack in a deck of cards (also yes), we all went silent as we studied the card. Quiet conversations broke out among us, but no one spoke out loud, until finally someone asked Joel if we were to speak out our observations to the whole group, to which he gave a strong affirmation, which opened up the floodgates. Here is some of what people shared:



He's holding his belt in the same way as the Emperor. His left hand, the heart side, is holding the belt. There's a restraint in holding one's belt in the will realm. What does it mean to be a Page? He's a carrier. It's the lowest station. He has a troubled expression on his face. The earth behind him is barren, not lush. His hat has a lemniscaterly feel to it. It has all three colors—thinking, feeling, and willing. I'm intrigued by the relationship between the two coins: the one he's holding in his hand and the one on the ground. My mind goes

³ See page 276.

crazy: are they bouncing back and forth, is he playing with them? The coin in his hand has ten petals on the outer rim, like the ten-petal lotus flower, six petals on the next rim, like the six-petal lotus flower, with the one in the center serving as the unity of everything. So he's holding up into consciousness the etheric chakra and the astral chakra and looking at them with concentration. It looks like he has a feather in his right sleeve.

As people spoke out their observations, Joel and Phillip remained quiet for the most part, encouraging us only with a nod of the head in agreement or an "Ummhmm," although a few of our observations led to comments or questions from them. When someone pointed out that the Knave had white hair, indicating maturity, but a young-looking face, and another said the way his feet were turned out looked like he was striking a pose, Joel said there was something of Caspar Hauser in the image. "If you see pictures of Caspar Hauser, he's kind of holding his feet that way, and is holding a wooden horse in one hand and a letter in the other."

A participant said she was still intrigued by the coin at the Knave's foot, and Phillip asked "Is it resting on the ground, then?" Another said, "The coin by his foot has eleven petals," and Joel said, "There we go. Yes." He explained that we were lacking a key piece of information that he and Phillip had when studying the Knave, which was that they had just gone through the process of studying the ten numbered cards previously, making the Knave the eleventh. "He's almost unconscious of the eleventh coin," someone said, to which another replied, "He is the eleventh. He's trying to hold consciously everything that's come before." "That's right," Joel said. "How do I meet what is not me and become part of it? Or how do I raise the unconscious into consciousness and look at it objectively? I have to separate myself from it in order to observe it, but then I have to reunite myself with it in order to have wholeness."

When the conversation turned to the Knave's belt, Joel passed out two Major Arcana cards, the Emperor and the Magician, and told us to compare the way the Emperor holds his belt to how the Knave holds his, and then to notice the Knave's belt versus the Emperor's crown. Joel and Phillip noticed the fact that the Emperor is leaning back and is holding on to the belt, really keeping his will in check. They saw that the triangles on his belt are like the crown of thorns, whereas with the Knave it's as though he's pricking his own fingers on the belt in order to maintain his awareness, which requires his strict attention. So it's less about the restraint of his will and more about the awakening of his perceptive faculties.

Regarding a comparison between the Magician and the Knave, Phillip said their gestures are almost exact mirrors of each other, and Joel agreed, except that the Magician is holding the wand, the more linear object, *up*, and he's holding the round object *down*, and that with the Knave it's the reverse.

Before moving on to the Knight card, Joel shared an insight that he and Phillip had eventually come to regarding the Knave, i.e., that the first layer of a Hermetic conversation is paying strict attention to the detail of the Arcanum. He said this is a good guideline for meeting anything—another person, a book, nature, one's inner life—paying strict attention to what is

there before you. So if the Magician is concentration without effort, the Knave is concentration *with* effort, with intention.

Joel then introduced the next character in the story, the Knight, and as he passed the card around, he told us that the leading questions this time would be *What's your impression? What does this image call up in you? How does it make you feel; what does it make you think of; what do you associate with it?* We were more comfortable with this process than when we did it the first time, and we answered him almost immediately:



He's taken possession of his lower nature, the animal, the horse he's mounted on. He's not holding the coin. The coin has twelve petals on the outside and four on the inside. He has a slightly happier expression on his face and seems more composed. He has a receptive quality about him and seems to be receiving something. His horse has blue hooves. He has an androgynous face. I am seeing a tableau of the Magi following the star. He's got an eye on that coin, which is like the sun. Is that a club or a baseball bat in his right hand?

When asked what the point of the coins was, Joel replied, "With these coins, we're not working with the exchange of quantitative value, we're working with the exchange of *qualitative* value. And that is what Arcana are: means of exchange in—and a store of—qualitative value."

Regarding the club, or baton, Joel referenced Phillip's indication that everything below the baton in the foreground is a chaos of detail, while above and seemingly further away, the Knight is being washed over by the coin and has a gentle expression of wonder on his face. The baton takes all of his effort and transforms it into something more effortless, something with grace. He recalled that with this image, he and Phillip had the experience of Saul's transformation at the gates of Damascus into the effortlessness of Paul.

When asked what an Arcanum was, Joel summed it up by saying an Arcanum is something between a symbol and a mystery. Everyone knows or thinks they know what a symbol is. It's fully out there in the day-to-day world in the daylight, whereas a mystery is completely shrouded in darkness, something beyond. An Arcanum is in the realm of twilight; it's the gateway to the mystery depending upon what you bring to bear when you interact with it.

After a long discussion as to whether symbols could be arcana, Joel powerfully and eloquently stated:

These are not arbitrarily created images; they are arcana. And even though each one is multi-vocal and multi-valent, it doesn't mean it's arbitrary. So not every interpretation is correct, and this is the heart of what I want to get to here. If you approach reality or arcana or other people only as the Knave, you will be lost in a literalistic interpretation of life. And if you approach the world only as the Knight, you will be lost in a subjective, arbitrary interpretation of life that is only a reflection of your own consciousness. You need to unite the Knave and the Knight.

You need to adequately perceive what is coming to you from the other, and then allow that to have an inner response. If you only approach symbols and arcana with your inner life, it will be whatever you want it to be; it won't matter, it will be arbitrary. You need to let the other speak to you and then it will communicate to you what it is, in a unique way! It will still be unique to you, but it will also be authentic; it will be true.

So that's why this is the tale of the Knave and the Knight, because the two qualities we need to unite in order to have Hermetic conversation—or really, *any* conversation—is accuracy of perception of the other, and a rich inner response to what we are interacting with. So that was partly why I laid out my whole biography before beginning this process, because that's the level of intimacy you're actually looking for. Nothing is off limits in a Tarot conversation in terms of your inner life. It can have as much depth as you're willing to give it, so we don't necessarily need to be limited to the content of these letter-meditations, or Anthroposophy. You can bring in your struggles as a parent, your knowledge of anatomy, your biography work as a social therapist. Whatever your experience is will then be constellated and turned into something whole through the Arcanum.

We were then given the last two court cards, the Queen and the King, and Joel prefaced our work with them by comparing Goethean conversation with Hermetic conversation:

A Goethean conversation begins in the same way as a Hermetic conversation, by reconstructing the details of something after which you're led from specific details to seeing things as a metamorphosis. *And only after that* does your inner realm of sympathy and antipathy come in, the realm of the psyche; *then* you've brought something to wholeness.



Hermetic conversation is different, because it begins the same way, with perception of detail, but it almost immediately brings with it the life of soul. So the Knave and the Knight are there immediately. What we then come to with the image of the Queen is to imagine the coin passing through the sieve of the Queen and taking on different forms. The Knave and the Knight are possible with one image, one Arcanum. You can't move to the level of the Queen until you're working with more than one image, to see things as a metamorphosis, as adaptations of the one thing. This is what the Queen shows to us. So you can work with just the Magician and be engaged in a Knave and Knight process, but you need to have at least the High Priestess to engage in the question (say): How does the Magician weave into the High Priestess? What's the movement from one Arcanum to the other?

You can't reach the level of the King until you've gone through twenty-two major arcana or ten coins, and it really is a reality that each conversation changes the one that came before; each Arcanum renews your perspective of one you've already looked at. It's not until you reach the end that you suddenly see things at a certain stage of wholeness, and the King is what expresses this wholeness.

Someone asked, "The King of any suit?" and Joel replied, "We don't know yet!" to much giddy laughter caused by the excitement that we were being given material that was still in the process of unfolding. He explained, "This is what we got from the Coin Court; only last month did we finish the suit of Coins. All of this came about ten days before I needed to be giving these presentations. I didn't know what I was going to give before that."

Joel concluded by saying, "In modern science we only have the Knave and the Queen. We only have attention to detail and perception of the process of metamorphosis. We do *not* have a perception of the whole. Everything is divided into different realms that don't fit together, and there's also kind of an injunction against a cultivation of the validity of the inner life (the Knight). So you can see how things are out of balance." This led to an animated Hermetic conversation that engaged us so completely even the lure of lunch couldn't pull us away.

Of course it did eventually, and sharing a delicious meal together was a good way to transition into and prepare for the events of the afternoon: a sacred drama reenacting the foot-washing of the twelve disciples by Christ, followed by our final conversation of the retreat. Because I was playing piano during much of the play, I did not witness the pivotal scene when the foot-washing took place, but when I returned to the circle I could feel the profundity of what had transpired, and saw deep emotion on the faces of the disciples, and even tears in some cases. I basked in the peace and love that radiated through our circle, and listened with interest as each participant spoke of his or her experience.

Closing Conversation – Karen Rivers and Joel Park

After a break, we gathered again for our last conversation. Both Karen and Joel had concluding remarks to make, and then the floor was opened up for participants to have a conversation and ask questions. Karen began by saying she wanted to give a picture of the relationship between *Meditations on the Tarot* and the Foundation Stone Meditation, and again made sure we understood that hers was just one possible correspondence out of many possibilities. She chose to work with three phrases from the first three verses of the Foundation Stone Meditation: *Practice spirit recollection*; *Practice spirit awareness*; and *Practice spirit beholding*, and paired them with the following Arcana from *MOTT*: *Practice spirit recollection* with The Sun from Letter XIX, page 532; *Practice spirit awareness* with Temperance from Letter XIV, page 379; *Practice spirit beholding*, also with Temperance from Letter XIV, page 387. (The page numbers for the quotes she read aloud to us are from the 1997 edition of *MOTT*).

For the fourth verse of the Foundation Stone, Karen said that although there is no practice called out, we have the prayer at the end of the verse: *O Christ Sun, warm thou our hearts, enlighten thou our heads, that good may become from what our hearts we found and our heads direct with single purpose.* In this prayer, she said, we unite thinking, feeling, and willing in our heads, hearts, and deeds, and so she thought of the Magician, Letter I, as a correspondence to this, and she read aloud from page 7. In the portion of the prayer in which we speak *O Christ Sun, warm thou our hearts*, we're speaking to Christ, where in Letter III, the Empress, are the words I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. (John xiv, 6), found on page 66.

Lastly, Karen mentioned that there is a collection of invocations from *MOTT* that were written at one of the cycles of study at Fort's Barn in Petaluma, California, with a verse for each Arcanum that encapsulates all the key points of that Letter. They are available through the Sophia Foundation and are called *Meditations on the Tarot Invocations*.

Joel began by thanking everybody, likening these Hermetic conversations we were having to a Whitsun experience, with a spiritual being in the center, and the harmony of different viewpoints as a dodecahedron, which allowed one to feel the harmonizing quality of the Tarot. He then addressed the question many people had, which was why he and Phillip began their study of the Minor Arcanum with the Coins or Pentacles. The answer to this question involved the Sephiroth Tree, and Joel said that Valentin Tomberg gave a more thorough description of it in *Meditations on the Tarot* than he was about to give to us right now. He gave us the following pages (from the 1997 edition) in case we wanted to delve deeper: pages 47-48 from Letter II, the High Priestess; pages 506-510 from Letter XVIII, the Moon; and pages 653-658 from Letter XXII, the World.

He then answered the question by starting with an overview of the history of the Tarot, saying the geometric forms of the cards come from Islam, the human forms come from Christianity, and the whole structure of the seventy-eight images comes from the Tree of Life, the Sephiroth Tree, which is from Jewish esotericism, the Kabbalah. However, as Robert Powell stated in his lectures and in *Astrogeographia*, the Tarot actually originated in Egypt and comes from the constellation of Orion as an image of Osiris, or the *being* of Osiris, who is Christ. Moses took this ancient wisdom in which he had been initiated—he grew up in Egypt as royalty—and distilled it down to the Kabbalah, the Sephiroth Tree, from which the Hebrew language evolved. The twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet *are* the twenty-two Major Arcana of the Tarot.

This *being*, the Tree of Life, the Sephiroth Tree, Joel stated, is none other than the etheric body of Christ, and it expresses within it four planes of reality: *Action (Assiah)*, our Physical realm, which corresponds traditionally with the Suit of Coins; *Formation (Yetzirah)*, the Elemental realm, Suit of Swords; *Creation (Briah)*, the realm of Archetypes, Suit of Cups; and the highest realm *Emanation (Atziluth)*, Suit of Batons or Wands, a realm where there is a pure outpouring of love from the unlimited, Ain Soph. He told us that in Tomberg's "homework assignment" (at the end of *MOTT*), you begin with the Coins and work your way up to this realm of the Batons.

Joel then addressed a core question: What is the purpose of studying and having a Hermetic conversation on the Arcana of the Tarot? Why would we get together every week and talk about a picture for two hours? It's a little weird. He explained that in addition to the social, therapeutic aspects of doing this, which is conversational—learning how to have conversations—there's a deeper piece to it, and he mentioned the book *Cosmos and Psyche* by Richard Tarnas. He liked the way Tarnas, who is not an Anthroposophist, laid out the Anthroposophical perspective of history without any jargon in a really thorough and impressive way:

Tarnas says that the human experience of the world used to be a *participatory* experience. There was not a clear divide between the inner life and outer life; the world was ensouled, it was spiritual; there was a flow between the two. But humankind increasingly became ego conscious, which came to its most solid form with Descartes, who said the only thing that's *real* is what's outside of us and is quantifiable, and what is inside of us is purely subjective. Anything that involves quality is a kind of fancy of the human spirit. So the bridge between the inner and outer was severed.

