

Sophia and the Rose of the World

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Who is Sophia, and what does the coming Age of Sophia signify for humanity and for the Earth? From the Bible it is known that “Sophia” is the Greek word for wisdom. In the Old Testament this word is expressed in the Hebrew as “Hokmah (pronounced “Chokmah”), meaning wisdom. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek the word “Hokmah” was translated as “Sophia”. In the English translation of the Bible this is translated as wisdom. If one reads the *Book of Proverbs*, one finds there words which Sophia speaks through King Solomon. It has been said that Solomon was regarded as the wisest human being of antiquity. So great was his fame on account of his wisdom that people came from all over the ancient world to seek him out, including the fabled Queen of Sheba. She came from afar to drink from the wisdom of Solomon. Solomon was a human being who had a special relationship with Sophia, Divine Wisdom. Various books of the Old Testament are attributed to Solomon, among them the *Book of Proverbs*. All these books speak of Sophia. These are called the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament.¹

If we read the *Book of Proverbs*, we see words which Sophia speaks in the first person. This answers one of the questions which are often raised with regard to Sophia: Is divine wisdom simply an attribute of God? We speak of God’s power, God’s wisdom, and God’s love. But it is clear if you read the Wisdom Books in the Old Testament that it is not simply an attribute of God but an actual being, because she speaks in the first person. She says, for example: “I was present at the beginning of the creation...participating at the side of the Lord in the work of creation” (Proverbs 8:22, 30). This is a statement that tells us something about Sophia. It is a matter of an actual being, whose nature is wisdom, who participated in the work of creation. It is clear also from the words spoken that Sophia is a feminine being – a great, divine feminine being. This raises many interesting questions of a philosophical and theological nature about the nature of the Godhead. These questions were asked by some thinkers in the ancient world, but then with the rise of Christianity the theme of Sophia more and more receded into the background. The main reason for this was that early Christians identified Sophia with Christ. With this, at one stroke Sophia disappeared from human consciousness, at least in the Christian world. Christianity, because it developed increasingly as a patriarchal religion, lost the Divine Feminine – although there was (and still is) devotion to the Virgin Mary. On the other hand, however, in the Russian Orthodox Church there lives a devotion to Sophia. It is not immediately apparent how this came about. One can see from the various Sophia icons from the Russian tradition that all of them show Sophia as a majestic divine feminine being who is raying out wisdom. Above her is Christ, so she is clearly not the same as Christ. To her right is the Virgin Mary, so she is clearly not the same as the Virgin Mary. To her left is John the Baptist. This is something – the

¹ Thomas Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria* (York Beach/ME: Samuel Weiser, 1998).

Sophia icon tradition – that has lived in the history of the Russian Church. In fact there are two cathedrals named after Sophia: the cathedral of Divine Sophia in Kiev in the Ukraine, which was founded in the 11th century, and the cathedral of Holy Sophia in Novgorod, north-west of Moscow, also dating from the 11th century, which was regarded for centuries as the spiritual center of Russia. Moreover, there are also numerous Sophia churches in Russia. The Russian people simply took this as a matter of fact, this devotion to Sophia, without really questioning it or asking: Who is Sophia? And there is even (going back to the 17th century) a church liturgy dedicated to Sophia in the old Slavic language (church Slavonic). All this shows that in the Russian tradition there has lived this devotion to Sophia.

We have referred in this book already to the great Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyov, who was born in 1853, and who studied philosophy in the West. His mission was to help the Russian people in the development of philosophy. Already as a child, in the tenth year of his life, when he was attending a church service in Moscow, he had a vision of Sophia who appeared to him as a radiant divine feminine being wrapped in azure light. On this account a sense of Sophia was living in him. It was a living presence, not just something that he had merely seen from the icons. He knew that Sophia is a real being. In his philosophical quest he was searching for the deeper meaning: Who is Sophia, and what is the relationship of Sophia to the Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are imbued with masculine qualities?

