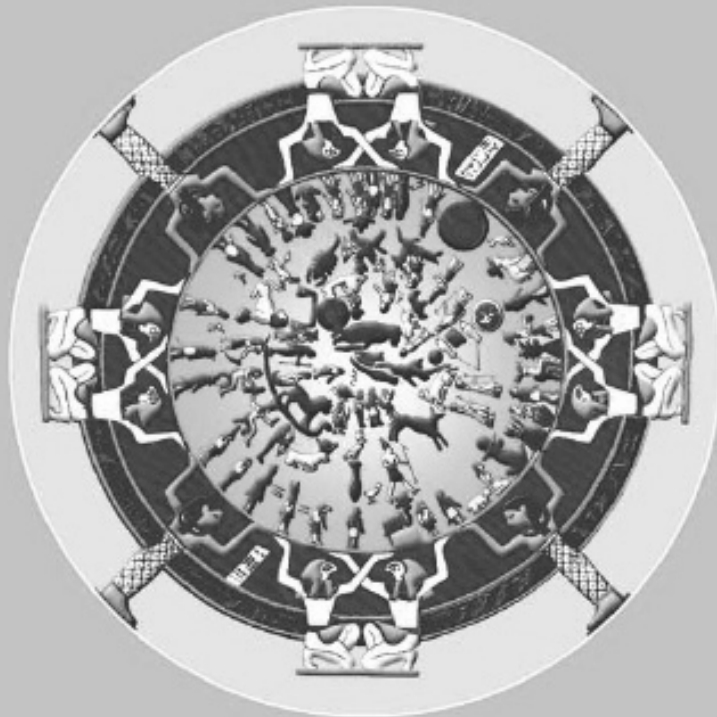


HISTORY OF THE ZODIAC



Robert Powell

“Robert Powell’s dissertation refers to a problem fundamental to the earliest reflections concerning celestial space: that of the measurement of the heavens by ordering the stars and constellations in a coordinate system. The author also presents a tool which can be useful for further research work: the reconstructed Babylonian star catalogue.”

—Professor Grazyna Rosinska, Institute for the History of Science, Polish Academy of Sciences

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NEW PUBLICATIONS

Keith Harris, one of the editors of *The Western Shores – Christian Hermeticism Vol 1*. (available from the Sophia Foundation bookstore) and which concerns the Hermetic impulse linking Christian esotericism and the traditional Church, has brought out a booklet entitled *Valentin Tomberg’s Letter From Another Perspective*, which takes a deep look at the letter written by Valentin Tomberg on March 9, 1970 and sheds valuable new light upon it. Keith then goes on to look at the role of the pyramid of social power in our time, continuing his reflections upon the relationship between Christian esotericism and the traditional Church. This booklet is also available from the Sophia Foundation bookstore.

John Hipsley has brought out a new work by Valentin Tomberg in the series Grail Guide Publications – entitled: *Foundations of International Law as Humanity’s Law*. This work, the sequel to Valentin Tomberg’s Ph.D. thesis *Degeneration and Regeneration of Jurisprudence*, was written around the end of World War II and is occupied with the key question: How was the rise of the National-Socialist State of Germany possible and what is necessary from the standpoint of international law that such a tragedy for humanity never occurs again? Valentin Tomberg gives a clear and penetrating analysis that leads him to this conclusion: “The sovereignty of any state ends where it begins to violate divine law, natural law or contract law, and this creates not only the right, but more importantly, the unavoidable obligation – for the community of states as well as for each individual state – to intervene.”

Recently the Sophia Foundation successfully raised funds to help re-publish two cherished and long out-of-print books by Valentin Tomberg: *Christ and Sophia* (Biblical studies), and *Lazarus Come Forth* (formerly titled *Covenant of the Heart*). Thanks to your donations, these books are now in print by Steiner Books.

James Wetmore, a long-time friend of Robert, editor of several of his earlier books, and an independent publisher, has offered his expertise to establish our own publishing imprints for Sophia Foundation publications. The printing technology he offers significantly reduces the costs of production, for it is not necessary to produce, stockpile, and finance large inventories, but prints “on demand”. This new technology also feeds data, at no extra cost, to the book databases used by the retail and library markets as well as those used by internet suppliers such as Amazon.com, creating an immediate presence on the web.

With gratitude to James, we are very happy to announce the establishment of the Sophia Foundation Press, which has published the long-awaited *Cosmic Dances of the Planets* (along with a reprint of its companion volume, *Cosmic Dances of the Zodiac*), the *Christian Star Calendar 2007*, and reprints of *Hermetic Astrology volumes I and II*. Another imprint, the Sophia Academic Press, has published the book of Robert’s Ph.D. thesis *History of the Zodiac*. These books and also the two books of Valentin Tomberg mentioned above can be ordered on-line from the newly updated bookstore on our website, www.sophiafoundation.org

It has long been Robert’s dream to bring together the insights of Astroscopy, the wisdom of the stars, with Astronomy, the science of the stars. The publication of these works is an important contribution towards realizing this goal. They are the fruit of years of devoted research and work in service to Christ and Sophia. Several other publication projects of Robert’s research are planned to follow: *The Astrological Revolution*, *Your Zodiac Sign Is Not What You Think It Is*, *Elijah Come Again*, *God and the Galaxy*, and *Astrogeographia and the Bible of Astrology*.

We would like to take the opportunity to express our gratitude to all who have helped to raise funds to support this publication effort. Your tax-deductible donations to the Sophia Foundation for “Astrosophy books” has helped us to take the first steps toward realizing these publication goals. All the help that we receive is greatly appreciated!

Five loaves and two fish once fed a multitude of people and similarly, these books can feed people all around the world in the present and in the future. Making these teachings more widely available is not only a deed, but also, we believe, a speaking, which can be heard by the spiritual world.

HISTORY OF THE ZODIAC

The zodiac was first clearly defined by the Babylonians some 2500 years ago, but until recently the basis of this original definition remained unknown. This zodiac of the Babylonians, known as the *sidereal* zodiac because it is specified in direct relation to the stars (Latin *sidera*, ‘stars’), was used for centuries throughout the ancient world, all the way to India, and must be distinguished from the *tropical* zodiac in widespread use by astrologers in the West today, which was introduced into astrology in the middle of the second century A.D. by the Greek astronomer Claudius Ptolemy. Such was Ptolemy’s influence, however, that the tropical zodiac gained prominence and, except for its survival in a variant form in India, knowledge of the sidereal zodiac was lost.

In this penetrating study of the history of the zodiac, first submitted in 2004 as his Ph.D. thesis, Robert Powell restores the sidereal zodiac to its rightful place as the original zodiac, tracing it back to the Babylonians in the fifth century B.C. The implications of this rediscovery of the original zodiac are immense, the key point being that the signs of the *sidereal* zodiac, each thirty degrees long, coincide closely with the twelve astronomical constellations of the same name, whereas the signs of the *tropical* zodiac, since they are defined in relation to the *vernal point*, now have no direct relationship to the corresponding zodiacal constellations, owing to the precession of the equinoxes.

This carefully researched history of the zodiac includes chapters on the Egyptian *decans* and the Hindu *nakshatras*, showing how these sidereal divisions, which originated in Egypt and India, are related to the original Babylonian zodiac. By illuminating the history of the tropical zodiac in widespread use at the present time, light is also shed on the controversy surrounding the ‘zodiac question’ (*tropical* vs. *sidereal*), showing that originally the tropical division was not a zodiac at all, but a *calendar* for describing the course of the seasons. This book, the fruit of thirty years of research, is intended not only for scholars but for general readers as well, and offers the clearest and most comprehensive study of the history of the zodiac yet published.



SOPHIA ACADEMIC PRESS
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA

History of the Zodiac

Experiential review

When I started to read Robert Powell’s book *History of the Zodiac*, I tried again and again, while reading, to imagine the content in terms of images. In doing so, I experienced an extraordinary sense of joy. A wonderful love began to grow in my heart, which then enveloped me completely. I felt myself inwardly transported into the realm of the zodiac, and was then surrounded and penetrated by the zodiac. Deeply moved by this experience, after a time I read further. Again I endeavored to enter into the images underlying the content. As I did so, the scientific mode of presentation dissolved, becoming transformed into spiritual content, where I experienced the timeless realm of cosmic space.

The next step, as I continued to read, was the experience of the whole earth as an imprint of the zodiac – indeed, of the entire globe of the starry heavens. There arose in me an overwhelming sense of love for the earth, the zodiac, and the celestial sphere of the starry heavens. These profound experiences came as a result of reading the content of *History of the Zodiac* in terms of images.

—Beate Sattler

The Blessings of Spiritual Diversity

The Board has received the suggestion that we include articles by people with different perspectives or with religious/spiritual affinities other than Christianity, in order to cultivate learning, celebrate the blessings of spiritual diversity, discover similarities, and bring us closer to the Rose of the World. There was general agreement with this idea. Board Member Andrew Elliott wrote in response:

Common sense and the philosophy/cosmology we embrace tell us that Christ and Sophia are timeless and universal beings...manifest throughout history, in different cultures and different religions i.e. irrespective of the labels we ourselves give. The "Rose of the World" as I understand it, speaks of a future world culture where an awareness of this truth pervades and respect for all cultures and expressions of faith flows from that awareness. The Rose is the heart of each of us, the intersecting point of heaven and earth, of Christ and Sophia. The Rose of the World is that place for the entire realm of creation. The future we seek knows and lives this truth.

As a beginning, in this issue of *Starlight*, we feature "Letter from the Road, the Abraham Path" by Elias Amidon, Pir of the Sufi Way. In hopes of stimulating conversations between spiritual traditions and the rich and fruitful insights that can result, we encourage and welcome submissions from various traditions that embrace the varying faces of Sophia, or different perspectives that could enrich our understanding of Love and Wisdom interweaving in the development of humanity and the future of the world.

— Molly Rose

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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 6, no.2 – Fall 2006), 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:

"Our Mother" in volume 2 (2002), no.1

"Solomon" in volume 2 (2002), no.2

"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" in volume 3 (2003), no.1

"From a book that I read during sleep" in volume 4 (2004), no.2

"Trials by Fire, Water and Air of Man and Humanity" in volume 5 (2005), no.1

"The Zarathustra Line of Jesus of Nazareth, part I: Manu-Melchizedek" in vol. 5 (2005), no.2

"The Zarathustra Line of Jesus of Nazareth, part II: Zarathustra-Zoroaster-Jesus" in vol. 6 (2006), no.1

My article "*Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, and the Return of Christ in the Etheric*" appeared in the previous issue of the newsletter—*Starlight*, volume 6 (2006), no.2. Now, in this issue of the newsletter, we are taking the opportunity to present further 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, but it also contains material that is completely new. In the following material reference is 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 book *The Morning Meditation in Eurythmy*, which also indicates a way of working with these correspondences.