Joel felt that this is the core of our modern dilemma: there is no bridge between the outer and the inner.

The world has been reduced to the Enlightenment over here, which just wants to study the outer world, and the Romantics over there, who are absorbed with the inner world, and there's no connection between the two. He asked us *what reunites these two realms?* What can form the bridge between the cosmos outside of us, and the psyche—the unconscious, or the soul—within us? When we talk about the multi-vocal or multivalent aspect of archetypes, we've come right down to it, because an archetype is not just a blueprint. I would go so far as to say it's the *origin* of our inner life and the outer world.

These archetypes in particular, the Arcana, *are* the etheric body of Christ. That's what we're looking at when we have a conversation with these seventy-eight images. So if we can come to a conversational relationship with the arcane realm, the realm of archetypes, then the bridge starts to be formed, and suddenly we start to have these inspirations from our angel when it comes to how we interact with the world and other people. It doesn't matter how much intellectual processing we do to try to solve the world's problems. If we don't engage archetypally, we will solve *nothing*; we will only dig the hole deeper. So that is the reason why we would bother to sit down and have a conversation about a picture, because *this* is how we can come to find the etheric Christ in our time.

Joel then gave us the method he and Phillip developed in working with the Arcana. They begin each conversation with a practice found on page 422 of *MOTT*, Letter XV, the Devil, which involves facing each of the four directions and using a mantra from Psalms: *Let God*

arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him! As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before fire, let the wicked perish before God! When Joel observed the astonished look on some people's faces upon hearing this mantra, he acknowledged that while it may sound like a militant way to begin their meetings, Tomberg describes it as a protective force against mischievous (or worse) spiritual forces.

He said that when they were working with the Major Arcana, they read out the quotations at the beginning of the Letter Meditation, and then did some kind of eurythmy practice: the Knight's Practice for the Major Arcana, and Inner Radiance for the Minor Arcana. Next they lit a candle and invoked the guiding spiritual presence of that day, which can be found in Letter XVI, the Tower of Destruction, on page 458. After their conversation, they closed with more eurythmy. Regarding the format, he said that Robert has given us several lifetimes of practical ritual work that can be woven into these conversations to make them more formal, or they can be quite informal like the conversation we'd had that morning on the four Court Cards.

Joel told us he hoped we'd have the confidence to *play* with these ideas (assuming we'd planned to bring this material back to our communities), and turn them into something that works for our group. He generously offered to send us zip files of notes they'd taken of every conversation they'd had thus far, saying he was all for open-source and engaging us in the process.

Working through the Major and Minor Arcana is a lifelong, ongoing process. My personal dream or fantasy would be for other people to be engaged with this work, and at some point in the future, have some kind of Journal of Hermeticism that publishes letter-meditations for the Minor Arcana, anonymously contributed by many different people who have learned how to have a conversation with the Tarot. So I encourage everybody to take up this practice if you enjoyed it. Part of our plan is to write a layman's *Meditations on the Tarot* with completely different letters. Hypothetically, we will end up writing one hundred letter-meditations: twenty-two on the Major Arcana leading into fifty-six on the Minor Arcana, and then the twenty-two Major Arcana once again.

Joel then took questions. When asked if he and Phillip think about the Arcanum during the week between meetings, Joel said:

We exclusively think about the Arcanum *during* the conversation. In my experience, especially as an intellectual, if I have things I want to say before I come into the meeting, I take all the life out of the conversation; I've immediately placed walls around the conversation. So I do my best to wipe my mind of the conversation and come in completely fresh. Most of the time, we're exhausted, we can't get together until after my kids are in bed, and we feel like we don't even know what we're going to talk about, that what we're doing is ridiculous... and then the Arcanum takes over. Actually, the emptier you are, the more ready you are to receive what the Arcanum wants to say; so no, we *don't* focus on it throughout the week.

Someone observed that once you begin to work with symbols and arcana, they tend to stay with you and come into your dreams, and synchronicities start to happen in your life. Joel responded:

Well, maybe I should lay that out as a warning. Rick Tarnas says the language of archetypes *is* the language of synchronicity, and when you begin to become aware of synchronicity, it kind of cracks the egg a little bit. We both have had intensely traumatic times over the course of the past three years, in more than one way, by life events coming to meet the Arcanum we've opened up. So that would be the warning before entering into this: Be forewarned that you're going to open up intense layers of experience by doing this; it's not a bed of roses. If you say the Christ path is the path of suffering, well, you signed up for it. So it's not something you wish to avoid, but it's something you need to be prepared for.

Finally, someone said they were having trouble getting started reading *Meditations on the Tarot*, and knew they couldn't just sit down and read an entire chapter in one morning.

No, no. With Anthroposophy, you have the content of Rudolf Steiner and you have the exercises given by Rudolf Steiner, and I think Rudolf Steiner really wanted people to *take up* the exercises and do their *own* spiritual research and not get stuck in all the content. And the same thing can happen with this book, where you just want to read that content over and over again, and it certainly can have a transformative effect on you, but there's a process that Tomberg points at throughout this book, and that's to *engage directly with the arcana themselves*. So I would strongly encourage you to find a friend and engage in some lighthearted Tarot conversation, and that will help you read *Meditations on the Tarot*.

The person who asked this question was one of the younger participants attending the retreat, and as I listened to Joel respond to her feelings of overwhelm as to how to approach a book as intellectually daunting as *Meditations on the Tarot*, I could see that he was building the bridge he'd spoken of earlier, a bridge that unites the outer, objective, material world of the cosmos with the inner, subjective, soulful world of the psyche, a bridge that is essential to heal the schism that exists in our modern world and these "terrible times we find ourselves in" (Chief Arvol Looking Horse), with which the younger generation especially must now deal. Joel's response to her was radical, liberating, creative, and playful: Don't get caught up in the content of the book, but instead have a conversation with a friend (*When two or more are gathered in my name...*) and engage directly with the Arcana themselves (a Hermetic conversation, where inspirations from our angels can come in), which will help you read *Meditations on the Tarot* (whose twenty-two Major Arcana *are* the Tree of Life, the etheric body of Christ). I felt hopeful that through this light-hearted, non-academic, soulful approach—the transformation of work into play—more young people might be drawn into the work that has such potential to bring healing and peace to the world.

Chief Arvol Looking Horse speaks of such bridges as the Sacred Hoop of Life to which we are *all* connected:

To us, as caretakers of the heart of Mother Earth, falls the responsibility of turning back the powers of destruction. We are the ones who must decide. Each of us alone can make this crucial choice, to walk in honor or to dishonor our relatives.... Know that you yourself are essential to this world. Understand both the blessing and the burden of that. You yourself are desperately needed to save the soul of this world. Did you think you were put here for something less? In a Sacred Hoop of Life, there is no beginning and no ending.

I realized that through this Sacred Hoop of Life, another bridge was beginning to form, a bridge that could potentially unite different generations to work together toward achieving the monumental task Chief Arvol spoke of. This newly forming bridge is between the vast body of work Robert Powell and Karen Rivers have created and continue to create through the Sophia Foundation (which of course is very connected to the vast body of work left by Rudolf Steiner and Valentin Tomberg), and the work that is now being created by the next generation of Hermeticists, of which Joel Park and Phillip Malone—or the Knave and the Knight as they playfully refer to themselves—are fine representatives.

I felt some sadness as we did our final Foundation Stone Meditation together, but also renewed hope for what the future might bring. The past two Sophia Foundation Meditation Retreats had been inspiring and even life-changing for me, and this one was no different, but I knew the challenge was to put the teachings I'd received into my day-to-day life. Chief Arvol's words "You yourself are desperately needed to save the soul of the world" put the weight of responsibility onto each of us as individuals, so any changes we wanted to make in the world also meant examining and working with our own vices. As I walked back to my casita as the high summer sun set, its reddish-golden hues made me recall Steiner's Fourth Imagination under the influence of Uriel with its potential for transforming the silver quality of human vice into the gold of human virtue. Uriel's admonishing gesture as he looks into the disturbing realm of human error could be likened to Chief Arvol's dire words that it is up to each of us to turn back the powers of destruction that have befallen Mother Earth. And just like the dove uniting the realms of the Father and Mother, we too can serve as bridges to help heal the schism that exists between the inner and the outer, the psyche and the cosmos, as we transform both ourselves and the world. I renewed my vow to serve the Good. May the Good prevail!



Chief Arvol Looking Horse

Dante Alighieri and Valentin Tomberg

Philip Mees



Recently I read a book by the Dutch anthroposophical author W. F. Veltman about Dante. It led me to read some more about Dante's life which, in turn, raised a surprising question in my mind about whether there might be any connection between him and Valentin Tomberg (1900-1973). It came to me because I thought I saw a similar pattern in their biographies.



Dante (1265-1321) was one of those unique individuals who leave an indestructible cultural legacy in human culture. His *Divina Commedia* is full of inexhaustible treasures. It was composed in his later years, which were spent in great sorrow and loneliness in exile from his home town, Florence. In Florence he had been a prominent person, active in local politics, for a very short time in a position like that of mayor of this city-state. He had participated in little inter-city wars and inter-party fights. He was generally recognized as an important person. Around 1300 he ended up on the wrong side of a party split, and was exiled for life—at that time the most severe sentence short of burning at the stake. He lived in exile for the remaining years of his life.

Veltman describes Dante as a soul related to the Templars, with similar social and political ideas based on Christian brotherhood, without prejudices. (Interestingly, the Templars were destroyed in the years 1307-1314, during the time of Dante's exile.) Among other things, Dante advocated for elected rather than hereditary kings and other leaders, and also for strict separation between the leaderships of Church and State. He was clearly far ahead of his time in this.

When we look at Tomberg, we also see a person of importance, although of a completely different kind. He contributed much to Anthroposophy in Estonia, Holland, the United Kingdom, and beyond. He was well known because of his profound writings and lectures dedicated especially to Christology. But when he began to write out of his own spiritual research he ran afoul of some anthroposophists in Dornach who had decided to focus solely on one—and only one—master, and could not accept the idea of anyone else doing spiritual research. He was in fact exiled. And in exile he wrote his masterwork that is like a beacon of esoteric Christianity for the future.

One of the things Rudolf Steiner said about reincarnation is that an individual's lives may sometimes be recognized because a similar pattern may show up in successive lives. I wonder whether in the lives of Dante and Tomberg we witness a similar pattern of rising to prominence, subsequent decline, and then outright rejection, while in both cases the person was ahead of his time, each in his own way. Both wrote their most important works in exile. Might it indicate a case of reincarnation? Or, at least, one wonders if there could be some kind of deeper level of connection between these two individuals.

Might it indicate a case of reincarnation? Or, at least, one wonders if there could be some kind of deeper level of connection between these two individuals.

A Remembrance of Summer in Assisi, Italy, 2019

Another of Robert Powell's Cosmic Events in Time

Donna Martin

Once again Assisi beckoned us to her heart and to the haloed atmosphere of this beautiful city of St. Francis, set upon a hill overlooking the verdant valley and olive groves below. The city was chosen by Robert Powell for two Choreocosmos/Sophia summer seminars this year. Participants came, committed to learning more of the Hebrew alphabet and the Tree of Life— the 10 Sephiroth and 22 Paths of Wisdom— also for Eurythmy to the Foundation Stone Meditation of Rudolf Steiner with the theme being “Initiation into the Mysteries of the Starry Heavens and the Earth Mother.” We gathered in concert with one another, deepening our experiences and understandings amid choreocosmos dances, the music of the masters played on the violin and grand piano, wisdom-filled lectures/conversations, and last but not least, in evening celebrations shared with one another as a community in communion.

One particular evening celebration on Tuesday evening, August 13th which was memorable to me for its deep learning and the beauty and “immanence of the circle” (this beautiful phrase was coined by Robert's wife Lacquanna) was the “Celebration Ritual of Rudolf Steiner's Book with Seven Seals” with spoken liturgy and the music of Vivaldi on the violin. Gathered together with a central altar of fresh flowers and candles in the evening twilight and against the background of softly chiming bells sounding over the valley from the Cathedral of Santa Chiara (St. Claire), one found oneself inwardly placed within a deep ruby-rich and glowing heart radiance as part of our beautiful, etherically responsive circle of friends and participants. Then appearing before me, with me, around me, around and underneath our circle, was the great figure of Christ, holding up the whole of Mother Earth in His arms. He spoke: “I AM the Lamb of God who was slain, and opened the Book with Seven Seals.” Upon listening and beholding this, the whole of Mother Earth seemed to instantly metamorphose into a large OPEN BOOK. Within the Open Book were all of Christ's WORDS. As I continued to behold this unfolding mystery, the words became singular— “THE WORD.” Then next and very gradually, I began to see the integration of the “bread of eternal life” spread also throughout THE WORD, which was also THE BOOK, and I remembered “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

As the Ceremony with text and music rhythmically unfolded each Seal, one's heart continued to pulse with the heartbeat of the Universe in the earth. Then appearing as perhaps a “gift of the future,” in the middle and on top of the Open Book, a smaller exquisite little book was placed— unopened— and upon it was also placed a small lace posy with a sweet white rose adorning the cover. Towards the finale, as the Text of the Grail was read and the Teacher stood alone to speak aloud into the silence, a soft, glowing radiance began to rise around us from Mother Earth, from The Book, from around our circle, a luminous golden yellow radiance, rising up before us and becoming the angelic figure of Christ Himself. He was garmented in golden, silken-like transparent veils. One could see through the veils to eurythmy-like gestures with His arms. It was for us as if incredibly we were all rising up within Him and within the train of His golden garments. Beholding this in wonder and mercy, Christ— our Master teacher, Brother, Friend—

was showing us how He could lift us up. Once again in remembrance: “If I be lifted up, I will lift all men unto me.” We were all in various stages of being lifted up into this golden gifted SUN Radiance and Resonance which continued to rise higher and higher up into the Cosmos and up into the Unity of One. We were not there yet, but Christ was with us, and the WAY shone upwards in glory. This beautiful meditation gradually came to its closing.

