



The Master Peter Deunov in the Rila Mountains of Bulgaria

Words from The Master Peter Deunov

from Woman: The Source of Love and Life

Bialo Bratstvo Publishers, Sofia, 2010

In the Old Testament, it is said that God scorns the prideful, but gives grace to the humble (Proverbs 3:34). By "God," I understand this to refer to the Mother — to Living Nature. And she is great! Great is your Mother Nature! It is said in the Scriptures that when Christ found himself in human form, He became humble (Philippians 2:8). In order to have the Blessing of the Divine Mother, Christ was ready to endure all suffering. In esoteric science, Father is known as Mother. He is Love, but not in the way you understand Mother-Love.

Do not even think of comparing this Divine Mother with the love you know. There is no image with which we can compare it. I call her "Divine Mother," but not with the meaning that she has given birth to God. Esoteric science comprehends the Divine Mother as the Essence of all living things in the world.

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Editor: John O'Meara, Layout design: Aline Francoeur

Consultant Editors: Robert Powell, Sandra Weil

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Sophia Foundation Admin. Office:
4500 19th Street, #369
Boulder CO 80304

Administrator:
Kim Marie

Telephone: 303-242-5388
Email: sophia@sophiafoundation.org
Website: sophiafoundation.org

Editor's Overview

Our aim with this issue has been the conscious one of continuing to acknowledge and to build on the collaborative work of those great Masters of the spiritual life which include for us pre-eminently Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, Peter Deunov, and Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg), the last of whom may be thought of as hovering over this issue. There is a focus early on in this issue especially on the words and thoughts of the Master Peter Deunov, followed by a shift in focus, in Robert Powell's article, to the words and thoughts of Valentin Tomberg—these being filled out and elaborated upon with some marvellous additional excerpts from the work of Rudolf Steiner and Daniel Andreev. The constant motif running through this early section of the issue is the Great/Divine Mother and her many manifestations, which is then re-cast explicitly in the issue's second half in the form of the Sophia in her three aspects, relating to the Self, Nature, and the Divine Creation (in John O'Meara's article on Florensky and Bulgakov). The further question is then raised, by Bill Trusiewicz, as to how we can live into these three aspects of the Sophia (Holy Soul, Divine Daughter, and Divine Mother) as a way of going to meet the saving power of the etheric Christ. Another key focus (in Robert Powell's article) is on the ultimate reunion of the Father and the Mother to which we can look forward in the far distant future as an effect of the redemptive deed of Christ Who is seen working at present in tandem with the Sophia through His Descent into the Earth. Another powerful source of Inspiration working in our own time stems from the new light influences of the Sophia, which have begun to give the lie to a morose disposition that would overstress the extent of the sway of evil in today's world. This is the additional focus of an article by Sheila Wildfeuer on how we can be working with the Empress of the Tarot today. In the meantime the profound depths of the Mother's ongoing travail as the Black Madonna forms the content of Karen Rivers's article, among whose multiple aspects She appears to us as Cosmic Mother, Earth Mother, Sorrowful Mother, Mother of Compassion, and Destroyer of Unreality.

Threefoldness is everywhere both considered and celebrated in this issue, whether in the form of the series Self/Nature/Divine Creation of Florensky, or the Egocentric/Biocentric/Theocentric Systems taught by Peter Deunov. The Divine Mother manifests at a certain level also as Mother Earth, and we are fortunate to be able, with permission, to present materials on this theme that take us back to the time of Zarathushtra, a former incarnation of Peter Deunov¹. In the last part of this issue, we take another (quick) look, with Robert Powell and David Bowden, at Mother Earth's own chakras, of which there are, as in the human being, seven, one of which was recently visited at Bali, with direct reports forthcoming from those who attended the pilgrimage there. In this issue of *Starlight*, there is also more by Anne Catherine Emmerich on Spiritual Marriage, courtesy of James Wetmore, and more on Novalis on a theme that also points towards the experience of spiritual marriage (*via* a discussion of the enigma of Nature in *The Novices of Sais*). Finally, we give further thought to the more emphatically polar aspects of the Sophia, Heavenly and Creaturely, and draw you into an additional "Meditation," on the link between Mother Earth and the Migrant Mother who has been so much at the forefront of the news recently. This last link will seem like a leap but is rather in the nature of an intrinsic association if one contemplates this deeply enough.

JOM

¹ See The Pentecost 2018 issue of *Starlight*, pp. 76-78 at:

<https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Starlight-Pentecost-2018-v3-sm.pdf>

A Preliminary Sequence: Some Manifestations of the Mother

Excerpts from *The Great Mother*¹

Erich Neumann²

Because originally human life was so strongly affected by its *participation mystique* with the outside world that stone, plant, the human being, animal, and star, were bound together in a single stream, one [sphere] could always transform itself into another. Humans and gods are born of trees and buried in trees; human beings can turn into plants; the two realms are so close together that one can merge with the other at any time. Humankind has [at that point in time] achieved little independence and is still close to the maternal womb. This proximity to the womb is not only the cause of the frequent mythical transformations of humans into plants but also of the magic by which human beings—and at first precisely women—attempted to influence the growth of plants.



The Earth Goddess, Tellus (Roman Gaia)
Ara Pacis altar, Rome

The bond between woman and plant can be followed through all the stages of human symbolism: lotus, lily, and rose, the virgin as flower in Eleusis, all symbolize the flower-like unfolding of the highest psychic and spiritual developments. Thus birth from the female blossom is an archetypal form of divine birth, whether we think of Ra or Nefertem in Egypt, of the Buddhist “divine treasure in the lotus” or, in China and the modern West, of the birth of the self in the Golden Flower.³

On the boundary between the plant and animal realms, both governed by the Great Mother, lives the bee. Along with milk, its honey was sacrificed in the oldest times to the earth goddesses. A contrast to the bloody symbolism of the animal world, a kind of intermediary between plant and animal, it is a favorite with the Great Mother. Bachofen⁴ describes the bond between the beehive and the one Queen Mother: “the beehive [is] a perfect prototype of the first human society, based on the gynocracy of motherhood, as we find it among the peoples named. Aristotle goes so far as to place the bees higher than the men of that first period, because in them the great law of nature is expressed far more perfectly and firmly than among men. The bee was rightly looked upon as a symbol of the feminine potency of nature. It was associated above all with Demeter, Artemis, and Persephone. Here is symbolized

¹ Published by Princeton University Press in 1963, originally written in 1955, pp. 262-267, *passim*.

² A student of Carl Jung and a practicing analytical psychologist, Neumann was perhaps the most advanced student of comparative mythology among Carl Jung’s pupils at the time he wrote.

³ See Carl Jung and Richard Wilhelm, *The Secret of the Golden Flower*. There is a discussion of this idea in *Starlight*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 40-41.

⁴ Johann Jacob Bachofen, author of *The Mother Right*, 1861, a seminal work on the ancient culture of matriarchy.

the earth, its motherliness, its never-resting, artfully formative busy-ness, and [here is] reflected the Demetrian earth soul in its supreme purity ... But the bee is also associated with the moon: the priestesses of the moon goddess were called 'bees,' and it was believed that all honey came from the moon, the hive whose bees were the stars ..."

The Mission of the Mother⁵

Boyan Boev⁶

"Mothers will save the world."

"Whoever thinks that the world can be saved outside the mother is misleading us.

All teachers must stand around the mother."

The Master Peter Deunov

When the child comes to the Earth, Intelligent Nature has prepared a heart that loves it with selfless love. This is the mother! The child is born helpless, weak, with a lot of needs that it cannot satisfy on its own. It can barely do anything. Thus Mindful Nature surrounds it with the tenderness and self-denial of maternal love. The existence of motherly love tells us that there is a Providence in the world for all beings – that there is a Great Mindful Beginning that conducts things.

Through the mother speaks Mindful Nature, through Her speaks the heart of the world. The mother is an expression of Mindful Nature – the Great World Mother.

[The mother] enkindles/ignites her love in the heart of the Earth-mother and through the latter she loves. She – the Great World Mother! And as Nature is indestructible in its purposes and plans, such is the love of the mother. Through the mother's mouth speaks the World's Mother!

The existence of motherly love is a guarantee for the beautiful future of humankind. All the while that the sacred fire of love, lit by the World's Mother is burning, the rise of humanity is sure.

The mother's love is of non-earthly origin. It is not from this world. It comes from the heavenly spheres to show that love rules the whole world.



Tempi Madonna by Raphael

⁵ Courtesy of Emily Michael who translated this text. The excerpt is taken from a full lecture entitled "The Mission of the Mother."

⁶ One of the Master Deunov's most intimate pupils. After attending lectures by Rudolf Steiner, Boev was directed by Steiner back to his homeland where the Master Deunov was teaching. See *Starlight*, Vol. 18 No. 1, Pentecost, p. 66.

On the Mother, the Day-World, and Night

Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis)

from *Hymns to the Night*, trans. George MacDonald¹

[Novalis is here addressing his beloved Sophie who is dead and has now appeared to him in vision. He begins with praise of the Divine Sophia, and is soon speaking of the feminine element of visionary Night in which he finds himself with his Sophie ...]

Glory to the queen of the world, to the great prophet of the holier worlds, to the guardian of blissful love! She sends thee to me, thou tenderly beloved, gracious sun of the Night. Now I am awake, for now I am thine and mine. Thou has made me know the Night, and brought her to me to be my life: thou hast made of me a man. Consume my body with the ardour of my soul, that I, turned to finer air, may mingle more closely with thee, and then our bridal night endure for ever.

[Here Novalis shifts his attention to the Day-World.]

Thy mother, it is she brings thee forth, and to her thou owest all thy glory. Thou wouldst vanish into thyself, thou wouldst dissipate in boundless space, if she did not hold thee fast, if she swaddled thee not, so that thou grewest warm and, flaming, gavest birth to the universe.

[Focusing now on the visionary element of Night.]

Thou upliftest the heavy-laden wings of the soul. Darkly and inexpressibly are we moved; joy-startled, I see a grave face that, tender and worshipful, inclines towards me, and, amid manifold entangled locks, reveals the youthful loveliness of the Mother.



Madonna del Magnificat, by Botticelli 1481 Uffizi Gallery

¹ See Crescent Moon Publishing, Kent, UK, 2010.

On The Great Mother

Peter Deunov¹

Follow your Great Mother: Love.

When we are born of our Divine Mother, the Spirit to which we aspire, death will be swallowed up.

Say to your Mother: "For you who gave me birth into this world of God, I sacrifice everything. In your love I find the last support of my soul."

Excerpts from 'The Great Mother'²

Peter Deunov

[In the following remarks, Peter Deunov speaks of the inevitability of our coming into a relationship with the Mother in our will. Cf. *Starlight*, Pentecost 2018, p. 75:

<https://sophiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Starlight-Pentecost-2018-v3-sm.pdf>

See also Valentin Tomberg, *The Our Mother Course*, General Overview to Weeks 121-127:

"Hardness and strength of will must be developed to such a degree in order to give the force [necessary] to bring karma into order." — Ed.]

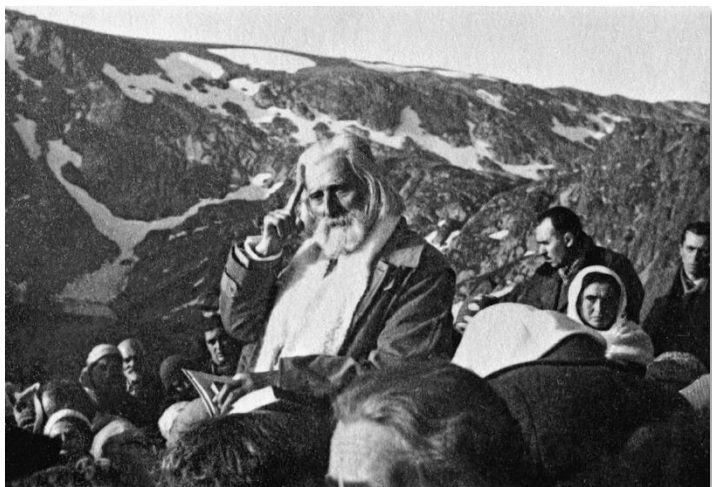
The only real thing you have in this world is your organism. Until you explore your organism, you will be ignorant and you will not be able to understand Nature. Our Great Mother—Nature—constantly restricts her children to all the rules she possesses. Keep in mind that She is mercilessly crude. No occultist should be self-effacing and think that it will go unnoticed for them. When this Divine Mother grabs you, she will walk you through all the rules of upbringing without even batting an eye.

What one person thinks to be rough in the world, what we, modern people, see as some sort of disharmony in the world, are actually the most harmonious actions. I dare not tell you that Nature should be studied from the back of her hand. You should also start studying your Life on the other side [so to speak]. For example, the kindness of one person depends on the misery contained in the roots of his or her Life. In fact, we can mathematically determine that the goodness of one person will be as great as the degradation in the roots of that life. Now,

¹ From *The Wellspring of Good*. Ed. and tr. Antoaneta Krushevska. Walnut Creek CA: Evera Books, 2015, p. 151, and *The Teacher: The Dawning Epoch*. Ed. and tr. Maria Mitovska and Harry Carr. London: Shining Word Press, 2015, pp. 49, 286.

² One of a series of Thursday evening talks given by the Master Peter Deunov. Translation provided by Emily Michael and adapted by the Editor.

many of you are willing to show better than you are or worse than you are. This is a false position and Nature does not tolerate such a pretense ...



Peter Deunov Giving a Talk in the Rila Mountains

How will you define Faith? Once true Faith has come, unbelief, and hence the contradiction in Life, will also come. Where there are contradictions, Life has begun. This is one sign of knowing that the real life of the disciple has begun. If there is no contradiction, you are far from the Truth—this is the law of the Earth. But this contradiction should not be a stumbling block for those of you who want to learn ...

When this Divine Mother has spoken, everyone should observe silence. Sometimes she forces us to remain silent. In this silence you have heard the voice of your Mother coming from the depths of the soul. This voice is calm and will speak to you as softly and gently as no other voice has spoken to you. But when will this voice speak to you? When one has gone through the greatest anguish and sufferings, having filled up ten pockets with tears. This voice provokes an instantaneous magical change in the human being. You may have been the most offended, the most bitter person on Earth, you may have been dying, but this voice has spoken to you; it is immediately a revival ...

I will tell you: when you put your right hand on the top of your forehead, you are provoking one of the most noble feelings. There are many centers in this part of the head, but you are primarily concerned with charity—Divine Love. And if the one who puts his hand on your head has a sense of charity, you will immediately feel a delight in yourself. The mother, laying her hand on the head of the child, tells its spirit: “Mother Nature, who has left me to look after you, loves you and her Love never changes.” And this mother, who puts her hand on the child, is its stepmother left to watch it. So whenever you have begun to worry, put your hand on, or let someone else put their hand on, your forehead, focus your mind on this place, and when you call your Great Mother, everything will pass. Knowing the importance of every action—these are the ways of the new upbringing ...

Make an attempt to let your Mother talk to you. If you hold on to your views as you have them today, your Mother will not speak to you. I will give you some clarification: pay attention to the clouds, connect with them, and do not think that they are dead, but always consider them to be alive. In educating ourselves, we need to draw on Nature because in the various forms it has created lies a great purpose: to change the mood of our mind, heart, and will. Sometimes in the sky whole mountains of clouds are formed, aimed at north or south; watch these lively clouds in space, ponder why some are facing north and some southward.

Modern people today are exhausted because they do not go out to observe the sky but turn only to the earth, to what they themselves have created, and it is petty. If people went out to observe the sky, the clouds, and the stars, their mood would change, and we, the modern shoot of the White race, would be more noble than we are now, because we voluntarily do not want to give up the old order of things. At one time people made idols, worshipped, and we laugh today. But modern people have made their homes, have their properties, rejoice because they are overwhelmed. Is not this idolatry? Never put any belief in the idea that your house, fields or vineyard will take you over [and settle what life is for you]. Do not put any hope in them ...

This is a task for you now—to turn back, at least eight thousand years back, to come to the door of the Garden of Eden, to show you that you have taken a curved path. There was another: the Straight, Narrow Path, the great Path of Living Nature and you have to enter this Path. In your mind, you ask: how can you go back eight thousand years? Take your example from the little child: when it stands up on its feet, does it have any idea how to proceed? No, it obeys an instinct—standing on its feet, falling, standing up again, falling again, and so on. We will fall, we will get up, we will worship until finally we stand on both our feet and start thinking our way [along the Straight, Narrow Path of Living Nature] ...

You do not need great heroism, only Faith and obedience. Every good action is according to the Will of God. Every good thought, any good endeavor, as small as it is, is according to the Will of God. Know that every good endeavor breeds results though it takes a long time. The least good will, the smallest good urge, in time, will produce a good result. Every good thought and desire is due to the urge of your Divine Mother, who wants to lift you up to the full life she has in mind for you ...

February 26th, 1920, Sofia



Slavic Icon of Byzantine origin

The Divine Mother

A Compilation by Robert Powell

In the Sophia Foundation journal, *Starlight*, sent out to friends of Sophia, it has always been the case, and is intended also in future, that articles of interest translated from Valentin Tomberg's literary estate should appear. There are many esoteric articles of his that have never been published. The following one is of special interest to the Sophia Foundation. At the core of the Sophia Foundation is the spiritual work on *Meditations on the Tarot*, the *Lord's Prayer Course*, and the *Our Mother Course*—all the spiritual legacy of a great spiritual teacher who in his primary work [*Meditations*] preferred to remain anonymous and whose name in his twentieth century incarnation is largely unknown, even though it is a matter of one of the great spiritual teachers of humanity. In his primary work, anonymity is his preference in order to be able to work all the more powerfully for the Good.

Through him have come spiritual treasures such as the basic *Prayer Sequence* that many friends of Sophia are working with—some in the more extended version forming the heart of the new Sophianic impulse of sacred dance. Central to the *Prayer Sequence* is the new prayer for humanity in the present age of Christ's Second Coming: the "Our Mother" Prayer, which is complementary to the "Our Father" (Lord's Prayer) taught by Jesus Christ two thousand years ago. The "Our Mother" Prayer was given to Valentin Tomberg in the Russian language at a special moment in time, as revealed in the following article. In this article from Christmas 1940, the "Our Mother" Prayer is not referred to explicitly, but various petitions (of the seven petitions of this prayer) shine through the words of Valentin Tomberg. A short time later, some of Valentin Tomberg's students began working with the "Our Mother" Prayer in the context of the *Lord's Prayer Course* that he gave in Amsterdam during World War II. The following article is of particular interest as it is evidently the first time that Valentin Tomberg said anything at all about the meaning of that which is expressed in the "Our Mother" Prayer that was given to him at this moment in time when the world was under such a cloud of darkness (World War II).

In this Introduction I have written of this as an "article." To be more precise, Valentin Tomberg spoke these words (in the following) within the context of a small group of people attending the *Lord's Prayer Course* in Amsterdam. Someone wrote down his words, and thus it would be more correct to say "lecture" rather than "article." Possibly due to a lack of completeness in the transcription of his words, there are sometimes gaps in understanding the text which, where appropriate, I have filled with explanatory words in brackets []. For those working with the *Lord's Prayer Course* or its extension the *Our Mother Course*, or with the *Prayer Sequence*, this lecture/article offers some new perspectives on the "Our Mother" Prayer. As this prayer is the spiritual *Foundation Stone* of the Sophia Foundation, I believe that the following lecture/article—and, indeed, this entire compilation following—will be of interest to every reader of *Starlight*.

“OUR MOTHER”
Valentin Tomberg
(Christmas 1940)

“Christmas this year was spiritually Easter, since the World Soul resurrected as memory. Until this time humanity still lived according to the Ten Commandments which, however, have an infinitely greater content [than supposed], and which need to be understood increasingly further and more profoundly. For example, ‘Thou shalt not take my name in vain’ is also to be understood [as saying] that one ought not to acknowledge anyone else in life as ‘Führer’ [leader]. ‘Thou shalt not make any graven image’ appeals to moral intuition, so that one goes [one’s way] freely and inwardly, connecting oneself imagelessly with one’s God. ‘Honor your Father and Mother’ refers not simply to one’s physical parents; [what is] also meant here is your Father in heaven and your Earth Mother. The Earth Mother is not to be found; [She] is completely extinguished from consciousness [in the Western world at this time, Christmas 1940].

Where can one find Her?

One comes to the Father through the seven stages of death [referring to the soul’s passage in the life after death through the seven planetary spheres: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn]. In each sphere through which one ascends to the Father one leaves part [of oneself] behind, peeling something off. Finally [after completing the passage through the seven planetary spheres] one ascends as a purely spiritual being into the realm of the Father, where one [generally] loses consciousness.

The way to the Earth Mother leads through the sub-earthly spheres.¹ There one finds Her and eternal life. After encountering the Mother one can resurrect. Christ, the Son, reconnected the Father and the Mother, who are separated by substance and by evil, the belt of lies.² Also *human beings* have the task of bringing about the connection once again. Through Christ’s descent into hell, whereby He encountered the Mother and thus the Resurrection and Ascension was made possible, there arose [Sacred] Magic through the connection of above and below. One cannot rule [material] substance; [one can] only master it from within.



Vierge Ouvrante, Musée de Cluny

¹ See Robert Powell, *The Christ Mystery*, Chapter 3: “Sub-Nature and the Second Coming.” See also an updated version of this in P.V. O’Leary (ed.), *The Inner Life of the Earth* (2008), pp. 69-141.

² RP: “by [the] substance [of the sub-earthly spheres] and by [the powers of] evil, [such as Lucifer, the creator of the astral sphere of the ‘belt of lies’ encircling the earth].”

The Mother has hidden Herself; [She] has fled into the interior of the Earth. Therefore She was actually forgotten for a time. And now this Christmas time [there] has resurrected the first [thing] which indicates a gradual understanding and seeking of the Earth Mother again: *the remembrance of Her name.*

The human soul has no place on Earth [and] also not in the spiritual world — *there* [is] the spirit, not the soul. Paradise was the realm of the soul; it has disappeared into the interior of the Earth with the Mother. Paradise, Shamballa, is our home; otherwise [without Shamballa] we are homeless wanderers. However, Christ—after His death—encountered the Tree of Life. Thus, one may hope that Shamballa will appear again on Earth. Shamballa is not something spatial. [It] is not a place, but a state of consciousness that is present always and everywhere. It is the Earth's etheric body permeated with the breath of Buddhi.

And in the coming kingdom one will experience how the Mother warms the homeless souls. And, then, that one can be truly faithful from within, organically. Now, organically, we are still unfaithful. Then, as [the] stream of daily bread, one will have in human hearts a daily memory/thought of the name of the Mother.

In the future one will experience it as a sin of omission ['Schuld'] that one forgot the name of the Mother. And one will take up the fight against evil in the world, against the temptation which brought about [not only] the disappearance of Paradise [but also that] the Mother remained in the darkness. The immeasurable pain of the Father—through the separation from the Mother—will be stilled through the Son. To Sophia belongs the homeland and the bestowal [of wisdom] and the all-merciful grace for everything in the All."

*

The essence of the above words spoken by Valentin Tomberg at Christmas 1940 is to be found in the "Our Mother" Prayer:

*Our Mother, Thou who art in the darkness of the underworld,
May the holiness of Thy name shine anew in our remembering,
May the breath of Thy awakening kingdom
warm the hearts of all who wander homeless.
May the resurrection of Thy will renew eternal faith
even unto the depths of physical substance.
Receive this day the living memory of Thee from human hearts,
Who implore Thee to forgive the sin of forgetting Thee,
And are ready to fight against temptation,
Which has led Thee to existence in darkness,
That through the Deed of the Son,
The immeasurable pain of the Father be stilled,
By the liberation of all beings from the tragedy of Thy withdrawal.
For Thine is the homeland and the boundless wisdom
and the all-merciful grace.
For all and everything in the Circle of All.
Amen.*

Valentin Tomberg (1900-1973) was not the first spiritual teacher of the twentieth century to speak about the Divine Mother. Already before him, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) spoke of the Mother—but only on a few, rare occasions, the most well-known being in the context of the “Uriel Imagination” that can be experienced most strongly around the time of the summer solstice (St. John’s Tide):

The silver-sparkling blue below, arising from the depths of the Earth and bound up with human weakness and error, is gathered into a picture of the Earth Mother. Whether She is called Demeter or Mary, the picture is of the Earth Mother. So it is that in directing our gaze downwards, we cannot do otherwise than bring together in Imagination all those secrets of the depths which go to make up the material Mother of all existence. While in all that which is concentrated in the flowing from above, we feel and experience the Spirit Father of everything around us. And now we behold the outcome of the working together of the Spirit Father with the Earth Mother, bearing so beautifully within itself the harmony of the earthly silver and the gold of the heights. Between the Father and the Mother we behold the Son.

(Rudolf Steiner, quoted from Robert Powell, *The Christ Mystery*, p. 32)

Rudolf Steiner also gave an inspiring meditation on the Divine Mother:

*If you seek me with true desire for knowledge, I shall be with you.
I am the seed and the source of your visible world.
I am the ocean of light in which your soul lives.
I am the ruler of space.
I am the creator of cycles of time.
Fire, Air, Light, Water, and Earth obey me.
Feel Me as the spiritual origin of all matter.
And as I have no consort on earth, call Me Maya.*

(translated by Robert Powell, *Divine Sophia, Holy Wisdom*, p. 11)

This meditation belonged to the second grade of Rudolf Steiner’s Esoteric School that he led from 1904 to 1914, and was accompanied by the words:

One imagines a Feminine Form spread out in the universe.

*

Another person who has contributed in the twentieth century to the unveiling of the mystery of the Divine Mother is the great Russian seer and poet, Daniel Andreev (1906-1959), who wrote the following words in his masterpiece *The Rose of the World*, which was written (for the most part) in the 1950’s when—having been sentenced to 25 years imprisonment under Stalin—he was in Vladimir prison. Andreev’s words are a passionate plea to honor the Earth Mother, known in the Bible as “the Mother of everything living” (Genesis 3:20).

Earth is the Mother of all the others, and not only of them, but of every living thing: every elemental, every animal, human, daemon, angel, demon, and even every angelic hierarchy. An inexhaustible wellspring, She is the one who creates the ether body of all

beings and takes part along with the individual monads in the creation of their astral bodies. She is endowed with warm, inexhaustible love for everything, even demons. She grieves for them, but forgives them. Everyone, even angels of darkness, call Her “Mother.” She loves all and everything, but She reveres only the highest hierarchies, especially Christ. She is fertilized by the great radiant Spirits of the Sun. She perceives people and their inner world. She hears and responds to the call of our heart, and She answers through Love and through Nature. May Her Name be blessed! Prayer can and should be offered up to Her in great humility.

All of us abided at one time in Her immaculate heart. Great One of Light! They sang Your glory in the temples of Egypt and ancient Greece, on the banks of the Ganges and on the top of the ziggurats of Ur, in the Land of the Rising Sun, and in the far West, on the Andean plateaus. We all love You—good and bad, wise and ignorant, believers and nonbelievers, those who feel the infinite goodness of Your heart, and those who simply enjoy Your light and warmth. Cascades of spiritual grace pour down into the angelic worlds, the worlds of the elementals, and the worlds of humanity. Beautiful Spirit, the origin and sire of all living matter, the visible image and likeness of the Universal Sun, the living icon of the One God, allow me too to join my voice, audible to You alone, to the global chorus of Your praise. Love us, O Radiant One!

(Daniel Andreev, *The Rose of the World*, p. 280)

The “Our Mother” Prayer New Standard Version

At the founding of the Sophia Foundation during the Holy Nights 1994/1995, the “Our Mother” prayer was dedicated as our *spiritual foundation stone*. The significance of the “Our Mother” prayer as a new, great prayer for humanity—complementary to the “Our Father” prayer given by Christ two thousand years ago—can only be really understood in the context of the work of redemption of Christ in our time: the work of redeeming Mother Earth and opening up for humanity the Mother’s golden realm, Shamballa, at the heart of the Earth. This is the spiritual context for the giving of the “Our Mother” prayer to humanity in the twentieth century. This prayer essentially embodies the new redemptive work of Christ that began in the twentieth century and which will last for the entire span of the New Age (1899-4399), embracing the last part of the Age of Pisces (215-2375) and most of the Age of Aquarius (2375-4535). It is THE prayer for the New Age, the Age of the Second Coming of Christ, for the redemption of *Mother Earth*. Just as two thousand years ago the Christ came primarily for *humanity*, to open up a path to the Father, as expressed in the Lord’s Prayer and the Ascension of Jesus Christ to the Father, the Second Coming of Christ is primarily for the healing of *Mother Earth* and nature.

