



## SOPHIA GRAIL CIRCLE

CONSECRATION TO THE  
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SOPHIA  
&  
CONSECRATION TO THE  
SACRED HEART OF JESUS CHRIST

The consecrations to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ and to the Immaculated Heart of Mary Sophia can be of fundamental value and assistance. Together they are the modern equivalent of that which is referred to as the "baptism of water and the spirit."

*Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

John 3:5

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## *Esoteric material by Valentin Tomberg*

### Writings on the Lotus Flowers (Chakras)

As announced in the last issue of the newsletter (*Starlight*, volume 7, no.1 – Spring 2007), Valentin Tomberg's *Anthroposophical Studies of the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocalypse of St. John* together with his seven lectures entitled *The Four Sacrifices of Christ and the Appearance of Christ in the Etheric* have been republished by Steiner Books in a single volume entitled *Christ and Sophia*, with an excellent Introduction by Christopher Bamford. Also Valentin Tomberg's *Covenant of the Heart*, written towards the end of his life, has been republished under the title *Lazarus, Come Forth!* Both works are available from the Sophia Foundation as also is *Inner Development* – seven lectures by Valentin Tomberg on the path of esoteric development, with unique material on the three doubles and also Rudolf Steiner's life path as the way of a Christian initiate, again with a wonderful Introduction by Christopher Bamford. Moreover, Sophia Foundation Press is republishing Valentin Tomberg's *Studies of the Foundation Stone Meditation* and his collection of *Early Articles* (more information concerning these two publications will appear in the next newsletter).

In addition to the above publications, in the newsletters of the Sophia Foundation the following esoteric material by Valentin Tomberg has been published for the first time in English translation:

- 1 "Our Mother" in volume 2 (2002), no.1
- 2 "Solomon" in volume 2 (2002), no.2
- 3 "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" in volume 3 (2003), no.1
- 4 "From a book that I read during sleep" in volume 4 (2004), no.2
- 5 "Trials by Fire, Water and Air of Man and Humanity" in volume 5 (2005), no.1
- 6 "The Zarathustra Line of Jesus of Nazareth, part I: Manu-Melchizedek" in volume 5 (2005), no.2
- 7 "The Zarathustra Line of Jesus of Nazareth, part II: Zarathustra-Zoroaster-Jesus" in volume 6 (2006), no.1
- 8 "The Lotus Flowers, Part I: The Three Upper Lotus Flowers" in volume 7 (2007), no. 1

My article "*Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, and the Return of Christ in the Etheric*" appeared in *Starlight*, volume 6 (2006), no.2 and in this issue my article "*Valentin Tomberg: a Platonic Soul*" is being published. Also in this issue of the newsletter we are continuing with the publication of hitherto unpublished material written by Valentin Tomberg on the Lotus Flowers (Chakras) translated from the German into English. This material partly overlaps with the material in his *Lord's Prayer Course (Our Mother Course)* available as an esoteric course of studies from the Sophia Foundation, however it also contains material that is completely new. In the following material, reference is sometimes made to the seven I AM sayings and also the seven healing miracles from the *Gospel of St. John* as corresponding to the seven lotus flowers, and also that there are seven words (sayings) from the cross and seven sayings of the Risen One which relate to the seven lotus flowers. In the following material these correspondences are not presented fully – they are, however, presented in a complete form in my booklet *The Morning Meditation in Eurythmy*, which also indicates a way of working with these correspondences.

—Robert Powell

☆ ☆ ☆

# The Lotus Flowers

## Part II: The Lower Lotus Flowers

VALENTIN TOMBERG

Translated by Robert Powell from a German manuscript written before or during World War II and previously unpublished in English.

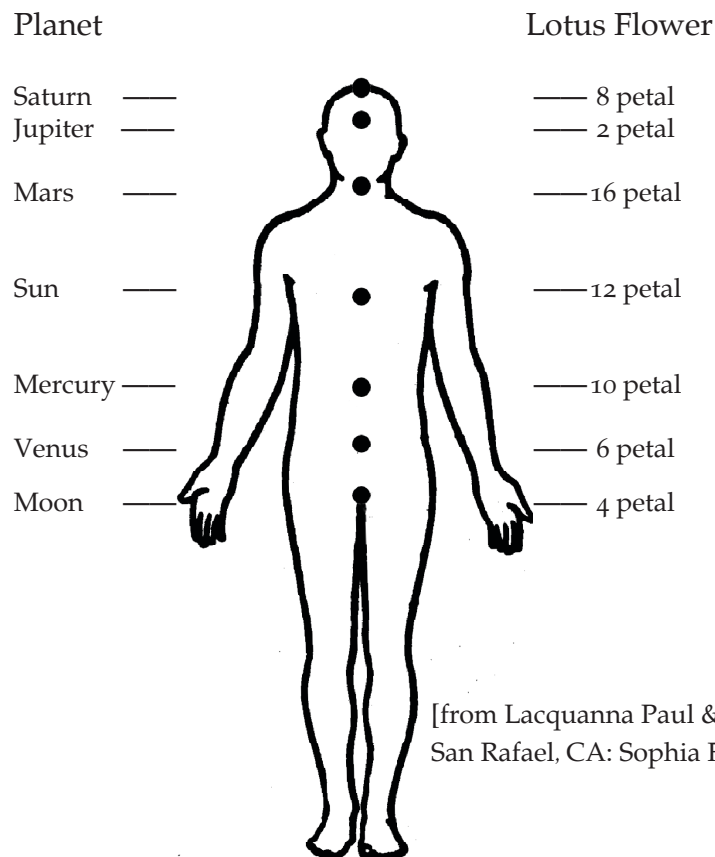
Footnotes and words in brackets [ ] have been added by the translator.

[For practical reasons this material has been divided into parts. The first part dealing with the upper three lotus flowers was published in the previous issue of *Starlight*. Part II focuses upon the lower lotus flowers – specifically the 12 petal, the 10 petal, and the 6 petal lotus flowers. Among the esoteric material relating to the lotus flowers in Part II, there are also scattered references to the 4 petal lotus flower, which is the Root Chakra and corresponds to the Moon.]

### Introduction

Every astral body has seven lotus flowers. Their essence consists of primal thoughts from the power of the Father.

The human being has seven lotus flowers, which are his seven spiritual organs. The seven seals of the Apocalypse refer to the seven lotus flowers. The transfiguration of Christ was the opening and penetration [of the lotus flowers] by the power of Christ pouring through them. Temptation is the wrong development of the lotus flowers. Saints are human beings who are penetrated from the spiritual world in such a way that one or more lotus flowers are transfigured by the power of Christ pouring through them. Every esotericist must have been a saint at some time [in a previous incarnation] and had the experience of being irradiated by the Sun radiance of Christ pouring through them.



[It is] the I AM power that effects the transfiguration of the lotus flowers—I AM being the esoteric name of Christ. All [seven] I AM sayings are healings of the seven lotus flowers. Also the seven healing miracles, which accompany the I AM sayings as Imaginations, are symbolic acts for the purification of the seven lotus flowers. Evil arises if instead of the power of Christ the power of evil enters into the lotus flowers. This is also sevenfold, since each I AM saying has an evil saying counterposed to it. Each lotus flower or chakra corresponds to a planet.

[from Lacquanna Paul & Robert Powell, *Cosmic Dances of the Planets*, San Rafael, CA: Sophia Foundation Press, 2007.]

## [Heart Chakra] 12 petal lotus flower: Sun

The 12 petal lotus flower is like a Sun and has twelve petals or rays. When the 16 petal lotus flower moves and one of its rays meets the 12 petal lotus, the latter also begins to rotate – from the word [16 petal lotus] to love [12 petal lotus]. Its content is: the three crosses from Golgotha laid one upon the other (3x4). Its effect is healing. With the 16 petal lotus flower healing takes place through the word. With the 12 petal lotus flower healing is through a stream of love. It rays out love and goodness. It is quite especially effective, because it is not bound to one location, but rather it can move around and enter into other human beings. It is the astral Sun, the lotus flower of love. It contains the crosses of Lucifer, Ahriman, and Christ. When Lucifer's pride is transformed into shame and then conscience, this sphere is purified. Ahriman has to make the transition from the fear of judgment to awe and reverence before God. The Christ's cross of love is in the center and all is [filled with] the Sun's power. Right now [1<sup>st</sup> layer in the structure of the heart] coldness and death are at the center. [Proceeding from the center of the heart outward layer by layer, the next layer is the second layer, then comes the third layer, followed by the fourth layer.] 2<sup>nd</sup> layer: fear; 3<sup>rd</sup> layer: worry; 4<sup>th</sup> layer: boredom. All of this is [the nature of] Ahriman.

Then [in the structure of the heart] comes the sphere of Lucifer, and on the outermost periphery [of the heart] is the [realm of the] Christ impulse. The Christ sphere [proceeding outwards in the structure of the heart] comprises: 1<sup>st</sup> layer: being; 2<sup>nd</sup> layer: joy; 3<sup>rd</sup> layer: humility; 4<sup>th</sup> layer: pain. When it begins to radiate, the inner goes to the periphery. [This is the first stage.] Then the lotus flower of love cognizes the secret [mystery] of Golgotha. At the second stage the kernel is transformed again into a Sun [\*], where the 'I' is at the focal point again. [This is the] level of Imagination.

At the following stage [the third stage] a ray proceeds from the 16 petal lotus flower around the 12 petal lotus flower, entering into it and teaching it, whereby the Sun [\*] begins to ray in upon itself in response to this stream.

A whole 'streaming system' then forms, which in turn enlivens the 16 petal lotus flower. This is the second level – Inspiration. An etheric stream then forms the etheric heart. Here the 16 petal lotus flower takes the initiative. This heart is purely etheric, forming as a heart on the right alongside the heart on the left. Here

also [between the physical heart and the etheric heart] a center arises and the rays form three crosses which, however, are able to recognize evil. Through conscience (first heart) and through love (second heart) we have to cognize the crosses of Ahriman, Lucifer, and the Asuras. This is knowledge [cognition] of the threefold evil. This is the eighth lotus flower, which only a few people have at the present time. Now [at the present time] one cannot have more [than eight] lotus flowers. This is the level of initiation [Intuition] – three circles [one imagines the three circles around one, centered in the heart chakra, adding a circle each time that one speaks or thinks or meditates one of the following mantra]:

'I unite myself with the Spirit' – cognize the first cross.  
Imagination

'I love the Son' – cognize the first and the second cross.  
Inspiration

'I revere the Father' – cognize all three crosses.  
Intuition

The Imagination of [the Mystery of] Golgotha and [also] the [three] Rosicrucian Mantra ['I revere the Father'; 'I love the Son'; 'I unite myself with the Spirit'] belong to this lotus flower.

The Nathan Jesus had an ideal 12 petal lotus flower. [After the Fall] the 12 petal lotus flower was damaged when human beings no longer received the right nourishment from seed forces. Christ purified and healed this lotus flower with the words: 'I AM the bread of life'. The corresponding saying from the Cross is: 'Today you shall be with me in paradise', ['in paradise' signifying] in the kingdom of the heart and soul. The resurrection of this lotus flower is connected with the words of the Risen One in the Apocalypse about a new heaven and a new earth – the New Jerusalem ['Behold a new heaven and a new earth' – *Revelation 21:1*].

This is the lotus flower in which human morality flourishes, where wisdom and revelation come together. The upper three lotus flowers are those of wisdom through which one acquires self-knowledge. The lower three lotus flowers are those of revelation. Both [wisdom and revelation] come together in the 12 petal lotus flower.

## [Solar Plexus Chakra] 10 petal lotus flower: Mercury

This is the lotus flower of the conscious and the subconscious. If its contours are sharply defined, the human being thinks clearly and not indistinctly. Clear, well-defined thoughts help to develop this lotus flower. Indefinite thoughts and thinking that flutters around weakens it. It is the lotus flower of knowledge and also science. Usually the 10 petal lotus flower is connected directly with the 2 petal lotus flower, and the two in between – the 12 petal and the 16 petal lotus flowers – are excluded. On this account scientific thinkers are generally unable to work at all convincingly with the word – their heart is not present [in what they say].

Clairvoyant perception in color and form is yielded by the 10 petal lotus flower when directed outwards. Directed inwards, it is the memory of everything from the other lotus flowers transformed into form, color, and image. It is the 'keeper of the archives' in the human being.

It has a very definite form: two pentagrams one upon the other—the front one has two points directed downward, and the rear one has one point directed downward.

First it develops Imagination, then Inspiration and Intuition [which is the classical development]. It is the lotus flower of knowledge. It nurtures analysis—however, without losing sight of the whole. It strongly develops the elaboration of elements—for example, [to study] Thomas Aquinas' mode of thought and cognition is conducive to health. This mode entails always proceeding from a set point and placing everything else in relationship to it. Vague mysticism is not healthy for the 10 petal lotus flower. It has a movement toward the front and one toward the rear, toward the spinal column.

Its ten petals correspond to ten senses: five 'day senses' and five 'night senses'.

It is the 4 petal lotus flower which bears the memory of the past, [that] of negative karma, the memory of the astral body. The 8 petal lotus flower bears the memory of the future, [that] of positive karma, the memory of the physical body. Memory of everything to do with the present incarnation lives in the 10 petal lotus flower, [the memory of] the etheric body.

At the level of Imagination the stream ascends straight up [direction ascends from below above in relation to

the five lotus flowers listed here, and alongside is written 'Imaginative consciousness']:

8 petal lotus flower  
2 petal lotus flower  
16 petal lotus flower                      Imaginative consciousness  
12 petal lotus flower  
10 petal lotus flower

[At the level of Inspiration the stream ascends up and then descends down again as far as the 16 petal lotus flower. Alongside the diagram representing this is written 'Inspirational consciousness']:

8 petal lotus flower  
2 petal lotus flower  
16 petal lotus flower                      Inspirational consciousness  
12 petal lotus flower  
10 petal lotus flower

[At the level of Intuition the stream ascends directly from the 10 petal lotus flower to the 8 petal lotus flower and then directly back down to the 12 petal lotus flower. Alongside the diagram representing this is written 'Intuitive consciousness']:

8 petal lotus flower  
12 petal lotus flower                      Intuitive consciousness  
10 petal lotus flower

All scientific, objective thinking arises through the working together of the 2 petal lotus flower and the 10 petal lotus flower, in their meeting. Mathematical thinking arises from the subconscious. A hypothesis is only a hypothesis as long as it is in the subconscious. When it is brought to consciousness, it is no longer a hypothesis.

The [five primary] senses of the human being have been separated by Ahriman. Through the development of the lotus flowers the five senses become re-united again. For example, one then sees with the sense of touch or with the sense of hearing, and so on.

The complete development of the 10 petal lotus flower would make the human being into an architect. [On the other hand] music belongs to the 6 petal lotus flower. Music and painting belong to hygienic esotericism. Architecture and sculpture are 'Father arts' [belonging] to mechanical esotericism.

A [clockwise] spiral proceeds from the 10 petal lotus



flower to the 12 petal lotus flower. In every petal of the 12 petal lotus flower is a special form of healing —[belonging to] healing esotericism. On this account there are twelve specializations in medicine. All forms of healing belong to one or other of these twelve. Whichever petal comes into contact with the revolving spiral from the 10 petal lotus flower is responsible for the special development of the human being [in a particular direction]. This is medical ‘healing intuition’. Black occultism dives down to the 4 petal lotus flower, thereby cognizing the four directions of the physical, etheric, and astral bodies and the ‘I’, and [from there] directs everything in such a way that [all] the lotus flowers are corrupted.

The 10 petal lotus flower does not have anything to do with morality directly. However, its imperfection has consequences for morality. Everything is then fuzzy; nothing is sharply contoured. In our time the 10 petal lotus flower has to be developed, and therefore it is now quite especially attacked by dark forces. Nowadays life is very ‘indefinite’ in a moral sense.

The upper lotus flowers sleep during the night, and the lower ones are filled from below. Thus, one has no choice. If one does not definitely decide [to serve the Good], one serves evil. However, the 10 petal lotus flower is awake at night. It is awake through all 24 hours of the day. It is the light of the subconscious. It awakens the human being when danger threatens.

Bodily asceticism was practiced as the conscious renunciation of the 4 petal lotus flower and the force of procreation, because this force can be used for evil purposes. A lotus flower can be healed when it rests in God and becomes a servant of the Good. Thus, one can renounce the 10 petal lotus flower in our time, because otherwise [potentially] it would only be misused for scientific knowledge [in that it would be used for this kind of knowledge alone]. Then one would have no interest in things which do not have to do with God. This [renunciation] is also able to effect healing. In so far as a human being is able to misuse his lotus flowers, he is a human being [and not an Angel].

The saying from the Cross for this lotus flower is, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do’. [This refers to] unconscious behavior. Healing takes place through the words, ‘I am the door’ in relation to the healing of the paralyzed man [at the pool of Bethesda], who lay there for 38 years.

[Sacral Chakra] 6 petal lotus flower: Mercury, now Venus

This is the lotus flower of the balance of body, soul, and spirit—also of peace. It has the quality of working harmonizingly upon polarities, bringing them into accord. [Here there is] a covenant, in freedom, between the body, the soul, and the spirit. The 6 petal lotus flower has the ability to harmonize the character of other people. It also gives the capacity of intercourse with spiritual beings in the soul realm and regulates the contact between the two worlds [the soul realm and the world of normal human consciousness]. It enables a quite definite acquaintance with spiritual beings. Its form is the Seal of Solomon [6-pointed star]. Its movement is a rotating triangle, describing a circle. Its being is harmony: the principle of balance between body, soul, and spirit. It is the lotus flower of eugenic esotericism.<sup>1</sup>

The conscience of healing esotericism is the 10 petal lotus flower.

The conscience of eugenic esotericism is the 6 petal lotus flower.

The conscience of mechanical esotericism is the 4 petal lotus flower.

Inspiration of healing esotericism is through the 12 petal lotus flower.

Inspiration of eugenic esotericism is through the 16-12-6 petal lotus flowers.

Inspiration of mechanical esotericism is through the 2-12-4 petal lotus flowers.

Intercourse with beings of the third hierarchy: a point between the 12 and 10 petal lotus flowers.

Intercourse with beings of the second hierarchy: a point between the 10 and 6 petal lotus flowers.

Intercourse with beings of the first hierarchy: a point between the 6 and 4 petal lotus flowers.

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<sup>1</sup> See Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia* (Steiner Books: Gt. Barrington, Massachusetts, 2006), p. 159 concerning eugenic, hygienic, and mechanical esotericism. These three branches of esoteric knowledge refer to reproduction, health, and the ‘mechanics’ of using subtle energies.