One sat in contemplation, realizing in the “earth of us,” Christ had lifted us up in His arms. He had loved us in our depths. He brought us home to our Mother and raised us up to our Father within His sacred golden Sun garments and radiance. How unbelievably blessed and graced are we. In deep reverence and gratitude for this shared eternal journey through Time, this is respectfully submitted.

The Living Stones of St-Guilhem-le-Désert

Founding the Sophia Grail Training in Europe with Robert Powell
September 21 - 28, 2019

Ingrid Mary Fraser

The stone buildings of the village of St.-Guilhem-le-Désert in the south of France tumble and emerge out of the surrounding rocky landscape in which it nestles. Twelve hundred years of pilgrims’ prayers and devotional hymns have resounded, creating an etheric dome where inner quiet and the heartbeat of the earth feel near. In its midst emanates healing mercy from a small wooden piece of the cross blessed by the body, blood, and breath of the Crucified One.

Here could the Tree of Life be seeded
Dazzling the darkness
And turning rays of death
Into rainbows.

Here could our white magician utter his incantations, mantras of love, awakening the heart of the Mother—a refined dodecahedron, crystallising out of the depths and widths of Shamballa. Here could our sacred movements resound. Here could the sacred union of man and woman be blessed; the substances of bread and wine, milk and honey be shared.... Here could the joys of friendship find their ground.

Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God’s sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

— from the First Epistle of Peter (2:4f)

For thine is the Kingdom, Malkuth; and the Power, Yesod; and the Glory, Tiphereth;
and the Gnosis, Da’ath; in Eternity, Kether, Aumen.

*Ingrid Mary Fraser, lives on a peninsula in the Oslo fjord
and seeks to support the ideals of the Sophia Foundation.*

Nordic Conference of 2019
Towards Our Common Sophianic Future

Phillip Malone

This summer I had the great fortune to attend the 2019 Annual Nordic Conference in Lappeenranta, Finland. Held on the shores of Lake Saimaa very near the border of Eastern Europe, this was the second annual gathering of this conference, and was held entirely in the English language. The theme of the seminar was “Our common Sophianic Future,” and in many ways this seminar brought all of us who were present into a beautiful shared experience of Sophianic community.

In a spacious and gracious manner, the organizers divided our time into three parts: whole group activities, small group activities, and deliberately structured free social activities. Woven throughout were also artistic activities including an artistic presentation from the Kalevala, presented in eurythmy and speech, beautiful meditative gong playing, community singing of the songs of Peter Deunov as well as his pan-eurythmy. We also had one evening with a community open stage where individuals and small groups presented artistic offerings of their own, spontaneously.

The keynote presenter, Harrie Salman, brought us deeply into the theme of our Sophianic future by giving us a broad view of the Sophianic impulse from past to future. He spoke about the historical disappearance of the Mother goddess in ancient Israel (as understood through Temple Theology), as well as highlighting the persistence of Sophianic culture in Eastern Europe and its destiny to reunite with Grail Christianity near to the region where the seminar was held (as indicated by Rudolf Steiner). This truly gave strong confirmation to the feeling that we were all drawn together out of a love not only of our Divine Father, but also of our Divine Mother, and that our work today is a bridge that links the presence of the Mother in our ancient past to the re-integration of the Mother into humanity's spiritual life in the future. Harrie also led us in the joyous and devotional practice of pan-eurythmy.

Several others presented highlights and insights to the group from their own work. Are Thoresen from Norway presented his work in the veterinary field, focused on healing through opening a middle space for the Christ impulse. Sabrina Wendtner presented on her experiences with Original Play as a therapeutic and artistic healing art. Liz Daniels performed on the gong, and Nette Eriksson-Wetmore and Markku Maula dramatically spoke an excerpt from the Kalevala which Tuula Karkia accompanied with Eurythmy.

Three options for small group activities were available: Prayer Eurythmy, Astrosophy, and Biography work. I participated in the Astrosophy group, led by Natalia Haarahiltunen, which presented foundational concepts of Astrosophy and sparked lively discussions. I also attended the Eurythmy group on a different day and was able to enjoy moving the prayer sequence led by Maria Lindén. Many participants from the biography group also shared that it was a very meaningful and transformative experience for them. The social activities included meals at a nearby restaurant, a walking tour of the city, and a dinner cruise aboard a boat on Lake Saimaa.

During this time, the beautiful spirit of our community touched me in the way we all gathered to better understand the being of Sophia, our Divine Mother; in the way each individual offered of themselves, whether through art or knowledge or just their experience; and also in the way each person graciously received from the whole. The Spirit of Sophia as the Rose of the World was also evident in the way a variety of spiritual streams were able to weave together. The conference hosted people from 12 countries, many representing differing spiritual streams. Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, Peter Deunov, and other less familiar teachers, some still living, were represented, each expressing a great love of the spirit and of Sophia. Next year's conference will be held in Norway, in June of 2020.

Phillip is a father of two children and practices massage therapy in New Hampshire. He is deeply inspired by Hermeticism and building bridges between various spiritual streams, and enjoys working with the Marseille Tarot as a tool to that end.

Nordic Sophia Conference in Oslo, Norway, 2020

Friends of Sophia in Scandinavia are inviting International friends to Oslo between June 19th and June 26th, 2020 for a conference with the working title "Christ is here for Nature." Contributions by Harrie Salman and others. You may get further information from Ingrid Fraser, ingridfraser1@gmail.com.

Language of the Soul

Performing in the Beautiful Sophianic Future Event

Lappeenranta, Finland

July 22-27, 2019

Aura Aalto

It is enriching to hear someone speaking from their own experience, and it balances the rational forces of the intellect, which are also important, but often used because of the fear to open up. I think we can reach higher perspectives by touching something universal and objective through the experiences of our own soul. To some extent these experiences are only meaningful for ourselves and individual growth, but they can also lighten up true encounterings with something that is greater than us, and bring that something greater closer and more understandable, not only to ourselves but to someone else as well. In the social sphere we are challenged to recognize the universal in the individual, because the divine shows itself to every soul differently, but in the end it is still the same divine for all of us.

I took the opportunity to express my soul through artistic performance in this Sophianic Future Event, in which there was a very open atmosphere for this kind of activity. It was my first encountering with the Sophia community, but I got the impression that this theme of opening up about our own spiritual experiences was somehow present, and that the soft feminine side of God represents this ability in a warm and loving way. In one of the evenings

there was an open stage, where we had the joy to listen to many souls singing, reciting poems, acting and playing an instrument. I chose to recite a poem from my first poem book called Sunbird (Aurinkolintu). I published it last spring in the Finnish language. My poems tell about the processes that happen in the soul when one is suffering and longing, but finding beauty in it by observing how the environment reflects these processes. With my art I hope to encourage people to go to the deep and vulnerable areas of their life.

The name of the poem is "You cry me," and it gets its inspiration from my experience from meeting with Christ. I often find that I meet Christ when I am looking into the depths of suffering or loneliness. The poem is not about my falling to the depths, but it is about how I experience Christ meeting me there—Christ is suffering with me, like with all people who suffer. And when I meet him, it is like finding out the biggest secret in the world, but that secret is so big that I can only experience it, it dies in my hands. And this dying is the very point of my existence. I stand between the spiritual world and the daily life, being a creation connected to the universe, and at the same time somehow dying because of the suffering and loneliness that the creation process causes.

This is my own interpretation of the poem, and you can make your own; maybe it tells you something different! I would be interested to hear. So far only this one poem is translated, but the book in Finnish can be ordered by sending a message to aurinkolintu@protonmail.com.

Here is the poem:

You cry me

In the end I stay
you preserve me,
you cry me.

When I drop from your cheek
your world flows towards me.
In the mirror of your eyes
the reflection of my quest brightens.

A flashing thought
the truest concept
dies in my hands.

I find myself
in a suffocating fulfillment
in a lonely closeness.

You hold my fear in your heart
and you know.

And here it is in Finnish:

Itket minut

Lopulta jään
sinä säilytät minut,
itket minut.

Kun putoan poskeltasi
maailmasi virtailee luokseni.
Silmiesi peilissä
etsintäni heijastus kirkastuu.

Välähtävä ajatus
todellisin käsite
kuolee kädessäni.

Löydän itseni
tukahduttavasta täyteydestä
yksinäisestä läheisyydestä.

Sinä pidät pelkoani povellasi
ja tiedät.

Aura Aalto is an artist/musician living in Helsinki, Finland

Summer Camp Rila Mountains, Bulgaria

Elizabeth Daniels



In August of this year I had the wonderful uplifting experience of attending five days at the summer camp of the White Brotherhood in the Rila Mountains, Bulgaria. The White Brotherhood was founded by Peter Deunov, otherwise known as the Master, Beinsa Douno. When my husband first suggested we spend some days there I was a little hesitant as I was not really sure what I was letting myself in for. The camp itself is very high up in the mountains, and there is much walking involved. We had to sleep in a tent, and all in all at age 67, it seemed quite a difficult trip. Not only this, but I personally have a problem with “sects” and “cults,” and on the surface the White Brotherhood appeared to fit into this category. However, I decided to go, was pushed to go. Something pulled me. I have been a “searcher” of the holy most of my life, having been to ashrams in India (Pondicherry, Rishikesh Poona), retreats in the Himalayas, Vipassana in Thailand and England, plus involvement with various esoteric schools. One can find people dressed in white the world over—meditating, praying, dancing, chanting—so why not see what the Rila Mountains had to offer?

I am a great believer in synchronicity, and how this trip unfolded definitely seemed to come from the hand of god. It was my interest in the Divine feminine that led me to a Robert Powell course on the Holy Grail, and it was here that I heard for the first time of the work of Peter Deunov. Consequently, I was introduced to pan-eurythmy, a type of sacred dance which originated from the teachings of the Master, and found it personally uplifting. This initial introduction was then followed by a recommendation from our dear friend Harrie Salman with whom we had been attending courses on the Sophianic Impulse of our time. Harrie had spent some previous time in the Rila Mountains in his personal search for Sophia, and spoke about the Master with great respect and love. Peter Deunov was a spiritual teacher living in Bulgaria, and had many similarities with Rudolf Steiner. Most of his teachings took place on walks in the mountains, as he was very much into nature, calling it the feminine face of God. Every year in the Rila Mountains a summer camp happens, and this is where I went. Once there I was on my guard about the cult possibility and observed what was going on with an air of skepticism. But after the first day, I began to loosen up, to soften and allow myself to feel the dedication and love of the people who attended the camp.

What radiated out from these people was phenomenal. It was impossible to ignore. To start with nothing was easy. Fetching water from a spring took about three quarters of an hour, going to the toilet (a hole in the ground) also took time; there was no luxury, no mod-cons. We all slept in tents dotted around steep mountain slopes. At night it was often zero degrees. To get to the high slopes where we danced pan-eurythmy took over an hour of hard climbing. Every day the rocky pathway was filled with people of all ages who came to join in with the dancing. A whole orchestra accompanied us on the climb, so we danced daily to beautiful live music. Once we got to the dancing place, most of the participants, including myself, changed in to white clothes, and it really became something special.

Every morning the 800-plus attendees got up at 5.30 a.m. and greeted the sun with reverence and joy. This would be followed by prayers, lectures and singing. There were people of every kind. Office workers, sports folk, dreadlocked lads, hippie types, silicone-lipped women in tight jeans, grannies, grandads, teenage kids, small children, babies, all completely different, yet all feeling welcomed to be part of the summer camp, 2,500 meters up in the mountains. They all came to dance and give thanks. They all came as they believed in the powerful lessons of Peter Deunov and wanted to be part of this huge gathering of heartfelt folk.

Two simple daily meals were given for free, and although one could give a donation, nothing was asked. It was a truly special experience. The energy was very sacred and the smiles abundant. The place itself was magnificent. What skies, what mists, what changeable weather. It was hot, it was cold, clothes on, clothes off; one was in the midst of nature's natural forces, and these forces could be felt on every level. We were surrounded by seven beautiful lakes of pristine water. Sunrises and sunsets were incredible, the air was pure, the energy of the place invigorating and life-giving. I was amazed at how the bounce in my legs just did not give up!

One very special event that happened for me is that I was asked by the friends who had assisted our being there if I would like to participate in a "watch." The watch took place on one of the high points of the camp, and was for three days and nights – 72 hours with no interruptions. Small groups of six to eight people took turns in doing an hour watch. During this time the focus was on world peace, deepening of consciousness, the abundance of love, and the sacredness of life. Prayers, singing, or heartfelt words were spoken in turn as the watchers stood in a circle overlooking a vast and beautiful land. The watch I was part of took place at 8:00 p.m. The sun was setting, and it was getting dark and cold. As the watch changed, a ritual of great importance took place. Those arriving to take over stood at the lower part of the point of watch, and those leaving came down to pass them. We stood there in a line, our right hand raised with palms held upwards, like how you see Native American Indians greet one another. Each person leaving the watch passed by the line of the waiting new watch. With their hand in the same gesture, they looked each person in the eye and said, "There is no love like the love of God." The response from the new watch was "Only the love of God is love." This continued until all the leaving watch had passed. Then the new watch took their place. When our watch had finished, we went through the same procedure. I can still see the love on the faces of the people I encountered; their smiles are embedded in my heart.

I think this is one of the most memorable experiences in my life. Even as I write about it now, tears well in my eyes and my heart expands. I feel the deep sacredness of what took place and how I was filled with an overwhelming sense of unconditional love. It so happened that the timing of this trip to Bulgaria (Divine Intervention) coincided with some heavy personal relationship problems between my husband and myself. It turned out to be the perfect place to be together and work through the emotional turmoil of betrayal. We could not have been in a more sustaining and love-filled place. We both left that mountain cleansed and rejuvenated with an understanding of the bigger picture that life presents. I am truly grateful to have had this extraordinary experience.