—Robert Powell

The Lotus Flowers

Part I: The Three Upper Lotus Flowers

VALENTIN TOMBERG

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

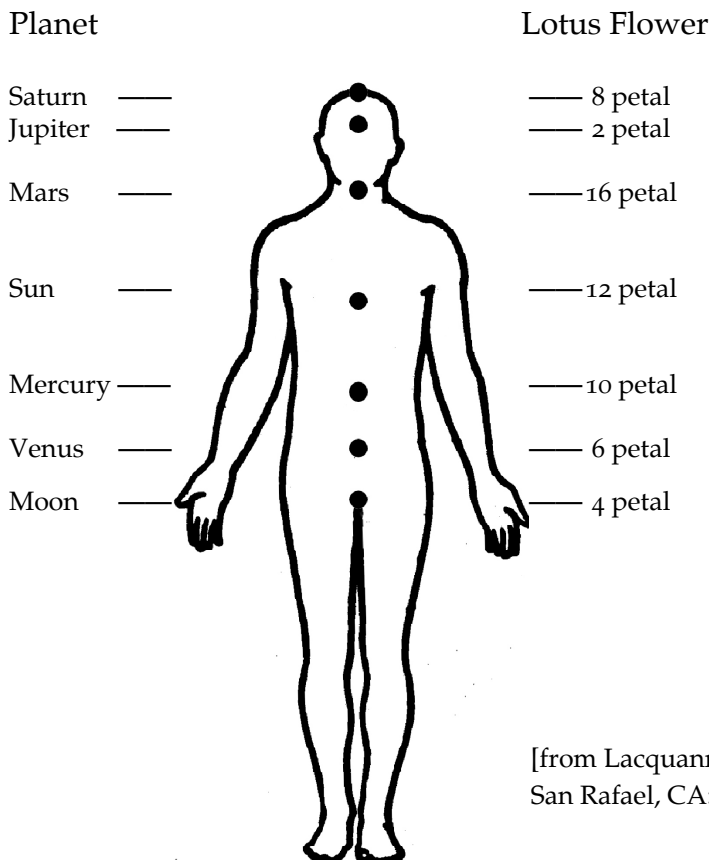
Footnotes and words in brackets [] added by the translator.

[For practical reasons this material has been divided into parts. The first part dealing with the upper three lotus flowers is published in this issue; and the second part – focusing upon the remaining lotus flowers – will be published in the next issue of the newsletter.]

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.]

[Crown Chakra] 8 Petal Lotus Flower: Saturn

This lotus flower is above the head and it is the one which creates a connection with the spiritual world. To those who can see it, it appears to light up in one thousand scintillating violet sparks. In the case of saints it appears in a special way. This was known in earlier times. On this account they were depicted with halos. All the consequences of the human being's positive karma are contained in this lotus flower. It bears the human being's eternal name. The eternal name is the mystery surrounding each human being. It also indicates [her or] his special task. Every human being is a thought of God. Thereby each human being has his special task through all incarnations from [Ancient] Saturn to [Future] Vulcan. That which the human being has already attained, up to the present, in a positive sense is contained in the 8 petal lotus flower.

Concerning the form of this lotus flower: the upper stream leads to the spiritual world and connects the human being with his Angel; the lower stream goes down through the 2 petal lotus flower and eventually reaches the feet as a purifying, ennobling stream. Then a 'washing of the feet' takes place.

The 8 petal lotus flower belongs to the three most important. The 8, 12, and 4 petal lotus flowers are the most important. The other lotus flowers are only there to help [these three]. The three upper lotus flowers – the 8, 2, and 16 petal lotus flowers – comprise the wisdom through which one attains self-knowledge.

Adam Kadmon had an ideal 8 petal lotus flower. However, it was damaged at the time of the Fall. Christ heals and purifies it again through the miracle of the raising of Lazarus, speaking the words: 'I am the resurrection and the life'. When warmth enters into the 8 petal lotus flower, permanent 'vertical memory' arises, so that a continuous stream reaches the human being from the spiritual world, who is then open to the revelations from the spiritual world. If a human being had true faith in one life, then not only does he have memory of his own positive karma in the next life but also knowledge of the higher worlds. This is called the apostolic faculty, for which the monk's tonsure is an earthly symbol. One then attains 'spatial memory' and is continuously open for the spiritual world. The 8 petal lotus flower is disposed toward knowledge of cosmic evolution (God the Father) and toward 'mechanical occultism' (cosmic thought).

[Third Eye] 2 Petal Lotus Flower: Jupiter

This is the lotus flower of 'I' initiative. It is located in the small cavity in the forehead above the nose and between the eyebrows. Science does not know why this cavity is there. All concentration and all initiative of thought come from this lotus flower. If one does not put questions to the world, this lotus flower is weak. If one has a lot of questions, it is strong. The eyebrows are an expression of its streams: one to the right (Ahrimanic) and one to the left (Luciferic). Consciousness is in the center and doubts [when it is pulled from one or the other or from both sides]. If one is able to direct the streams from the horizontal into the vertical, this becomes a stream of spiritual cognition which passes through the 8 petal lotus flower into the spiritual world.

It [the 2 petal lotus flower] turns 60 times a minute. It is strengthened through concentration. The history of the 2 petal lotus flower: originally this 'I' lotus flower was in the heart. After the Fall it was relocated as the 2 petal lotus flower. It is the 'sign of Cain'. This was a protective measure so that Ahriman and Lucifer would not come too close to the heart lotus flower. In the future, thinking will take place again with the heart, the 12 petal lotus flower, feeling with the 2 petal lotus flower, and willing with the 6 petal lotus flower. This is the separation of thinking, feeling, and the will which Rudolf Steiner spoke about: three 'seeing points' [three soul organs of perception] in the future.

In the 2 petal lotus flower is the possibility of looking up to God and down to the Earth. For example, Thomas Aquinas had the possibility of looking up, and there he found the [Church] dogmas as a reality. At the same time he worked continuously with his own human thinking to grasp the revelations [of the spirit].

In Paradise human beings had one eye vertically above the other. Having the eyes one above the other expressed the possibility of looking up and looking down. Through the activity of Lucifer and Ahriman, the eyes came to be positioned next to one another. Lucifer and Ahriman gave us the horizontal positioning of the eyes. However, the vertical stream has to be re-established, for the horizontal positioning of the eyes is the 'sign of Cain'.

Rudolf Steiner wanted to bring human beings to develop the 2 petal lotus through spiritual science – through study and concentration. If one accomplishes this, the inner work of the development of the 16 petal lotus flower begins. However, Rudolf Steiner also prepared a further stage: that the heart lotus flower will shift to the center again and the 2 petal lotus flower to both sides, to the

right and to the left. With the one, one will be able to cognize all the Divine Laws, and with the other, all that which is evil. At some time in the future the human being will have two 12 petal lotus flowers. In Devachan [in the life after death] one has the 12 petal lotus flower around one and one is at the center. This reflects the Christ surrounded [in the spiritual world] by twelve Bodhisattvas and on Earth by twelve disciples.

Moses had an ideal 2 petal lotus flower. Therefore he is depicted with two rays streaming out from the head, which later became horns [see Michelangelo's statue of Moses]. When the gods saw that the children of human beings were beautiful, and when Adam and Eve saw that they were naked, the 2 petal lotus flower was damaged so that the human being could no longer see in a pure way. One sees ahrimanicly with the right eye, i.e. one sees cynically, or one sees luciferically with the left eye, i.e. one sees with false ideals. In the middle is the Christ seeing that has to be re-established. With the healing of the man born blind Christ heals this lotus flower and speaks the words: 'I am the light of the world'. On

the cross Christ experienced the crucifixion of the 2 petal lotus flower so that consciousness of his connection with God was extinguished. And then he took the highest human initiative with the 2 petal lotus flower and asked after God. ['My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?']

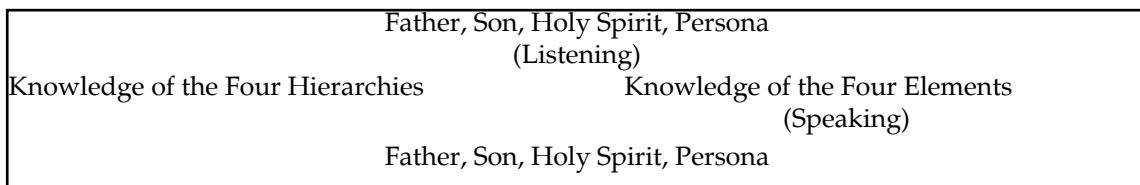
The 2 petal lotus flower gives the fundamental tone for everything. It creates initiative, upon which everything depends and from which everything proceeds. When it begins to rotate, the force of the 8 petal lotus flower pours into it [the 2 petal lotus flower] as a blessing, then after one year [this force descends from the 2 petal lotus flower] into the 16 petal lotus flower, and so on [to complete the descent] through all the lotus flowers in six years.

If warmth enters into the 2 petal lotus flower, formal logic is transformed into moral logic, according to which something is true if it is good. Only the Good – that which is moral – is the measuring standard and not simply that which is logical. This faculty is called the evangelical faculty.

[Throat Chakra] 16 Petal Lotus Flower: Mars

This is the lotus flower of the word – the word in a physical and in a spiritual sense – to understand the world as a creative process through the Word. This lotus flower is to be found in the region of the larynx. Its rotation lasts an hour. On this account a lecture should not last longer than an hour – then repeat the beginning.

History [of the 16 petal lotus flower, the lotus flower of the word]: originally the 16 petal lotus flower had only 12 petals and was an etheric Sun. In earlier times the 8 petal lotus flower [crown chakra], that of death, and the present 4 petal lotus flower [root chakra], that of life, both had 8 petals. However, 4 petals of the lotus flower of life ascended, so that the lotus flower of the word – instead of 12 petals – now had 16 petals. This took place after the Fall, and thereby the force of procreation was taken away from the lotus flower of the word, because it – the magical word – was too dangerous. In the future, however, we will have to restore this force again.



The 16 petal lotus flower listens above for the Words of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the Persona, and it proclaims on Earth the Words of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the Persona that it has experienced. It cognizes the Four Hierarchies—their genesis and birth. It [also] cognizes the Four Elements, through which it can have magical forces. It speaks on Earth and is part of the World Word. For through listening on the one hand, and through hearing and proclaiming on the other hand, something new arises in the spiritual world and on the Earth.

What is most important for the development of this lotus flower is self-control. The eightfold path of the Buddha – and also Rudolf Steiner's [eightfold path] exercises – are classical ones for its development. Through these exercises one arrives firstly at Inspiration (through listening), and then at Imagination (lines and figures full of significance, which express much), and then at Intuition – the working together of the spiritual world and the human being. Buddha had an ideal 16 petal lotus flower. Through pride, at the building of the tower of Babel, the 16 petal lotus flower was damaged. Then

human beings no longer understood [the spiritual world]. [Being separated into different languages, human beings also no longer understood one another.]

Christ heals and purifies the 16 petal lotus flower with the miracle of the walking on the water and through the words: 'I am the good shepherd'—when one hears his voice again and wants to follow him. 'I thirst' is the saying of Christ from the cross [corresponding to this lotus flower]. He thirsted after [proclaiming] the World Word, when [on the cross] he was able to see only human beings who inflicted pain on him.

Hewasno longerconsciousofthewhole[theinterconnection of everything]. The resurrection of this lotus flower took place when he said: 'Go forth and baptize all peoples

in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit' – meaning: let all peoples participate in the World Word.

When warmth enters into the 16 petal lotus flower, the Word not only brings to expression the interconnection of everything but also the Word magically proclaims what the spiritual world has to say. This faculty is called the prophetic faculty. Then a [spiritual] being can speak through the human being. In earlier times the human being was taken hold of [from above]. Now this faculty has become the Boddhisattva faculty – that is, two beings can 'speak together', if the human being wants [to allow a spiritual being to speak through him or her]. Now the human being has to make [herself] himself ready so that a higher being can speak through [her] him. This is true faith.



