

The Esoteric Quarterly

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**Esoteric philosophy
and its applications to
individual and group
service and the expansion
of human consciousness.**



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The Esoteric Quarterly

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The mission of the *Esoteric Quarterly* is to provide a forum for the exploration of esoteric philosophy and its applications. Full-length articles and student papers are solicited pertaining to both eastern and western esoteric traditions.

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Autumn Wisdom

As the Sun's path crosses the equator we enter a transformative period in the Earth's annual cycle. The onset of the autumnal season represents the ongoing unfoldment of the Soul Year wherein a period of balance or equilibrium takes place between Soul and form. Libra's influence creates an interlude that allows for the emergence of self-direction and free choice. Yet, as the sun wanes and darkness increases, we will be nudged by the energies at play to turn away from the material in order to focus intently on the Soul and Spirit.

Autumn also symbolizes the season of ripening or maturity and the coming of wisdom. The ancients depicted the sun of the autumnal equinox with the figure of the celestial serpent, whose gift was a special wisdom that projected or extended itself through all three autumn signs. Libra can be characterized by wisdom since it concerns the careful weighing of values and establishment of balance and harmony. In its higher aspect, Scorpio is sometimes known as the "Crowned Serpent," as it provides us with the opportunity to transmute our lower nature and to view life in the light of the Soul. Scorpio determines how we will use the knowledge that has been garnered in the preceding signs. The Dragon of Wisdom or Draco is connected to Sagittarius and promotes the wise focus, dedication and direction of all our energy toward the perception of the One. Thus, these three months of autumn represent a unique time to invoke and promote Wisdom.

All four articles offered in this issue of the *Esoteric Quarterly* touch upon this overarching theme in one way or another. Our first article deals with the hidden

wisdom of Chapter 11 in the *Revelation of St. John*. Zachary Lansdowne's verse-by-verse exposition gives us new insights into what is considered to be one of the most abstruse and deeply symbolic chapters in the Bible. Traditional approaches to interpreting this enigmatic text have been focused on "people and events that occur in the external world"—an approach that the author describes as "external-temporal." In stark contrast, Lansdowne employs a detailed, psychological analysis unveiling Chapter 11's teachings on the effects of censure, criticism and judgment on the one who judges. What he uncovers is nothing less than a set of enduring, practical instructions for every aspirant on the spiritual quest.

John Nash contributes an article on *Sophia*, the sacred feminine and embodiment of divine Wisdom. His brief historical survey on Sophianic spirituality spans biblical Judaism, early and mainstream Christianity, as well as its preeminent expression in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Among other things, Nash discusses *Sophia* in her various roles as the central pivot of creation, as Chockmah, the Bride of the Logos and Christ's complement. The author concludes by touching upon *Sophia's* rebirth in modern times and the part she plays in the emergence of the New World Religion. Her role as a source of inspiration and a much needed masculine-feminine balance are emphasized.

Barbara Maré's article explores the fourth cosmic Path—the Path to Sirius—the path most veiled in mystery. The great sun Sirius, even greater than our Solar Logos, is the higher self to our solar system. Its presence in the night sky, along with its significance as a giver of life and the "Star of Wisdom," are

noted in the earliest astronomical records. Maré draws upon these early accounts and the teachings of Alice A. Bailey to unveil the key elements surrounding this Path. We learn about the visual, verbal and numerical symbolism, the qualities that we need to develop, and the role of the Anthakarana in comprehending this fourth cosmic Path. Maré's article contains much food for thought on one of the most important stars for the Earth and solar system.

The final article in this issue focuses on the *joyous sacrificial will*. Its author gathers wisdom from Eastern and Western religious thought to reveal sacrifice as a universal archetype underlying the existence and progression of all Earth forms. These concepts are related to studies in psychology and evolutionary biology that show that the sacrificial impulse is not a diminishment or a necessary suffering, but the purest form of spiritual interchange and a way of liberation for us and others. The article closes with the thought that the will-to-sacrifice is a joyous, life-affirming act—the ultimate of all creative acts.

Publication Policies

Articles are selected for publication in the *Esoteric Quarterly* because we believe they represent a sincere search for truth, support the service mission to which we aspire, and/or contribute to the expansion of human consciousness.

Publication of an article does not necessarily imply that the Editorial Board or the School for Esoteric Studies agrees with the views expressed. Nor do we have the means to verify all facts stated in published articles.

We encourage critical thinking and evaluation of ideas. However, we will not allow our journal to be used as a platform for attacks on individuals, groups, institutions, or nations. This policy applies to articles and features as well as to letters to the editor. In turn, we understand that the author of an

In this issue we offer two related poems. The first, *Bride of Fire* by Sri Aurobindo, was provided with kind permission by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India. The second poem, entitled *Agni*, is by Bruce Lyon.

We continue with our usual custom of offering some thoughtful quotes, all of which are related to the published articles. This issue also includes a photographic collage of the Buddha, the greatest representative of wisdom on our planet. This evocative photograph, by Christopher Beikmann, fits in beautifully with our fall theme. In addition, we draw the reader's attention to two new book reviews—*How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* by David Bomstein and *Inside the Occult: The True Story of Madame H.P. Blavatsky* by Henry Steele Olcott.

Donna M. Brown
Editor-in-Chief

article may not necessarily agree with the views, attitudes, or values expressed by a referenced source. Indeed, serious scholarship sometimes requires reference to work that an author finds abhorrent. We will not reject an article for publication simply on the grounds that it contains a reference to an objectionable source.

An issue of concern in all online journals is potential volatility of content. Conceivably articles could be modified after the publication date because authors changed their minds about what had been written. Accordingly we wish to make our policy clear: We reserve the right to correct minor typographical errors, but we will not make any substantive alteration to an article after it "goes to press

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor,

This is the U.N. International Year of Astronomy and 40th anniversary of the “giant leap for mankind” when we landed on the moon, and sent back first photos of the earth; photos that many think have been psychologically revolutionizing pictures. They show us earth seen from a detached point of view as one beautiful living system of land mass, circulating oceans and clouds. This giant leap into exploration of the solar system was brought to us by science. Vision, science and the arms race gave us the motivation to expand outward and now we have become aware of our home planet as an integrated life-form, expanding our sensitive awareness to climate change, the circulation of ocean currents, CO₂ production, and carbon footprints. The 3rd ray of creative intelligence and the 5th ray of analysis and scientific thinking were at creative work here. We honor scientists and the scientific tradition in education.

When we were outside stargazing with our friends, students or children this summer we found Saturn in the constellation Leo, despite astrological calculations placing it in Virgo. In order to avoid being contradicted by our children and students, it would be wise to acknowledge the difference between astronomy and astrology, giving each its due. Because of the precession of the equinoxes, the ephemerides used by astrologers are about 25 degrees off. When we are locating a planet in a constellation we need to adjust for this, looking in the next section of the sky. Intelligent astrologers are well aware of this (see Phillip Lindsay’s web site, www.esotericastrologer.org), drawing the distinction between a cosmic relationship which is an “esoteric truth but not an exoteric fact” and yet the esoteric truth is “somehow true” even though “there is no exoteric

alignment.” The very last part of the cosmic alignment to earth is off by 25 degrees, almost a whole sign, but who can say that the rest of the alignment to cosmic energies and constellations is not true on the whole?

“Astrology is a science which must be restored to its original beauty and truth,” Alice Bailey and the Tibetan write, and when the “nature of the field of space” and “that which is found within that space” is correctly understood then “we shall see a far wider and at the same time a more closely related horizon; the relationships between individual, planetary, systemic and cosmic entities will be grasped.” (Esoteric Astrology, p. 5.)

No one gave us more of an expanded view of cosmos than Carl Sagan and NASA, who made the stars and galaxies come alive. The grandness and scope of the worlds seen by the Hubbel telescope inspire and amaze, leaving us in awe of what we have left to discover. No one has given us a more expanded view of the inner life of the cosmos than H.P. Blavatsky, Alice A. Bailey, Rudolf Steiner, the Roerich’s, esoteric astrologers and others in the esoteric field. They expand our values to see the world as intelligent and relationships above and below as sacred. The esoteric greening of relationships to nature, cosmos and each other is the heart of spiritual life and meditation. Seeing relationships to nature, to spiritual worlds and to cultures as sacred is a sound foundation to right human relationships. We all use a combination of scientific truths and subjective truths to navigate life. Love and knowledge come together all the time, despite ideological belief structures to the contrary.

I’m not an astrologer, I’m a psychologist. My major emphasis has been to promote monthly meditation as world service, and to define spiritual as Alice Bailey and the Tibetan define it. “The word ‘spiritual’ refers neither

to religious matters (so-called) nor to the Path of Discipleship or the Path of major or higher initiations, but to the *relationships* on every level...from the lowest to the highest.” It relates to “moving forward from one level of consciousness” to the next, to the “power to see the vision,” to “every effort of the evolutionary process,” and to “all activity which drives the human being forward toward some form of development” whether physical, emotional, mental or intuitional. (*The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 364)

A great planetary meditation is already taking place in the minds, hearts and lives of all who love the planet and humanity. This informal meditation joins all people of goodwill of all religions and none, scientific and esoteric, artistic and economic. Our monthly meditation at the full moon gives a unifying structure to what is already a

widespread if informal meditation. We need not make a wall of esoteric beliefs. The stars belong to us all. We would benefit by acknowledging our debt to science and they would benefit by the rich heritage of myth, literature, astrological and astronomical names and meanings through history and cultures that give subjective life and dimension to the cosmos. As long as we have much left to learn, fact and fiction will always play a beneficial part in shaping concepts and cognition. As I used to tell my university students, this text book you are studying now will be outdated in less than a decade; a hundred years from now it will be chuckled at. Fact becomes fiction and fiction fact, periodically. Together, they give us a fuller picture of the whole of life and may make our relationships to it more sacred.

Dr. Joann S. Bakula
Arizona

Poems of the Quarter

Bride of Fire **by Sri Aurobindo**

Bride of the Fire, clasp me now close, -
Bride of the Fire!
I have shed the bloom of the earthly rose,
I have slain desire.

Beauty of the Light, surround my life, -
Beauty of the Light!
I have sacrificed longing and parted from grief,
I can bear thy delight.

Image of Ecstasy, thrill and enlase, -
Image of Bliss!
I would see only thy marvelous face,

Feel only thy kiss.
Voice of Infinity, sound in my heart, -
Call of the One!
Stamp there thy radiance, never to part,
O living sun.