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Journeying to Hyperborea

An Exploration of the Spiritual History and Future of Northern Europe

Harrie Salman

Four talks given in the Grail seminar in Hästholmen, Sweden, August 1- 4, 2018.

The fourth talk will be published in John O'Meara's forthcoming publication, Easter 2020.

Part 1 - The Celtic Lands

Where is Hyperborea?

The earliest historical sources about the land we are journeying to date back to the 5th century BC. Among them is the book *Histories* by Greek historian Herodotus, which mentions a tradition from the Greek island of Delos. In the past, two times a delegation from Hyperborea had come with offerings to this island, but later these offerings reached Delos through intermediaries.

Herodotus thought that the Hyperboreans were living somewhere in Northern Russia. Hyperborea is the land beyond the northern wind (*Boreas* in Greek). Greek, Roman and later writers have proposed other locations, such as the Baltic countries, the Celtic lands, the British Isles and Scandinavia.

The island of Delos had a famous sanctuary of the Greek sun god Apollo, who was even thought to have been born there. According to a Greek myth, Apollo travelled every winter in a chariot of swans to Hyperborea, which was ruled by his priests. It was a land of eternal light where the sun did not set, and where happy people were living who, according to the Greek poet Pindar, did not know disease and bitter old age, war, and the toils of labour. This description of Hyperborea as the land of the sun god Apollo might refer to the network of solar initiation centers of Northern Europe.



Map made by Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1592, showing Hyperborea around the North Pole

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), the founder of Anthroposophy, described how in a distant past the initiate Skythianos inspired a culture of music and song that spread over Europe, most probably from the north, so that we may connect it with Hyperborea. This is the common source of the Celtic bards, the Germanic scalds, and the Greek and Thracian singers that we associate with Apollo and Orpheus.¹ The Finnish *laulajat* and the Russian *skaziteli* can be added to them. The harmonious music of this song culture created peace in the soul and it built the organs of thought.

¹ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 14.11.1909 (listener notes), in CW (= Complete Works), nr. 117. English translations of Steiner's lectures can be found at <https://www.rsarchive.org/>

The German researcher Andreas Delor has attempted to reconstruct the early history of humanity in his books about Atlantis. For this project he relied on the help of nature spirits, with whom he could communicate through Verena Staël von Holstein, and of a number of German clairvoyants.² In this research, Hyperborea or Thule appears as the name for the islands between Newfoundland (Canada) and Scandinavia, among them Greenland, Iceland, and Ireland, as well as islands that sunk into the sea at the end of Atlantis. This was the northern part of Atlantis, that was not covered by ice. When the ice had melted, new lands appeared—Scandinavia, Finland and Northern Russia. Already during the Ice Age there may have been initiation centers here: on Spitsbergen (Svalbard), in Lapland, around the White Sea (possibly on the islands of Solovki in Russia), and on Novaya Zemlya (Nova Zembla).³ We may therefore include these new lands in the mystery land of Hyperborea.

From Rudolf Steiner we know about the Hyperborean Age. This age was before the ages of Atlantis and Lemuria. This was a time when human beings were not yet incarnated in physical bodies, but lived in the etheric space. The sun was still connected with the earth. Around the Arctic Circle the memory of this solar age is still present in nature, with its long summers when the sun does not set.

Our journey to Hyperborea will bring us from Ireland (that belonged to the northern parts of Atlantis), through Scandinavia and Finland, to the North of Russia, where the coming 6th culture is being prepared. On our way, we will visit some of the initiation centers of these lands. Rudolf Steiner will be our guide. We take our point of departure in the Celtic world.

Initiations

Initiations were special procedures in temples or mystery centers to bring well-prepared students into contact and communication with the spiritual world. In this way, the disappearing clairvoyance could be replaced by a new kind of connection. Before the coming of Christ, the initiation could not be experienced consciously. It took place without consciousness, in a sleep-like condition that lasted for three and a half days. During the initiation, the student was surrounded by 12 helpers. All the cultures of antiquity had such initiation temples where students were trained by priests and had to pass trials. In Egypt and the Middle East, the initiation led to knowledge of the inner world of man and the earth; in the North of Europe to knowledge of the outer world (nature and the cosmos).

Christ reconnected human beings with their higher being (the higher “I” or Self), thereby creating the possibility to establish the contact with the spiritual world in full consciousness. Anthroposophy teaches this new path: it is a school of purifying our astral body (as in the earlier initiations), of facing and transforming our double, of meditation, and of developing certain inner qualities to open the organs of supersensible perception (*chakras*). This leads to

² Andreas Delor, *Atlantis*, volumes 1-8, Verlag Ch. Möllmann, Borchten, 2012-2016.

³ *Ibid*, vol. 5, 2016, pages 224-229.

the birth of the higher being in the consciousness soul, to the development of higher forms of consciousness (imagination, inspiration and intuition), and to new conscious clairvoyance.

Humanity as a whole is on its way to develop this new clairvoyance, which is a gift of Christ, so that we may be able to see him in his new etheric form. The Bulgarian teacher Peter Deunov (1864-1944), a spiritual brother of Rudolf Steiner and founder of the esoteric-Christian School of the White Brotherhood, pointed out that the power of Love will make us clairvoyant.

The Hybernian Mysteries

Rudolf Steiner spoke of the solar oracle of Manu, not far from Ireland. Here, in the last phase of Atlantis, Manu prepared selected people for the development of thinking in the post-Atlantean age. From this oracle a network of initiation schools was created in Europe. The initiation center that remained closest to the traditions of Atlantis was in Ireland. Steiner spoke about the Great Hybernian mysteries, *Hibernia* being the Latin name for Ireland. The initiation center of the Odilienberg near Strassbourg and an initiation center in Burgenland in Austria were among its dependencies.

The only information about the Hybernian mysteries comes from Rudolf Steiner.⁴ After a difficult preparation and purification of the soul, the students of this initiation school were placed individually in front of two statues in the shape of high pillars, made of different materials. One statue had a male quality, the other one was a female statue. The two statues produced contrary feelings in the soul, one related to the experience of cosmic effects of the sun, the other of moon effects. After receiving teachings on the outer and the inner world, the student experienced the Guardian of the Threshold, who showed him his imperfections. Then he was again brought to the statues, where two priests spoke. Now the candidate for initiation experienced the first statue as representing human knowledge, the second one as art. After that, he was shown an image of Christ, and he was told to take Christ's Word and Power into his heart and to receive from him science and art.

The initiates of these mysteries taught that the Spirit of the Sun (Christ) was coming to the earth. When Christ had actually come and was crucified, Irish initiates witnessed these events simultaneously in a clairvoyant way. It is possible that the Hybernian mysteries were connected with the sanctuary of Newgrange, north of Dublin.

The Celtic World

In Rudolf Steiner's version of old European history after the decline of Atlantis, those people who were developing the new faculties of thought travelled to the center of Asia. Others who came from decadent Atlantean cultures and still had clairvoyant faculties, stayed behind in Europe. They were the hunters of Old Europe. In later millennia, most of them learned agriculture from farmers who came from Turkey. Herdsmen coming from the Ukraine and speaking early forms of the modern European languages created a more advanced social organisation in which they ruled as warriors. Among them were warriors who spoke an early

⁴Rudolf Steiner, lectures of 7, 8 and 9 December 1923, in CW, nr. 232, and the lecture of 27.12.1923, in CW, nr. 233.

Celtic language. In the first and second millennia BC, they conquered Central and Western Europe, including Ireland. They created the Celtic world, in which in the course of time everybody spoke Celtic, including the hunters, fishermen, and farmers who were living there. They all became the Celts as we know them from history.

The Druid Mysteries

The Druid initiation schools were a new development in the spiritual life of Northwestern Europe. Rudolf Steiner usually mentions them together with the initiation schools of the so-called Drotten of the early Germanic tribes and of people living in Northwestern Russia.⁵ These two initiation schools may have been founded some 4,000 years ago.⁶

The druids (male and female) were the spiritual leaders of the Celtic world. They were solar initiates who received the wisdom they needed to lead their communities from their observations in the shadows of the dolmens and stone circles. There they studied the spiritual rays of the sun that penetrated through the stones, as well the rays that were reflected by the earth. Steiner described their natural science, especially of healing and of agriculture, as a lunar science.⁷



Joseph of Arimathea
Glastonbury
made in 1936

The Druid initiation was the quest of the soul for the inner union with the spirit. In a Celtic myth, the seeking soul was called Ceridwen, while the spirit hidden behind the sense-world was called Hu. This union with Hu the Mighty that was possible in the initiation, was however not the complete fulfillment of this quest of the soul. What was still missing would, according to the Druids, be brought to the earth by the Spirit of the Sun (Christ) himself. The initiates were waiting for his coming to the earth, to nature and to the human soul, so that the soul would receive “the knowledge of eternity and immortality,” as Steiner said.⁸

This Druidic quest for the highest spirit was later transformed into the quest for the Holy Grail, after Joseph of Arimathea had brought the Chalice of the Last Supper with the etherised Grail Blood of Christ to England and Ireland, as Judith von Halle described in her book on his mission.⁹ She wrote that Joseph of Arimathea went as far as the western coast of Ireland. He found initiates in Ireland who knew Christ as the Spirit of the Sun and who understood his mission. She did not, however, give details about the places he visited there.

⁵ Rudolf Steiner, ‘The Mysteries of the Druids and Drotten’, lecture of 30.9.1904 (listener notes), in CW, nr. 93.

⁶ Andreas Delor, *Atlantis*, volume 3, 2016, pages 92-94.

⁷ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 10.9.1923, in CW, nr. 228.

⁸ Rudolf Steiner, ‘The European Mysteries and Their Initiates’, lecture of 6.5.1909, in CW, nr. 57.

⁹ Judith von Halle, *Joseph von Arimathea und der Weg des Heiligen Gral*, Verlag für Anthroposophie, Dornach 2011.

Celtic Myths and Initiation Stories



Image of an initiate from the silver Gundestrup Cauldron found in Denmark

The familiarity of the Celts with the spiritual world finds its deepest expression in the Irish and Welsh myths and stories. These tales of magic and adventure speak about men, but in many cases they are about fairies or spiritual beings, and often the tales deal with initiations. One of the archetypal images in the stories was the Cauldron. The Cauldron of Ceridwen contained knowledge and wisdom. Another cauldron brought fertility and regeneration to the land and abundance of food. In one story, a cauldron in which food for one person had been put could feed a hundred men. There was also a cow in mythical Ireland that gave enough milk for all its inhabitants. These are clearly images of Mother Nature.

In the tale *The Story of Taliesin*, ascribed to the Welsh bard Taliesin who lived in the 6th century, we meet the goddess or world-soul Ceridwen. She is boiling the herbs of nature in her cauldron. Her ugly son Avagddu should drink

the first three drops to receive divine inspiration. A young boy called Gwyon Bach has to stir the cauldron during a year and a day, but he gets three hot drops on his hand and sucks them off. With his new knowledge of inspiration, he knows that Ceridwen will punish him, and he runs away in the shape of a hare. Ceridwen pursues him as a hound, but he changes into a fish. Ceridwen becomes an otter, whereupon he turns into a bird. Ceridwen now becomes a hawk. In his last metamorphosis Gwyon Bach changes into a grain that Ceridwen swallows as a hen. She becomes pregnant and gives birth to a beautiful boy called Taliesin. He is cast into the sea, but found by Elphin. Elphin is imprisoned by his uncle Maelgwyn, but the young bard Taliesin releases him with a song.



Ceridwen and Her Cauldron
J.M. Edwards, 1901

The British anthroposophist Eleanor Merry has given a very sensible interpretation of this mysterious tale. The flight of the boy with the four transformations is the prenatal journey through the realms of the four elements. The sea is the maternal womb, Elphin is the earthly personality, Taliesin the immortal spirit, the higher self that manifested itself after his initiation (the three drops of wisdom). Maelgwyn is his lower sensuous nature, and Avagddu his double (shadow).¹⁰ In her book, Eleanor Merry also provided a key to understand the Welsh poem *The Spoils of Annwn*, in which a company led by King Arthur went to the Otherworld to capture the cauldron of Annwn. Taliesin participated in this journey, which can be read as a description of initiatory experiences.

¹⁰ Eleanor C. Merry, *The Flaming Door*, Floris Books, Edinburgh 1989 (original from 1936), pages 125-136, 152.

King Arthur and the Grail Stories

King Arthur is the hero of many stories from Britain. His circle of 12 knights had its roots in the Druid and Drotten mysteries in which 12 persons worked together under the leadership of a 13th person. Arthur was not a proper name, but during many centuries it was the title of such a leader of knights. The 12 knights represented the 12 signs of the zodiac, Arthur the sun, and his queen Guinevere the moon. Their experiences belong to the development of the sentient soul. As servants of the Cosmic Christ, they rode from their initiation center at Tintagel in Cornwall into Europe to civilise it, bringing justice and fighting dragons, which were wild elemental beings in the souls of people.

Some time after Joseph of Arimathea had brought the Chalice of the Last Supper to the British Isles, stories about the quest for the Holy Grail appeared. In the early Middle Ages, this quest became part of the adventures of the knights of the Round Table. Stories from Wales also found their way through Brittany into the French Grail stories. Elements from these Welsh tales brought an atmosphere of magic, especially into the Perceval story of Chrétien de Troyes, that we also find in the *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach. These motifs originate in the pre-Christian Old-Irish *echtraí*, adventure stories in which heroes travel to the Otherworld or meet otherworldly beings.

Among these Irish motifs we find the Fisher King, who appears nameless in Chrétien's story, and as Anfortas with Wolfram. We have the bleeding lance, the Grail castle that is totally empty on the morning after Perceval's first visit, a cauldron providing all kinds of food that became the Grail, the strange adventures of the knights, and Klingsor's Castle of Wonders. Roger Loomis, a specialist on the Arthurian tradition, established these connections between the Irish tales and the Grail stories.¹¹ Some researchers see in the Welsh hero Peredur the model for Perceval.