Letter from the Road, the Abraham Path

ELIAS AMIDON

Pir of the Sufi Way

Leaving Our Father's House Separation

Four years ago at this time my wife and I were in Iraq, on the eve of the invasion. With the members of the Iraq Peace Team we were trying to bring to the attention of world media the enormous mistake the coming invasion was about to enact, and the agony that mistake would inflict on the people of Iraq and the world. I remember feeling a sense of the inexorable, blind weight of my government's decision to attack. It seemed like a weight cast from mountains of habitual thoughts passed down through time, all of these habitual thoughts emerging from one root idea: we are separate. Separate peoples, separate nations. Our identities are fixed in separation. We take it for granted. But this is not just an idea maintained by the Bush administration or by Western culture. It's everywhere. The Han Chinese maintain it; the Arabs in Somalia maintain it; the Québécois in Québec maintain it. Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, Turks, Greeks, Jews, Welsh, Catholics, Brahmins, Navajos, Republicans and Democrats maintain it.

It is the enormous habit of our species. Our need to associate with a particular group with a particular identity in contrast to other groups with other identities is an old addiction. We seek security inside them, inside these

structures of identity passed to us from those who have gone before, structures of tribes, ideologies, ethnicities, religions, and nations. These structures are the myriad houses of our separateness—they are our father's house.

Our father's house. Each generation of us remodels that house to some extent, tears down a wall here or puts up an addition there. But the walls of the houses of our identities are always built with the same concrete of separation. I'm not talking about the natural differences among us. Our differences are beautiful. I'm talking about how we grasp onto those differences, how we identify with them to such a degree that they divide us from each other. This has been going on a long time, so long we believe that's the way things have to be. But do they? Is there another way to experience the human condition?

Abraham

In the four years since the U.S. invasion of Iraq, I have become increasingly involved in a project in the Middle East called the Abraham Path (see Letter from the Road #31). Although I didn't realize it at first, this project, and Abraham's story behind it, exactly addresses these questions of our species' long habit of separation. The

point of the Abraham Path is simple: to open an 1100 kilometer walking trail from Harran, Turkey, where Abraham first heard God's call, through Syria, Jordan, Israel, culminating in Palestine at his burial place in Hebron/Al Khalil. It will be a trail for all people to walk on, no matter what their religion or nationality. And more than a trail, it will be a focus for the constellation of historic sites scattered through this land that tell the inspiring and anguished story of Abraham's children.

I have just returned from my seventh journey to the region, this one with a delegation of twenty people from ten countries, a "Study Tour" sponsored by the Abraham Path Initiative and Harvard University. For the first time we traveled the entire Path (by bus), holding meetings along the way with governmental and business leaders, religious clerics, university professors, and leaders from civil society.

Everyone we met felt the sense of promise and optimism of this simple idea of a path wandering through the countryside. These are people who have grown up with conflict and who expect it. Yet there is something striking about the image of a path and the image of people walking on it, the image of our children and their children and their children. It touches a recognition deep within us of how things are in the truth of our existence, not how we think they have to be. But why is it that Abraham's footsteps inspire this sense of promise? What is it about his story that has caused such widening ripples in the surface of history? What did he do?

I've come to see there's one crucial event in Abraham's story from which everything else emerges: God's call, "lech lecha," Go forth! And the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your land and your birthplace and your father's house unto a land I will show you." And Abraham did. He took a step. He acted. That step created the path. It was a step away from his father's house. It was a step into the unknown, for God had not told him where to go, just to go. Although we see in the history of the Abrahamic religions just the opposite tendency, with adherents of each religion and sub-sect refusing to leave their father's house, nevertheless at the heart of what is honored in Abraham's story is this particular step and the faith it signifies to walk into the unknown, to release the habitual thoughts and fixed ideas that reinforce our sense of separateness from each other. This step is a subversive act. It undermines the entire structure of human identity. It is the ultimate crossing of borders, leaving our father's house. And at the same time it signifies pure

faith, not the faith in beliefs, but the faith that this is a step into our real home, our real belonging, beyond the smaller belongings of our nation or religion or ethnicity.

I am not saying we need to abandon all forms of identity. We can still be Americans or Cambodians or Manchester United fans or Episcopalians or whatever affiliations we are comfortable with. I am suggesting we need to learn to hold these affiliations very lightly. They are affiliations after all, they are not who we are, not our true belonging. What then is our true belonging? What is outside our father's house?

Glistening Eyes

Some time ago on a trip to Syria I was invited to give a talk to a group of about forty Shiite clerics and businessmen at a beautiful mosque in the old city of Damascus. I hadn't prepared and was unsure what I should say. I got up before the microphone and looked at the circle of bearded and turbaned men, some in elegant clerical robes. I thought I saw suspicion in their eyes, their arms folded, waiting to hear what this American had to say. Looking back now, I see this was a moment when I stood at the threshold of my father's house, looking at other men standing at the threshold of theirs. And for some reason I was able to take a step—a little one admittedly—and go forth into the unknown.

I started by talking about children, the little four year-old girl, Roquai'ya, a Shiite saint whose shrine was the heart of this mosque, and the Prophet Muhammad as a little boy whose birthday was being celebrated that day, and the infant Jesus who was spoken of in the Quranic verses we had just heard recited under the dome of the mosque. It touched me that we grown men and women had come here to take notice of these children who lived long ago, and the mystery of innocence and presence they revealed.

I told them I had recently been blessed with my first granddaughter. I made the gesture of holding her in my arms, and said, "Surely some of you must know how that feels, with a grandchild or a baby of your own." Suddenly I saw little smiles appear. Some of them glanced at each other and nodded. And then I said, "When I looked down at this little one I suddenly realized she was not an American, or a Syrian, or a Russian, or from any nation. Where was she from? She was from God's country. And then I realized, oh my goodness! She was not a Christian, or a Buddhist, or a Muslim, or a Jew. What religion was she? She was from the religion before any of these!"

The men melted. Their eyes glistened. For that moment we were together, outside our fathers' houses, realizing that

actually we all shared the same belonging, the same home, the same nation, the same religion, just like little children.

Letters from the Road are sent out occasionally by Elias Amidon and Rabia Elizabeth Roberts, telling stories and lessons from their travels and work in the world. This letter is reprinted here in Starlight with the kind permission of Elias. An archive of past letters from Iraq, Thailand, Burma, Israel/Palestine, Syria, Utah, Brazil, and Mexico can be seen at www.boulderinstitute.org. On that website and on www.sufiway.org you can find information about the programs and activities. More information about the Abraham Path can be found by visiting www.abrahampath.org.

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March 2007

Sentimentality and the Sentient Soul

PHILIP MEES

Recently I took a trial subscription to The Sun magazine, a monthly with stories about people and their often deeply troubled lives, stories which tend to have some positive, moral content. What struck me, however, was the sentimentality of most of these stories. Most of them were written to appeal to our most easily accessible feelings and emotions but lacked spiritual depth. They were all about feelings and sensations. And since I had wondered about sentimentality for a while, this focused my attention some more. For instance, we also find sentimentality in many of the new age streams we see around us. Rather than grappling with real spiritual truth, such movements often work with ideas and practices that just make us feel good. Pleasant sensations are taken for truth. What is it that makes sentimentality so attractive to so many people? It seems to me that it may be an expression of the sentient soul's hunger and thirst for nourishment from the world. The sentient soul is that part of our being into which the impressions flow which we pick up from the world around us. Everything we see, hear and experience is first received by the sentient soul. Here are also the beginnings of the human being as a separate entity who is no longer an integral part of nature, but can experience nature as something outside him(her)self. The outside impressions thus meet something of an individual nature which we could probably call

the personality. They also meet something more objective, which resides in the consciousness soul and radiates down into the sentient soul, and that is the intuitive knowledge we all carry in us, deep down, of what goodness, beauty and truth are. We can experience this especially strongly in children who meet something in the world that violates this intuitive knowledge. I vividly remember how upset my 11 year old daughter was when she witnessed a teacher treating a child unjustly at school. Thus perhaps we could say that the world meets our personality in the sentient soul. But because of our intuitive secret knowledge of goodness, beauty and truth, the sentient soul expects something from the world. We constantly look for expressions and confirmation of this knowledge from what the world brings to us through the impressions and experiences it provides us. And if we are unable to find sufficient confirmation this expectation can grow into a deep longing, a true hunger and thirst. If we fail to find such confirmation our secret knowledge may become weaker and weaker and eventually fail to guide us in our thinking and in our deeds. Yet we constantly long for it. As we all know, goodness, true morality is not a common commodity in the world today. Neither are beauty and truth. Just notice what our cities look like today, even the practical items we use daily, and how houses and schools are constructed. Look at

what is expressed in art, for instance music and movies. Positive content and morality are not usually prominent in the most popular art forms. I think it may be said that normal, everyday life today offers us little to confirm our secret knowledge of truth, beauty and morality. The result is that our sentient souls are undernourished and go hungry. They cannot find the kinds of impressions they need from the world that contain the true spiritual qualities they need for their nourishment. Where can they go? They can go to stories that appeal to the more superficial aspects of our personalities, our easily accessible feelings and emotions which we all cherish and express in daily life. The kinds of stories I read in *The Sun* about people who have achieved something despite great odds or after great struggle. Often such stories are written from a very personal point of view, quite subjectively, and to make it into a magazine, they tend to need a degree of sentimental sensationalism. Now, I don't want to make light of the experiences described in these stories. They are about horrendous challenges and difficulties and the quietly heroic ways people have succeeded in dealing with these. I have nothing but admiration for the people described. To some extent such stories do indeed respond to the longing of the sentient soul, and to some extent they do indeed confirm our secret knowledge. However, they contain no evidence of understanding of the spiritual aspects of the situation, no awareness of karmic needs, no understanding how the individual story is part of the story of humanity. I suspect, therefore, that such things are not really good "organic" food for the sentient soul. They look more like a quick fix or fast food which feels nice for a while but, in the end, leaves the soul as hungry as before. Waldorf education makes a point of emphasizing the importance of surrounding children with beauty, truth and morality as they grow up. This must have to do with the needs and longing referred to above. It is the kind of long-term nourishment that makes for a healthy sentient soul where the impressions from the world meet the personality and the secret knowledge in an up-building way. This lays a kind of groundwork

on which the child can then develop a strong intellectual soul that enables it later to think straight. The importance of this was brought home to me by a statement Valentin Tomberg made in his meditation about the fourth beatitude: The sentient soul is the member of the whole human soul nature that expresses the condition of the complete soul. This would mean that we need a healthy sentient soul in order to also have a healthy intellectual soul. Let's take a look at that. While the impressions from the world come into our sentient soul, the activity of thinking about them, evaluating them, judging them takes place in our intellectual soul. It is here that we develop critical capacities such as distinguishing one thing from another and making judgments. Tomberg's statement leads me to believe that this process may be impeded if what takes place in the sentient soul is not in a healthy balanced condition. If the sentient soul is ill, can the intellectual soul be healthy? What do we see around us? How many people do we know who truly display an ability to think straight about something, to clearly distinguish good from bad, to make healthy judgments? For most of us our thoughts constantly fly off in all directions, in our minds we make the most surprising associations which we call thinking but which really aren't thinking at all, and we tend to follow our prejudices more than logic. And it is not that people lack intelligence. Yet, how much healthy thinking is there really? Although there are undoubtedly also many other factors to consider, maybe the intellectual soul is indeed being incapacitated by the illness of the sentient soul. Where I come out here is a better understanding of the importance of filling the needs of the sentient soul in a meaningful way. The sentimental story probably has a certain function, but it may be a temporary and superficial one. It would be much better to see a Mozart or Verdi opera, or read Dickens, where there is plenty of sentiment but in a framework of an art that flowed out of the spiritual world and that contains eternal truth in its own unique way. And for those who have experienced them, what takes place in the celebrations of the Sophia Grail Circle also offers true spiritual nourishment. Goodness, beauty and truth are essential "organic food" for the soul.