His search led him to London. He studied in the Library of the British Museum, and there one day he had a second experience of Sophia. This time he saw only her face. She said to him: “Go to Egypt.” And that is what he did. He took the train across Europe, down through Italy, and then took the ferry from Brindisi across to Egypt and stayed at a hotel in Cairo. There were some Russian émigrés staying there. One night he received the inner message to go into the desert. He was dressed wearing a long coat, a tall silk hat, and black gloves when he set off into the desert – a very strange sight. Some Bedouin nomads captured him, uncertain whether to kill him outright or to hold him for ransom. Fortunately for him, because of his appearance they thought he was the devil, and so they released him.

That night it was approaching dawn when he had the third and most momentous experience of Divine Sophia, who appeared to him in her full glory and showered him with love. “Today my Queen appeared to me in azure” he wrote.² From that point, for the rest of his life, he was devoted to Sophia to help bring an understanding of Sophia to the Russian people. He is regarded as the founder of sophiology – the theology of Sophia. For sophiology, Sophia is at the pinnacle of creation. Thus all creation has a relationship to Sophia, because all of creation has come into existence by way of the Divine Wisdom that Sophia embodies. She is the “plan” of creation and also participates in the work of creation.

² Paul M. Allen, *Vladimir Soloviev: Russian Mystic* (New York: Steiner Books, 1978), p. 117.

In Chapter 9 of the *Book of Proverbs* there is a reference to Sophia's temple having seven pillars. This gives us some idea about the nature of Sophia. To use an analogy: an architect, before he sets to work building a house, will draw an architectural plan and work from that. One could think, by way of analogy, of the creator as the great architect and Sophia as the plan. She embodies the plan of creation. The seven pillars in Sophia's temple indicate the seven stages of the unfolding of creation, what is referred to as the "seven days of creation."

As well as that which came about in Russia through Sophia and the Russian sophiologists, our knowledge of the divine plan of the being of Sophia has been greatly enriched in the 20th century through the work of Rudolf Steiner, whose central teaching is about the unfolding of creation through seven stages or "days". What Rudolf Steiner describes is of such detail that he gives us a picture going far beyond anything that anybody has ever taught before concerning the stages or "days" of creation. Through the teaching of Rudolf Steiner, an unveiling of the being of Sophia has taken place. In fact, Rudolf Steiner called his life's work "Anthroposophia" – "anthropos", from the Greek, means the human being and "Sophia" is the Greek for wisdom. "Anthroposophia" is a new revelation of the being of Divine Sophia, in which there is an understanding of Sophia as a divine feminine being.

One important aspect indicated by Rudolf Steiner is that Sophia is a cosmic being, whose nature embraces the whole cosmos. Thus, when we contemplate a map of the galaxy we gain insights into Sophia, who holds the blueprint for creation. Our Sun, and all the different stars/suns in our galaxy, have all come into existence from the galactic center at the heart of the Milky Way galaxy. In the *Timaeus*, Plato refers to the *Transmundane Sun* and he describes our Sun as a miniature copy of this *Transmundane* or *Supra-Celestial Sun* – we could also say *Central Sun*, if we identify Plato's *Supra-Celestial Sun* with the galactic center. Could it be that Plato, in referring to the *Transmundane Sun*, meant the heart of our galaxy, conceiving of it as a *Central Sun* from which everything else has proceeded?

Let us consider, as a hypothesis, that – along the lines of Platonic cosmology – there is a Central Sun at the heart of our galaxy. In this case, it is of immense power, as may be grasped by way of analogy. If one imagines the power of our Sun holding the nine planets and countless asteroids in their orbits, one will get a sense of the power and majesty of our Sun. Now, if we think of a Central Sun at the galactic center, the scope of its power is such as to hold at least one hundred billion suns (not planets!), in their orbits around it, including our Sun!

Modern astronomy postulates the existence of a "supermassive black hole" at the center of our galaxy. According to esoteric teaching, however, it is a divine center pouring out love to all the suns, all the stars in the heavens. This is what Aristotle called the "prime mover" at the heart of all existence. Everything in our

galaxy is moving around this great center. Moreover, Divine Sophia has something to do with this.