But these parallels are not the most important. The essential things in the formation of the Grail story are the Christian element of healing (through the blood of Christ) and the Celtic initiation background (the longing of the soul to be united with the spiritual world). In the *Parzival* story of Wolfram the two esoteric impulses connected with the Grail stream and the Arthurian spiritual stream reached their full integration. This is not yet the case in Chrétien's *Perceval*.

The Celtic Archangel Inspiring Esoteric Christianity

Ireland received its Christianity directly from Palestine and Egypt in the 3rd century, and not through Rome. St. Patrick came to Ireland in the 5th century from Rome, but he failed to create a Roman church organisation. During several centuries, the Irish Church was not led by bishops but by abbots who were in fact Christian druids. One of its centers was the abbey on the island of Iona.

¹¹ Roger Sherman Loomis, *The Grail – From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1991, pages 74-81.

For a long time, Christ had been expected in the initiation centers as the Spirit of the Sun. Later he was venerated as the Lord of the Elements (of Nature) (*Rìgh nan Dul*). In many traditional Scottish songs, Christ was called like this. In a story written by Fiona Macleod, St. Bridget addressed Christ in a Gaelic (Scottish) prayer in the following way:¹²

Dia romhan, Moire am dheaghuidh.
 'S am Mac a thug Rìgh nan Dul!
 Mis' air do shlioc, a Dhia,
 Is Dia ma'm luirg.
 Mac' öire, a's Rìgh nan Dul,
 A shoillseachadh gach n i dheth so,
 Le a ghras, mu'm choinneamh.

God in front of me, Mary behind me.
 And the Son, sent by the King of the Elements!
 Windward from you, o God, I am.
 And God in my footsteps.
 May Mary's son, the King of the Elements,
 Reveal for me the meaning of all these things,
 Through his grace.

From Ireland, esoteric Christianity was brought to Scotland and England, and then to the other Celtic lands on the continent. In the course of the Middle Ages, most Celts were integrated into the new European nations. Only on the fringes of the British Isles and of Brittany in France could the Celtic languages survive to this day. The Celts disappeared as a nation, and their folk spirit took on another task. In Rudolf Steiner's vision, the Celtic folk spirit became the inspiring spirit of esoteric Christianity.¹³ He inspired the Grail tradition, the Rosicrucian movement, and other spiritual streams of European culture.



Externsteine

Steiner revealed that the Celtic folk soul created, in its new function, a spiritual center from where the spirituality of Europe could radiate. This etheric Grail castle replaced the earlier etheric center of the Germanic gods and goddesses (the Aesir) above the sanctuary of the Externsteine in

Northern Germany.¹⁴ In the mythological stories of the *Edda*, this center had the name of *Asgard*.

Steiner called the home of the inspiring archangel of esoteric Christianity (the former Celtic folk spirit) the "High Castle of the Grail." In the Grail stories, this is the Grail castle of Monsalvat that appeared for the first time in the etheric world above Titurel's fortress in Galicia. Later this etheric castle moved to San Juan de la Peña (south of the Pyrenees), to Montségur in the South of France, and to Arlesheim. Southwestern Germany should have become a new Grail kingdom in the time of Kaspar Hauser (in the early 19th century), but this was prevented.



Taking the body of Christ from the cross, relief from the Externsteine

¹² Fiona Macleod, *St. Bride of the Isles*, first published in 1899. Many editions.

¹³ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 12.6.1910 (morning), in: *The Mission of the Folk Souls*, in CW, nr. 121.

¹⁴ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 12.6.1910 (evening), see note 13.



Glastonbury (town in Southwest England)
to which Joseph of Arimathea
is supposed to have brought the Grail

The Grail castle is the home of the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail, founded by Joseph of Arimathea. Its members are spiritual beings, men and women who have served the Grail. With the etherised blood of Christ kept in the Grail, Joseph had consecrated special places in France, England and Ireland, so that the people of Europe could undergo in the substance of their blood a fundamental change—a change that liberated them from the group and clan souls and opened them for the birth of their individual “I” that is carried by the blood.¹⁵

Connected with this secret of the Holy Blood is the secret of the copies of the “I” of Jesus that are kept by the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail. Rudolf Steiner said that when individuals have prepared themselves in a spiritual life, they will understand these secrets through spiritual science and become ripe to be granted a vision of the Holy Grail and to receive a copy of the eternal “I” of Jesus.¹⁶ Percival was the carrier of such a copy.

In Steiner’s vision, the Holy Grail sends its inspirations from the etheric world to the new mystery centers all over the world, where the Science of the Grail (Anthroposophy) is practised. With the first Goetheanum, he created a new Grail temple that now only exists in the etheric world. The common work for a new spiritual culture will bring more and more people together in the Grail family of humanity, who will in the course of time all receive a copy of the “I” of Jesus.

Part 2 - The Germanic Lands

The Scandinavians

Like the population of the Celtic lands, the Scandinavians also are composed of different ethnic groups. They were united by warriors speaking an early form of the Germanic languages. The oldest groups were European hunters, who had come to the North when the climate became warmer after the Ice Age. Other hunters came from Siberia and still live in the northern parts of Scandinavia and Finland (the Sami or Lapps). When farmers came to the Baltic Sea from the south, most hunters living there started to combine hunting with farming. Like the Celtic tribes, they lived with the rhythms of the sun and the moon, close to nature. These farmers-hunters of Old Europe were clairvoyant, reported Rudolf Steiner. Between waking and sleeping, many of them could connect with Odin and other gods that they knew from earlier incarnations in Atlantis. There they had experienced in the night the etheric presence of gods like Odin, Thor, Baldur, Zeus and Apollo.¹⁷ Genetically, the

¹⁵ Judith von Halle, see note 9, pages 68-76.

¹⁶ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 11.4.1909, in CW, nr. 109.

¹⁷ Rudolf Steiner, lectures of 4.8.1908 and 13.8.1908, in CW, nr. 105.

descendants of this group of farmers-hunters comprise almost half of the population of southern Scandinavia. They can also be found along the southern and eastern shores of the Baltic Sea, and in northern Russia. In a next wave of migrations, some 4,000 years ago, the speakers of the early Germanic language occupied the southern part of Scandinavia. They integrated the people who were already living there into the Germanic culture.

Rudolf Steiner had a different view on this.¹⁸ For him, the Celts were the original population of large parts of Europe. According to him, the Germanic tribes came to Scandinavia from the East only in the centuries around the birth of Christ. In the light of our present knowledge of cultural and linguistic developments, this view is not tenable anymore. But his vision that the spiritual life in the north of Europe was inspired by the closely related Druid and Drotten mysteries is still very valuable.

The Drotten Mysteries

When the refugees from Atlantis travelled to Europe and Asia, many of them stayed behind in Europe to be educated by the priests of the (Hyperborean) initiation centers in a moral sense, and in the development of courage. Rudolf Steiner called the leaders of these centers the *Brahmins* of Europe. In India, the *Brahmins* lived among the general population, but in Europe they lived separately from the other social groups, in spiritual communities of the hidden initiation centers. From there they led the development of European culture, through the priests of Old Europe, and by giving instructions to the Indo-European warriors who organised the social life in the different parts of Europe.¹⁹

In 1904 Rudolf Steiner said about these initiation centers that the spiritual life of Europe emanated from a “central lodge in Scandinavia,” a Drotten lodge.²⁰ In 1906 he spoke of a “famous initiation school in the north of Russia” whose initiates were called Drotten.²¹ In Steiner’s view, the Celtic-Germanic mysteries of the Druids (in Western and Central Europe) and the mysteries of the Drotten (in Scandinavia and Northern Russia) were founded by the initiate Sig.²² Sig or Sigge was an advanced human being through whom the god Odin (in Germany known as Wotan) could work. According to recent spiritual research, he is supposed to have lived in Scandinavia around 2100 BC or a few centuries earlier.²³ In a later incarnation, he may have lived as Siegfried.

These initiation centers had colleges of 12 initiates who worked together in their spiritual research. Part of their training was to intensify their feelings in experiencing the cycle of nature through the year.²⁴ In 1904 Rudolf Steiner gave a description of the initiation in the Druid and Drotten mysteries. In the first part, the candidate for initiation had to search for the dead body of the god

¹⁸ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 15.3.1924, in CW, nr. 353.

¹⁹ Rudolf Steiner, ‘Christ and the Human Soul’, lecture of 29.5.1912, in CW, nr. 155.

²⁰ Rudolf Steiner, see note 5.

²¹ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 29.7.1906 (listener notes), in CW, nr. 97.

²² Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 1.5.1907, in CW, nr. 104a.

²³ Andreas Delor, *Atlantis*, vol. 3, 2016, pages 88-94.

²⁴ Rudolf Steiner, ‘The Nordic Initiation’, lecture of 26.6.1910, in CW, nr. 119.

Baldur, who represented the heavenly human being before his descent into matter. In the Celtic world this was called the search of the soul for the god Hu. The descent into matter was felt by experiencing one's physical, etheric and astral bodies. Labyrinths, of which many are still present on the coasts of Sweden, Finland and Northern Russia, played a role in the initiation.²⁵

A late echo of the initiatory experiences in the Drotten mysteries can be found in the Norwegian *Draumkwedet* (the Dream Song). It was sung by Olav Åsteson at the entrance of a church about the journey of his soul through the world of the elements. His journey began on Christmas Eve and lasted for 13 nights. These experiences mark the transition from the old worldview of the initiation schools to the new world of (Celtic, later Roman) Christianity in Old Norway.

The farmers of Old Scandinavia venerated gods and goddesses that were connected with nature, the Vanir. One ritual of fertility that was incorporated in the Germanic culture was dedicated to the Vanir goddess Nerthus. In Denmark and other parts of the Germanic world at the beginning of spring, a wagon of the goddess was pulled around the land by cows. It was a sign that also the cycle of human fertility could begin. As a result, all children were born around Christmas. The first boy born in the first of the Holy Nights was educated to become the leader of the community 30 years later.²⁶ These rituals of the sacred conception of children go back more than 4,000 years. They were still known to the Roman historian Tacitus.

The Mission of Odin

Fragments of the wisdom of the Drotten mysteries can be found in the mythological stories that have been written down in Iceland in the 13th century and collected in the *Poetic Edda* and the *Prose Edda*. In these stories we read about the Vanir, the older group of gods, and about Odin and his family of 12 gods and goddesses, called the Aesir, who were living in Asgard.²⁷ Already in Atlantis they all played a role in the development of the human being—his body, his life forces, his soul, and his consciousness. As an archangel, Odin was the folk spirit of the Germanic people before they split into different tribes with their own folk spirits. The other Aesir can be seen as angels and archangels. For the Germanic people, Thor, the god of thunder, was connected with the human "I." They had received it from him and they experienced him in the pulsation of the blood, that is the carrier of the human "I."²⁸

Odin could work through male and female initiates (their names beginning with *Sig-*, like Siegfried and Signe). In this way he could open new faculties, especially in the power of speech and in the poetic arts of the skalds (singers). The *Edda* tells of his initiations (or rather the initiations of the persons through whom he was working) that already began in Atlantis. In a later period, he introduced the runic letters from a Mercury initiation center on the northern coast of the Black Sea. This brought a first intellectual element to Western Europe

²⁵ Rudolf Steiner, see note 16.

²⁶ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 21.12.1916, in CW, nr. 173.

²⁷ Rudolf Meyer, *Nordische Apokalypse*, Urachhaus, Stuttgart 1966.

²⁸ Rudolf Steiner, see note 13.

that was not accepted by the druids. Rudolf Steiner speaks of a new Wodan (Odin) culture that they experienced as an illness.²⁹ This culture probably spread over northern and western Europe between 1500 and 1000 BC.

Odin was also connected with Buddha. Rudolf Steiner indicated that Odin's individuality was the same as the individuality of Buddha that later appeared with the same mission. Buddha became a vessel for Odin, he explained.³⁰ This is difficult to interpret. Maybe Odin was the archangel of Bodhisattva Gautama on his way to enlightenment before he became a Buddha.

According to Rudolf Steiner, in Germanic culture the human "I" was born in an early stage of the development of the soul, when it was still functioning as sentient soul. In order to strengthen their "I," people were exposed to tests of courage. With their clairvoyant faculties, the Germanic people could see how angels and archangels were working into their souls. They could experience the awakening of the "I". Until about the 10th century AD they still had an understanding of these processes, Steiner said.³¹

These Germanic people could see that their lower self was a projection of their higher self in the spiritual world. They wanted to unite with their higher being (as the soul/Ceridwen with the spirit/Hu), as was the goal of the Drotten mystery schools. Because of the awakening of their "I" in this early stage of soul development, they could also hear the voice of their conscience, speaking from their higher self as a divine voice.³² This formation of conscience took place in northern and western Europe before the birth of Christ. It can be seen as a reflection of the coming of Christ from the sun to the earth.

The Three Powers of Evil

The gods of Asgard worked together with spiritual beings that later appeared as evil because they hindered man in his further development. Odin had mixed his blood with one of them, Loki, who can be compared to Lucifer. Lucifer made human freedom possible, with God's (Yahweh's) permission, by seducing man into disobeying the rules given by God and eating from the tree of knowledge. Like Lucifer, Loki made human beings independent and worked in their blood, in their desires and passions.

Out of Loki's connection with the evil being Angrboda, three evil powers were born: the Midgard Serpent who brings egoism to the soul, the Fenrir wolf who brings the lie to the etheric body, and Hel who brings illness and death to the physical body of human beings. Loki was responsible for the death of the god Baldur. He was the son of Odin and Frigg, and a shining and innocent god. There was a prophecy that he would be killed. His mother received vows of all beings that they would not kill him, but the mistletoe was forgotten. Loki made an arrow from the mistletoe and directed the hand of Hödur, the blind brother of Baldur, and in

²⁹ Rudolf Steiner, see note 7.

³⁰ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 14.8.1908, in CW, nr. 105, and lecture of 12.9.1908, in CW, nr. 106.