Sophia Grail Circle and Training for Facilitators

MOLLY ROSE

An important part of the Sophia Foundation's mission is the development and practice of Sophianic liturgy, the Peace Service, and other gatherings dedicated to Sophia's global culture known as the Rose of the World. The liturgy and celebrations specifically address the needs and development of humanity in our time and the future.

These gatherings, referred to as the *Sophia Grail Circle*, are essentially a community of people who join together to form a vessel to serve Divine Love and Divine Wisdom, referred to in the *Sophia Grail Circle* as Christ and Sophia, devoted to the spiritual evolution of humanity and the earth. Toward this end we work together consciously and purposely 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.

The Sophia Foundation is now offering a *Sophia Grail Circle Training for Facilitators*, led by Robert Powell and Karen Rivers, involving home study and practice, and yearly meetings in Petaluma, California. Twenty people have responded to the inner call to undertake the rigorous study, training of consciousness, and practice necessary to carry this work and ministry into the world. A number of these people live at a distance and/or have financial limitations, making it difficult to participate in the yearly workshop. We would like to establish a scholarship fund to assist them with travel and/or tuition expense.

You can support this work, by making a donation for *Grail Training Scholarships* to the Sophia Foundation.* Imagine the Peace Service and other Sophianic celebrations taking place around the world, and what this kind of spiritual communal work could mean for the present and the future. You can serve the fulfillment of this goal by helping provide the financial means for friends who are called to this training.

*Tax deductible donations may be made by credit card (information phoned or faxed) or check (made out to the Sophia Foundation with the memo: *Grail Training Scholarship*) mailed to the administrative office.

News from Vancouver, BC

SUSAN KOPPERSMITH

Here in Vancouver there is an active group of about 25 people, Rosa Mundi, dedicated to communion with the Living Christ through the grace of Divine Sophia. Under the able guidance of Randall and Josie Scott, some of us meet at least twice a month on a Sunday morning at the Rudolf Steiner Centre in North Vancouver. We start by moving the Foundation Stone Meditation to cosmic dance, lead by Josie (a 2002 graduate of Choreocosmos), followed by a study led by Randall of Valentin Tomberg's Studies of the Foundation Stone. We break for coffee and socializing and then resume with the Sophia Grail Circle. Having been a regular churchgoer for the last 30 years, I am used to spending Sunday mornings being lifted out of my regular routines, and I find this work with the Scotts very satisfying on many levels.

Randall has been a student of Spiritual Science for 28 years. At present he is leading study groups on the basic works of Steiner, on *Meditations on the Tarot* and on the *Book of Revelation*. He also lectures on various subjects, including St. Francis of Assisi. Right now a primary focus for him is to develop a profound relationship to the mysteries of the starry heavens through the divine forces of Christ and Sophia. One of the ways that this can be done is through following the Eightfold Path through the signs of the Zodiac by way of the decans. Since late last fall, Randall has sent regular "meditational" essays every 10 days through the e-mail. I (and others) have found these offerings full of content and very helpful, as he is able to build bridges between the Bible, mythology, and the Eightfold Path and the work of Steiner, Jung, Tomberg, and Robert Powell. If you would like to be included on this e-mail list and receive these regular contemplations, contact Randall directly at rosamundi@shaw.ca.

Thoughts on Ordination

PAT LUCE AND BOB SCHMITT

By way of introduction to this article, at the Sophia Foundation meditation retreat during the first week of January 2007 – reported in Kevin Dann’s article below – there was an interesting discussion concerning the sacramental life of modern humanity and how the Sophia Grail Circle might be seen in this context. This discussion was greatly enriched by the contribution of Bob Schmitt, a former Jesuit priest, who is able to speak from his own experience of the sacramental life and gives an interesting perspective on ordination, recounted from his time at the Jesuit seminary. Until recently, Bob and his wife Pat were the co-presidents of the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology in Palo Alto. Currently they live in Greensboro, North Carolina. They participated in the week-long pilgrimage of the Sophia Foundation to Chartres Cathedral in May 2000. Following the discussion at our meditation retreat in January 2007, I asked them if they could set down the thoughts in writing that had been presented at the retreat, and they have responded with the following presentation.

—Robert Powell

One of the key areas of theology is sacramental theology. Like any area of theology there are various opinions among theologians on aspects of the sacraments. Based on our study and reflection we would like to offer some of our reflections on the ordination of priests.

Traditionally there are seven sacraments. They are Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation (forgiveness of sins), Eucharist, Matrimony, Anointing of the Sick (Extreme Unction), and Holy Orders (ordination). Sacrament comes from the Latin word meaning “a sign of the sacred” and each sacrament is a special ritual for encountering God’s saving presence and power.

Ordination has two characteristics that are different from the other sacraments. In the other sacraments the primary focus is for the good of the person(s) receiving the sacrament with a secondary focus on responsibilities to the community. For example, baptism is to unite the person more closely to Christ and welcome that person into the Christian community. The primary purpose of ordination is to serve the community rather than serve the good of the individual being ordained. It is the community who calls for the ordination of chosen people because of their need for ministry.

People who are to be ordained should have heard a calling. This is a two-fold calling: a calling from the community and a calling from above (from Christ, or from Sophia, or from Christ and

Sophia). The latter calling is an interior one. One discerns a call from above to this special form of service. Representatives of the community then confirm that call by saying “yes” to this person’s ordination and what form of training and education is needed to fulfill that service. Ordination occurs at the end of that process.

Traditionally ordination is passed on in a line that goes back to the Apostles. Anyone ordained in this tradition knows that they are within the Apostolic lineage and continue the mandate of service given by Christ to the Apostles. Even Paul, who was selected directly by the Risen Christ, went to the Apostles.

The theologian who taught Canon Law at the Jesuit seminary raised the question: Suppose a group of Catholics on a desert island do not have a priest, can they ordain one? His answer was “yes” because Christ wants them to be served and supported in their faith. Service of the people takes precedence over Apostolic lineage. As always, the primary purpose of ordination is ministry to the people. This is a responsibility that comes to one who is ordained. At the same time there is a wonderful gift which comes with ordination.

As the Sophia community develops there will undoubtedly be a natural evolution of liturgical forms and spiritual ministry in preparation for Sophia’s coming, an event not yet recognized by mainstream Christian churches. For someone interiorly called

by Sophia, as ordination within a mainstream church is unlikely, the decision for ordination is essentially a joint decision within the Sophia community and confirmed by the community. Now a more encompassing question emerges: How is the

community evolving and how does this community consciously form itself to best serve as preparers for the coming of Sophia? These are special times and we are blessed to be part of them.

MORNING MEDITATION EXPERIENCES

November 8, 2006

This morning, while doing the morning meditation in eurythmy, I felt a most special celebratory mood. I did the Foundation Stone meditation in eurythmy. While speaking the line, "In the World Thoughts of the Spirit awakens the soul" (Per Spiritum Sanctum reviviscimus), I had the impulse to speak this line three times. Speaking it the second time, I saw in front of me an image of the Archangel Michael with a wonderful triangle on his forehead, with a red point in the center. I had seen this painting of the Archangel Michael hanging in the museum of St. Catherine's monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

Then I experienced myself standing up to the waist in the ground, slowly sinking deeper into the earth, as if descending down into a round chimney. It was all dark around me. However, I still saw the image of the Archangel Michael in front of me, so I was not afraid.

Then I felt a wonderful stream pouring through me from above below, through the feet. I looked down and saw beneath me, in the continuation of the round chimney, a bright light, like sunlight, deep below me. After this experience I rose slowly back to the surface of the earth again.

November 13, 2006

This morning I did the Choreocosmos eurythmy: the twelve moods in relation to the seven planets according to their positions for today in the zodiacal signs as given in the *Christian Star Calendar*. Then I did an exercise which I always do. I spread my arms out to the sides horizontally and spoke the following words: "With all brothers and sisters in heaven and on earth, with all religions of the earth, united through the love of Christ and Sophia in our hearts" – visualizing a white ring encircling Mother Earth as a protection – "we pray for the blessing of peace: may it stream across the earth to the hearts of all human beings and ignite the light of peace." I always speak this three times. Today, after speaking it the third time, a radiantly bright figure appeared before me, also with outspread arms. I asked myself, "Who is this?" The radiant figure, gradually receding, became larger and larger. Then I saw in the light a cross behind the outspread arms. Christ and the cross appeared in living, transparent light. Slowly the cross together with Christ sank down into the earth, which appeared radiantly brilliant. Then I felt the cross head down beneath my feet. The light then disappeared. After this experience I felt peace within such as I have never experienced before.

November 26, 2006

After doing the morning meditation this morning, I also did the prayer sequence in eurythmy. I faced toward the Full Moon, speaking the seven Words from the Cross with the Hail Mary prayer. Then I spoke the prayer Hail to Thee, O Lamb of God with the seven I AM sayings. When I reached the line "I AM the good shepherd," I saw a man clothed in ordinary attire appear before me holding a lamb in his arms. He placed the lamb upon my right arm.

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 2007 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.sophiafoundation.org

LACQUANNA PAUL

It seems that there is a continual unfoldment and depth of understanding which is inherent with this work, always revealing something new. This time there was the discovery of the "inner cross", which is created by the planetary gesture and sound of Saturn. With the "U" sound, as the arms extend up and arc downwards, I discovered that when I initiated the gesture as an emergence from beneath my shoulder caps (like a snail emerging from within its shell), that my arms extended more freely and with more fullness flowing into the extension. This activated an inner streaming of etheric forces in toward my spinal column, enlivening the tiny nerve endings which nourish the spinal fluids. I experienced this as a baptismal stream of grace. Through the etheric streaming my torso elongated freely, not through a physical stretching or muscular contraction, but rather a subtle movement and gathering toward my spinal column, the vertical center of my being, coming from the shaping presence of the etheric, like a sculptor shaping the softened substance of clay. This was an inner experience of the building up of the vertical axis of the cross. Then with the Saturn gesture, with hands cupped in the region of the spleen, I experienced a natural softening and warmth as the shoulders and rib cage expanded once again and opened, creating a horizontal streaming of etheric forces into my arms and hands – an inner building up of the horizontal axis of the cross, a 1/3 to 2/3 proportioned cross.

Once I had discovered this subtle activation of etheric substance, I repeated the experiment, concentrating my initiation of the arm extension as an emergence

from beneath my shoulder caps, and each time with the same result, which then opened softly into the Saturn gesture, flowing warm and free, a natural opening and release like an out-breath, filling the palms of my hands with etheric substance. This was a "crowning" experience, because I literally felt showered with grace.

Apparently this activation put a circulation into movement, enlivening the connection between my crown chakra and the root chakra, because my next big discovery was with the Moon gesture! When for the first time, I discovered the promised streaming down into my legs and feet, I continued to hold the gesture for a time in order to discover what was activating the streaming. There was an activity of warmth in the region of my crossed wrists, when the gesture was orientated more downward, more toward the root chakra. When I experimented with this – holding the gesture higher or lower, I could discover the activation point, resulting in a renewing, circulatory flowing, refreshing also for my brain and sense of being fully awake.

Perhaps these kinds of experiences and discoveries are what participants often describe as being "bathed" in bliss! Throughout the week, I continually noticed the lightness and freedom in my limbs, probably due to the enlivened etheric forces in the room, created through our movements and through Ludmila's masterful playing of these magnificent classical masterpieces. More and more I discover that we too are a masterpiece, created through the tones and soundings of our cosmic origins.