*Illustration to Dante's Divine Comedy, Paradiso by Gustave Doré:
Dante and Beatrice beholding the Empyrean in the form of a white rose
(Empyrean derives from the Ancient Greek word "pyr" meaning fire).*

Let us look back to someone who had a deep relationship with Sophia: the Italian poet Dante. In Dante's vision which he had at Easter in the year 1300 and which he spent the rest of his life writing down as *The Divine Comedy*, he beheld the highest realm. In Dante's vision of the highest heaven he calls this highest realm the "Empyrean". Let us now contemplate the depiction by the French graphic artist Gustav Doré of Dante's vision of the Empyrean (see above), and let us then compare this with an image of our Milky Way galaxy (see below). One can see the similarity. It appears that what Dante beheld in mystical vision has now been found seven hundred years later by modern astronomy. Dante describes in his vision the throne of God at the center and countless beings around the throne of God. According to Dante, the whole is fashioned in the form of "a snow-white rose".



An image of the central region of the Milky Way galaxy

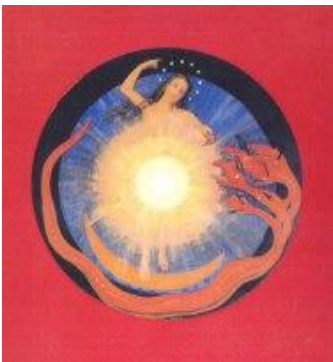
Those who know the mystical tradition relating to Divine Sophia will know that this image somehow relates to Sophia, referred to as the *heavenly rose* or *celestial rose*. In contemplating an image of our galaxy, what are we actually beholding? Are we on some level beholding an image of Sophia in the form of a snow-white rose? Is Sophia, as the wisdom or “plan” of creation, one and the same with what we see revealed in the structure of our galaxy? Considering that Sophia – according to her own words from the *Book of Proverbs* – has always had a relationship with our evolution “from the beginning of creation”, it is reasonable to conclude that Sophia is a being of galactic dimension. At least, we can hold this possibility as a hypothesis.

One of the important things that Rudolf Steiner indicated was that the being whom we call Sophia is the same as the goddess whom the Egyptians called Isis. We know of the great significance of Isis for the Egyptian culture and also of the significance of Osiris. Isis and Osiris were regarded as brother and sister and also as bride and groom. If we take this idea of Rudolf Steiner and work with it, that Sophia is the same as Isis, then who were the Egyptians revering as Osiris? In various lectures Steiner describes that Osiris was how the Egyptian people saw Christ before his incarnation on the earth. We could think of this as a pre-incarnatory revelation of Christ to the Egyptian people in the shape of Osiris, before Christ incarnated on the earth. Against this background we can understand the words of St. Augustine, who said that there were “Christians before Christ”.

If we grasp this background concerning the ancient Egyptian mystery religion of Isis and Osiris, we can begin to understand that the Egyptians were indeed “Christians before Christ”. Before he came into incarnation on the earth, they worshipped him as Osiris. Osiris and Isis have a deep relationship to each other and are the same beings whom we know as Christ and Sophia. This is addressed in the revelation to John, the last book in the Bible, which is the revelation of the Ascended Christ to John the Beloved Disciple on the island of Patmos. It is clear that the one who is called the “Lamb” in *Revelations* is Christ. That is also the name that John the Baptist gave to Christ, as indicated in John’s words: “Behold the Lamb of God” (*John* 1:29). In the revelation to John reference is made to the “Bride of the Lamb” who is Sophia. There is a deep and profound relationship between Christ and Sophia. A mystery of the future is revealed in *Revelations*, where in the last two chapters the working together of the Lamb and his Bride is referred to. What is

called the sacred marriage of the Lamb and his Bride – in the Greek, *hieros gamos* (“sacred marriage”) – where the picture is given of Sophia the Bride descending from above and coming down as the bearer of the new heaven, coming down and uniting with the Lamb, who through his sacrifice is bringing about the spiritualization and transformation of the Earth. Through this sacred marriage takes place the creation of a new heaven and a new earth, as described in the last two chapters (Chapters 21 & 22) of *Revelations*.