Agni **by Bruce Lyon**

Your tawny fire
lifts me from half heartedness
into the soul searing flames
of a fearless simplicity
Sitting in your fierce core
I have only to wait
for the dross of my forgetfulness
to pour forth like molten gold
..a spirit treasure
waiting to be spent
on beauty



Autumn Wisdom
by **Christopher Beikmann**
www.ancientartizen.com

Quotes of the Quarter

The Revelation is a description of, a possibility of, your own consciousness; and not a historical fact, not as a fancy, but as what your own soul has sought through its experiences, all are but emblems of the forces that may war within the individual in its journey through the material, or from the entering into the material manifestation to the entering into the glory, or the awakening of the spirit, in the inter-between, in the borderland, in the shadows.

John Van Auken, *Edgar Cayce on the Revelation* (A.R.E. Press, 2000)

A man cannot speak but he judges himself. With his will, or against his will, he draws his portrait to the eye of his companions by every word. Every opinion reacts on him who utters it. It is a thread-ball thrown at a mark, but the other end remains in the thrower's bag. Or, rather, it is a harpoon hurled at the whale, unwinding, as it flies, a coil of cord in the boat, and if the harpoon is not good, or not well thrown, it will go nigh to cut the steersman in twain, or to sink the boat.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Compensation*, (Thomas Crowell & Co., 1926)

A knowledge of the structure of the worlds and the operation of the elements, the beginning and end of epochs and their middle course; the alternating solstices and changing seasons; the cycles of the years and the constellations, the nature of living creatures and behavior of wild beasts; the violent force of winds and human thought; the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots. I learnt it all, hidden or manifest, for I was taught by Sophia, by her whose skill made all things.

The Wisdom of Solomon 7:17-22

The Universal Mother works out whatever is transmitted by her transcendent consciousness from the Supreme and enters into the worlds that she has made, her presence fills and supports them with the divine spirit and the divine all-sustaining force and delight without which they could not exist. That which we call Nature or Pratkriti is only her most outward executive aspect.

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*, (Lotus Press, 1927)

The 7 solar systems of the One About Whom Naught May Be Said are 7 major stars within a larger grouping which together form a constellation or cluster called the Sirian System ("Sirius moving cluster" in astronomy). Sirius is the major star. This is the One About Whom Naught May Be Said in the "lesser" sense, a cosmic Logos (our sun is a cosmic Entity) composed of 7 solar systems. This cosmic Logos or cluster (an integrated system forming an Entity), as a whole, travels along with 6 other clusters around an even greater center. These 7 clusters, or a Supercosmic Logos, are the ONE ABOUT WHOM NAUGHT MAY BE SAID in a 'greater' sense, and together (as an ENTITY) form a cosmic Wheel.

Peter Kubaska, "Hypotheses," *Journal of Esoteric Psychology*, (1988)

The Sirian, or fixed year, was established according to the heliacal rising of Sirius, yet the interval between two heliacal risings of Sirius corresponds neither to the tropical year, which is shorter, nor the sidereal year, which is longer. For it is remarkable that

owing to the precession of the equinoxes, on the one hand, and the movement of Sirius on the other, the position of the sun with respect to Sirius is displaced in the same direction, almost to the same extent.

Calculations established by astronomers have demonstrated that between 4231 and 2231 B.C., the approximate duration of the reign of the Bull, *Hap*, the Sirian year was almost identical to our Julian year of 365 1/4 days. These periods would cover “Ancient Empire,” and we cannot but admire the greatness of a science capable of discovering such a coincidence because *Sirius is the only star among the “fixed stars” which allows this cycle*. It can therefore only be supposed that Sirius plays the role of a center for the circuit of the entire solar system.

R.A. Schwalle, 1961) De Lubicz, *Sacred Science*, (Inner Traditions International)

Nothing seems more sacrilegious to me than the concept of an All-Merciful Father-God, who sacrificed his only begotten and consubstantial Son for the sins of the people, the people whom, according to the Scriptures, he himself created! It reminds one of a certain Akkadian ruler who sacrificed his son in an attempt to avoid the consequences of his own sins. Ancient history recorded and condemned such a barbarous concept of fatherhood. Is it possible for later generations to accept such an example of parental love and to elevate it to the stature of Divinity? Every truly loving earthly father or mother would gladly sacrifice their lives for the salvation of their son. Can a Divine Father be morally inferior to the people whom he himself created! It is by voluntary sacrifice or self-renunciation that the world is held together. In the higher worlds the chalice of self-sacrifice is radiant with all the fires of unutterable joy, and only on our plane, the plane of tests and sorrow, is this chalice full of bitterness and poison. The Spirit that has realized the joy of self-sacrifice is itself the

highest Beauty. Beauty and self-sacrifice lie in the foundation of Being.

Letters of Helena Roerich II,
(Agni Yoga Society, 1936)

I shall answer the questions about service. Service to the Hierarchy of Light is service to the General Good. Of course, striving to the General Good opens the gates of higher knowledge and Service. But I would like you to realize clearly what qualities you must first of all develop in yourself for advancement on the path of Service. Many people are dreaming about the General Good and even are ready to work for it as long as it does not interfere with their habits and prosperity. But true service to the General Good, which leads to the gates of the Stronghold of Light, requires sacrifice and complete disdain for everything personal, in other words, the complete abandonment of selfhood. When the consciousness is broadened, when all feelings and comprehension are refined, the law of sacrifice will be accepted as the highest achievement. There will be no room for self-pity, fear for the future, offenses and envy because with every breath will sublimity, beauty, and the highest joy of service be realized.

Letters Of Helena Roerich I,
(Agni Yoga Society, 1931)

Reverence for Life affords me my fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, assisting, and enhancing life and that to destroy, harm, or to hinder life is evil. Affirmation of the world—that is affirmation of the will to live, which appears in phenomenal forms all around me—is only possible for me in that I give myself out for other life.

Albert Schweitzer, *The Teaching of Reverence for Life*, (Peter Owen Ltd., 1966)



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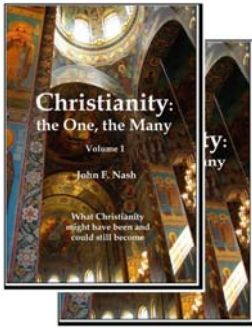


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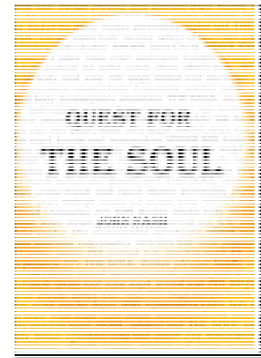
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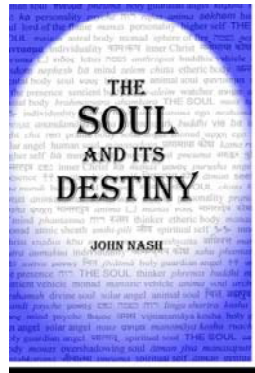
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The Two Witnesses in the *Revelation of St. John*

Zachary F. Lansdowne

Abstract

The *Revelation of St. John*, sometimes called the *Book of Revelation* or the *Apocalypse*, is the last book of the Bible. It has been a mystery ever since it first appeared about 2000 years ago because of its many puzzling symbols. Chapter 11 of the *Revelation* contains some of its most enigmatic symbols, including two dramatic witnesses. We analyze chapter 11 by using a psychological approach that takes every symbol as representing some aspect of an aspirant who is on the spiritual journey, and show that this chapter depicts the effects of judgment on the one who is judging.

Traditional Approaches of Interpretation

Many Christians, over the centuries, have wondered about the “two witnesses” in chapter 11 of the *Revelation*, because they are among the most dramatic characters in the Bible. These witnesses prophesy before the world for three and a half years wearing sackcloth. They can cause droughts, turn water into blood, and strike the earth with plagues. They are eventually killed by a beast but return to life and ascend to heaven. How can we understand these two witnesses and the unusual events that surround their lives?

The vast majority of published commentaries on the *Revelation* are based on three traditional approaches. The *preterist*, or past historical approach considers the *Revelation* as describing the issues and events that took place during the first century. The *historical* approach considers the *Revelation* as predicting the whole course of human history from the founding of Christianity to the end of the present age. The *futurist*, or eschatological, approach considers the *Revelation* as primar-

ily predicting the events that will occur at the end of the age.¹

For example, the preterist approach might construe the two witnesses as the Apostles Peter and Paul, the historical approach might construe them as the Written Word of God (Sacred Scripture) and the Oral Word of God (Sacred Tradition), and the futurist approach might construe them as the reincarnated prophets Moses and Elijah.

When using these traditional approaches, many commentators consider chapter 11 to be the most difficult chapter in the entire *Revelation* to analyze, because *none* of these approaches readily yields a credible interpretation. For example, Robert Mounce says, “In turning to the matters in 11:1-14, we come to a passage that is universally recognized as difficult to interpret.”² Gerhard Krodel says, “This is the most difficult section in the *Revelation*.”³ John Hinds agrees that it is “the most difficult passage in the whole book of *Revelation*”;⁴ and Craig Keener also agrees that “this section is perhaps the most difficult passage to interpret in the entire book of *Revelation*.”⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that the suggested identities of the witnesses vary widely, even among interpretations that are based upon the same traditional approach.

About the Author

Zachary F. Lansdowne, Ph.D., who served as President of the Theosophical Society in Boston, has been a frequent contributor to *The Esoteric Quarterly*. His book *The Revelation of Saint John*, which provides a verse-by-verse analysis of the entire *Revelation*, was reviewed in the Fall 2006 issue. He can be reached at zackl@sprynet.com.

The three traditional approaches could be called “external-temporal,” because they all interpret the characters and episodes in the *Revelation* as representing people and events that occur in the external world at definite past or future times. None of these approaches seems consistent with what the *Revelation* says about itself. According to Revelation 1:1, its purpose is to show “things which must shortly come to pass.”⁶ Revelation 1:3 states: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” Thus, according to its own verses, the *Revelation* is concerned with the *present* time, which is whatever time we happen to be reading it, and contains information that we can apply immediately to become blessed.

Psychological Approach of Interpretation

The *Revelation* describes a series of visions in which its scribe, John, participates. Let us consider a method of interpreting these visions that is completely different from the foregoing external-temporal approaches. This method is a psychological one and is based on the following four principles.

1. *Each of John’s visions is similar to a dream.* John’s visions contain symbols, just as a dream contains symbols.
2. *Each episode in a vision depicts a stage, or inner experience, on the spiritual journey.* The traveler on this journey could be anyone who aspires to a higher way of life, no matter what religious tradition is being followed.
3. *Each symbol within an episode represents some aspect of the consciousness belonging to an aspirant who is at the corresponding stage on the spiritual journey.* The various beasts, seals, books, places, and angels that appear in a vision depict fragments of an aspirant’s inner life, just as any part of a dream can be thought of as representing a fragment of the dreamer’s personality.