The Path of the Magi: A New Year's Retreat with Stargazing

December 31, 2006 – January 6, 2007 in Borrego Springs, Southern California

KEVIN DANN

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gain'd,
To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come round right.*

In the wee hours of the morning the day before New Year's Eve, as I stood in line for the security check at Albany Airport, I kept catching the faint strains of a familiar melody. I stepped out of line and followed my ears up a flight of stairs to the airport observation deck, where there was a small gallery devoted to the history of the airport site. On one wall there was a black and white panel displaying the original manuscript of "Simple Gifts," the Shaker dance hymn written in 1848 by Elder Joseph Brackett. It turns out that the homes, fields, gardens, workshops of Watervliet, the first Shaker settlement in America – even the grave site of founder Mother Ann Lee – lie now beneath the runway asphalt. So, my path to the "Path of the Magi" gathering in the far off Anza-Borrego section of the Colorado Desert began with the serendipitous discovery of the birthplace (in 1776) of the American community that, more than any other, celebrated the divine through sacred circle dance. (The Shakers' official name – the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing – also links them in spirit to contemporary Sophianic communities). A week later, having touched back down to earth at the Watervliet site/Albany airport, I got in my car and turned on the radio to hear the opening strains of a "Sound & Spirit" program devoted to the subject of the sacred dimensions of dance. Another simple gift.

The 40 of us who convened at John Scranton's home – formerly the "Old Desert Club" – received both simple and not-so-simple gifts all week long. When we arrived on Sunday evening, New Year's Eve (coincident with Pluto's conjunction with the Galactic Center), for a Sophia Grail Circle celebration of the Beatitudes, John had a roaring fire in the fireplace, and faithfully kept it stoked with the dense and dry wood of orange trees that once grew in local groves. After the celebration, Katalina Prince treated us with a festive feast for our eyes and our palates—the first of twice daily sumptuous snack banquets at our breaks. A few revelers stayed up until midnight grinding the Magi's gifts of frankincense, myrrh, and gold, assisting Kendra Cumming in creating the Three Kings biodynamic preparation which was applied later in the week to the desert garden surrounding John's home.

The next morning, Karen Rivers spoke of John's roaring fire as she recalled the fire burning in the hearth of her own home on New Year's Eve 1994/1995, when she and Robert came to found the Sophia Foundation. Karen gave us an image of that fire as a picture of the realm of the Divine Mother, and likened the Sophia Foundation community at its twelfth anniversary/Jupiter return to a glowing hearth in a time of darkness.

Robert began by hearkening back to the beginning of his own life's work with his study of the Magi's reading of the starry script as a harbinger of Jesus' birth – prophesied by Zarathustra, whose astral body was itself the "guiding star" for the Magi. As we looked up southeastward into the desert sky each evening at Sirius, we were cognizant of this being the eternal star of the Zarathustra/Master Jesus individuality, whose guidance has been of such great import to this Sophianic community.

Though this week in the desert was framed by New Year's Eve and Epiphany, the festival that daily occupied our hearts and minds was Baptism. Working with the Foundation Stone Meditation in eurythmy alerted us to Rudolf Steiner's gift of this great prayer/meditation as a Baptismal event heralding the return of the etheric Christ. As we prepared to receive a Sophianic baptism on the evening of Epiphany, in connection with performing the Foundation Stone Meditation in eurythmy, we felt ourselves in communion with those around Rudolf Steiner at the Christmas Conference in 1923. (Another cosmic echo was felt in this week's gathering, which was one Jupiter transit from the initial founding of the Sophia Foundation, and seven Jupiter transits from the event of the Christmas Conference).

Robert distinguished the Star of the Magi from the Star of Bethlehem. Whereas the former relates to the cosmic configuration beheld by the Magi on the night of Jesus' birth, the latter was not an external cosmic phenomenon such as a star or planetary configuration. Rather, it was Jesus' astral body, which guided the three Magi, leading them towards Bethlehem. This guidance was intercepted by Herod's attempt to use the Magi to try to find and destroy the newborn Messiah. Given the depth of the lecture material on a number of different themes, many of us felt like the errant Kings at times, trying to get back on the sure path.

Straying off the path in the desert can be pretty hazardous, as naturalist Kareen Barnett pointed out

to us on Tuesday morning, on a short desert walk that took in ocotillo, palo verde, mesquite, and a cholla cactus that sank its tenacious spines into John's pant leg. (Kareen deftly removed it with a plastic comb.) All of us were fascinated by the natural history lore, but none more so than Uberta from Italy and Beate from Germany. For Uberta it was her first visit to the United States, and she landed in this idiosyncratic spot! Both Uberta and Beate delighted like children in the eccentric forms and figures of the desert landscape.

Since Pluto was conjunct with the Galactic Center at the beginning of our week together (and will be again twice in 2007), the recently demoted (but unfairly so: see Robert's article in the *Christian Star Calendar* 2007

Though this week in the desert was framed by New Year's Eve and Epiphany, the festival that daily occupied our hearts and minds was Baptism.

– also posted on the Sophia Foundation website) planet was a frequent topic of the week's conversation. Robert pointed out that throughout the period of Jesus and John the Baptist's activity, Pluto was in Sagittarius. Most striking is that heliocentric Pluto was at 16 degrees Sagittarius

at the Crucifixion and Resurrection, which was the position of the Sun at the moment of Jesus' birth. In other words, at the Crucifixion and Resurrection there was a transit of Pluto over the birth Sun of Jesus.

Pluto's conjunctions with the Sun during Christ's life on earth highlight the planet's dual aspects as Hades (god of the underworld) and Phanes (god of light). At the conjunction of the Sun and Pluto on November 29, AD 29, there took place – it was the 39th day in the wilderness – the third temptation of Christ by Satan. Here, in this encounter between Christ and the Prince of Darkness, it was clearly the Hades side of Pluto that manifested itself. One year later, on December 1, AD 30, there was again a conjunction between the Sun and Pluto. On this day Christ's raising of the daughter of Jairus took place. This raising from the dead – from darkness into light – was a manifestation of the Phanes side of Pluto. (Just such alignments support Robert's reasoning that – despite the declaration of the International Astronomical Union – Pluto is indeed a planet.)

Hearkening one Jupiter return back once again to

his opening lecture at the founding of the Sophia Foundation, published in a much expanded form in his book *The Most Holy Trinosophia*, Robert on Wednesday took up the theme of the three Spiritual Teachers of Humanity in the twentieth century, likening their missions to the three Patriarchs of ancient Israel. Just as the missions of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were necessary to ensure a threefold completion of their preparation for Christ's advent upon the Earth, the century of Christ's etheric advent needed the teachings of the Kingdom (Rudolf Steiner's magisterial elucidation of esoteric cosmogony/ cosmology); the Power (Valentin Tomberg's opening up of the mysteries of Christ's miracles, passion, and his etheric return); and the Glory (the third teacher's revelations concerning the Resurrection Body).

According to Robert's research, the third teacher has been incarnated – in female form – since the 1970's. While the third teacher works out of the public eye, she is represented in the public arena by Judith von Halle, a young German woman approximately the same age as the third teacher. At the age of 32, on Good Friday 2004, Judith von Halle received the stigmata. Since then she has written a number of books describing her visions of events from the life of Christ. Together with Lucky, Robert attended one of Judith von Halle's lectures in Stuttgart, Germany, on December 11, 2006. He spoke of Judith von Halle in the context of other individuals – Saint Francis, Anne Catherine Emmerich, Padre Pio – who have received the stigmata, stressing how significant her appearance is at this time of the Third Temptation of humanity. Like Anne Catherine Emmerich, Judith von Halle has taken no solid food since receiving the stigmata, and thus is a living exemplar of Christ's response to Satan – "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." On the eve of the impending incarnation of Ahriman (Satan), signifying the climax of the Third Temptation for all humanity, it is indeed heartening to know that in the person of Ju-

Robert took up the theme of the three Spiritual Teachers of Humanity in the twentieth century, likening their missions to the three Patriarchs of ancient Israel.

dith von Halle, a contemporary human has indeed freed herself so powerfully from Ahriman's grip. Robert also took heart in Judith von Halle's restoration of the Anthroposophical community to the central task of elucidating and furthering the Mystery of Golgotha. (She is an Anthroposophist herself.)

The case of Judith von Halle led us to contemplate the central mystery of our week in the desert – that of the Resurrection Body. At this moment in time, when *The DaVinci Code's* popularization of the deadly lie of the Grail as a physical bloodline has seized the imaginations of millions of people around the globe, it is stunning to have before us in Judith von Halle a living embodiment of the Grail forces of resurrection. Our work with the Foundation Stone Meditation in eurhythmy truly took on the dimension of a path toward the Resurrection Body in light of Robert's remarks.

"To turn, turn will be our delight." Turn we did, all week long, to Marcia's extraordinary musical accompaniment, and on Wednesday afternoon, Cheryl Mulholland led us in the cosmic dance of Jupiter in Scorpio. This was Cheryl's graduation from the Choreocosmos School of Cosmic and Sacred Dance—Cheryl being the first Choreocosmos student to graduate on American soil.

On Thursday Robert spoke about the three temptations in relation to the "Apocalypse Code," Robert's discovery that one day in the life of Christ is equal to one Saturn cycle in history, i.e., 29.5 years. Humanity as a whole is now undergoing the Third Temptation during the current Saturn cycle of 29.5 years. During the preceding two Saturn cycles, the first one extending from 1929 to 1958 being that of the First Temptation, and the second one from 1958 to 1988 being that of the Second Temptation, humanity had to face the temptation of the will-to-power (Nazi Germany) and then the "casting from the pinnacle of temptation" (the drug epidemic: "Turn on, tune in, drop out"). In the current period, which is that of the Third Temptation (1988 to 2018), humanity has the possibility of taking hold of the true Glo-

ry – the Resurrection Body – but also faces the challenge of overcoming the temptation to instead fall prey to the false glory of cell phones that take photographs or iPods that turn into phones. Remember twenty-five years ago when “Transformer” toys – robot-like action figures that metamorphosed into cars, airplanes, and other machines – were all the rage? These “Robots in Disguise” are now in the hands of most adults, in the forms of digital information technologies. “Starscreamers,” a new line of Transformer toys, is to be launched on July 4 this year simultaneous with a Steven Spielberg-produced film. The star beings must indeed be screaming as they watch the human being choose Ahriman’s path of mechanization over Christ’s offer of true transformation via the Resurrection Body. While the three teachers – including the third teacher: the John the Baptist individuality, presently incarnated upon Earth in female form – conspire (“breathe together”) to place before humanity images and paths toward the Heavenly Jerusalem, the triple threat presented by Hollywood, Madison Avenue and Silicon Valley is dragging the contemporary world down into a Babylon of digital gewgaws by means of which humanity is becoming increasingly estranged from the Divine.

On Thursday afternoon, Robert introduced a discussion of the upcoming baptismal celebration planned for the evening of January 6, the date on which the Church celebrates the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan. Robert spoke of the importance in our time of celebrating baptism as a manifestation of the opening up of the realm of Shambhala, reminding us that Shambhala is the place where our Resurrection Body is held in the stream of eternal life. Baptism also calls us into alignment with the Fire of the Holy Spirit streaming from the Galactic Center.

Jim Wetmore performed a great service for many of us in the group when he asked by what authority could baptism be celebrated in our time. Robert replied that two criteria had to be fulfilled: it would need to come about as a re-

sponse to a call from humanity; and it would need to have the blessing of the spiritual world.