The 16 and 6 petal lotus flowers develop together, as do the 2 and 10 petal lotus flowers and [also] the 8 and 4 petal lotus flowers. The 12 petal lotus flower stands alone [in that] it has knowledge from above and revelation from below. One can only work upon the upper lotus flowers, which then work upon the lower ones with which they are connected. One is not able to work directly upon the lower ones.

The 4 petal lotus flower corresponds to Future Vulcan (Ancient Saturn).

The 6 petal lotus flower corresponds to Future Venus (Ancient Sun).

The 10 petal lotus flower corresponds to Future Jupiter (Ancient Moon).

Only the 12 petal lotus flower is in the present, i.e. it is the lotus flower of the world.

The three upper lotus flowers correspond to the human being prior to the Fall.

Lucifer works upon the upper three [and] Ahriman upon the lower three lotus flowers.

The Son works upon the 16 petal lotus flower.

The Spirit works upon the 2 petal lotus flower.

The Father works upon the 8 petal lotus flower.

The highest development of the lotus flowers is reached when higher spiritual beings can be taken into them.

Thus, the highest development of the 12 petal lotus flower is reached when the Nathan Jesus is taken into it. The power of Michael can be taken into the 10 petal lotus flower. The power of the being that was the Time Spirit in the Ancient Indian epoch, the Angelic Being that inspired the Manu, can be taken into the 6 petal lotus flower. The highest hierarchical being can be taken into the 4 petal lotus flower – this is that part of the Christ Power that works as Yahweh. The other lotus flowers belong to other hierarchical beings whose names are not yet known [except to initiates]. As long as this is so, they will remain undeveloped [that is, without knowing these names, a potent means for the development of these lotus flowers is lacking].

All the lotus flowers have their basic law of operation.

The following is an application of this:

The 8 petal lotus flower: breadth [width]

The 2 petal lotus flower: coldness

The 16 petal lotus flower: air [discussed below at the end of this section]

The 12 petal lotus flower: movement

The 10 petal lotus flower: warmth

The 6 petal lotus flower: height

The 4 petal lotus flower: length

The 2 petal lotus flower is connected with coldness. For example, a person from the north is more individual than one from the south. Human beings from the north have a stronger 'I'. In the south there are more types who are similar to one another. The movement of the 12 petal lotus flower is the cause of the heart's flow of life. Twelve rays from the zodiac penetrate through the twelve petals into the heart. These rays, which are effected by Yahweh, have a moonlike quality. However, when [Christ] rays out from the 12 petal lotus flower, they become partly sunlike. Illnesses are [a matter of] destiny, and death is independent thereof. When one becomes old and tired, the rays go higher and higher into the head until they eventually arrive at the 8 petal lotus flower—from the Sun sphere of the heart into the Father sphere (death). Then the movement of the heart ceases.

[In the spirit of the ancient yoga tradition] the Indians seek to raise their consciousness to the Father, into the 1000 petal lotus flower, as they call it. However, this is wrong. For one cannot come here [into this lotus flower] without bringing one's life experience with one. They attempt [to do so] without life experience. Through this madness, drops of this lotus flower sprinkle down which, however, all fall into Ahriman's realm.

Warmth in the 10 petal lotus flower signifies that love penetrates into all twelve senses. Someone who is filled with love finds that, even if their senses were not previously open, now all their senses open. One can stand a bad smell without feeling nauseous if one recognizes it. In the legend of Christ Jesus [about him seeing a dead dog], with the [sight of the] dead dog it is said that he did not see only decay and dissolution but also the wonderful image that arises when the elements return to their home. If one is unable to feel love for a stone, one can think of Nature [lovingly], and one's senses will be opened through love.

The 'height' of the 6 petal lotus flower signifies the harmonization of thought, feeling, and will in the vertical (not in the horizontal). In a practical sense this means a continuous, ever-present thought/remembrance of the spiritual world, more as a mood than on the level of consciousness. One has to learn to say I AM vertically. Then a vertical stream ascends above from the eyes, and a triangle descends from above, outside of the human being's [normal] consciousness, coming from the higher self in the future. And if the human being comes to this point in the course of life, he [or she] knows what has to be done. For the Y-fork of deciding has already

been accomplished.<sup>2</sup> The Y-fork which is only for the purpose of decision making in the horizontal causes disadvantages for development in the vertical. Then a constant dilemma arises between above and below. [For] the Y-fork in the vertical: [imagine a triangle with the point up \*, this point being the higher self; one side of the triangle is a line proceeding down from the higher self to the point \* representing the 6 petal lotus flower, and the other side of the triangle is a line proceeding down from the higher self to the point \* representing something of the future – see schematic figure].

\*higher self

\*6 petal lotus flower

\*point in the future

The fact of not placing the Y-fork in the vertical but rather in the horizontal signifies THE illness of this lotus flower, through which the whole of humanity is passing. If humanity does not become creative in the vertical, it will always remain blind. The eyes of the 8 petal lotus flower are pierced through the Father. In the 4 petal lotus flower there is a splinter of Ahriman. Only through the two eyes becoming vertical [“vertical seeing”] can they be restored to the ‘I’.

Air: the 16 petal lotus flower. If air enters the blood, the human being dies. Air and blood are inimical. This is an expression of the Fall. Both [air and blood] are part of Christ. Through the Fall they have been torn apart. In the [future] Jupiter period [of evolution] both will be able to be reunited again. Air is the I AM spoken in the cosmos. Blood is the power of the word I AM in the human being. Now blood and air are not able to be united. At

the present time one can only acknowledge [cognize] these two I AM’s.

Work on the 16 petal lotus flower does not take place directly, but [indirectly] from the 2 petal and the 6 petal [lotus flowers]—from the 2 petal lotus flower because the principle of higher consciousness is in this lotus flower, and from the 6 petal lotus flower because there is harmonization in this lotus flower. One has to imagine the 16 petal lotus flower as a knot of veins which are empty within, like empty tubes that have an opening at each end. The Word of Christ is breathed into one end, and the word is breathed out the other end through the human being. In the future this lotus flower will not look very nice; it will look like the glandular system. However, what will sound forth from it will be wonderful. In the case of Ahrimanic human beings this lotus flower will look wonderful – transparent, crystalline – but it will be the work of Ahriman shaping it, not of the human being. These human beings will avoid pronouncing certain words, for example: Christ. If they speak his name, a part of this fragile structure [of the 16 petal lotus flower] will fall off. This will be healing for them, but they will be afraid of it. In the etheric bodies of these human beings a degeneration of the etheric blood will take place, corresponding to what takes place in the blood on a physical level with syphilis.

[To be continued in the next issue of *Starlight* (Spring 2008). The next part of this series of esoteric studies on the lotus flowers by Valentin Tomberg is about the movement of the lotus flowers and how they are interrelated.]

2 This reference by Valentin Tomberg is just one example of his panoramic overview of the whole domain of initiation science. The Y-fork of deciding is something that was practiced in the Rosicrucian School and was spoken of by Rudolf Steiner in his first Esoteric School. The communications of Rudolf Steiner within the first Esoteric School were not known outside of a small handful of people, and their content was only published (in German, in three volumes) in the 1990’s, long after Valentin Tomberg’s death. In 2007 the first of these three volumes was published in English translation, from which the following description of the exercise of the Y-fork of deciding is taken: “In the good Rosicrucian school a symbol was given... Y [on the left arm of the Y the words ‘Command me’ are written, and on the right arm of the Y the words ‘Forbid me’ are written]. Concerning this symbol the teacher says: To be sure, you cannot use the method you receive with this symbol with everything that happens to you during the day, especially in these fast-paced times, yet in a thousand instances you should do it at least once. That one time imagine this form before your spiritual eye when you are confronted with the need to make a decision. Then imagine that along one line the words are written: ‘Command me’. Then in a contemplative way let everything pass through your soul that can be said in favor of the deed in question. Everything must be well and logically thought through. A fact that follows from the previous fact must be truthfully, that is, in accordance with the facts, thought through, until at the conclusion of the line of thought you have standing clearly before your soul what appears as the goal of the decision that is to be translated into a deed. Then think of the other line. On the other line stands written: ‘Forbid me’. Here you must also list all the facts that speak against the decision. This must be done just as clearly, with complete objectivity, without sympathy or antipathy. Then let your gaze sweep along the line with no writing. There, you imagine, you yourself are standing, but your true ‘I’, not your sheath-‘I’, stands there. Then wait quietly and compare what appears as the facts that speak for the line labeled ‘command me’ and for the line labeled ‘forbid me’, by looking back and forth between them. And then the correct decision will appear in your mind and your true ‘I’ will have given it to you. You must do the same if you have to make a judgment. Along one line is written ‘correct’, on the other ‘incorrect’. Your higher self stands on the unwritten line... Your true, unique, inner ‘I’, uninfluenced by the sheath-‘I’, will then tell you the correct judgment if, again, you listen quietly and with perfect, inner calm and seclusion to what it says” (Rudolf Steiner, *Esoteric Lessons 1904-1909*, Steiner Books, Gt. Barrington, Massachusetts, 2007, pp. 318-319).



# Valentin Tomberg: a Platonic Soul

ROBERT POWELL

A key to understanding Valentin Tomberg as a Platonist is given through his relationship with Elisabeth Vreede (1879-1943), one of Rudolf Steiner's closest co-workers. Concerning Elisabeth Vreede, Rudolf Steiner indicated that she had incarnated earlier than planned and that she did this in order to meet Rudolf Steiner on Earth. He also saw her in connection with the Platonic stream.<sup>1</sup> It is well known that at Plato's Academy in Athens astronomy, arithmetic, geometry, and music were taught. Mathematics and astronomy have always been cultivated in the Platonic stream. Rudolf Steiner indicated this explicitly in connection with Elisabeth Vreede, whom he appointed as the leader of the Mathematical-Astronomical Section.

In his lectures on Karmic Relationships Rudolf Steiner outlined how the people gathered around him belonged more to the Aristotelian stream. In this respect Elisabeth Vreede was an exception. She had incarnated earlier than planned in order to meet Rudolf Steiner. Because she came early, she had a very limited circle of friends.<sup>2</sup> Those with whom she was karmically connected were not yet incarnated. However, upon meeting Valentin Tomberg she recognized him immediately as a significant figure from the Platonic stream and decided to actively support his deeply Christian anthroposophical impulse. She organized lectures for him and she was the person from whom it was possible to order Tomberg's *Biblical Meditations*<sup>3</sup> and other works that he had written. She formed the bridge between the two great spiritual streams of the twentieth century:

Rudolf Steiner	Aristotelian stream
Valentin Tomberg	Platonic stream

When Elisabeth Vreede was excluded from the Vorstand of the Anthroposophical Society, this meant the exclusion of the Platonic stream to which she belonged. It meant also the exclusion of the one whom she recognized as the leading figure of the Platonic stream, who – as she clearly saw and acknowledged in her Foreword to the first English edition of the *Studies of the Old Testament* – was capable of carrying on spiritual-scientific research along the lines of Rudolf Steiner. If she had remained in the Vorstand, Valentin Tomberg – as her protégé – would have been introduced to the members of the Anthroposophical Society as a spiritual researcher and Tomberg would have had the possibility of gaining widespread acceptance for the fulfillment of his mission, which was to teach concerning the coming of Christ in the etheric realm (as referred to in his seven lectures entitled *The Four Sacrifices of Christ and the Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric* published as an Appendix at the end of the recently published book *Christ and Sophia*).<sup>4</sup> One cannot understand the destiny of the Anthroposophical Society in the twentieth century if one does not know about this and if one does not clearly see that forces were at work to bring about a split between the Aristotelian and Platonic streams represented by Rudolf Steiner and Valentin Tomberg. Elisabeth Vreede did all she could to work against this tragic divisive tendency. She devoted much time and energy to leading people together.

The following quotation from Elisabeth Vreede's biography shows how she was always firmly against anyone being excluded from the Anthroposophical Society. She knew and recognized that all should be

1 Rudolf Steiner, *Die Weihnachtstagung zur Begründung der Allgemeinen Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft 1923/1924* (GA 260, Rudolf Steiner Verlag: Dornach, 1994), p. 272: "Thus you will see how well founded it was that above the door of Plato's school stood: 'God geometrizes!' And one can penetrate into the essence of a Platonic teaching...only through mathematics...I will let this realm be taken on in future by Dr. Vreede as leader" [meaning, leader of the newly founded Mathematical-Astronomical Section of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland].

2 M.P. van Deventer and Elisabeth Knottenbelt, *Elisabeth Vreede: Ein Lebensbild* (Natura Verlag: Arlesheim, 1976), p. 41.

3 Recently published in English translation in one volume (432 pages) under the title *Christ and Sophia: Anthroposophic Meditations on the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocalypse* (Steiner Books: Gt. Barrington/Massachusetts, 2006), available also from the Sophia Foundation.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 357-402.

able to find a place within the Society and should be allowed to express themselves. She carried the central concerns of the Anthroposophical Society in her heart and she was aware of preparing the way for others who would come later – representatives, like Valentin Tomberg and Willi Sucher,<sup>5</sup> of the Platonic stream. Her concern was that the Platonists should also find their place within the Society:

The Being of Anthroposophy I have always felt to be a newly created spiritual Being – created with the help of Dr. Steiner – so to say the first hierarchical Being generated by human beings. This Being is very young and relatively undeveloped, like a child – a Being that has to develop further through our working together as a “community of spiritual knowledge” and under the guidance of its creator from the spiritual world. Precisely on this account I find it so painful when again and again such hostile attacks are launched against some active members with a view to excluding them from this work of co-creation of the Being of Anthroposophy.<sup>6</sup>

Elisabeth Vreede’s words were not heeded. In fact, she herself became the victim of a hostile attack, which led to her being excluded from the Vorstand of the Anthroposophical Society in 1935.

Elisabeth Vreede’s clear recognition of Valentin Tomberg, referred to above, is expressed in her words of introduction to his *Studies of the Old Testament*:

Readers will do well to apply to these Studies the methodic principle we also learned from Rudolf Steiner: that the truths of esotericism must sustain *each other*...The very fact that these Studies – as the author pointed out in his preface to the original (1933) edition – are founded on the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, will make it easier for the reader, from the basic truths already known to him [or her], to understand and weigh whatever in these pages reaches out beyond Dr Steiner’s teaching...It should go without saying, and the author himself has made it clear, that such communications as are here contained do not absolve the reader from the responsibility of exercising his [or her] free judgment – submitting them to the test of independent thought and meditation and experience, even as Rudolf Steiner required us to do with his own teaching upon spiritual science.<sup>7</sup>

This is interesting, coming from Elisabeth Vreede, who was one of Rudolf Steiner’s closest co-workers, that she considered Valentin Tomberg’s work to build upon Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual science and to “reach out beyond Dr. Steiner’s teaching”. She referred to “the many deeply spiritual and sublime reflections that are here contained.”<sup>8</sup>

Through Elisabeth Vreede, Valentin Tomberg was invited to hold lectures at various anthroposophical gatherings. One such conference was the Summer School of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain held in Bangor, North Wales, in August 1938. There he held four lectures entitled, “*The Spiritual Hierarchies and their Working in the Twentieth Century*.”<sup>9</sup> In her report of the conference, Dorothy Lenn wrote: “We strove to follow Valentin Tomberg as he led us to esoteric heights, to ever loftier summits of the spiritual worlds...Mr Tomberg spoke of it [the location where the conference was held] as a place which enriched him inwardly, which breathed old remembrances, a place in which it was good to speak out great things. He spoke of the Druid mysteries, and how it was important that we should be there, continuing what had long been done on the hills of Penmaenmawr.”<sup>10</sup>

Among the approximately two hundred people who attended the Bangor conference was the young Willi Sucher, who was a co-worker of Elisabeth Vreede in the Mathematical-Astronomical Section of the School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, and who was the pioneer of a new star wisdom, *Astrosophy*. On this occasion Elisabeth Vreede and Willi Sucher took the opportunity to climb

5 Willi Sucher (1902-1985) was also a Platonic soul who was recognized by Elisabeth Vreede and encouraged to develop a new star wisdom (astrosophy) – see Willi Sucher, *Cosmic Christianity and the Changing Countenance of Cosmology* (Steiner Books: Gt. Barrington/Massachusetts, 1993), pp. 9-24 for a brief biography.

6 M.P. van Deventer and Elisabeth Knottenbelt, *Elisabeth Vreede: Ein Lebensbild* (Natura Verlag: Arlesheim, 1976), p. 10.

7 Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia: Anthroposophic Meditations on the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocalypse* (Steiner Books: Gt. Barrington/Massachusetts, 2006), pp. xxxi-xxxii.

8 *Ibid.*, p. xxxii.

9 Valentin Tomberg, “The Spiritual Hierarchies and their Working in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” *Shoreline*, vol. 5 (1992), pp. 36-51. Available in German translation in volume 1 of the biography by Liesel Heckmann, *Valentin Tomberg (1900-1944)*, (Novalis Verlag: Schaffhausen/Switzerland, 2001), pp. 546-562. As the journal *Shoreline* is no longer published, it is intended that the English original of these four lectures will be made available again in a future issue of *Starlight*.

10 “Valentin Tomberg: Some Facts, Some Questions,” *Shoreline*, vol. 2 (1989), p. 51.

the hill above Penmaenmawr (near Bangor) to visit the ancient Druid stone circle there, which had been visited by Rudolf Steiner in 1923. Years later Willi Sucher wrote, "Thus we took farewell of one another, at least for the time being, in the proximity of witnesses of an age-old star wisdom, and with a deep feeling of responsibility for its future."<sup>11</sup>

These "*witnesses of an age-old star wisdom*", the great Druid stone circle at Penmaenmawr, were referred to by Valentin Tomberg in his fourth lecture at the Bangor conference:

Druid culture was a high soul life. The twelve stones were the outer manifestation of the 12-petalled lotus [flower]. The heart perceived the mystery of the Sun. This was a heart esotericism, therefore not written down. Only the stones remain because the soul is dead. The resurrection of the soul is the rediscovery of the Sophia Being.<sup>12</sup>

In the same lecture, Valentin Tomberg gives some very important insights into the relationship between Sophia and the Archangel Michael and the second coming of Christ. We shall return below to the relationship between Sophia and Michael as a key to understanding the relationship between the Platonists and the Aristotelians, two spiritual groups in our time who have the task, in working together, to help prepare humanity in relation to the second coming of Christ – the Platonists who are oriented primarily to Sophia and the Aristotelians primarily to Michael. Now, however, let us focus on the role of Michael and Sophia with respect to the second coming of Christ, which is a return in an etheric body – in contrast to his coming two thousand years ago in a physical body.