³¹ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 14.6.1910, see note 13.

³² Henning Hansen, *Odyssee des Gewissens*, Urachhaus, Stuttgart, 1992, pages 140-148.

this way Baldur was killed. The image of the shooting by Hödur tells us that he was blind in relation to the spiritual world, but seeing in the material world. Baldur stood for the clairvoyance that was widely spread among the people of the past. Because of the awakening of the intellect, clairvoyance began to wane.

The Germanic Apocalypse

After the murder of Baldur, the Aesir wanted to check the powers of evil, but they failed. Three cold winters came without summers, and wars were fought between people. The sun and the moon were swallowed by wolves; the stars disappeared. Then all evil powers broke loose and attacked Asgard, together with wild elementary beings. This is the beginning of the downfall of the Germanic gods, described as the *Ragnarök* (The Fate of the Gods) in the poem *Völuspá*. Here is a piece from this poem:

1. Völuspá – The Prophecy of the Seeress (Poetic Edda, stanzas 55-60)

Thá kemr inn mikli mögr Sigfödur,
Vídarr, vega at valdýri.
Lætr hann megi Hvedrungs mundum standa
hjör til hjarta, thá er hefnt födur.

Gín loft yfir lindi jardar.
Gapa ýgs kjaftar orms í hædum.
Mun Ódins son eitri mæta
vargs ad dauda Víðars nidja.

Thá kemr inn mæri mögr Hlódynjar,
gengr Ódins sonr vid orm vega,
drepr af móði Midgards véurr,
munu halir allir heimstöd rydja;
gengr fet níu Fjörgynjar burr
neppur frá nadri níðs ókvíðnum.

Sól tér sortna, sígr fold í mar,
hverfa af himni heidar stjörnur.
Geisar eimi ok aldrnara,
leikr hár hiti vid himin sjálfan

Geyr nú Garmr mjök fyr Gnipahelli,
festr mun slitna en freki renna.

Sér hon upp koma öðru sinni
jörd ór ægi idjagræna.
Fallar fossar, flýgr örn yfir,
sá er á fjalli fiska veidir.

Then Sigfather (Odin)'s great son comes,
Víðar, to advance against the wolf.
With his hand he stabs his sword to the heart
Of Hvedrung's son (the wolf), then his father is avenged.

In the air gasps the Earth-girdler.
The terrible jaws of the serpent gape in mockery.
Odin's son (Thor) must meet the serpent.
The wolf's death bait is Víðar's kin.

Then comes Hlódyn's shining kinsman (Thor),
Odin's son advances to fight the serpent,
In wrath this defender of Midgard kills,
Everyone must move away from their homesteads;
Nine dying steps Fjörgyn's son (Thor) takes
Away from the serpent of whom scorn is not spoken.

The Sun begins to blacken, the Earth sinks into the sea,
Flaming stars fall from the sky.
Steam rises up in rage and fires burn,
The high heat plays against heaven itself.

Garm bays continuously in front of Gnipahelli,
The fetters will break and the wolf will run free.

She sees coming up a second time
The Earth from the ocean green again.
The waterfall flows, an eagle flies over it,
And on the mountain catches fish.

In this battle Odin is killed by the wolf Fenrir, who is then himself killed by Vidar, Odin's son. Thor and the Midgard Serpent kill each other, as do Loki and Heimdal. Asgard is destroyed. Looking further into the future, the seeress sees a new greening earth with a new humanity and a new generation of gods—Vidar is still alive, Hödur and Baldur return from Hell.

The images of the *Ragnarök* should not be taken literally. Gods cannot die. As spiritual beings, they can take up new missions, and seen from a human perspective they become invisible when clairvoyance disappears. It was the fate of the Germanic gods that the development of human consciousness led to the gradual loss of clairvoyance. In the first stage this was experienced as the death of Baldur; in the second stage as the downfall of almost all the gods. This stage, that lasted for many centuries, was accompanied by the coming of Christianity to the lands of the Germanic tribes, first as Celtic Christianity, later in its dogmatic Roman form.

Symbolical for this transition from the pagan to the Roman Christian religion was the destruction of the Irminsul (a sacred pillar) near the initiation center of the Externsteine in 772 by Charlemagne during his wars against the Saxons of Northern Germany. According to Rudolf Steiner, Asgard, the home of the Germanic gods, was in the etheric space of this area.

In the Germanic world, the loss of clairvoyance was experienced as a great tragedy, but it was not the end of the world. A new green earth would appear, with a new humanity. In this third stage, Baldur will be reborn when human beings will develop their clairvoyance again. They will then also meet Vidar, the silent god and successor of Odin. He brings the new clairvoyance and works in the will.

Sigurd, Siegfried, and Gawan

The *Edda* and other medieval stories from northern Europe tell about the Scandinavian hero Sigurd, the son of Sigmund and Hjordis. Sigurd kills the dragon Fafnir and takes possession of his hoard, the cursed hoard of the Nibelungen. He is murdered himself because of complications in his relations with Brynhild and Gudrun. These stories contain references to Germanic mythology and to initiation. According to recent spiritual research, Sigurd may have lived around 1970 BC in Scandinavia. The hoard of Fafnir stands for the old wisdom of Atlantis that can be used in a destructive way. A fight with a dragon stands for an inner fight with one's lower being. Sigurd's mother Hjordis was a descendant of Sigge, the founder of the Drotten mysteries. Sigurd may have been a reincarnation of Sigge.³³ Sigge, Sigmund, and Sigurd were then persons through whom Odin could work.

The same research claims that Sigurd was reborn in the early 5th century AD as Siegfried, the hero of the German *Nibelungen Song*. In this story, we find similar complications between the hero and Brünhild and Kriemhild. It is likely that the creator of the song used the old Scandinavian motifs and connected them with the conflict between Attila and the Burgundians.

³³ Andreas Delor, *Atlantis*, volume 3, 2016, pages 78-94.

A next incarnation of the hero, but now in a life that is connected with Christ, is supposed to have been in Skåne, south Sweden, in the Grail hero Gawain, the son of the Norwegian king Lot.³⁴ As a knight of the Round Table of King Arthur, Gawain participated in the Grail quest of Percival. He entered the Castle of Wonders of the black magician Klingsor (situated in Sicily) and overcame the trials.

The New Missions of Odin and Vidar

When Odin disappeared from the scene of the *Ragnarök*, where did he go? When the Germanic tribes conquered Europe in the Great Migration of Nations, they received their own archangels. Odin was no longer their archangel. Rudolf Steiner said in 1910 in Oslo that Odin was educated over a long period by the Spirit of Old Greece, who had become the Spirit of exoteric Christianity (connected with Church Christianity) and by the Spirit of Old Rome. Both represented the wisdom of the earlier cultural epoch that ended in 1413, the epoch of the rational soul. For his new mission, Odin had to make a compromise with the Spirit of a still earlier epoch, the Spirit of Old Egypt. This led to the rise of materialism in our epoch that is a reflection of materialistic tendencies in Old Egypt.³⁵

Between the 12th and the 16th/17th centuries, Odin prepared himself for his new mission—to become the leading Spirit of the present epoch of the consciousness soul. Rudolf Steiner described how Odin as the Spirit of the new epoch separated the Dutch nation from the German nation and worked through the archangel of the Dutch nation a first part of his global mission, in this case the creation of a global trade network in the early 17th century.³⁶

Rudolf Steiner warned against falling back into old forms of clairvoyance; that would lead to great dangers. During the time of Nazism in Germany, old forms of consciousness were magically provoked by the modern Klingsor, Adolf Hitler, who manipulated the German double. The glorification of old pagan Germanic culture during Nazi rule led the Swiss psychologist C.G. Jung in 1936 to the conclusion that the Nazis were manipulating the archetype of Odin in the subconscious of the Germans.³⁷ This conclusion was wrong. It was rather the demon of Odin. Odin had already assumed a new mission as the inspiring force of the consciousness soul. Instead of Odin, it was his enemy the dark Fenrir wolf who had taken possession of the German soul. Since the 20th century, Klingsors appear everywhere. We need new Gawains to transform the demons of the modern age, and we need new spiritual helpers in the transformation of our doubles.

In the *Ragnarök*, Vidar, the son of Odin, kills the Fenrir wolf. Rudolf Steiner said about Vidar that he will drive away the remnants of old clairvoyance and awaken the forces of the new clairvoyance. He will provide the etheric form in which the etheric Christ will appear again. In the 20th century, Vidar “who is common to us all in North and Central Europe” will give

³⁴ Idem, p. 36.

³⁵ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 12.6.1910 (evening), see note 13.

³⁶ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 9.6.1910, see note 13.

³⁷ Carl Gustav Jung, “Wotan” (originally published in 1936), in C.G. Jung, *Collected Works*, vol. 10.

people the ability to see Christ.³⁸ On the basis of what Steiner has said, the questions if Vidar was the angel of Gautama Buddha before his enlightenment and if Vidar is the German folk soul cannot be answered.

In the same lecture, Steiner gives the impression that Vidar is the new archangel of the Germanic-Nordic world, whose nations also have their own national folk spirit. This Nordic archangel works with the wisdom of the Germanic spiritual traditions that lives in the souls of people in northern Europe, and will connect it with modern spiritual science. He will especially bring to fruition, in the second half of the present epoch of the consciousness soul, the prophetic germs of the coming culture, which were already visible in the 19th and 20th century in the spiritual philosophies of the Slavic nations—above all in the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov.

Part 3 - The Lands of the Kalevala Culture

The Baltic Madonna

We now cross the Baltic Sea to go further north, from Scandinavia to Finland. In early April, 1912, Rudolf Steiner travelled across this sea to Finland to give his first lecture cycle. It was a most dangerous journey, in which storm demons wanted to stop him. Two years later he spoke about this sea when he described the Atlantic Ocean as a powerful sea dragon, feeling its way into the Baltic Sea with three feelers at its ends (the Gulf of Bothnia, the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Riga). This dragon pushed itself into the Baltic Sea. With the elementary water beings it contained, it created conditions for the specific development of the Finnish soul, as Steiner explained.³⁹

The Baltic Sea also has another face. In a Catholic tradition from Poland, but also elsewhere, this sea is perceived as a kneeling Madonna. With her feet in the Danish Isles, she kneels on the Polish coast. Her head, with a large “hat” on top of it, reaches into the Gulf of Bothnia. One hand stretches down into the Gulf of Riga, while the other hand is held up in the Gulf of Finland and directed towards St. Petersburg in Russia. This can be seen as a prophetic image—a Madonna kneeling in front of the Sophia being that will inspire the coming 6th culture in the northeast of Europe.

The Finns

The modern Finns represent a transformed Siberian element in Europe. Although genetically not very different from the other Europeans, the Finns are distinguished by their non-European language, the origin of the speakers of this language, and their soul qualities. About 62% of the people in Finland have a paternal ancestor (the Finnish Adam) who lived some 20,000 years ago in southern China. The ancestors of these Finns came all the way

³⁸ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 17.10.1910, see note 13.

³⁹ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 14.11.1914, in CW, nr. 158.

through Siberia to reach the shores of the Baltic Sea, probably around 800 BC. The Sami, who are related to them, may have come 1,000 years earlier.

These Finnish hunters joined the farmers-hunters already living around the Baltic Sea. These farmers are the paternal ancestors of 28% of the Finns. The remaining paternal ancestors have come from the Germanic areas in Scandinavia and from the Balto-Slavic areas. In the coastal areas, Swedish people started to settle almost 1,000 years ago. The Finns lived in the forest and became farmers as well. In the course of time the Sami retreated to the North.

The Finns have always lived close to nature, with the elements of water and fire (the sauna). There are still people in the countryside who are clairvoyant and can see nature beings, but in the last century with its intellectual education, this heritage of the past has largely disappeared, as also in Scandinavia. In the human soul, as Rudolf Steiner describes it, its three aspects (sentient, rational and consciousness soul) are well connected. But in the Finnish soul this was, and to some extent still is, different. Under the influence of the sea dragon from the Atlantic Ocean, these three aspects, including the soul forces of thinking, feeling and willing, became independent and need to be coordinated by the "I."

This separation of the soul forces is gradually becoming a reality for modern people as well, especially those who develop spiritually. It is a consequence of approaching the threshold of the spiritual world. In Finland, we come closer to this threshold. While the Scandinavians are part of the present culture, the Finns unconsciously already belong to the 6th culture, in which we will live in close connection with our higher being that is in the spiritual world.

The Kalevala

In their quality of gatekeepers of the new culture, the Finns are also the guardians of the memory of the past. With the tales collected in the great epic poem of the *Kalevala* by Elias Lonnrot in 1835, and in a new version in 1849, the Finns have preserved something that will be the "conscience of Eastern Europe," Rudolf Steiner said.⁴⁰ The *Kalevala* contains the visions of Finnish seers, presented in a powerful, magical, and imaginative language, with a message that has an important educational value—not only for the Finns, but for European culture and humanity in general. In Steiner's view, this message may have a similar value for the development of the consciousness soul as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had for the education of the rational soul in Greek and Roman culture. But to serve this goal, the ideas from the *Kalevala* must be revived and permeated with the insights from spiritual science.

The *Kalevala* presents a spiritual vision of reality that was saved in the forests of Finland and Karelia (in Russia) just before this wisdom from the initiation centers of northern Europe would have disappeared forever. It speaks to us in images about the creation of the world, three great heroes, their wooing of the maiden of the North Country and their trials, the

⁴⁰ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 15.11,1914, in CW, nr. 158.

forging of the *sampo* and its loss in a confrontation with the evil Louhi, and the birth of the Jesus child in the Finnish forest.