Our evenings alternated between star-gazing, enjoying the beauty of the stars under the clear desert night sky, and Sophia Grail Circle celebrations. Tuesday evening’s celebration of the Seven Seals brought about a response from the elemental world that was visible in a spectacular set of sweeping cloud forms. Thursday evening’s “Jacob’s Ladder” Sophia Grail Circle celebration – in which we followed the ascent of the soul through the planetary spheres in the life after death – brought an even more

Cheryl Mulholland led us in the cosmic dance of Jupiter in Scorpio. This was Cheryl’s graduation from the Choreocosmos School of Cosmic and Sacred Dance—Cheryl being the first Choreocosmos student to graduate on American soil.

dramatic response: the welcome sound and smell of a rain shower. On Friday morning the mountains encircling Borrego were dusted with snow.

During our evening star-gazing, we usually found ourselves looking southeast toward Orion, which Robert unveiled on Friday as a starry representation of the Tree of Life. The Orion nebula (M42) together with the main stars in Orion – Meissa, Betelgeuse, Bellatrix, Alnitak, Alnilam, Mintaka, Saiph, and Rigel – map out both the “lower” four members (the physical, etheric, astral bodies and the “I”) and the “higher” spiritual members (manas, buddhi, atma) of the human being, as well as the stages leading to the Resurrection Body. Robert brought these starry signifiers down to earth as he revealed that Orion’s stars mapped onto some of the Earth’s most significant sacred sites – the Great Pyramid at Giza (Alnitak; the other two of the three pyramids on the Giza plateau – the Pyramid of Khafre and the Pyramid of Menkaure – are symbolic representations of Alnilam and Mintaka, the other two stars in Orion’s Belt); the Temple of Solomon (Betelgeuse); the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus (Bellatrix); Hagia Sophia (Meissa); and the great Pharos lighthouse at Alexandria, where the real (not symbolic) projection of Alnilam upon the Earth is located.

On Saturday, the cosmic celebration of both the Baptism and the Adoration of the Magi, we made the

transition from a contemplation of these mysteries from the outside, to experiencing them from the inside. Robert presented yet one more suite of hermetic resonances: the geometric figures of triangle, square and cross are embedded in both the Lord's Prayer and the Tree of Life (and reflected on high in the constellation Orion). Each of those forms shimmered with other layers of meaning, almost too awesome to consider, and yet each of us undeniably had stepped into the path that the earlier Magi had discerned, and then followed. The clear desert

"'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be," says the Shaker hymn.

Amen.

Sixth International Choreocosmos Week

The Zodiac and the Tree of Life

April 10-16, 2007 at Casa di Salute Raphael, Roncegno, Italy

CHRISTOPHER AND MARGOT COOPER

One of the key insights underpinning the work of Choreocosmos is that the starry realm of the Zodiac is the etheric body of Christ. When one brings into eurythmical movement the forms of each sign (on the basis of the astronomical glyph for that sign and their corresponding gestures plus the verses – Twelve Moods – that Steiner gave for each of them), then one begins to enter into a new relationship with the being of Christ. Of course, the Zodiac seems a long way away, however the twelvefold influences stream right down into each human being helping in the formation of the physical body from the Ram (Aries), which plays a role in shaping the brain, to the Bull (Taurus) working in the throat-larynx area, and so on through the whole physical body. For example, the forces of the Lion (Leo) form the heart, and finally our feet receive the forces streaming from the Fishes (Pisces). These are now Christ-filled forces with which we are blessed when we enter a new incarnation.

Such knowledge is urgently needed in today's world which has in general drained the heavenly worlds of any reality except the material-physical. The stars have fallen silent and it is a disaster for humankind that so little effort is being made to find the true reality behind the "cosmic slag" we can record with our instruments. Disaster means literally "sundered from the stars".

air and landscape gave us the space to take in this stunning eternal trajectory – from the ancient Egyptians' relationship to Orion as the abode of Osiris; to the Magi's pilgrimage to the promised return of their beloved teacher Zarathustra; to Osiris/Christ's incarnation at the Baptism; to Rudolf Steiner's deed of bringing the Foundation Stone Meditation; all somehow impossibly but ineluctably aiming to this humble gathering at the Old Desert Club, where we celebrated the baptism that evening, bringing to earth a new impulse leading to the Resurrection Body.

The choreographies for the twelve signs of the zodiac used in the cosmic dances have been developed by Robert on the basis of the astronomical glyphs for the signs. These glyphs are derived directly from the star formations in the zodiacal constellations into which the signs are embedded. The sidereal Zodiac is used because it is astronomically true to how the stars appear in the night sky today. So, for example, the glyph for Aries arises out of linking up the stars to form the head of the Ram. The eurythmy sound is "Vvv", which was clairvoyantly perceived by Rudolf Steiner to be the archetypal cosmic sound for Aries. He perceived all the gestures and sounds of the Zodiac and communicated them in his lectures Eurythmy as Visible Speech. The sounds corresponding to the Zodiac are all consonants whereas the vowels correspond to the Planets.

The music chosen for the cosmic dances are in the keys indicated by Rudolf Steiner. The Anthroposophist and Christian Community priest Hermann Beckh was the first to explore in detail the correspondences between the zodiacal signs and the twelve major and minor keys. In the Choreocosmos work relating to the Zodiac, for each sign there are two examples of music in the corresponding keys. For Aries, the first is from Beethoven's "Waldstein Sonata" (Op. 53), and the second is a Rondo, also in C major, by Mozart. Listening to C major we experience a cheerful bright affir-

mation, a sunny, spring-like quality, with the powerful uplift of Resurrection. Moving with the music in C major one can experience that the Sun is exalted in the Ram.

Regarding Christ as he works through the Zodiac: the star Regulus at 5° Leo is associated with the Lion of Judah and is one of the four Royal Stars which form a cross in the heavens. The human heart is the Christ center of the human being. If one meditates for 10-15 minutes on Regulus in the night sky one can experience healing warmth and strength flowing into one's own heart! Robert showed us this star (for him the inner connection, through practice, is much quicker). In this way one can begin to develop a relationship to the stars as living beings. Another star Robert spoke about was Al Jabhah. (This star, which is visible almost directly above Regulus, is so far away that it looks rather faint, but it is actually 15,000 times more luminous than our Sun.)

It was through this star in the throat of the Lion, which was aligned with our Sun at the time of Lazarus' raising from the dead, that Christ spoke the command "Lazarus come forth" and the forces of life overcame death. The quality of Leo is enthusiasm, the color is a glorious blue (royal blue) and the keys are E major and C sharp minor. The main sound is "T". The gesture expresses the stream of radiance from the Sun down to our heart. We experience the "raying in of the spirit". As with Aries, the Leo choreography is based on the glyph. (All the cosmic dances are done in a circle moving clockwise.)

Robert himself seems to have stepped down from one of the statues of the mighty portals of Chartres Cathedral. Tall and finely built like the thoughtful sculptures, he moves with true grace. He has also worked with and trained a group of eurythmists and other eurythmically gifted students who carry the Choreocosmos impulse out into the world.

References

- ¹ Rudolf Steiner, *Aus den Inhalten der esoterischen Stunden*, GA 266, vols. I, II & III (untranslated), refers to the Zodiac as the etheric body of Christ.
- ² Lacquanna Paul & Robert Powell, *Cosmic Dances of the Zodiac* (Sophia Foundation Press, 2007) gives the eurythmy forms (based on the glyphs for the zodiacal signs) and also describes the movements and gestures for each of the twelve cosmic dances, as well as presenting a wealth of material relating to the meaning and significance of the twelve signs.
- ³ Robert Powell, *History of the Zodiac* (Sophia Academic Press, 2007) is the book form of Robert's PhD thesis, which shows that the sidereal Zodiac is the original Zodiac of the Babylonians, Egyptians, and Greeks. See also Robert Powell and Peter Treadgold, *The Sidereal Zodiac* (American Federation of Astrologers, 1985).
- ⁴ Rudolf Steiner, *Eurythmy as Visible Speech* (Anastasi, 2005).
- ⁵ Robert Powell, *Hermetic Astrology*, vols. I & II (Sophia Foundation Press, 2007) and *Christian Hermetic Astrology: The Star of the Magi and the Life of Christ* (Steiner Books, 1998) are the basic works in which Robert discusses the Four Royal Stars and the mysteries of the fixed stars in relation to the life of Christ. See also his book *Chronicle of the Living Christ* (Steiner Books, 1996).
- ⁶ Robert indicated that the foundation for the Choreocosmos work is to be found in the following words of Rudolf Steiner concerning the School of Chartres. "The human being in his outer bodily nature partakes in the life and weaving movement of Earth, Water, Air, Fire, which take on organic form in him. They who thus looked into the life and weaving movements of the elements – Earth, Water, Air and Fire – did not see mere natural laws, but behind all this life and weaving movement they saw a great and living being, the Goddess Natura... Then the teachers would lead the human being from a conception of his bodily life to an understanding of his soul. They made it clear to him: Your soul stands under the influence of the planetary world: Mercury, Jupiter and Venus, Sun and Moon, Saturn and Mars. Thus if psychology were to be studied, the human being's vision was directed upward to the secrets of the planetary world... When it was a matter of considering the spiritual life, they turned their gaze upward to the fixed stars and their configurations. They looked up above all to what is represented in the Zodiac." Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, vol. IV, lecture 4 (Anthroposophical Publishing Company, 1957), pp. 56-58.

The Immanence of the Circle

Choreocosmos Week in Kinsau, Germany: January 14-20, 2007

LACQUANNA PAUL

Back in Germany, a mere five days following our return from the Borrego Springs retreat, twenty-eight enthusiastic Choreocosmos participants gathered in Kinsau for a week of cosmic dance in Upper Bavaria. This was a vast change from the desert landscape of Borrego Springs, but nevertheless filled with an elemental power, as hurricane strength winds swept across Europe, howling gustily at our door for most of the week.

We were a Sophianic gathering with twelve countries represented—Germany, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Luxembourg, Peru, Spain, the United States and England. The Italians carried the day in the food preparation, with delicious Italian cuisine orchestrated by our dear friend, Tiziano Freschi (the Italians tend to sing and dance as they cook). There were incredible birthday desserts brought by an appreciative circle of friends and an abundance of fresh produce and dairy delights brought by Heidi and Arnold Langen from Bollheim, their bio-dynamic farm near Bonn in Germany.

As in the prior five years of our hosting a week in Kinsau, our choral dancing together resulted in a spirit of co-operation and heartfelt sharing of responsibilities. Although within the space of our Bavarian village dwelling, the communal life did at times resemble the traffic in Naples—we became over time etherically responsive, and the result was a harmonious working together in the convivial bond of community.

It was this theme: the circle of community and indeed the immanence of the circle itself, which remains in the afterglow as a profound and lasting gift to my heart.

Our week's work was focused around the sidereal birth horoscopes of five great spiritual individualities: the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, the Solomon Jesus, Rudolf Steiner, and Valentin Tomberg. There was a quality of attention and focus within our communal dancing circle which was deep and profound, creating a chalice for the silent beholding of the inner currents of resonance awakened through our movement and gestures, which so distinctly described the unique tone of each individuality and destiny.

Each day as the inner circle danced Saturn – turning round, circling – we could behold our friends in the outer circle, dancing round and holding the quality and gesture of the destiny of one of these great individuals. It was deeply touching to realize that with each grace-filled step, we too, each one of us, was uniquely precious and had answered a call of destiny in coming together at this time.