Already in Chapter 12 mention is made of Sophia as a majestic cosmic being. She is depicted as the “woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (*Revelations* 12:1). The image below is a representation of Divine Sophia based on a sketch by Rudolf Steiner that is drawn directly from Chapter 12 of *Revelations*. He presented this sketch as the fifth of the seven apocalyptic seals.



The Fifth Apocalyptic Seal by Clara Rettich, based on a design by Rudolf Steiner

The Russian contemporary of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) – Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900) – also did much during his short life to promote consciousness of Sophia among the Russian people. His efforts gave birth to Sophiology: the theology of Sophia. There would be much to say concerning Solovyov and Sophiology, but for now let us focus on the image of the fifth seal. Let us try to understand what was at work with both Rudolf Steiner and Vladimir Solovyov. We can understand it against the background of the image of the fifth seal of the “woman clothed with the Sun” described in *Revelations*. Sophia is bringing to birth a child, and – as depicted on the image of the fifth seal – she is attacked by a great red dragon with seven heads. This expresses something from metahistory to us in a remarkable way. For Vladimir Solovyov’s mission was to speak to the Russian people in the name of the “folk spirit” of the Russian people, to draw the Russian people towards understanding their true mission, which has to do with Sophia. We can understand this against the background of some remarks made by Rudolf Steiner, where he spoke of the next age, the Age of Aquarius, as the age when the Slavic peoples will come into their true mission. The Russians – and in fact all the Slavic peoples – will come into their true mission in this coming age. Their mission has to do with Sophia. That is why the image of Sophia has lived in the

Russian church. The existence of the icons of Sophia in the Russian church, and also the naming of cathedrals and churches after Sophia, is not something coming from the past. It is something to do with the future. It has to do with the future mission of Russia and of the Slavic peoples. The coming Age of Aquarius will bring forth a new culture. This new culture will develop first in Russia and in the other Slavic countries and will then spread around the world to become a global culture.

If we consider this picture of the future, we can then begin to understand what took place through another Vladimir, who came after Vladimir Solovyov. That was Vladimir Lenin, who was the leader of the Bolshevik revolution, and who was instrumental in the birth of communism. Soviet communism took over not only in Russia but also in *all* the Slavic countries. Soviet communism represented the opposite of the coming Sophia culture. What Solovyov and many other Russian – notably Daniel Andreev – were working for was to prepare Russia for the future culture of Sophia.

As John beheld in his vision on the Island of Patmos, he saw that Sophia would be attacked by a great red dragon. And what did the Bolsheviks call themselves? The Reds. It is very transparent, if you contemplate it, what was at work. It was literally an attack by demonic forces who worked through Lenin, and then through Stalin, after the way had been prepared by Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* published in 1848, shortly after the start of the "war in heaven" in 1841. It is noteworthy, too, that Stalin was born in 1879, the year when the war in heaven was concluded by the casting down of the Spirits of Darkness upon the earth. The way the dark forces work is that they see what is the true image for the future, and they substitute a caricature or an inversion of it. It is often able to take hold, because it has some element of truth.