In preparation for this event [the second coming], Christ has to take shape again, but this time in an etheric, angelic form. He will take, or borrow, the form of an Angel who is NOW [1938] in a state of consciousness which it is important to understand. This Angel is a personality [elsewhere Valentin Tomberg refers to this Angel actually as an Archangel working on the level of an Angel and bearing the name "Archangel Jesus"] who can only give information when asked inwardly. This personality is unselfish to the degree of having no activity except for other people. If there were no questions at all in her surroundings, she would experience a kind of swooning of inner consciousness. This is the present state of this Angel, because she meets no active questioning from humanity. She is in a sort of death [condition], awaiting resurrection, which will take place in human consciousness...The resurrection of the soul is the rediscovery of the Sophia Being. Her relation to the heart power of Michael gives her back the imaginative power of which she was robbed by Lucifer and which gave rise to fantasy. In the realm of fantasy Sophia cannot speak. She can only communicate with those who by effort reach her sphere. However, her union with Michael brings her in touch again with humanity. The lowest point of [Sophia's] contact [with humanity] is [through]the swooning of the angelic being. Sophia gives a kind of "motherly covering" to this being into whom will descend the Christ. Sophia bears the Angel closest to her heart, and in this Angel will Christ be born.<sup>13</sup>

To return to our initial theme – Valentin Tomberg: a Platonic soul – this is brought out in a wonderful way in Christopher Bamford's Introduction to the book *Christ and Sophia*, and I would like to close this article by quoting from this Introduction and then from Valentin Tomberg's first lecture (from the seven lectures on *Inner Development*) about the Platonists and the Aristotelians:

Aristotelians and Platonists should work together, but during the period when Tomberg was active in Anthroposophy, the mood was Aristotelian. As a Platonist, he was controversial almost by definition. Likewise, as a Platonist (and a Russian) he had an ineradicable affinity for Russian Orthodoxy, which again made him "different". It presented the problem of a "religious" temperament (again essentially Platonist) which, rather than turning toward nature and to visible history as the Aristotelians did, turned to Christ and the Christ Event as the heart of Anthroposophy, and hence to the heart and inner meaning of history, nature, and cosmos. On this basis...Tomberg sought to ground Anthroposophy in biblical revelation. Startling in its ambition though this might have been, it certainly was not orthogonal to Steiner's own intentions, because for Steiner, too, the Mystery of Golgotha was indisputably the "turning point of time"...

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> Valentin Tomberg, "The Spiritual Hierarchies and their Working in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," *Shoreline*, vol. 5 (1992), p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 50-51.

Something must still be added in conclusion. For Tomberg, as an anthroposophist, Sophia – as cosmic intelligence and ultimately, therefore, the source of our cognitions – is closely connected with the Archangel Michael. The Archangel Michael for Rudolf Steiner and for anthroposophists is at once the regent (or ruler) of our age, the Guardian of the Threshold who mediates cosmic intelligence to humanity, and the founder of a cosmic spiritual school, whose earthly reflection Anthroposophy seeks to be. In the first lecture (“The New Michael Community”) in *Inner Development*, Tomberg shows the intimate relationship between Michael, Sophia, and Christ. He speaks of Platonists and Aristotelians coming together to form a new “spiritual knighthood” under the name *Michael-Sophia in nomine Christi* (“Michael [and] Sophia in the name of Christ”):<sup>14</sup> Rudolf Steiner speaks of two streams within the anthroposophic movement: the Platonists and the Aristotelians. The Platonists are those in whom the new clairvoyance will appear in the form of karmic seership. The Aristotelians will have a clairvoyance with regard to the secrets of nature...These two groups must work together; there is no other way for it to be. They will *have* to work together...The men and women of Sophia [Platonists], [human beings] of revelation, will walk the path together with the men and women of knowledge [Aristotelians oriented toward Michael]. The Platonists [Sophia] will stand guard with the Aristotelians [Michael] at the threshold of the spiritual world...This community was begun through Rudolf Steiner, through the founding of the anthroposophic movement, through the revelation of the mission of Michael, and through the misfortune that we later experienced. We are summoned by the voice of Rudolf Steiner; we are tested by the misfortune now coming to us [1938]. What we must awaken in the depths of our souls is *earnestness* in regard to the spiritual and outer worlds, and *fidelity* to the spirit, each one according to his or her position in life. We can conduct ourselves in every way, in speech and action, according to the demands of everyday life. But let us keep one province free from compromise; let us remain *true to the spirit*, independent of all teachings and teachers, of all organizations in the world. Let us remain faithful to the inner voice of truth and conscience! Then we are in the school that is preparing for the future Michael Community – the community that will bear the motto: *Michael-Sophia in nomine Christi* (“Michael [and] Sophia in the name of Christ”).<sup>15</sup>

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*The Christian Star Calendar 2008* by Robert Powell, with monthly ephemerides by Peter Treadgold, computed using his Astofire program, published by the Sophia Foundation Press.

The ephemerides list the daily positions of the planets geocentrically and heliocentrically in the sidereal zodiac. Robert provides a commentary on the astronomical events for each month against the background of similar events in the life of Christ—in the spirit of continuing in our time the Cosmic Christianity of the three magi who beheld the star of Bethlehem and came to pay homage to Jesus. The calendar also includes at the beginning of each month an astronomical overview to assist one in keeping track of the visibility of the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. In addition to the monthly commentaries and ephemerides, there are a number of interesting articles:

The Significance of Mega Stars	—Robert Powell
Cycles of Time: Structuring Human Destiny	—William Bento
Signature of the Planet Pluto	—David Tresemer & Robert Schiappacasse
Eclipses in 2008	—Wain Farrants
Earth and the Cosmos	—Lacquanna Paul
René Querido – a Celebratory Remembrance	—Brian Gray

Sophia draws our attention not only to the star mysteries of the heights but also to the cosmic mysteries connected with Christ’s deeds of redemption wrought two thousand years ago. To penetrate these mysteries is the purpose of the yearly *Christian Star Calendar*.

The *Christian Star Calendar 2008* is available from the Sophia Foundation for \$18 plus shipping and handling.

<sup>14</sup> Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia: Anthroposophic Meditations on the Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocalypse* (Steiner Books: Gt. Barrington/Massachusetts, 2006), pp. ix, xxxiii.

<sup>15</sup> Valentin Tomberg, *Inner Development* (Anthroposophic Press: Gt. Barrington, Massachusetts, 1992), pp. 31-32. Words in brackets [ ] added by RP.



*Two letters to Robert Powell*

[1] My name is Gabrielle Chen Dickens. My father is Richard Dickens and my mother is Lisu Chen Dickens. I am sixteen years old. I am working towards the goal of becoming a priest in the Episcopal Church. The primary reason I have written to you is that I have read Fr. Thomas Schipflinger's extraordinary book, *Sophia-Maria*, and I am currently listening to your tapes, *The Sophia Teachings*.

The ideas of Sophiology have wrought a powerful effect upon me, and I am thoroughly captivated by the beauty and resonance of its teachings. The teachings of the Sophianic movement provide a new vision of Christianity in which the forces of the Divine Feminine are unearthed and integrated with the traditional beliefs of the Church. For quite a long time, I have felt some dissatisfaction with the rigid, absolutely patriarchal spirit present in much of the dogma of the Church. It seemed as if there was no room for a feminine side to the Divine and a natural, vital part of God had been suppressed and avoided. I have particularly found distasteful the Protestant Church's stubborn refusal to accept the Virgin Mary's role and their constant practice of downplaying her significance in respect to Christ and the Church. I find it terribly ironic that the branch of Christianity that has been so open to women would be so determined to avert their eyes from devotion to the Virgin, given the fact she is a sublime personification of the Divine Feminine and brought the Son of God into this world. The Protestants seem very quick to deride the Catholic Church for keeping the flame of the Divine Feminine burning brightly with their intense devotion to Mary. Despite the modern world that has steadily turned away from religion, or else insists upon interpreting it with blinders on, I believe that the holistic vision of Holy Sophia as the Soul of Creation and Her vital role together with Christ represents the path that leads us towards the future.

*Sophia-Maria* is cover-to-cover a masterful and groundbreaking piece of theology in which Fr. Schipflinger clearly displays the spirit of Sophia speaking through him, as well as each of the individuals he showcases in his magnum opus. I admire his method of allowing the reader to compile their own unique perceptions of Sophia and Her relationship to Christ, God, and the Church as well as with humanity. Fr.

Schipflinger provides multiple and variegated materials to peruse, here and there inserting some of his own personal ruminations, but mainly allowing the reader to revere Sophia in a personal light.

The chapter about the revelations of St. Hildegard von Bingen was particularly of interest to me not only because of her crucial visionary experiences of Sophia and Her image in Creation, but also because St. Hildegard was one of the first prominent female theologians as well as one of the most important of the Catholic mystics. St. Hildegard's visions and their subsequent depictions in iconography seem to me to be a major step in the Sophia tradition. St. Hildegard offered a pictorial tradition based on her visions and communion with Holy Sophia in which the complex imagery reveals the dynamic, vital role of Sophia in Creation and in relation to God. I found her unique cosmology particularly compelling, for it further supports what seems to be one of the underlying themes of Sophiology: That is, we inhabit a living universe that has its sacred soul in the form of Sophia as the Wisdom that keeps the cosmic organism alive as well as being connected intimately with God. St. Hildegard's revelations are truly stunning because they provide a multi-layered, comprehensive vision of Sophia and Her many forms as well as Her role in Creation in union with God. Sophia Amon, the Mother of the World and Humanity and the Co-Creator that stands alongside God, is powerful both as an image as well as in the deeper implications it reveals: Sophia, crowned with Divine power, nurturing the human spirit and the totality of Creation within Her own being. Sophia is not only the Mother that gave birth to Creation, but She still shields us in Her womb and She guides us along the path of God's design for Creation. Sophia Amon is also the vehicle of salvation and only through union with Her can a human being obtain a truly holistic and pure existence.

For me personally, I thought that the vision of

St. Hildegard of Sophia Mary as the “icon of the Holy Spirit” was extremely fascinating as well as beautiful in both image and significance. For it not only proclaims the perfect embodiment of Sophia in the Blessed Virgin but also the connection between Sophia and the Holy Spirit of the Trinity. The Virgin Mary, as the virginal figure of Wisdom in the vision, is elevated as a divine incarnation of Sophia alongside the Incarnation of God in Christ, whom She brought into the world of humanity. Thus Mary, as the incarnation of Wisdom Sophia, is the ultimate perfection not only of Wisdom in human form but also, together with Christ, as the culmination point of God in man. She is thus placed as the ultimate embodiment of the Divine Feminine in human form. Christ and Mary “conjointly” are the omega point and the divine archetypes of the highest form of humanity.

Fr. Schipflinger brilliantly provides an analysis of why St. Hildegard stresses the importance of Wisdom’s garb and its colour. According to his analysis, the gown and its pure colour symbolize not only the relationship of Mary as the incarnation, but additionally how She wears the gown as representative of humanity. In this same vision I was particularly struck by the beauty and power of the red seraph that stands beside Wisdom as the fiery manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This figure never fails to captivate my attention as I look at this iconographic representation of St. Hildegard’s crucial revelation. The winged figure is both terrifying in its splendor yet absolutely beautiful at the same time, a fitting image of the Holy Spirit who both baptizes its prophets with fire, but stands as the spirit of divine love who weeps for the plight of humanity. Fr. Schipflinger interprets the proximity of Wisdom and the winged personification of the Holy Spirit, supported by sections of Scripture, to mean that Wisdom is the perfect image of the Holy Spirit. All of the visions dealt with in the book reveal St. Hildegard’s intimate knowledge of the divine, complex nature of Sophia and Her various guises that illustrate Her diverse functions in God’s Creation. These include Her role as the bearer of the eternal law in Creation and, in the human soul, the guardian and teacher of the spiritual virtues of both Her Church and humanity. She is the personification of Love and the one who frees humanity from its imprisonment by evil. She is the Bride of Christ and Mother of the Church who works with Christ to lead Her Church to salvation. She is the one who advocates and mediates for humanity with Christ; and She is the one who is Christ’s partner who aids us in our path to reaching unity with Him. St.

Hildegard certainly has played a crucial part in clarifying the meaning of Sophia; and she also gives us a beautiful series of vignettes in her visions with which to view Sophia actively revealing Her mysteries in Creation. I greatly appreciated the time and passionate energy that Fr. Schipflinger allotted in his book to St. Hildegard and her revelations. Because St. Hildegard provided a unique “woman’s point of view” on the Divine Feminine mysteries of Sophia.

In reading the section of the book which deals with the obviously synonymous relationship between Sophia and the Cabala’s Shekinah, three particular qualities of the Shekinah caught my eye: Aside from naturally being attributed to Sophia, these facets of the Shekinah also prefigure a few later developments of Sophianic thought. Firstly, the Shekinah is viewed by Cabalists as being the primordial ground from which every part of life is prefigured and shaped by Her. For She is the principal or reason behind all Creation. She is the ultimate Idea that encompasses everything. This seems to prefigure the writings of Jacob Boehme much later in the 17th century, specifically his idea of a primordial “abyss” that is the incomprehensible, absolute source of all existence. Sophia, like the Shekinah of the Cabala, serves as the Mother of Creation because it is She who, according to Boehme, “mirrors” the latent potentialities of the chaotic conditions within the “abyss” to give birth to the objective reality of life. Although the Cabala portrays the Shekinah as the primordial ground itself, the concept of Boehme’s “abyss” is still quite similar: Because he too proposes that there exists an absolute source for all of the possibilities of Creation and existence itself through which God shapes life. In addition, Sophia prefigures and shapes Creation, in the sense that through Her she mirrors the multitude of potentialities existent in the “abyss”, and how it can unfold and give rise to them in Creation. Yet She is still the Mother of Creation, because when the “abyss” turns itself outward to give birth to the reflected possibilities, Her own image is reflected outward to form a created image of Herself which produces all of Creation. This is a more circuitous way of expressing the same trait of Sophia and the Shekinah as the Mother of all that is created and the Idea as both the Cabala and Boehme affirm.

Secondly, another quality of the Shekinah in the Cabala that is similar to a tenet of Sophiology is that the Shekinah manifested herself through Sara, Rebecca,

and Rachel. Although by no means of the same order of importance, this concept of the Shekinah coming upon these women and filling them with Her presence is indeed similar to the belief of Sophia incarnating in the Virgin Mary.

And a third characteristic of the Shekinah is reminiscent of the visions of St. Hildegard. For the Shekinah's garments and jewels are formed of Creation and the natural world as a reflection of Her role as the one whom showcases God's splendor as well as Her identity as the Bath-Kol.<sup>1</sup> The Shekinah as Bath-Kol means She is the first and greatest, the most perfected and elevated, of the created beings. She is inside God's Creation as its soul. And it is within God's Beloved, whom He adorns with His splendor, that all other things are created. This image of the Shekinah, as the Bath-Kol who adorns Herself with Creation, is identical to the vision of St. Hildegard of the two holy figures, of Wisdom and the Holy Spirit. Wisdom in the vision was robed with the pure green cloak encrusted with gems, which represents Wisdom's most prized possession: Creation and humanity within it. The archetypal image of Sophia, in whatever mystery tradition or guise She is venerated, seems to remain relatively constant in Her basic role in Creation and in Her relationship with God. The intimate and loving maternal pride that She has for humanity, so much that She views us as Her beloved children and most beautiful treasure, as well as Her active participation in Creation, also remain a recurrent theme of the Sophia mysteries.

I feel that of all the individuals discussed in *Sophia-Maria*, Jacob Boehme was the most fascinating, inspirational, and truly revolutionary herald of Sophia to me. This is only my personal opinion, but Boehme was perhaps the first major thinker to provide a cohesive, comprehensive philosophical and metaphysical school of thought that was dedicated exclusively to clarifying the role of Sophia. His teachings struck an even deeper chord within me not only because of the extraordinarily troubled circumstances in his life under which he received his revelations, but also, due to the vivid descriptiveness of his language when explaining the complex workings of the divine and existence itself. Yet

<sup>1</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Fifth Gospel* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1968), pp. 65-66: "The 'Bath-Kol' was the name given to the mysterious voice of inspiration... Jesus himself became aware of the inspiration of the Bath-Kol... and he was convinced that he discerned it with all certainty, that in times to come the voice of the same Spirit who had inspired the ancient Hebrew teachers would speak no longer..." (footnote added by RP).

perhaps the most remarkable aspect about the writings of Boehme is the mystical, deeply intimate and personal tone of the guidance that he receives from Sophia. The strength of his bond and his rich visionary experience with Sophia is visible in the detailed insights and the unprecedented concepts he shows us in his work. His unique concept of the "abyss" and the participation of Sophia as the Divine Mirror of all Creation was indeed striking and of deep interest to me. The eternal and constant potentiality for becoming a reality that is present in the "abyss", as well as its ability for self reflection through the Divine Mirror of Sophia, seems almost to parallel the same potential for evolution and self-reflection of human beings. Boehme believed that the "abyss" was spurred forth by its primordial, untamed desire to possess enjoyment and experience for itself. But when it sees the possibility of reality that it is capable of forming from its own substance, through Sophia as its mirror and point of reflection, the "abyss" progresses from its state of absolute freedom and internal subjectivity to its ultimate omega point as absolute form and objectivity. The "abyss", by turning to Sophia to mirror its capacity to grow and unfold into a concrete reality, catches a glimpse of the infinite possibilities that lie in the path of expanding outside itself into an objective manifestation. The evolution into absolute form, as Boehme calls it, of the "abyss" is like a surrendering of itself to Sophia as She takes its shapeless being and transforms it into a perfected form, as a part of Her own reflection in Creation.

This entire complicated process seems to me to have many similarities to the evolution of the human spirit awakening to its own potential within the form of the divine and its capacity for unfolding into something much greater under the guidance of Sophia. A human being undergoes a sort of infancy and germination period within their soul, a time in which they are yet to fully comprehend the revelation about their relationship to the greater plan of God and the ever active love of Sophia for them. This is a phase of human development in which human beings live in a state of darkness, trapped in a stubborn subjectivity of consciousness in which they are in pursuit of only things that provide pleasure or benefit to their material existence. This is like the beginning mentality of the "abyss" as it searches only for self-gratification and an experience that satisfies its existence. But human beings, as any wilful child, must progress into adolescence, and they must, eventually, reach a level in which they pause and turn within to the soul and spirit – which makes them receptive to the influence of Wisdom

within themselves and within Creation around them. And this, then, provides them with the answer from the infinite possibilities of what they can become in the light of God. And they are like the “abyss”, when it surrenders itself to the mirror of Sophia to cultivate its untamed substance, and to realize the possibilities of Creation; so, too, does humanity strive to meet its potential under the guiding hand of Sophia and allow itself to ascend to higher levels of being within the spirit of God.