The three heroes of the *Kalevala*, Väinämöinen, Ilmarinen and Lemminkäinen, stand for the three spiritual beings that brought to humanity respectively the sentient soul, the intellectual soul, and the consciousness soul. They can be seen as angels with many incorporations, already in Atlantis, in



Vainamoinen and the Maiden of the North
Robert Ekman, 1861

human beings through whom they could work.⁴¹ The unification of these three aspects of the soul has to be achieved through the human "I." This is not a human unity, but a divine unity that we receive from Christ, as Rudolf Steiner remarked in connection with the birth of the Jesus child of the virgin Marjatta, the Finnish Mary, at the end of the *Kalevala*.⁴²



The Forging of the Sampo
Axel Gallen-Kallela

Lönnrot composed the *Kalevala* from tales that he heard from old singers (*laulajat*) in remote villages of Finland and across the present border in Russia, where also Finnish-Karelian people were living. They were clairvoyant and had an astonishing repertoire of songs in their memory that had been handed down through centuries. These songs had been inspired by initiates and given to a nation in which the old clairvoyance was still alive until about 1,000 years ago when Christianity came.⁴³ The publication of the *Kalevala* was very important for the formation of Finnish national consciousness in the 19th century, when Finland was no longer a part of Sweden, but an autonomous part of Russia.⁴⁴

The Sampo

The central theme of the *Kalevala* is the forging and the loss of the *sampo*. It is a magical object, whose creation by the smith Ilmarinen is described in the following lines:

Ohoh seppo Ilmarinen,
Takoja iän-ikuinen!
Saatatko takoa sammon,
Kirjokannen kirjaella
Joutsenen kynän nenästä,

O thou smith, O Ilmarinen,
Thou the great primeval craftsman,
If you can but forge a Sampo,
With its many-coloured cover,
From the tips of swans' white wing-plumes,

⁴¹ Andreas Delor, *Atlantis*, vol. 3, pages 189-190, vol. 5, page 402, and vol. 7, page 140.

⁴² Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 9.11.1914, in CW, nr. 158.

⁴³ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 23.4.1912., in CW, nr. 133.

⁴⁴ Juha Pentikäinen, *Kalevala Mythology*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1999.

Maholehmän maitosesta,
Ohran pienestä jyvästä,
Kesäuuhun untuvasta,
Niin saat neion palkastasi,
Työstäsi tytön ihanan.

From the milk of barren heifer,
From a little grain of barley,
From the wool of sheep of summer,
Will you then accept this maiden,
As reward, my charming daughter?

— Kalevala X:259-268

Lietsoi tuulet löyhytteli:
Itä lietsoi, lietsoi länsi,
Etelä enemmän lietsoi,
Pohjanen kovin porotti.
Lietsoi päivän, lietsoi toisen,
Lietsoi kohta kolmannenki:
Tuli tuisi ikkunasta,
Säkehet ovesta säykkyi,
Tomu nousi taivahalle,
Savu pilvihin sakeni.
Se on seppo Ilmarinen
Päivän kolmannen perästä
Kallistihe katsomahan
Ahjonsa alaista puolta:
Näki sammon syntyväksi,
Kirjokannen kasvavaksi.
Siitä seppo Ilmarinen,
Takoja iän-ikuinen,
Takoa taputtelevi,
Lyöä lyunähyttelevi.
Takoi sammon taitavasti:
Laitahan on jauhomylllyn,
Toisehen on suolamylllyn,
Rahamylllyn kolmantehen.

Then the winds arose in fury,
Blew the east wind, blew the west wind,
And the south wind yet more strongly,
And the north wind howled and blustered.
Thus they blew one day, a second,
And upon the third day likewise.
Fire was flashing from the windows,
From the door the sparks were flying
And the dust arose to heaven;
With the clouds the smoke was mingled.
Then again smith Ilmarinen,
On the evening of the third day,
Stooped him down, and gazed intently
To the bottom of the furnace,
And he saw the Sampo forming,
With its many-coloured cover.
Thereupon smith Ilmarinen,
He the great primeval craftsman,
Welded it and hammered at it,
Heaped his rapid blows upon it,
Forged with cunning art the Sampo,
And on one side was a corn-mill,
On another side a salt-mill,
And upon the third a coin-mill.

— Kalevala X:393-416

The *sampo* was made of the most subtle etheric energies (imagined as a swan's feather, milk, a barley grain and sheep wool of the summer). It is described in the image of a mill that produces corn, salt and money—the things we need to live. Rudolf Steiner saw in the *sampo* an image of the human etheric body.⁴⁵ Our etheric body has the qualities of the earth energies from the nature in which we live and of the nation of which we are part. The Finns have their own national *sampo*, like other nations. The differences between people are overcome by Christ who unites the whole of humanity. That the child Jesus is born at the

⁴⁵ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 9.4.1912, in CW, nr. 158.

end of the *Kalevala*, as Lönnrot composed it, is highly significant. We are all part of humanity, and we will grow together into one human family with one new etheric body in which differences between nations will disappear.

The word *sampo* has been taken from the ancestors of the Indians and Iranians who some 4,500 years ago were the neighbours of the early Finns in the middle Wolga area in Russia. It originally meant “pillar,” the pillar around which the northern sky turns. This movement of the sky was shown in the multi-coloured lid of the *sampo* that was turning like a mill stone and that was illuminated by the polar light and the lights of the stars. This is the cosmic dimension of the Finnish *sampo*.

The *sampo* was made for Louhi, the Lady of the North, in exchange for her daughter who was sitting on a rainbow. In Finnish folklore, she was a moon maiden. Louhi hid the *sampo* in a mountain, until the three heroes decided to take it back so that their land Kalevala would benefit from the *sampo*. The heroes had to steal it, and in the ensuing fight with Louhi over the *sampo*, it broke into pieces. These pieces fell into the sea and brought fertility where they drifted ashore. In the beginning of the *Kalevala*, Louhi had a luciferic quality, but when the heroes had taken the *sampo* away, she became an ahrimanic witch. She sent illnesses to the people of Kalevala who had to be healed by Väinämöinen. Then she took the sun and the moon and hid them in a mountain. When the heroes threatened to chain her, she released the sun and the moon.

Rudolf Steiner explained why the *sampo* had to disappear for a while. When the etheric body had been made, it took time before it could work in human beings and bear fruit in the life of the soul. Steiner does not say why it had to break into pieces. But when we see the *sampo* as a collective etheric body, then obviously everybody had to receive a part. The forging of a new *sampo* that is promised at the end of the *Kalevala* will be the creation of a universal etheric body of humanity.

Initiates and Spiritual Healers

Väinämöinen is the archetypal initiate (*tietäjä* = one who knows the way – to the spiritual world) of Finnish culture. He was poet, singer, *kantele* player, healer, seer, and magician. As a healer, he knew the “words of origin,” the magical words about the origin of diseases, and by reciting them he could heal people. Väinämöinen stands in the musical and poetical tradition of the great initiate Skythianos. In one episode, he travelled to the world of the dead (Tuonela) to search for missing magical words, and returned as a snake, which is a shamanistic motif. The trials of the three heroes in their wooing of the maiden of Northland remind us of similar tests in other initiation stories and in fairytales, like plowing a field of snakes.

Finnish culture had its roots in the world of shamans that existed in Siberia, but it has developed in a different direction. The shaman uses a drum to go into a state of ecstasy in which his soul can travel into the world of elementary beings. From them he hopes to receive knowledge and the power to heal people, protect them, or guide them to the afterlife. The Finnish *tietäjä* (initiated spiritual healer) did not necessarily use ecstasy techniques or rely on animal helpers. He had a vast collection of incantations, charms and words about the origin of things.

The appearance of these healers in Finnish culture shows the influence of the initiation centers of northern Europe. It is difficult to establish if there were any specific Finnish initiation centers, but probably initiations took place in the Drotten initiation centers until the early Middle Ages. The spiritual healers must have initiated their successors themselves. Also there must have been nature sanctuaries, such as in the Koli Hills in Eastern Finland and elsewhere.

Until the early 20th century, in many parts of Finland spiritual healers were still active. Hundreds of reports on their activities are kept in the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki. They show an amazing practice of magic, sorcery and healing that has now largely disappeared from daily life in the countryside.⁴⁶ We read about healers who “made their *luonto* (inner nature) strong” to protect themselves against the evil forces active in illness and dark magic. They were asked to heal people, to remove the evil from which people suffered, and to send it back to its perpetrator to ensure the wellbeing of the crops and the animals, to locate stolen goods, and to force the thief to return them.

The Magic of the Word

The language of the *Kalevala* is a magical, healing language that should be recited, not just read. It has a powerful rhythm, and the content of one sentence (of 8 syllables) is often repeated in another way in the next sentence. In the rhythm of the recitation, the stress usually falls on the syllables 1, 3, 5, and 7. This can be experienced by the readers while reciting for themselves the two *sampo* fragments given above. The traditional recitation of the tales (supported by the music of the *kantele*) was in many cases done by two singers who were moving in rhythm. The lines of the *Kalevala* receive an additional effect through the occurrence of the same vowels or consonants in one or more lines.

In Rudolf Steiner’s view, human speech has developed out of singing. In speaking, we use vowels and consonants. Originally there were 12 consonants. Of the Finnish language, he said that the 12 original consonants have been preserved almost in their pure form. Only the 12th one has become a bit unclear, but it is still there.⁴⁷ These are the 12 consonants used in Finnish: H, J, K, L, M, N, NG, P, R, S, T, V. Finnish words do not have a B, C, D (only in the middle of a word), F, G (only as NG), Q, W, X, Z, but in loanwords and more recent words they can be used.

The Mission of Finland

Finland has a special etheric quality of purity that is connected with the powerful forces of nature and its geographical position near or within the Polar Circle. It is exposed to sunlight in the long days of the summer and to the electro-magnetic field of the sun. In a magical way, it carries the memory of the Hyperborean Age when the sun was still connected with the earth.

⁴⁶ Laura Stark, *The Magical Self*, Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, Helsinki 2006.

⁴⁷ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of 2.12.1922, in: CW, nr. 283.

Until recently, most Finnish people did not think intellectually; they thought with their heart and received imaginations, inspirations, and intuitions from the spiritual world. Far away from European intellectual life, they lived in a world where the Fall into sin, the separation from our spiritual origins, had not progressed so much. They experienced God in nature; they felt the closeness of spiritual beings and received their help. We may call this a life in the atmosphere of the Nathanic Soul of Jesus (the pure and innocent soul of the Jesus child of the gospel of St. Luke, that came from paradise). This atmosphere is still strong at Finnish Christmas time, but it has changed dramatically in the 20th century. Especially since 1989, Finland has embraced modern technology. People are losing their connection with the world of the *Kalevala*, but still their connection with nature is very strong.

Where this connection is still felt, Finnish people are connected with the etheric land of Kalevala, from where the inspirations for the forging of the new *sampo* come, and where the contribution of Finnish culture to the future of humanity is guarded. For Rudolf Steiner, the reason that the Finns do still exist as a nation is related to the preservation and the renewal (through spiritual science) of the spiritual culture of *Kalevala*, in its authentic language, and in the service of European culture and humanity. This can be done by keeping the imaginations alive, by consciously relating to nature as a spiritual being, by speaking the Finnish language in all its richness, and by being inspired by the artistic expressions of the Finnish folk soul. Doing these things can contribute to preserving the “living memory of the past” and the “conscience of the European East.” as Steiner said.

Another part of the Finnish mission that is rooted in the past but directed to the future is connected with the *sampo*. It broke into pieces to give every Finn his own etheric body. In the future a new *sampo* has to be forged, not for a nation, but for humanity, so that it can unite in a spiritual culture.

The European North is a place of cultural memory, but also the territory of the future. Finland owes the awakening of its national identity in the 19th century to the good will of Czar Alexander I, who conquered Finland from Sweden and gave it autonomy in 1809. We may expect that in the future, Finland will return this blessing to Russia. During the Cold War, Finland has been a bridge between the West and the Soviet Union, and in the future it can be a bridge to the 6th culture that should develop in the land of Holy Sophia where we are going to now.



Harrie Salman is a philosopher of culture from Holland. He is studying the spiritual history of humanity, with a special interest in esoteric Christianity. His main focus is currently on Eastern and Northern Europe.

This Year's Edition of *Star Wisdom*, volume 2
Saturn – Mary – Sophia

The *Star Wisdom* series is a vehicle for articles on spiritual cosmology—from a variety of perspectives, on a wide range of topics. This year's edition, *Saturn – Mary – Sophia* (the second in the series), wishes to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of Rudolf Steiner's lectures on "Isis, Mary, Sophia." At the same time, we are drawing attention to the rare event of a Saturn-Pluto conjunction *and* a Saturn-Jupiter conjunction occurring in the same year. This promises to be a year of great upheaval—one that portends a cultural renaissance, under the sign of the Virgin: Saturn, the planetary aspect of the Virgin Mary (see Joel Matthew Park's addendum to the "Editor's Foreword").

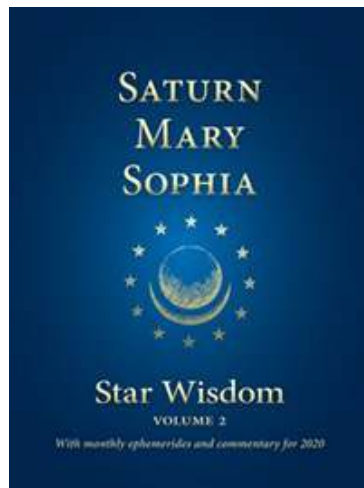
This year's articles begin with an in-depth retrospective of the previous time period of Saturn-Jupiter conjunctions in the Earth Signs (Taurus, Capricorn, Virgo), "Blessings of the Great Conjunction" by Julie Humphreys. This is followed by selections from Yvan Rioux's *The Mystery of Emerging Form*. The chapters from this work on the signs of Capricorn and Sagittarius flesh out our inner relationship to these archetypal realms of the zodiac in which the most prominent conjunctions occur in 2020. Then follows Kevin Dann's follow-up to his article from 2015, "Into the Vortex II," wherein he further elaborates the cosmological perspective that relies on the action of the vortex in all creation. Next, Joel Matthew Park discusses the implications of Rudolf Steiner's statement involving "Saturn in Cancer" at the time of Parizval. Phillip Malone follows this with a brief but illuminating review of the movie "The Principle," which raises unresolved questions surrounding geo- vs. heliocentrism. David Bowden and Robert Powell then present an exciting article which further elaborates their pioneering research on Galactic Horoscopes. "Everlastic Concrecence," by Becca Tarnas, gives a simultaneously clear and poetic picture of the paradigm offered through archetypal cosmology. Lucian Schloss writes of the catharsis that is offered to us through a Saturn-Pluto conjunction. This year's "Classics in Astrosophy" presents articles written by Robert Powell in 1975 and 1980 on Great Conjunctions, and Claudia McLaren Lainsen goes into the potentials offered by this Great Conjunction for the arising of humanity's collective shadow, and what each of us can offer to transform it.