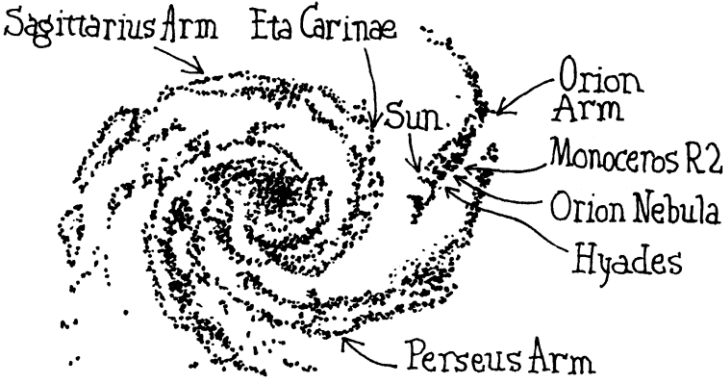
As remarked upon already, the future age of Sophia will be an age of the flourishing of community, brotherhood and sisterhood, called in *Revelations* "Philadelphia". The Greek word *delphos* means the womb, and *adelphi* means "springing from the same womb", i.e. brothers and sisters come from the same womb. *Philadelphia* – that is the love that exists between brothers and sisters coming from the same womb. In a more extended sense, Philadelphia is the community of brotherly and sisterly love. The longing for community was the seduction that lay at the root of Soviet communism. Communism is supposedly based on community. But as the world then witnessed, it turned out to be a dictatorship of an élite, who led their extravagant lifestyles at the expense of millions of people whom they subjected to their will. The element of truth in communism was the longing of the Slavic people for community. This was the lure, the promise of community. However, what took place did not lead to a community of free spirits, but rather to the subjugation of the people to the will of an elite group. The great tragedy that overcame Russia and the Slavic peoples was the preempting by dark forces of the future that is to arise in the coming Age of Aquarius. The visions presented in *Revelations* are true. They offer a picturing of the future, but we

have to learn to read them properly, and this is what we mean by “reading the images of the Apocalypse”.

At the time of John, of course, all of this with regard to Soviet communism was far in the future, but for us now it lies in the past. During the time of Soviet communism the vision of the true future of Russia was kept alive in at least one person, Daniel Andreev, who has been called the “Russian Dante”. The great work of Daniel Andreev – *The Rose of the World* – is very important as a continuation of that which emerged with Vladimir Solovyov as the stream of Russian spirituality devoted to Divine Sophia. *Rosa Mira* is the Russian title; *The Rose of the World* is the English translation of this title. It is difficult book to read, because Daniel Andreev was faithful to everything that was said to him. It was said in a language which is not really known. He uses many expressions that are unknown in any language. However, he does give a glossary to explain what these expressions mean, but when one is reading the book it is very challenging because of expressions like *Shadanakar*, *Bayushmi*, and *Zatomis*. If one perseveres, an extraordinary revelation is presented in this work. However, there are also definite errors in this book. Perhaps these have arisen in translation. Nevertheless, the general message of the book is very inspiring because it is all about the coming of Sophia.

Through my own research I have been able to confirm Daniel Andreev’s basic thesis of the future incarnation of Sophia. Concerning this, we are approaching an event comparable to the incarnation of Christ two thousand years ago. This event will have an enormous impact on the whole of the planet. Let us contemplate this coming incarnation of Divine Sophia with the help of star wisdom (*Astro-Sophia*). Through the wisdom of the stars, it is possible to penetrate to an understanding of the coming incarnation of Sophia, which culminates during the coming Age of Aquarius. The stages of incarnation of Sophia are the same as those of the incarnation of Christ, the Logos. Therefore, let us follow the stages of this incarnation of the Logos, starting with the *Central Sun* at the heart of our galaxy as the place of origin of Christ and Sophia, who each follow the same path of incarnation. In the case of Christ, his descent from the Central Sun began long ago and took place in stages. An important stage was the entrance of Christ into our local part of the galaxy, the Orion Arm, located between the Sagittarius Arm and the Perseus Arm – two of the great spiral arms extending out from the galactic center. (There are four spiral arms – two major and two minor – proceeding from the center of the galaxy and some side arms, one of these being the Orion Arm. Our Sun is located on the inside of the Orion Arm, looking towards the galactic center in the direction of Sagittarius.)

The Galactic Center with Spiral Arms



Milky Way Galaxy

About eight thousand years ago, Christ descended from the local part of our galaxy to unite with our Sun. After entering our solar system and uniting with the Sun about 6000 BC, two thousand years ago Christ descended into the human being Jesus of Nazareth at the moment of the baptism in the River Jordan. This is the moment that is addressed in the words: "This is my beloved Son whom today I have begotten" (*Luke 3:22*). This is how it is expressed in the ancient manuscripts. In later manuscripts it was changed to "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." With this later translation the significance of the moment of the incarnation was lost. However, in the ancient manuscripts of the *Gospel of Luke* one can read: "This is my beloved Son whom today I have begotten." This moment of baptism in the Jordan signified the incarnation of the Logos into the human being Jesus of Nazareth. It denoted the beginning of a divine mission which lasted for 3½ years. I was able to exactly date most of the major events in the life of Christ in my book *Chronicle of the Living Christ*. This mission was to bring the impulse of divine love from the *Central Sun* (Plato's *Supra-Celestial Sun*) for the earth and the evolution of humanity.