Boehme’s Sophiology is especially impressive to me because of its unique and comprehensive vision of Sophia and the remarkable insights it offers about the totality and importance of Her role. His teachings about Her are all the more intriguing because of the actual mystic and intimate relationship he shared with Sophia, which served as the source of inspiration for the majority of his work. Boehme’s belief in two Sophias, Sophia Uncreata who is pre-existent and beyond Creation, and Sophia Creata who is the reflected image in Creation of Sophia Uncreata, is reminiscent of St. Augustine’s own theories about Sophia and Her two forms, uncreated and created. Yet Boehme clarifies and eliminates a troublesome misconception of Sophia that was accepted by Philo and Athanasius as well as other prominent figures in Church tradition. This erroneous idea equates Sophia with the Logos, the Son of the Trinity, which leads to a variety of misguided implications about both Sophia and the Logos. This included the argument that Arius used about the synonymous relationship between created Sophia and Christ as the Logos, to justify his case for rejecting the full meaning of the Incarnation. In addition, this more masculine driven belief in the inseparability of the Logos and Sophia leads to an imbalance in the very nature of God. For it fails to take into account that the ultimate form of God “must” encompass all polarities of being while, at the same time, God remains forever beyond them. Relegating everything that is divine or divinely created to the sphere of a single gender or force that is only a facet of God’s ultimate, unknowable nature is a grave error, whether it be completely masculine (as many religious fundamentalists do) or completely feminine (as some New Age groups do).

Boehme succeeded in integrating the concept of the two Sophias by approaching it from a perspective in which Sophia and Christ, the Logos, are separate yet harmonious entities that work together in and beyond Creation. The idea of two Sophias opens the door to more implications about the importance and possibility of Sophia being present, in some sense, in the

Trinity; and yet it still stays reverent to the traditional conceptualization of Sophia as the first, highest, and most beautiful of God’s Creation. The entire process of Sophia manifesting in Creation and Her state as pre-existent and created are fascinating examples of the typical Boehmean style, which exhibits the complexity and the intricacy of his understanding about Sophia. The unique and unprecedented conceptualization of the Trinity and its relation to the “abyss” as well as Boehme’s insistence upon viewing it in terms of the principles of the Divine Nature that are the product of the unfolding of the “abyss” itself are yet again an example of the stunning ingenuity of Boehme’s teachings. The suggestion of a feminine aspect in the Trinitarian God in the form of the Holy Spirit is, I have to admit, something that has not received much attention (although it was prominent in the writings of Theophilus of Antioch and Irenaeus in the 2nd and 3rd centuries); nor, for that matter, has it received much acceptance in the Church; primarily because of the long tradition within the Church that held fast to the belief of Sophia as created.

Additionally, Boehme came to this belief based mainly on his own personal mystic experiences and revelations from Sophia as well as the rather unorthodox elevation of the Holy Spirit to Mother and not merely proceeding from the masculine Father and/or Son as the Western and Eastern Churches have stressed in their tradition. Boehme’s policy of focusing heavily upon the principals rather than the personifications that compose the Trinity is interesting and allows room for interpretation about how each of the Trinitarian principals (Will-Father, Science-Wisdom-Holy Spirit, and the product of their union – the Son) can actually be a fitting representation of the personified Trinity. The eternal polarity within the primordial “abyss” between Will and Science-Wisdom and their unfolding into the product of the Son for me personally can be broken down into simpler terms. The Will of the Father is that of the Architect of Creation and the force that brings it into reality. He is the one who creates out of Himself and has the capacity of bringing His vision to fruition. But He first turns to Science-Wisdom for Her guidance, gazing into Her Divine Mirror and beholding the infinite possibilities of the multiplicity of forms Creation could take, and it is She who possesses the intuition and dynamic presence that enables Creation to be filled with a soul as well as to possess the memory of its origin. The strength and creative drive of the Father, along with the maternal instinct and vibrant spirit of Science-Wisdom, balance one



another as polarities in the Divine Nature as well as in the workings of Creation. The Son as the product of their union, as Boehme believed, represents the pre-Creation foreshadowing of Christ descending into the realm of humanity. The Son as the product can be interpreted as a part of God the Father's divine being placed in the divine womb of Science-Wisdom the Spirit Mother and from Her another form of God is shaped. The Son is still a divine face of the Trinitarian God, and He is equal to the Father and Science-Wisdom the Mother, even though He proceeds from the Father through the Mother.

This more complicated and novel vision of the Trinity might be easily misconstrued at a cursory glance by a more orthodox observer as heretical. And it is understandable why such a great mind as Boehme underwent much censure from his religious peers; but if one painstakingly analyzes his ideas on the Trinity and Sophia's unique role in it, he still holds to the traditional understanding of the Trinitarian God with a slightly different twist. As I understand it, he received more criticism for his view that Sophia Creatura is the outwardly reflected image in Creation of Sophia Uncreata in the Trinity. It seems this was erroneously interpreted by many to mean he inserted a fourth Personage into the uncreated, pre-existent Trinity in the form of the created ("reflected") Sophia. As Fr. Schipflinger states, this was an unfounded argument against Boehme because he stuck faithfully to the more traditional procession of the Trinity (unity to polar duality to trinity) and he was a firm believer in the traditional teachings of the Trinity. Besides there is no heresy or problematic issue if Sophia Creatura is seen (as Boehme intended) as a substantialized, corporeal manifestation of the uncreated Mother Spirit of the Trinity, for the Mother Spirit of the Trinity is a face of God and cannot thus be directly experienced at the individual level. Sophia Creatura is the consciousness, or collective soul, of Creation and She is the physical reflection of the Mother Spirit that actively participates in Creation. The infinitude of possible ideas that can be realized as physical reality in Creation are encompassed in the body of Sophia Creatura, and She serves as the mirror through which the Trinitarian God views Creation and in whom the Trinity places the wonders of God. She is also the Mediator between Creation and the Trinity, acting out Her function as Guardian and Soul and Sustainer of the Trinity's Creation. Thus the Trinity as perceived by Boehme can indeed be restricted to three Personifications while still incorporating Sophia Creatura as the corporeal reflection of Sophia Uncreata. Sophia

Uncreata is the Mother Spirit of the Trinity whom with the Father and Son brings forth Creation, while Sophia Creatura descends from the Mother as a corporeal reality to ensoul, nurture, and sustain Creation and lead humanity into the presence of the Trinitarian God.

As for Boehme's view of the Virgin Mary, he believed that Sophia Creatura acted in accordance with the will of the Trinity and placed Her soul upon Mary, thus making Mary holy so she might be the mother of the descended Christ. Boehme's view of the relationship between Mary, Sophia Creatura, and the Trinity interested me greatly because it offered a new perspective on the Incarnation of Mary; he made such a great difference between the idea of Mary as the "earthly" form of Sophia Creatura and that of Mary being "entrusted" with the soul of Sophia Creatura, who acts under the counsel of the Trinity. As with most of Boehme's teachings, he proceeds from the traditional concept and takes one step further in complexity, guided by his mystic relationship with Sophia and the revelations She entrusted to him. To me, this idea offers a new clarification to the *Gospel of Luke*, in which the Angel Gabriel proclaims to the Virgin Mary that "the Holy Spirit will *come upon* her and the power of the Most High will overshadow her". The Holy Spirit, in Her manifestation in Sophia Creatura, entrusts ("comes upon") the soul of Sophia Creatura with Mary so she becomes the sacred womb that carries the descended Christ. "The power of the Most High that overshadows Mary" means the presence of God in the Trinity; for it is the Trinity that authorizes Sophia Creatura to place Her soul in Mary and it is the Son in the Trinity that descends into Creation, taking the form of man as Mary's child. Boehme certainly deserves the title of "father of Western Sophiology", despite the fact that this part of his work does not receive as much attention as his theories of existence. As you can tell, I was thoroughly enchanted by his teachings and found his insights on Sophia – the existence of the "abyss"; the Trinity; and his reverence for Creation – truly important for modern society and religion.

In reading about the Eastern branch of the Sophianic movement, it seems to me that veneration for Sophia has flourished there and has become a very prominent grouping within Russia which is destined to gradually garner increasing acceptance. There also appears to be much more unity and collective themes that run throughout the teachings of the major Sophiological prophets. For instance, there is a prominent emphasis in all three of the great Russian Sophiologists – Soloviev, Florenski, and Bulgakov – upon the concept of Sophia as

the collective World Soul that encompasses all Creation (particularly the souls of all humanity) and sustains the kinship that is shared by all humans. To varying degrees of interpretation, this is the unifying thread in the works of the main Sophia scribes. It is this concept that actually serves as a point of undisputed agreement about its validity and which is viewed by all three of the founders of the Russian Sophiological movement as an article of their faith. The source of differentiation that arises among them does not come from a denial or toning down of the statement about Sophia's basic role as an all-encompassing, unifying Soul of Creation; instead it is derived from a marked diversity of interpretation of the same truth. Soloviev, Florenski, and Bulgakov differ simply in the level and degree to which they are willing to interpret the same vision of Sophia's role in Creation.

Soloviev articulates the basic role of Sophia as the World Soul and unifier of individual human souls by allowing a tripartite conceptualization of Sophia's complex position and function. She is seen by him as possessing three levels of being that successfully allows Her to be the unifier, sustainer, and director of all that is existent in God's Creation (a divine level, an earthly level, and a part that creates and directs the mechanisms of the universe such as space, time, and causality), as well as being a mediator between living beings and God and providing a dynamic and sacred center of all life.

Florenski takes this entire concept and expands upon it both in complexity as well as bringing it a step further in dealing with Sophia's relationship to the Trinity. He also remains firm on the basic principle of Sophia as the soul and unity in which all Creation is encompassed; but he argues for the necessity of not allowing oneself to simply intellectually accept the reality of Sophia and to make theological ruminations about Her. Instead, we should devote ourselves to Her with humility and seek for religious revelations by direct spiritual experience through Her. Florenski goes further by saying Sophia is not merely the center and synthesis for created humanity but also for the entire universe of Creation. She is the first created being who was born from the Trinitarian God as the highest being of all Creation. And She serves the function as Mother of everything that is external to God. Florenski expands upon Sophia's unique and intimate relationship with the Trinitarian God by formulating an overlapping Sophianic trinity that reflects Her role in respect to each of the members of the Trinity. This Sophia trinity contains the facets of Sophia as Daughter of the Father, Sister-Bride to the Son, and Image

of the Holy Spirit.

Of the three scribes of Sophia, Bulgakov is the one who – by far – takes the boldest approach to the basic concept of Sophia in Creation. While Soloviev and Florenski believe Sophia was created and made divine by God's grace, it appears Bulgakov upped the ante by proclaiming that Sophia was both created and divine *as well as* being divine by nature (not merely by grace). It can be said that Bulgakov adopted not so much a radical and extremist view of Sophia but, instead, he took the whole concept to an entirely new level. Not only does his re-envisioning of Sophia extend beyond his predecessors by arguing for Sophia as encompassing everything divine and created, including the very nature of God; but he also takes the new turn of viewing Her no longer as a personal entity, as in previous tradition, nor merely as a divinely incarnated individual. Instead She is a supra-human presence that includes the hypostasized natures of the divine and created. Neither Soloviev nor Florenski took the unprecedented road of arguing for a Sophia that is both personified in the Trinity as well as the soul of Creation. The founding Russian Sophiologists are indeed a fascinating trio of men who each left as their legacy extremely diverse, profound visions of the same facet of Sophia.

The main reason I am writing this letter is that I wish to join the Sophia Foundation, to become part of the movement that has given Sophia a voice in religion and society. Given the fact I am only sixteen, I am wondering what the qualifications for membership would be once I am legally an adult in two years? In addition, would my membership in the Episcopal Church, and my later plans to become a priest within it, be acceptable for membership in the Sophia Foundation? And as for my opinions provided in this letter, I was wondering if they would be considered compatible with those of the Sophia Foundation?

The message of Sophia is of profound importance to the very nature of faith in modern religion and also to today's society, which is imperilled on multiple levels. I am a firm believer not only in a greater dissemination and acceptance of the Sophianic message in the three churches (Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican) of Apostolic Succession, but also for a greater unity and cooperation among these churches. The barriers of ideology and fundamentalism must be overcome so that these three churches form a firm friendship and connection together to weather the rising storm that is facing today's Christianity. Sophia and the re-emergence

of Her teachings, I think, holds the key not only to helping to unite these churches, but also to bringing a new era in modern Christianity in which the true partnership of salvation and love in Christ and Sophia is finally revealed.

I would like to thank you for all that you have accomplished in service to Her and in revealing to countless people the mystic teachings of Sophia. Your

May the blessings of Sophia and Christ always be with you.

☆ ☆ ☆

[2] I am extremely grateful and honored to receive your letter. It was very thoughtful of you to respond so swiftly. Again, I can only thank you with the utmost gratitude and warmth for allotting time to respond to my letter.

Regarding the form for the Sophia Foundation you included in your letter, I am immensely thankful for your consideration in sending it directly to me. I completed it but a few days ago and sent it along. It is exciting to be able to be part of such a devoted, sincere group of individuals, wholeheartedly dedicated to serving Sophia. Additionally, I feel quite relieved to know that membership in the Episcopal Church will not hinder my involvement in the Sophia Foundation of North America. For I am acutely aware that veneration of the Divine Feminine (specifically in the crucial role of the Blessed Virgin Mary) is for many not a welcome practice of faith. I am all the more happy to be aware of the Sophia Foundation's support of interreligious relations. I too pray for an era yet to come, hopefully in the not too distant future, in which the religious and spiritual movements will work harmoniously under the banner of Sophia. In the meantime, it is of great comfort to know there exist some institutions, including the Sophia Foundation, that not only disseminate the wondrous message of Sophia, but also promote friendship among the various religious and spiritual traditions of the world.

It seems apparent that the Spirit of Sophia is circulating throughout the religious institutions, to guide them toward a path that leads to recognition of Her. Yet it disappoints me when Her message is lost or misconstrued due to the ideological fallacies of the individuals within these institutions; such prosaic, materialistic ideas regarding Sophia and Her true role (or lack thereof) within the many churches proves to be a great hindrance to the true meaning of Sophia

work and interpretation of Her mysteries have made Her teachings accessible to every person and your tireless commitment to promote the many diverse works about Sophia is inspirational to all who strive to find Her in their faith. The devotion and wealth of knowledge that all the faithful followers of Her, including yourself, have achieved through love of Sophia is a clarion call to all who seek to know Her.

being disseminated and accepted. Sophia is obviously working throughout the world, leaving Her mark within the various institutions of faith as well as within social movements. She inspires them with a particular archetype and spurs them to action, as a cosmic muse beckoning them to realize She is their patient Mother. In far too many instances Sophia's message is shaped into something materialistic and political, with the spiritual and divine truth stripped from it. For instance, within my Church the call of the Divine Feminine has been shaped into merely a socio-political cause. And there seems to be an absolute aversion on the part of many to anything associated explicitly with the Virgin Mary – even though the Virgin Mary is probably the most recognizable form of Sophia, serving as the face of the Divine Feminine in mainstream Christianity. The very fact the Virgin is an established part of the "Catholic faith" and there exists some differences between the two Churches, leads some to be determined to consistently ignore Her. On the positive side, my Church has elevated women to a role of equality within the priesthood; however, it has failed to recognize the greater spirit of Sophia-Mary. Instead, there is generally a focus merely upon the socio-political significance of "feminism".

Another example where Sophia is surely at work is in the conservationist movement, a group that has succeeded in recognizing the living, spiritual nature of the earth and that is instilled with some greater presence. Although the conservationist movement may be unaware that this "Soul of the Earth" is actually Sophia; that the earth is Her body; and that She is the Soul of Creation, they have succeeded in welcoming, albeit unconsciously for many, the archetypal guidance of Sophia. And they have become

champions dedicated to saving the earth. But somewhere along the way, the message given to them and inspired by Sophia was warped into another political, materialistic cause that is producing further polarization between its supporters and its opponents.

I diverged into this topic, because it seems to be an emerging crisis besetting humanity; not only with regards to Sophia, but also among humanity itself. Materialistic ideologies regarding faith, politics, and society have further taken hold of our relations with one another and with the divine, thus creating a great divide that seems to be constantly expanding. Hopefully the end of this chaos and division will be the era of Sophia, but until then it still succeeds in isolating us from Sophia and God as well as from each other.

It was with joy that I read your generous praise of my letter, and I feel very fortunate to be the receiver of such acclaim. Sophiology, when one embraces steadfastly its

complexity as well as its deep spiritual exploration and devotion to Sophia and Her works, becomes a fountain of knowledge with which one can come closer to Sophia and also become intrinsically connected to all the various beliefs revolving around Her. That is how I felt when writing that letter. It was as though I was delving deeper into the macrocosm of wisdom and love. It was the same macrocosmic presence with which those great Sophiologists crafted their visions and expositions about the universal Sophia and Her role within our world.

By all means, I should be the one to thank you for all that you have done when it comes to answering the call of Sophia and being Her messenger in the world. The work you and the Sophia Foundation have accomplished has inspired countless people, myself included, to discover Sophia and to develop a devotion to doing all that is possible to spread Her word.

May the light and love of Christ and Sophia be with you always,  
Gabrielle Chen Dickens

### *Rosary*

Perhaps a glimpse of Her is seen in the incandescent veins of  
Still, twinkling crystal roses on the string.  
A moment of clarity during recitation, a pause catching up with the eyes,  
The transient spark, a reminder from a watchful Mother,  
Peeping from behind hidden, strumming wings in Psyche's chamber;  
Alive, stealing a second of ordinary air;  
Halting the endless procession of fingertips,  
Each thought wrapped around a Hail Mary.  
Encircling, delving into images reborn from the story every pair of  
Human lips can speak, without the aid of dreams or fading textbooks.  
That miniscule flicker of reflected gold, stopping the world as it shudders past.  
A pause, a particle of transfixed wonder, wonder what it might mean?  
Is She flickering an eye behind the praying mists?  
A shrug, continuing the daily mass by the sun-whitened window,  
Every now and then, a sheepish glance cast towards the clock;  
But some intangible metamorphosis of light has changed the air.  
That flicker of glittering eyes behind the chips of crystal  
Has shifted the course of prayer, like a quick hand rustling a fall of raindrops.  
Awareness, tickling at the back of daydreams, birthing reality,  
Another glance at the beads, waiting for some new thought, or miracle,  
As a child watches the stirring of sky before it unfurls rain,  
Wondering which angel is mourning in Heaven.  
Another wink of light, a shocked realization seeping in  
Recognizing Mother is blinking prettily, majestically as She passes through.