As indicated above, the Russian spiritual teacher Valentin Tomberg (1900-1973) first spoke of the “Our Mother” prayer at Christmas 1940, as a prayer complementary to the “Our Father” prayer, to the participants in the original *Lord’s Prayer Course* that he held in Amsterdam during World War II. Because the *Lord’s Prayer Course*, an extensive exploration of

the esoteric significance of the “Our Father” prayer, was given in German, he also gave the “Our Mother” prayer in German, although according to his own statements he himself prayed this prayer in the Russian language. It is not known if the Russian original of the “Our Mother” prayer was ever written down. If it was, it is now unknown. The German translation of the Russian original given by Valentin Tomberg is the basis for the English translation of the “Our Mother” prayer.

The translation that has until now been used in the prayer sequence and in the esoteric study material on the *Lord’s Prayer/Our Mother Prayer* distributed by the Sophia Foundation is the standard version printed below. The “Our Mother” prayer and the Lord’s Prayer esoteric study material were given by Valentin Tomberg during the years 1940-1943.

The “Our Mother” Prayer Standard Version

*Our Mother, Thou who art in the darkness of the underworld,
May the holiness of Thy name shine anew in our remembering,
 May the breath of Thy awakening kingdom
 warm the hearts of all who wander homeless.
May the resurrection of Thy will renew eternal faith
 even unto the depths of physical substance.
Receive this day the living memory of Thee from human hearts,
Who implore Thee to forgive the sin of forgetting Thee,
 And are ready to fight against temptation,
 Which has led Thee to existence in darkness,
 That through the Deed of the Son,
 The immeasurable pain of the Father be stilled,
By the liberation of all beings from the tragedy of Thy withdrawal.
For Thine is the homeland and the boundless wisdom
 and the all-merciful grace.
For all and everything in the Circle of All.
Amen.*

Over the years of working with this great prayer in Europe, Australia, and America, on numerous occasions various people have brought to expression their difficulty with the opening words: “Our Mother, Thou who art in the darkness of the underworld.” And subsequently the understanding of the prayer as a whole is obscured. Much consideration has been devoted to the question: How can the “Our Mother” prayer become accessible to everyone?

The German translation from the Russian original is lacking in some respects, and the English translation although close to an exact translation from the German, incorporates intuitive elements reflecting an inner search for the true meaning of the original. Shamballa: the golden realm of the Mother at the heart of the Earth concretizes the location of the Mother’s realm and is more accessible to many than the expression “darkness of the underworld.”

Accordingly this has led to the formulation of the new standard version of the “Our Mother” prayer, which incorporates the expression “heart of the earthly realm” in the opening line and correspondingly in the tenth line. There is also a change in the eighth line where the word “sin” is an inadequate translation of the German word “Schuld.” We think these minor changes in formulation will help make the “Our Mother” prayer more accessible to everyone while remaining faithful to the true and essential meaning of the prayer.

There is also the objective change in human consciousness that is taking place in relation to the Mother through Christ’s work of redemption. We believe that the new standard version reflects something of this change in consciousness due to the activity of Christ since the time that the “Our Mother” prayer originated in 1940.

The “Our Mother” Prayer New Standard Version

*Our Mother, Thou who art in the heart of the earthly realm,
May the holiness of Thy name shine anew in our remembering,
May the breath of Thy awakening kingdom
warm the hearts of all who wander homeless.
May the resurrection of Thy will renew eternal faith
even unto the depths of physical substance.
Receive this day the living memory of Thee from human hearts,
Who implore Thee to forgive us for forgetting Thee,
And are ready to fight against temptation,
Which has led Thee to withdraw into the heart of the Earth,
That through the Deed of the Son,
The immeasurable pain of the Father be stilled,
By the liberation of all beings from the tragedy of Thy withdrawal.
For Thine is the homeland and the boundless wisdom
and the all-merciful grace.
For all and everything in the Circle of All.
Amen.*

We respect each person’s freedom as to which version of this great prayer to choose. We decided for ourselves, beginning with the Holy Nights 2002/2003, eight years after the founding of the Sophia Foundation, to work with the new standard version of the “Our Mother” prayer. We have had cards printed with this version for those who would like to have one.³

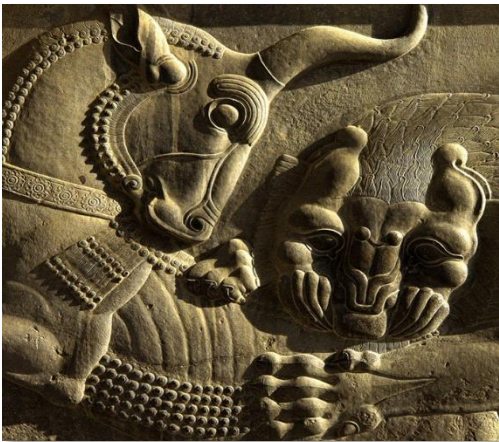
Robert Powell and Karen Rivers

³ Available from the administrative office of the Sophia Foundation; email: sophia@sophiafoundation.org

On Mother Nature and Zarathushtra

Farhang Mehr¹

Concurrent with the process of Zoroaster's inquiry into the Truth, but at quite a different plateau, the Soul of Creation, *Geush Urvan*, complained to God about the spread of injustice, violence, hatred, hostility, and revenge on earth. She indicted the ravaging disharmony in society. She entreated God for help. She craved to cleanse the earth of destructive elements. Conscious of the destination of the creation, she implored the Creator to send a strong and righteous individual to rectify the situation and to restore peace, accord, and progress in the world.



Geush Urvan being attacked by Ahriman

Her request was vouchsafed by Righteousness and thus was considered by God:

Unto Thee, O Lord, the Soul of Creation cried:

*"For whom didst thou create me and who
so fashioned me?*

*Feuds and fury, violence and the insolence
of might have oppressed me,*

None have I to protect me save Thee,

*Command for me, then, the blessings of a settled,
peaceful life."*

(Gathas: Yasna 29-1)²

The *Gathas* inform us that Ahura Mazda, in response to the request by the Soul of Creation (or Mother Earth), appointed Zoroaster as his prophet:

*Then, thus, spake Ahura Mazda, the Lord of
understanding and wisdom:*

*"As there is no righteous spiritual lord or secular
chief,*

*So have I, as Creator, made thee (Zarathushtra) the
protector and guide,*

For the welfare of the world and its diligent people."

(Gathas: Yasna 29-6)

¹ From *The Zoroastrian Tradition: An Introduction to the Ancient Wisdom of Zarathushtra*. Costa Mesa CA: Mazda Publishers Inc, 2003, pp. 50-79 *passim*. In this book Farhang Mehr reminds us that Zoroaster (the name with which Zarathushtra is generally referred to in Western tradition and favored by Mehr here) is the Greek rendering of Zarathushtra. Mehr also notes that modern scholars have dated Zarathushtra's time as approximately 1750 BC, but that, among other Greeks, Aristotle dated the prophet at 6000 BC.

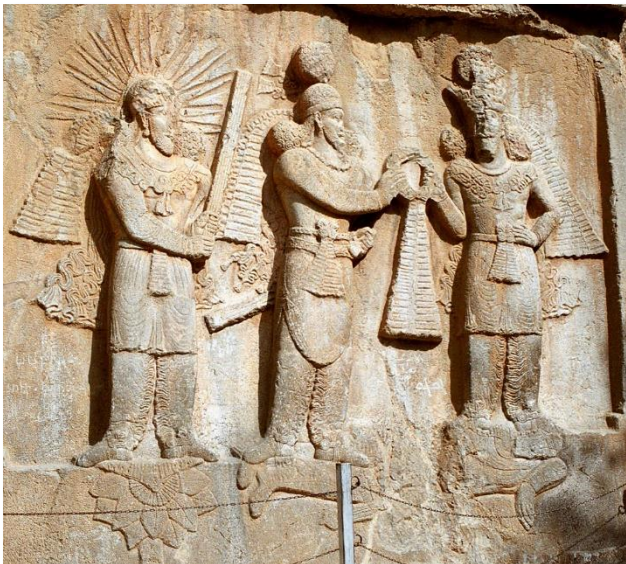
² Compare the complaint of the fallen Sophia in the *Pistis Sophia*: "Why has the strong power risen among the wicked?" and "How long now, O Light, dost thou suffer them, that they oppress me?" See Violet Macdermot. *The Fall of Sophia*. Great Barrington MA: Lindisfarne Books, 2001, pp. 147 and 143.

Taken aback by Ahura Mazda's announcement, the Soul of Creation pleaded:

*Thereupon the Soul of Creation cried:
"In my woes I have obtained for help the feeble
voice of a humble man,
When I wished for a mighty over-lord!
Whenever shall I get one to give me help with power
And with force?"*

(Gathas: Yasna 29-9)

Bewildered at the nomination of Zoroaster to prophethood, the Soul of Creation exclaimed that Zoroaster did not possess any worldly power. She expected a prince with a strong arm and an army to be chosen for the assignment. God tacitly alerted the Soul of Creation that in such a mission spiritual power and not worldly power is at issue. Instantaneously regretting her insolence, the Soul of Creation admitted that God knew best.



*Ahura Mazda investing Ardeshir II, with Mithra,
the Yazata of Oath-Taking, on the left*

Then Ahura Mazda revealed his message (*Manthra*) to Zoroaster. The voice of God was transmitted through Sraosha, personified as the teacher of religion. God's voice was heard by Zoroaster through his mind's ears³ ... Once Zoroaster received the message, he pledged to teach that which was revealed to him in the very words of the Most Holy, the Hymns contained in the *Gathas*. The *Gathas* are God's teachings in sweet hymns, *Manthras*. *Gathas* means Holy hymns and *Manthras* means thought-provoking. They constitute the rules of the best life and are God's eternal law. Their goal is the removal of inequity and injustice. They are conducive to the development and progress of the world ...

Zoroaster preaches for everybody, without distinction of race, color, or sex. His aim is the universal uplift of truth, the promotion of love, harmonization of mind and heart, the self-realization of the human being, and the attainment of happiness ... In Zoroastrianism virtue means justice. Virtue does not denote the blind performance of what is ordered and refrainment from what is forbidden; it connotes that the human being's acts of commission and omission must result in justice. In this context one's intentions and the results of one's actions assume relevance ... The right of liberty is also reflected in the Zoroastrian concept of the relationship between God and the human being ... The restraining force comes from the individual's moral convictions, conscience (*Daena*), and good mind (*Vohu Mana*) ...

³ I.e., through "good mind" and "through love" [the author's elucidations]. The image to the side is offered as an analogy of Ahura Mazda's appointment of Zarathushtra as the original Leader of the Persian race. Representations of Zarathushtra appear only later and are often on the model of Mithra [Ed].

Any act ravaging nature is forbidden. That is why Zoroastrianism is called the first ecological religion. Protection of the environment is an aspect of *Asha* ... *Asha* denotes law, righteousness, and justice. To do justice means to do the right thing, and no act can be right unless it is congruous with the law of *Asha*. The law of *Asha* requires selfless service with love and dedication for the preservation, development, and refreshment of the world ... Defilement of the soil, water, air, and fire in any form or degree is considered a transgression of nature and of the law of *Asha*. This protective attitude toward nature originates in the Gathic treatment of life and the material world. A vast difference exists between those religions that view matter as an evil substance and the body as a prison for the soul, and Zoroastrianism, which treats matter and life as benefactions from God and, as such, adorable. Life and matter, if put to good use, are loving and divinely vouchsafed. *Ahura Mazda* is the architect of both celestial and terrestrial worlds. His creations, without any exception, are good. This joy-producing world is being sustained by *Ahura Mazda*, and human beings as his co-workers must act wisely and gratefully in the preservation of the world ...

By offering homage to water, fire, earth, air, and other natural elements in his prayers, a Zoroastrian acknowledges the importance of keeping nature free from pollution. The natural elements are essential for existence and progress: they are sources of energy and indispensable for the continuation of life. Human beings are acting as trustees for nature in this world; anybody who violates that trust encroaches upon the law of *Asha* and will encounter unhappiness in life.

In an attempt to enhance popular consciousness of the natural elements (short of reintroducing pre-Zoroastrian polytheism), Zoroastrian sages introduced the concept of *Yazatas*, the Adorable Ones, who represent the natural elements and are also their guardians; and made them praiseworthy. For instance, in the framework of the Adorables, Anahita represents water and is also the guardian of water, and Atar represents fire and at the same time is the genius of fire. Anahita bestows fertility on women, purifies the male's seeds, purges the woman's wombs, facilitates the child's birth, and provides timely milk in mothers' breasts. Likewise, Atar is the bestower of well-being, abundance, wisdom, comprehension, and a host of other boons on man [and woman]. The metaphors and symbolism employed in the concept of *Yazatas* are most graceful and impressive. They nurture love and the care of nature in the hearts and minds of multitudes of people ...



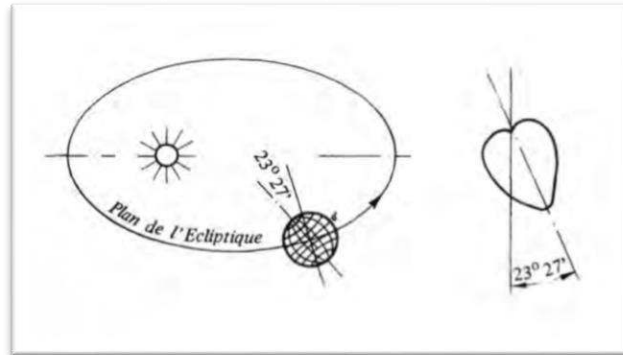
Anahita, Goddess of Fertility

Three Systems: Theocentric, Egocentric, Biocentric

Peter Deunov and Mikhaël Aïvanhov¹

[The following are excerpts from Aïvanhov's clarification of a teaching communicated to him and to his group in a letter sent to them by the Master Peter Deunov. Ed.]

"In the Annals of humanity is conserved the information concerning the fall of the first human beings. When this occurred, all of creation was dragged into the fall: the animals, the vegetation, and even the earth. And it was at that moment that the axis of the earth tilted, forming an angle of 23 degrees, 27 minutes from its original position (see diagram):



The fall of humanity thus resulted in the inclination of the earth's axis, which has led to a change in the position of the earth's magnetic and electrical currents. And at the same time, the human heart, which was once placed exactly in the center of the torso, tilted its tip to the left.

Now the earth's axis is returning to its original position, and this movement is going to cause great telluric transformations. The plants will then produce fruits imbued with new strengths and virtues that are drawn from the mineral kingdom. The animal kingdom will also go through modifications because of those which will have occurred in the plants, and it will be the same for human beings. For the moment, none of these transformations appear yet; they remain hidden, and only sensitive beings perceive them. But before the axis of the earth returns to its original position, humanity will go through great trials in order to be purified. Later, all will become luminous; the stones, the water of the rivers, and matter will become transparent.

For the moment, the vegetation, fruits, and vegetables we eat are imbued with negative forces. The earth is a large cemetery sprinkled with the blood of human beings and impregnated with their crimes. [Also] [t]hose who labor in the fields and work the gardens do it too often without love, in a state of inner revolt. Their thoughts and their feelings enter the seeds and poison the earth and its fruits.

¹ One of the Master Deunov's most advanced pupils, sent to France by the Master in 1937 to extend and continue the work there. Deunov chose Aïvanhov out of 40,000 other students. Many thanks to Lesley King-Adelaide and to Randall Scott for initially alerting us to the following material. [Ed.]

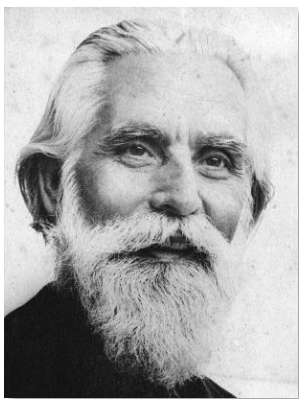
One day, human beings will be instructed in the art of cultivating the land according to Initiatic rules. The seeds will then absorb the cosmic forces in quite another way, and the fruits will communicate their virtues to those who eat them. If human beings are sick, it is because, by their ignorance, they continually create unhealthy living conditions. Without knowing it, they eat cadavers, walk on cadavers and sleep on cadavers.

It is through the theocentric system that all can be re-established in the world. This system must be understood in the broadest sense of the term, as a life full of love, justice, and kindness. To lead a balanced life, the disciple must revolve around God, serve Him, and accomplish His will. One can only work for the Lord by enlightening others, leading them to the Source, giving them an example of love, kindness, and sacrifice, which corresponds to the biocentric system.

But to be able to do this work, one must be strong, healthy, solid, resistant, and well-developed in oneself, which corresponds to the egocentric system. This is the reason for the two egocentric and biocentric systems: when they are put at the service of the theocentric system, they find their justification.

Human beings then become complete, unified. But if they are not attached first to the theocentric system, their life in contact with others and their personal life completely lose their meaning.

The egocentric system is linked to the “personality,” The biocentric system is already more turned towards others. As for the theocentric system, it goes far beyond the biocentric system. People who belong to the biocentric system work to prepare the lines of communication and build spiritual bridges. They fly into the world to search, study, and bring their findings to others. They serve as intermediaries between the people of the first category and those of the third. It is among them that we find artists, philosophers, and researchers. As for those who belong to the theocentric system, they serve as links. They lead those of the biocentric system to a higher ideal, to the Creator of the universe. They are the most remarkable mystics and philosophers, the Initiates, the great Masters.



I am very happy to have given you some clarification on this sentence of the Master’s letter. I hope it will help you better situate yourself and direct you in life. These are simple, elementary explanations, but very important.”

Mikhaël Aïvanhov, Paris, April 2, 1938²

² For more by way of an application of Peter Deunov’s thoughts as presented by Mikhaël Aïvanhov, see <https://with-omraam.com/blog/letter-master-peter-deunov-part-1-7/>. This website blog offers a great deal of material on many aspects of the spiritual life as developed by Mikhaël Aïvanhov, including many excerpts from Peter Deunov’s work. [Ed.]

[The following is from the book *The Sacred Words of the Master*, by Peter Deunov, as provided on the website blog cited above. See <https://www.amazon.com/Sacred-Words-Master-Call-Disciple/dp/1417979623> Ed.]

The source that springs from the summits waters everything along its course.

If you want to help humanity, first take care to reform your life. You then act according to the law of the source.

Let disciples drink only water from the source. May they suffer from thirst rather than drink impure water. What you think of, you receive within. Think often of truth, love, wisdom, equality, and virtue: then they will abide within you. The water that comes from these depths is pure.

In nature, all forms are symbols of an eternal ideal world. They are the book in which disciples read what God has written. Disciples begin their instruction by studying nature: springs, grasses, flowers, mountains ... This is where they seek the right methods of life and purity.

You cannot see anything on the surface of a rippling lake. A calm lake reflects the summits of the mountains, the sky, the sun, and the stars. The disciple needs a calm soul and well-balanced thought. Then comes the clear vision of things, and many contradictions find their solution.

You must feel like a living soul, pursuing a triple goal: to feel, think, and act according to God. Consider all other human beings as souls who should love God. The disciples of the Universal Brotherhood are not men and women, but souls. Such disciples do not expect their happiness from outside. They learn, they work on themselves and in the world, but without losing themselves in it.

When the soul of the disciple awakens to God, it is free. And the disciple must not limit it by the captivity of the body. The law of karma limits human beings, but as soon as they begin to live for God, they enter into grace, into love. And here they are already free.



*Peter Deunov in the
Rila Mountains*

The Work of the Empress Today

Sheila Wildfeuer

Little of significance about sacred magic can be added to what has already been written by the anonymous author of the *Meditations on the Tarot*,¹ hereafter referred to as M.O.T. Yet we humbly pursue new insight when we employ the works of Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, and Robert Powell as starting points for our spirit-seeking. Steiner admonished us to take nothing he said as fact, unless we verified it with our own spiritual research. Tomberg illuminated the necessity of bringing about the Kingdom of God by adding to what was observable, by creating from moral imagination.² Dr. Powell maintains a role of spiritual collaborator and servant—reminding us of the Breath of Christ that is the power to continue the work of creation.³ These teachers have modelled in life what the Sons and Daughters of Light must do for the future, to bring about the 6th epoch: it is not enough to sit with the 5000 and receive communion; we must find the courage to walk on the water. The Empress, as the Arcanum of Sacred Magic, gives us an indication of how to do this. In working with the commentary on the Empress, let us act with integrity, with artistry, and with capability.



The Empress

We find ourselves at a time in history of tremendous possibility, according to the Apocalypse Code:⁴ the time of the 40th day of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, when the angels came to minister to Him.⁵ In order to take up the work of sacred magic—the work of the Empress, we must understand what it is. Here we will apply an interpretation of Brian Gray's: that "understanding" means to "stand under" the truth; thus, we do not own the truth, or stand in truth, but stand under it.⁶

The truth of sacred magic is a serious matter to stand under. The most cursory reading of M.O.T makes clear that sacred magic can't be done without mystical touch and the revelation that follows, after which we manifest sacred magical acts in the world. Regarding sacred magic, we attempt to:

1. Discern what sacred magic "is"
2. Comprehend what is required for the practice of it
3. Do what is required so we are able to practice it
4. Practice it.

¹ Anon., *Meditations on the Tarot*.

² Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia*, p. 186.

³ Robert Powell, "Amen/Aumeyn Meditation," *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality*, p. 40.

⁴ Robert Powell, *The Apocalypse Code*, *Journal for Star Wisdom* 2018.

⁵ Matthew 4:11.

⁶ Brian Gray, *From Compassion to Forgiveness*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTGMBotgMY4> lecture of 31 March 2012.

We cannot discern the “is” of sacred magic solely as an observer or beneficiary, only as a practitioner—or additionally as a practitioner. We might be able to observe that it has taken place and receive the benefits of it, but we must perform sacred magic in order really to know it.

Sacred magic is approached first through “mystical touch.” We focus all our attention on a single point, until we have so concentrated our attention that we no longer have to work at concentrating. Then mystical touch can happen. This is the work of the first arcanum, the Magician. It is worth remembering that the accomplishment of this level of concentration will exact from us many repeated attempts. Although the Magician represents concentration without effort, he works for a long time to attain effortless concentration. This reality of having to *work* for concentration is not a trifling matter, as it is connected with the outer consequences of the Fall of humanity; thereby our discernment of what “is” asks us to examine what “was.”

What “was” lies in the Creation of the world, within which humanity lived in a state of connection with the Divine, the state of Paradise. In Biblical tradition, the human being fell from the paradise state by succumbing to the temptation of Lucifer, and God and Man went their separate ways. We departed wretchedly, the way was a descending one; we arrived at the stage of the human journey between what “was” and what “is” now, and we stayed in between for quite some time.

As a result of this first phase of the human journey, Divine Goodness became a MYSTERY. This is basic to a definition of the Fall: that Goodness, as the state of Paradise and union with God, withdrew from our perception and became hidden. And Goodness, being no longer in our possession, transformed into the object of our longing: what we sought and longed for and wished to stand under after all. All the Mysteries of antiquity were an effort by initiates to penetrate the hidden Goodness, and to reveal to humanity the guidance of the Divine to which humans no longer enjoyed direct access.

At the Fall, Evil also became a MYSTERY. Human beings—ashamed of their error and afraid of judgment (shame and fear being the inner consequences of the fall)—embarked on the slippery path of hiding, from God and each other. And so, ever since we left our Divine home and began the adventures of the Prodigal Son,⁷ (a story central to the 4th Arcanum, the Emperor) we carried with us an inheritance that we mostly squandered: the meeting within us of the mystery of Good and the mystery of Evil. By choosing freedom—a freedom that we were in no way ready to embrace and therefore benefit from—we set the course of human



The Magician

⁷ Luke 15:11-32.

evolution going. We absorbed into ourselves the conflict between Divine nature and Fallen nature, and in so doing—as the 10th hierarchy in training, between the angelic realm and the world of nature—we also obscured what was below us by over-identifying with what was above us. We obscured the Light of the Divine by overstressing the forces of evil. The gates were barred both ways.

If we consider Creation to be the first and supreme act of sacred magic, which has been suggested by the anonymous author, it would require—as he also suggested—a sacred magical act of comparable significance to open the barred gates.⁸ Hence the Incarnation of Christ in Jesus of Nazareth—the Son of God coming to redeem humanity from the Fall. By joining mankind on his earthly journey, the Son of God revealed the map back to the Divine, by the teaching of Love. By allowing Himself to be brutally murdered, and then descending in spirit through hell, He opened the gates to understanding the mystery of evil on behalf of the heavens, and the mystery of heaven in relation to the depths. This brought us from the in-between phase after what “was” to the present—to what “is.”

Because of our freedom to choose between divine guidance and evil guidance, set in motion by that first choice of Lucifer’s temptation over Divine guidance, we took on independent existence but we were cast out of the presence of Goodness. With the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we now have both the freedom to rejoin Paradise *and* the presence of Goodness in us to make the return journey. That we regained passage back is certainly through no merit of our own; this fact continues to expose to us what “is”: the panoptic innocence of the crucified God Man is directly proportionate to our collective and individual guilt for the crime committed against Him.

Which brings us back to the necessity of and preconditions for practicing sacred magic.

In order to be worthy of fathoming the mystery of Goodness, restored to us by Christ, we must pass through purification, illumination, and initiation (the transformation of our fallen human nature). It is a significant clarification: we relinquished unity with the Divine—the state of Goodness—at the Fall, and this state of unity was restored to us through the incarnation of Christ, but this state of unity lies within us as dormant until we have purified ourselves. The mystery of Goodness may be available to us, but we must overcome the continued presence of temptation if we want to be worthy of fathoming and working out of the mystery of Goodness.

It is important to make the distinction that, for the most part, the path of self-development is not the work of sacred magic. It is the pre-requisite for the work of sacred magic: it is the work of becoming worthy. Becoming worthy is a matter of developing the self and therefore “self-oriented,” mostly involving exercises and discipline and ruthless self-examination. But the plane of sacred magic is altruistic: it is for the other. Altruism comes from the latin root *alteri*, meaning “other people.” If we carry out sacred magic, we do so in the name of the Father and for the sake of the names of all. We hope to be worthy of carrying out the work of the Divine *in the world*, this hope spurring on our self-development. Our developed self

⁸ Anon., *Meditations on the Tarot*, p. 56.

aims to do the work of the Divine as it becomes understandable to us through what is revealed when we are touched by God, and this work will always be in the name of God and for the sake of others. Like the work of the angelic world, our labor in self-development will be mostly unseen and go unrecognized, as will our work of sacred magic.⁹

The steps we take to qualify ourselves for performing sacred magic are deeply personal and are undertaken in privacy, usually known only to God and to us. Rudolf Steiner speaks of the dangers of articulating our self-development in earthly words, which can involve us in a clumsy and inaccurate endeavor that can damage what we are building up.¹⁰ The model we can take for self-development is that of the uniting of human love and divine love in Jesus Christ, which occurred in the solitude of his humanity at the Transfiguration and in the garden at Gethsemene, while his closest friends were asleep.¹¹

So we wrestle alone with the enormous challenge of self-development. Sometimes we fail to see what has been accomplished, and we have to overcome our shortsightedness. More often we fail to recognize what we haven't accomplished, and we need to work on humility. The work of overcoming our flaws can be taken up by any divine spiritual path of development. This is not a vague matter, and integrity asks us to be clear within ourselves: what are the steps we are taking for purification, illumination, and initiation?

There is the need for inner clarity, but we cannot, at the same time, subject our rate of progress in spiritual matters to measure, because all unfolds in its own season. Impatience and procrastination are two sides of a pathology, one as bad as the other. We can have no effect on or power over time; it opens and closes in a prescribed rhythm. To be impatient means we will overlook opportunities to grow; to procrastinate means allowing growth opportunities to pass by us. In the pursuit of sacred magic, we do our best and we trust that the day will bring us the progress that we have gained through our work and our embrace of the rhythm of time. Tomberg says that experiencing "today" is the awakening of human responsibility. "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise" brings us into the presence of the World Conscience,¹² a Conscience that will unfailingly suggest any necessary adjustment that our own conscience may have neglected to take into account.

The second step of sacred magic—after receiving mystical touch—is gnosis. We learn about gnosis from the 2nd arcanum, the High Priestess.