According to Rudolf Steiner, every step taken by Christ during his ministry between the Baptism in the Jordan and the Resurrection was in harmony with—and an expression of—the cosmos. The *Star Wisdom* series is concerned with these heavenly correspondences during the life of Christ, and is intended to help provide a foundation for cosmic Christianity, the cosmic dimension of Christianity. It is this dimension that, by and large, has been missing until now from Christianity and its 2,000-year history.

Readers can begin on this path by contemplating the movements of the Sun, Moon, and planets against the background of the zodiacal constellations (sidereal signs) today in relation to corresponding stellar events during the life of Christ. In this way, the possibility is opened for attuning in a living way to the life of Christ, who is now—since the onset of his *Parousia* in 1933—spiritually present in the elemental plane of the Earth.

Each volume of the *Star Wisdom* series also features a guide to the correspondences between stellar configurations during the life of Christ and those of today. This guide comprises a complete sidereal ephemeris and aspectarian, geocentric and heliocentric, for each day throughout the year. Published annually, new volumes of *Star Wisdom* are generally available beginning in November for the coming new year.

Saturn – Mary – Sophia: Star Wisdom, volume 2 offers monthly commentaries by Joel Matthew Park on the movements of the planets throughout 2020, supported by Julie Humphrey's astronomical previews for each month. These offer an opportunity to connect spiritually with the stellar configurations during 2020. This direct interaction between human beings on Earth with the stars above is intended to help the reader develop the capacity to receive the wisdom-filled teachings of the angelic hierarchies—the spiritual beings dwelling in the archetypal realm of the stars.



**Stargazing:
December 2019 - January 2020**

Julie Humphreys

There are human beings... who never look up to the stars their whole life long, who do not know where Leo is, or Aries or Taurus... Such people are born, in a next life on Earth, with a body that is somehow limp and flabby.

— Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, vol. 1, p. 86

The information below is based on Eastern Standard Time and Eastern Daylight Time for the convenience of our American readers, but should be more or less universally applicable to regions in the northern hemisphere. Please make needed adjustments to different time zones.

Observing the apparent path of the planets (called the ecliptic) before the background of the fixed stars of the zodiac requires denizens of the northern hemisphere to look southward. On the days of our spring and autumn equinoxes, this path will begin directly in the east, arch over the southern horizon, and end directly due west. On the other 363 or 364 days of the year, you'll observe that the planets rise slightly north or south of east, culminate east or west of south, and set south or north of west. However, their east-south-west trajectory remains roughly the same. It is a wonderful exercise throughout the year to simply notice where the planet rise, culminate, and set in reference to your fixed surroundings: trees, steeples, mountains, etc.

December 2019

Venus catches up to Saturn on the 11th. You can see them set—Saturn first—two hours past sundown. You'll be able to admire December's full Moon on the following day, shining high above Orion's belt. The Geminid meteor showers peak on the night of the 13th; you'll want to look northeast for your best chance at seeing them. The large waning Moon will make viewing more difficult, as it's in the sky from 1700 until 0800 the next morning.

On the 16th, Venus, still visible low in the west for two hours after sunset, enters Capricorn. Early on the morning of the 22nd you'll be able to see the Moon rise just ahead of Mars. The new Moon on the 26th creates an annular solar eclipse over Australia, Asia, and India, and the Sun is positioned as it was at the third temptation in the wilderness. The Moon passes Saturn on the 27th; look for Saturn setting right before the Moon about an hour after sunset. On the 28th, the Moon and Venus will set together, in nearly perfect conjunction, two to three hours after the Sun moves below the western horizon for its nightly rest.

By the 31st of the month, Orion will be seen rising a little over an hour before the setting of the Sun. Have a glorious New Year!

January 2020

The new year begins with Mercury, Jupiter, Sun, Pluto and Saturn in Sagittarius; by month's end the Sun will be in Capricorn, and Mercury will have moved on to Aquarius. On New Year's Day you'll see Mars, in the first decan of Scorpio, rise around 0400, roughly three hours ahead of the Sun. As the Sun falls below the western horizon at 1630, you'll find Venus low in the southwestern sky. Now an evening star, she'll only be visible after sunset. At this time, the nearly First Quarter Moon will be high in the south.

Just before midnight on the 2nd, the Moon will reach its first quarter at 17° Pisces, meaning that its right half will be illumined by the Sun. It will rise around 1130 and be overhead, due south, as the Sun sets, finally dropping below the western horizon around 2300.

The full Moon on the 10th will be below the star Castor (25° Gemini), found at the upper eastern corner of the constellation. And what a special one this will be, as India and surrounding lands will experience a penumbral lunar eclipse that will last over four hours!

The 17th will bring the last quarter Moon, having just entered Libra. You'll see the left half of the Moon illumined as it rises in the east around 0100, three hours ahead of Mars. By the 20th, the Moon will catch up to Mars, and on the following morning you'll see Mars, in the middle decan of Scorpio, rise just ahead of the Moon. As they move higher above the horizon, you'll have a few hours before dawn to gaze at Antares, the heart of the Scorpion, below Mars. Both have a reddish hue, but Antares twinkles, seeming to wax and wane in brightness.

January's new Moon at 9° Capricorn will take place on the 24th. Between the setting of Venus at 2000 and the rising of Mars at 0400 on the 25th, the night sky will be free of both moonlight and other visible planets. In the absence of cloud cover, the stars should be beautiful! Between these hours you'll be able to see the Bull and Orion move from culmination to setting as Leo rises to its apex from the eastern horizon.

On the 26th, Venus and Mars will form a perfect square aspect, and between Venus setting and Mars rising, you'll again find the night sky free of classical (visible) planets. On the 27th, you'll find the Moon, almost conjunct Venus, setting at 2000, quickly followed by Neptune (invisible to the naked eye) and Venus, at 22° Aquarius. On the actual day of the Moon-Venus conjunction, the 28th, Venus will set about twenty minutes ahead of the Moon.

Orion will be high in the southeast at sunset; the Hunter sets in the west at approximately 0400, three hours before dawn.



Orion

Editor's note: This is a selection from *Saturn – Mary – Sophia: Star Wisdom, volume 2*, and if you wish to have all the stargazing notes for 2020, we invite you to purchase a copy.

Available at [SteinerBooks](#)
and [Amazon](#).

**Support Materials Available
from the Sophia School of Movement**

Dear Community,

A very sincere 2019 'hello' to you!

I am writing from beautiful North Carolina, to update you on support materials that are available through www.SophiaSchoolOfMovement.Org.

The links are in white at the top of the home page. Select *CDs for Purchase*.



Music CDs:

The Music for the Prayer Sequence (Ludmilla)

The Music for the Zodiac (Ludmilla)

The Music for the Planets (Sylvia Series I and II)

The Music for the Four Elements and Prayer Sequence (Sylvia)

The Music for the Liturgy to the Earth (Sylvia)

Note: The 4 CD set of 84 dances by Marcia Burchard is available through the Sophia Foundation website: www.sophiafoundation.org.

A heartfelt and enthusiastic Thank you to Ludmilla Lohbrunner-Gricenko, Sylvia Karpe, Marcia Burchard, and Robert Powell for their efforts to make these Choreocosmos CDs available.

Lecture CDs 2011 - 2018:

A selection of Robert's lectures is available for purchase as audio CDs.

New in 2019: Transcripts of Robert's lectures are now available for the same price as the CDs.

Just send me an email: kcalegar@earthlink.net with TRANSCRIPTS in the subject line, and name the transcripts you would like to have mailed to you.

All CDs (music and lectures) are available via the website:
www.SophiaSchoolOfMovement.Org.

The links are in white at the top of the home page. Select *CDs for Purchase*.

Check out the list and allow yourself to be guided to the particular lectures that you are inwardly seeking.

A very special thanks to Robert for his permission to allow these *treasures* of Wisdom to be made available as CDs.

With love and gratitude,
Kelly Calegar



**Sophia Foundation Events
in North America
2020**

Sophia & Archangel Jesus [2]

Los Altos Choreocosmos Event

March 6 - 8, 2020

Los Altos, CA

<https://sophiafoundation.org/event/los-altos-ca-choreocosmos-weekend-2020/>

Grail Facilitator Training [3]

May 21 - 25, 2020

Stoneville, NC

<https://sophiafoundation.org/event/grail-facilitator-training-2020/>

Boulder Choreocosmos Event

June 7, 2020 - Public Lecture

June 8 - 12, 2020 - Workshop

Boulder, CO

Boulder Choreocosmos features the research and work of Claudia McLaren Lainson and cosmic dance and prayer eurythmy with eurythmist Audrey Wiebe.

North Carolina Choreocosmos Event

The Path of Forgiveness

July 22 - 26, 2020

Chapel Hill, NC

**2020 Overview
of Robert Powell's
Seminars/Workshops**

Detailed flyers for the seminars/workshops listed in this overview will be available soon.

Unless a different link is given, follow this link for available information:

<https://sophiafoundation.org/upcoming-events-non-sponsored-events/>.

The Shambhala Path—January 4th – 10th

Seminar/Workshop at Izhcayluma, Vilcabamba, Southern Ecuador. Arrive Saturday, January 4th; depart Friday, January 10th. See flyer here:

<https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Shambhala-Path%E2%80%94Ecuador.pdf>.

Dornach: Choreocosmos

- Seminar 1—**Planets in the Zodiacal Signs of Aries, Taurus, Gemini.**
5 days: **July 27th – July 31st**
- Seminar 2—**The Four Elements and Liturgy to the Earth** — start Friday evening, July 31st at 7:30 p.m. One day seminar: Saturday, August 1st, start at 9:30 a.m., end on Saturday evening at 10:00 p.m. Departure on Sunday, August 2nd.

Roncegno: Casa di Salute Raphael

- Seminar 1—**The Journey of the Soul into Incarnation—International Choreocosmos Week. August 3rd – August 6th** (Monday - Thursday). Arrive on Sunday, August 2nd in time for dinner at 7:00 p.m. Introduction on Sunday evening after dinner followed by four complete days.
- Seminar 2—**Liturgy to Mary Sophia** for Choreocosmos graduates.
August 7th & August 8th. Start: Friday morning, August 7th at 9 a.m.; end: Saturday evening, August 8th, at 10:00 p.m. Departure on Sunday, August 9th, after breakfast.

Assisi: Oasi Sacro Cuore—1st week: August 10th – August 15th (Monday–Saturday).

- Seminar—**The Mystery of Divine Love and the Dodecahedron—The Foundation Stone of Love & the Dodecahedron of the Moral Ether.**
Arrival in time for dinner at 7:00 p.m. on **Sunday, August 9th.** Introduction on Sunday evening after dinner followed by six complete days. End on Saturday evening, August 15th at 10:00 p.m. Departure after breakfast on Sunday, August 16th.

Assisi: Oasi Sacro Cuore—2nd week: August 18th – August 23rd (Tuesday–Sunday morning).

- Seminar—**The Shambhala Path & Claiming One's Sovereignty in Christ.**
Arrival on Sunday or Monday, **August 16th or 17th** in time for dinner at 7:00 p.m. on Monday. Movement (Eurythmy) exercises to protect oneself against electromagnetic radiation. In addition to lectures about the Shambhala Path, we shall also investigate some new etheric technology: **How Tensor Rings Can Help Protect Human Beings and the Earth.**
Introduction on Monday evening after dinner followed by 5½ complete days. End on Sunday morning, August 23rd at 12:30 p.m. Departure on Sunday, August 23rd after lunch, or on Monday, August 24th after breakfast.

Assisi: Oasi Sacro Cuore—3rd week: August 25th – August 30th (Tuesday - Sunday morning).

- **Sophia Grail Circle Training**
Arrival on Monday, August 24th in time for dinner at 7:00 p.m. Introduction on Monday evening after dinner followed by 5½ complete days. End on Sunday morning, August 30th at 12:30 p.m. Departure on Sunday, August 30th after lunch or on Monday, August 31st after breakfast.

Sophia Foundation Pilgrimage to Australia: September 25th – October 10th

Flight to Melbourne; departure on September 25th. Departure from Melbourne on October 10th for arrival back on October 10th or October 11th. See flyer here:

<https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Uluru-Pilgrimage-flyer-1.pdf>

Cana

Natalia Haarahiltunen

There was the time of wedding
in the place called Cana.

There was something there
which still works on here.

People rejoiced about love,
the union and life.

The couple looked in
each other's eyes
and the feast was high.

Bright colors
of celebration.

One guest in His white clothes.

Wine, it was ending fast.
Time, it recalled the past.

What was to be offered
from now on?
Was there anything left
for the union of Love?

The time stood still
like the water in jars.

The drops of pureness
were held in the Virgin's eyes

The calm waters reflected the skies.

A call forth from old
was this new feast to be.
The new wine much better
than the one in the eve.

Love was kindled through waters
and the wine was fine.

Everyone was taking part in this Union of Love.



Wedding Feast
Giotto

Astrosophical note:

The Miracle of the Turning Water into Wine occurred with the Sun at 8° Capricorn, which nowadays is January 23rd. This is close to the Sun's position of 6° Capricorn when the Magi visited the Solomon Jesus. This is also very close to the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter at 5° Capricorn which will occur in December of 2020.



Madonna
Baron Arild Rosenkrantz