# NOVALIS' FAITH IN THE NIGHT: A MEDITATION

BILL TRUSIEWICZ

Though the Dark Iron Age called Kali Yuga has passed (in 1899), and we now live in the Age of Light, we are nevertheless largely under the influence of ideas that have long outlived their usefulness. Every age has its gifts, and then its decline and decadence. In the former dark age, we were schooled in attention to the mineral world--a world that had not yet had its day in the sun, so to speak; nor had humans as yet developed the faculties to gain the degree of mastery over the material world that we now possess.

As long as humans are united to the mineral world, we will not attain our freedom until we first penetrate that world with our thoughts. Modern science has attempted to do this, and has done an admirable job in many respects. But the world view that prevailed in the 19th century and has continued into our day was so focused on the mineral world that through the lens of that view we could only see the world in terms of the mineral kingdom; lacking was research that truly penetrated into the vegetable, animal and human kingdoms. All the research in these realms was directed only to the mineral element *within* these higher kingdoms.

As our awareness of the mineral kingdom developed, all the arts and sciences of living things continued to be focused only on the *mineral* constituents of living things, i.e., they followed the path of the *lifeless*, the *inanimate* and the *non-human*. The rules of measure, weight and number so dominated the human imagination that nothing above the mineral realm was able to make itself known to the imagination. This failure of imagination caused great suffering, and because the cause of this suffering was unacknowledged, it continued almost wholly unameliorated to the present.

In the area of astronomy this same failure of imagination prevailed. Over the course of the Dark Age that began in 3102 BC and ended in 1899 A.D., what had previously been a living sky above us became for the human mind little more than a rock garden in space, and the astronomical science of divination, formerly a living art, was replaced by what seems by comparison to be a mere game for clever minds as they exercised their skills in the abstract mathematical and mechanical game of measuring distances and temperatures, computing dates,

and formulating soulless theories of origins. In the arid environment of materialistic science, the circle of living beings known as the Zodiac with whom ancient men had intimately communed faded from human consciousness. While the scientific view of *astronomy* brought a formerly living cosmology (divine and not yet human) down to the subhuman and sub-vegetable level, the *astrological* viewpoint lost its soul by disconnecting with the stars themselves--not following the precession of the equinoxes. The true, sidereal (connected with the actual stars), astrological science gave way to a mechanical procedure that was only a formulaic application (and therefore dead) of outdated astrological information. Through the course of time, with the deadening influence of abstract, materialistic thinking, the *corpses* of Astronomy and Astrology eclipsed the great "mysteries of the night" making them inaccessible to the human cognition and imagination.

Rudolf Steiner speaks of a myth that he would like to be resurrected in our time. He proposes a "New Isis Myth," a sort of reverse of the ancient Egyptian Myth of Osiris and Isis. This myth can serve as a living imagination, enabling modern humanity to redeem, among other things, consciousness of the *life* of the zodiac. Steiner identifies the starry heavens in all their cosmic beauty as Isis-Sophia herself, and he gives a picture of what modern materialistic thinking has done to her. He says, "Lucifer has slain her... and carried her off into far distant spaces." Sophia, the Wisdom of the cosmos, has been slain; the spiritual connection of humankind to the cosmos has been severed. One of the most pressing tasks of our day is to restore Isis-Sophia not just to her former glory, but to new heights of glory. It is time for humanity to celebrate in countless assemblies across the planet the resurrection of Sophia. By means of a new inner star wisdom which unites the spirit of the human being with the spirit of the cosmos, a renewed "faith in the night" is possible.

The phrase "faith in the night" can be understood in at least two ways: 1) in reference to a faith that holds fast "through the night," through the "dark night of the soul," and 2) as faith in the *night itself*. The dark night of the soul can be understood as a test of our faith. In the 23rd Psalm, David's faith exclaims, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil." The second sense of "night" is less familiar to us than the "dark night," and it is this sense that I wish to

focus on in the following meditation, beginning with the question: Who holds faith *in* the night or *in* darkness—something altogether different from having faith *through* darkness or night? The words of Novalis, perhaps the most notable exponent in modern times of this second sense of “night,” can help us answer this question.

In Novalis’ *Hymns to the Night* we read:

I hold an eternal, unchangeable faith in the heaven of Night...	Hymns III
...true to the Night remains my secret heart...	Hymns IV
Thou hast made me know the Night, and brought her to me to be my life...	Hymns I
Blessed be the everlasting Night...	Hymns VI

Novalis’ references to the night might sound almost blasphemous to our modern ears. We are used to identifying darkness and night with evil; the “bad guy” always dresses in black. Is our faith not based on He who is the “light of the world?” If we are to enter Novalis’ radical world, we must put aside these associations, for, as is evident in his writing, he perpetually moves us away from our conventional thinking with his characteristic “shocks of beauty.” One needn’t read more than several lines of *Pollen and Fragments* or *Logological Fragments* to see that this is so. If we would know Novalis, our thinking must change.

Novalis’ “questionable” association with *Night* in his writing is not merely a rhetorical device. Novalis *is* Novalis (and not Frederick von Hardenberg, his birth name) as the result of a supernatural meeting in which he came face to face with Night. Obviously, when speaking of the Night we are referring to something more than the mundane term denotes. The first clue to a new meaning is the fact that Novalis capitalizes the word. In making this change, he is actually coining a new word which makes an important addition to our spiritual vocabulary. I have hinted at it above, but now let us explore more deeply what Novalis really means by this *Night* and what *Faith in the Night* is about.

As we approach this subject, I would first like to ask you to play with me in the waters of this great ocean of night. However, before we even touch the water with our toes, we can embark on this somewhat daunting journey from an abstract, esoteric perspective—not actually touching the water yet, but observing it. After we have made certain observations, we may then want to dangle our toes or perhaps our feet in this ocean—immerse ourselves deeply enough to get the feeling of just what it consists of, and to acclimate to its keen

freshness before we attempt to dive wholeheartedly into its depths.

We can begin our exploration of the “great ocean of night” by noting that according to Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual scientific research, at a certain level of initiation, a student of the mysteries achieves what he calls *continuity of consciousness*. What this means is that during sleep, what is normally unconscious (although punctuated by semi-conscious dreams) becomes subject to observation. In other words, the state of sleep becomes a wakeful experience—something that we can remember, a sort of communion out of which we can derive meaning and purpose in the highest degree. As we continue with this exploration, we should also bear in mind that the world of night that we enter during sleep is in actuality the *spiritual world* into which we enter with our astral body and our ego.

If you are a stargazer, you know that *darkness* is the greatest aid to seeing the stars. On the darkest nights we are able to see far more stars (and therefore, more deeply into space) than on brighter, artificially lit or moonlit nights. During the day most of the heavens are hidden, though we are not left completely alone, as our two glorious orbs—a valiant sun and a paler moon remind us of the *other* world. Consider now that what is true on the physical level of experience is also true on the spiritual plane (“as above, so below”).

In daylight consciousness (the spiritual term for ordinary, rational thinking) the heavens are mostly hidden; therefore by analogy, the spiritual world is also hidden. The human intellect, bound to the human brain, is incapable of penetrating to the realm of spirit. Essentially, the intellect is our tool for comprehending the mineral world. The human intellect does extremely well with material facts—concepts and ideas. But this kind of thinking is superficial; it has no depth. Like physical light, intellectual thinking can only illuminate the surface of things.

On the level of *feeling*, a deeper life grips us. Both pain and pleasure will move us to deeper layers of our being. A feeling that imposes itself upon us has the same quality as a dream; it is only partly conscious. Consider what happens when a friend grabs you from behind by the shoulders and starts to massage your shoulders, neck and back. If you decide to receive this gift, what happens? You might close your eyes and enter into a dreamy, blissful state as you feel your muscles relax and your bones and tendons release their tension. You

might want to move to a couch or bed. The tendency is to want to get supine, to horizontalize, or to “vege out,” as the saying goes, i.e., to mirror the dreamless sleep consciousness of the vegetable kingdom. Your body is giving in to a near-sleep condition. You become passive and receptive. These states are prerequisites to sleep, which is normally unconscious.

Although still “unconscious,” our response to pain is different from our response to pleasurable sensations. Imagine that someone interrupts your wonderful massage by coming over and slapping you violently on the arm. You might be stunned, dumb, rendered immobile. You might sit bolt upright in a daze, hardly knowing what has “hit” you. Or you might be momentarily filled with rage or fright and lash out blindly in self-defense, without thinking that the person who slapped you might have had a good reason for doing so. You are not aware that a large mosquito had been about to impale you, and that this second friend has saved you the agony of several days of itching with a quick, sound, swat. You have reacted before your brain has had time to take in all this information. You have been caught off guard and acted unconsciously.

Our responses both to pleasure and to pain have the property of occluding thought, of bypassing or negating the conscious thought process. We may recall them after the fact, but while we’re experiencing them, we can be said to be relatively unconscious. There are many things that take place in our organism that are completely unconscious and/or involuntary: digestion, the beating of our heart, breathing, and coughing and sneezing. We do other things such as speaking, moving our limbs, smelling and hearing, without knowing how we do them. These examples of everyday experiences demonstrate the natural connection we have to the night realm of the unconscious. Now we will consider the potential for *deepening* our conscious experience of the Night, of awakening to her *gifts*.

Most of us are at least dimly aware of the great waters of Night that lap up on the shore of our awareness during the twilight state between sleep and wakefulness. The following are examples of experiences that occur in that moment before waking—brief glimpses of the spiritual world that shine through before the portal of night consciousness closes completely. Just before waking, you find yourself sitting rapt, listening to some master of wisdom expounding upon the mysteries—teachings that you have never heard before, lessons of a deeply spiritual nature.

Perhaps you remember the last sentence or phrase of this dissertation. On another occasion the countenance of a loved one who has crossed the threshold rushes into your view and delivers a lengthy message to you in a split second. These psychopompic experiences are one of the ways that the spirit waters gently splash against the edge of our daylight world out of the great ocean of night.

We may also speak of dreams as twilight experiences even though they usually occur in the middle of sleep. The term “twilight” denotes not only a between-ness but a duality, insofar as being *between* means to be in the middle of *two* things. In the case of dreams, the two things are the light of everyday consciousness and the usually invisible light of night which might be termed “astral” or “subtle” light. A dream is a manifestation of astral light that condenses enough to be visible to ordinary consciousness while one is asleep. Dreams are an entry point into the realm of “inner night.” Persons who can interpret dreams have a connection to the sphere of the night. They are familiar with night thoughts—the language of dreams—and may be called *readers* of the astral light.

Dream images may or may not have profound significance, as our everyday world often creeps into our dream life. A person gifted with the ability to interpret dreams is able to discern which images carry significance and which ones are merely reflections of our superficial waking experiences. The ability to interpret dreams comes to one who has penetrated his or her subconscious and carried the upper light of reason into its recesses. Such persons have learned to be active observers of their own usually hidden impulses, desires and passions. They have penetrated their emotional lives to uncover primitive beliefs in the form of pictures or word structures that have been embedded in their will and have learned to reshape or dislodge them. They have learned to observe their own ever-present lower nature in its movements, and have learned to subjugate it—to keep it in line. Such self-knowledge qualifies a person to understand this level of unconscious activity in others.

Dream imagery can be extremely useful when its potent emotional nature has been decoded. When the drama enacted in dreams can be properly related to the emotional drama we experience semi-consciously in daily life, a new light falls on our inner conflicts—one that can help us to work through our difficult “issues.” Our inner night becomes illumined by reason. By adding one’s thinking heart forces, one’s courage, to the newly lit landscape of our dream life, we can alter the dynamics at work there, and we can experience healing, comfort

and a new sense of freedom. Those who experience such healing find themselves on more friendly terms with the night, and they begin to have faith in it.

There are many types of dreams. Some are so vivid that they make waking life seem *less real* by comparison. These dreams contain will forces that can impel us to make changes if we don't resist their message. Another type is *deliberate* dreaming that can occur in the midst of daylight consciousness. In this experience, will, feeling and thought are consciously united in a super-durable bond by means of which some threshold may be crossed. This form of "dreaming" is an important tool of the spiritual researcher.

Poets are often actually night "swimmers" without knowing it. They are renown for being fond of the subtle feelings experienced while gazing into the night sky, that experience of tasting the "wine that only eyes can drink," as described by Albert Giraud in his poem, *Pierrot Lunaire*. Every human being whose inner child has not been smothered by either education or experience has within a poet's heart—for the human heart *is* that of a poet. The age of light is beginning to school us in the ways and knowledge of the poets. The Romantic spirit of poetry, of which Novalis was perhaps the brightest exemplar, has been maligned, while materialism has run rampant. We must begin again to trust the knowledge that comes by way of the heart, and to revive the noble art of poetry in every soul. "The heart is the means to transform the world," says Novalis. And again, "The heart is the key to the world and of life."

The poet in us *feels* the fact that the heavens truly embrace us. The planets, the moon and the stars are held in loving arms. It is not some abstraction called *gravity* that keeps our wonderful, massive moon from flying off into space or plunging to the earth. Rather, this force may more accurately be described as a gentle, grave, and powerful *moral* force, comparable to a mother's love for her child. The heart is capable of feeling cognitively this *moral* force which permeates the universe. In reference to this, Rudolf Steiner was fond of quoting the philosopher Kant who said that he stood in awe of two things the more he reflected on them, "the starry heaven above me and the moral law within me."

The final shore of the ocean of night that I would like to visit is the near-death experience. Countless people experience life-transforming meetings with death. From the abundance of literature documenting these close encounters with death (not all of which is reliable),

we have become familiar with the profound experiences people may have facing this threshold. The greater part of this literature corroborates facts that are known to spiritual scientific research. I would now like to consider briefly the less familiar phenomenon of near-death experience that is connected with the mystery teachings that have come down to us from antiquity.

A key esoteric practice of the ancient mystery centers was to induce a near-death experience in the well-prepared student. (Even the ancient *exoteric* practice of baptism, as was employed by John the Baptist, was designed to loosen the etheric body from the physical body as it naturally does at the time of death by holding a person under water for long enough to produce that effect.) The ancient mystery centers schooled their students by rigorous and often very dangerous methods designed to prepare them to pass the pivotal test, sometimes referred to as the Temple Sleep. In the Egyptian mystery schools, a sarcophagus was used to emphasize the gravity of this ritual act, which of course was more than a ritual, but was a rite of initiation. The person to be initiated was put into a death-like sleep for three days, enabling their journey into the spiritual world to be imprinted on their etheric bodies (and thus allowing them to recall the journey). At the successful completion of the rite, the new initiate was given the name "son of god," indicating that during his initiation he had come into communion with the beings of the higher worlds.

In a later period of history, when the mysteries were giving way to a new order among the Greeks, teachers such as Socrates and Plato reframed the earlier mystery knowledge out of their memories of pre-birth existence in the spiritual world, and created a new thought-based form of mystery knowledge known as *philosophy*. It is interesting to note in connection with earlier mystery practices that, to paraphrase Socrates, "The philosopher is not likely to be understood by ordinary men because he must ever and anon pursue death."

Today, by virtue of Christ's sacrifice on Golgotha, and especially since the beginning of His second coming at the start of the Age of Light, the appropriate mystery school is Life itself. Once the Christ impulse penetrated human hearts and took hold of the human will, the possibility of experiencing the Resurrected One became available to all humankind. We are able to have this experience by virtue of Christ's journey into Hades—to the depths of the



Mother in the underworld—and His return to the Father in the heights. By means of these cosmic achievements, sufficient courage was enkindled in human hearts to enable us to confront the mystery of death.

By now we understand that sleep (which has been called “the little death”) brings us to the threshold of the spiritual world. During sleep, the astral body and ego separate from the etheric and physical bodies, whereas at the gate of death itself, the etheric body also separates. It is during sleep and after death that the soul and spirit pass into the spiritual world—the world of night. In our time, the spiritual aspirant has the opportunity to confront death, to penetrate the gates of hell—the Hades of his own inner being—by confronting his or her lower nature or subconscious with the help of Christ. Those who have met the Guardian of the Threshold and have stood firm in their resolve to conquer their lower nature are familiar with this region. Anyone who has the courage to face his demons, to acknowledge his habitual faults and weaknesses embedded in his physical and etheric bodies, and to do what must be done to change them, is a candidate for the initiation experience. He or she is ready to experience the mystery of the forces of life and death and to meet the beings of the spiritual world in full consciousness. The greatest force that can help us on this path is love. As the force of love increases, the desires and inclinations of the astral body are purified to such an extent that they can penetrate regions that are normally closed off from consciousness. This is the lesson that Novalis is teaching us with his life: *Love conquers death*.

Before we attempt a dive fully into the ocean of Night with Novalis as our guide, we need to acquaint ourselves with some crucial details of his biography. First, it is very significant that Novalis was very fond of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. As you will remember, Orpheus (from the Greek word *orphe*, meaning “darkness”), was the founder of the Orphic mysteries whose poetic and musical powers were nothing short of magical. Orpheus lost his young wife Euridice when she happened to trip through a nest of snakes and was mortally bitten. He was so stricken with grief that with his mighty musical gift he persuaded Hades to allow him to enter the underworld to bring her back to life.

Novalis’ destiny was similar to that of Orpheus. He lost the love of his life, Sophie von Kühn, in the flower of her youth—a few days after the beginning of her fifteenth year. This loss for Novalis was utterly life-transforming. In order to understand the monumental

significance of this event we must review something of the karmic biographies of Novalis and Sophie von Kühn.

It may help us to understand the stature and significance of this individuality to learn that his previous incarnations include the Old Testament prophet Elijah, John the Baptist, and Raphael, the great renaissance painter. As evidence or indications of these previous incarnations, consider the frequent appearance of John the Baptist in Raphael’s paintings of the holy family, and also the palpable reality of Mary expressed by Novalis in his spiritual songs. (As John the Baptist, the Novalis individuality had a close relationship with Mary.) As we seek to grasp the significance of the Novalis individuality in world history, we should bear in mind these previous incarnations. We can also have an immediate and profound experience of his worth as we study his writings, which give us a sense of the centrality of his role in the evolution of human consciousness. There is a height, breadth, depth and purity in his works that is inexpressibly magnificent. By steeping ourselves in Novalis’ writing, we can truly connect with his *spirit* and grasp something of the sublime life and experience that he brings to the world soul.