Gnosis involves the descent of revelation to the book of tradition: when we are touched by mysticism, we understand what then lives in us by developing this gnostic sense. The formulae and gestures of sacred magic can be found in this book of tradition. We have examples of sacred magical formula in the seven sacraments, in the Foundation Stone Meditation, in the Inner Radiance sequence of prayers, in the meditations of the Grail Knights. In using these formulae we can say that we are aspiring to the practice of sacred magical acts.

⁹ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia*, p. 272.

¹⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, p. 71.

¹¹ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia*, p. 184, Matthew 14:37, Luke 9:32, Mark 14:37.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 285.

However, the efficacy of sacred magic relies on a *living* tradition—it can't operate within a philosophy or system that is separated from mysticism and listening for revelation. (Nor can we confuse “serendipity” or “synchronicity” with sacred magic. Sacred magic is always intentional. We can perform sacred magic through acts of forgiveness and compassion, but they are not accidents or coincidences and are performed in the name of God.)

In his Meditation on the Empress, the anonymous author's final word on the nature of sacred magic is that it is life such as it “was” before the Fall¹³: what “was” returning to us and inhabiting what “is.” It is generative—construction, and construction is the requirement of our time. We have seen the face of Evil and called it by name. The effects that it has wrought in the world while we slept on at Gethsemane will continue to unfold. But in this time of the 40th day, we are privileged to stand under Truth with renewed vigor, for the angels have come to minister to us. They have been unbound from their restraint and pour in now with only love and healing. There is no judgment against us from the heavens that we have been asleep, only hovering forgiveness and fresh forces to outfit us for the restoration of an earthly existence that honors its Father and Mother. By maintaining our union with the Divine in our day consciousness, we increase the vertical room within ourselves for the Christ, and when our actions work on behalf of the connection *between* heaven and earth, we expand outwardly the space of the Christ-force on the earth as the source of all inspired ideas, all hope, all love, and all aid. We can make amends for our personal fall by standing now, with Christ, as gatekeepers between heaven and earth. He is not the gatekeeper, He is the gate. And we can stay awake with Him, as keepers of the Gate.



The High Priestess

The establishment of the community of Philadelphia will come about through this vertical and horizontal expansion that begins with meditative efforts. Our meditations accept the angelic grace of our time, enabling us to purify, to experience mystical touch, to listen for revelation, so we can build on the capacity of the purified space and act for the Christ in the horizontal. We cannot afford to be deceived by the remains of the day of Evil—yes, we must restore, but we will no longer be cowed by the darkness, because of the force of instreaming Light. A teacher in the contemporary school of the Sophia mysteries uses the phrase “bag of tricks” for the deceptions being practiced on an unsuspecting humanity.¹⁴ Ahriman is bitter in the dark corners, reduced in his power to that sphere of mesmerizing shadows suspended from his finger. It can still draw us in and intoxicate us with the false belief that the darkness

¹³ Anon., *Meditations on the Tarot*, p. 73.

¹⁴ Claudia McLaren Lainsou, unpublished class lesson, WindRose Academy, Boulder CO, 30 May 2018.

in the world and in ourselves is one all-encompassing darkness, from which there is no extrication. It cannot be overstated that this is a *false belief*.

We envision the darkness in the world, and the darkness in ourselves, as factions that have had their day: there is a need in our time to see things as such in order for sacred magic to operate. We realize that the destruction we have witnessed is the background for the Light, the necessary screen against which we can see the Light travailing—the Light that shines in the darkness, which the darkness cannot overcome. Sacred magic is for the increasing of that Light ...

The anonymous author points out that all Hermeticism is in pursuit of the great work: life before the Fall.¹⁵ He states that every spark of love and every droplet of sincerity will be saved and multiplied by the Divine.¹⁶ Valentin Tomberg claims that the mission of white occultism throughout the centuries has been to combat the tendencies of humanity toward the three temptations in the wilderness. From this wilderness we have emerged and now stand in the presence of ministering angels.¹⁷ We have from Rudolf Steiner the reformulation of the Rosicrucian mantra: *Ex Deo nascimur*—From the Divine humanity is born, *In Christo morimur*—In Christ death becomes life, *Per Spiritum Sanctum reviviscimus*—In the World-Thoughts of the Spirit the soul awakens.¹⁸ This mantra we lay into our hearts as the foundation stone of ourselves working against these tendencies towards temptations, as white occultists. We can see suggested in the card of the Empress the sacred magical gesture that accompanies this formula:

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The Tree of Life is the unity of mysticism, gnosis, and magic. The Empress contains them all, her number is 3. In the performance of sacred magical acts, we become participants in the Great Work, through peacefulness, alignment with God and Nature, and harmonious collaboration with Life. We participate in the fruiting of the Tree of Life. The back of the Empress's throne is a pair of petrified wings. When our meditative effort, combined with angelic grace and the presence of Christ and Sophia in us, have converted those dark forces of the fallen human, shame and fear, into the wings of awakened conscience and courageous reverence,²⁰ we release the Empress in us from petrification, and our souls are lifted by Christ into the spirit world. From this sphere, we enact sacred magic, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; in the name of the Mother, the Daughter, and the Holy Soul—one God, luminous Trinity, forever and ever. Aumeyn.

¹⁵ Anon., *Meditations on the Tarot*, p. 68.

¹⁶ Anon., *Meditations on the Tarot*, p. 69.

¹⁷ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia*, p. 166.

¹⁸ Given to the members of the Anthroposophical Society at the Christmas Foundation Meeting 1923.

¹⁹ Lacquanna Paul and Robert Powell, *The Foundation Stone Meditation in the Sacred Dance of Eurythmy*.

²⁰ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia*, p. 277.

On The Sophia in Relation to the Creation: The Sophiology of Pavel Florensky and Sergius Bulgakov

John O'Meara

Pavel Florensky published *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* in 1914, at the relatively mature age of 32. It would appear, however, that a large part of this collection was written by 1908, so that already, at a rather precocious 26, Florensky was well along in becoming the extraordinary polymath who appears to us so splendidly in these pages. He is by now, certainly, fully immersed in all the main issues not only in religion, but in the arts and in the sciences as well, especially mathematics. Focused in this comprehensive way on the deepest inner relations of the self, the world, and the universe, Florensky gives himself to what are fundamentally the method and aims of the spiritual scientist.

On reaching his chapter on "Sophia," one settles more firmly on what, in the rest of this widely ranging collection, is one of his main themes if not the main one of all: namely, "the relationship between *ascesis, the virginity of the soul, the bearing of spirit, love-pity for creation, and the being-in-love with creation*" (230). Florensky otherwise describes his main focus as "this bridge leading the ascetic to the absolute root of creation." He articulates this whole process more fully in this same paragraph:

... washed by the Holy Spirit, separated from his selfhood through self-purification, [the ascetic] has found in himself his own absolute root — that root of creation which is given to him through coparticipation in the depths of Trinitarian Love.

That this "absolute root" in the self can be at the same time the "absolute root of creation" is precisely what, according to this spiritual scientist, the Sophia makes possible, for, as Florensky puts it in his chapter devoted to Her: "Sophia is the Great Root by which creation goes into the intra-Trinitarian life" (237). Along the way Florensky has made the strong point that to grasp all this is to build on the incontestible fact of spiritual "objectivity":

Objectivity does exist. It is God's creation. To live and feel together with all creation, not with the creation that human beings have corrupted but with the creation that came out of the hands of its Creator; to see in this creation another higher nature; through the crust of sin, to feel the pure core of God's creation ... this is to point the requirement of a restored, i.e., a spiritual person.
(192)

Syncronically, or karmically, I came to Florensky's book for the first time fresh from working in several lectures by Rudolf Steiner that focus on the same progressive basis to our spiritual development, which is here referred to the influence and activity of the Hierarchies. Especially was Steiner's account illuminating for my purposes where he speaks of the nature of



Pavel Florensky

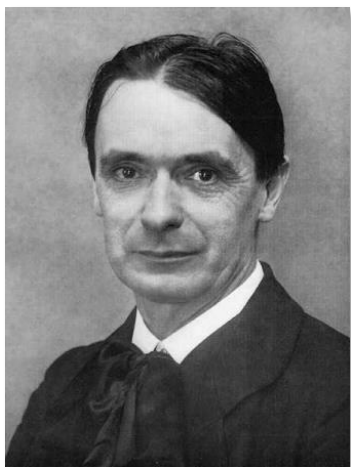
our relationship to the Second Hierarchy, shedding light on Florensky's somewhat strange term for the second-to-last stage in this progress: "love-pity for creation." Steiner formulates this stage as a case of "love and compassion":

Hardly anything we know in our ordinary state of consciousness can convince us of the divine nature of existence as does our potential for love and compassion ... we are able to pour ourselves, as it were, into the essential life and reality of the other soul with its pleasures and pains ... not only everything that can suffer and experience joy in a human way or resembling a human way, but also into all that lives ... We feel ourselves to be inside the living entities, we learn to live with the plants, with the animals, with other people ... What is more, we discover a higher, spiritual world behind all that lives, the world of the Second Hierarchy. (140-141)

A still further development attends on progress to the last stage in Florensky's series, what he calls, equally strangely, "being-in-love with creation," Florensky's emphasis here falling as much on the word "being" as the word "love." Steiner's account helps to clarify this difficult term. He speaks of another new adjustment by which "love and compassion" evolve into something more complete. Steiner notes that in the former stage "we extend our own nature like tentacles, pouring it into the other entity, but we continue to exist apart from those entities" (147), adding further that "[now] this last remnant of egotistic feeling must cease":

*We have to reach a point where we not only pour ourselves out into other entities and stand apart with our own inner life, but really feel those other entities **to be our self**, going completely out of ourselves and losing the feeling that we are beside the others ... We look at [an entity] not merely from where we are, but know ourselves to be one with it and look back at ourselves from there.*

Additionally, there opens out at this stage a further experience of the First Hierarchy, in whose creative nature we are now immersed: "the spiritual entities we are then able to perceive are also in three categories" (148), viz., the Spirits of Will (the Thrones), the Spirits of Harmony (the Cherubim), and the Spirits of Love (the Seraphim)¹. As for the very first stage of actual spiritual



development—the "bearing of the spirit," where we come to know the spirits of the Third Hierarchy (Angels, Archangels, Archai), Steiner is also illuminating. He remarks on the strange fact that in our consciousness at this stage we are actually remembering what we have already experienced first in a "clairvoyant state where none of the things we perceive in our ordinary state of consciousness remain" (138) and where, in the meantime, much has been communicated to us about the spirit-world.

The account by Steiner from which I have been quoting formed part of a lecture he gave in 1912², two years before Florensky published *The Pillar*. In his very wide-ranging research

¹ The Second Hierarchy likewise has three categories: the Spirits of Form (the Exusiai), the Spirits of Movement (the Dynameis) and the Spirits of Wisdom (the Kyriotetes).

² Newly entitled "The Third and Second Hierarchies" and "The First Hierarchy and the Divine Trinity" for the edited collection, *Angels*, London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1996.

for his book, Florensky had come across Steiner's work, and he cites Steiner (in the endnotes) several times, first on the subject of "the general character of mystical knowing" (441), then, more specifically, on "the relation between the [ancient] mysteries and Christianity" (566). In the former case Florensky cites Steiner's *Theosophy* and in the latter *The Ancient Mysteries and Christianity* and *The Way of Initiation*, all books that had come into print between 1910 and 1911. As for Steiner's lecture on the progressive stages of clairvoyant vision, which I quote above, this was not published until much later, but it is very likely that *had* Florensky seen it or heard of it, he would have found in it an important confirmation of his own understanding, not to say a significant extension of it where the Hierarchies are brought in. As it is, Florensky's focus in his account turns to the Sophia. Having settled on "the absolute root of creation" as the end-point of our progress in spiritual experience, Florensky asks the question: "How is the creation thought in itself?" (230) As Florensky indicates in the first part of his chapter on the Sophia, creation "in itself" is "thought" by God: "to exist is to be thought, to be remembered, or, finally, to be known by God" (237). It is when one focuses especially on "how" the creation is thought that one is necessarily led to the unique spiritual being of the Sophia, for, as Florensky puts it, "This is the question of Sophia" (230). In short, the creation is thought by means of what links it *together*, through the various spheres appointed for the corresponding stages of our development—self, nature, and the universe: in other words, "Sophia is all-integral creation and not merely *all* creation" (237). Thus are we able to proceed through the denominated series of stages in our spiritual progress because the Sophia provides the actual ground for our passage from one sphere to the other. Here, it is to be understood that by "the creation" Florensky has in mind, of course, not the creation in any guise but quite specifically, as stated above, "the pure core of God's

creation," where the heavenly and the earthly actually meet, in an absolute integration of their respective domains. Sergius Bulgakov, Florensky's successor in sophiological thought and theory in the Russia of their day, provides an especially apt definition of the Sophia in this respect as "the coinherence of all with all" (xiv). Such "coinherence" assumes at bottom an identity of the



Florensky and Bulgakov; painting by Mikhail Nesterov

heavenly and the earthly: there *is*, in fact, such a ground as "the world in God" (1) in the words of Bulgakov; in fact, "the world in God" *is*, for Bulgakov, "the Divine Sophia" (1). It is Sophia who finally "unites God with the world as the one common principle, the divine ground of creaturely existence" (74).

It is specifically in this comprehensive sense that we can speak of the fact that "by Wisdom God made the world" (Bulgakov, 66—as cited from the Psalms): "God in his three persons created the world on the foundation of the Wisdom common to the whole Trinity" (67). Florensky had put it this way: "Sophia ... enters into the interior of the Trinity ... a fourth"

(252), by which “fourth” Florensky would seem to mean the TrinoSophia as a whole, in Her three aspects as these relate to the three Persons of the Trinity, for he goes on to point out that:

*From the point of view of the Hypostasis of the Father, Sophia is the ideal **substance** or ground of creation, the power or force of the being of creation. From the point of view of the Hypostasis of the Word [the Son], Sophia is the **reason** of creation, the meaning or truth of creation. From the point of view of the Hypostasis of the Spirit, Sophia represents the **spirituality** of creation, its holiness, purity, and immaculateness ... (252-253).*

This “triune idea” of “ground-reason-holiness” is echoed by Bulgakov who speaks of the Sophia, likewise in relation to the Trinity, as the “source” of God’s revelation, its “content,” and its “form” (40-48). Bulgakov is clearer as to the core of creation being “the self-revelation of [the] Godhead” and that “the divine Sophia” is that self-revelation (51). The self-revelation of the Godhead implies His exteriorization, i.e., His revelation in the world, and Sophia is that revelation as “the divine ground of creaturely existence” (74), being at once divine *and* “creaturely” (Florensky 252). Insofar as the Sophia is concerned, the Biblical testimony, as Bulgakov’s exposition shows, brings the revelation of the Godhead forward only in its content and form, as the “Wisdom” and “Glory” of God: “Chokmah” and “Shekinah” (for the first time in the Bible, respectively, in *Proverbs* and *Exodus*—see 26-29), or in the language of the TrinoSophia of our day, Daughter Sophia and the Holy Soul. In this account, significantly, the Mother is left out. The Father is said, by Bulgakov, to “possess” Her as a “source of revelation, as the mystery and depth of his hypostatic being, in a true sense as his own nature—*natura*—which has still to be manifest” (40). The Father’s being and nature gets manifested only through the Son and the Holy Spirit, as *Chokmah* and the *Shekinah*: until then the Sophia “abides” in the Father only as *Ousia* (substance only) and has not yet manifested as “Sophia” (41). Might all of this not suggest, in the meantime, that “No one has seen the Mother,” on the analogy of John’s statement that “No one has seen the Father” (Jn.6.46), and this in spite of the massive record of cultish worship that has been offered in the Great Mother’s name over the course of many centuries, seemingly without interruption?³

How, then, do we *access* that sphere of the revelation of His nature at the core of God’s creation that brings us into union with the being of the Sophia? This is where the work of Florensky is of such significance, plunging us as it does into that great and long record, in Church tradition as a whole, of the “ascetic” approach to a clairvoyant perception of the relevant spheres. From the Latin “*ascesis*” we derive “asceticism” about which we have incorrect notions; Florensky remarks specifically that “worldly literature has never understood the spirit of Christian asceticism” (211). “Asceticism” in its proper sense involves not a strenuous denial of one’s links to creation but, on the contrary, deep work towards a greater connection (199) to it. Florensky notes how a wrong notion of asceticism developed from Hinduism (179ff) which was bent on establishing a way of life separate from “the bad infinity of unrestraint, both in the material world and in the intellectual world” (199). We need to recognize that a proper Christian asceticism is quite other than this: “one [tradition] is based on the bad news of the evil that reigns in the world; the other is based on the good news of the

³ See, representatively, Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955.

victory that has defeated the evil of the world” (212). A true asceticism, in fact, restores us, by virtue of what has become, since the Redemption of Christ, a “grace-endowed creation,” which is once again “able to live as it is in itself, in accordance with its originally given mode of being;” in this way “the goal of the ascetic’s strivings is to perceive *all* of creation in its original triumphant beauty” (226). Florensky can thus speak of an “ascesis of restoration” (253) as the process by which one finds an actual connection with the Sophia. The final effect of a proper ascesis, i.e., purification from the self-absorption of a purely “fleshly rationality” (282), is “virginity, inner chastity, and humble immaculateness” (253), and “Sophia is Virginity as the power on high that gives virginity.” Florensky in fact notes two avenues by which the Sophia can be known, the first deriving from Greek tradition, the second Byzantine (281). In the first She appears as “an object of contemplation,” in the second in her “aspect of chastity and virginity,” although Florensky is especially eager to establish “the continuity and indivisibility of the idea ‘virginity-contemplation,’” for it is finally but one interconnected process (“inseparably connected”):

it is this continuity that explains why the insistence with which purity is spoken of in the ecclesiastical literature is proportional both to the amount of space devoted to the idea of charismatism, the bearing of the spirit, deification (whatever it is called in different ages) and to the emphasis on the absolute value of creation. (255)



Sophia

The foregoing passage is itself an indication of the “all-integral” nature of the series that links purity or virginity of the soul with both the bearing of the spirit and the rest, to come back to “the relationship between *ascesis, the virginity of the soul, the bearing of spirit, love-pity for creation, and the being-in-love with creation.*” It is the spiritual being of the Sophia who serves as the substantial/actual link in this series from the time Her own Virginity adds itself to the virginity of the soul in the spiritual aspirant. This

is a case, furthermore, of a condition of “virginity-contemplation” in the aspirant, a composite term that already bridges the link between virginity of soul and the bearing of the spirit. A further correspondence may be proposed here between contemplation and the bearing of the spirit, and so between virginity and love-pity for creation. Florensky notes also that his own contemporaries, beyond the Greeks and the Byzantines, were themselves already “dreaming of the *unity* of all creation in God,” (Florensky associates those developments with the prophetic figure of Vladimir Solovyov⁴). One might propose, then, the association of “unity” with the final term in Florensky’s series, the “being-in-love with creation,” so that, in the last analysis, the following set of groupings emerge:

contemplation.....virginity.....unity
the bearing of the spirit.....love-pity for creation.....the being-in-love with creation

⁴ For Solovyov’s profound unitarian view of the creation, see my article in *Starlight*, Epiphany, 2017.

Florensky's additional research into the history of concrete representations of the Sophia, also in the history of Sophianic iconic art in his own native Russia, links these different spheres in the series further (278) with the figures of

The Incarnate Word.....Mary, the Mother of God.....the Church

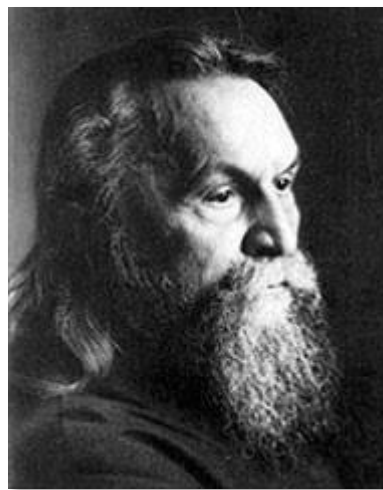
We have already seen the additional application Steiner makes to a clairvoyant experience of the three Hierarchies

Third Hierarchy.....Second Hierarchy.....First Hierarchy

who, in the creation, are likewise linked by the Sophia. It is She who, according to Florensky, also weaves between the three Persons of the Trinity as They reveal themselves in the creation out of their several spheres, *in Her*:

Holy Spirit.....Christ, the Son of God..... The Father

I do not believe that Florensky ever claimed a full clairvoyance for himself, but the great value of his exposition lies in showing how the many extraordinary efforts of spiritual aspirants in Church tradition certainly invoke such a possibility. Florensky's purpose would seem to have been the more humble yet powerful one of helping to mediate and set forth all that in Church tradition would point to and inspire the *prospect* of clairvoyance (or as much of that tradition as he could fathom). He is in this respect quite eminently a "heart-medium" about whom we feel that he is making himself precisely into a vehicle of that "humility, chastity, and simplicity" (248) of tradition through which the whole series of developments proceeds (we can also translate this last series into our own Christian Hermetic terms: "obedience, chastity, and poverty").⁵ Bulgakov for his part, in his *Sophia: Goddess of Wisdom*, is working far more in the sphere of "contemplation." Thus we associate Bulgakov especially with the stage of "the bearing of the spirit," and Florensky with that of "love-pity for creation." If so, can we not conceive, then, of another who would represent, for his part, the connection to the third and most complete stage in Florensky's series of spiritual possibilities: namely, the final, positive "being-in-love with creation" — someone who was to come after them?⁶ Operating, more prominently, in the "contemplative" line, Bulgakov's sophiology is also very much linked to the Trinitarian theology that he inherits from Church tradition. From a more contemporary point of view, which is to say our own, there are limitations to Bulgakov's sophiology in this respect; the same



Sergius Bulgakov

⁵ In keeping with his fundamental role as a "heart-medium," Florensky devotes the greatest number of pages in his chapter on Sophia to the Blessed Mary Mother of God, four to ten times as many as to the Church and to the Incarnate Word respectively.

⁶ One might conceive of this stage as associated with an experience of the "unity" of creation as described above. As we have seen, Florensky links this stage with the prophetic figure of Solovyov, among others. (A modern-day instance of a contemplated unity is provided by Bill Trusiewicz, in his remarkable essay, given below. Ed.)

may be said of Florensky on another (heart) level: their role as priests, faithful to the fundamental tenets of the Orthodox faith, from which they could not at some point divagate, would appear to have placed limits on what they could claim about the Sophia. This is especially clear where they refuse “Hypostatic” status to the Sophia, denying Her, that is, the status of a Person. Both are adamant in this respect; so Florensky: “Sophia is not a Hypostasis in the strict sense” (277), and Bulgakov: “Sophia ... , once more, is *not* a Hypostasis” (52). Only of the Trinity, each One among Whom is a Person or Hypostasis, could this be said. In spite of his formal declaration that the Sophia is not a Hypostasis, nevertheless Florensky comes close to making such a claim, for he speaks of Her in Her whole composite nature, at one point, as “a *fourth*, creaturely ... Person,” a fourth, that is, to the Trinity if “nonconsubstantial” with the Trinity (252), that is, distinct from Them because creaturely. Florensky otherwise speaks of the Sophia, citing Scriptural and patristic testimony, as “the Ideal Person of Creation” and “the Hypostatic System of the world-creating thoughts of God” (241). Bulgakov for his part would not open such troublesome doors, and he writes as if in reaction to the insinuation that he might be: “yet here is no ‘fourth Hypostasis;’ we do not transform the Holy Trinity into a quaternity” (55); “a ‘fourth hypostasis’? ... certainly not” (35)⁷. Yet Bulgakov too lands himself in suggestively ambiguous phrasing where he says, for example, that “the Divine Sophia ... can never exist without a hypostasis, but is eternally hypostasized” (79), although here Bulgakov would appear to mean that the Sophia acquires hypostatic identity only in relationship to each of the three Persons of the Trinity: in this sense only is She “capable of being hypostatized, in a given Hypostasis” (35). For Florensky “Sophia is not a Hypostasis,” and yet he fully understands why an idea of “wisdom *in abstracto*” (277) would be difficult to absorb, for “people do not live by abstractions” (278), and, consequently, “[o]ne began to seek concrete representations for Sophia” (278). In this way, as he shows, the Sophia came to be personified in the Incarnate Word, in the Mother of God, and in the Church.

One has the strong sense that both Florensky and Bulgakov might have been ready to confer the status of Person on the Sophia, but that both were finally held back by the constraints of theological dogma in their time as handed down over centuries within their own Church in which they were also priests. Might a comparable discretion in relation to generally held dogma in their day (to avoid a reactive backlash) have also constrained Rudolf Steiner as well as Valentin Tomberg from declaring on behalf of the Sophia in relation to the concept of a Person? As far as I know, nowhere either in Steiner or Tomberg is such a declaration ever made. On the other hand, nowhere do Steiner and Tomberg *deny* the concept of the Person to the Sophia, as Florensky and Bulgakov do quite formally. (Here the important distinction would need be observed between a “being,” which is how both Steiner and Tomberg refer to the Sophia, and a “person” — for a being is not necessarily a person.) Several kinds of problems obtrude themselves here. In the case of Florensky and Bulgakov, a limitation sets in where each stops short of seeing that the Sophia, like the Godhead, manifests in three separate guises *of her*

⁷ It would appear that Bulgakov was thought to heretically hold this view himself and was clearly setting the record straight. See

<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Traditional+Christian+marriage+as+an+expression+of+social+justice%3A+...-a0369062467>

own, according to our present-day concept of the *Trino-Sophia*. Perhaps if they had seen this, it would have been easier to attribute the concept of a Person to each of these three entities, as had been the case with the three aspects of the Godhead. As it was, seeing the Sophia as one thing, they found themselves confronted with the rather unwieldy concept of a “fourth” Person, and it must have seemed even to them strange, even outlandish, to place the Sophia as a fourth Person alongside the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In any case, everyone would have had to reckon with the burdensome authority of traditional dogma which had only ever spoken of Persons in connection with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the case of Steiner, the matter is complicated by the fact that he speaks for the most part of Sophia in her aspect as Divine Daughter⁸, and not of *the* Sophia in Her totality. Yet even Tomberg, who revived the understanding that the Sophia manifests as her own three distinct entities, did not feel he could speak openly of these as Persons.



To Valentin Tomberg we owe the additional insistence (supported, among other sources, by the Cabbala) that the Sophia reveals Herself, in fact, in Her three aspects as Divine Mother, Divine Daughter, and Holy Soul, in counterpoint to the three aspects of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (548 *passim*):

Holy Soul.....Divine Daughter.....Divine Mother

Tomberg called this entire complement of spiritual Powers working together “the luminous Trinity,” and although Tomberg strictly describes the Godhead as the “active” Trinity and the Sophia, in complement, as the “reactive” or “receptive” Trinity, he would appear to have conferred on all of these Powers the status of (relative) Equals. As Equals, they would all be also Persons, since the Godhead has always been conceived in terms of Persons.⁹ Rudolf Steiner had also pointed to the threefold aspect of the Sophia (without actually personifying these, as Tomberg does), as pictured of old in the ancient figure of Isis. This figure appears in her most far-reaching aspect—re: the Mother: “bearing a lion’s head” (99); in her second aspect—re: the Divine Daughter: “bear[ing] on her head the two familiar cow horns and wings of the hawk[; she] offers her child the ankh or cross of life”; in her third aspect—re: the Holy Soul: as “the figure of Isis with the Horus child at her breast”:

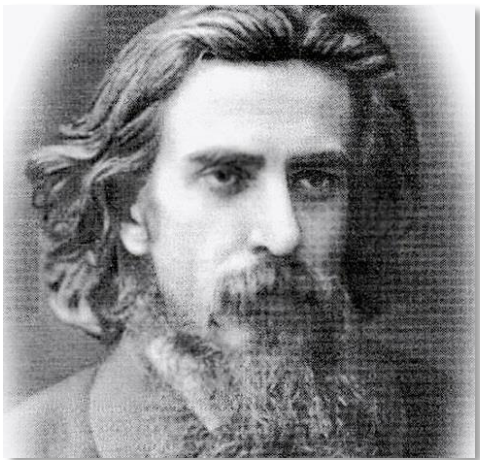
Thus behind the physical Mother of Life appears the spiritual Mother of Life; and behind her again the primal force of all life ... (100)

Tomberg had recast Florensky’s more abstract triad of ground/meaning/spirituality (see above) as Divine Mother/Divine Daughter/Holy Soul, and it is hard not to suppose from the latter terms the attribution of Hypostasis or Person in each case. Nevertheless it remained for Robert Powell in our time to proceed to speak openly of “the three *Persons* of the

⁸ See Powell, *The Most Holy Trinosophia*, p. 44.