There were evening celebrations which corresponded to the horoscope we had danced that day. The first celebration, dedicated to Sophia, followed the dancing of the Virgin Mary's horoscope. At a certain point during the celebration, I was inwardly guided to open my eyes. I beheld for the first time the power of a circle, which is sustained by the quality of devotion and concentrated focus of intention toward its center. The use of the word behold is intentional, because I was not seeing something that was separate from myself, but rather I was a part of the beingness of the circle, while at the same time "held" within the embrace of the circle. I could perceive that the inherent immanence of the circle itself was enlivened, creating a spiralling vortex of etheric substance, spiralling up to connect with the spiritual world and correspondingly drawing down an answering response. Truly, I was witnessing what could be called "sacred magic" on behalf of the Divine Feminine.

We were enveloped in the spirit of Mary's grace and in the sounding of the readings spoken in the beautiful tones and rhythms of the various languages. It was as though Mary's gentle hand was present bidding us to drink deeply from the baptismal font of the circle, filled with the substance of our hearts united in a spirit of community—Sophia's gift to the Earth.

The day dedicated to John the Baptist was celebrated in the evening with the Seven Seals meditation.

Once again, upon following a subtle inward bidding, I opened my eyes during the Sixth Seal, the "Michael Seal", read by Tiziano. I beheld a being standing before me, appearing as a soft, super-sensible light, coming quite close—with a gentle radiating presence, a particular

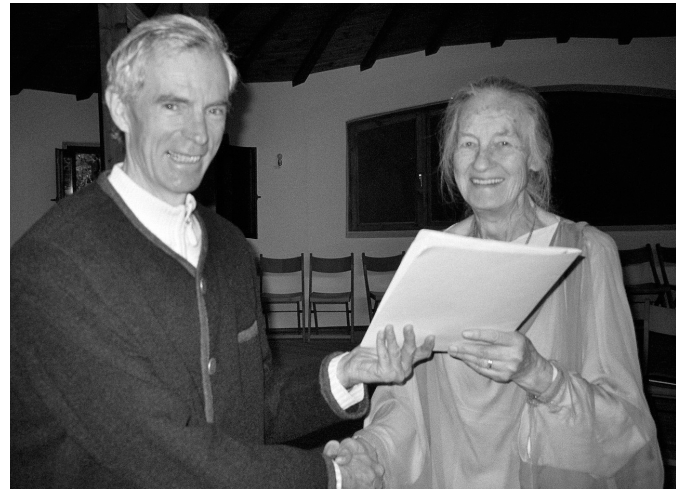
quality which I could clearly recognize in the future, if I were to be so blessed. In the intensity of this permeating warmth, my mind was entirely attuned and receptive. Not a thought entered, just a knowing to be quiet and to listen and to behold. And again, I beheld a circle—only now it was not our circle, the circle of participants, but rather, a super-sensible circle, like a wheel of patterned energy that seemed imprinted on the floor in the center, raying out, like spokes on a ship’s helm. It remained there, horizontally, for quite a time, seeming not to move. Then at a certain point, there appeared little super-sensible beings, taking hold of the spokes and together moving the wheel around in a clockwise direction. I couldn’t see them in the normal sense of seeing—but rather there was a “sense seeing” of their presence. They were small, more in the direction of what we would term “tiny”, and were completely united in their task of turning the wheel, each one taking a spoke and turning.

Then, as the wheel turned, there descended down from above, a dynamic pattern of light, a six-pointed star in a circle of light. The pattern of the star and the circle were created by the dynamic interplay of moving light—and this patterned light emanation was being drawn down by the tiny beings turning the wheel. I watched in amazement as the patterned light being drawn down from above slowly descended into the earth. When the task was complete, the beings and the wheel disappeared.

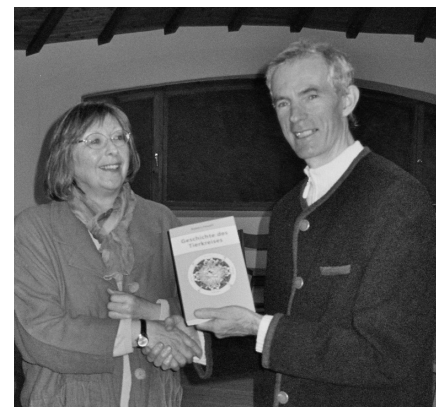
I seemed to be receiving lessons on the power of our hearts’ intentions, when focused in a circle, to call forth the good, the true and the beautiful from above. Perhaps the significance of the circle has its’ own immanence and restorative power, bringing a sense of wholeness to our life on Earth.

On the evening of the Beatitude celebration, following the day of dancing Valentin Tomberg’s horoscope, there came yet another experience of the power of the circle. This was an experience of the power which is passed from one to another, when enhanced by our love and sacred intention held once again in a circle. This came during the blessing, which was passed around the circle, “May the Peace of Christ and Sophia be with you”. Never have I felt this blessing to be so powerfully amplified. Surely our guardian angels were attuning to this deed and sending their grace to each of us through the blessing of one another.

Rounding out the week’s events was the celebration



of Robert’s birthday, which was of course a highlight for all of us. Bernt Rossiwall, serving as the Secretary General of the Institute for Astrosophy (IFA), bequeathed to Heidi Langen the honor of announcing the seventeen countries represented through donation gifts and birthday greetings in behalf of the publication of Robert’s PhD thesis, *History of the Zodiac*. This was followed by a presentation of the German edition of the book, presented to Robert by Gisela Storto, one of the IFA board members. Robert was delighted most especially just to know that his work and research have been appreciated and recognized as worthwhile among an ever widening circle of friends. The celebration continued with various offerings sprinkled throughout the day. The cosmic dancers danced the Sun in Capricorn while Robert stood in the center. Then he joined us in celebration as we danced together the horoscope of the day. There was an exquisite German choral piece led by Heinrich Sandkuehler, a wonderfully witty skit presented by Kathy Wilde and gorgeous white roses tinged in red, the gift of Gisela and Johannes Storto – followed in the evening,



with all the beauty and sweetness of the rose itself, by Marianne Storto playing her violin in a duet with Ludmila—from a violin sonata by Rachmaninov.

We concluded the evening with a conversation about the third teacher (the John the Baptist individuality) and the significance of Judith von Halle, a young German anthroposophist

of Jewish descent, who on Good Friday in the year 2004 received the stigmata at the age of thirty-two, in resonance with the rhythm of the life of Christ. Gudrun Gundersen, one of the Choreocosmos participants, shared her more personal account from private meetings with Judith von Halle—holding the question: Might Judith von Halle be a spokeswoman for the John the Baptist individuality, announcing now the presence

of Christ in our midst? Interestingly, this all came on the evening following our dancing the horoscope of Rudolf Steiner!

The lasting “present” to all of us was the wonderful week filled with such inspiring content—and the gift of each other, blossoming through our gratitude for the opportunity to participate more consciously in the great cosmic unfolding of the coming of Sophia and the Rose of the World.

Choreocosmos in Kinsau, Germany

January 14-20, 2007

The following report is actually a letter from eurythmist Gudrun Gundersen to Judith von Halle, who bears the stigmata, as referred to in the two foregoing contributions. The letter to Judith was written on January 25, 2007.

Beloved Judith,

I have just been to a Choreocosmos workshop with Robert Powell. We moved eurythmically in cosmic dance to the stellar (birth) configurations of great individualities and deepened into them in the lectures. There were eurythmists and lay people resonating together through the cosmic gestures, moving forms (choreographies) which are read from the zodiacal constellations and the planets, and which are done together in two circles. The outer circle, moving clockwise, shapes the signs of the zodiac, and the inner circle moves counter-clockwise to the corresponding planetary forms – for example, the Moon in Capricorn, with which we ended the workshop.

The sequence of the planets for each horoscope corresponds to the planetary sequence of the Twelve Moods by Rudolf Steiner. A horoscope is “danced” through seven cosmic dances according to the positions of the planets in the signs of the zodiac, moving to music expressing the different planetary qualities, each piece in the key of the zodiacal sign in which a planet is located in the horoscope. Here the great classical works of music offer an appropriate basis, our experience of them being heightened through the Choreocosmos activity.

The eurythmic gestures and consonantal sounds for the zodiacal signs expressed in the outer circle are answered by the movements and vowel sounds for the planets in the inner circle. Here there is an initial approach to listening to the “speaking” of the various Angelic hierarchies to one another and with one another. Consciousness of the whole, over and above the consciousness of each individual participant, can also be practiced.

These 7 x 12 cosmic dances, formed and developed by Robert Powell, are like a string of pearls which are activated as a “present” from human beings for the spiritual hierarchies extending up to the heights of heaven, resounding as a “thank you” for the gifts which we have been privileged to receive from the hierarchies. In this activity a special kind of heart connection arises between the participants and on this account they like to meet for cosmic dance as often as possible.

On the foundation of Anthroposophy, in Robert’s lectures the heart’s knowing is deepened, focusing especially upon Christ’s activity in the etheric, how this can be perceived, and also upon the task of preparation for the future coming of Sophia. A basis is provided by Robert’s findings expressed in his *Hermetic Astrology* books and karma research, as well as his study and editing of the works of Valentin Tomberg.

At this workshop we worked through the birth horoscopes of the Virgin Mary, the Master Jesus, John the Baptist, Rudolf Steiner, and Valentin Tomberg. During these days Robert turned 60 and on his birthday we moved the planetary configura-

ration of the day. That same evening, following the birthday celebration, it was the wish of the participants to hear more about you. Robert's words about you – embracing and including aspects relating to the whole theme of the workshop – were deeply moving. He depicted your activity in the stream of evolution and allowed a heart knowledge to arise in the souls of the participants, which I was privileged to supplement by recounting something about the meetings between you and I.

At the end of the evening it was the express wish of the community to invite you to a conference, so that you would be able to present your message yourself – and, moreover, perhaps you would enjoy the activity of cosmic dance. The invitation is extended to you and Carl-August to join us at the anthroposophical spa hotel, Casa di Salute Raphael, in Roncegno, Italy either this year in the week after Easter (April 10-16, 2007) or next year (the dates for 2008 are not yet fixed). Probably there will be friends from Germany and America there, so that many would have the privilege of hearing you.

I am giving a copy of this letter to Robert to translate for the Italian, American and English participants in the small groups that he has established everywhere in the name of Sophia, so that the great hall in Roncegno can be filled.

Heartfelt greetings from everyone, especially from Robert and myself, Gudrun

7 Planets in Capricorn

March 16-18, 2007 in Pforzheim, Germany

KATHY WILDE

This weekend 33 people participated in a Choreocosmos workshop with Robert in Pforzheim situated in the region north of the Black Forest. The theme was the seven planets in Capricorn. In his introduction Robert talked about the process which accompanies our movements when we dance the forms and gestures. He described what takes place – invisible to our physical eyes – what happens between the different members of our being when we are engaged in cosmic dance.

Through Choreocosmos we grow bit by bit as our astral body, aether body, physical body and also our "I" are being taught, each undergoing a development, so that we not only enjoy the movements, music and harmony, and the love we experience in the group, but at the same time we are being taught. This introduction caused quite a stir in me concerning the path into my inner self, and I would like to highlight this by giving two examples in connection with the cosmic dances of Jupiter and Venus.

How can we learn to experience these inner processes of transformation? In Rudolf Steiner's *Gospel of St. Matthew* lectures he talks about the ancient Jewish tradition of the Cabbala and the meaning of the Sephiroth Tree. He tells us that those who were trained in the Cabbalistic tradi-

tion were able – amongst other things – to express the inner functioning of their astral body and aether body in words.