There was some knowledge of this in early Christianity, where Christ was referred to as the *Spirit of the Sun*. There was a knowledge that Christ came from a higher world as a cosmic being. Similarly, speaking of Sophia as the "woman clothed with the Sun", she is also an emissary from the *Central Sun* as the bearer of the divine feminine aspect of the Godhead. In the case of Christ and Sophia, we can speak of *God-born* beings coming directly from the heart of God at the center of our galaxy. God-born beings have to be distinguished from all other beings, who are created beings. Angels, and all beings of the celestial hierarchies, and also human beings and all other beings are created beings. However, Christ and Sophia are God-born beings. This means that they are *essentially and substantially* part of the Godhead, the Divine Heart at the center of our galaxy. (There is a manifestation of the Divine Heart or *Central Sun* at the center of every galaxy, whereby the Godhead is mystically present throughout the universe.) When Christ spoke the words: "I and the Father are one" (*John 10:30*), what is meant by this? To understand the cosmic being of Christ, one has to grasp that the essence of his being extends all the way to the *Central Sun*, and thus he could speak these words in their full and profound sense. The same applies to Sophia, the Bride of the Lamb, who is the feminine counterpart of Christ.

Let us now endeavor to follow the stages of Sophia's incarnation. At the time when Dante wrote *The Divine Comedy* and had his vision and saw the snow-white rose, the celestial image of Divine Sophia united with the throne of God in the Empyrean, the highest divine realm, when Dante had this vision, at that time Sophia was still united with the *Central Sun*. She was at that time still dwelling in this highest sphere, the Empyrean, the divine realm united with the throne of God. Through the star wisdom of Astro-Sophia it is revealed that since approximately 1775, Divine Sophia has become connected with the local part of our galaxy, the Orion Arm, and is now working especially through the twelve constellations of the zodiac. This is revealed in the image of Sophia crowned by twelve stars. Sophia is

clothed with the zodiac. She is at the present time working from the level of the zodiac.

Daniel Andreev's indication regarding the descent of Sophia, referred to earlier, points to "the turn of the nineteenth century", i.e., around 1800, so the date 1775 found through astrophysical research is close to this. This point in time of Sophia's entrance into the local part of our galaxy coincides with the founding of the United States of America in 1776. There is a very deep connection here between these two events, which it is not possible to go into now because it is too complex. However, it can be said that there is a relationship between the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the descent of Sophia to unite with our cosmos – by this is meant the local part of the galaxy, the Orion Arm – around the year 1775. Since that time Sophia has been working from the level of the zodiac.

Since then *Theosophy* has arisen – Theo-Sophia, the wisdom of God, through H. P. Blavatsky (1831-1891). Also Russian *Sophiology* – the theology of Sophia – has arisen through Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900); and *Anthroposophy* (Anthropo-Sophia), the wisdom of the human being, has arisen through Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) These spiritual streams have arisen directly in the wake of the approach of Sophia, who around 1775 came from the *Central Sun* into our local cosmos, the Orion Arm of the Milky Way galaxy. The coming of Sophia was revealed to John on the island of Patmos over 1900 years ago when the Ascended Christ showed him the unfolding of the future of evolution. In the middle of this unfolding, in this series of visions that he received and wrote down in *Revelations*, in Chapter 12 he suddenly beheld Sophia appearing. John was seeing into the future. He was seeing a certain moment in time. He saw that Divine Sophia was going to appear on the world stage.