⁹ Cf. Powell in his “Afterword” to Thomas Schipflinger’s *Sophia-Maria*, York Beach ME: Samuel Weiser, Inc, 1998: “It suffices to say that this perspective of the Sophianic Trinity offers a basis for Sophiology comparable in scope and grandeur to the Christian theological teaching of the Holy Trinity” (401).

Holy Trinosophia" (78) as She was now championed, in counterpoint to "the three Persons of the Trinity" (138) (the term "The Most Holy Trinosophia" originating, it would seem, with the Comte St. Germain). Even so, we are still far from *comprehending* the TrinoSophia as a set of Persons, and the work of further substantiation of Her nature along these lines must await, it would appear, a future time.¹⁰ In the meantime, it is hard to see how one could *not* be thinking of a Person when we hear it proclaimed today that "Sophia [the Divine Daughter] is coming"¹¹, or that the Divine Mother remains for the moment imprisoned in the depths of the Earth awaiting Her release¹², or that the Holy Soul as the *Shekinah* formerly "brought peace and



Solovyov

harmony into the community" (Powell 60-61) and that "she" continues to do so today, "overlighting" souls so that there comes to expression in them "the urge" towards "community based on karmic relationships" (78), relationships, that is to say, among fully developed "individuals," spiritually speaking (here persons, who have become conversant with the terms of their former lives). In the same way, it is hard to suppose that Solovyov thought of his Sophia (the Daughter, in this case) as anything other than as a Person when, at one point, She visits him to tell him that, for Her sake, he must be taking better care of himself (84), or when She dictates the

instruction he is passing on in his early (unpublished) philosophical dialogue entitled *The Sophia* (119ff). Then there are the famous poems in which Solovyov revisits, first, the moment in his youth when he actually saw Her: "You smiled before me full of radiant favor" (266), which was followed by another such moment when in Egypt: "You looked about, like the first radiance/Of creation's universal day of days" (270). Solovyov was certain that he had had the experience of Sophia Herself and not the Blessed Virgin Mary in whom, it had been said for so long, She had manifested. It was Solovyov's special claim that what he had to offer about Sophia (the Daughter) was indeed what he calls a "positive content"¹³ and not merely some general inclination of sympathy towards Her such as he was ready to acknowledge of his

¹⁰ Among other things, it remains often a challenging matter to distinguish one aspect of the Sophia from another, and we are not always so clear as to which we are speaking of when we refer to "Sophia" (without the article), especially as we refer to the Divine Daughter as Sophia (hence my proposal that we use *the Sophia* when speaking of the TrinoSophia by analogy with *the Godhead*). To complicate matters further, it would seem to be impossible, at some point, to separate any one aspect of the Sophia from the other two, as I show in my recent article "The Riddle of the Sophia," in the Easter/Pentecost 2017 issue of *Starlight*. This raises the spectre of potential (luciferic) aberration where we appear to be devoting ourselves so emphatically, almost exclusively, to Sophia the Daughter, as is often the case today.

¹¹ By Estelle Isaacson in *The Mystery of Sophia*, Great Barrington MA: SteinerBooks, 2014, p. 3.

¹² In *The Mystery of Sophia* we are assured by Estelle Isaacson that, yet, "[t]he Divine Mother can be unbound" by "specific individuals who are willing to descend—to find Her" (5).

¹³ Cited by Florensky in *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, p. 240, my source also for the point about "theosophy" below.

forbears who yet had not proceeded really to know Her for Herself.¹⁴ By “positive content” Solovyov would appear to have meant a concept of the Sophia as a living Person and all that followed from this philosophically, as opposed to the vague “theosophy” with which Solovyov’s associates in Sophianic experience had conveniently surrounded Her. No doubt Solovyov should figure prominently if not pre-eminently in any future enterprise that would more fully establish the Person that is represented in the case of each of the Sophia’s trinitarian aspects. At that time, a truly representative *sophiology*, as distinct from a Sophianic experience that is already highly developed even today, will *also* have come into its own alongside that experience, which will have become in this way a more fully conscious experience (at that time, it is the experience itself that will have given birth to the sophiology).

The point will be made that in any case *Proverbs* 8, especially, clearly presents Sophia as a Person, for what sort of being other than a Person would be able to speak in the first person? (“I was set up from everlasting” etc)? Yet the import of this text (as well as other texts) is not so easily determined. Consider, for example, how Bulgakov treats this text from *Proverbs*. He concludes from it that the figure of Wisdom which it presents is “somehow divine and quasi-hypostatic, *though not a person*” (26, italics mine); Wisdom, for Bulgakov, is rather a “principle” (26) which has here been “personified” (27).¹⁵ And, indeed, structurally speaking the famous passage from *Proverbs* (8.22-31) *could* be read as simply Solomon’s own dramatization of the nature of Wisdom: the chapter begins with Solomon speaking of Wisdom “crying at the gates,” and he then goes on to dramatize Wisdom speaking, *making* of Wisdom a person who speaks, as a dramatist might: making of Her, that is, a *dramatis persona* of his own profound imagining. Bulgakov conceives of this figure of Wisdom as, in fact, God’s own substantial nature, quite strictly—the substance or *ousia* in which He has His being. Not simply “a quality or attribute” of God, “Ousia-Sophia is distinct from the hypostases [distinct, that is, from the three Persons of the Trinity],” but at the same time “it [Ousia-Sophia] cannot exist apart from them and is eternally hypostatized in them” (34)—note, here, Bulgakov’s consistent use of the impersonal pronoun “it” in referring to this entity (as opposed to “she”). Bulgakov thus concludes that “Ousia-Sophia is the life of a hypostatic spirit, though not itself hypostatic” (34).¹⁶

One might turn also to a passage from Tomberg from his *Meditations on the Tarot* (279-280) where he glosses the same excerpt from *Proverbs* thus: “Co-creatix, Co-redemptrix, Co-

¹⁴ Solovyov exempts only three figures from this judgment: “Paracelsus, Boehme, and Swedenborg.” Florensky and Bulgakov came after Solovyov.

¹⁵ The same quibble could be brought to bear on the use of “she” when Sophia is referred to: namely, that “she” is merely a personification, relating to the fact that “Sophia” represents a feminine principle of being. It will especially pique us to learn that the famous expert in Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem, claimed that the feminine form (and name) of Sophia stems, in fact, from a mere accident of Hebrew grammar, thus denying any feminine nature to *Chokmah*: “The feminine names for Wisdom, which can be quite simply explained as resulting from the feminine gender of the corresponding nouns in Hebrew and Greek, cannot ultimately be cited as proof of the female character of the figure itself:” *On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, New York: Schocken Books, 1991, p. 143.

¹⁶ Cf. Scholem, *On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, p. 142: “One needs to undergo considerable convolutions in order to interpret ... the descriptions of Wisdom, or Sophia, in chapters 1 through 10 of *Proverbs* ... as a hypostasis bearing a divine character.”

sanctificatrix [this series being with reference to the three Persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] *Virgo, Mater, Regina* ... this formula summarizes the thoughts relating to the *principle of virginity*" (279, italics mine). Tomberg goes on, indeed, to consider that "principles do not exist separately from the beings who incarnate and manifest them," but in the case of Sophia the "principle" only becomes a "person" in Mary: "the reality of the principle of the Divine is God; the reality of the principle of the Divine Word is Jesus Christ; and the reality of the principle of fertile and productive virginity is Mary-Sophia." In Tomberg the concept of the person has even shifted away from the members of the Trinity in their own nature to the human reality in which they are finally conceived (as "God" and as Jesus Christ, as well as Mary.) We find this same characteristic emphasis in yet another passage from the *Meditations* (549): "The weeping Lady of Salette ... differs from the *Shekinah* of the visions of the Cabbalists and Hassidim in that she is not the personification of a principle, i.e., she is not solely an *aspect* of the Divine [cf. Bulgakov], but rather is a human person who existed in the flesh at the bosom of the visible community of Israel twenty centuries ago ... [S]o did the *Bath-Kol*, the 'Daughter of the Voice,' become flesh in Mary-Sophia. The Church worships her as the Virgin, as the Mother, and as the celestial Queen, corresponding to the Mother, the Daughter, and the 'Virgin of Israel' of the Cabbala, and to the Sophianic Trinity—Mother, Daughter, and Holy Soul—mentioned above." As for the distinctive sense in which Mother, Daughter, and Holy Soul can themselves be said to constitute Persons, such an advanced sophiology has yet to take full shape here and may still be far from taking shape while our experience of the Sophia has yet to develop more fully, however intense this experience may be at the moment.

Robert Powell¹⁷ has conveniently summarized an important evolution in Tomberg's communications about the Sophia, although he notes, at the same time, a significant reticence in Tomberg's formulations, at every stage:

Tomberg's teaching of the Divine Feminine Trinity, definitely in its later formulation (and perhaps also in its original formulation), does in fact expand upon the traditional teaching of the Trinity, and this is a very much needed expansion—if we are to truly grasp the Divine Feminine. This extension/expansion is to be found implicitly in chapter 19 of Meditations on the Tarot [which I quote from, above, p. 548 passim] and is most evident and explicit in chapter 7 of part II of Lazarus, Come Forth [former title: Covenant of the Heart]. Here Tomberg, drawing upon the Cabbala, writes of the Eternal Mother alongside the Eternal Father, and also gives some other indications which are key, evidently representing a "Sophia as Person" standpoint—rather than the "Sophia as Being" standpoint. The question as to which standpoint was originally represented by Tomberg [in The Lord's Prayer Course] has to be left open.¹⁸ It is quite possible, though, that this original depiction might actually be a "Sophia in Person" perspective, without explicitly being put forward as such. On the other hand, it is probably fair to say that there was an evolution from Tomberg's early perspective concerning the threefold Divine Feminine from

¹⁷ In a personal communication to me, responding to my query about this issue.

¹⁸ Powell notes that Tomberg here refers to Sophia as "'the unity in consciousness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit', speaking of Sophia-Eve [the Mother] as an *aspect* of the Father, of Sophia [the Daughter] as an *aspect* of the Son, and of Sophia Achamoth [the Holy Soul] as an *aspect* of the Holy Spirit." See *The Course on the Lord's Prayer*, Volume II, ed., Catharina Barker et al. (Hirtengärten, Germany: Tomberg Books Achamoth, 2015), pp. 19-21.

this original reference to what he later presents in chapter 19 of Meditations on the Tarot and in chapter 7 of part II of Lazarus, Come Forth. Clearly, though, Tomberg did not want to be seen as in any way contradicting the traditional teaching of the Trinity in Christian theology, and so he did not undertake much of an elaboration regarding the philosophical and theological consequences of his introduction of the profoundly significant teaching of the Mother, Daughter, and Holy Soul as the Divine Feminine counterparts to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Indeed even when Tomberg comes closest to declaring himself fully on behalf of “Sophia as Person,” he feels he must hedge his view in the form of a question (admittedly a rhetorical one):

If all fatherhood has its origin and foundation in God, if therefore father love essentially corresponds to the love of God the Father as all Christians believe ... one cannot leave aside the question as to whether motherhood and, correspondingly, mother love also have their foundation and origin in the Godhead. Or ought one to deny that mother love is rooted in the divine and has its archetype in the divine ... ?¹⁹

Tomberg otherwise cites the Cabbala as maintaining this very view: “the traditional teaching of the Cabbala ... acknowledges that father love and mother love are of the same divine origin and worth.”²⁰ However, even in this late expression, Tomberg’s declaration does not go farther than this. In the meantime, the evolution in Tomberg’s presentation has gone from the Sophia as a feminine aspect or principle of the divine (in *The Course on the Lord’s Prayer*, see n.17) to its ideal embodiment in a human person (Mary, in *Meditations*) to a more open (if still periphrastic) appeal on behalf of the idea of the divine origin of the feminine principle itself (in *Lazarus, Come Forth*). Clearly far more was meant to come from this profound, seminal presentation.

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¹⁹ See *Lazarus Come Forth*, p. 203.

²⁰ *Lazarus*, p. 206.

The Revelation of the Threefold Divine Sophia As Key to Meeting Christ in the Etheric

Bill Trusiewicz

*The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way...
When he prepared the Heavens I was there
When he gave the sea his decree,
that it should not pass his commandment:
When he appointed the foundations of the earth:
Then I was with him...*

Wisdom's Speech

Old Testament: Proverbs 8

In this essay we will begin to explore the Threefold Divine Sophia, a topic that seems to us to have an unlimited scope for exploration, as a key to meeting Christ in the etheric sphere of the Earth where human beings in our time can find their most intrinsic nature mirrored – as illumination from above alights on the virgin soul within. In an earlier article¹ we looked at the revelation of the divine feminine being of Isis/Sophia “hidden behind” Rudolf Steiner’s Foundation Stone Meditation, the text of which speaks ostensibly of the spiritual foundations of the human being discoverable in the masculine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In that study we hinted at the threefold nature of Sophia when we looked at one of the fundamental edicts of ancient Egyptian mystery schools inscribed beneath the veiled statue of Isis at Sais: “I am the All: I am the Past, Present, and Future, no mortal can lift my veil.” We also considered the “Great Portent” revealed to St. John, recorded in chapter twelve of his Revelations, a woman who has a threefold constitution: the moon under her feet, the sun illuminating her body and her head crowned with twelve stars. In this essay we will explicitly address ourselves to the threefold nature of the Divine Sophia as a basis for a direct experience of her and the Christ as they appear in our time, in the life-body of the Earth.

Preliminary to our examination of the threefold Divine Sophia and essential to it, let something be understood, which needs to be addressed in our time. We can no longer expect to arrive at truth without recognizing that nothing in life can be addressed properly without taking duality into account. One-sidedness will not do. There is a duality that exists in nature and in every aspect of life that can no longer be ignored. Everything that has existence necessarily has a counterpart. Nothing exists in itself by itself. Rudolf Steiner said it like this: “Everywhere in life we find duality [...] The pupil must make it his duty to think in terms of these dualities [...] never think in terms of single aspects only [...] When humanity learns to

¹ That article is titled: *The Foundation Stone Meditation as the Being of Isis/Sophia: Some Results from Working with The Foundation Stone Meditation*. It can be found in an earlier issue of *Starlight*, Advent 2017, and at: <https://independent.academia.edu/BillTrusiewicz>

think in dualities, thinking will be factually correct and in accordance with reality.”² We mention this here, noting that this is a subject that deserves more attention, at the very least an article dedicated to it, but more, because we want in this study—to think “in accordance with reality.” To think in accordance with reality we must, of all things, think of the reality of duality when dealing with divine spiritual beings.

One duality that we would do well to take into account is the relationship between masculine and feminine Divine beings. For instance, the divine beings of the hierarchies and the Godhead have counterparts; they have what we might call *consorts*. The early Christians who became known as Gnostics, who wrote the so-called Gnostic Gospels, were among those who recognized this reality and used this terminology. With the recognition of this truth we can ascertain that the Threefold Divine Sophia properly deserves to be placed alongside the Holy Trinity—or more, as a triangle, united with the triangle of the Trinity (see figure 1). This is not a

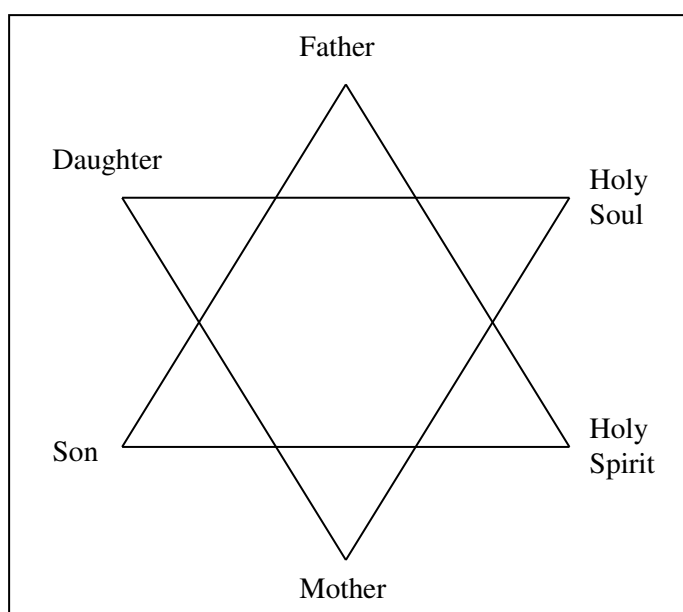


Figure 1. Luminous Holy Trinity or Six-in-One Divine Hexadity

new idea but one that we will emphasize here. When we put the two triangles together we get the Divine “Six in One” or “Hexadity” also referred to as the “Luminous Holy Trinity,” to borrow terms from the Russian mystic / philosopher / hermeticist Valentin Tomberg. What we thus create is a picture of the unity of the Masculine Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with the Feminine Holy Trinity of Mother, Daughter, and Holy Soul. The consort of the Father is the Mother, the consort of Christ is Sophia, the consort of the Holy Spirit is the Holy Soul. These two Trinities act as One; all of their activity is cooperative.

It is imperative that we begin to think in these terms, to observe and recognize this higher reality. If we ourselves are to meet Christ in the etheric, to be united with him, we must know what it means for the Sophia to be “the bride of Christ,” to be *his* consort. So meeting Christ in the etheric means we meet Sophia; in a certain sense we become Sophia, we discover our inner Wisdom—the teacher within. Besides this, we connect with the Father and the Holy Spirit.³ And consequently we also are united with the Mother and the Holy Soul. These are not abstractions or metaphors. They are actual beings with whom we can enjoy a relationship—we can know them in reality.

Our time is a particularly spiritual time, a period under the Rulership of the Archangel Michael. We are also in the Age of Pisces, the Fishes, Ichthyos being the symbol of Christ and

² GA 89 Berlin, April 3, 1905.

³ For more, see Rudolf Steiner on the three meetings each person can have with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: *Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses*. Blauvert NY: Spiritual Research Editions, 1989, pp. 25-28.

water representing the etheric world in which humanity “swims.”⁴ The possibility for human beings in our time to connect to the spiritual world in full consciousness is unprecedented. And a threshold experience, a spiritual initiation, is becoming more and more a possibility and also more a necessity, to overcome the evils of our time. Not just those seeking the spirit but humanity as a whole is being drawn further and further across the threshold of the spiritual world. For those who are wholly given up to external life, in which a conscious meeting with Christ hasn’t occurred, the human connection to external life, to the sense-perceptible physical world, is changing. External life as we knew it was ordered according to spiritual laws, which no longer hold. As a result more chaotic conditions are rapidly approaching.

This is the result of realities reflected, for example, in the fact that, as a person crosses the threshold, the three members of his or her soul, the thinking, feeling, and willing faculties become independent since they are no longer bound to the physical body. Spiritual science calls this the “splitting of the personality.” Today we are in a transitional period, in which the physical body is losing its ability to bind the human soul together in such a way that patterns of behavior are predictable and orderly (even if not without a chaotic character, which results from a largely uncultivated soul life). The new natural clairvoyance one sees more and more today is the result of an expansion of the etheric body beyond conformity to the physical body. This condition of expanded etheric form, which in the past was the result of either atavistically lagging behind in development, or advanced spiritual development, is beginning to become a normal state for human souls with the result that, especially in those who have not awakened their higher I, a more chaotic condition ensues than when the etheric body remained in conformity with the physical body. This is what it means when we say that humanity *in general* is crossing the threshold in our time.

Briefly, to reiterate: today the three members of soul—thinking, feeling, and willing—are no longer exclusively under the influence of our bodily organization, with the limited modicum of order that condition provided hitherto. Spiritual forces and beings can now inhabit the human etheric body and gain control of it. Therefore one sees an increase of activity in an unconscious flow of will impulses, emotions, and thoughts, which is one of the reasons we witness such bizarre behavior every day in the news. In keeping with our commitment to “think in dualities,” we note here also that, while the dark unconscious forces are at work in humanity, other forces in the Earth, good, pure forces from Shambhala, the Mother Lodge, are also becoming available to those who find the grace to gain access to them. Fortunately, the good powers who guide the spiritual evolution of humanity have provided what is necessary to meet the chaos coming into the world. For a problem that is threefold, the “splitting of the personality” into three distinct and disordered members, the remedy is found in the Threefold Divine Sophia whose aptitude, if I may use a prosaic term, is precisely in harmonizing and uniting disparate parts. While the Archangel Michael, through the Christ Power, illuminates each of the soul members individually through the Spirit, the work of harmonizing and unifying the soul is the work of the Divine Sophia. Just as the human male provides the seed to

⁴ For a further elaboration of this topic, look for another article by the present author entitled: *The Path from Pisces to Aquarius: As Key to Meeting Christ in the Etheric, A Modern Reading of the Stellar Script*.

father three children, for instance, it is the female who gives birth and is the primary care-giver who is specially equipped to provide nourishment and the motherly qualities that are essential for a healthy unified family life.

To further this discourse, it will serve us well to begin by examining this article's epigraph, which was taken from the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, referred to by Christians as the Old Testament, in an effort to awaken memories deep within us. We are seeking that inner resonance to confirm the subtle inner wisdom imprinted in our souls. Wisdom (Sophia) is speaking here:

*When He prepared the heavens, I was there...
When He set for the sea its boundary...
When He marked out the foundation of the earth...
Then I was beside Him...⁵*

Sophia was there when God "prepared the heavens...set for the sea its boundary...marked out the foundation of the earth..." Here we can take the wisdom of the writer (King Solomon) as a step in confirming our Divine Hexadity, our Luminous Holy Trinity, seeing how this work was done collaboratively with both the divine masculine and feminine taking part. Beyond this basic recognition of cooperation, in order to understand this text in any significant way we need to forget our usual method of thinking. We need to enter into the original writer's thoughts which, despite modern criticisms of the mode of consciousness of those times, were luminous with a deep wisdom of nature and humanity. If we review what we know of human consciousness during this period and into later times, we will recognize that to people of that era, the sky, the sea, and the earth were not merely physical bodies with different properties as they are generally thought to be today – they were populated by spiritual beings. In other words, to the Greek for instance Uranus was the "sky god" who fathered Zeus whose outstanding characteristic was intelligence – thinking. The sea was ruled by Oceanus the oldest son of Uranus and Gaia while the later generation brought forth Poseidon, known as Neptune by the Romans, whose power was as the sea surges with passion. The Earth goddess was Gaia or Demeter – stalwart givers of life and promoters of growth. And Hades, god of the underworld was perceived as the darker side of earth. To perceive these mythological personages as realities, in the primeval past, was only "logical" or "common sense," as we would say today. In later times, when it was no longer common knowledge, the memory of former times was imparted by initiates in the form of the myths we know today.

Notable above is the difference between Solomon's account of Wisdom (Sophia) working beside God and that of the other world religions given from a non-Semitic world view. From the Hebrew/Judaic perspective it was of the highest significance that the Godhead be recognized as a unitary being – what became known as a "mono-theistic" point of view. If this had not been the case and did not prevail into modern times, the possibility of humanity uniting with higher worlds to achieve god-manhood through the god-man Christ Jesus, would have been prevented. The independence and discord seen between the three categories of gods mentioned would never have resolved the division and conflict in the human soul among

⁵ Holy Bible, Proverbs 8:27-30.

thinking, feeling, and willing. The disharmony seen amidst the pantheon of gods was a dramatic picture of the disharmony among the three members of the human soul. From the Judaic perspective there was no plurality of Zeus, Poseidon, and Demeter, for instance. There was simply God and his consort Sophia; the masculine Father God with a threefold nature was not yet explicitly delineated but presented as a unitary being with different attributes and roles, the explication of which would fall eventually to theological exegesis.

This development of the idea of the unitary godhead was coincident with the shrinking of the etheric body into conformity with the human head beginning with Abraham, the father of the Semitic peoples, where thought as an independent human faculty commenced development and what we now call atavistic clairvoyance was eclipsed. This condition in Abraham was far in advance of the rest of humanity. One result, of great consequence, was that the feminine divine was subsequently submerged for the most part, with feminine attributes subsumed in the masculine Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This was necessary for a time to develop human individuality and to master the physical world. The salient point here is that a triple *UNITY* was established in and referred to the pre-eminence of the Father God and Wisdom his consort.

Returning to our Old Testament verses we quoted, what we want to see here is that Sophia “was beside Him” as an active participant in the foundation and continuation of the natural world in a threefold way that relates directly to us. How this relates to us has to do with our ability in modern times, with different faculties than our ancestors, to perceive again, as the initiates of old—the soul of nature. When we say that Christ is present “in the etheric” we mean *in nature*—in the living natural world around us, within which “we live and move and have our being,” to echo St. Paul.

It is important to realize that the forces that were developed after Father Abraham, the forces to perceive unity in the cosmos, the same forces that caused the Divine Feminine to be submerged and hidden, with consciousness of the spiritual world eclipsed by intellectuality, would be resurrected to re-establish the Divine Feminine. These forces concentrated in the head of the human being also make it possible for human beings, independently and in freedom, to re-gain a clear and fully conscious connection to the spiritual world. An outer masculine approach to life that over-emphasizes knowledge of the material world over the spiritual world had to prevail for a time over a feminine and inward consciousness, which was a clairvoyant consciousness. So clairvoyance grew dimmer and dimmer until it was expunged. Today these forces have now achieved enough strength to penetrate the inner nature of things, no longer by instinctive means, given by the spiritual world as a shadowy clairvoyance, but out of the strength of the inner being of a humanity that is rising to a clarified I consciousness through the Christ impulse. The old clairvoyance has given way to clear, waking consciousness of the spiritual world.

How will this manifest? And how does it relate to our meeting Christ in the etheric? We need to know how it will manifest since we need an outer mirror to become conscious of our inner experience, which otherwise remains as a willing-feeling experience that is dimly felt as faith—being largely unconscious. We need to raise our faith to gnosis or living knowledge.

The new natural clairvoyance that we can experience is made possible on the basis of two requirements: the etheric body must expand beyond the confines of the human head and secondly, the strengthened I forces must enter the etheric sphere surrounding the body. Not to worry that one's etheric body may not reach out beyond the head: one need only practice brain-free thinking. Brain-free thinking occurs when we think spiritual thoughts, that is thoughts that mirror the structure of the spiritual world and are not just a mirror of the ordinary, physical, sense-perceptible world. We can only truly think spiritual thoughts outside of the physical apparatus of the brain, so the practice of brain-free thinking actually expands the etheric body. It is possible today to move one's attention, which is to say one's higher I consciousness, back and forth between the brain and the etheric world uniting the above and the below, the inner and the outer, the feminine and the masculine. This is what Jesus of the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas said one must do in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female...then you will enter [the Kingdom].⁶



Figure 2. *The Three Marys at the Tomb*, by Mikolaj Haberschrack

Before we directly address the question of meeting Christ in the etheric, it will serve us well to anchor our discussion of the Divine Sophia in her threefoldness with a further elaboration from Tradition, from Art, and from the Foundation Stone Meditation of Rudolf Steiner.

There is a very interesting and telling tradition among Catholic Christians mostly of Spanish origin, which is observed in Good Friday parades called *Penitencia* celebrating the three Marys (*Tres Marias*) present at the tomb of Jesus. In these Good Friday processions, the first Mary is holding a *broom*, the second Mary is holding a *censer* or *thurible*, and the third is holding an *alabaster jar*. In this we see folk wisdom at its best, the kind of wisdom seen in the shepherds in the Gospel of Luke who heard the angelic choir and the announcement of the birth of the Messiah. The three Marys express the three aspects of the Triune Divine Feminine. The

broom represents the earthly; the thurible with burning incense rising stands for the heavenly; and the alabaster jar symbolizes that which mediates between the heavenly and the earthly—constituted as it is, of alabaster, a translucent stone from the earth and ointment representing the Christ, who is both the “balm of Gilead” and the Messiah or “anointed One.” We are speaking here of the Mother, the Daughter, and the Holy Soul that mediates between the two.

⁶ “Gospel of Thomas”, 22, p. 129, from *The Nag Hammadi Library*, Ed. James M. Robinson, Third revised edition. San Francisco: Harper, 1978.

Countless representations of The Three Marys exist in early Christian art such as that painted by Mikolaj Haberschrack (see figure 2). But, I would like to present my readers something more unusual and enigmatic, that will lead us into a deeper consideration. The painting, *Pythagoras Venus* (see figure 3) was painted by an artist who devoted most of his life to figurative studies, largely of women, by themselves and in social settings. He was intensely interested in what we might call the “power of the feminine,” which often exhibits in purity, authenticity, and vulnerability—without effort. The painting is by the deceased Portland Oregon-based artist Mike Russo (1909-2004). The artist was not religious or spiritual in any ordinary sense but sustained an intense intellectual interest full of questions about what he keenly observed in the external world of the feminine and the power it yields, has yielded, and will yield in that world, to which he brought a great deal of warmth.