4. *The role that John plays in his visions represents the conscious attitude of an aspirant, whereas the other symbols represent aspects of an aspirant’s subconscious and superconscious natures.* This distinction between John and his role in a vision is similar to the distinction between a person who is dreaming and the character that the person plays in the dream itself.

A few commentators have used a similar psychological approach to interpret the *Revelation*. Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891), co-founder of the Theosophical Society, states: “The fact is ... the whole *Revelation*, is simply an allegorical narrative of the Mysteries and initiation therein of a candidate, who is John himself.”⁷ Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952), founder of the Self-Realization Fellowship, writes: “Certainly in the *Revelation* of St. John we are led by means of metaphor into the profound insights of the yoga science in which Jesus initiated his advanced disciple John, and others, whose consciousness thereby ascended to the exalted Self-realized state of the kingdom of God within.”⁸ Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), a well-known medium, makes a similar point: “For the visions, the experiences, the names, the churches, the places, the dragons, the cities, all are but emblems of those forces that may war within the individual in its journey through the material, or from the entering into the material manifestation to the entering into the glory, or the awakening in the spirit.”⁹

Blavatsky, Yogananda, and Cayce interpreted only a few symbols in the *Revelation* and none of them attempted a verse-by-verse analysis of any chapter. In what follows, we give a detailed psychological analysis of chapter 11, verses 1 through 13, and show that it is concerned with judgment in the sense of censure or criticism. In verses 1 through 3, the soul (or inner divine voice) tells the aspirant to observe himself while judging other people. In verses 4 through 10, the aspirant has a series of insights as to how his judgment of others is harmful to himself. In verses 11 through 13, after having those

insights, he transforms himself by giving up all judgment of other people.

Measurement of the Temple of God

Verses 1 through 3 are concerned with measuring a temple:

(1) And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. (2) But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months. (3) And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

The *Revelation* was composed in a peculiar manner. Krodel reports that the 404 verses of the *Revelation* allude 518 times to earlier sacred texts.¹⁰ These texts include books of the Old Testament, New Testament, and Pseudepigrapha. The latter books are Biblical in character but are not considered canonical. For example, verse 1 probably alludes to Ezekiel 40-42, in which a man with a reed carefully measures each part of the temple of God. When a symbol alludes to an earlier text, its meaning within the *Revelation* could be different from its earlier significance.

Cayce comments on verse 1: “Ye, your own souls as individuals, who will you put in your heaven? Ye of a denomination, ye of a certain creed, ye of a certain measurement, with what measure ye mete it is measured to thee again.”¹¹ *A Course in Miracles (ACIM)* has a similar notion: “Each one you see you place within the holy circle of Atonement or leave outside, judging him fit for crucifixion or for redemption.”¹² The reed in this verse is interpreted as a mental standard of judgment. The temple is taken to be what Cayce calls “your heaven” or what *ACIM* calls “the holy circle of Atonement,” so it represents the people judged as worthy of receiving the

blessings of God. Similarly, the people left outside the temple are those who are judged as unworthy.

These verses do not depict the aspirant as directly condemning anyone. Presumably, the aspirant has been practicing the biblical principle of “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another” (Colossians 3:13), and so has generally avoided grievances, resentments and hatreds. Instead, the aspirant is directly admiring some people, thinking of them as worthy or good. For example, he might be impressed by their honesty or humanitarian concerns. When the aspirant directly judges some people as worthy based on a personal trait, however, he indirectly judges anyone who lacks that trait as unworthy.

Angel is a translation of the Greek word (*angelos*) that means “messenger.” Alice Bailey, a theosophical writer, considers Solar Angel and soul to be synonymous terms,¹³ and uses the term *soul* to represent the inner divine voice or super-conscious self.¹⁴ She also mentions “the intuitions which are sent to you from your soul.”¹⁵ Accordingly, the instructions from the angel in verses 1 through 3 are taken to be intuitions sent from the aspirant’s soul.

The angel tells the aspirant to “rise.” We take this instruction to mean that the aspirant should rise above himself to observe himself in a detached manner. Bailey gives similar instruction: “the task of the disciple is to become consciously aware—like a detached onlooking Observer—of these energies and their expressing qualities as they function within himself.”¹⁶ The Apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 13:5, also gives similar instruction: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”

The word *gentile* generally means “any nation except the Jews.” In the course of time, the Jews began to pride themselves on their peculiar privileges, so this word became a term of contempt. By the time of Jesus, according to Matthew 18:17, a Gentile and a tax collector were comparable in opprobrium.

In verse 2, the Gentiles are taken as disdainful concepts of other people.

In theosophy, the *personality* consists of the mental, emotional, and physical bodies. The mental body is sometimes called the “mind,” and the emotional body is sometimes called the “astral body.” The physical body has both dense and vital portions. The dense physical body contains the muscles, organs, and bones, and the vital body contains the seven chakras of yoga philosophy. The vital body has been given many other names: “golden bowl” in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 12:6);¹⁷ “etheric body” in theosophy; “biofield” in alternative medicine; and *pranamayakosha*, a Sanskrit name, in the Hindu Upanishads.

Plato says, “Recall the general likeness between the city and the man.”¹⁸ The city is a community with many inhabitants, and the apparent, or outward, man is the personality, which is inhabited by many thoughts, feelings and motives. Thus, in verse 2, the city is taken as the personality. Joel Goldsmith, a mystical writer, describes how we are perturbed by our concepts of other people: “If we continue to be perturbed about someone, it is because we are entertaining a concept of him, and it is that concept that is causing the conflict within us.”¹⁹ Thus, the treading of the city symbolizes the disturbance that the personality feels through having disdainful concepts of other people.

What is the meaning of 42 months in verse 2? This period of three and a half years has the same symbolic meaning as the three and a half days mentioned in verses 9 and 11. If each month lasts exactly thirty days, the same period is equivalent to the 1260 days mentioned in verse 3. This period has its origin in Daniel 7:25, in which the power of

evil is said to last “until a time and times and the dividing of time.” In verses 2, 3, 9, and 11, this period symbolizes the length of time during which the judgment of unworthiness is maintained.

Verse 3 mentions the “two witnesses,” which alludes to the following rule in the Old Testament: at least two witnesses must provide evidence before an indictment against a suspect is considered valid or substantiated. (see Numbers 35:30, and Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15.) The Talmud, which is the basic book of Jewish law, clarifies how this rule about witnesses is to be applied, stating, “no one can incriminate himself.”²⁰ The Talmud acknowledges that a confession has value for the purpose of expiating sin before God, but not for the purpose of trial and conviction.²¹ Thus, a suspect, even if he or she makes a voluntary confession, should not be counted as one of the two witnesses needed for conviction. This prohibition against self-incrimination is ancient, because the Talmud was transmitted orally for centuries prior to its compilation by Jewish scholars around the fifth century CE.

Who are the witnesses in verse 3? According to our psychological approach of interpretation, they must refer to two parts of the personality. Judgment is performed by the mental body, so the witnesses of judgment ought to be parts of the personality other than the mental body, for otherwise a witness would be incriminating itself. Our approach takes the “two witnesses” as the emotional and vital bodies, because they bear witness to, or provide evidence of, the thoughts held in the mental body. Cayce gives a similar interpretation: “These then are the witnesses. The innate and the emotional.”²²

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 13:1, writes, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” In particular, the con-

Certainly in the Revelation of St. John we are led by means of metaphor into the profound insights of the yoga science in which Jesus initiated his advanced disciple John, and others, whose consciousness thereby ascended to the exalted Self-realized state of the kingdom of God within.

dition of our emotional and vital bodies can establish whether judgment is present within us. *ACIM* describes how the condition of our moods, which are part of our emotional body, is a witness: “When your mood tells you that you have chosen wrongly, and this is so whenever you are not joyous, then *know this need not be*. In every case you have thought wrongly about some brother God created.”²³ Bailey describes how the condition of our motives, which are part of our vital body, is also a witness: “the study and understanding of *motives* is of such value and importance, for such a study determines intellectually (if properly investigated) what factor or factors inspires the daily life.”²⁴

Sackcloth is a symbol of loss or mourning. For example, after Jacob heard that his son Joseph had been devoured by wild animals, Genesis 37:34 reports, “And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.” In verse 3, the two witnesses are depicted as wearing sackcloth, indicating that the emotional and vital bodies have lost their spiritual qualities.

Consequently, verses 1 through 3 have the following psychological meaning:

(1) The aspirant has a mental standard that he believes can be used to judge the worth of other people. The soul tells the aspirant, “Observe yourself with detachment while you use your mental standard to identify the people who are worthy of receiving the blessings of God, (2) and while you judge everyone else as unworthy, without explicitly having to consider them. Your disdainful concepts about those other people will cause your own personality to be perturbed as long as you maintain your judgment about them. (3) I will give power to your emotional and vital bodies so that they bear witness to your judgment of unworthiness. These bodies will express your mental judgment as long as you hold it, but they will do so while bereft of their spiritual qualities.”

Powers of the Two Witnesses

Verses 4 through 6 depict the powers of the two witnesses:

(4) These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. (5) And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. (6) These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

The two witnesses might be modeled symbolically after Elijah and Moses. Verse 5 states that fire proceeds out of them to devour their enemies—this power is associated with Elijah because he invoked fire that consumed his enemies (2 Kings 1:10-12). Verse 6 states that the witnesses can stop the rain from heaven—this power is also associated with Elijah because his prayer caused a terrible drought in Israel (1 Kings 17:1). Verse 6 also states that the two witnesses can turn water into blood and smite the earth with plagues—these powers are associated with Moses because he caused similar plagues to occur in Egypt (Exodus 7-8). As shown next, the emotional and vital bodies of every human being could be regarded as having those same powers.

What do the trees in verse 4 signify? Jutta Bell-Ranske, a theosophical writer, interprets these trees as the “the ganglionic nerve-system.”²⁵ Indeed, the phrase “nerve tree” is sometimes used in articles on human anatomy to denote a nervous system, because it has the appearance of a tree. Thus, the two trees are taken as the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, which are the two branches of the autonomic nervous system.

Yogananda considers the seven candlesticks in Revelation 1:20 to be the seven chakras of yoga philosophy,²⁶ so the two candlesticks in verse 4 are two of those chakras. But which

two are they? Bailey says that the solar plexus chakra connects the emotional body with the sympathetic nervous system: “The sympathetic nervous system, that marvelous apparatus of sensation, is closely related to the emotional or astral body. The contact is made via the solar plexus.”²⁷ She also associates the sacral chakra with both the vital body and the area of the physical body affected by the sacral parasympathetic nerves.²⁸ Thus, the two candlesticks are interpreted as the solar plexus and sacral chakras.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 4:4, states: “the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” If the “god of the earth” in verse 4 is the same as the “god of this world,” then the “god of the earth” has the power to delude human beings. Blavatsky warns against “the great dire heresy of separateness that weans thee from the rest,”²⁹ and Bailey says, “our race is controlled by the great heresy of separativeness.”³⁰ Accordingly, the “God of the earth” is taken as the belief of separateness, because it distorts the perceptions of most people.