In this ancient and wise Jewish tradition, if one experienced the astral body one was able to discern three qualities. It is difficult to find words for these qualities in our modern language as it is less spiritual than the ancient Hebrew. However, nowadays we have the possibility of following the description of an initiate like Rudolf Steiner, who describes that in the Hebrew language there existed three words to express the functioning of the astral body: Hod, Netzach and Yesod. Hod expresses the quality of "spirit revealing itself outwardly", appearing on the surface, striving towards the surface. Netzach is a quality which expresses "self manifestation in space so that everything else is excluded", the philosophical meaning of this being that two bodies cannot be at exactly the same place simultaneously. Yesod expresses a quality in between the other two, between Hod and Netzach.

In the Choreocosmos dance for Jupiter I experience these qualities. When I circle to the back I have to leave space

because I am circling around something that is filled—Netzach. (The name given by Rudolf Steiner for the Jupiter form is “The inner has triumphed” and Netzach = Victory, Triumph.) At the same time when I gently close my fist (left hand) and with my open right hand circle around it, my third eye (Jupiter chakra) experiences a spiritual quality of striving which corresponds to Hod. Then, circling forward and forming the round, embracing “O” (oh) gesture (the sound corresponding to Jupiter) this expresses a quality in between the other two, which corresponds to Yesod.

In the ancient Jewish tradition of the Cabbala they also had the possibility of expressing the three qualities of the aether body. These were called Gedulah (Chesed), Tiphereth and Geburah. Gedulah was applied to express the experience of “majesty and grandeur in the spiritual world”, the experience of great and majestic impressions of overwhelming power. Geburah is an expression of “power which manifests itself outwardly in order to project itself”, to assert itself in the world in a more independent way. And Tiphereth is a quality that

expresses “greatness at rest within itself”, containing both beauty and goodness.

In the Choreocosmos dance for Venus I experience these qualities: Gedulah with the “A” (ah) gesture for the sound corresponding to Venus—great and majestic impressions that are awe-inspiring. Then the Venus gesture itself – circling the left arm downward and behind in the realm of the subconscious, streaming down through the left hand toward the heart of the earth—here I experience the quality of Geburah: a moving out of oneself in a more independent gesture. At the same time when doing the Venus gesture the right arm is extended forward with the palm of the hand facing up in devotion—here I experience Tiphereth: offering beauty and goodness from the heart.

It would be possible to discuss many more correspondences in relation to the gestures and forms of the Choreocosmos dances. The foregoing is just an example of two instances in connection with the cosmic dances of Jupiter and Venus. My admiration, respect and love for the wisdom in Choreocosmos continues to grow.

CHOREOCOSMOS SCHOOL OF COSMIC AND SACRED DANCE

NORTH AMERICAN SCHEDULE 2007

May 11-13, 2007 “Sophia and the Foundation Stone”

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

At the Barn, near Petaluma, California. Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

Registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America.

Information: contact Karen Rivers: Tel: 415-662-2147. E-mail: karen@karenrivers.info

May 19, 2007, 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

MAY 25–29, 2007 “Sophia Grail Circle Training for Facilitators”

A five-day training at the Barn, near Petaluma, California.

Registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America.

Information: Karen Rivers: Tel: 415-662-2147 E-mail: karen@karenrivers.info

June 8-10, 2007 “Sophia and the Foundation Stone”

A weekend workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: 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@msn.com

- June 11-15, 2007 "Sun and Moon Consciousness: Experiencing the Sun and Moon in the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac"
(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@msn.com
- June 16-18, 2007 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 18-22, 2007 Meditation Retreat of the Sophia Foundation of North America
At the Santa Sabina retreat center, San Rafael, California. Sacred Dance and Sophia Grail Circle
The meditation retreat, which takes place every two years, is open to those who are working with the study materials (Lord's Prayer Course, Our Mother Course, and other study courses of the Sophia Foundation of North America).
Information and registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America
- June 22-24, 2007 "Sophia and the Mystery of Mary Magdalene"
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 26-28, 2007 "Sophia, Demeter & the Four Elements"
A 3-day workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Elements (with Sophia Grail Circle)
At C-Dar Lodge, Brackendale, 1½-hour drive north of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
C-Dar Lodge is a center for biodynamic preparations, and the focus of the workshop is to enter into a relationship with the Earth Mother (Demeter) and the beings of the elemental kingdoms (Fire, Air, Water, Earth).
Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.
Contact: Ferdinand Vondruska. Tel: 604-898-9101 E-mail: bioman@telus.net
- June 29-July 1, 2007 "Sophia and the Foundation Stone Meditation"
A weekend workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: 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 E-mail: branch@seattleanthroposophy.org
- July 2-6, 2007 "Christ and Sophia: the Path of Cosmic Initiation:
Cosmic Dances of Planetary Configurations during the Life of Christ"
A 5-day workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Planets in Signs of the Zodiac
At the Waldorf School, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. (With Sophia Grail Circle)
- July 6-8, 2007 "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, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Musical accompaniment with pianist Marcia Burchard
For both events contact: Randall Scott, 152 West 15th Street, North Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7M 1R5
Tel: 604-988-8424/604-988-4600 E-mail: RosaMundi@shaw.ca
- July 9-13, 2007 "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 Barn, near Petaluma, California. Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.
Registration: contact the Sophia Foundation of North America.
Information: Karen Rivers: Tel: 415-662-2147 E-mail: karen@karenrivers.info

July 15–20, 2007 “Cosmic Dances of the Seven Planets in Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces: the Path of Cosmic Initiation”
A 5-day workshop with Robert Powell. Choreocosmos: Planets in Signs (with Sophia Grail Circle)
At the Eugene Mennonite Church, 3590 West 18th Ave, Eugene, Oregon. Musical accompaniment with pianist and composer Marcia Burchard.

Information and registration: Deborah Aikens or Renee Taylor: Tel: 541-343-0536, E-mail: deborah@efn.org
NW Center for Health Promotions, 90 East 27th Avenue, Suite A, Eugene, Oregon 97405

July 23-27, 2007 “Cosmic Dance of Eurythmy: Planets in the Signs – Cancer, Leo, Virgo: Nurturing our Relationship with the Cosmos”

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

At the Barn at Valhalla, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Musical accompaniment with concert pianist Marcia Burchard.

July 27-29, 2007 “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 Barn at Valhalla, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Musical accompaniment with concert pianist Marcia Burchard.

For both events contact: Kelly Calegar, 18 Haycox Court, Durham, NC 27713

Tel: 919-361-0691 E-mail: kcalegar@earthlink.net

EUROPEAN SCHEDULE 2007–2008

August 12-19, 2007 “The Immaculate Heart, the Sacred Heart, the Cosmic Heart”

One week Sophia workshop at the retreat center Citadella in Assisi. Musical accompaniment with violinist Daniela Rossi. Arrival on August 12 for dinner; departure on August 19 after breakfast.

(English/German with Italian translation)

Information: Sally Ellis-Jones, Tel: +39-0461-724893/+39-3482-106251 E-mail: sellisjones@yahoo.com

September 14-16, 2007 “The Seven Planets” (with Cosmic Dance)

Weekend workshop with Robert Powell in Barcelona. Starting at 8:00 pm on Friday evening and ending at 12:30 pm on Sunday.

Information and registration: Montserrat Fonts-Salas

Schulstrasse 14, 54427 Kell-am-See, Germany (English/German with Spanish translation)

Tel.+49-6589-917449 E-mail: usebregondi@infinito.it

September 28-30, 2007 “Christ’s healing miracles through movement” (with Cosmic Dance and Sophia Grail Circle)

Weekend workshop with Robert Powell in Rome, starting at 8:30 pm on Friday evening and ending at 12:30 pm on Sunday. (English/ German with Italian translation)

Information and registration: Uberta Sebregondi

via della Fonte di Fauno 20, 00153 Roma, Italy

Tel.+39-06-86904627 or +39-335-6749935 E-mail: usebregondi@infinito.it

September 30 – October 1, 2007 “Manopello – Veil of Veronica – The Face of Christ”

A visit to Manopello to see the face of Christ imprinted on the veil of Veronica in the church there.

October 2-4, 2007 “Michael and the mysteries of the stars” (with Cosmic and Sacred Dance)

Seminar at Monte Gargano, sacred to the Archangel Michael (3 full days)

(arrival on Sunday evening and departure on Thursday morning)

Cosmic Dance, Star Gazing, and exploring the Star Mysteries with Robert Powell at Monte Gargano

(English/German with Italian translation)

Information and registration: Uberta Sebregondi, via della Fonte di Fauno 20, 00153 Roma, Italy

Tel.+39-06-86904627 or +39-335-6749935 E-mail: usebregondi@infinito.it

Informazioni: Carmela Bruna Alfano, viale Azalee 6, Pinetamare, 81030 Castelvolturmo CE

Tel./ Fax: +39-081-5097769; +39-339-1350365

- October 5-7, 2007 "Sophia and the present time: the stars in 2007/2008" (with Sacred Dance and Sophia Grail Circle)
 Weekend workshop with Robert Powell in Naples (English/German with Italian translation)
 Information and registration: Uberta Sebgondi, via della Fonte di Fauno 20, 00153 Roma, Italy
 Tel.+39-06-86904627 or +39-335-6749935 E-mail: usebgondi@infinito.it
 Informazioni: Carmela Bruna Alfano, viale Azalee 6, Pinetamare, 81030 Castelvoturno CE
 Tel./ Fax: +39-081-5097769; +39-339-1350365
- October 19-21 , 2007 "Cosmic Dance of Eurythmy: Planets in the Signs — Aquarius"
 Weekend workshop with Robert Powell in Pforzheim (German)
 Information and registration: Hanna Dalhöfer
 Vogelsangstrasse 68, 75173 Pforzheim, Germany. Tel: +49-7231-23792
- November 9-11, 2007 "Cosmic Dance of Eurythmy: Planets in the Signs — Pisces"
 Weekend workshop with Robert Powell in Trier (German)
 Information and registration: Gisela Storto-Lanfer
 Am Irscherhof 35, 54294 Trier, Germany. Tel: +49-651-34053
- November 16-17, 2007 "Astrology Seminar" with Robert Powell in Stuttgart
 Information: Krista Koesters (German)
 Hechenweg 2-I, 71229 Leonberg, Germany. Tel: +49-7152-331033 E-mail: koesters@schlundmail.de
- 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, and Rudolf Steiner"
 Seminar with Robert Powell in Kinsau (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
 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

Fishing in the Keep of Silence

There is a hush now while the hills rise up
 and God is going to sleep. He trusts the ship
 of Heaven to take over and proceed beautifully
 as He lies dreaming in the lap of the world.
 He knows the owls will guard the sweetness
 of the soul in their massive keep of silence,
 looking out with eyes open or closed over
 the length of Tomales Bay that the herons
 conform to, whitely broad in flight, white
 and slim in standing. God, who thinks about
 poetry all the time, breathes happily as He
 repeats to Himself: There are fish in the net,
 lots of fish this time in the net of the heart.

—Linda Gregg

Articles, reports, photographs – please send them
(marked “Newsletter”) to Molly Rose.

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LAST NIGHT

Last night, as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
That a spring was breaking
out in my heart.
I said: Along which secret aqueduct,
Oh water, are you coming to me,
water of a new life
that I have never drunk?

Last night, as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that I had a beehive
here inside my heart.
And the golden bees
were making white combs
and sweet honey
from my old failures.

Last night, as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that a fiery sun was giving light inside my heart.
It was fiery because I felt
warmth as from a hearth,
and sun because it gave light
and brought tears to my eyes.

Last night, as I was sleeping,
I dreamt—marvelous error!—
that it was God I had here inside my heart.

Antonio Machado (Spanish poet, 1875-1939)
translated into English by Robert Bly