A word about Pythagoras before we continue. Pythagoras was known to be sympathetic to women, but I think also he venerated women. He is credited with discovering the planet Venus, identifying it with what was formerly thought to be two different stars—one a morning and the other an evening star. He called Venus the “Sol alter,” the *other Sun*, and he took for the symbol of his order the five-pointed star which is called “The Pentagram of Venus” since Venus inscribes such a pentagram every eight earth-years in its journey around the Sun.

In the painting *Pythagoras Venus* are five women, easily placed in a pentagram or pentagon shape—already very significant. In the upper left is what appears to be a woman from at least pre-industrial times, perhaps even ancient times, carrying a pot on her head and dressed as of old. The dark background, from which she appears to be emerging speaks of an obscure past, as if she is lingering on the threshold of a new world that opens up around her—forward and to our right. And she alone is leaning toward and perhaps reaching into the past (her right hand reaching to our left), while the other four women are leaning or moving to the right (the future). The left-right, past-future orientation will be further substantiated as we continue. Three of the four other women are modern, one wearing pants and two others skirts.

The fifth, central and largest figure, naked and with her left arm missing (perhaps suggestive of the wounding of the Divine Feminine), appears to be a statue, evoking the timeless (the Eternal Feminine), with a large globe on her shoulder reminiscent of Atlas holding the globe of the world on his shoulder—hardly mistakable as “The Universal Woman.” The picture plane appears as something of a tableau when read from left to right: a progression of time—out of the past—into the future. The rightmost figure has a Vesica Pisces resting on top of her head (again a Pythagorean motif), replete with the fishes’ tail on a blue, perhaps water background.



Figure 3. *Pythagoras Venus*, by Michele (Mike) Russo

Are we not here rendering the Piscean Age emerging out of a remote past with the Ichthyus reaching into the future age of The Waterman?

The topmost quarter of the painting (delineated by the black and blue backgrounds) contains three heads from left to right. The first, the female representative of antiquity, has a funnel shaped vessel on her head. Perhaps I am stretching the simile but it is hard to resist the observation that it depicts the atavistic streaming in of spiritual content from above that was experienced in earlier ages. This leading to the right (and out of the past) brings us through the

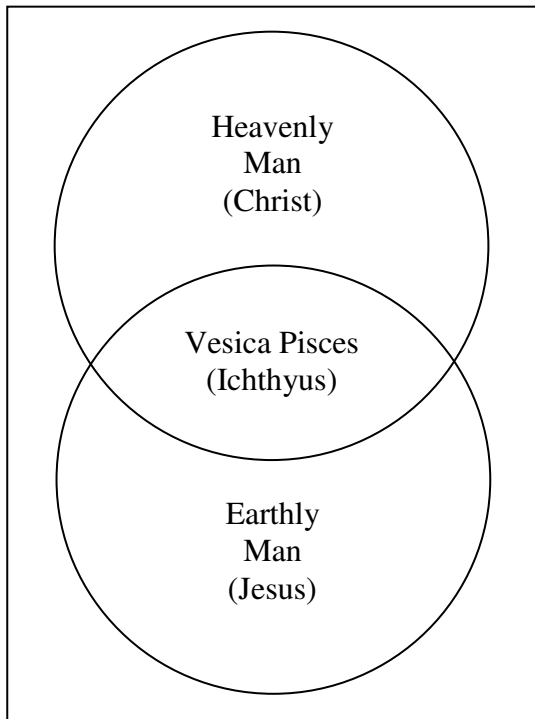


Figure 4. The Vesica Pisces as the union of the heavenly and earthly man

second head—that of the universal woman, which leads further into the future with the modern/future head (far right). This third woman is depicted, not with the “funneling in” of forces of thinking from above, but with the Ichthyus contained on her head, indicating the possibility of thinking that has been freed from the physical body by the Christ—the “fisher of men.” The Ichthyus (also called Vesica Pisces, for its fish-shape) is a figure that is made when two circles overlap (see figure 4). This lens-shaped figure is symbolic of the coming together of the heavenly sphere and the earthly sphere, aptly describing a consciousness derived from the incarnation of the God-man, Christ Jesus.

The abstract background of our painting is divided horizontally opening up to the right and coming forward toward us. In it one finds three vessels—one carried on the head of the figure from antiquity and what looks like an ancient bowl at her feet. We see also in the foreground what looks like a

pail—vessels being symbols of the feminine. The farthest back space (black background) seems to intimate an obscure past, as mentioned, but now we notice in relation to it, the Earth Globe emerging, as it were, out of the past into the present. And what of this globe—on the shoulder of the central figure? Is Earth somehow in transition as seems to be indicated by the black left-half and blue right-half background of the globe? And is that transition somehow on the shoulder(s) of women or should we say the Feminine, the timeless or universal female, intimated in the painting’s title with the word *Venus*?

We have examined this painting to evoke, through artistic feeling, the central place of the Feminine Divine in the arc of history going back into antiquity and reaching forward beyond our own era. In it we find something that calls to mind both the old and the new mysteries. “I am the All, I am the Past, Present, and Future, no mortal can lift my veil.” And the modern: “I am the Human Being, I am the Past, Present, and Future, every mortal should lift my veil.” This, the central dictum of the mysteries, spoken by Isis/Sophia, was made known in Sais of ancient Egypt but is more than relevant today in its new form. Our considerations should give us a richer feeling for the metamorphosis of human consciousness through

pictorial means—and a sense of the progression of time from past, to present, to future, which we will now consider further as a means to deepen our understanding of the Divine Sophia in connection with nature.

This consideration of time, the panorama or tableau of time we have been discussing, is not something we can glance over lightly, as we might recall it is among the first things that appear when crossing the threshold of the spiritual world. We must stand before this tableau if we would be initiated into the mysteries of our time. Did you ever wonder why it is, in the old mysteries, that time alone is mentioned as a description of “the All?” As if Time, the Past, Present, and Future, in the abstract manner it is considered today, could be representative of “the All?” Since containers are symbolic or representative of the feminine, it shouldn’t be surprising for Isis/Sophia to speak of Time encompassing or containing “the All.” Let us further consider this important *threefoldness* of time.

Contained within the threefold “All” of past, present, and future, the great epochs of development of the human being take place. Through Old Saturn, Old Sun, Old Moon, and Earth, the last of which is incomplete, the four members of the human being come into being: the physical body, the etheric body, the astral body and the as yet not fully developed ego. What emerged during the Old Saturn, Old Sun, Old Moon, and Earth periods is: fire, air, water, and earth. What also emerged during those epochs was the mineral Kingdom, the plant Kingdom, the animal Kingdom, and the Human Kingdom. During those same periods the foundations for willing, feeling, and thinking were laid, where also the foundations for our limbs system, rhythmic system, and nervous system were formed. And when we gaze out into the universe on a dark night we can see in the Moon encircling the Earth, the Sun with her planets, and further still the circle of the Zodiac around us—if we can take it all in, we will be seeing the actual being of Sophia. We recount all this to bring to mind the manifold world of nature in which we live every day, which we cannot but take for granted. All this that is spread out before us has taken eons of time to unfold in its complexity and beauty.

This “All” contained within Time, and discernible in the world around us, is explored in a unique and powerful way through the mantric verses of the Foundation Stone Meditation of Rudolf Steiner. Beyond the obvious allusion to past, present, and future in the first three stanzas, with references to “spirit recollecting” (the past), “spirit awareness” (the present), and “spirit beholding” (the future), there are other subtle references to Sophia in her threefoldness. Immediately following each “spirit” activity is mentioned a “soul” grounding: “In depths of soul,” “In balance of soul,” and “In stillness of thought.” These three describe Sophianic spheres of activity, which are further elaborated three verses below in each stanza with: “In Depths of Worlds Begetting Being,” “In Rhythms of Worlds Bestowing Grace,” and “In Beings of Worlds Beseeking Light.” Meditating on these words in their context will clearly reveal the activity and power of the feminine divine working in *Soul* in a threefold manner—in collaboration WITH the threefold masculine *Spirit*.

In the modern mysteries we are able to see, not only the past incarnations of the Earth (Old Saturn, Old Sun, and Old Moon), but the future stretching out into the sixth and seventh cultural epochs of Earth existence, following our present fifth. We can see three greater epochs

following and beyond that a period of rest (called pralaya) and then the greater planetary stages (reincarnations of Earth) called Jupiter and Venus, with all of their own interims or pralayas, and finally Vulcan. These each play out with their ramifications in 343 (7x7x7) epochs of time. Seeing this as an initiate, we engage with those vast ages of time, not as a remote and hardly relevant past or as a dark and uncertain future, but as a present reality — knowing the substance (in seed form) of each of those great epochs, which are further reincarnations of Earth. With etheric vision we become partakers in the eternal — we lift the veil of “The Past, The Present, and The Future.”

We have thus far mentioned the pantheon of gods seen in Mythology for instance, who are often at odds with one another, but we have concentrated, for the most part, on the various aspects of the unitary Divine Sophia as they express themselves in the spiritual, soul, and physical worlds seen from the etheric world — from the Abrahamic perspective we might say. We should also examine what Goethe, the German writer, scientist-phenomenologist and statesman can contribute to our study of the Threefold Sophia, in his literary representations of “Mother” manifestations in the astral world. Well known is his reference to “The Mothers” in *Faust II*, in which Faust stamps on the ground gripping a magical key in hand and sinks to “the Mothers,” where he finds three Mothers seated on golden tripods. Here is what Rudolf Steiner says about Faust’s Three Mothers: “Out of the trinity of thinking, feeling, and willing, which is still astral, the humanity portrayed in Faust is striving upward toward the threefoldness of the Ever-Feminine.”⁷ And from an historically earlier period than Faust, again from the perspective of the astral world, he tells us, as well, that there are not one but three Mothers represented in Egyptian religious art: the first is the figure of Isis with the Horus child at her breast; the second, of greater antiquity, bears on her head two horns and the wings of a hawk; the third, of the greatest antiquity, is Isis bearing a lions head. These three in fact represent the threefold nature of the human being, Steiner says: “our human soul bears in it three natures — a will nature at the inmost depths of the being, a feeling nature, and a wisdom nature. These are the three soul Mothers we meet in the three figures of the Egyptian Isis.”⁸

Thus far we have focused on identifying the divisions that can be found in various wisdom streams in order to better understand the trinitary nature of the Divine Sophia and show how manifold and intimate are the threads being woven into us and the world we live in through her. In so doing we have also identified the disjointed nature, the chaotic elements, that exist as a result of these divisions of soul. We have only hinted at the solution that can come in our time from the Divine Feminine — “who unites all,” to borrow a phrase from the Russian polymath Pavel Florensky. Let us attempt now to bring all the divergent elements into a unity.

Reviewing all that we have brought before our souls, we can realize that all the divisions, which are the cause of strife and chaos in the world and the human soul, have their origin and expression in and through the divisions in the human soul, between thought, sense,

⁷ See *Anthroposophy in the Light of Goethe’s ‘Faust’*, from the collected works of Rudolf Steiner, SteinerBooks, 2014, p. 207.

⁸ See *Isis Mary Sophia: Her Mission and Ours*, Great Barrington MA: SteinerBooks, 2003, p. 99.

and volition. This division, as we have seen, is particularly striking in the way it is expressed in pre-Christian, non-Judaic cultures—through the various disputing and warring gods. The reason for this can be shown to be that the primary source of guidance from the spiritual world, of these particular cultures, was from the astral world. The spiritual research of Rudolf Steiner has shown, for instance, that Hermes, the great inspirer to Egyptian culture received the highly developed *astral* body of Zarathustra, while Moses received his *etheric* body. We know that Polytheism was dominant in the non-Semitic worlds, largely through Hermes, while Monotheism grew out of the Judaic tradition of Moses. We know that picture consciousness dominated in those cultures that developed out of what could be derived from of the astral body of Zarathustra. And that through Moses the Jews were forbidden to make images; they needed to cultivate a more abstract, intellectual consciousness inspired from the etheric—from the Sun Sphere, the realm of the Spirits of Form. The Egyptians and those who followed were guided through imagination from the Moon Sphere—the sphere of the Angels.

We have here a picture, in the Judaic tradition, of a unitary Godhead as opposed to a divided, plurality of gods resulting from different spheres of influence in the spiritual world. Out of the unitary inspiration came the concept of God as a *tri-unity*; and Wisdom, having three constituents, appeared also as one being. The leading thought here is: “What direction or fulfillment was to be transmitted by the Hebrew stream guided from the Sun Sphere—the realm of the etheric?” The answer is: Mary and Jesus. The Mystery of Golgotha gave us an incarnated soul that was perfectly integrated—a perfect unity—in Mary. And in Jesus the world received the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and the Mother, the Daughter, and the Holy Soul—the Hexadity in the *spirit* messenger, Christ. In Mary, who also contained the Divine Hexadity, the Six-in-One was primarily a messenger of *soul*. At the event of Golgotha the three Mothers became the One Mother—the Mater Gloriosa—in Mary. And the Holy Trinity appeared as one in Christ. Concerning the uniting of the Three Mothers into One Mother at the Mystery of Golgotha in Mary, Rudolf Steiner said: “...don’t they [the three Mothers and the one Mother of Goethe] show us with their overwhelming poetic splendor what the Mystery of Golgotha has brought us.”⁹

The Mystery of Golgotha made it possible for the Son of God to be born out of the Theotokos, the Mother of God—in every human being. This means that the human I, which previously was bound to the physical body, as a slave to its ideas and appetites, could be reborn through death and resurrection. The New Testament calls the newborn I “the New Human.”¹⁰ The Father and Mother of the “new I” are Christ and Sophia. It is this new “I” alone that can harmonize and unite the three soul members: the mind, emotions, and will. The seed of the new “I” comes from Christ, “the Logos who was with God from the beginning,”¹¹ and who illumines the individual soul members, while the soul itself with its need for nurturing and unifying is the domain of the Holy Soul, playing her part in the Divine TrinoSophia, who

⁹ Lecture 10, *Anthroposophy in the Light of Goethe’s ‘Faust’*, SteinerBooks, 2014, p. 207.

¹⁰ Usually rendered: “New Man.”

¹¹ Holy Bible, Gospel of John, 1: 1-2.

was beside Him when he set the bounds for the heavens, the earth, and sea.¹² The harmony and beauty of the “new I” is perfectly exemplified in Mary as the Mater Gloriosa.

The sublime event we call “The Mystery of Golgotha” and its implications need to be expressed in a more capacious language. How can we do justice in words to such a profound mystery event? What occurs through our meeting Christ and Sophia is a microcosmic repeat of the Mystery of Golgotha, which not only illuminates and conveys unspeakable harmony to the soul, its rays go out to the ends of the earth warming and calling to life from every corner of creation. How can we make an adequate account of this? We cannot with our normal faculties do it justice. To see it and to express it calls to mind what Rudolf Steiner said:

*...we must again learn to perceive a spiritual reality behind stones, plants, animals, human beings, behind clouds, stars, behind the Sun. If through what is material we again find the spirit in all its reality, we also open our soul to the voice of Christ, who wants to speak to us if we would but listen to Him.*¹³

Developing the faculty of sight referred to here—to “meet Christ in the Etheric” has been the object of this study. With this in mind we have sought through the preceding pages to bring before our spiritual vision a rich palate of colors to illustrate how the Threefold Divine Sophia weaves through our world in a complex and beautiful way as co-creator with the Holy Trinity. We sought to show how majestic and intimate is the architecture of weft and warp in which we live and which lives in us through the working together of the Father and Mother, Son and Daughter, Holy Spirit and Holy Soul. Through these, all we have come to know of the trinity of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, has come to us. Through these reflections, may we dwell more richly and more fully in the living knowledge of The Divine Hexadity.

For a poetic closing: Vladimir Solovyov, a great exponent of the Divine Sophia, who himself was gifted with supersensible meetings with Sophia, has some fine words that he used to introduce an excerpt from a poem by Aleksey K. Tolstoy reproduced below. Both the introduction and the poem speak eloquently to our considerations in this article and deserve to be savored for their luminous beauty. They also are a remarkable example of “perceiving the reality behind [nature]” that Rudolf Steiner suggested above. The quotation is taken from lecture seven of a series of lectures Solovyov gave in St. Petersburg, which began on January 29th, 1878.

[T]he actuality of this divine world, which is necessarily infinitely richer than our visible world, can be fully accessible only to one who actually belongs to that world. But since our natural world also is necessarily closely connected with this divine world...and since there is not and cannot be any impassable gulf between them, the individual rays and glimmerings of the divine world must penetrate into our actual world, constituting all the ideal content, all the beauty and truth that we find in it. And man, who belongs to both worlds, can and must touch the divine world by an act of mental contemplation. And though living in the world of conflict and muffled disquiet, he enters into relations with the clear images of the kingdom of glory and eternal beauty. This

¹² See: Holy Bible, Proverbs 8: 22-31.

¹³ GA 226.

positive, although incomplete, knowledge of or penetration into the reality of the divine world is particularly characteristic of poetic creation. Every true poet must necessarily penetrate 'into the fatherland of flame and sword' in order to take from there the primal images of his creation and together with them, that internal lucidity that is called inspiration and through which we, in our natural reality, can find the sounds and colors for the incarnation of ideal types, as one of our poets says—

*And my dark glance brightened,
And the unseen world became visible,
And since that time my ear hears
What others cannot catch,
And I came down from the mountain heights,
Fully penetrated by her rays,
And on the agitated dale
I gaze with new eyes
And I hear an incessant talk
Rings everywhere,
As the stone heart of the mountains
Beats with love in the dark depths;
And slow clouds curl
With love in the sky-blue firmament,
And under the bark of trees
The living juice in the leaves
Rises up with love as a singing stream.
And I understood with a prophetic heart
That all that is born from the Word,
Pouring out the rays of love,
Thirsts to return to Him again.
And every stream of life,
Submissive to the law of love,
Rushes irrepressibly to God's loins
With all the strength of being.
And sound and light are everywhere,
And there is only one principle for all the worlds,
And there is nothing in nature
That would not breathe with love.¹⁴*

¹⁴ From *Divine Sophia: The Wisdom Writings of Vladimir Solovyov*. Ed. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2009, pp. 178-179.

The Black Madonna, a Divine Mystery Veiled in Blackness

Karen Rivers

DARKNESS is the one true actuality, the basis and the root of light, without which the latter could never manifest itself, nor even exist. Light is matter, and DARKNESS pure Spirit.

(H. P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine* 1:70)

Isis spoke the following words to Horus when instructing him about the Secret Doctrine:

Give heed, my son, Horus, for you shall hear the secret doctrine of which our forefather Kamephis was the first teacher. It so befell that Hermes heard this teaching from Kamephis, the eldest of our race. I heard it from Hermes, the writer of records, at the time when he initiated me into the Rite of Black Perfection, and you shall hear it now from me... (From *Kore Kosmu*, the sacred book of Hermes Trismegistus. Cited in *Meditations on the Tarot*, Arcana 9, The Hermit.)

The Black Madonna, an image of Divinity shrouded in darkness, is enshrined in countless pilgrim churches, in remote monasteries, in tiny chapels and vast cathedrals, down in dark crypts and up on high altars, in Sicily, Spain, Switzerland, France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Turkey, and as Black Tara in China, as Kali in India, and as “Our Lady of Guadalupe” in Mexico. She has been visited by millions of people for hundreds of years. More than five hundred of the world’s Madonna images are black or dark.

Who is the Black Madonna? What does she represent to the world? What is her message?

On her face is an expression of utter solitude so intense that the child on her knees or in the embrace of her left arm seems strangely appended. Her eyes are opaque, blank, veiled in the deepest interiority. She sits deeply, a curtained container, a tabernacle of God’s wisdom, the eternal bloody cave of birth, disintegration and rebirth. (Meinrad Craighead, Benedictine sister)

It is possible to consider the Black Madonna as the archetypal counterpart of the Virgin Mary: they interrelate as the Yin/Yang of the Taoist symbol; they create a whole, each half containing the other. The Black Madonna is known as the Queen of the Earth while Mary is known as the Queen of Heaven. The Black Madonna is fertile and generative while Mary is the icon of the Immaculate Conception and Incorruptibility. The Black Madonna is the Virgin who is consort to no man or deity, as all life emanated from her as Mother Nature. Mary received the seed of God in the form of the Holy Spirit. Yet, although it is possible to consider them as archetypal counterparts of the Divine Feminine, both the Black Madonna and Mary, in the essence of their being, represent the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail, bearing divine wisdom and containing the divinized soul.¹

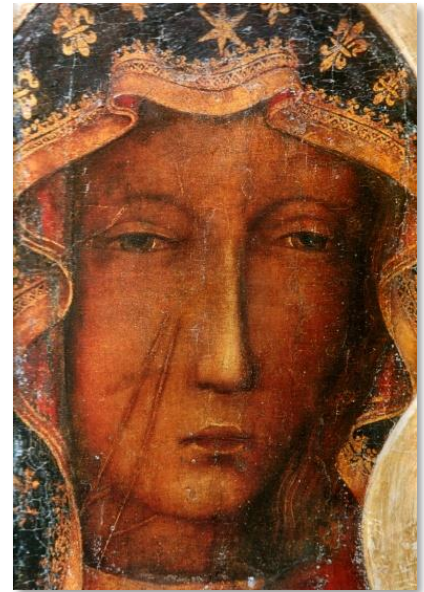
Historically, Isis of Egypt was the first recorded appearance of the Black Madonna, other than the Paleolithic Venus figurines. The cult of Isis was the dominant religion of the Mediterranean during late Roman times, and had spread into Roman-occupied lands, including Gaul. The city of Paris was devoted to Isis, as Lyons was to Cybele and Marseilles to Artemis. Like other Black Goddess figures, Isis is the life-giving and healing goddess of the

¹ These relationships will be made clear in greater detail in the second part of this article (see note at the end).

Earth. In *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius, Isis says: "I am Nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things, spiritual queen of the dead, queen also of the immortals, the single manifestation of all the gods and goddesses there are." The text goes on to state that she is identical with Cybele, Artemis, Aphrodite, Persephone, Demeter, Juno, and Hecate.

Subsequent to the presence of the cult of Isis, during the fourth century AD St. Helen, mother of the Emperor Constantine, brought the Madonna known as Our Lady of Częstochowa to Constantinople from Jerusalem at a time when there were formative debates and explorations on the meaning of Christ and Christianity. By the end of the fourth century, the basic tenets of Christianity had been formed, primarily from the work of St. Augustine (354-430 AD), and Black Madonnas began to appear in various parts of Europe, seeding the presence of the divine feminine.

When the infamous Council of Constantinople occurred in 869, it was legislated that the human being is a two-fold being, purely body and soul. Any reference or understanding of the spiritual nature of humanity was considered heresy. However, slowly but surely, the Black Madonnas started to populate the landscape. The healing impulse intended by the incarnation and resurrection of Christ began to transform into religious and secular power under Roman influence. As the Council of Constantinople legislated away the consciousness of the spiritual nature of humanity, two of the most famous Black Madonnas, (Montserrat and Einsiedeln,) appeared and became prominent around 869.



Our Lady of Częstochowa

In volume III of *Karmic Relationships*, lectures three and four, Rudolf Steiner describes that before the age of the cathedral schools humanity experienced a living presence, a living knowledge of the spiritual world and the living spiritual beings present in nature. In the seventh and eighth centuries, there was a dimming sense of this connection with the spiritual world. It was during this time of dimming consciousness that the Black Madonnas appeared in greater number, and were being placed in many of the cathedral schools and centers where spiritual knowledge was still cultivated.

The largest number of Black Madonnas was brought to Europe through Crusader or Templar hands during the time of Bernard of Clairvaux, the Crusades, the building of the cathedrals, and the flowering of the great Mystery Schools, particularly of Chartres. St. Bernard received his inspiration from the Black Madonna at Chatillon, where three drops of milk flowed from the Black Madonna's breast into his mouth. He credited this experience to his devotion to Mary. Upon this foundation, he preached the intimacy of the human soul with the Divine.

Rudolf Steiner states that the Crusades were the preparation for the Age of the Consciousness Soul, which began in 1413. The Consciousness Soul infuses consciousness into

human deeds, where the soul rises above personal desires or needs and unites with the eternal, serving the true and the good. The eternal spirit shines into the soul; it unites its existence with the eternal. It is notable that the Black Madonnas became a fixture in the time of the Crusades, to help shape the coming birth of the consciousness soul era.

The Black Madonna symbolizes the intimacy of the human soul with Christ, a symbol of the human capacity to birth the Christ within. Bernard of Clairvaux, and the Cistercians with their influence on the Templars, sought to form a culture that could be a vessel for Christ. They carried Black Madonna images throughout the Continent of Europe seeding an imagination and invitation for this cultural ideal, as a force for creating a civilization founded on cosmic, transformative, sustaining love.

What do these statues and paintings of the Black Madonna signify? What is Her message? The Black Madonna brings us into the presence of deep, black, unsolvable mystery. Yet, though veiled in a cosmic mystery of darkness, some aspects of the magnitude of Her divine essence can be perceived. Just as Christ Jesus embodied multiple facets in his ministry, as healer, teacher, priest, the Good Shepherd, the Lamb of God, the Guardian of the Threshold, the Alpha and the Omega, so the Black Madonna also manifests various capacities. The vast magnitude of her divine essence begins to open when She is beheld from multiple perspectives: as the Cosmic Mother, the Earth Mother, the Sorrowful Mother, the Mother of Compassion, and the Mother who removes all illusion from the ego.



Virgin of Montserrat

THE BLACK MADONNA AS THE COSMIC MOTHER:

The Black Madonna is the darkness of the void from which even the light is born, the final mystery that is drawing all things into deeper and deeper union with it. She is the formless void at the beginning of the Rig Veda in Hinduism and the Book of Genesis in the Bible. The Black Madonna is the great cosmic Mother in whose lap all creation exists, the seed and source of creation, the manifested counterpart to the transcendental being of the Heavenly Father beyond all creation. The universe itself is embraced and mothered by Her. She is the mediatrix of unity, uniting all aspects of creation, without separation into nations, ethnic groups, or religious sects. She is the primal void from which everything has emerged.

THE BLACK MADONNA AS THE EARTH MOTHER:

The great Earth Mother emerged out of primordial chaos. Dark and fecund, from her fertile womb all life springs; she gives birth to the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the human kingdom. She sustains and nourishes all life through her body and, at the completion of each life cycle, all living things return to her. As such, She is the source of all the dark, rich, fertile processes of Nature, the agent of all fertile transformations in

external and inner nature—in the outside world and in the psyche. The Knights Templar introduced Black Madonnas into Christianity, in part to re-awaken the reality of the Earth Mother as a living being. With the shift to a patriarchal sky-god religion, followed by the Judeo-Christian monotheistic traditions, the nature-reverencing goddess religions of the ancient world were suppressed, desacralized, and in many cases demonized. With the rise of materialism and a merchant economy, and the ensuing corruption of politics and religion, there was a longing to return to the purity of the early apostolic age. Into this cultural soil the Black Madonnas appeared in Europe.

At the origin of human life on the earth, a defining event took place with the fratricide of Abel, when human blood spilled upon the earth for the first time. As Abel's blood united with the soil of the earth, the virginal quality of the Earth was lost, and the heart of the Earth Mother was forever changed. Human beings violated the sacred gift of life. Robert Powell, in his lecture on the Black Madonna in Sebastopol, CA., June 18, 2016, described how, to aid humanity, the Earth Mother withdrew into the heart of the Earth to protect the undeveloped human "I" that lives in the blood, and how She will remain there until the time when human beings develop the maturity to redeem the deeds of the past through a spiritual birth of Christ within. This withdrawal was the ultimate sacrifice of the Mother. She united Herself with the destiny of humanity's fall from grace and holds near to her heart each human "I" to preserve its sanctity. The Black Madonna sits with the Christ Child on her lap, offering Him to us to heal the past and reclaim our "I" in its sovereignty.