Jiddu Krishnamurti, a religious philosopher, describes how subjective division leads to conflict: “But if we create subjectively a division—I belong to this and you belong to that, I am a Catholic, you are a Protestant, I am a Jew and you are an Arab—then there is conflict.”³¹ In verse 5, the term “enemies” shows that the aspirant is in conflict with the people whom he judges as unworthy, so he must be identifying himself with the people whom he judges as worthy. Even though “enemies” is a concept that the aspirant creates through his own judgment and identification, his reactions to the associated people are based on that projected concept rather than on their actual characteristics.

ACIM states, “Anger must come from judgment.”³² Fire can be a symbol of anger, as in Isaiah 30:27: “Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning *with* his anger, and the burden *thereof is* heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.” In verse 5, “fire” represents the anger arising from the subjective division brought about by judgment.

In the Bible, *righteousness* is a motivation that promotes the well-being and peace of the community (Proverbs 14:34). Paul, in Romans 6:13, says that God’s righteousness can flow through us: “Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.” Bailey has a similar notion: “Physical plane methods, when motivated by unchanging love of humanity and under the direction of an enlightened soul, become agents of righteousness.”³³ In verse 6, rain is a symbol of righteousness, as in Hosea 10:12: “for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” See also Isaiah 45:8.

Heaven represents the spiritual world, as in Deuteronomy 26:15: “Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel.” Thus, the “power to shut heaven, that it rain not” is the power to block the influence of the spiritual world so that righteousness ceases to flow into the personality.

Geoffrey Hodson, a theosophical writer, says that in the Bible, “Applied to human beings, water typifies the emotional world, the emotional or desire body, and the varied manifestations—calm, troubled or stormy—of the feeling aspect of human nature.”³⁴ For an example of water used as a symbol of emotions, consider Psalms 69:1-2: “Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto *my* soul. I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.”

Blood can be a symbol of conflict, as in Habakkuk 2:12: “Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity!” Thus, the “power over waters to turn them to blood” is the power over feelings to make them conflicted.

Hodson also says that in the Bible, “Earth and all physical, solid objects refer, in the main, to the physical body.”³⁵ For example, “the dust of the ground” symbolizes the physical body in Genesis 2:7: “And the

LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground.” In verse 6, “the earth” is taken as the dense physical body, so the power “to smite the earth with all plagues” symbolizes the power to afflict the dense physical body with all kinds of diseases.

The preceding discussion gives the psychological meaning of the powers listed in verses 5 and 6, so the next step is to discover the parts of the personality that possess those powers. Verse 5 states that the witnesses can respond to their enemies with “fire,” or anger. The emotional body has the power to generate angry feelings, as Bailey illustrates: “We are swept by anger or irritation. Instinctively we begin to shout. Why? Emotional energy has us in its grip.”³⁶ The vital body has the power to generate angry behavior from a stream of angry feelings, as Bailey explains: “When you remember that the vital body is the recipient of the streams of energy, and is in fact composed and formed of such streams, and that the physical body is driven into activity by these streams, it is apparent that that stream which is the most potent is the one which will control the action of the physical body upon the physical plane.”³⁷

Verse 6 states that the witnesses have the power over “waters,” or feelings, to make them be “blood,” or conflicted. The emotional body has such power, as shown by Bailey’s list of emanations: “From this [emotional] vehicle emanate the desires, impulses, aspirations and those conflicts of duality which so oft afflict and hinder the disciple.”³⁸ Verse 6 also states that the witnesses have the power to prevent “rain,” or righteousness. The emotional body has such power, as Bailey explains: “The seat of all this trouble is to be found in the desire-feeling-emotional body, and in an undue attachment to externals and forms. These factors prevent that clear-seeing which leads to wise and cooperative action.”³⁹ In addition, the verse states that the witnesses have the power to “smite,” or afflict with disease, the “earth,” or dense physical body. The emotional and vital bodies have such power, as Bailey also explains: “Ninety percent of the causes of disease are to be found in the etheric and astral bodies,”⁴⁰

where etheric and astral are synonyms for vital and emotional, respectively.

Verses 5 and 6 corroborate our earlier identification of the two witnesses as the emotional and vital bodies, because all of the powers attributed by the verses to the witnesses are possessed by those bodies, as shown by the foregoing quotations from Bailey. Consequently, verses 4 through 6 have this psychological meaning:

(4) The activity within the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems reflects the activity within the solar plexus and sacral chakras, which reflects the activity within the emotional and vital bodies, which in turn reflects mental judgments of worthiness and unworthiness. These judgments are based on the belief of separateness, which can be called the God of the earth, because it controls the vast majority of people. (5) If hurt by their enemies, the emotional and vital bodies respond with angry feelings and behavior, and try to hurt those people just as they have been hurt. (6) The emotional and vital bodies have the power to block the influence of the spiritual world, thus stopping the flow of righteousness. They have the power over feelings to make them conflicted and can attack the dense physical body with all kinds of diseases, over and over again.

Death of the Two Witnesses

Verses 7 through 10 describe the death of the witnesses:

(7) And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. (8) And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (9) And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations

shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. (10) And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

Paul, in Romans 8:5-6, describes a spiritual sense of death: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace." Just as the physically dead are unconscious of the things of the physical world, the spiritually dead are unconscious of the great facts of the spiritual world, such as God, unity and the soul. The spiritually dead may still be intensely alive to the things of the physical world, but they lack spiritual awareness. As shown next, verses 7 through 10 depict how judgment leads to the spiritual death of the emotional and vital bodies.

The "bottomless pit" in verse 7 is sometimes translated as the "the deep" or the "Abyss." Luke 8:31 describes it as a prison for evil spirits. Bailey uses similar images to depict the subconscious nature: "The subconscious nature is like a deep pool from which a man can draw almost anything from his past experience, if he so desires, and which can be stirred up until it becomes a boiling cauldron, causing much distress."⁴¹ Moreover, *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation* interprets the bottomless pit as the "subconscious mind" or "area of repression,"⁴² which is how this symbol is construed here.

Matthew 7:1 states, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." *ACIM* gives this explanation: "When the Bible says 'Judge not that ye be not judged,' it means that if you judge the reality of others you will be unable to avoid judging your own."⁴³ Bailey says, "we see in others what is in us."⁴⁴ Thus, the beast that rises out of the bottomless pit is guilt, because judgment of others leads to self-judgment.

Any of the so-called powers depicted in verses 5 and 6 could be used as a defense against guilt. In particular, anger attempts to get rid of guilt by projecting it onto someone else. Unrighteous activity attempts to gain a feeling of superiority that offsets, or compensates for, a feeling of inferiority engendered by guilt. Conflicted feelings can interfere with detached observation of guilt. Sickness can be an excuse for not facing guilt or be an attempt to alleviate the feeling of guilt through self-punishment or eliciting sympathy from other people. *ACIM* concludes, "Sickness is not an accident. Like all defenses, it is an insane device for self-deception."⁴⁵

These defenses are *insane* because their application actually increases the strength of what they would defend against, as *ACIM* explains: "You make what you defend against, and by your own defense against it is it real and inescapable."⁴⁶ Moreover, when the emotional and vital bodies use any of these defenses, they die in a spiritual sense. The spiritual death of the emotional body is its loss of inclusive or spiritual love. Paul, in Philippians 2:1-2, writes about this kind of love: "If *there be* ... any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind." Similarly, the spiritual death of the vital body is its loss of righteousness.

ACIM speaks about the role of memory: "Memory holds the message it receives, and does what it is given it to do ... And if it seems to serve to cherish ancient hate, and gives you pictures of injustices and hurts that you were saving, this is what you asked its message be and that it is. Committed to its vaults, the history of all the body's past is hidden there. All of the strange associations made to keep the past alive, the present dead, are stored within it, waiting your command that they be brought to you, and lived again."⁴⁷ Accordingly, in verse 8, "dead bodies" are taken as painful memories of past emotional and physical experiences.

In verse 8, the “street of the great city” consists of the internal communication channels, alluded to in verse 4, that transmit information from one part of the personality to another, because the city symbolizes the personality, as in verse 2. Sodom was a place of moral degradation (Genesis 19:4-11), and Egypt kept the Israelites in bondage (Exodus 1:13-14). Charles Fillmore, co-founder of Unity Church, says, “Sodom symbolizes the lowest form of sense desire,” and “Egypt signifies the darkness of ignorance.”⁴⁸

Krishnamurti uses metaphors similar to those in verse 9: “What we know is the dead past, not the living. To be aware of the living, we must bury the dead in ourselves.”⁴⁹ In verse 9, “dead bodies” are memories of past experiences, and “to be put in graves” means to forget those memories.

This episode in the *Revelation* depicts an intermediate stage on the spiritual journey. The aspirant is no longer completely identified with his physical form but has not yet become absorbed in his soul. In Bailey’s words, “Duality however, still persists, for the man is sometimes identified with his soul and sometimes with his form nature; this is the stage wherein so many most earnest disciples are at this time to be found.”⁵⁰ In verse 10, “they that dwell upon the earth” are thoughts, feelings and motives that are still identified with the physical form, because the earth represents the dense physical body, as in verse 6.

In John 16:20, Jesus predicts that his disciples “shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice” during the period between his crucifixion and resurrection. The celebration in verse 10 probably alludes to that text and is interpreted as the mutual justification, support and strengthening of the thoughts, feelings and motives still identified with the physical form.

Consequently, verses 7 through 10 have the following psychological meaning:

- (7) The act of judging other people causes guilt to emerge out of the subconscious nature and enter the personality. By using their powers as

defenses, the emotional and vital bodies strengthen guilt and die in a spiritual sense: inclusive love is extinguished from the emotional body, and righteousness from the vital body. (8) Painful memories of past emotional and physical experiences pass throughout the personality, resulting in a pervasive sense of degradation, bondage and suffering. (9) All elements of the personality focus on those painful memories as long as the judgment of unworthiness persists and they maintain those memories. (10) The unredeemed parts of the personality, which are identified with the physical form, use this suffering to justify, support and strengthen each other, because they are no longer superseded by the inclusive love and righteousness that the emotional and vital bodies had previously displayed.