The soul that indwelt Sophie von Kühn and the spirit that hovered about her are more mysterious and enigmatic. Suffice it to say that, as evidenced in Novalis’ writing, her short life served to make available to Novalis an experience of the divine Heavenly Sophia herself. For the few years that she was friends with Frederick von Hardenberg (for Sophie did not know him under his pen name of Novalis), he was utterly devoted to her, and was inexplicably drawn into the mystery of her *being*.

It was no ordinary love affair between Frederick and Sophie, who was twelve when they met. The philosopher Hardenburg was fully capable of a *supersensible* love that was as ardent and consuming as any “worldly” love affair but built upon purely Platonic grounds. The two were betrothed, but a mere two and a half years after he had met her, on the 19th of March 1797, Hardenburg lost his beloved Sophie to death. His very life was shaken to the core. His love for her would not allow him to accept death as an end. Like Orpheus, this champion of the High Romantic Spirit would storm the gates of death with mingled love and grief, and would not be thwarted.

On May 13, less than two months after her

death, Hardenburg was at Sophie's grave when he took the plunge into the abyss of night. In deep despair, clinging to a bare thread of faith, he burst open the gates of death with his love—and love came to meet him out of the night. The following quote brings the power of this consummate, spiritual, moment to life for us through his magical, poetic gift. It's time to take a deep breath.

Once when I was shedding bitter tears, when, dissolved in pain, my hope was melting away, and I stood alone by the barren hillock which in its narrow dark bosom hid the vanished form of my Life, lonely as never yet was lonely man, driven by anguish unspeakable, powerless, and no longer aught but a conscious misery;—as there I looked about me for help, unable to go on or to turn back, and clung to the fleeting, extinguished life with an endless longing; then, out of the blue distances, from the hills of my ancient bliss, came a shiver of twilight, and at once snapt the bond of birth, the fetter of the Light. Away fled the glory of the world, and with it my mourning; the sadness flowed together into a new, unfathomable world. Thou, soul of the Night, heavenly Slumber, didst come upon me; the region gently upheaved itself, and over it hovered my unbound, newborn spirit. The hillock became a cloud of dust, and through the cloud I saw the glorified face of my beloved. In her eyes eternity reposed. I laid hold of her hands, and the tears became a sparkling chain that could not be broken. Into the distance swept by, like a tempest, thousands of years. On her neck I welcomed the new life with ecstatic tears. Never was such another dream; then first and ever since I hold fast an eternal, unchangeable faith in the heaven of Night, and its sun, the Beloved.

Hymn to the Night, III  
translated by George MacDonald

There is no word of analysis or logical argument that will avail better than to cling to these staggeringly profound and beautiful words, and to meditate on their meaning—to encounter first-hand the healing stream that proceeds from the mystery of the union of Christ and Sophia here elucidated.

Nevertheless, what may be said in closing is that the spirit of John the Baptist-Novalis is still baptizing those who come to him, who come to Christ and Sophia. Whosoever comes to him, he will baptize in the great waters of the Night, so that the heavenly Sophia herself can bestow all that she brings of healing love and wisdom to those who comprise the World Soul.

The spirit of the Baptist speaks through Novalis: The crystal wave, which, imperceptible to the ordinary sense, springs in the dark bosom of the hillock against whose foot breaks the flood of the world, he who has tasted it, he who has stood on the mountain frontier of the world, and looked across into the new land, into the abode of the Night, verily he turns not again into the tumult of the world, into the land where dwells the Light in ceaseless unrest....but true to the Night remains [his] secret heart, and to creative Love, her daughter.

Hymns to the Night IV

### *Secret of the Night*

When the twilight sky outbreathes  
its last trace of daylight  
into the heaven's deep whorl,

And a jewel-bespecked brilliance  
alone articulates  
the dark celestial dome,

Is it not then, out of night's holy  
womb, that true vision is born –

Disclosing the secrets hidden  
behind the veil of the day's deceit?

What flaming joys! What holy desires  
are so expressed! In those fires  
that burn, yet are not consumed!

The sum of earthly memory  
spans but a few ticks  
of this immortal clock.

No, death has no power here,  
where burns the eternal flame,

Pure as gold,  
and without smoke.

—Bill Trusiewicz  
October 2007

*Ancient Marian Prayers with Sophianic Attributes*

Today on this traditional Feast of the Queenship of Mary (as the octave of the Assumption/Dormition of Mary celebrated on August 15<sup>th</sup>), I recall the many Marian prayers which were part of my upbringing and still resonant in my soul. Of course there are the deservedly well-known prayers such as the "Hail Mary," the "Magnificat" (Mary's own words recorded in Luke 1:46-55), and the "Salve Regina" (Hail Holy Queen)—so perfect for this Feast as it honors Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

Yet to this treasure trove of traditional prayers, I have found so many more ancient prayers, though dedicated to Mary, they also recognize, honor and praise Her Sophianic attributes. They come from a variety of sources: Old Testament passages and the Psalms; Celtic prayers; prayers and meditations from well-known Saints and not so well-known Saints, mystics and theologians throughout the ages; prayers incorporated in the rituals and liturgies of different religious rites reflecting their unique cultural and spiritual heritages; and some from the Mother Herself spoken to visionaries during Her apparitions.

I would like to offer excerpts from some of the above sources. Perhaps they may serve as seeds for meditation or inspiration to create your own tribute to the Divine Eternal Feminine.

Warmly,  
JaniceMarie Mappin

**Star Illumined by the Sun**

(from the Byzantine Liturgy)

Hail, star illumined by the sun, hail;  
Through you creation has been renewed.  
You are the heavenly stairway  
Through which God has descended.  
You are the earth  
Of the fruit that never perishes.  
You are the key  
At the doors of paradise.  
You are the burning bush  
That is not consumed.  
You are the sea  
That drowns the spiritual pharaoh.  
You are the rock  
That gives forth water for the thirsty.  
You are the column of fire  
That guides those who are in darkness.  
You are the nutriment  
That has replaced the manna.  
You are the promised land  
Flowing with milk and honey.  
You are the tabernacle  
Of God and the Word.  
You are the ark  
Guided by the Holy Spirit.  
You are the censor of gold and perfume  
Giving forth the holy fragrance of Christ.  
Amen

**The True Devotee of Mary Splendor of the Stars**

(St. Louis Marie de Montfort, (Ethiopic Anaphora)

1673-1716)

She is Queen Sovereign  
Of all the Universe.  
Heaven is Her domain;  
Her heel is Satan's curse.  
She is the treasurer  
Of all Christ's goods. She lifts  
Sin's bar and bids us share  
The Holy Spirit's gifts.  
She is more radiant  
Than all the Cherubim;  
She is more luminant  
Than all the Seraphim.  
Outside the Trinity  
And solely by God's grace  
In Heaven's galaxy  
She holds the highest place...

Mary, you are the extension of heaven  
and the foundation of the earth,  
the depths of the seas  
and the light of the sun,  
the beauty of the moon  
and the splendor of the stars in the sky.  
You are greater than the cherubim,  
more eminent than the seraphim,  
and more glorious than the chariot of  
fire...  
Your hands touched the untouchable  
and the fire of the divinity that lies therein.  
Your fingers are like the incandescent  
tongs  
with which the prophet received the coal  
of the heavenly oblation.  
You are the basket of this bread of burning  
flame  
and the chalice of this wine...

**Song of Songs (6:10)**

Who is this that appears like the dawn,  
Fair as the moon, bright as the sun,  
Majestic as the stars in procession?

## O Mary, Peaceful Ocean

(St. Catherine of Siena 1347-1380)

O Mary, peaceful ocean.

O Mary, giver of peace.

O Mary, fruitful land.

You, O Mary, are that new plant  
from which we have the fragrant flower  
of the Word, only-begotten Son of God,  
because this Word was sown in you,  
O fruitful land.

You are the land and the plant...

### Meditation with Hildegard of Bingen—1098-1179

The earth is at the same time mother,  
She is mother of all that is natural,  
Mother of all that is human.  
She is mother of all,  
For contained in Her are the seeds of all.  
The earth of humankind contains all moistness,  
All verdancy,  
All germinating power.  
It is in so many ways fruitful.  
All creation comes from it  
Yet it forms not only the basic raw material for  
humankind,  
But also the substance of the incarnation of God's Son.  
Amen

## "Lady of Light" – Meditation Poem

You who bring new waters of life

To all those who are open to you

Pour forth your birthing waters on us today.

Wash us, refresh us, sparkle drops of effervescent love  
upon us

Fill us with the wetness of wisdom

And quench our thirst for you

Oh, Mother of the World.

We invite your presence, your love, your playfulness,  
your vast depth of being into our midst.

Reveal to us the mysteries of the Universe, those hidden  
things you have veiled for centuries

That we may all evolve in true holiness and oneness of  
being. As we work together to build the earth.

Amen

—Pat Luce

Inspired as the opening meditation for the conference  
on the "Sacred Feminine" in Loire Valley, France where  
we participated as keynote speakers, October 2006

## SOPHIA GRAIL CIRCLE STUDY MATERIAL

The *Sophia Grail Circle* is central to the activities of the Sophia Foundation of North America. In the booklet *Divine Sophia, Holy Wisdom*, written for the founding of the Sophia Foundation, is written:

*Through the inspiration of Sophia, new artistic ritual forms will gradually incarnate into the world – forms in which great spiritual truths will be enacted by way of rituals in an artistically (spiritually and aesthetically) meaningful setting. Participating in such rituals can help to bring about far-reaching transformations in consciousness and the entire inner life, even taking effect in the outer world, in the kingdoms of nature. This will lead to Sophianic liturgical forms, complementary to the traditional Christian forms of liturgy.*

In the years since the founding of the Sophia Foundation on New Year's Eve 1994/1995, the *Sophia Grail Circle* has evolved with respect to the development of Sophianic liturgy. At the present point in time there are several *Sophia Grail Circle* celebrations:

the Sophia celebration

the Peace service

the Sacred Marriage celebration

the Liturgy to the Earth

the meditation on the Seven Seals from the *Book of Revelation*

the meditation on the Nine Beatitudes from the *Sermon on the Mount*

the Foundation Stone meditation given by Rudolf Steiner at Christmas 1923

the Ascent through the Planetary Spheres ("Jacob's Ladder")



Each of these celebrations has a unique and profound quality. What they all have in common is the circle arrangement with a central focus – a flower arrangement or altar comprising meaningful meditation symbols – this being the “Grail principle”. These are community celebrations with music alternating with readings of sacred texts, and sometimes including sacred dance.

The “Grail principle” is that of a community spiritually united, *oriented toward a central focus*, creating a vessel into which Higher Beings (such as Christ and Sophia) can incarnate as Bearers of an overlighting intelligence and power of spiritual communion, bringing Divine Grace and Peace to the participants. The *Sophia Grail Circle*, working out of the “Grail principle”, proceeds from an artistic level – through music and sacred texts (sometimes including the sacred dance of eurythmy) – to a religious level of experience. This requires that there first be preparation on a cognitive level – for example, in the case of the Seven Seals, to contemplate the meaning of the Seven Seals in relation to the stages of evolution, which is one of the ways in which the Seven Seals can be approached. (As with all true *spiritual* symbols, the Seven Seals have multiple levels of significance.) There is an *ascent*, therefore, from the cognitive to the artistic to the religious dimension, the word “religion” meaning “to re-unite”.

Expressed briefly: the *Sophia Grail Circle* is a community of people who join together to form a vessel to serve Christ and Sophia and the spiritual evolution of humanity and the earth. Toward this end, we work together consciously and purposefully to maintain the intention and vision of our Circle. The *Sophia Grail Circle* is an endeavor focusing on Sophia at the heart of the community. It is a human weaving that serves to enable the inspiration of the Divine to work into the heart of each and every person in the circle and also into the heart of the wider Sophia community and – beyond – into the community of all humankind as a grace and blessing.

The Cosmic Christ and Divine Sophia are universal beings known to various peoples and traditions by different names at different times. Uniting with them for the furthering of human evolution is the focus of the *Sophia Grail Circle*. The various texts – in booklet form – published as *Sophia Grail Circle* study material are intended to help give an orientation and thereby enable the focus of the *Sophia Grail Circle* to be realized. Their purpose is to provide additional support to the *Sophia Grail Circle* celebrations. They can be read also in their own right without necessarily attending any of the *Sophia Grail Circle* activities.

The following *Sophia Grail Circle* study material is available upon request, with a donation of \$12 for each booklet requested. If you wish, you may add \$3 to your donation to help with shipping and handling.

*Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sophia & Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ* by Robert Powell. (See the front cover of this issue of Starlight.)

*The Foundation Stone Meditation in the Sacred Dance of Eurythmy* by Lacquanna Paul and Robert Powell. Study material describing forms and gestures for the Foundation Stone Meditation given by Rudolf Steiner on Christmas Day 1923. This meditation enfolds a supersensible reality which has been traditionally called by various names: The Holy Grail and the Philosopher’s Stone being two of the more traditional designations for what Rudolf Steiner called the *Foundation Stone of Love*.

*Morning Mediation in Eurythmy: Four Steps of Realization of the Words “Not I, but Christ in Me”*, by Robert Powell. Rudolf Steiner’s “Morning Meditation” in sacred dance with the sayings of Christ for the chakras.

*The Prayer Sequence in Sacred Dance* by Lacquanna Paul and Robert Powell. Study material describing the forms and gestures of the Prayer Sequence in sacred dance (eurythmy), with diagrams.

## SOPHIA GRAIL CIRCLE

I offer something I have written down from two of the many deep experiences I have undergone through participating in the celebrations of the Sophia Grail Circle over the years. I feel they might offer a regenerative hope to other seekers on the path of Sophia. At the time of these experiences, they were a gift given following a long and arduous 11-year work assignment. Thereby it often seemed I gave more energy to the work than I actually had and was able to give. On many levels the exhaustion I experienced through this work assignment seemed complete. The following two Sophia Grail Circle experiences during the Sophia celebration and the celebration of the Seven Seals began the process of healing not only for my physical body, but also for my soul and spirit.

### *The Sophia Celebration of the Grail Circle*

The music began and my legs and feet immediately wished to dance. The next minute I was transported up into spiritual realms and found myself on a great curve of light through the galaxy leading towards its heart. As I continued to behold, a great city of light rose up to meet my gaze, thus entering my mind. Then, across the curve of the horizon and above the light, I saw a shining gold crown coming into view, as if appearing over a hilltop. This was followed, gradually, by a full vision of Mary, Queen of Heaven, moving toward me, garmented in white and blue, approaching, borne along on her exquisite feet. The closer she came, the more overjoyed I became, and I began to move toward Her. We embraced and suddenly I was back on the earth, sitting in my chair, held upright. Round about I saw what I can only describe as an “immense bodily sacrifice” which glowed about me in ineffable light.

Gradually I became aware that there was activity in the center of the circle – activity in which we all shared. From Sophia, bouquets of flowers of every description were placed into each person’s arms with joy. Each spray of flowers was specific for each individual. She then turned my attention to my husband sitting on my left. Sheets of living water and light flashed upward through his feet and legs. Just above his head I saw images from the revelation to John on Patmos, and I beheld the Holy City of the Heavenly Jerusalem descending closer. She then showed me his heart, wherein was a golden chalice, and as soon as I saw the golden wine abiding within it, I drank of it. Ineffable joy was present everywhere. Sophia went around the circle filling each one’s golden cup in their hearts. There was no end to this incredible and ineffable joy.

### *The Celebration of the Seven Seals*

At the beginning my body began to tremble in anticipation and in readiness for the grandeur of this event at which I beheld a heavenly, spiritual attendance overlighting our gathering.

With the build-up of the music and the reading of the First Seal, the Son of Man descended. I experienced Him within me, right down to my toes. As the music for the Second Seal began, sheets of living light flashed downward. It was as if the Holy Living Creatures “fell down” in Time upon the altar. With the Son of Man within me, Sophia appeared from the center, coming toward Him. She reached out and they embraced each other. Suddenly, in deep delight, I found myself standing in a fountain of living water, the light and refreshment of which stayed with me.

Toward the end of this beautiful celebration, I began to notice how everyone’s feet around the circle were all so very precious. Then I recalled the previous year’s experience during the celebration of the Seven Seals: at the end Christ, the Son of Man, stood in the center, and from His feet issued forth corridors of living water, filled with light and streaming across the floor toward the feet of each participant. These corridors of water (one corridor for each person) were as rivers connecting our feet to His footsteps and to the purpose for which we each had come to the earth.

Now, once again, Christ stood in the center among us, wearing a long garment of ivory and gold. Each one of us was then shown an inner task, with an indication of a deepening to come. This was given also with a resonance – something which would see the work of each one of us through. I began to notice Christ’s garment and how it shone. The longer I looked, the greater it shone, until the garment’s radiance poured forth such scintillating light – signifying for us all to be remembered in the garment itself. Even when it becomes no longer visible, yet somehow we are clothed in His raiment for a time and times to come...

Now, well into the sequence of experiences of further deepening into the task where Holy Wisdom has led me, homecomings such as these celebrations of the Sophia Grail Circle have brought great love, grace, remembrance, and strength upon the path, making this incredible life journey so worthwhile – a journey in service to Christ and Sophia and to humanity.

—In gratitude ... a friend

## *Mary, Queen of the Angels and Archangels: The Force of Love*

In our circle I behold that we are looking up at the Holy Virgin, Queen of Heaven, Sophia, Daughter of the Lord, coming down toward us, preceded by angelic beings. She is radiating the force of Divine Love toward us, to open our hearts and spiritual eyes.

Softly, little by little, each Angel takes up a position around the circle, behind each person, placing the left hand upon each one of our left shoulders, then later taking up a position near each person's left foot, to give each one of us strength and certainty.

We begin to feel much fire coming from Sophia into the region around our hearts.

Our heads are covered with white and rose colors streaming down from the heavens.

Then Archangels surround us, forming a celestial choir together with the Angels, singing the most heavenly, lovely music we can possibly imagine.

Sophia and the Holy Spirit are always present to hear our prayers.

We are moved by this vision of a world belonging to the future, created for us by the Divine Fusion of Lord Jesus, Holy Mary, and the Holy Spirit.

Experience of Dr. Nicola Piscopo, MD  
Sophia Celebration in Assisi  
August 12, 2003

## *Meditation on the Nine Beatitudes*

While I was seated and waiting for the group to settle and the meditation to begin, I sensed a presence in the center of the room, waiting for us, eagerly awaiting our union. Sometime after the reading of the Fourth Beatitude, I became aware of a pillar of light in our midst with approximately the same diameter as the central altar. This pillar of light extended upward to heaven. I wondered if others saw it too. I saw it with my eyes open and also with my eyes closed.