We can ask the question: When was this, or is it still to come in the future? The answer is that the appearance of Sophia onto the world stage is happening in stages. The first stage has to do with Sophia coming into our cosmos represented by the realm of the zodiac, symbolized by the twelve stars around her head. The second stage has to do with Sophia coming into our solar system and connecting with the Sun. This is why John saw her in vision "clothed with the Sun". In the third stage he beheld her with the Moon under her feet. And then follows the fourth stage, which I will discuss below. What we are presented with in Chapter 12 of *Revelations* is a blueprint of the incarnation of Sophia. What, then, is the next stage of Sophia's incarnation, when she will come down from the level of the zodiac comprising the twelve zodiacal constellations?

According to astrophysical research, this will be around the year 2375. Then Sophia will come into our solar system and unite with our Sun. Then she really will be the "woman clothed with the Sun." This will take place at an interval of about 600 years after her entrance into our local cosmos (Orion Arm) with its central band of stars – the twelve constellations of the zodiac. Advancing 600 years from 1775, this will occur around the year 2375, which is the date when the vernal point will enter the sign of Aquarius. Right now the vernal point is at 5 degrees in the sign of Pisces.

It moves back one degree every 72 years. We can calculate the exact date when the vernal point will enter into the sign of Aquarius signifying the beginning of the Age of Aquarius. This will be in the year 2375. This is the date that I have arrived at, based on an exact definition of the zodiac as presented in my PhD thesis. This date is also confirmed by a publication called the *American Sidereal Ephemeris*.³ There the date for the beginning of the Age of Aquarius is given as 2376 – a slight difference of only one year. Whichever date one takes, the beginning of the Age of Aquarius is around this time. This will be the time when Sophia will enter into the next stage of her incarnation approaching the Earth in accordance with the great vision of John that he had on Patmos over 1900 years ago. She will then be literally the “woman clothed with the Sun.”

Already now preparation for the incarnation of Sophia on the Sun is taking place. This is one of the great events in the history of our solar system. The entrance of Sophia into our solar system will signify a profound shift in our evolution, when this being of sublime majesty, beauty, celestial power, grace, and divine light and love will unite with the Sun at the start of the Age of Aquarius. Even now Sophia’s influence, which at the present time (last part of the Age of Pisces) is streaming in from the world of the fixed stars, is already beginning to be received by our solar system and, in the words of Daniel Andreev, this is giving rise to a new culture here on the earth, the Sophia culture known as the Rose of the World. The more that human beings experience this inflowing of Sophia, now from the fixed stars, especially from the twelve constellations of the zodiac, but soon – in the Age of Aquarius – directly from the Sun, the more there will arise a new sense for life here on earth. To illustrate this, here with a quote from Daniel Andreev’s book *The Rose of the World*:

A mysterious event is taking place in contemporary times: new divine creative energy is emanating into our cosmos. Since ancient times, the loftiest hearts and minds have anticipated this event that is now taking place. This is an event so important that it can only be compared to the incarnation of the Logos 1900 years ago. Vladimir Solovyov was given a glimpse of her when on a starry night in the Egyptian desert he experienced a stunning breach of his consciousness and saw the great feminine being with his own eyes. We call her *Zventa Sventana*, the Holiest of the Holy, She who is the brightest and all good, the experience of the feminine hypostasis of the Trinity. The long-awaited day approaches when she will descend. There she will be born in a body of enlightened ether. A host of the loftiest souls will descend with her. There she is, our hope and joy, light and divine beauty. With her coming, there will be the founding of the Rose of the World.⁴

³ Neil Michelsen, *The American Sidereal Ephemeris* (San Diego/CA: Astro Communications Services, 1981), Introduction.

⁴ Daniel Andreev, *The Rose of the World* (Great Barrington/MA: Lindisfarne Books, 1997), pp. 356-357.