Resurrection of the Two Witnesses

Verses 11 through 13 describe the recovery of the two witnesses:

- (11) And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. (12) And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. (13) And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Detached self-observation yields insights. In verses 1 through 3, the soul instructs the aspirant to observe himself with detachment while he is judging other people. Verses 4 through 10 describe the resulting series of insights that the aspirant has about himself

and that show the cost of judgment, so he is ready to give it up. *ACIM* makes a similar point: “It is not difficult to relinquish judgment ... The teacher of God lays it down happily the instant he recognizes its cost. All of the ugliness he sees about him is its outcome. All of the pain he looks upon is its result. All of the loneliness and sense of loss; of passing time and growing hopelessness; of sickening despair and fear of death; all these have come of it. And now he knows that these things need not be. Not one is true. For he has given up their cause, and they, which never were but the effects of his mistaken choice, have fallen from him.”⁵¹

Paul, in Ephesians 2:4-6, writes about spiritual resurrection: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ... And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places*.” Just as verses 7 through 10 describe the spiritual death of the emotional and vital bodies, which is the loss of their spiritual qualities; verses 11 through 13 describe their spiritual resurrection, which is the recovery of those qualities.

After being asked the question “What is signified by the revival of these witnesses?” Cayce gave the following answer: “How hath He given? ‘If ye meditate on these things, I will bring to thy remembrance all things.’ The reviving, the renewing, by the abilities of the soul to take hold upon the witnesses of the life itself! And what is life? God!”⁵² Although Cayce’s answer is not entirely clear, it suggests that the witnesses are revived through “the abilities of the soul” and the effort to “meditate.” Accordingly, in verse 11, “the Spirit of Life from God” is taken as ideas that come from God, via the soul, during meditation and that convey the realization of the essential unity of human beings. Paul, in Ephesians 4:25, also speaks of this unity: “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.”

ACIM describes how ideas from God can transform our minds: “Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think. Search sincerely for what you have done and left undone accordingly, and then change your mind to think with God’s. This may seem hard to do, but it is much easier than trying to think against it. Your mind is one with God’s. Denying this and thinking otherwise has held your ego together, but has literally split your mind.”⁵³

Arthur Powell, a theosophical writer, says, “The causal body owes its name to the fact that in it reside the causes which manifest themselves as effects in the lower planes. For it is the experiences of past lives, stored in the casual body, which are the *cause* of the general attitude taken up towards life.”⁵⁴ The causal body stores wisdom learned from experiences, expresses abstract thoughts, and transmits divine ideas to the personality. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 5:1, refers to the causal body with the phrase, “an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”⁵⁵

What is the “great voice from heaven” in verse 12? The foregoing quotation from Paul suggests that this voice might be the causal body, because that body is located “in the heavens.” On the other hand, this voice might be the soul, because the latter is part of the spiritual world, which is symbolized by “heaven.” The angel in verse 1 has already been interpreted as the soul, but perhaps the voice from heaven and the angel denote the same entity. Revelation 10:8 states, “And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel,” showing that the voice from heaven is different from both the aspirant and the angel. Thus, our conclusion is that the voice from heaven is the causal body.

The two witnesses “ascended up to heaven in a cloud.” Here, “ascended up to heaven” is taken as the recovery of the spiritual qualities that were lost in verse 7. A cloud is a symbol of divine guidance, as in Psalm 78:14: “he led them with a cloud.” In verse 12, divine guidance is transmitted by the causal body to the emotional and vital bodies.

A great earthquake is a symbol of a great destruction that is wrought by divine judgment, as in Ezekiel 38:19-20: “For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; ... and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.” In verse 13, the great earthquake is interpreted as the destruction of all mental judgments through the application of divine ideas. Goldsmith describes the corresponding lesson that the aspirant learns: “In the spiritual life, you place no labels on the world. You do not judge as to good or evil, sick or well, rich or poor.”⁵⁶ Paul, in Galatians 3:28, makes a similar point: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

What do the numerical symbols in verse 13 mean? Ten patriarchs are mentioned before the Flood (Genesis 5), the Egyptians were visited with ten plagues (Exodus 7-12), and there are ten commandments (Exodus 34:28). The *New Bible Dictionary* concludes: “The number 10, therefore, also signifies completeness.”⁵⁷ One thousand, which is ten cubed, signifies the completion of three processes. Genesis 2:3 states: “God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.” The *New Bible Dictionary* also concludes, “Seven ... is associated with completion, fulfillment and

In withholding judgment as to whether the situation is good or evil, we create within us something like a vacuum. Truth rushes with the Truth about the person, situation, or condition. Truth reveals Itself as the harmony unto the situation.

perfection.”⁵⁸ In the context of verse 13, “the tenth part of the city fell” is taken as the loss of all separative feelings, and “slain of men seven thousand” as the perfection that is achieved in the personality through the elimination of all egotistical activities on mental, emotional, and physical levels.

The aspirant is a subjective life who operates through his vehicles of expression, namely, his causal body and personality. The “remnant” in verse 13 refers to what remains after the foregoing purification has taken place. The purified personality certainly remains, but the subjective life and causal body also remain. Thus, the remnant refers to the aspirant and includes both vehicles of expression.

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:7, advises, “Neither be ye idolaters,” but Goldsmith provides a broad definition of idolatry: “To give power to anything external to consciousness is idolatry. It is to recognize a power apart from God. We must come to the inner conviction that power does not exist in form—any form, no matter how good the form may be.”⁵⁹ Judgment gives power to external conditions, so it is equivalent to idolatry. Thus, when the aspirant gives up judgment, he could be regarded as having true reverence towards God, because he is no longer idolatrous.

In the King James Version of the Bible, “fear” is a translation of a word that could also mean reverence, and the expression “fear of the LORD” often denotes reverence that invokes, or summons, illumination from God. For example, Proverbs 15:33 says, “The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom”; Psalms 25:12-14 states, “What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose ... The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant”; and Malachi 4:2 states, “But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” Accordingly, the

phrase “the remnant were affrighted” in verse 13 means that the earlier purification enables the aspirant to have reverence that invokes illumination from God, and the phrase “gave glory to the God of heaven” means that the aspirant shows forth that illumination.

Goldsmith summarizes the foregoing steps: “Here we are today with an evil person, condition, or disease. The first thing we do is retire within ourselves. I can’t call it good or evil. So if it is neither good nor evil, what is it? All I can know about it is that ‘it Is.’ What am I looking at? Am I seeing what Is—or what appears? The minute that I can agree that I am seeing an appearance, then I can disregard it, because behind that appearance is that which Is. In withholding judgment as to whether the situation is good or evil, we create within us something like a vacuum, and into that vacuum Truth rushes with the Truth about the person, situation, or condition. Truth reveals Itself as the harmony unto the situation.”⁶⁰

Consequently, verses 11 through 13 have the following psychological meaning:

(11) After learning the cost of judgment through the insights set forth in verses 4 through 10, the aspirant remembers ideas from God, which imply that the belief of separateness is unreal. The emotional and vital bodies start to recover, and the unredeemed parts no longer can justify themselves. (12) The causal body, which understands the divine ideas, calls upon the emotional and vital bodies to regain their spiritual qualities, which they then do in spite of the unredeemed parts. (13) Soon afterward, the aspirant’s application of the divine ideas eliminates all mental judgments, because they are based on the belief of separateness, all separative feelings, because they are based on mental judgments, and all egotistical activities, because they are based on separative feelings. This purification enables the aspirant to be invocative and show forth illumina-

tion from the God of heaven rather than that of the earth.

Conclusions

The *Revelation of St. John* is written mainly in symbols. If the symbols in chapter 11 are interpreted psychologically, they depict judgment’s formation, cost, and relinquishment. In particular, the “two witnesses” in the chapter show how the emotional and vital bodies are affected by judgment. As illustrated by this exegesis, the *Revelation* provides detailed and practical instructions for the spiritual journey. Although the *Revelation* appears in the holy book of the Judeo-Christian tradition, its instructions can be appreciated and applied by aspirants in all religious traditions.

Bailey says, “the *Book of Revelations* ... was dictated 1900 years ago by the disciple who is now known as the Master Hilarion,”⁶¹ and “the Master Hilarion ... in an earlier incarnation was Paul of Tarsus.”⁶² On the other hand, Bailey also says, “In the *New Testament*, John, the beloved disciple, was privileged to gain a cosmic picture and a true prophetic vision which he embodied in the *Apocalypse*.”⁶³ Modern scholars generally assign the following dates: Paul died around 64 or 65 CE. The *Revelation* was composed at a later date, sometime between 68 and 96 CE. John survived his contemporary apostles, dying about 100 CE. If all of these accounts are true, then Paul, after the death of his physical body, passed into the spiritual world and dictated the *Revelation* to John, who was still incarnated in the physical world.

Although we cannot confirm Bailey’s account that the author of the *Revelation* was in fact Paul, our exegesis of chapter 11 does show a definite Pauline character. In particular, this chapter contains several allusions to Paul’s writings, such as “two or three witnesses” (2 Corinthians 13:1) and “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), and utilizes many of his doctrines, such as self-examination (2 Corinthians 13:5), spiritual death (Romans 8:5-6), spiritual resurrection (Ephesians 2:4-6), unity of human beings

(Ephesians 4:25), and ending of judgment (Galatians 3:28).

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Sophia: the Gnostic Heritage

John F. Nash

Summary

This article presents a brief history of Sophia, best known of the divine feminine individualities of the West. Under her Hebrew name, *Chokmah*, Sophia emerged in late biblical times. But it was the Gnostics of the early Christian era who created the Sophia we recognize today. Sophia played a small but significant role in western mainstream Christianity and a much larger role in Eastern Orthodoxy. Russian Orthodox theologians not only had personal experiences of Sophia but also shared important insights into how she related to the Trinity and to the “invisible Church” that transcends historical Christianity. The article concludes with some remarks about the relevance of Sophia in modern spirituality.

Background

A masculine God dominates Judaism, Christianity and Islam. But female deities were popular in many ancient cultures, and they survive in the religions of Asia and the Pacific, and in the indigenous religions of the Americas. A popular theory is that the Great Mother once ruled supreme in much of the world but was overthrown when Indo-European tribes invaded the Middle East in the third millennium BCE. Allegedly the invaders brought with them a masculine warrior god, or several warrior gods, who eventually evolved into the Deity of the Abrahamic religions.¹

Whether or not there was once a supreme feminine deity—and the issue continues to be debated—there is no doubt that feminine deities were more common in the West in antiquity than they became during the 2,000 years of the Common Era. In recent decades resistance has increased not only among feminist theologians but also more generally to the convention that God is necessarily masculine and must be referred to in terms such as “He,” “Fa-

ther,” “Lord,” and so forth. Resistance has also increased to the custom of envisioning God in any kind of anthropomorphic terms.² Yet anthropomorphism is comforting to many people, and the concept of a powerful Goddess, complementing or even replacing the traditional masculine God, resonates with large numbers of thinking people.