THE BLACK MADONNA AS THE SORROWFUL MOTHER:

Her scarred dark face peers out from behind the dancing flames of candlelight. She does not seem of this earth. It is as if she is a window between the worlds, as if when looking at her one is looking into the abyss of the cosmos. Through her penetrating stare all the failures of humanity swirl about, all the violence, rape, wars, fears, sickness, pollution, oppression, and economic injustice. The heartbreak of the world is Hers. She bears the cost, the price, the anguish, and the sacred agony of the Divine Feminine in each of us. She is that part of us that is burned, wounded, seared, and broken by the world, by what we suffer in the world. She is the woman who has been burned by love, by the constant, unavoidable opening of the heart to the suffering of life, to the injustice of human beings, and to the cruelty of the false self. In standing in front of us in her burned, black dignity, she embodies the strength of enduring endless suffering without closing her heart, of standing in the fire and being burned and charred without ever turning away from the necessity of loving in a complete and total way.

So many of the Black Madonnas have been scarred, burned, broken, buried, and yet they prevail, they mend, they endure through the centuries. This may be one of the reasons the Black Madonnas have such appeal. In spite of the advent of the Black Madonnas into human history, there has been an unleashing of previously unimaginable evil onto the planet. Wars, religious strife, genocide, plagues, willful environmental destruction have tested the strongest of resolve. Yet by their very blackness the Black Madonnas serve as reminders that even while suffering through the darkest of nights, love, wisdom, endurance, and resurrection are possible.

The Mater Dolorosa, the Madonna of Solitude and Sorrow, beholds and bears within Her even our most unbearable pain. As Andrew Harvey describes it in his comments on “birthing the Black Madonna”:

This aspect of the Black Madonna is an initiation into the burning furnace of charity. She takes you into the depths of the mystery of the Mother because the Mother is not simply the great, dark cloud of final mystery that is uplifting everything from revelation to revelation. She is not simply the Queen of Nature, the Queen of all the fertile processes that transform life itself into a mirror of the Divine... The Black Madonna is that force of pure suffering mystical love that annihilates evil at its root and engenders the Christ-child in the ground of the soul even as the world burns.²

THE BLACK MADONNA AS THE MOTHER OF COMPASSION:

The word *compassion*, meaning *to love together with*, is derived from the Latin *con*, meaning *with*, and *passus*, meaning *patient* or *one who suffers*. In Biblical Hebrew, the word for compassion is *riham*, which is derived from *rehem*, which means *the mother, womb, showing mercy*. The Arabic word for compassion, *rahmah*, also translates as *womb*. The meaning of the name *Isis* is *throne*, as the Egyptian word for Isis, Ast or Aset, means *Throne or Seat*. *Isis* is an onomatopoeic Asianic word, *Ish-ish*, meaning *she who weeps*. The Black Madonna—the womb of the universe—provides the cosmic lap where all creatures gather. The Black Madonna is the Throne of Compassion, the Divine lap.

Compassion is that state in which one sees all living beings as part of one’s own self, and in which everyone’s suffering is seen as one’s own suffering. Only the Great Mother could provide the compassion needed for the sorrowful human condition.

The Black Madonna is the sorrowful mother, the mother who weeps tears for the suffering in the universe, the suffering in the world, the brokenness of our very vulnerable hearts. In the Christian tradition she holds the dead Christ in her lap. The crucified Christ represents all beings—He is the cosmic Christ, as well as the historical Jesus that she is embracing, for all beings suffer, and the Black Madonna, the Great Mother, knows this and empathizes with us in our pain. She embraces us like a tender mother with a compassionate heart for all the world. She invites us to enter into our grief and to learn what suffering has to teach us. The wisdom gleaned from the grieving heart becomes the fertile womb that births the new. Grieving empties the soul of its pain, it opens the womb to gestate the unfolding future. The Black Madonna is the essence of love, and her love without condition is what heals the deepest wounding of the soul. She embodies the living presence of the transformative power of compassion and acceptance.

THE BLACK MADONNA AS KALI:

In Hinduism Kali is a manifestation of the Divine Mother. The name Kali comes from the Sanskrit root word *Kal*, which means both *time* and also *black*. She is equated with the eternal night, is the transcendent power of time, and is the consort of the god Shiva, the destroyer of unreality. There is nothing that escapes the all-consuming march of time. As the consort of the

² See *Radical Passion*, North Atlantic Books, 2012, p. 62.

destroyer of unreality, She reveals the illusory self-centered view of reality and compels the disillusion or destruction of the false ego. In Hinduism, Shiva and Kali grant liberation by removing the illusion of the ego and identification with the body, awakening the eternal I AM.

Kali's black skin represents the womb of the unmanifest quantum field from which all of creation arises and into which all of creation will eventually dissolve. She is depicted as standing on Shiva who lies beneath Her with white skin, in contrast to Her black or sometimes dark blue skin. He has a blissful detached look. Shiva represents pure formless awareness — *sat-chit-ananda* (being-consciousness-bliss) — while Kali represents “form” eternally supported by the substratum of pure awareness.

Of all the forms of the feminine principle in Hinduism, Kali is the most compassionate because She provides *moksha* or liberation to Her children. She destroys only to recreate, and what she destroys is sin, ignorance, and decay. The ego trembles with fear when it sees Mother Kali because the ego sees in Her its own eventual demise. If one is attached to one's ego, Mother Kali will appear in a fearsome form. A mature soul who engages in spiritual practice to remove the illusion of the ego sees Mother Kali as very kind, affectionate, and overflowing with incomprehensible love for Her children.

In the Black Madonna you have an all-encompassing symbol of the divine feminine, the wildness, the fury, the ferociousness, the grandeur of destructiveness, the rage against illusions, the rage against cruelty and injustice, that is also part of the sacred feminine.

The holiness and acute precision of her destructive power strips away the illusions of the ego, after which she will pour a wholly new vision and new awareness into the dark empty void that she has prepared in your psyche.

The Black Madonna, in all her manifestations, is ultimately the blackness of divine mystery celebrated by the great mystics who see the divine as forever unknowable, mysterious, beyond all our concepts, hidden from all our senses in a light so dazzling it registers as darkness.

The Black Madonna is the black womb of light out of which all of the worlds are always arising and into which they fall, the presence behind all things, the darkness of love and the loving unknowing.

The Dark Queen of Heaven guides us into the Highest Mysteries.

[PART 2 OF THIS ARTICLE ON THE BLACK MADONNA WILL APPEAR IN THE EASTER EDITION OF *STARLIGHT*. SEE A PREVIEW BELOW.]

The Queen of Sheba spoke to King Solomon, “I am Black but I am Beautiful” (Song of Solomon 1:5). She is depicted twice in the Cathedral of Chartres, associated with the Prophets and Kings of Israel who are considered to be the foundation of Christianity. Rudolf Steiner indicated that the Queen of Sheba was the reincarnated Eve, the Mother of All, the progenitor of humanity. She then appears as the Black Madonna in her incarnation as the Queen of Sheba, and then as the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Virgin Soul and Queen of Heaven. This sequence of incarnations contains a key to the mystery of spiritual evolution, the significance of the Black Madonna, the Hermetic principles of alchemy, and the creation of the Philosopher's Stone.

Reflections on the 2018 Pilgrimage to Bali

[Ed. Before continuing to read these reflections, the reader may wish to be referred to the account of the Earth's seven chakras as presented in chapter 10 of *Astrogeographia* by Robert Powell and David Bowden (Great Barrington MA: SteinerBooks, 2012). The following text is taken from that chapter.]

<i>Planet</i>	<i>Chakra</i>	<i>Continent</i>	<i>Place/Planetary Chakra</i>
Saturn	Crown	North America	Mount Shasta
Jupiter	Third Eye	Europe	Externsteine
Mars	Larynx	Asia	Mount Kailash
Sun	Heart	Asia-Africa	Golgotha/Jerusalem
Mercury	Solar Plexus	South America	Lake Titicaca
Venus	Sacral	Southeast Asia	Mount Agung
Moon	Root	Australia/Oceania	Uluru

"The table above offers a summary of our findings identifying the seven planetary chakras of the Earth, where the place of the Christ's resurrection—Golgotha, Jerusalem—is the heart or Sun chakra of the Earth. In *Astrogeographia*, the latitude of Golgotha corresponds to the alignment of the stars on the Celestial Equator, or 0° declination. The three upper chakras are identified with locations in the northern hemisphere: Mount Shasta, California, with the crown chakra; the Externsteine in Europe with the third eye chakra; and Mount Kailash, Tibet, with the larynx chakra. Conversely, the three lower chakras are identified with locations in the southern hemisphere: Lake Titicaca on the border of Peru and Bolivia with the solar plexus chakra; Mount Agung on the island of Bali with the sacral chakra; and Uluru, Australia, with the root chakra."

[Ed. The reader will note that, under the auspices of the Sophia Foundation of North America, pilgrimages to four of the Earth's chakra sites have now been conducted: to Mount Shasta (2012), Lake Titicaca (2014), Jerusalem (2016) and Mt. Agung (2018). Future pilgrimages are planned to Uluru (2020), and to Externsteine (2022), while a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash has yet to be planned.]

(1) Initial Greetings from Bali

from Robert Powell, Lacquanna Paul, Karen Rivers, and Michael Choy

We are here on the beautiful island of Bali, enjoying our pilgrimage to the Venus Chakra of Mother Earth.

We started our time at the Great Mountain Views Villa, situated at the foot of Mt. Agung, the active volcano which is the Venus Chakra. Our stay there was beyond magical. We were hosted by a wonderful family of local villagers, many of us in tears as we left our friends.

We arrived at our next resort, entering the gate with flower petals being thrown upon us and people shouting "Welcome to Shambala!" We are now staying at the Shambala Oceanside Resort, a beautiful place by the sea where we will continue on our journey of connection to this very special place.

We hope you enjoy this special greeting from our co-founders, Robert Powell and Karen Rivers, our Board Treasurer Michael Choy, and Robert's wife Lacquanna (Lucky) Paul. To view this two-minute video, use the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twFyi03giVk&feature=youtu.be>

(2) From Lacquanna Paul

LETTER FROM THE BALI PILGRIMAGE

Dear Sophia Community,

Our pilgrimage has just begun and hummingbirds are singing your name this morning! The retreat center looks directly out onto Mt. Agung. A beautiful rice field stretches out, bright spring green, directly in front of our open movement center. The grasses stand about knee high and sway gently in the breeze. I can spot a temple shrine set up in a tree for fresh daily offerings of prayer and gratitude for the abundance of life springing forth in the lush green fields.

Forests fringe the rice fields, which are vast and restful to the eye and Mt. Agung rises up just beyond. This morning as I write I can see the upper crest of the mountain, which has grown completely quiet and peaceful since its threatening seismic activity late last fall. Our group is small and intimate, fifteen in all. Robert is looking and feeling well. Yesterday a large black butterfly came to rest on his hand during the Eurythmy. Then a dog came into our circle, singled him out and made a slow, wagging circle around him. Nature was responding to his beseeching words concerning the Mother.

The Balinese life maintains a constancy of active prayer, devotion, and offerings of gratitude. There are choral songs of prayer every day beginning at six a.m., again at two p.m., then again at six p.m. The singing fills the air with the vibrancy of a refreshing breeze and joins with the nature sounds of roosters, dogs, and birds as a blessing to all.

We watched yesterday and again this morning as a young Balinese woman carried a tray of fresh fruit and flowers as an offering to the little shrines that were all around us, one to bless our movement area and several out in the rice fields. All areas are blessed by these little shrines. Incense and water sprinkling accompany every fresh offering, which as far as we have noticed, happen morning, noon, and night.

Robert and I have taken the afternoon off from the scheduled outing and thus, I have time to write you. This morning we attended a local Balinese funeral. The cremation of the ninety year old aunt of our main tour leader was being celebrated by the entire village, maybe a hundred people, multi-generations, etc. The women are quite beautiful and petite. They looked like flowers, dressed in traditional sarong, lace tops with bright sashes at the waist, hair slicked back in a tidy bun, very graceful and beautiful to behold, bright welcoming smiles all around.

The ceremony was rambunctious and joyful, young men and boys carrying the elderly aunt down a jungle path and up to the top of a grassy hill, frolicking under the weight of her carriage; they lurched backward and forward, side to side, as though they were out in a storm-tossed sea, threatening to drop her at any minute. We asked what this signified and were told that the boys were just having fun, showing off that they were young and strong and full of

life! The boisterous group would stop along the way to be serenaded by roadside bands, a cacophony of clamoring sound—gamelans, flutes, rattles, gongs, and horns.

The entire village young and old had been engaged in the weaving of tiny baskets to hold fresh flowers for the old aunt's final cradle of rest just prior to the igniting of the cremation fires. Yesterday each one of us had participated in the making of these small flowery offerings and afterward, after we had received a cleansing water blessing by the village priest, we made our own procession down to the local temple to sit in prayer and leave our offerings for her departure. So it is with the village atmosphere here, everyone is included in this great celebration of life.

Following the cremation, the villagers gathered for a joyous celebration banquet in honor of the departed aunt. Then, soon after, the music resumed, sounding more harmonious than before, almost lyrical. The second part of the cremation ceremony had begun. After the bones are removed from the ashes, and the ashes cleared of the remaining charred wood, they are carried ceremoniously down to the river in a yellow coconut, together with an offering of money.

Our Balinese hosts at the Great Mountain Views Villa Resort gathered on the veranda respectfully in quiet reverence to witness the melodic procession proceeding down to the river, just beyond the rice fields at the foot of Mt. Agung.

No doubt, there would be youths further down river who would dive into the river to receive the beneficent offering of money, just as the great river of life would receive the gift of the revered aunt's long life lived in devotion and gratitude to the Creator.

Being here, even for this short space of time, has helped to strengthen my resolve regarding the meaning and significance of our rather hasty decisions concerning moving to Ecuador. It has helped to clarify the meaning and purpose of our decision. Both places being so near the equator, Bali (some 8 degrees south) and our home in Ecuador (about 4 degrees south), there is the strong impulse to support the Mother. Here in Bali, I can experience how prayer and gratitude become a vital part of the Mother's life-support currents encircling the Earth and returning to her heart in Shambhala at the center of the Earth.

The Balinese life supports this act of grace effortlessly. It is natural and essential to the nature of the culture. It is as though the Balinese people were specially created as the Venusian representatives of the cosmos—with the purpose to live and breathe a joyful song to God.

MOONLIGHT MAGIC, STARS, AND RISING SUN

Predawn Stargazing

The enigmatic presence of the stars forming the Southern Cross greeted us as we ascended the entrance to the Great Mountain Views Villa Retreat where we would spend the first week of our Balinese adventure.

This was to be our last view of the starry sentinel that welcomes the soul to the southern hemisphere. The intrepid stargazers that gathered poolside each morning before sunrise would

discover that this radiant bejeweled starry sentinel had just slipped down out of view behind the shadowy fringe of the bordering trees to the south of Great Mountain Views. Only the “pointer stars,” Alpha Centauri and Agena, that point to the Southern Cross, remained visible above the tree line as a poignant reminder of the descent of the starry cross, which crowns the southern night sky.

Alpha Centauri, the third brightest star in the heavens—after Sirius and Canopus—was beautiful to behold, and we spent some time contemplating the quality of its loving and heart-warming *star blessing* as the “older sister” to our Sun, Alpha Centauri (4.4 light years away), as the closest bright star to our solar system, being—along with Sirius (8.6 light years), Procyon (11 light years), Altair (17 light years), Fomalhaut (25 light years), and Vega (25 light years)—immediate members of our “local family” of stars, each occupying a certain position in the local “stellar family” of our Sun.

The kingly presence of Jupiter prevailed as the most radiant starry friend in the predawn skies throughout our Bali pilgrimage. There were other familiar star friends present to greet us in the predawn mist—Saturn and Mars in Sagittarius and the stars marking the Summer Triangle: Vega, Altair, and Deneb—the latter marking the head of the Northern Cross, known to the Greeks as the Swan (brightest star: Deneb), the magnificent constellation that, along with the constellation of the Lyre (brightest star: Vega) and the constellation of the Eagle (brightest star: Altair), beckoned to us from the north.

Robert called our attention to the Milky Way, the luminous band of stars arching across the starry heavens, which bears the presence of the Southern Cross at its root and the Northern Cross as its crown. One might ask, “How does one discern the crown from the root?” The answer I would guess is that the blue-white supergiant star Deneb (estimated luminosity nearly 200,000 times that of our Sun), which marks the head of the Northern Cross, is the star which, according to modern astronomy, is leading not only our Sun but also a vast number of stars of our local arm (the Orion Arm) of the Milky Way galaxy in their majestic orbits as they circle the source of the heart of creation: the Central Sun at the Galactic Center.

During the time of our pre-dawn stargazing, Scorpio was stretched out majestically, with the claws clearly visible reaching down toward Jupiter in the region of the balance pans of Libra. And above and to the east of the claws, the red star Antares, marking the heart of the Scorpion, shone brightly from the center (15° Scorpio) of this striking constellation. Speaking of this, we could also see clearly how the stars of Sagittarius depict the bow and arrow forming this zodiacal sign, delineating the glyph representing this zodiacal constellation.

I mention all of this so that one can get a picture of the excellent conditions for star wisdom that can be imparted, provided the heavens are clear, for our active engagement with a learning opportunity, and correspondingly an inspiration, which evermore connects us with the stars as our lifelong friends.

Sunrise over Bali

Perhaps every sunrise is beautiful in so far as the soul recognizes that a miracle has occurred. Then, of course, the heart is set in harmonic resonance with the Sun for the rest of the day. One can also fondly acknowledge that not every sunrise is the same in that the colors and

tones that drench the horizon seem absolutely original to the time and the place and the viewing conditions.

Our stargazing group swelled as others gathered to join us in offering gratitude and devotion to the rising Sun through eurythmy, moving together through the *Inner Radiance Sequence*. Gradually, as the light began to dawn, we could see Mount Agung appear through the morning mist. We gasped inwardly with delight as puffs of smoke seemed to arise from the volcanic crater at the summit of this sacred mountain in response to each of the four stages of “Putting on the Resurrection Body” that belong to the *Inner Radiance Sequence*. Then the blessed event of the rising Sun would often appear behind the smoke and the mist as the blood orange orb of Sunrise over Bali.

WATER BLESSINGS

The image alongside is a detail from Sandro Botticelli’s masterpiece, *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1484-1486) in the Uffizi gallery, Florence, Italy.

When one contemplates our 2018 pilgrimage to Bali, home to Mount Agung, the epicenter of the Venus (sacral) chakra of the Earth, one is reminded of Botticelli’s great painting of “The Birth of Venus” – wherein the fair Venus is born out of the frothy foam of the sea supported by a conch shell, standing upright and natural in the activity of balance against prevailing winds and nature beings.

One could think of the Indonesian island of Bali as the conch shell bearing a culture of people likewise beautifully upright and naturally graceful in the activity of ongoing prayer and devotion, keeping nature and humanity in a perfect balance of reciprocity.

Water is the key element which one remembers when visiting Bali—holy water sprinklings on flowery shrine offerings; water purification ceremonies performed by village holy men and temple priests; standing under rushing water falls; exquisite water parks with giant coy fish and ominous protecting guardians; “Rumi”-esque flowering gardens and spreading mystical trees, swimming pools, and stepping-stones in labyrinthine patterns over coy pools (as we passed face to face with fellow pilgrims from

around the world); canoe paddling early morning on a lake; dolphin sightings from Balinese boats; and, of course, swimming in the Bali Sea.

Steiner describes the planet Venus as a stepping-stone for the passage of the soul through the planetary spheres in the life after death. He describes the loneliness of the human soul if one has not taken up an active religious or spiritual life while living on the Earth.

Devotion is the distinguishing attribute Steiner assigns to the planet Venus. The Venus center in the human being regulates the waters of life and requires the activity of balance and harmony for all the systems of the human being, not only on the physical bodily level, but also on the soul and spiritual levels.



The Venus gesture of the left arm and hand in eurhythmy lends a listening ear through the open palm of the left hand to the soul-issues living in the depths of the subconscious and extending all the way down to the heart of the Earth. At the same time, the Venus gesture of the right arm and hand brings to expression an “offering up” in devotion to the spiritual world in a spirit of reciprocity. Further, the Venus sound “ah” expresses the joy of devotion—for this Steiner uses the expression “in praise of the gods.” The Balinese culture lives, moves, and breathes this cosmic wisdom in the ether body of the earth, the water body that extends all the way to the Moon.

In the days that followed the end of the pilgrimage, having extended our stay in Bali for an extra three days, Robert and I were privileged to witness a highly colorful full moon celebration, which occurs only once a year—at Pura Samuan Tiga temple near Ubud. In this marvelously colored celebration, the women dance in long winding lines, swaying with arms linked by way of white veils flowing like waves of the sea. They circled the grounds of this large temple, many—we were told traditionally twelve times—representing the eternal presence of the sea.



Then followed the most astonishing sight, an enormous pouring out of hundreds of young men—perhaps five hundred of them—all dressed in white, holding hands and rushing in wavelike forms, slinging themselves up against the stone surrounds, like crashing waves of the eternal sea. Round and round the temple grounds they went. Intermittently, the women would stream behind the men. Then, astonishingly, the men broke into a headlong dash, commencing to

run—even sprint—round and round the temple grounds, bare foot in the midday sun. They were for us the gift of the breath of life. Gamelan orchestras played in accompaniment of all this activity—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmlAZxha8Pw>—and villagers, dressed in bright Balinese traditional attire, watched in hushed wonder at the spectacle. My face streamed with the gift of tears in the shared joy of the celebration of this holy offering of gratitude for the breath of life.

On our final night in Bali, Robert and I contemplated these mysteries as we gazed in wonder upon the blood orange round of the full moon conjunct with the kingly planet of Jupiter high above.

from *The Way of Novalis*¹, chapter 7 “Approaching the Enigma of Nature”

John O’Meara

In *The Novices of Sais*² Novalis begins from where we all start: confounded by the great *enigma* of nature, which seems at once to hide its magical secret and to challenge our discovery of it. The many “figures” which emerge from the lives of human beings, it is said, themselves belong to “that great cipher” in nature which “we discern written everywhere” and within which “we suspect a key to the magic writing, even a grammar” (p. 3). *Novices* is in two parts: a short prolegomenon entitled “The Novice” and the bulk of the piece entitled “Nature.” In the prolegomenon the narrator is some version of Novalis himself; he overhears two novices speaking, one of whom remarks on “speech as its [own] delight and essence,” which provokes the second to affirm that only “he who speaks true, is full of eternal life, his written word seems wondrously akin to the mysteries” (p. 5). The teacher at Sais is said by the narrator, himself a novice, to *possess* that capacity for speech, this teacher whom we can take to be a representation of Fichte.³ This teacher is said to possess for himself the secret of nature, though not in any obvious way of communication. From the outside, this secret seems incomprehensible; it requires another way of comprehending, which can only be individually known: “He tells us that, led by him and our own inclination, we shall find out what happened within him” (p. 9). Fichte was said to have *found* the relation between nature and the self—in his own way; it was also part of his active philosophising in this regard to encourage others to pursue their own path of self-discovery, which in his view could only lead others in time also to experience the unity of nature in the self.

In the prolegomenon to *Novices*, the narrator-novice, who *is* Novalis, claims to pursue a path of self-discovery that is distinct from the path of his teacher who seems, nevertheless, ready to support his novice’s independent initiative. Unlike in the case of the other novices, the narrator does not go out in search of “nature’s treasures.” These treasures, under the teacher’s inspiration, the novices re-cast in the form of the “mounds and figures” that grace the “halls” of the mystery centre at Sais, but as to these treasures the narrator-novice says: “I do not search for them, but within them I often search” (p. 9). There is a way of knowledge, which is the teacher’s/Fichte’s, that assumes a prior objective identification



Nature by Arild Rosenkrantz

¹ John O’Meara, *The Way of Novalis*. Ottawa: HcP Ottawa, 2014, pp. 75-83 *passim*.

² All quotations from *The Novices of Sais*. Tr. Ralph Mannheim. New York: Archipelago Books, 2005. Sais was an ancient Egyptian town in the Western Nile Delta on the Canopic branch of the Nile.

³ A German philosopher of the day whom Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) studied extensively in his *Fichte Studies*.

between nature and the self, one posited *in* the self, and from which all our efforts to penetrate the intricacies of nature derive, so that these efforts must, in the last analysis, be about making an approach to that point where nature is finally discovered in the self, in the unity that binds the former to the latter. Thus can “the traits that are scattered everywhere,” along the teacher’s way, be finally “gathered together” (p. 5), in oneself. Everything around one is finally referred to the self out of which it springs, having its existence originally in the self. This is the light that has kindled in the teacher’s eyes and for the evidence of which he looks also in the faces of his novices, the “light” that will have made “the figure [of nature] visible and intelligible” (p. 7) in them also. The narrator-novice, Novalis himself, pursues a different course. As we have seen, for Novalis, true self-penetration is a penetration of that same spirit that infuses nature as it were from the other side, and on that basis the novice assumes the possibility ultimately of seeing also *into* nature where more of *itself* will be revealed. Nature is not merely to be referred to the self, as in Fichte’s system, but becomes through the self in turn its own world of inner revelation. Novalis had by now reached the point of development according to which nature, as grounded in the self, could now be expected out of itself to reveal, as the narrator-novice puts it, “where in deep slumber lies hidden the maiden for whom my spirit yearns” (p. 15) ...

There is, in fact, a complementary basis to the attraction between humankind and nature, and it leaves open the possibility that nature will in time reveal more and more *of herself*. Already in allowing herself to be tamed, she has made herself “companionable, responding gladly to the friendly questioner” (p. 35), and on this basis the narrator anticipates in time the return of “the old golden age” when nature “lived among [us] and divine association made [us] immortal.” The narrator does not lose sight of all that is required to approach this goal at the present time, bringing us, characteristically for Novalis, back to the [sacred] relativity of our effort for the moment, as we continue to strive toward this goal. Thus,

we see the future philosopher in him who untiringly pursues and inquires into all things in nature, who turns his mind to everything, gathers whatever is noteworthy, and is happy if he has made himself the master and possessor of a new phenomenon, a new force of knowledge. (p. 39)

A comprehensive presentation of the state of our relations to nature must also take into account the negative view of nature. Hence the consideration of nature seen also as unalterably destructive, a force that can only be held back by a form of war against it. Here the narration reflects the growing aggressiveness of the scientism of Novalis’s day, and it anticipates what in the modern age came to be called scientific objectivism. The alternative to “war on nature” is “escape to a happier world” (p. 43), of the sort that in the early Christian centuries defined the spirit of Gnosticism. In the latter view, “the effort to fathom the giant mechanism is in itself a move towards the abyss” (p. 41), since “association with the forces of nature ... must inevitably make [humankind] resemble ... the spirit of the awful, devouring power that is nature” (p. 43). In this Gnostic understanding, the “vain study” of nature can only lead to “a true madness, a fatal vertigo over the horrid abyss” (pp. 39-41). Contrasting with this traditionally-minded, condemning understanding is the intrepid view of modern-day scientism in which the scientist is “a noble hero, who leaps into the open abyss in order to save his fellow citizens” (p. 45).

Spirit and science are in this way kept apart. The narration at this point grows both philosophically and poetically more elaborate, indicating a shift to a higher level of reflection.

A third position is now brought forward that traces the focus on nature's destructiveness back to the speakers themselves who are seen as projecting images of their own wayward passions onto nature. Nature is rather to be acknowledged as embodying in itself the "all-embracing efficacy of a high, ethical world system" (p. 49) into which humankind must learn to grow. In this view, which we might call ethical objectivism, one's course is clear: "let him who would gain knowledge of nature practise his ethical sense" (p. 51). This view is, for the first time in the narration, put into the mouth of an actual speaker, one of the novices at Sais who has been vaguely coming forward in the narrative. According to this speaker, humanity, in its progressive ethical efforts, "becomes more and more one with [it]self and [the] creation round [it]." Thus another contrasting image presents itself, of humankind in the future as "lord[s] of the universe ... soar[ing] all-powerful over the abyss, and for all eternity ... over this world of everlasting change" (p. 49). In the midst of this great swirl of kaleidoscopic views, which seem to emerge as if from the nebula of historical experience, another novice now becomes the focus. He has been attending to these many voices and sits among them in confusion, until they eventually die out in him; at which point a "merry youth" comes forward, seemingly out of nowhere, to take him to task for being so sombre and ponderous. The world of spirit, he is told, waits to "embrace" him "like an unseen beloved" (p. 53), and only "love" will ever reveal all of nature's mysteries to him. The novice is to learn what all of that can be about from a tale that the merry youth now proceeds to tell him, Novalis's famous "Tale of Hyacinth and Rosebud." The Tale speaks of Hyacinth as one who yet, in spite of the "joy" (p. 59) of love he shares with Rosebud, "spent his days grieving and pining" (p. 53). Novalis's short time spent with Sophie [his beloved] followed quickly by her death are here conflated into one presentation: reflecting this death, Rosebud is herself described in the most lifeless terms. Hyacinth, in the meantime, is further associated, in his morose state, with an "old sorcerer." We see in this sorcerer once again the symbolic figure of Fichte whose philosophy continued to enchant Novalis; to this philosophy Novalis had returned during the period of his mourning over Sophie.