This is the expression that Daniel Andreev uses for this new culture that will arise through the coming of Sophia, the *Rose of the World*. And this term is highly appropriate in view of Dante's great vision of Sophia in the form of a snow-white rose in the highest celestial realm, the Empyrean. The work of Sophia in our time is dedicated to helping to prepare the way for this future culture of the Rose of the World. In the visions of Daniel Andreev he also points to forces of opposition to this arising of the Rose of the World in the future. The greatest opposition is presented by the incarnation of the Antichrist. The culture that will arise through the coming of the Antichrist is the opposite of what is to come into the world through the coming of Sophia and the founding of the Rose of the World. There are challenges to be faced. In meeting these challenges, we can especially find strength by focusing upon the Rose of the World and gaining an idea of the coming great culture of Sophia. Again quoting from *The Rose of the World*, Andreev says: "By warning about the coming Antichrist, by pointing him out and unmasking him when he appears, and also by cultivating unshakeable faith within human hearts, and also by grasping the spiritual perspectives of evolution, we will help Sophia bring to birth the new culture of love and wisdom." It has to be recalled, however, that Daniel Andreev, using his own special language, does not speak of Sophia. Rather, he speaks of *Zventa Sventana*, the Holiest of the Holy. Further, it has to be clarified that when Daniel Andreev speaks of an incarnation of Sophia, he makes it clear that this is not an incarnation into a physical human being, as was the case with the incarnation of Christ in the physical human being Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, it will be an incarnation of Sophia in an "ethereal body". This ethereal body, according to Andreev, is already being prepared, and it is a body of life forces, a radiant body.

This, then, is the fourth stage of incarnation of this great being, who will work here on the Earth in this radiant ethereal body and will bring about a far-reaching transformation giving rise to the culture of the *Rose of the World*, which Rudolf Steiner calls the *sixth cultural epoch*, the future Slavic culture. Everything that Rudolf Steiner describes about this future culture is elaborated upon by Daniel Andreev in his book *The Rose of the World*. It is through Rudolf Steiner that we know the exact date as to when this sixth culture will arise – starting in 3575 and extending over 2160 years to 5735.⁵ It will be the time of Sophia's incarnation in her ethereal body. This is the fourth stage – from the year 3575 – after the three stages depicted in the vision of Sophia from the Apocalypse of the stage of the stars ("crowned with twelve stars" – zodiacal level, 1775-2375), then the stage of the Sophia's incarnation upon the Sun ("clothed with the Sun" – Sun level, 2375-2975), then the stage of Sophia's working from the Sun through the phases of the Moon ("the Moon under her feet" – Moon level, 2975-3575). The rhythm of Sophia's incarnation follows a 600-year

⁵ Robert Powell, *Hermetic Astrology*, vol. I (San Rafael/CA: Sophia Foundation Press, 2007), Chapter 3 describes the sequence of zodiacal ages and corresponding cultural epochs, each 2160 years in length.

rhythm, which is connected with the planet Venus.⁶ This is also referred to by Rudolf Steiner, who speaks of the 600-year rhythm as an important rhythm of cultural history.⁷

To summarize the stages of Sophia's incarnation, which are important to hold in consciousness: The first stage was around 1775 coming from the galaxy into our cosmos, uniting with the Orion Arm, represented by the central band of stars, the twelve constellations of the zodiac, the "twelve stars". 600 years later, in 2375, the Age of Aquarius will begin and Sophia will unite with the Sun, when she will appear as "the woman clothed with the Sun." A further 600 years later, in 2975, Sophia will start to work increasingly from the Sun down to the level of the Moon. Then the third aspect beheld in John's great vision, with the Moon "beneath her feet", will be actualized. Sophia's incarnation means that she is working ever closer towards the Earth. And then a further 600 years later, in 3575, the incarnation of Sophia in an ethereal form in a life body in the Earth's aura will take place, in what is called the "world of the elements". This is the date – the actual date is 3574 – indicated by Rudolf Steiner for the beginning of the sixth cultural epoch. This is what Daniel Andreev is referring to with the birth of the Rose of the World as a new world culture inspired by Divine Sophia. Thus, with the help of star wisdom, it is possible to come to a precise understanding of the incarnation of Divine Sophia bringing the future culture known as the Rose of the World, underlying the sixth cultural epoch, which will last for 2160 years, from 3574 to 5734 – the coming down of Sophia from celestial heights as our hope, our joy, and our source of comfort for the future.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *Background to the Gospel of St. Mark* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1968), p. 153.