Of all the anthropomorphized, feminine deities discussed today, Sophia is the most popular in the West, to judge by the literature of feminist theology, women’s studies, and New Age culture. The purpose of this article, then, is to present a brief review of the history and contemporary relevance of Sophia in western spirituality. Many questions remain concerning how Sophia can be reconciled with traditional Christian doctrine. However, opportunities also exist to integrate Sophia more firmly into the Trans-Himalayan teachings.

Sophia in Biblical Times

The Greek word for “Wisdom” is *Sophia*. But the story of Sophia extends back into biblical Judaism, where she was known by the Hebrew name *Chokmah*. *Chokmah* had a long history in the Old Testament, starting out simply as the quality or virtue of wisdom and gradually approaching the status of a divine individuality. She had a close relationship with the masculine Yahweh, even participating

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in the creation. In an often-quoted passage from *Proverbs* Chokmah addressed the reader:

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as *one brought up with him*: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.³

The next chapter in *Proverbs* linked Chokmah/Sophia with the proto-Eucharist. She invited the townspeople to her feast, saying: “Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.”⁴

By the late biblical era Sophia’s rise to divine status had gained considerable momentum. In *Wisdom of Solomon*, probably written in the second century BCE, she—now Sophia, because the book was written in Greek—had become an object of desire, even worship: “Wisdom is bright and unfading... she is easily seen by those who love her, and found by those who search for her.”⁵ Perhaps the most significant passage from the same book is:

I loved her and sought after her from my youth up,
And I undertook to make her my bride,
And I fell in love with her beauty.
She glorifies her high birth in living with God,
For the Lord of all loves her.
For she is initiated into the knowledge of God,
And is a searcher of his works.

But if the possession of wealth is to be desired in life,
What is richer than wisdom, which operates everything?⁶

Jewish reverence for Sophia was continuing to develop at the turn of the Common Era. Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of the Apostle Paul, referred to her as the “Daughter of God.”⁷ Elsewhere, he reaffirmed her role in the creation:

[T]he Creator of the universe is also the father of his creation; and... the mother was the knowledge of the Creator with whom God uniting... became the father of creation. And this knowledge having received the seed of God, when the day of her travail arrived, brought forth her only and well-beloved son... this world. Accordingly Wisdom [speaks] of herself in this manner: “God created me as the first of his works, and before the beginning of time did he establish me.” For it was necessary that all the things which came under the head of the creation must be younger than the mother and nurse of the whole universe.⁸

Sophia in Gnostic Christianity

Sophia was greatly revered among Gnostic Christians in the early centuries of the Common Era. Gnosticism’s relationship with nascent mainstream Christianity has been discussed at length elsewhere.⁹ Suffice it to say that Gnosticism thrived for some three centuries before succumbing to its own organizational weaknesses and relentless repression by the mainstream church.

Like Philo, Gnostics affirmed Sophia’s status as a divine personage and her role in creation. The author of *Eugnostos the Blessed*, one of the Nag Hammadi texts, called her “Mother of the Universe, whom some call ‘Love.’”¹⁰ She is also mentioned in the *Book of Enoch* (*1 Enoch*) and the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* (*2 Enoch*).¹¹ The latter presents a creation story in which God proclaimed: “On the sixth day I ordered My Wisdom to make man of seven substances... and I made [Sophia] a ruler to

rule upon the earth, and to have My wisdom.”¹² In *I Enoch*, Sophia sought “to make her dwelling among the children of men;” but, rejected by sinful humanity, she “found no dwelling-place” and “returned to her place and took her seat among the angels.”¹³

The Sophia of *I Enoch* may have been able to return to “her place” by choice, but in other accounts Sophia fell from grace and was rescued only after much suffering. According to the *Apocryphon of John*, Sophia’s fall stemmed from her desire “to bring forth a likeness out of herself without the consent of the Spirit... without her consort, and without his consideration.” She bore a son, Yaldabaoth, who “was imperfect and different from her appearance.”¹⁴ In due course the misshapen Yaldabaoth—usually assumed to have been the Hellenic Demiurge—was tricked into breathing life into man. However the evil powers imprisoned man in a physical body from which he was unable to escape.¹⁵ Sophia’s fall may have been linked to the fall of Adam or the expulsion of Lucifer and his fellow angels from heaven; or it may have symbolized the disintegration of the ancient world under the pressure of Roman conquest.

The most elaborate account of Sophia’s fall and eventual rescue is found in the *Pistis Sophia*.¹⁶ There, she fell into the depths and, for a long time, was held captive. *Pistis* is usually translated as “faith” or “faithful;” but another meaning, more appropriate in the circumstances, would be “hostage.”¹⁷ Sophia was tormented by the twelve *archons* of the zodiac. The archons stripped away her power and light, whereupon Sophia exclaimed: “I cried out for help, and my voice did not penetrate the darkness. And I looked to the height, so that the Light in which I had believed might help me.”¹⁸ In due course, Sophia offered 13

Valentinus also identified the Holy Spirit as God the Mother and sought to relate the virgin birth to a feminine Holy Spirit rather than to Mary. Unfortunately, when the New Testament was compiled in Greek, “Holy Spirit” was rendered by the neuter noun *Pneuma*.

“repentances” to appease the archons. The archons ignored her, but her plight eventually came to the notice of Christ, and he sent the archangels Michael and Gabriel to rescue her. Their first attempt failed, but Christ sent them back, charging the archangels to “guide the Sophia in all the places of the chaos until they bring her up, and [to] raise her upon their hands, lest her feet touch the darkness below, and those of the darkness seize her.”¹⁹ When Sophia was finally escorted back to the heaven-world “she rejoiced with a great joy.” “I will give thanks to thee, O Light,” she exclaimed, “for thou art a Savior... I will speak this song of praise to the Light, for he has saved me from the height and depth of the chaos; and from the eons of the archons of the sphere.”²⁰

In the *Pistis Sophia*, the story of Sophia’s fall and rescue emerges from a long series of allegorical dialogues between the risen Jesus and his disciples. Although Sophia was obviously the main character in the story, Mary Magdalene featured prominently in the dialogues, and a strong connection seemed to emerge between the two. Mary was the most vocal participant in the ongoing dialogue between Jesus and his disciples.²¹ In fact Peter complained: “My Lord, we are not able to suffer this woman who takes the opportunity from us, and does not allow anyone of us to speak, but she speaks many times.”²² But the *Pistis* Jesus praised Mary for her participation, emphasizing her status among the apostles and promising rewards for her insights. Connections between Sophia and Mary Magdalene appear elsewhere. A Coptic psalm by the Manichean poet Heracleides identified Mary as the “Spirit of Wisdom.”²³

Interesting parallels can also be drawn among the Gnostic Sophia, the Shekinah of esoteric Judaism,²⁴ and the woman mentioned in Chapter 12 of *Revelation*. After her redemption,

Sophia became the bride of Christ. *Eugnostos the Blessed* reported: “Now the Son of Man harmonized with Sophia, his consort, and revealed a great androgynous light.”²⁵ The Shekinah, the indwelling Glory of God, was exiled in the wilderness, eventually to be rescued and wedded to the Holy One.²⁶ And in *Revelation*: “[T]he woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”²⁷ Mainstream Christianity has customarily linked the woman in the wilderness with Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Valentinus (c.100–c.160), one of the best-known Gnostic writers,²⁸ referred to Sophia’s rightful home, the heaven-world, as the *Pleroma*, a Greek word that conveys the notion of “fullness.” The *Pleroma* overlaps in meaning with the traditional Christian heaven, but Gnosticism was not satisfied with a simple two-layer, heaven-earth model. Rather, the expanse of reality was divided into a series of planes. Typical cosmological models involved seven or eight planes; but the second-century Syrian Gnostic Basilides envisioned 365, one for each day of the cosmic year.

Regardless of how many planes there were, each had unique properties and was inhabited by its own spiritual entities. The entities might be benevolent or malevolent, though at the higher levels they tended to be mostly benevolent. Moreover, the entities often came in male-female pairs.²⁹ According to Basilides the inhabitants of the *Pleroma* included the *Logos* (“the Word”) and *Sophia* (“Wisdom”).³⁰ As the fourth Gospel makes clear, the *Logos* was Christ. The suggestion that the *Logos* and *Sophia* might be complementary divine entities is of the utmost importance and will be discussed further in this article. Meanwhile it should be noted that the Gnostics, like the Nestorians of the fifth century, distinguished the divine Christ from the human Jesus.³¹ Only Jesus died on the cross; the divine Christ could never die.

In their desire to suppress Gnosticism, the church fathers wrote numerous tracts attacking its teachings. In a polemical tract attacking Valentinus, Tertullian of Carthage (c.160–

c.220) scorned Gnostic accounts of the fall of Sophia: “After her vain endeavors, and the disappointment of her hope, she was, I suppose, disfigured with paleness and emaciation, and that neglect of her beauty which was natural to one who was deploring the denial of the Father—an affliction which was no less painful than his loss.”³²

The Neoplatonists of the third century CE onward tended to distance themselves from the Gnostics, despite having common roots. Nevertheless, both Plotinus (c.204–270), usually regarded as the “father” of Neoplatonism, and his younger contemporary, Porphyry, mentioned Sophia in their comments on Gnostic teachings.³³

Sophia in Mainstream Christianity

Sophia played a smaller, but still significant role, in mainstream Christianity. Theophilus, second-century bishop of Antioch, who is credited with coining the term “Trinity,” identified its three aspects as *Theos*, *Logos* and *Sophia*.³⁴ A century later, Paul of Samosata, also bishop of Antioch, did likewise. However, institutional Christianity was destined not to embrace Sophia in that role.³⁵ In his search for an appropriate third person of the Trinity, Athenagoras of Athens turned instead to the Hebrew/Zoroastrian Holy Spirit. Even then, there was still a chance that feminine characteristics would be retained. The Holy Spirit was known in biblical Judaism as the *Ruach* (“spirit” or “breath”). Grammatically, *Ruach* is a feminine noun, and church fathers Origen and Jerome both quoted the *Gospel of the Hebrews*, where the Holy Spirit is referred to as the “Mother.”³⁶ Valentinus also identified the Holy Spirit as God the Mother and sought to relate the virgin birth to a feminine Holy Spirit rather than to Mary.³⁷ Unfortunately, when the New Testament was compiled in Greek, “Holy Spirit” was rendered by the neuter noun *Pneuma*.³⁸ Given their growing misogyny, it is unlikely that the church fathers were disappointed when attempts to depict the Holy Spirit as feminine came to an end.

Notions of the sacred feminine occupied the thoughts of many people in the Middle Ages.