In his self-evolution over this time, as we have seen, Novalis had reached a point that had taken him beyond Fichte inasmuch as the former could intuit a further possibility in the self for penetrating nature for all that *she also* has to reveal of her own. This transition in Novalis's thought is represented in the Tale in the displacement of the sorcerer by "the weird old woman" who counsels Hyacinth to "fling" the sorcerer's book into the "fire" (p. 61). This is an image not of rejection but of transformation. Only in this way, it is said, will Hyacinth be "healed." Hyacinth is now inspired by "mightier thoughts" that "rise" out of "the old times," thoughts of the possibility of a transcendent vision of nature "where," Hyacinth has been told, "dwells the mother of things, the veiled maiden" (p. 63). Hyacinth goes on his way to find this "mother of [all] things," inquiring after her "everywhere." Something of Novalis's difficult struggle until now to reach through to this sphere is represented in the disturbance Hyacinth experiences in his efforts to find his way. When the breakthrough comes, it does so in the terms in which Novalis had had his experience at Sophie's grave. It foreshadows, at the same time, the terms in which this experience will re-emerge in the *Hymns [to the Night]*:

*At first he [Hyacinth] passed through rough, wild country, mist and clouds lay across his path, and everlasting storms; then he found endless sandy wastes, burning dust, and as he wandered, his spirit changed, the hours seemed long, his unrest was appeased, he grew gentler and the turbulent force within him changed to a strong but tranquil stream in which his whole soul dissolved. **It was as though many years lay behind him**⁴ ... Higher and higher rose the sweet yearning in him ... **he met a crystal spring**⁵ and a throng of flowers coming down into a valley between black pillars that rose to heaven. They greeted him with friendly and familiar words ... "Just climb to the place whence we have come, and surely you will learn more" (pp. 63-67).*

Going his way

at length he came to the long-sought dwelling ... this abode of the eternal seasons ...

the last trace of earth vanished as though dissolved in air, and he stood before the heavenly maiden.

Her "light shimmering veil" being then "raised," she is revealed to be—Rosebud herself, or Sophie, who now "sinks into his arms" ...



Lovers by Marc Chagall

⁴ Cf. from Novalis's Diaries, *The Birth of Novalis*, ed. Bruce Donehower: "I blew the grave away from me like dust—**centuries were as moments**—Her presence was palpable—I believed she would appear at any moment."

⁵ Cf. from the *Hymns to the Night*, tr. George MacDonald: "**The crystal wave** which, imperceptible to ordinary sense, springs in the dark bosom of the mound against whose foot breaks the flood of the world, he who has tasted it ... and looked across ... verily he turns not again into the tumult of the world ... "

Anne Catherine Emmerich's *Parable of Marriage*

translated & introduced by James R. Wetmore

Anne Catherine Emmerich was born on September 8, 1774, at Flamske, near Coesfeld, Germany. From early childhood she was blessed with the gift of spiritual sight and lived almost constantly in inner vision of scenes of the Old and New Testaments. As a child, her visions were mostly of pre-Christian events, but these grew less frequent with the passing years, and by the time she had become, at twenty-nine, an Augustinian nun at the Order's convent in Dülmen, Germany, her visions had become concerned primarily with the life of Jesus, although they encompassed also the lives of many saints and other personages (some unknown as yet to history) as well as far-reaching insights into the Creation, the Fall, the mysterious Mountain of the Prophets, the Spiritual Hierarchies, Paradise and Purgatory, and the Heavenly Jerusalem. She also related many parables and other teachings.¹

Owing to difficult political circumstances, Anne Catherine's convent was disbanded on December 3, 1811, and one by one the nuns in residence were obliged to leave. Anne Catherine—already very ill—withdrew to a small room in a house in Dülmen. By November, 1812, her illness had grown so severe that she was permanently confined to bed. Shortly thereafter, on December 29, 1812, she received the stigmata, a manifesting of the wounds suffered by Christ on the Cross, and the highest outward sign of inner union with Christ. Unable to assimilate any form of nourishment, for the rest of her life she was sustained almost exclusively by water and the Eucharist.

As news spread that she bore the stigmata (which bled on Fridays), more and more people came to see her. For our purposes, the most significant of these was Clemens Brentano, who first visited her on Thursday morning, September 24, 1818. He was so impressed by the radiance of her being that he decided to move nearby in order to record her visions. Anne Catherine had already had a presentiment that someone—whom she called “the Pilgrim”—would one day come to preserve her revelations. The moment Clemens Brentano entered her room, she recognized him as this “Pilgrim.”

Brentano, a novelist and Romantic poet then living in Berlin, was associated with leading members of the Romantic Movement in Germany. He settled his affairs and moved from Berlin to Dülmen early in 1819. Thereafter he visited Anne Catherine every morning,

¹ Over the past several years, Angelico Press has published two sets of volumes containing Anne Catherine's detailed visions on the life of Jesus, supplemented with newly translated material, chronological and geographical indications, numerous illustrations, and an index. Another series (in twelve volumes) is nearing publication, enriched with extensive newly-translated material from the notes of Clemens Brentano, including two volumes covering Creation through the Old Testament, five volumes on people of the New Testament, a lengthy volume dedicated to the Virgin Mary, a collection of scenes from the lives of the saints, a biography, and two volumes bringing together various teachings, counsel on the inner life, parables, descriptions of spirit journeys on behalf of suffering souls, both in earthly life and in purgatory; and much else besides. The parable here published is drawn from one of these latter volumes.

noting down briefly all she related to him; after writing out a full report at home, he returned later the same day to read it back to her. She would then often expand upon certain points, or if necessary correct details. In his notes, Brentano writes that on the occasion of a teaching regarding marriage, a great parable was given Anne Catherine, much of which she was unable to retain. His initial note reads: "Marriage of the blood ends at death, but marriage of the spirit endures. Sometimes, however, a couple married upon earth do not find each other again in the hereafter—for the one may rise high, the other remain down lower. On the other hand, sometimes a couple who did not know each other (while living upon the earth) find each other and come together in the life after death."

Later, Brentano writes: "In this parable Anne Catherine was pointing to the degeneracy that befell human beings in their (originally) pure state—as first proceeding from the hand of God—when they succumbed to fleshly sin; to ejection from Paradise and (procreative) multiplication in the wilderness; to obscurity through mixing darkness with the holy, original light in humankind; and to the time when, finally, the promise of salvation would come, the time when the pure grain of wheat and the noble grape would have developed and found one another—when the heavenly wedding-banquet will be celebrated, offering mercy and strength again to poor, fallen humanity. Contained in this parable is the whole story of the Fall and the resulting dissemination and dispersal of humankind in their fallen corporeality, as well as God's subsequent provision to save them by gathering all together in one body—the body of the Bride of Christ, the Church—in order that they may be reborn as children of God."

But let us listen to her own words:

"This is the story of marriage, both as among fallen humankind and as a great sacrament in Christ and in his Church. All these things were presented with such simplicity and beauty that a child could have understood. And so did I also understand, when I received this parable. But now that I am present here once again in the dark desert of this world—filled as it is with pain and suffering—I can recall no more than the broadest brush strokes. But these at least I shall seek to convey.²

"I beheld a world, and set at either side a king and a queen. They were luminous and transparent. They longed for one another—were truly meant to be together—but were unable to meet. In due course the king took to himself a bride, and the queen a bridegroom, and they lived full well, and begat children. Then both passed away and rose up to a heavenly place.

² Brentano adds this comment: "The wonderful, comprehensive imagery of this parable cannot, unfortunately, be presented in a finished form. Much must remain forever missing, for the solution to the mystery surely lies largely in the proper order of events. Still, enough remains to warrant its inclusion here. Anne Catherine later supplemented her description as follows: 'I understood from the teaching on marriage that the marriage of flesh and blood ends upon death, but that marriage of the spirit endures in the hereafter; that often a man and woman joined in earthly marriage fail to find each other again after death—for it may happen that one of them stands higher [in that world], and the other lower—whereas often two come together in the hereafter who were not joined in their earthly lives.'"

“The king and queen were brilliant and transparent, but separated and solitary. Behind the king, upon a hill, was a garden; and the queen had a garden also, though hers grew upon a hill before her. Between the two stretched a wasteland, a region that lay in darkness.

“The king held a scepter formed at the top like a lily, or scalloped calyx, while the queen held a branch covered with a row of yellow flower buds. The two longed for one another, as has been said, for they were indeed each other’s intended. Their longing streamed out like rays that intersected, meeting in their midst. However, I understood that they did not know one another, and that a bride had been given in marriage to the king, and a bridegroom to the queen. They (the bride and bridegroom) had come from a third place in the middle between them, but lying off in a far corner.

“This third place was like a dark swamp overspread with a vile mist in which those present seemed to be held fast up to their necks. In any event, everything but the hills and gardens of the king and queen lay waste, all mire and muck and uprooted trees—it was like a destruction of the world.

“I saw the king and queen plant something, and beget children, and how everything continued to multiply—plants, growth, propagation—always in a circle, so that their two realms grew ever closer together. The plants kept sending forth into the ground new shoots, from which new stems would grow—and so it went.

“Then, when these two ever-propagating plant circles finally grew together, from their union rose up a great tree. On one side it bore the small leaves of the luminous fruits of the queen’s garden, and on the other the great leaves of the fruits of the king’s garden. The tree grew to a great height, and upon its branches I beheld ascending and descending generations. Above the tree hovered a world of light, like a beautiful garden, within which I beheld a table oriented to the four cardinal directions. Higher still was the Holy Trinity (just as we often see it represented in pictures), as also the twenty-four elders and the choirs of angels. At table I saw seated kings and queens, but on one side only.

“Yes, they were in a beautiful, lustrous garden in which had been set a long table. Upon a heavenly meadow angels were busy collecting dew, like manna gathered in the wilderness. From what they gathered they kneaded a long, ribbed loaf of bread, which was then placed at the center of the table, at which were seated many guests.

“Then I saw the queen floating upward all-shining between the north and east sides of the table, and the king just so between the west and south—it was as though they had quit the earth, though I cannot say whether they had died.

“They passed by one another as they proceeded toward the unoccupied side of the table and met in the middle, where each took a morsel of the heavenly bread and placed it in the other’s mouth—which act established them in marriage, in fulfillment of the longing they had had for one another upon the earth.

“The question was raised why the bread had not been set at the ends of the table, to which an angel answered that it must needs be stationed at the center. But as for the reason, I

have forgotten it, as I have so many other details. It had to do with the Passion of Christ; that in some way the bread of the wilderness, the manna, had been baked in Christ's Passion. I no longer recall exactly the sense, only such dim images as I have here offered.

"Now I saw another picture of what I had left behind in the wilderness (on earth). I saw the dark (repentant) wife of the king and the dark (repentant) husband of the queen take leave of the beautiful gardens (which had grown into woods) and also of their progeny—for all was gone rampant: no fruits, flowers fallen to the ground; all now dust and dark decay.

"Then I saw the wife of the king and the husband of the queen approaching either side of a desolate, dilapidated, and overgrown stone structure resembling the buildings of Egypt. They seemed not to know one another, and as though they wished—both of them—to retire there into an eremitical life of penitence. Each built, from their side, a little garden around an old thorn- or rose-bush, which however sent forth no roses but only stems and leaves.

"In consequence of their penitential labors I beheld the heavenly king send down to the repentant man a garland, as did the queen likewise to the repentant woman.

"The two repentants received many mystical gifts, always as garlands or fruits. Between them came to stand the hidden mystical chalice—guarded by the thorn-bush. Ears of grain and grape-vines waxed ever closer to it, in varying proportion to each other as time went along—and finally out of it grew the Holy Thing of Redemption."

Because it took on this character, Anne Catherine then saw the Holy Thing repeatedly assailed. This she beheld in images of warriors and chariots of different sorts, armored in particular ways, which she described in much the same way as does John in the Apocalypse. She continued:

"Among these assailants was an army of soldiers with stiff arms. I do not know whether these stiff arms represented a sort of weaponry, or bore some other significance. It was as though the warriors were instruments of darkness whose object was to destroy, to rip to pieces, or to take possession of the penitents' Holy Thing, which was their pledge of security.

"But then I beheld in another stream of images how carefully the penitents hid the Holy Thing—keeping it secure, well-guarded, and ever-victorious—*until it appeared to me no longer as the Ark of the Promise in the Temple in Jerusalem, but as the most holy Virgin of this present parable, until finally she—the small grain of wheat—became so clear and pure that, through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, she came to bear the Son of God, who then, as both Godhead and Man, offered his holy body and blood as a most holy sacrament to all who repent.*

"This was truly the most holy of humankind, and the parable a symbolic story of how repentant, fallen human beings had worked together with the merciful God to bring to fulfillment the moment of redemption in the course of time. [Or as Anne Catherine more briefly puts it elsewhere:] The mystery became gradually more hidden and secure, until finally it passed *from the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy Virgin, and thence, through the Savior, into the sacrament.* [Or again:] The mass is the hidden history of redemption—redemption become a sacrament."

On another occasion, in connection with a vision of Adam and Mount Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, Anne Catherine says:

“On this occasion I was given special insight into the recently received vision regarding the parable of the king and queen. I saw that the place where their gardens came together, where rose up the tree upon which the differing fruits of the king and of the queen united, and over which stood the heavenly table at which the two bound themselves together by sharing angelic bread—that this place was no other than Mount Golgotha.”



*The Virgin Mother,
Adorer of the Eucharistic Face of Christ*

[Ed. See the *Vultus Christi* blog site]

http://vultus.stblogs.org/the_eucharistic_face_of_christ/

“The blood-red mantle of the Virgin frames the Body and Blood of Christ, recalling that she ‘became [in the words of Pope John Paul II] in some way a tabernacle ... in which the Son of God, still invisible to our human gaze, allowed Himself to be adored.’ Above the uplifted hands of the Mother of God is inscribed the prayer of the disciples to the Wayfarer on the road to Emmaus: *Mane nobiscum, Domine*, “Stay with us, Lord” (Lk 24:29). This is the phrase that Pope John Paul II gave the Church at the beginning of the Year of the Eucharist in 2004.”

[Also In the words of John Paul II]

“The contemplation of Christ has an incomparable model in Mary. In a unique way the Face of the Son belongs to Mary. It was in her womb that Christ was formed ... No one has ever devoted themselves to the contemplation of the Face of Christ as faithfully as Mary.”

Prayer to Mary from Novalis's *Hymns to the Night*¹

Translated by James Wetmore

*Unto thee, O Mary
Myriad hearts aspire
Lost among the shadows
You their sole desire.
From thee they hope for healing
'Mid their anxious hearts' unrest
Wouldst thou, O Holy Creature
But clasp them to thy breast.*

*Inner fires burning,
Troubles keen upon our chest,
Away from this world yearning
In thy harbor seek we rest.
Thy help to us fair flowing
Quells poverty and pain,
Draws forth our soul-deep seeking
With thee always to remain.*



Madonna della Misericordia by Giotto

¹ See the end-part of Section V of the *Hymns*. Ed.

Meditation



Mother Earth by Rudolf Steiner



Migrant Mother, Photo by Dorothea Lange

John has invited us to meditate on these two images, and this is what was inspired into me ...

This woman in the photo: she represents the “us” we do not know, for it is we who are homeless and impoverished, because we have forgotten that there *is* a World Cross upon which Christ is nailed ...

Anguish tears the heart open, and through this heart-wound we enter into a new dimension of Time—Time as an Encircling Round—wherein the grace of the World “I” is constantly weaving souls together ...

In the great school of the World “I,” the soul comes to understand the “art of becoming.” In the Encircling Round of united Time, we *still* live in harmony. When we go through the heart-centric vortex that leads into Time’s eternity, we find that we continue to exist there in a state of blessed harmony—even as we simultaneously experience our disharmonious life within the broken stream of “little time” where past, present, and future are being torn asunder. From the Encircling Round, we hear one resounding message: *Love thy neighbor as thyself*. As spoken by Jesus Christ, this “Great Commandment” heralds the inevitable destiny of future epochs, wherein we will experience the reinstatement of souls weaving in harmony. Then, as now, Christ and Sophia weave among communities gathered in their name ...

This mother: her children bury their little heads, with tangled hair, upon her strong shoulders. As she looks into the far distance, the furrow of her brow increases and her gaze seems to transcend time. This mother does not suffer for herself; her agony is far greater, as she suffers for her children ...

Does she know that Christ and Sophia are drawing near to her?

—Claudia McLaren Lainson

Other Aspects of the Sophia

1

Sophia, the Supreme Wisdom of Heaven

Emily Michael

In Slavic languages Sophia is called “Премѹдрост Божия” [Premudrost Bozhia] (in Bulgarian), “Премудрость Божия” [Premudrost Bozhia] (in Russian), “Premúdrost’ Božia” [Premudrost Bozhia] (in Slovakian). The word “мѹдрост” [mudrost] is “wisdom” and the prefix “pre-” [Pre-mudrost] means “supreme,” “highest”; i.e. “Премѹдрост” [Premudrost] is translated as “Supreme Wisdom.” In Russian Orthodox iconography Sophia, the Highest and Supreme Wisdom of God, is usually expressed in feminine form or as a fiery Angel.



Sophia Wisdom of God Icon Yaroslavl

This old icon has a three-part structure¹, which contains a hidden symbolism.

In the Orthodox Tradition the Wisdom of God is called God-Word or the second face of the Holy Trinity, the Second Logos, so to speak. Occupying central place in this composition is Sophia, The Wisdom of God, represented in the form of a fiery Angel; the image goes back to the prophecy of Isaiah about the Angel of the Great Council (Isaiah 9, 6) and to the texts of the Apocalypse. The Angel in Royal Clothes and a crown, with a wand, sits on a Throne, which is resting on Seven Pillars.² This detail corresponds to the text of the *Proverbs of Solomon*: “Wisdom builds a house and confirms the pillars of the seven” (Proverbs 9, 1).

On both sides of Sophia, The Wisdom of God, are John the Baptist and the Holy Mother, Virgo Maria: on the right side St. John the Baptist holding the scroll with the inscription: “Behold the Lamb of God, take up the sins of the world, repent ...” (John 1, 29, Matthew 3, 2), on the left side the Holy Mother with a scroll, on which the text reads: “For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant...” (Luke 1, 48). All three figures are depicted with wings and wreaths. Above the fiery angel, Sophia, is placed the glorious image of Christ Jesus—as a representation of the embodiment of the Heavenly (Cosmic) Wisdom of God. The Twelve Apostles and Disciples of Christ are symbolized by the Twelve Rays of Glory that

¹ See http://www.icon-art.info/masterpiece.php?lng=ru&mst_id=1778

² The sitting position comes from ancient Palestinian tradition and the upright figure is a Hellenistic and Byzantine concept.

surround the Christ.³ At the top of the composition are the Throne, Hetoimasia⁴, on which the Holy Gospel is placed, and the heavenly semi-circle with angels. The image of the Throne recalls the most important event, which our Humankind is expecting — the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment. The three-part structure of the icon corresponds to the stages of the Divine House-Building:

- 1) The eternal birth of the Son from the Father,
- 2) The birth of the Son from the Virgin, and
- 3) His Eternal Kingdom in the Heavens, which will be on the Earth.

If the sacred text of the Bible is carefully studied, one will find that within the whole text only once is the phrase “manifold Wisdom of God” used. In the English translation of the Bible the definition of “Wisdom” is “manifold.” The Bible in the old Greek⁵ language has the word “πολυποίκιλος” (multifarious, multi-varied, or multicolored). In ancient Greek the translation is “multicolored.” One must note that the adjective “πολυποίκιλος” is for a masculine noun; for a feminine noun, the adjective should be “πολυποικίλη,” but “wisdom,” σοφία (sophiā), is a feminine noun, thus there is a combination of a masculine adjective with a feminine noun. An unusual and special correlation!

The word-combination “πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ” (multicolored Wisdom of God) establishes a link to the Light of God and to the Rainbow as a Testament of God⁶, in which each color corresponds to the Seven Spirits of God – The Spirit of Love (Pink), The Spirit of Life (Red), The Spirit of Holiness (Orange), The Spirit of Wisdom (Yellow), The Spirit of Soul (Green), The Spirit of Truth (Blue) and The Spirit of Power (Violet) — “The Mystery of the Seven Stars”⁷: “And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.”⁸ Altogether the Seven Spirits in 7 Colors represent the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit — one of the greatest Mysteries there is! Each one of the 7 Colors evokes within the human being a particular Virtue of Christ. When the Soul of one’s being receives all the 7 Colors, then the Holy Spirit comes upon one. The 7 Colors represent also the 7 Planets, the 7 musical notes⁹ etc. “These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.”¹⁰ “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you will not be conceited.”¹¹

³ Representing the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

⁴ See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hetoimasia>

⁵ See <http://biblehub.com/text/ephesians/3-10.htm>

⁶ The Rainbow, which is a Testament sign to all men (Gen 9:12-16), is made up of 7 colors.

⁷ Revelation 1:20.

⁸ Revelation 4:5.

⁹ See http://emily-michael.info/images/poster-7colors_en.jpg

¹⁰ Revelation 2:1.

¹¹ Romans 11:25.



“He held in His right hand seven stars, and a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth. His face was like the sun shining at its brightest.”¹²

Light was the first creation of God and nothing else before it! There is no light without the Sun! When the Sun is shining, the rays fall in different angles and create magnificent colors—this is the multicolored image of Light, perceived by the physical eyes. But what is behind each sun beam? “Every colorful ray of the Light is an intelligent Being,”¹³ and “the rays of the Sun are the living thoughts of the Advanced Lofty Beings,”¹⁴ who stand high above us in their evolution as Spiritual Hierarchies¹⁵—“they are the White Brothers of Humankind.”¹⁶ The sunrays with their colors are countless; so countless are the messages they bring to us from the multicolored Cosmic Wisdom. Everything comes from the Sun.¹⁷

“Light Divine,
Christ-Sun!”¹⁸

“The light of the sun will be seven times brighter—like the light of seven days.”¹⁹

¹² Revelation 1:16.

¹³ Words of Peter Deunov, The Master.

¹⁴ Words of Peter Deunov, The Master.

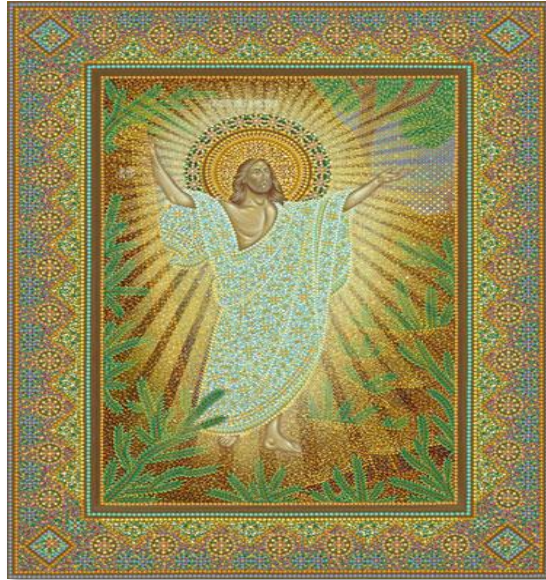
¹⁵ See https://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA110/English/APC1928/SpiHie_index.html

¹⁶ Words of Peter Deunov, The Master.

¹⁷ The Master Peter Deunov brought down for Humankind the Sun-Teaching and gave us the *Testament of the Color Rays of Light*. This Teaching was bestowed upon him by Christ Himself as a unique Method for work with the Seven Spirits of God, the Seven Colors of the Rainbow, and the Seven times Seven Virtues of Christ (each Color in itself embodying Seven of His Virtues).

¹⁸ “Göttliches Licht, Christus-Sonne,” *Der Grundstein Meditation*, Rudolf Steiner.

¹⁹ Isaiah 30:26.



*Resurrection of Christ icon in which Christ is depicted as the Sun,
By Y. Kuznetsov*

2

On the World Soul as the Creaturely Sophia²⁰

Michael Martin

For Bulgakov, the world soul is the creaturely Sophia. This quality of Sophia brings life to the universe; it is a principle of livingness. Like the light of the first day standing as the principle behind all light, Sophia informs all life in the cosmos, including the movements of planets, growth of stars, and so forth. “This creaturely Sophia,” writes Bulgakov,

as the heavenly face of the world’s being, already contains fullness of creation, just as the spring earth already contains all the seeds that will issue forth sprouts in their time. The creaturely Sophia connects and contains all. She is the universe containing all of creaturely being and linking it in a cosmic connection. In this sense, the creaturely Sophia is the soul of the creaturely world, its supracreaturely wisdom, the divine instinct of creaturely being, the guardian angel of creation, the very substance of creatureliness, submerged in nothing.²¹

Bulgakov, while straying from the tradition of those of the Fathers who wished to associate Sophia precisely as (only) Christ as Logos, stays closer to scripture, as, for example, we find in the Psalms: “How great are thy works, O Lord? Thou hast made all things in wisdom: the earth is filled with thy riches” (104:24), not to mention the passages on Wisdom found in Proverbs, Sirach, and Wisdom. For Bulgakov, Sophia as world soul informs all of creation and “moves genera either like a dark instinct, the inner law of being in its different forms, or like the life of individuals who have spontaneity of movement, which is the lower kind of creaturely freedom

²⁰ From *The Submerged Reality: Sophiology and the Turn Towards a Poetic Metaphysics* (Kettering OH: Angelico Press, 2015), pp. 162-164.

²¹ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Bride of the Lamb*, tr. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids, MI and Edinburgh, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and T&T Clark, 2002), p. 64.

and self-creativity.”²² Furthermore, “the world soul *becomes* together with the world itself, as if again arising out of nonbeing. From the state of sophianic potentiality, the world soul is actualized in creation.”²³ For Bulgakov, then, Sophia is intrinsically involved in *theosis* [deification], not only of the human person but of the cosmos as well. In Bulgakov, however, Sophia is not a demiurge, as so many Gnostic accounts would have it, but, instead, is the agent through which God creates the world and by which he governs and maintains his presence in it. Sophia, as Bulgakov so often points out, has no being outside of the Trinity. But, the question is, does *anyone*? Sophia, sophianicity, in Bulgakov functions, ultimately, as the vessel of *theosis* and its corollary phenomenon, sophianization ...

For Bulgakov, sophianization occurs in the human being through grace, but the cosmos also participates in sophianization when the Glory of the Lord shines through it. This manifestation of splendor requires divine-human participation and particularly concerns the human being because “the world, with man at its head, is the creaturely Sophia”²⁴ ... But sophianization, though accessible only in glimmers in consequence of the Fall, is only able to be actualized since the coming of Christ because

*in Divine-humanity, through the incarnation of the Son and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the world and man have received the fullness of sophianization. The Divine Sophia has united with the creaturely Sophia; creation has been completely deified in the union of the two natures in Christ by the Holy Spirit.*²⁵

²⁶It is not simply that Sophia is embedded in nature. An aspect of Sophia also inhabits a divine/spiritual space, one which triggers a divine longing in the human person, a divine eros. This heavenly Sophia stands in a synergistic relationship to the creaturely Sophia, the latter acting as a kind of enzyme or activating agent that is drawn to God through the heavenly Sophia. The creaturely Sophia, existing in all of nature but most actively in the human person, becomes then a sort of organ of perception. As the eye is an organ for perceiving light, so, in an analogous way, the creaturely Sophia existing in the human person (and all of nature) is an organ for perceiving the heavenly Sophia who is then capable of leading the repentant seeker to God.²⁷



*St. Bridget? 19th Century?*²⁸

²² Ibid., p. 102

²³ Ibid., p. 102.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 402.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 403.

²⁶ From *The Submerged Reality*, p. 49.

²⁷ In the last section following the block quote, Michael Martin is summarizing one aspect of the views of Jacob Boehme, the 17th century Silesian mystic, whose thought was clearly in line with that of Bulgakov. According to Martin, “Bulgakov, as did Soloviev and Florensky and especially Berdyaev, knew Boehme quite well.”

²⁸ “This image articulates who I think Sophia is better than anything I have yet encountered.” —Michael Martin.