I remembered the words of Frank Fools Crow, the Ceremonial Chief of the Teton Sioux, regarded by many to be the greatest Native American Indian holy person of the last hundred years, as he described how God works through a holy person. He spoke of the medicine people as "hollow bones" into whom the power comes and then flows through the medicine person to others. I became aware that our meditation created – by way of the pillar of light – a "hollow bone" between the Central Sun at the Galactic Center and the Heart of Mother Earth. Softening my gaze, I saw that the candles around the altar appeared like many-petalled pink flowers surrounding the column of light in our midst. As the experience deepened, another presence entered the room. This presence was comforting, like the warmth of fire, solid as Mother Earth Herself, ever present, like the air we breathe, and nourishing as the water we drink. Experiencing our circle as a circle of love, I softened and breathed deeply. The meditation ended in great peace.

—Sandy

## *Sophia Grail Circle*

Amid the warmth and pastoral beauty of Fort Schlesinger's farm in Petaluma, California, the Sophia Grail Circle passed through yet another sacred gate on Pentecost Saturday, May 26, 2007. As co-founder of the Sophia Foundation of North America (in 1994, with Robert Powell), Karen Rivers has served as the Sophia Grail Circle's devoted teacher and guide. The Sophia Grail Circle is a community of individuals who come together in the Grail tradition in service to Christ and Sophia.

The "Grail principle" is that of a community spiritually united, oriented toward a central focus, creating a vessel into which Higher Beings (such as Christ and Sophia) can incarnate as Bearers of an overlighting intelligence and power of spiritual communion, bringing Divine Grace and Peace to the participants...The Sophia Grail Circle is a community of people who join together to form a vessel to serve Christ and Sophia and the spiritual evolution of humanity.<sup>1</sup>

With great reverence and anticipation the Sophia Grail Circle came together in the Barn on the evening of Pentecost Saturday, May 26, 2007. This was a very important weekend for the Grail Circle because Karen and Robert were holding the second gathering of the Sophia Grail Circle Facilitators' training. Many arrived on Pentecost Saturday evening already infused with grace and reverence as they had been immersed in the facilitators training for two days. The sacred celebration that evening was offered in devotion to the Etheric Christ, known esoterically as the *Amen*, and to His Bride, Sophia, who is now descending from heavenly heights and is the bearer of the coming world culture known as the *Rosa Munda*, or Rose of the World. The sacred celebration dedicated to the Etheric Christ represents an extension of the Christian tradition going back two thousand years to the coming of Christ in a physical body at the beginning of our era.

In the Christian tradition sacred magic invokes the living presence of Christ through all that is sacred to Christ. The celebration of the Sophia Grail Circle connects onto the Christian tradition and extends the sacred magic by additionally invoking the *living presence* of Divine Sophia, the Bride of the Lamb, through all that is sacred to Her. In the sacred Grail rite there are levels of communion with both Christ and Sophia. By means of the invocation of sacred magic through the living Presence of Christ and Sophia, the sacred Grail rite of the Sophia Grail Circle assists in the transformation of the four members of the human body.

The celebration began with music by Beethoven, the first of four Beethoven pieces played by pianist and composer Marcia Burchard. The combination of Beethoven's heart-awakening compositions and Marcia's beauty and warmth-filled talent elevated our souls while setting a most tender and receptive mood. We were primed for something very special.

Marcia then performed Schubert accompaniments to the Prayer Sequence. With focused attention and devotion we danced sacred eurythmy to the Prayers. Upon the completion of the Sequence, Robert spoke an invocation and prayers, followed by selected readings of sacred texts read by Janice-Marie Mappin and Michael Cohen. Robert then solemnly prepared us for the communion with the Etheric Christ. As we sat in our Grail circle, one by one we spoke a blessing to one another. The deeper significance of this blessing is on the one hand for the spiritualization of the physical body toward ultimately becoming the resurrection body (*atma*, or spirit body), and on the other hand for the consecration of the "I", centered in the heart, that it may be permeated with Divine Love. Participating in this sacred Grail rite, I could feel sweet warmth and love infuse my very being.

When all in the Grail Circle had received the blessing of the sacred Grail rite, Robert began the next part of the celebration. Robert stood at the head of the Circle; Karen stood facing him, within the Circle. With great solemnity, and devotion, Robert called upon Christ and Sophia to bestow upon Karen heavenly Blessing in service to Christ and Sophia. I beheld Robert as a conduit for the Holy of Holies. A tangible Blessing descended upon Karen. As I watched Karen, I had thoughts of Sekmet, the Egyptian goddess of fierce strength, goodness, truth, and purpose – She who is known as Mother and Protector, and also as the destroyer of evil. I beheld such tall strength and attentive Presence in

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Powell (2007) *Sophia Grail Circle, Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sophia & Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ*. (Sophia Foundation: Palo Alto, CA, 2007), p. 4.



Karen. She was answering her call of service with *every* fiber of her being. After she received the heavenly Blessing in service to Christ and Sophia, Michael Cohen, Karen's husband, helped her don a magnificent cream brocade vestment worthy of the occasion.

While the Grail community silently offered their personal blessings to Karen, Bob Schmitt, Pat Luce, Anastasy Tynan, and Janice-Marie Mappin, surrounded Karen and laid their hands upon her to confer their most heartfelt blessings and to welcome her into her sacred calling of service.

Karen was the celebrant for the second half of the Grail rite, consecrated to Divine Sophia. Fully imbued with Divine Grace, Karen led the Grail circle in the sacred rite for the transformation of the life forces or etheric body into *buddhi*, or life spirit, and for the transformation of the soul or astral body into *manas* or life spirit. Once again we spoke a blessing to one another around the circle, in turn receiving a blessing from our neighbor in the celebration of the sacred Grail rite.

Marcia's beautiful music followed the consecration to Divine Sophia. We closed the celebration with a blessing of peace around the sacred circle: "The Peace of Christ and Sophia be with you."

We who know and love Karen can feel the amplified Grace and Wisdom bestowed upon her during the celebration that evening. We feel it in Karen's presence and we are recipients of her increased spiritual gifts because she chose to go through the sacred gate on the evening of Pentecost Saturday. We in the Sophia Grail Circle are so very blessed to have Karen as our friend, guide and teacher.

—Eileen Leggett

### *Reflections on the events of July 17-18, 2007: Pluto in conjunction with the Galactic Center*

I joined the global "fire the grid" meditation at 4:11 am PDT on July 17<sup>th</sup>. I appreciated knowing that thousands, maybe tens of thousands, were participating in offering their energy to the earth at this same time. This created a wonderful sense of community and shared intention, and a deep and heart-warming connection to the earth. Throughout the meditation I was especially aware of one line from the Our Mother prayer—*Receive this day the living memory of thee from human hearts...* Later I learned that the number of people participating might have been in the hundreds of thousands.

The energy flowing into the earth felt tender and deep throughout the entire day of the 17<sup>th</sup>. In Eugene, a warm summer rain fell off and on throughout the day, nourishing the earth that had become dry from a recent heat wave.

During the celebration of the Beatitudes that evening, I felt waves of Divine Love pouring into our circle and through the altar, into the heart of the earth. Each Beatitude seemed to call forth a new wave of energy. It was a gift to participate in this act of sacred magic. I was aware of Rudolf Steiner's words, "... *Shambhala will arise—woven and gleaming with light, abounding with life, and filling our hearts with wisdom.*"

This mood of Divine Love pouring into the earth set the tone for the Sophia Grail Circle celebration on the evening of July 18. Right from the beginning, I could experience a deep love and appreciation for everyone in the room and for the work we were doing together, and recognized this Love as the Essence of Being. This stayed with me through the experience of the celebration.

I would describe my experience of this celebration of the Sophia Grail Circle as an "awakening". When I close my eyes now (about 6 weeks later), I can still see the symbols from the celebration as though they were drawn with light. The symbols seem to be radiating light. This light has been present for the past few weeks and offers a steady stream of energy and nourishment. I'm especially aware of its influence in my thinking.

As the weeks have passed since this Sophia Grail Circle celebration, my inner activity continues to deepen. This has led to new insight and understanding regarding my life path. This includes a growing awareness of the leadership and the mission of the Church of John, of the community that's connected to the Night School of Sophia, of the value of the practices associated with the Sanctification of the New Moon and the Full Moon, of the principle of *Da'ath*, and of the profound significance of the Second Coming that influences every day of life. My commitment to serve the mission of Christ and Sophia has been deeply renewed through my experience of the Sophia Grail Circle, and I pray daily for the clarity and courage to serve meaningfully.

—Deborah Aikens

# CHOREOCOSMOS NEWS

This part of the newsletter is devoted to bringing news of the Choreocosmos School of Cosmic and Sacred Dance. For information concerning the Choreocosmos workshops in Europe and North America, please contact the administrative office of the Sophia Foundation, or see the Events Calendar on the Sophia Foundation web site: [www.sophiofoundation.org](http://www.sophiofoundation.org)

## *The Foundation Stone Meditation in Sacred Dance*

I have been involved with Waldorf education and Anthroposophy for over sixteen years, and almost ten years with the Sophia Foundation of North America. Along with scores of lectures and workshops, I also managed twice to complete one semester of the Waldorf Teacher Training, so naturally I've been exposed to the Rudolf Steiner's Foundation Stone Meditation a number of times. Each time I was impressed, through the words and manner in which it was presented, with the importance given to it, as well as the respect and high esteem with which it was regarded. It had been described as the seminal, summation of Rudolf Steiner's entire lifework and I had come eventually to regard it as the "holy grail" of Anthroposophy.

However, with considerable dismay I came to realize that try as I might to comprehend it, this piece remained impenetrable to me – all of it, except for the fourth verse, which is fairly accessible to most people, but which only tantalized me further, and added to the frustration of not being able to make any real sense of the first three verses. I finally gave it up and regarded myself as a second rate Anthroposophist. However, when a friend and Anthroposophical elder I very much respect, recently confessed to a similar experience, I began to wonder how many of us had closeted ourselves with this shameful secret over the years.

And so when Robert Powell offered a weekend workshop in Petaluma on the Foundation Stone Meditation, I decided to give it another try, this time with renewed hope and anticipation, being familiar with the quality of previous Choreocosmos workshops.

I learned in this workshop, that doing this meditation in eurythmy, with Robert leading and speaking the words, made all the difference. The words came alive for me as never before, both within and without, as I moved familiar planetary, zodiacal, vowel, and consonantal gestures through the beautiful forms.

Amazingly, the whole thing made sense to me in a wonderful way that is hard to describe in words– the meaning and depth went beyond words. In fact, I experienced that words on paper truly are dead, as opposed to words that are imbued with life through speaking or eurythmy.

I could understand that this meditation was not only a summary of Rudolf Steiner's life's work, but also a totality of wisdom for humanity and the spiritual world. I felt that I wanted to dedicate myself to speaking, moving and working with this meditation for the rest of my life. The meaning and purpose of human existence is in it, and what could be more important than dedicating myself to the meaning and purpose of human existence?

A booklet has been created (The Foundation Stone Meditation in the Sacred Dance of Eurythmy, available through the Sophia Foundation) with the words and gestures to assist workshop participants in learning and working with the meditation by heart. I found it a very helpful aid at home after participating in the workshop. Speaking and/or moving this meditation has been a most rewarding daily practice.

Thus it was a great surprise to me, with this new experience and insight, that when I sat down to read the Foundation Stone Meditation from the page, it once again made no sense to me, even though it continued to make sense when I spoke it or moved it in my daily practice.

I have come to realize that the "open secret" here is that this language is meant to be communicated in a living way; it is meant to be spoken, to be experienced. Why else would poets give "readings"? Why attend dramas, or musical performances, or experience any of what I call the "time arts" – music, dance, speech, ritual – arts that can only be truly experienced, in time, with the presence of both the artist and the art lover? There is a living, etheric quality that is as essential to the nature of the time arts as breathing is to us, and this must be allowed to live and flow through time with the beings present.

There is also a mysterious exchange that takes place between speaker and listener, performer and audience, lover and beloved, that is in the realm of Sophia – the weaving between souls that we in the Sophianic community call the Holy Soul. And indeed, the Foundation Stone Meditation addresses the human soul three times, and then calls upon the Spirit Light of the World in the fourth verse, to warm our hearts and enlighten our heads "that good may become– what from our hearts we found and from our heads direct with single purpose."

All I can say is that the Foundation Stone Meditation is something that is meant to be experienced and I know that it must have been an unforgettable experience when Rudolf Steiner first spoke these words. This was a deed, and for me it is about the Word becoming flesh and living among us. We are meant to experience this.

I offer my gratitude to Rudolf Steiner for giving us the Foundation Stone Meditation in the early 20th century, and to Robert Powell for listening to the guidance that led him to offering a way for 21st century human beings to experience it once again in a living way.

—Molly Rose, Michaelmas 2007

On June 26, at the end of the morning meditation, as I inwardly spoke some words for the blessing of Mother Earth, I saw a white dove above my head. At the same time, a broad waterfall of light streamed down my right side onto the Earth.

Seven weeks later I had the good fortune to participate in the Assisi workshop on “The Immaculate Heart, the Sacred Heart, and the Cosmic Heart”, working with the Foundation Stone meditation in eurhythmy. In reverence and humility – in face of the spiritual world – and out of love, I would like to relate an experience that was bestowed upon me by grace during the workshop. As we were doing the Foundation Stone meditation on the Thursday morning, during the music introducing the third verse of the Foundation Stone, I felt something like water streaming upon my head and over my whole body. It flowed down to my feet and streamed around them in a circle. I wondered if this was an experience of the Washing of the Feet. Then on Saturday morning, again during the music introducing the third verse of the Foundation Stone, I saw our whole group together with many others standing in a circle on the Earth with outstretched arms reaching up toward heaven. Slowly the Foundation Stone itself, which I could not see directly, sank down into the radiant Earth, which opened to receive it, and we all sank down slowly together with the Foundation Stone. Then a great ray of light shone down from heaven upon the Earth. I saw human souls majestically ascending and descending upon this ray of light.

—Anonymous

### *Space and Counterspace*

I have a friend who is very interested in the concept of counterspace. His interest comes from study of mathematics; my interest comes from the study of human movement in space. We have had some deep and lively discussions about space and counterspace (his terms) and movement and countermovement (my terms). In the course of these conversations we would often have to work diligently to come to a mutual understanding of what we were talking about, as his understanding of counterspace was not my understanding of countermovement. Since participating in Choreocosmos, I feel that I now have a ‘movement understanding’ of our conversations. What began to happen to me was this: at certain points in the Dance there would come experiences that I would like to describe using these terms of movement/countermovement and space/counterspace. The movement and countermovement in the room – the interplay of the inner circle moving the planetary gestures in one direction, with the outer circle moving the zodiacal gestures in the other direction- was where I began to notice some things. At certain moments in this movement/countermovement experience, a ‘mysterious harmony’ would enter my field of attention. It was as though a door opened and I entered into a field of entirely new and different perception. In this field, I had strong sense experiences of movement in a different space. It was as though I had entered a temple. The walls were stone; the darkness was lit with candles that were hanging from the walls. I could see, hear, and feel the swish of fabric showing movement. Although I could not see specific bodily forms, at times I saw the feet moving in this room. It was as though the Ancient Temple Dances were all about me in those moments.

I feel that the door into this space was really created by this incredible movement/ countermovement that was in the room. And now, I do have an understanding of my friend’s concepts of space and counterspace, from my own experience.

The ‘door’ into counterspace is *through the ‘dance’ between movement and countermovement* of planetary and zodiacal forms and gestures. Choreocosmos has provided me with a living, ensouled movement experience for which I am grateful, and am continuing to study.

—Diana Zinter

# CHOREOCOSMOS

## SCHOOL OF COSMIC AND SACRED DANCE

### SCHEDULE 2008

January 11-13, 2008 "Cosmic Dance of Eurythmy: the Four Elements

Weekend workshop with Robert Powell in Trier, Germany (German)

Information and registration: Gisela Storto-Lanfe

Am Irscherhof 35, 54294 Trier, Germany, Tel: +49-651-34053

February 3-9, 2008 "Cosmic Dances of Planetary Configurations at the Transition to Spiritual Realms of the Great Teachers of Humanity: Jesus of Nazareth, the Virgin Mary, the Prophet Mani, Christian Rosenkreutz, & Rudolf Steiner"

Seminar with Robert Powell in Kinsau, Germany (space is limited – early registration is recommended). Arrival on 3 February for the concert of the Schwabinger Klaviertrio at 5:00 p.m..Then: evening meal and conversation.

Departure on 9 February after breakfast. (German with Italian translation)

Information and registration: Gisela Storto-Lanfer

Am Irscherhof 35, 54294 Trier, Germany. Tel. 0651-34053, Fax. 0651-9932731

Italian participants: Uberta Sebgondi, Via della Fonte di Fauno 20, 00153 Roma

Tel: 06-86904627 or Mobile phone: 335-6749935.

February 16–March 9, "The Soul of India" Journey to India

Madras/Chennai Extension from March 9-11, 2008

led by Robert Powell and Karen Rivers (with eurythmy and singing at the various mystery sites and temples)

A 16-page color brochure and also the Chennai/Madras extension from March 9-11 can be downloaded from the Sophia Foundation website [www.sophiafoundation.org](http://www.sophiafoundation.org)

Pilgrimage to India organized by the Sophia Foundation of North America

Tel/Fax: 650-494-9900 Email: [sophia@sophiafoundation.org](mailto:sophia@sophiafoundation.org)

March 24-30, 2008 "Choreocosmos: International Week" in Roncesgno near Trient, Italy. "The Planets and the Zodiac: the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life"

in the anthroposophical spa hotel "Casa di Salute - Raphael": 7<sup>th</sup> graduation of the Choreocosmos School

(English/German with Italian translation). Arrival on March 24 for dinner; departure on March 30 after breakfast.

Information: Sally Ellis-Jones

Tel: +39-0461-724893 / +39-3482-106251 E-mail: [sellisjones@yahoo.com](mailto:sellisjones@yahoo.com)

April 20, 2008 (arrival) - April 27, 2008 (departure) "Hunab Ku and the Year 2012: Retreat with Stargazing" (with Cosmic and Sacred Dance) at the ancient Mayan site of Tulum, Mexico

To the Mayans Hunab Ku was the supreme God, the Creator of the universe. Some fifteen hundred years ago ancient Mayan astronomers predicted an alignment of the Earth, the Sun, and of the center of our Galaxy to take place at the end of the present cycle of the Mayan Long Calendar on December 21, 2012. This day, according to the Mayans, signifies the end of a cycle and simultaneously the beginning of a new cycle for humanity. Starting on the day of the Full Moon – Sunday, April 20, 2008 – we shall gather for a week at the ancient Mayan site of Tulum on the Caribbean coast of the Yucatan peninsula to explore the mystery of Hunab Ku and the year 2012. From April 20, 2008 to December 21, 2012, which is the day of the winter solstice, is a period of four years and eight months, which is not long in terms of preparing ourselves for the changes taking place as we approach the great shift in consciousness predicted by the Mayans. During the week there will be some free time to explore Tulum and visit sacred sites there and in the area, including a one day excursion to the magnificent Mayan site Chichen Itza.