We need only think of the troubadours and Beatrice in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. Another individual who entertained such thoughts was Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), the famous French abbot. Among much else, he is considered father of the Western Marian cult. For one of his sermons, Bernard turned to the book of *Proverbs*: “Wisdom hath builded her house she hath hewn out her seven pillars.”³⁹ However, he stopped short of actually identifying “Wisdom” (Latin: *Sapientia*) as a feminine entity;⁴⁰ Wisdom to him “was none other than Christ Himself.” The identification of Sophia with Christ was not altogether without precedent. When the Emperor Justinian saw the newly constructed basilica of *Hagia Sophia* (“Saint Sophia”) in Constantinople, he is reported to have exclaimed, in a reference to Sophia's biblical origins: “Solomon, I have outdone thee.” However, despite the fact that “Sophia” is grammatically feminine, the basilica was dedicated to Christ.

Bernard's close contemporary and friend, Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), wrote a beautiful poem about Sophia—again in her Latin form *Sapientia*:

O power of Wisdom!
 You encompassed the cosmos,
 encircling and embracing all
 in one living orbit
 with your three wings:
 one soars on high,
 one distills the earth's essence,
 and the third hovers everywhere.
 Praise to you Wisdom, fitting praise!⁴¹

About 150 years later, an alchemical text, *Aurora Consurgens*, gained considerable popularity. Referring to Sophia/Sapientia, it declared: “[H]er fruit is more precious than all the riches of this world, and all the things that are desired are not to be compared with her... She is the tree of life.”⁴² Moreover her qualities were: “power, honor, strength, and dominion.”⁴³ The text did not identify its author, but many scholars believe it was none other than Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), often considered the greatest Christian theologian of the West. Near the end of his life Aquinas had a profound mystical experience that led him to question much of what he had written earlier.

If in fact the statements quoted above were made by Aquinas, they would be remarkable words for a cleric schooled in the patriarchal tradition.

An important contribution was made by the medieval anchorite Julian of Norwich (c.1342–1416).⁴⁴ During her long seclusion in a tiny cell in Norwich, England, she claimed to have had 16 visions of Christ, which formed the inspiration for a number of classic mystical texts, including *Revelations of Divine Love*. Interestingly, she referred to God as “our Mother.”⁴⁵ But she did not explicitly speak of Sophia.

Someone who did speak explicitly of Sophia was the Lutheran mystic Jakob Böhme (1575–1624), who lived in Silesia in what is now Poland. Böhme's formal education was limited, but he studied medicine, the Kabbalah, and the Hermetic arts. He may also have read the works of Meister Eckhart with whom he shared important beliefs.

Reflecting his Kabbalistic influence, Böhme explored the human and cosmic aspects of gender: “[T]he masculine principle is predominantly anthropomorphic and creative, whereas the feminine principle is predominantly cosmic and birth-giving.”⁴⁶ Echoing a theory usually attributed to Plato's Aristophanes, Böhme asserted that Adam initially was androgynous and virginal.⁴⁷ That virginity was embodied in Sophia: “not a female, but a chasteness and purity without a blemish.”⁴⁸ Adam lost his primeval virginity through the fall, and Sophia's place was taken by his earthly companion Eve. Thereafter man remained in an incomplete state, yearning for his primeval wholeness. The solution lay not in withdrawal into ascetic celibacy, as the church urged, but in a spiritual reunion of the masculine and feminine; through woman man could once again find his primeval Sophia.⁴⁹ The masculine-feminine tension was just one expression of the fundamental juxtaposition and resolution of pairs of opposites.⁵⁰ The tension might be the source of much suffering, but it provided an environment in which our spiritual potential could be realized.

Böhme identified Sophia with the Trinity; but, like the Gnostics, he saw a special relationship between her and Christ: “[T]he Virgin, the divine Wisdom, has given me her promise not to leave me in any misery; she will come to help me in the Son of Wisdom.”⁵¹

Englishwoman Jane Ward Lead (1624–1704), who was influenced by Jakob Böhme, had several visions. In one vision, a woman told her: “Behold I am God’s Eternal Virgin-Wisdom, whom thou hast been enquiring after; I am to unseal the Treasures of God’s deep Wisdom unto thee, and will be as Rebecca was unto Jacob, a true Natural Mother; for out of my Womb thou shalt be brought forth after the manner of a Spirit, Conceived and Born again... Now consider of my Saying till I return to thee again.”⁵² Speculations about a female messiah occupied the Guglielmites of the 13th century⁵³ as well as the 18th-century Shaker “Mother” Ann Lee. The Frenchman “Père” Barthelemy Enfantin, who was born 12 years after Lee’s death, predicted that he would meet a female messiah and mother of a new savior, though it is not recorded whether he did.

Sophia in Eastern Orthodox Christianity

Sophia has always been revered in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. “Sophia” is not always considered to be a feminine personage, and we saw that the basilica of *Hagia Sophia* in Constantinople was dedicated to Christ. Nevertheless, the feminine Sophia has found special resonance in the Russian Orthodox Church. Numerous churches are dedicated to St. Sophia, particularly in Russia, and she appears in many icons. The icon in the cathedral at Novgorod is one of the best known.⁵⁴ The Russian Orthodox liturgy for the feast of the Assumption of Mary, August 15, includes a reference to an icon of Sophia: “Let us behold the miraculous icon of the Wisdom of God... I dare to sing in praise of the Patroness of the

World, the most innocent Bride and Virgin... Sophia, the Wisdom of God.”⁵⁵

Jakob Böhme’s work influenced the Russian philosopher and poet Vladimir Sergeyeovich Solovyov (1853–1900).⁵⁶ Solovyov had three visions of Sophia, the first during Mass on Ascension Day, when he was nine years old. A poem he wrote many years later recalled the experience:

Blue all around. Blue within my soul. /
Blue pierced with shafts of gold. In your
hand a flower from other realms. / You
stood with radiant smile, / Nodded to me
and hidden in the mist.⁵⁷

Whereas the *Pistis Sophia* linked Sophia with Mary Magdalene, the language of Solovyov’s poem links her to Mary, the mother of Jesus.⁵⁸

Solovyov’s second encounter with Sophia was in the British Museum. As before, he saw her in blue and gold. “Her face shone before me. But Her face alone. And that instant was a long happiness.”⁵⁹ The third was in the Egyptian desert, where he awoke from sleep “To a scent of roses from air and earth... I saw all and all was one. One alone in the image of female beauty.”⁶⁰ Solovyov’s sensitive poetry blended his devotion to Sophia with romantic yearnings of unrequited love, and again we can see connections with the troubadours and Dante’s Beatrice.

Solovyov leaned toward Gnosticism in regarding Sophia as the feminine complement of the masculine Logos. Together, he believed, they comprised the overshadowing cosmic Christ. Russian theologian and scientist Pavel Florensky (1882–1937) was more cautious. He too saw Sophia as the Bride of the Logos; she represented God’s love for his creation, even providing the channel through which creation was accomplished. But that ability was not hers by right: “One in God, she is multiple in creation and is perceived in creation in her concrete appearances as the ideal person of man, as his Guardian Angel.”⁶¹

Eastern Orthodox theologians saw in Sophia a model of the invisible church, the *Ekklesia*.⁶² The *Ekklesia*, in that context, is not the Christianity we know, the imperfect church struggling through history, but the *Church*: a perfect Platonic Form. Pavel Florensky spoke of the Mystical Church, “the unifying, preexistent, heavenly, mystical form,” contrasting it with the “historical church.” Russian Orthodox priest Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov (1871–1944) took up the same theme. “The Church in the world,” he wrote, “is Sophia in process of becoming, according to the double impulse of creation and deification.” He added: “The Church is... not only the body of Christ, but also the temple of the Holy Ghost... [T]he conjoint revelation of the Son and the Spirit in the Church... is effected by the twofold mission of the two divine persons from the Father to the world. This is what makes the Church the revelation, in terms of created Wisdom, of the divine.”⁶³

Sergei Bulgakov also saw a close association between Sophia and the Glory of God, which traditionally was associated more closely with the Shekinah of Judaic tradition.⁶⁴ Sophia, he argued, “is the glory of God and either expression could be used indiscriminately of divine revelation within the Godhead, for they both refer to the same divine essence.”⁶⁵ Commenting on the passage in *Proverbs*, cited earlier in this article, in which Chokmah/Sophia was with God “from the beginning,” Bulgakov identified Sophia as the “prototype of creation.”⁶⁶ Correspondingly, he saw creation—and particularly humanity—as the “creaturely Sophia,” the actualization of that prototype.⁶⁷

If Sophia is a divine feminine individuality, how does she relate to the Trinity? We have already seen that Theophilus of Antioch and

Paul of Samosata identified Sophia as the third person of the Trinity. And Böhme identified her with the entire Trinity. Florensky identified Sophia as a “nonsubstantial” fourth person of the Trinity:

Sophia takes part in the life of the Trihypostatic Divinity, enters into the interior of the Trinity, and enters into communion with Divine Love. Since Sophia is a *fourth*, creaturely, and therefore nonsubstantial Person, she does not “form” a Divine Unity.... As the fourth Person, she, by God’s condescension (but in no way by her own nature!), introduces a distinction in relation to herself in the providential activity of the Hypostases of the Trinity.⁶⁸

He added: “From the point of view of the Hypostasis of the Father, Sophia is the ideal *substance*, or ground of creation... From the point of view of the...

Word, Sophia is the *reason* of creation... From the point of view of the... Spirit, Sophia represents the *spirituality* of creation, its holiness, purity, and immaculateness, i.e., its beauty.”⁶⁹

While Pavel Florensky was executed in a Soviet purge, Sergei Bulgakov managed to escape to the West. But Bulgakov was criticized by the Orthodox Church hierarchy on the grounds that his Sophiology undermined trinitarian doctrine. Forced to distance himself from Florensky’s views, he retreated to the position that Sophia is the “nonhypostatic essence” of God. Since the divine essence is shared by all three hypostases, Sophia is neither a fourth hypostasis nor an expression of any one of them to the exclusion of the others: “The three persons... have one life in common, that is, one Oursia [divine essence], one Sophia.”⁷⁰ Bulgakov acknowledged distinct manifestations of Sophia through the three trinitarian persons, however. Her expression through the Son and Holy Spirit is “immediate,” while the “relation of Sophia to the Father is mediated through his relation to the other hypostases.”⁷¹ Interestingly, Bulgakov saw

Eastern Orthodox theologians saw in Sophia a model of the invisible church, the *Ekklesia*. The *Ekklesia*, in that context, is not the Christianity we know, the imperfect church struggling through history, but the *Church*: a perfect Platonic Form.