Two Poems

Bill Trusiewicz

Transcendent/Immanent One

In the Aquarius Mood

Transcendent One

*You, are nearer to me
Than I am to myself,
Who are as the Ancient spoke:
"...the Past, Present, and Future
No mortal can lift your veil."*

*Time's triple agent, you have
Come to rescue me from space
From the illusion of separateness
The malediction
Of physical embodiment.*

*How can I resist You
Coming not as beautiful
But as beauty itself
In your mildness?*

*Tenderly devastating,
Dissolving my particularity,
Lifting your veil,
To reveal all things.*

*Ever more inward your
Charms draw me
Until Nothing exists
Of us but You.*

*Finding You in
That Nothing—the Silence
That gives birth
To the Word in me—
Myself I find.*

*Thus with the Word
You establish Me
And the Seven Pillars of the World
Setting bounds
To Heaven, Earth, and Sea*

Immanent One

At the Threshold of Beauty

*You, who guard the threshold,
Beauty is calling me
Let me pass*

*It is unlawful
You may not pass*

*But I have seen Her
As the moon dancing
With the Earth
Full-orbed and radiant
With the Sun's blessing*

*Youthful siblings they:
Hand-in-hand, gaily
Swinging each other
Round*

*Beauty is calling me
Let me pass*

*It is unlawful
You have never
Before seen Her:
Full-orbed Moon
Radiant with the Sun
And the Earth
Gaily swinging each
Other round*

*Yes, my vision was weak:
Before this everything
Was a shadow, a semblance,
A caricature of the True*

*But now I have seen The True
O guardian of the threshold*

*Beauty is calling me
Let me pass*

*It is unlawful
Your vision is weak*

At the Threshold of Beauty
(cont'd)

*Tied to the physical
You cannot pass*

*But Her true form have I
Seen in the Sun brilliant
And the planets Her children
Swirling in their gyre
Serenely through space*

*You who guard the threshold,
I have seen The Beautiful
Beauty is calling me
You must let me pass.*

*It is all a chimera
A foolish fantasy
You may not pass*

*But Her Majesty also have I
Seen, crowned with twelve
And a starry procession
Soaring round about Her
On magnificent pinions
To most solemn, sonorous chords*

*O guardian,
Thus I have seen The Good*

*All this have I seen in the
Expanse inside of me—as me:
So great I must have been
And must be— this to see
—so great is She*

*Beauty is calling me
Let me pass*

*It is unlawful
You are a mortal
Bound to mortal vision
You cannot continue
Seeing what you have seen:
It was all grace
And not your doing*

*So true are your words
My guardian: I am
Just as you say
Weak of vision
Bound to the world of sense
Seeing only a semblance*

*But now I have Grace
Also with me
And by Grace I commit
All of my meager powers
In weakness
—to the call of Beauty*

*O Guardian,
Beauty is calling me
Let me pass*

*As thus spoken
Your soul finds balance
With the Feather of Ma'at¹
You satisfy the law:
You may pass*

¹ Ma'at is the Egyptian goddess of truth, wisdom, and order in the universe—often represented with or by an ostrich feather. The souls of the dead and those who sought initiation were weighed in the scale of justice with the “feather of Ma'at.” The soul too heavy with self would be given over to Duat, the underworld, where “The Devourer,” Ammit, the lion, hippopotamus, and crocodile goddess, would devour the soul causing it to suffer a “second death.”

Two Poems

Michael Geis¹

The Doors of the Dead

*For he is a herald who is with us always,
holding far into the doors of the dead
a bowl of ripe fruit worthy of praise.*

Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Sonnets to Orpheus*, part one, VII

*One morning while looking into a mirror,
I see myself standing near
the open doors of the dead.
Is an awakened spirit of our night's realm
passing through my mirror,
asking me to face Her dreaded doors?
I quickly turn away.*

*I remember Orpheus
is royal messenger, poet and lover,
familiar with the dead,
who quietly heralds the awakening
of this dark goddess waiting for me.
As She approaches my side,
I find the courage to quiet myself
and look into the kind eyes
of the one who foreshadows my death...*

*Death's darkening presence ripens the faintly burning embers
of my heart's longing,
a longing to be glazed by the colors of life!
Though many fears surround this venture,
my heart needs that dark embrace to help it glow,
to ignite its own alchemy of color.*

*This Yes to Death's invitation
is the ripeness I now carry
far into the doors of the dead.
It is strange to be summoned more fully into life
by a guardian of my mortality,
this companion for the unknown remainder
of my fleeting days.*

¹ Michael is a psychiatrist practicing in Santa Barbara, California. He has received invitations from Death twice these past two years, first as recurrence of lymphoma and second a severe major depression.

The Night's Invitation

*Misery knocks at thy door, a grief-courier,
and her message is that thy lord is wakeful,
and he calls thee to the love-tryst
through the darkness of night...
Light, oh where is the light!*

Rabindranath Tagore

*Your myth, my Lady, says
you wait for us
to descend into darkness,
to take your hand,
to see the path
your night wants
us to take
among faintly burning embers.*

*A grief-courier
finds many ways to call me.
I see Death's glowing eye
shining on my heart's longing.
When I can withstand this,
my spirit receives
an awakening touch
from this invisible guest.*

*You test me
to remember your invitation,
to descend into a dark lament,
where fragile sparks of color
rise into my life,
as I bow
to this destined engagement.*

*Within our dark embrace
traces of the light appear!
For we, dear partner,
are awakened together
by thy lord's gleaming,
now hidden, now shining
In our deepest night.*

Sophia/Choreocosmos workshops—summer 2018—in Germany and Italy, and Schedule of Workshops for 2019

Robert Powell, with contributions from Natalia Haarahiltunen,
Lacquanna Paul, and Turid Freemannslund

The International Choreocosmos week (August 25-30) at the anthroposophical spa hotel in Roncegno—Casa di Salute Raphael: <http://www.casaraphael.com>—for the Journey of the Soul into Incarnation (5-day workshop) was profound. With the Journey of the Soul into Incarnation our wonderful Italian pianist Fabio played for us—he also played for us during the first one-week Choreocosmos workshop this summer in Kinsau, Germany, at our Grail workshop there from August 5-11 (a report on this by Angelika Jenal will appear in the Easter 2019 issue). The 5-day workshop in Roncegno was followed by the 2-day Choreocosmos graduates meeting there (August 30 & September 1) when our violinist Vitale, who played for us during both Choreocosmos weeks in Assisi, joined us in Roncegno, and he and Fabio played some inspiring Beethoven music as accompaniment for us. In fact, this is my favorite music—with both piano and violin—among all the musical accompaniments for the various Choreocosmos events that I have experienced over the years. Included in this music is Beethoven’s violin concert, which represents “Mount Everest” for classical violinists. Vitale is such a humble and gifted violinist, that he becomes completely a vessel for Beethoven when he is playing this music. And Fabio is truly “Beethovenesque” in his piano playing—very powerful—in playing a piano transcription of the orchestra part of the violin concert and in all his playing of the other Beethoven pieces. Vitale and Fabio are good friends, so it was very special to hear them playing this sublime music together.

I received an email—see below—from our friend, Natalia Haarahiltunen from Finland, who has written in previous issues of *Starlight*, which I thought readers might find interesting by way of including a participant’s report.

Natalia and her husband Markku were with us not only for the first one-week workshop in Kinsau, but also for the first one-week workshop in Assisi, although Markku only took part in a few events at this workshop, as his main focus was exploring Assisi and also other places beyond the immediate town. Natalia and Markku were not able to join us in Roncegno for the 5-day workshop on the Journey of the Soul into Incarnation or for the 2-day Choreocosmos graduates gathering working with the four verses of the Foundation Stone of Love in eurythmy, with the profound musical accompaniment already referred to—specified in detail below.

The experience of these two Roncegno workshops was for me particularly powerful and enlightening.

Regarding the Beethoven recordings (links) that I have indicated below: these are of the music that provides the introduction—also the closing music [5]—to each of the four verses [1], [2], [3], [4] of the Foundation Stone Meditation (FSM), whereby the four verses relate to the levels of the will, feeling, thinking, and the “I.”

[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COGcCBJAC6I> — Kreutzer sonata, 1st movement (level of the will)

[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGFs7n6n3-8> — Spring sonata, 1st movement (level of feeling)

[3] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvrPGO7ja3k> — Violin concerto, first movement (level of thinking)

[4] Violin concerto, second movement (level of the “I”)

[5]—closing music: Violin concerto, third movement

—the idea being that while this music is being played (live), one is seated and one can deepen meditatively into the content of the relevant FSM verse which the music has been chosen to introduce.

Then, following the purely musical introduction for a given verse, the Choreocosmos eurythmy for that verse is done together in a group. The eurythmy unfolds in three parts:

- (a) eurythmy to a musical prelude, in this case played by Vitale on the violin, drawn from the music indicated above for each of the four verses—invariably a shortened version of that music,
- (b) eurythmy to the spoken word—in German, Italian, and English—for the relevant FSM verse, and
- (c) eurythmy to a musical postlude, in this case played by Vitale on the violin—same music and eurythmy as in (a).

Then, with [5], while seated again, one can enter into a sum-total experience of the whole Foundation Stone of Love Meditation.

Hearing this music played so exquisitely by our violinist, Vitale, and our pianist, Fabio, was a deeply moving experience, bringing some people to tears. With regard to the first two pieces—see above links—Anne-Sophie Mutter ranks as one of the great contemporary, highly gifted violinists, and regarding Beethoven’s violin concerto: this is a link to a recording of a truly stunning performance by Arabella Steinbacher.

Email from Natalia In Helsinki

Dear Robert!!!

I hope all the subsequent workshops went fine for you and all the participants. I am very happy about having learned the Foundation Stone Meditation in eurythmy from you. Thank you so much for this precious gift! And, of course, we thank also Christ and Rudolf Steiner for this great treasure. It seems to be most suitable to me, working with it on a daily basis, and also it balances something in a very deep way. Also the two trees—the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life—in everyone... Markku and I have been “watering” them through the exercises that you taught us. I even taught them to my mother who visited us recently! Markku is also learning the Foundation Stone Meditation in eurythmy from me. And he is also preparing his lecture about Steiner’s karma perspectives and exercises.

During the workshops with you, again we received so much inspiration with all these important spiritual ideas and teachings, and also with the prayer eurythmy, which is such a treasure to the world. I hope people will find it more and more in the future. Also, I am so happy about the new connections made with various participants. I find them to be very valuable. What fine young people came to these summer workshops.

I hope you and Lucky have had a good summer in Europe. And thank you once more for the special celebration in Assisi exactly one week after her crossing the threshold for those who knew our friend JoAnne Allen. It is a miracle that such a form for connecting with both Christ and Sophia exists. I have for many years been yearning and wishing that this could be celebrated together with others in a circle of brotherly/sisterly mood and way, as we did in Assisi in honor of JoAnne. It was an extraordinary and beautiful experience. Many, many blessings to both you and Lucky for celebrating this in Assisi for dear JoAnne. And many blessings to you for your work!

Natalia



Roncegno Group

The foregoing gives a glimpse of something of the 2018 European workshops, which very much represent new beginnings, based upon all that has opened up for me since moving to Ecuador, in terms of the experience of the Etheric Christ there in Southern Ecuador and, also, the experience of the opening of the path to Shambhala at that location. As this has been and continues to be an ongoing work, I have not been too much engaged in writing activity since

moving to Ecuador; everything keeps changing, as I am constantly being given new and more profound perspectives.

All I can say is that I am so deeply grateful for the guidance that led my wife, Lacquanna (Lucky), and myself to this sacred location, in the Andes, where there is an opening to Shambhala, and where it is possible, through eurythmy, to enter into connection in a remarkably direct way with Christ in the etheric realm. This is truly a fulfillment of my life's work, at the center of which is the Foundation Stone of Love and its continuation in Meditations on the Tarot.

I hope the foregoing gives something of a picture of how things are unfolding for me at this time in my life, where more and more I am experiencing the extraordinary blessing of the great guiding spiritual beings of our time—Michael, Christ, and Sophia—holding sway in my life and destiny. I am filled with gratitude.

Lastly, I am greatly blessed to be together with my dear wife, Lucky, who is such a blessing and loving support in my life. This summer, doing eurythmy at the various European workshops, especially doing the Foundation Stone of Love in eurythmy, has helped her to heal from the accident—with a fractured shoulder—which she had in Bali, towards the end of our stay last April during the Sophia Foundation pilgrimage there, reported elsewhere in this issue of *Starlight*. She is most grateful for this healing experience through eurythmy. To close, herewith some words she wrote describing her experience in relation to the new Christ knowledge I was endeavoring to bring to the participants in Roncegno, during the culminating week of the whole series of European workshops that took place in the summer of 2018:

“As for the summer workshops ... they were powerful and radiant in their entirety. Most lectures were recorded. It would be something to share. There was a poignant moment which, in the recall of its images, says all. It was the final week. We were in Roncegno. Some of the participants had attended all four weeks ... so that a vessel of receptivity had been created. The listening hearts of thirteen countries were represented in the participating members of our group. Robert lectured first in English, then carefully reconstructed his considerations in German, then listened intently to Uberta's incredible translation into Italian, correcting her when necessary, so that nothing was left out, inaccurate or confusing. It was clear that he wanted this final rendering which was the culmination of our four weeks together to be simple, elegant, and indelibly etched upon all of our memories...the truth that we are God-created and have a purpose and a future not to be forgotten but lived into with care, diligence, faith, and great love. Carefully, he spoke each word. I was sitting beside him so as to observe his love and resolve and then, looking across the room, there sat our friend Audrey, painstakingly stitching a new white eurythmy veil for one of the Italian participants. I thought of the veil of Veronica ... which delicately recorded the image of the Christ. This was what was brought to us through these lectures, moving together through the mystery of incarnation and the awesome grace of the Foundation Stone of Love. Step by step...stitch by stitch, Robert had given us and invited us to participate in the exquisite 'Image of Christ'.”

Lacquanna (Lucky) Paul

[from Turid Freemanslund:]

“Warm thanks to you, Robert, and to Lucky, for making it possible for me and all the other participants to learn choreocosmos and sacral dance and to experience a living spiritual community—between human beings and spiritual worlds working together for a higher purpose. I love it!

I have to admit that I was tired after one month of choreocosmos seminars, and towards the end of that month I was looking forward to coming home and integrating what I had learned and experienced. However, upon arriving home in Norway, it did not take long before I wanted to do more again—more choreocosmos and sacral prayers in a greater community, accompanied by live music. Thank you again!”

**Future program of Sophia/Choreocosmos workshops with Robert Powell
Summer 2019—Italy and France**

August 4-9, 2019: “Choreocosmos: International Week” in the spa hotel “Casa di Salute—Raphael” in Roncegno near Trient/Trento, Italy

“Cosmic Dances of the Nine Beatitudes” — with Italian concert pianist Fabio Berellini. 18th graduation of the Choreocosmos School for Cosmic & Sacred Dance. Arrival on August 4 for dinner at 7:00 PM; departure on August 9 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation)

More detailed information will be available soon. Please note that because this is taking place at the peak summer season, it is advisable to book rooms as early as possible.

Contact: Sally Ellis-Jones
Via della Polla 44, 38052 Caldonazzo (TN), Italy
Tel: +39-0461-724893 / Mobile: +39-348-2106251
Email: sally.ellis.jones@gmail.com

August 9-10, 2019: “Choreocosmos Graduates Meeting” in the spa hotel “Casa di Salute—Raphael” in Roncegno near Trient/Trento, Italy “Foundations of Choreocosmos: A Spiritual Path Arising from Eurythmy—The School of Christ & Sophia” —starts on August 9 at 9:00 AM; departure on August 11 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation)

The focus in cosmic dance will be on working with the Foundation Stone Meditation and the Prayer Sequence— with musical accompaniment by Italian concert pianist Fabio Berellini (Cosmic and Sacred Dance)

More detailed information will be available soon. Please note that because this is taking place at the peak summer season, it is advisable to book rooms as early as possible.

Contact: Sally Ellis-Jones
Via della Polla 44, 38052 Caldonazzo (TN), Italy
Tel: +39-0461-724893 / Mobile: +39-348-2106251
Email: sally.ellis.jones@gmail.com

August 11-17, 2019: “The Sacred Alphabet and the Source of Eurythmy – the Hebrew Alphabet & the Tree of Life – the 10 Sephiroth and the 22 Paths of Wisdom corresponding to the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot.”

One week workshop with the Shambhala Path (Sacred Dance) and (weather permitting) observation of stars & planets.

Musical accompaniment by violinist Vitale Cotofana.

One week Sophia workshop at *Casa di Spiritualità Oasi Sacro Cuore* in Assisi, Italy – <http://www.oasisacrocuoreassisi.com/> – *House of Spirituality: Sacred Heart Oasis*. Arrival on August 11 for dinner at 7:00 pm; departure on August 17 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation)

More detailed information will be available soon. Please note that full pension (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) is possible at Sacred Heart Oasis. However, accommodation there is limited. Early registration is advisable.

Contact: Uberta Sebregondi
viale Guglielmo Massaia 18, Sc. N/1, 00154 Roma, Italy
Tel: +39-06-45544847 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935
Email: usebregondi@gmail.com

August 17-24, 2019: “Connecting Heaven and Earth – Star Mysteries and Earth Mysteries.” One week workshop with Choreocosmos and Sacred Dance focusing upon the Foundation Stone Meditation in Eurythmy. This year the workshop theme is “Initiation into the Mysteries of the Starry Heavens and the Earth Mother” with (weather permitting) observation of stars & planets. Musical accompaniment by violinist Vitale Cotofana, who will be joined later in the week by pianist Fabio Berellini for the Beethoven music (violin and piano) accompanying the Foundation Stone Meditation. One week Sophia workshop at *Casa di Spiritualità Oasi Sacro Cuore* in Assisi, Italy – <http://www.oasisacrocuoreassisi.com/> – *House of Spirituality: Sacred Heart Oasis*. Arrival on August 17 for dinner at 7:00 pm; departure on August 24 after breakfast. (English/German with Italian translation).

More detailed information will be available soon. Please note that full pension (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) is possible at Sacred Heart Oasis. However, accommodation there is limited. Early registration is advisable.

Contact: Uberta Sebregondi
viale Guglielmo Massaia 18, Sc. N/1, 00154 Roma, Italy
Tel: +39-06-45544847 / Mobile: +39-335-6749935
Email: usebregondi@gmail.com

September 21-28, 2019: “Sophia Grail Training” in the Chapel Saint-Laurent, 2 rue font du portal, 34150 Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, north-west of Montpellier, France.

Following on from the four yearly Grail workshops (2015-2018), which may be seen as preparation, the Sophia Grail Training, founded in 2007 in California, will now, twelve years later, commence in Europe, led by Robert Powell, who is known for his books *Chronicle of the*

Living Christ, Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality, History of the Zodiac, The Sophia Teachings, and many other works.

In Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert in 2016 he presented the findings of his research into the “destiny mystery” of the Grail knight Kyot, who was the source of Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Grail book *Parzival*. As Robert showed, there is a deep connection between Kyot and the location Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert, which is why the Sophia Grail Training is taking place in this small town that is referred to as a “jewel of France.”

As well as offering the Sophia Grail Training, Robert will teach Choreocosmos, with sacred movements and gestures for prayers directed to Christ and Sophia as well as for “putting on the resurrection body” (see *Cultivating Inner Radiance and the Body of Immortality*)—the resurrection being the ultimate goal of the human being’s spiritual evolution.

He will also present concerning the hidden history of redemption and the new forms of devotion to Sophia in our time, in the spirit of the Grail tradition.

The Sophia Grail Circle is a community of people who join together to form a vessel to serve Christ and Sophia and the spiritual evolution of humanity and the Earth. Toward this end, we work together consciously and purposefully in service of the Holy Grail, focusing upon Sophia, the Divine Wisdom of evolution, at the heart of our community.

Accommodation in Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert is limited. Early registration is advisable. Registration begins in February 2019.

Contact: Laurence Penetrat
17 rue de la Mairie, 11260 Rouvenac, France
Tel: +33-468-741-479
Email: penetrat.laurence@orange.fr

Under the auspices of the Sophia Foundation, these events – see below – are planned in the United States for 2019:

January 2-5 during the Holy Nights—Behold the Midnight Sun, with Choreocosmos—North Carolina (location to be announced)

March 8-10—Holy Saturday Mystery—Los Altos, CA

May 9-12—Sophia Grail Training—California (location to be announced)

June 21-24—Sophia Foundation Meditation Retreat (final dates to be confirmed, and location to be announced)

July 19 -20—Knight’s Training—North Carolina (location to be announced)

July 22-26 Sophia and the Archangel Jesus: The Evolution of Love, with Choreocosmos—North Carolina (location to be announced)

Dear Community,

A very sincere 2018 'hello' to you!

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



Music CDs:

The Music for the Prayer Sequence (Ludmilla)

The Music for the Zodiac (Ludmilla)

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

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

The Music for the Liturgy to the Earth (Sylvia)

'Thank you' to Ludmilla Lohbrunner-Gricenko, Sylvia Karpe, and Robert Powell for their efforts to make these Choreocosmos CDs available.

Lecture CDs 2011 - 2018:

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

Herewith the newest lecture sets that are available:

Bali Retreat 2018, which includes a lovely introduction to the Balinese people, and their culture of religiosity, with a global perspective on how Sophia works in the world through various cultures.

*The Tree of Life, Assisi 2017, which includes the Tree of Life within the human etheric body, its relationship to the Foundation Stone Meditation, and the latter's relationship to the book *Meditations on the Tarot - A Journey into Christian Hermeticism*. This is a review of the 2016 lectures, with very interesting new content.*

Note of interest: I also recommend *The Seven Seals of the Apocalypse, Chapel Hill, 2011* as a reminder of the challenges we face ever more directly since Christ has penetrated the 8th sub-earthly layer (the divisive layer) as the Second Coming progresses.

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

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

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

The links are in white at the top of the home page – select *CDs for Purchase*

**With love and gratitude,
Kelly Calegar**

More on the Bali Pilgrimage

From Luca Panzarino

From Robert we learned that Bali, with its powerful chakra center (sacral) at Mt. Agung (8°21' S; 115°31' E), lies on the meridian in astrogeographia coinciding with the 25th degree of Leo, in turn coinciding with the Moon's location at the event of Pentecost. The Moon at Rudolf Steiner's birth was (1,828 years later) at the same zodiacal location—25° Leo, pointing to him as a messenger of the Holy Spirit, the archetypal manifestation of which came to expression with the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at the historical event of Pentecost.

It was during the first week that one of the biggest highlights of the whole pilgrimage took place without our expecting it. We headed for a visit to the Pasar Agung temple, about which I'd only received information about a long row of stairs to be walked before getting there. We walked on to the upper part of the temple, and we started another meditation. I had my eyes closed as usual and could feel the sun was starting to heat up during the meditation. All of a sudden it got quite hot, and towards the end of the meditation, as it felt I could finally open my eyes, I looked up and couldn't believe it myself: right there, no more than 200 meters away, was the Mt. Agung crest! I felt one with it as what I was seeing and feeling were the same. Were we that high? I had no idea! Elevated in both ways, I was breathless: the crater kept appearing as the few clouds were now moving away.

At some point Robert informed us that that was as close as we would get to the top of Mt. Agung. Robert and Karen indicated that we were going to do some dances. We started facing one side of the temple toward the crater. It was special and out of this world: we were performing such things in a Balinese temple on the very top of Mt. Agung! It was magical, I really felt as if we did plant something over there by sharing and performing together the Sacred Dances for Christ and Sophia, sending out Light, Love, and Life in foresight of the future stages of evolution, for the healing of the current world-condition, and as a gesture of devotion serving as a model for free, healthy human beings. It felt somehow normal to be doing this, and yet when I think it over I realize that it wasn't anything that had ever happened there before. There is always something special about any Sophia Foundation workshop: it really keeps activating your thinking in a new way. And that was one of the things that is still working on me, as I continuously ask myself what did we really do at the Pasar Agung Temple?

As the Pilgrimage unfolded, we experienced different forms of sacred magical events, like the AUM chanting under a very strong and holy waterfall in the north of the island. We also attended a cremation ceremony where everyone was singing, playing a musical instrument and cheerfully talking or smiling. We attended a Balinese dancers' performance where each one of us was called to dance to the rhythm of their musical instruments, which I really much enjoyed and admired. I was specifically impressed with the dancers' ever-changing co-ordination and movement of their eyes and hands: each eye, ball, and finger would go in a different direction, in a kind of inverted circle like spinning. Extremely difficult to keep up with, which induced humor in us as we watched. We went out onto the ocean with

local fishermen to see the dolphins; we woke up at 3am to go out on a lake with rafts to do stargazing ...

We had our last celebration in a circle, with singing and oration, at the Ananda Cottages Yoga room, surrounded by rice fields. From here we went back to our daily life and work, enriched in many different ways and with a lot more to give. I feel blessed and happy to have taken part in such a pilgrimage, this being my first pilgrimage with the Sophia Foundation group which has always much warmth, openness, beauty, and freedom to share and receive in good will, with true spirit, and with a pure soul. I'm filled with gratitude towards all the participants as well as organizers who made this happen. Gratitude to all the local people of Bali who cooked for us, drove us around, cleaned our rooms, and made our stay special in many different ways, always with a True Smile on their faces.

Best thanks,

Luca

From Annette White

Pasar Agung, at over 4900 feet (1500 meters), is the highest temple in all of Bali. However, it is not as famous as the Mother Temple, Besakih, also located on Mount Agung—the largest and holiest temple in Balinese Hinduism, which we visited the following day. Pasar Agung is nevertheless most interesting, remote, and it is a most auspicious temple. The Balinese Hindus believe that the gods live on Mount Agung, and indeed there is a special quality to the Pasar Agung temple—halfway up the holy mountain—that was noticeably different from all the other temples we visited, including the Besakih temple.

We knew that the temple dress of sarongs and sashes—and udheng (temple headdress) for the men—was an important part of showing respect for the gods and goddesses at the temples of Balinese Hinduism. Robert looked noble and dignified in his temple clothing, acquired on the first morning of our pilgrimage from the little shop in our nearby village, and it reflected perfectly his stature as our spiritual guide and teacher. Michael, too, as the “official photographer” on behalf of our group, looked quite splendid in his temple outfit.





We still had to ascend some 375 steps to arrive within the precincts of the temple. We learned that the temple had been closed for the last few months because of the potential danger of further eruptions of the volcano. Serendipitously Pasar Agung had only just re-opened two days before our visit.

I was one of those who first reached the temple entrance. There I was blessed with precious moments to myself. This was a spectacular celestial gateway with soaring columns and arching dragons guarding the steps that marked the outer realms of the temple. There was a magical stillness in the temple forecourt, and time seemed to stand still for a moment. I had that rare sense of *presence*, which occasionally comes if one is still and present enough to be in the moment and to sense that gentle quiver in time where heaven and earth meet. For a few blessed seconds I felt the presence of Holy Sophia. Suddenly the clouds parted, and just as the sun radiated through the swirling clouds, Mount Agung revealed herself to us, soaring heavenwards in all her splendor, framed by the extraordinary intricately carved pinnacled temple gateways of ancient black volcanic stone.

As the group gathered, we made our way to the central altar in one of the temple courtyards, where a priest emerged and knelt. Then he carried out a blessing ceremony, in which little woven bamboo basket offerings of flowers and incense were distributed to each one of us and we took part in the prayer ritual. This involved chanting and offering three flowers in turn to honor the Hindu gods—red for Brahma, yellow or white for Shiva, and blue for Vishnu. This was followed by our drinking and being sprinkled with holy water, one by one around the group. (By this time we had begun to be more cautious about drinking the water.)



After two such priestly ceremonies in two different temple courtyards of Pasar Agung, exhilarated and inspired we made our way down the mountain. The sun was now in full force, shining upon the lush and green paddy fields below. We all felt very blessed that day, and the aching legs that ensued were well worth the effort. This experience was on the fifth day of our pilgrimage, and there were many more wonderful days that followed, but this day stands out for me, and I hope it will always remain etched in my memory.

Starlight, the journal of the Sophia Foundation, appears twice a year, around Easter/Pentecost and Advent/Christmas. If you are intending to send a contribution to the next issue, please email it to John O'Meara at starlightjournal27@gmail.com by February 1, 2019. Projected themes for the next issue: the Grail story, the Grail stream, Grail culture. Contributors are encouraged to submit as early as possible, for the issue will be in process of shaping itself as the contributions come in.



*Photo of a Sculpture by the Bulgarian artist, Stella Raynova, 1919-2014
[Supplied by Emily Michael]*