*If you are interested in attending the workshop, please request information for details concerning cost, registration form, information as how to get to Tulum, various accommodation possibilities, rental cars, bus schedules, prices, etc. complete with web pages, phone numbers, etc .*

Further information about this one week star gazing retreat with Robert Powell is available from: Manuel Salgado, Email: [quelibec@hotmail.com](mailto:quelibec@hotmail.com)



May 2-4, 2008 "Sophia and the Foundation Stone"

A weekend workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Sacred Dance (with Sophia Grail Circle)

San Francisco Bay Area, Palo Alto region of the Peninsula, California (location to be announced)

Registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America.

Information: contact Cecille Greenleaf: Tel: 650-533-0074 or 650-948-4536. E-mail: [cao@greenleafmed.com](mailto:cao@greenleafmed.com)

May 24, 2008, 2:00-5:00 PM "Meditations on the Tarot" (Christian Hermeticism meeting)

Meeting and lecture with Robert Powell, at the Barn, near Petaluma, California.

Contact: Anastasy Tynan. Tel: 415-786-9896 E-mail: [evlogite@yahoo.com](mailto:evlogite@yahoo.com)

May 23-27, 2008 "Sophia Grail Circle Training for Facilitators" starting on May 23 at 7:00 pm.

A 4-day training at the Barn, near Petaluma, California, starting Friday evening and ending at noon on Tuesday.

Registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America.

Information: Karen Rivers: Tel: 415-662-2147 E-mail: [karen@karenrivers.info](mailto:karen@karenrivers.info)

June 9-13, 2008 "Seeking Isis-Sophia: A Modern Path for the Human Soul" (With Sophia Grail Circle)

A 5-day workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Cosmic Dance – Planets in Signs of the Zodiac

At Kelly's Barn, Boulder, Colorado. Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

Contact: Cheryl Mulholland. Tel: 303-516-0606 E-mail: [kinterra@gmail.com](mailto:kinterra@gmail.com)

June 13-15, 2008 "The New Demeter Mysteries: the Fifth Sacrifice of Christ"

A weekend workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Cosmic and Sacred Dance (with Sophia Grail Circle)

At Kelly's Barn, Boulder, Colorado. Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

Contact: Cheryl Mulholland. Tel: 303-516-0606 E-mail: [kinterra@gmail.com](mailto:kinterra@gmail.com)

June 20-22, 2008 "Sophia, Mary Magdalene, and the Great Whore of Babylon"

Annual conference of the Sophia Foundation of North America,

At the Santa Sabina retreat center, San Rafael, California. Sacred Dance and Sophia Grail Circle.

Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

Information and registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America

June 22-24, 2008 Annual Board Meeting of the Sophia Foundation of North America

At the Santa Sabina retreat center, San Rafael, California.

The meeting is open to board members, advisory board members, and guests.

June 27-29, 2008 "The New Demeter Mysteries: the Fifth Sacrifice of Christ"

A weekend workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Cosmic and Sacred Dance (with Sophia Grail Circle)

At the Waldorf School, Seattle, Washington. Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

Contact: Stacy Gehman. Tel: 206-517-4917 Email: [branch@seattleanthroposophy.org](mailto:branch@seattleanthroposophy.org)

June 30–JULY 4, 2008 "Cosmic Dances of Planetary Configurations at the Transition to Spirit Realms of the Great Teachers of Humanity: Jesus, Mary, Mani, Christian Rosenkreutz, and Rudolf Steiner"

A 5-day workshop with Robert Powell Choreocosmos: Planets in Signs (with Sophia Grail Circle)

At the Waldorf School, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Musical accompaniment with pianist Marcia Burchard.

Contact: Randall Scott, 152 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1R5

Tel: 604-988-8424/604-988-4600 E-mail: [RosaMundi@shaw.ca](mailto:RosaMundi@shaw.ca)

July 4-6, 2008 "Christ and Antichrist"

A weekend workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Cosmic and Sacred Dance (with Sophia Grail Circle)

At the Waldorf School, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Musical accompaniment with pianist Marcia Burchard.

Contact: Randall Scott, 152 West 15<sup>th</sup> Street, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1R5

Tel: 604-988-8424/604-988-4600 E-mail: [RosaMundi@shaw.ca](mailto:RosaMundi@shaw.ca)

July 7-11, 2008 "Cosmic Dances of the Seven Planets in Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius

Correspondences between Macrocosm and Microcosm"

Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

A 5-day workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Planets in Signs (with Sophia Grail Circle)

At the Eugene Mennonite Church, 3590 West 18<sup>th</sup> Ave, Eugene, Oregon

Information and registration: Deborah Aikens or Renee Taylor: Tel: 541-343-0536, Email: [deborah@efn.org](mailto:deborah@efn.org)

NW Center for Health Promotions, 90 East 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite A, Eugene, Oregon 97405

July 14-18, 2008 "Cosmic Dances of the Nine Beatitudes"

A 5-day workshop with Robert Powell Choreocosmos: Planets in Signs (with Sophia Grail Circle)

At the Barn, near Petaluma, California. Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard, with singing of Marcia's compositions of the Nine Beatitudes led by Karen Rivers.

Registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America.

Information: Karen Rivers: Tel: 415-662-2147 E-mail: [karen@karenrivers.info](mailto:karen@karenrivers.info)

July 20, 2008 (arrival) - July 27, 2008 (departure) "The Sun and the Human Heart: Christ and the Marys of the Gospels" (with Cosmic and Sacred Dance) at a beach front retreat center on the Atlantic coast in Salter Path, North Carolina, USA.

A new and profound esoteric understanding of Christ is arising in our time, the time of the *Parousia*, the renewed presence of Christ "in the clouds" – that is, in the realm of life forces known as the etheric realm. His renewed presence in the etheric could be described as the greatest mystery of our time. How can we connect with this event? And what does it signify? How does the coming of Christ in our time differ from his coming two thousand years ago? At that time he came to reveal the *Heavenly Father* – in his own words: "I and the Father are one." Now, as we shall explore in this workshop, he is coming to reveal the *Divine Mother*. Through Christ the mysteries of the Divine Feminine are being opened up in our time. On this account the women in the Gospels closest to Christ have important roles in our time, particularly the Virgin Mary – now known as *Mary Sophia* – and *Mary Magdalene*. We shall deepen into the lives and destinies of the Marys, exploring their missions in the modern world.

Information and registration: Kelly Calegar, 18 Haycox Court, Durham, NC 27713, USA

Tel. 919-361-0691 Email: [kcalegar@earthlink.net](mailto:kcalegar@earthlink.net)

August 10-17, 2008 "Sophia and Mary Magdalene" (with Sacred Dance & Sophia Grail Circle)

One week Sophia workshop at the retreat center Citadella in Assisi. Musical accompaniment with violinist Daniela Rossi. Arrival on August 10 for dinner; departure on August 17 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation)

Information: Sally Ellis-Jones:

Tel: +39-0461-724893 / +39-3482-106251 E-mail: [sellisjones@yahoo.com](mailto:sellisjones@yahoo.com)

August 29-31, 2008 "The Seven Planets and the Chakras" (with Cosmic Dance)

Weekend workshop with Robert Powell in Stockholm, Sweden (English)

Starting at 8:00 pm on Friday evening and ending at 12:30 pm on Sunday

Information and registration: Michael Gejel Email: [gejel@hotmail.com](mailto:gejel@hotmail.com)

Sophia Foundation of North America (Administrative Office)

3143 Avalon Court

Palo Alto, CA 94306, USA

Telephone/Fax 650-494-9900

Email: [sophia@sophiafoundation.org](mailto:sophia@sophiafoundation.org)

Website: [www.sophiafoundation.org](http://www.sophiafoundation.org)

For German language information visit the Choreocosmos website: [www.choreocosmos.info](http://www.choreocosmos.info)

Choreocosmos School of Cosmic and Sacred Dance

# The Soul of India

## Journey to the Land of the Rishis

With Robert Powell, Ph.D. and Karen Rivers

REGISTRATION AND FINAL PAYMENTS DUE NOVEMBER 1, 2007

Pilgrimage dates: February 16 - March 9, 2008

March 9 – 11, three day extension to Chennai, Mahabalipuram temples, the Basilica of St. Thomas, the place of his death, and the world center for the Theosophical Society.



### *Pilgrimage to India*

organized by the Sophia  
Foundation of North America  
Tel/Fax: 650-494-9900

Email:

sophia@sophiafoundation.org

A 16-page color brochure with a detailed itinerary for the pilgrimage from February 17 to March 9 and also a brochure regarding the Chennai/Madras extension from March 9-11 can be downloaded from the Sophia Foundation website [www.sophiafoundation.org](http://www.sophiafoundation.org)

The Sophia Foundation pilgrimage to India, the Land of the Seven Holy Rishis, will offer you an experience of a lifetime, exploring the spiritual streams born in the land of Mother India, participating in sacred dance and song, and entering into the mysteries of the Seven Holy Rishis who brought the teachings from the Atlantean Mystery Centers to ancient India. The ancient Indian cultural epoch sowed the seeds for the spiritual evolution of humanity since the Great Flood, at which time Manu and the Rishis brought the mystery wisdom of the seven sacred temples of Atlantis to India. The future cultural epoch that will emerge in America will be a metamorphosis of this ancient Indian epoch. The threads of these mysteries will be explored during our journey through the sacred land of India.

*“Those seven who were sent down by the great Leader to lay the foundation of the first Post-Atlantean civilisation were the Seven Holy Rishis of ancient India. They bore within their etheric garment, the etheric bodies of the great Atlantean Leaders... Thus the past, the present, and the future acted in harmony.”*

— RUDOLF STEINER. *THE SPIRITUAL HIERARCHIES*. LECTURE 7.

*“The symbol of the Initiation into the Sun-Mysteries is the picture of the Sun in Taurus. When the Sun stands in the sign of Taurus this vista in the heavenly firmament reveals the mystery of the Initiation of the Rishis. This Initiation took effect through the seven personalities who were the Seven Holy Rishis. This is also expressed in the fact that the Pleiades, a cluster of seven stars, shine from the same region of the heavens. That is the region where the whole solar system entered into the Universe to which we belong.”*

— RUDOLF STEINER. *BACKGROUND TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK*. LECTURE 12.



*“If we go back to the civilization of ancient India, then we find that the Seven Holy Rishis spoke of that which each one of them had to give to humanity... The Spirits of the Planets came to light in that which the Seven Holy Rishis had to say to humanity; each one speaking what he himself knew... For the exalted wisdom which the Holy Rishis gave to humanity was the great recollection of the ancient Atlantean civilizations, only in a new form. At the same time, these seven Holy Rishis said: ‘Above that which we have to give as the civilizations of the seven successive periods of time, lies something else which exists beyond our sphere.’ That which lay above their sphere, the Holy Rishis called Vishvakarma. Thus they alluded to something which lay beyond their sphere, and which comprised a greater Earth-Sphere...”*

— RUDOLF STEINER. *THE SPIRITUAL BEINGS IN THE HEAVENLY BODIES AND IN THE KINGDOMS OF NATURE*. LECTURE 9.



Who were the Seven Holy Rishis? And what is their significance for our time? What is the relationship between the culture of India and the culture of America? What can we experience today of the Holy Land of India, where many of us have lived in ancient times?

The names of the Seven Holy Rishis, as they have been handed down through the tradition of the Himalayan masters, are Marishi, Vasishta, Angirasa, Atri, Kratu, Pulaha, and Pulastya. They are related to the seven stars forming the “Big Dipper” in the constellation of the Great Bear.

*“The longing that lives in the depths of human souls as an echo of the Rishi culture involves, above all, the efforts toward a comprehensive synthesis of spiritual wisdom that is valid for everyone – wisdom that could harmonize one-sided tendencies, just as the revealed wisdom of the Rishis during the ancient Indian epoch represented the harmonizing of the Seven Atlantean Oracles. This longing that lives in human souls corresponds to the light of the ‘seven stars’ in heaven which became the light of the ‘seven candlesticks’ on earth. This longing lives in them because the light that shines in the seven stars of the constellation of the Great Bear once shone also in the Seven Holy Rishis...in one community – just as the seven candlesticks were joined in one light of wisdom.”*

— VALENTIN TOMBERG. *CHRIST AND SOPHIA: MEDITATIONS ON THE APOCALYPSE*. CHAPTER 1.

On our pilgrimage to the land of the Holy Rishis we shall explore the star mysteries of the Pleiades in Taurus and the seven stars forming the Big Dipper in the Great Bear in relation to the Seven Holy Rishis and the primal revelation of Divine Wisdom given to humanity by these seven disciples of the Manu, the great spiritual leader of the seven cultural epochs embracing Post-Atlantean history and extending into the future. The future ages to follow our present Age of Pisces are those of Aquarius and Capricorn – the Age of Capricorn being the time during which the seventh cultural epoch, that of America, will flourish. As



Capricorn is the sign opposite Cancer in the zodiac, the American cultural epoch will be a metamorphosis of the Age of Cancer during which the first cultural epoch, that of India, flourished. The ideal of an all-embracing comprehensive wisdom which lived in Ancient India is to resurrect in the future through the Being of Divine Wisdom, Sophia, and the goal of the Sophia Foundation of North America is to help prepare for the coming Age of Sophia.



The pilgrimage is under the guidance of Robert Powell, Ph.D. and Karen Rivers, co-founders of the Sophia Foundation of North America, and Aban Bana, founder of anthroposophical initiatives in India, and an excellent Indian guide, who is planning a wonderful experience for us in her home country. . See [www.anthroposophyindia.org](http://www.anthroposophyindia.org).

Against this background, the pilgrimage to the land of the Holy Rishis with Karen and Robert is one that the Sophia Foundation is looking forward to under the guidance of Aban Bana, founder of anthroposophical initiatives in India. See [www.anthroposophyindia.org](http://www.anthroposophyindia.org).

Some highlights are: we will be in Khajuraho for the Annual Dance Festival when all the famous dancers from India will be performing with the temples as their backdrop. We will visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar and travel to Dharamsala to experience the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan community there. We will have a dawn boat ride on the Ganges, visit the Ajanta and Ellora caves, and meet with spiritual personalities who will enrich your understanding of the spiritual background of India, its people, and its great tradition.

Other sites include: New Delhi- Mahatma Gandhi, Mathura- birthplace of Krishna, Agra- the Taj Mahal, Varanasi- River Ganges, Bodhgaya- Buddha's enlightenment, Aurangabad- Cochin- sites of St. Thomas, Coconut Lagoon, Madras.

And for those travelers who would like to see more, there is an extension to Chennai, Mahabalipuram temples, the Basilica of St. Thomas, the place of his death, and the world center for the Theosophical Society, March 9 – 11.

#### FELLOW TRAVELERS IN SPIRIT

If you are not able to join us for the journey itself, but would like to serve the spirit of the pilgrimage, we would like to offer a way for you to participate as a "Fellow Traveler in Spirit," by collecting donations from friends to carry to India as a gift to the Tibetan Nuns Project, an organization working to alleviate human suffering, which is in alignment with Sophia as the Mother of All Peoples. We hope in this way to serve as your *Ambassador of Good Will in Deed* and also model world travel with a social conscience. Those

who become *Fellow Travelers in Spirit* will receive copies of relevant handouts, notes, and meditative materials prepared for this pilgrimage.

We have chosen the Tibetan Nuns Project because we will be visiting Dharamsala where one of their nunneries is located. We will also be open to contributing to the well-being of others we encounter on our pilgrimage.

The Tibetan Nuns Project was founded in 1987 when a group of 66 refugee nuns appeared overnight on the streets of Dharamsala, India. They had been on a

two-year pilgrimage from eastern Tibet that ended in a journey over the Himalayas. Ill and exhausted, they had nowhere to go. The Tibetan Women's Association organized emergency assistance to provide their basic needs and the Nuns Project was formed to find a long-term solution to the problem of how to secure housing, medical care and most importantly, education for refugee nuns. The Project created a sponsorship program, reaching out to people and foundations around the world to provide education and humanitarian aid to refugee nuns from Tibet and the Himalayan regions of India. For more information see: [www.tnp.org](http://www.tnp.org).

### *Recommended Reading and Study Material for the Pilgrimage to India*

Robert has compiled an 18-page booklet, including meditations, for all those on the India pilgrimage. If you are going on the pilgrimage to India and have not yet received this material, which describes the theme of the pilgrimage as "The Grail goes East and meets the Soul of India", please contact Molly Rose, administrator of the Sophia Foundation, to let her know.

## IFA

### Institute for Astrosophy

The Institute for Astrosophy (IFA) is a European tax-deductible organization based in Germany.

The founders (and board members) are Heidi Langen, Lacquanna Paul, Robert Powell, Bernt Rossiwall, Gisela Storto and Katherine Wilde.



(From left to right) Front row: Lacquanna Paul, Robert Powell, Heidi Langen  
Back row: Katherine Wilde, Bernt Rossiwall, Gisela Storto

In response to enquiries about the tasks of IFA, Bernt Rossiwall has provided the following summary of the mission statement:

- 1) The purpose of the Institute is to support scientific research in the field of Astrosophy, with respect to the influence of the planets and fixed stars upon human beings, animals, plants, and the Earth.
- 2) This includes research into the historical development of knowledge concerning the influence of the cosmos upon life and testing the results of research in its therapeutic application and also as applied to biographical studies, pedagogy, and the arts.

It is above all the intention of the founders of IFA to support the research work of Robert Powell.

For more information, contact Dr. Bernt Rossiwall,  
Gagers 16, 6165 Telfes, Austria. Tel./Fax (43) 5225 62001



*Starlight*, the newsletter of the Sophia Foundation, appears twice a year – in the Spring and in the Fall. The next issue of *Starlight* is due to appear Spring 2008. If you are intending to send a contribution, please do so by the end of March 2008.

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Effortlessly,  
Love flows from God into humans,  
Like a bird  
Who rivers the air  
Without moving her wings.  
Thus we move in His world  
One in body and soul,  
Though outwardly separate in form—  
As the Source strikes the note,  
Humanity sings-  
The Holy Spirit is our harpist,  
And all the strings  
Which are touched in Love  
Must sound.

Mechthild of Magdeburg  
trans. by Jane Hirshfield