Sophia, rather than the Logos, as the mediator between God and the world, arguing that “the hypostasis of the Logos cannot provide such a unifying principle.”⁷²

Eastern Orthodox teachers speak of *theosis*, or “deification.”⁷³ Theosis, the spiritual goal of the great saints, is a process of enlightenment brought about by the agency of divine energy; Christ’s transfiguration on Mount Tabor is regarded as the supreme example. We can envision, as the Russian theologians did, global theosis as the spiritual goal of Christianity—perhaps even the whole of humanity. For Sergei Bulgakov that global theosis was the final manifestation of Sophia, the Bride of Christ, and the implications for a new appreciation of the Divine Feminine are obvious. Through our individual and collective spiritual growth, perhaps we can glimpse the deification of the church and humanity and the manifestation of Sophia on earth.

Concluding Remarks

According to legend, Pythagoras coined the term “philosophy” when he exclaimed “I love wisdom [*sophia*]”—though wags have long suggested that he was referring to a woman of his affections. Be that as it may, “Wisdom” is a feminine noun in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages, and its personification may have been inevitable. As we have seen, that personification was taken to great heights in late-biblical Judaism, in the Gnosticism of the early centuries of the Common Era, and in Russian Orthodox theology in the 19th and 20th centuries. Sophia/Sapientia made significant but less prominent inroads into mainstream western Christianity. Meanwhile, “Theosophy” and “Anthroposophy” are other familiar words which incorporate *sophia*, and much has been written about their significance.⁷⁴

By the latter part of the 20th century Sophia had been co-opted by feminist theologians seeking a goddess. In the process “Sophia” became a catch-phrase—one selling hundreds of books, tapes and DVDs—for all things feminine and divine. She now absorbs not only Chokmah and the Shekinah but also the Greek Athena and the Buddhist Prajnaparamita

and Kuan-Yin. Yet if Sophia has lost her specific identity, humanity has gained insights into its own nature, including the masculine-feminine balance that Jakob Böhme urged that we re-establish within ourselves. To quote Carol Parrish-Harra:

Who is this numinous Sophia? She is Mother Wisdom, come to guide us home... [Sophia] dances through my life, peeks through the windows of my mind, whispers words of wisdom, laughing and playing... To follow Sophia is the opportunity of our time... She leads to dynamic adventure requiring that we face our fears, learn to love, and dare to move more fully toward our potential.⁷⁵

That said, to remain faithful to the traditional understanding of Sophia may be more rewarding. Even in her traditional form she is a powerful figure. She could appear to Solovyov in human form. She serves a cosmic role, perhaps subsuming the Trinity. And she serves as a symbol for the overarching Ekklesia. Elsewhere,⁷⁶ this author has suggested that the Ekklesia can provide a model of the New World Religion discussed by Alice Bailey.⁷⁷ “Sophia in process of becoming,” to use Bulgakov’s phrase, can extend beyond Christianity. Understanding her role, as it pertains to the new religion, could be especially valuable, and opportunities for further work in this area clearly exist.

For the moment, perhaps, Sophia’s role as the Bride of the Logos is the most evocative. Considering Sophia to be a feminine complement to Christ can give new meaning to the Christian message. It can alleviate stereotypes of Christianity as a patriarchal religion. It can also open up new avenues for bringing Christianity into closer contact with other esoteric systems, like the Kabbalah, which stress gender balance at all levels of reality.

Certainly, the whole concept of Sophia raises difficult theological issues. Reconciling Sophia with trinitarian doctrine would be as much a concern for Western religious authorities as it was for theologians in the East. Mainstream theologians in West and East have even been reluctant to revisit notions of a dis-

inction between the human Jesus and the divine Christ—though esoteric Christianity leans heavily in that direction.⁷⁸ The suggestion that Sophia in some way manifested in, or overshadowed, a human being, even someone of the status of Mary of Nazareth, would offend many theologians. Perhaps Theosophical research on the World Mother might help in that regard.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, the popular myth that Mary Magdalene was Jesus' wife may betray a still dim, but growing, realization of a cosmic marriage between the divine Christ and Sophia. Clearly, more work needs to be done in all these areas. The effort would be challenging, but it could provide important new insights.

¹ See for example Merlin Stone, *When God was a Woman*, Dorset Press, 1976, especially ch. 4. See also: Robert Graves, *The White Goddess*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1948, and Monica Sjöö & Barbara Mor, *The Great Cosmic Mother*, Harper & Row, 1975.

² For example, Paul Tillich proposed that God should be envisioned as the "Ground of Being." See his *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 1, University of Chicago Press, 1951, p. 240.

³ *Proverbs* 8:22-30. Emphasis added. The Hebrew *aman*, which is rendered here as "one brought up with him," can also be translated as "trusted confidant," even "nurse." However, some Bibles reduce *aman* to "a master worker" or "architect," difficult to reconcile with "delight," which follows. Others go in the other direction and use "darling." Unless stated otherwise, all biblical quotations are taken from the King James Version.

⁴ *Proverbs* 9:5.

⁵ *Wisdom of Solomon* 6:12 (transl: E. Goodspeed), *The Apocrypha*, Random House, 1959, p. 188. The King James Bible has "Wisdom is glorious."

⁶ *Wisdom of Solomon* 8:2-5, p. 192.

⁷ Philo Judaeus, *De Fuga et Inventione*, IX, 52 (transl: C. Yonge), Bohn, 1854-1890.

⁸ Philo Judaeus, *De Ebrietate*, VIII, (transl: C. Yonge), Bohn, 1854-1890.

⁹ John F. Nash, *Christianity: the One, the Many*, Xlibris, 2007, vol. 1, pp. 255-284.

¹⁰ *Eugnostos the Blessed*. III, 80, James M. Robinson (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Library*, Revised Edition, Harper-San Francisco, 1988, p. 231.

¹¹ The two books were not included in the canonical Bible, but *1 Enoch* was widely referenced by the early Christian fathers. Tertullian referred to it as "scripture," and there is even a reference to it in *Hebrews* 11:5. The authors—and there were probably more than one—were not the biblical Enoch, the grandfather of Noah; but they describe Enoch's visions. The authors were probably Hellenic Jews writing somewhere between 200 BCE and 100 CE. The books seem to have been written in a mixture of Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek.

¹² *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, XXX:8, 12 (transl: W. Morfill), Clarendon Press, 1896/1999, pp. 39-40.

¹³ *The Book of Enoch*, XLII:1-2 (transl: R. Charles), The Book Tree, 1917/1999, p. 61.

¹⁴ *Apocryphon of John*, II:9-11 (transl: F. Wisse), James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*. Revised version. HarperCollins, 1988.

¹⁵ Frederick Wisse, Introduction to *The Apocryphon of John*, James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Library*, Revised version, HarperCollins, 1988, p. 104.

¹⁶ Violet MacDermot, Introduction to *The Fall of Sophia*, Lindisfarne Books, 2001, pp. 22-25. Two manuscripts of the *Pistis Sophia* were acquired on the Egyptian antiquities market in 1770 or thereabouts.

¹⁷ In Greco-Roman society a hostage might be held to guarantee performance of a contract: i.e., to guarantee "good faith."

¹⁸ "Pistis Sophia" book 1, § 32 (transl: V. MacDermot), *The Fall of Sophia*, Lindisfarne Books, 2001, p. 122.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, book 2, § 73, p. 166.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, book 2, § 81, p. 174. The pairs of aeons can be compared to the sephiroth on the outer pillars of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.

²¹ As Susan Haskins pointed out, Mary Magdalene asked 39 of the 46 questions in the first two books of the *Pistis Sophia*. See her *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor*, Riverhead Books, 1993, p. 47.

²² *Ibid.*, § 36, p. 125.

²³ Susan Haskins, *Mary Magdalen: Myth and Metaphor*, p. 49.

²⁴ Nash, *Christianity: the One, the Many*, vol. 1, p. 268.

²⁵ *Eugnostos the Blessed*, III, 3, 81, p. 218.

²⁶ John F. Nash, "The Shekinah: the Indwelling Glory of God," *Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2005, pp. 33-40.

²⁷ *Revelation* 12:6.

- ²⁸ Valentinus was educated in Alexandria, but in 136 CE he moved to Rome and remained there for 25 years.
- ²⁹ The polar entities can be compared to the *sephiroth* on the outer pillars of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life.
- ³⁰ Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis*, (transl: R. Wilson), Harper, 1977/1984, p. 311.
- ³¹ The Nestorian heresy, which claimed that “Jesus Christ” was two persons and two natures, was condemned by the First Council of Ephesus in 431. Official Christian doctrine, from then on, insisted that Jesus Christ was one person with two natures, human and divine. John Nestorius, after whom the heresy was named, may not in fact have held the “two person” belief.
- ³² Tertullian, *Against the Valentinians*, 10, (transl: A. Roberts), Gnostic Society Library.
- ³³ See for example Plotinus, *Enneads*, ninth tractate, §10. Source: Internet Sacred Text Archive
- ³⁴ Theophilus of Antioch, *Epistle to Autolychum*, II, 15, Theophilus used the term *trias* (Greek, “number three”), which was translated into the Latin *trinitas* and, in turn, into the English “Trinity.” Theophilus of Antioch is not to be confused with the fourth-century patriarch of Alexandria of the same name.
- ³⁵ Sophia managed to survive in the East, though not always in connection with the Third Person of the Trinity. In the West the only vestige of the Trinity’s sophianic origins is a vague awareness that wisdom, in its everyday sense, flows from the Holy Spirit.
- ³⁶ See for example: Robert J. Miller (ed.), *The Complete Gospels*, HarperCollins, 1992, pp. 428-433. No complete manuscript of the *Gospel of the Hebrews* survives.
- ³⁷ Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, Ballantine Books, 1993, p. 100.
- ³⁸ See for example: *Acts 2:4*.
- ³⁹ *Proverbs 9:1*.
- ⁴⁰ Bernard, who wrote in Latin, would have used *Sapientia*, which, like the Hebrew *Chokmah* and the Greek *Sophia*, is a feminine noun.
- ⁴¹ Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard’s Theology of the Feminine*, Univ. of California Press, 1978, p. 64. See also Peter Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1970, p. 157.
- ⁴² Thomas Aquinas (attributed to), *Aurora Consurgens*, I: 20-25, (transl: Marie-Louise von Franz.), Inner City Books, 2000, p. 35.
- ⁴³ *Ibid*, V: 13, pp. 53-55.
- ⁴⁴ “Julian’s” real name is not known.
- ⁴⁵ Julian of Norwich, *Showings* (Long Text), ch. 52, Paulist Press, 1978, p. 279.
- ⁴⁶ Jakob Böhme, *The Threefold Life of Man*, (transl: S. Janos), Quoted in: N. Berdyaev, *Studies Concerning Jacob Boehme*, etude II, 1930, pp. 34-62.
- ⁴⁷ In Plato’s *Symposium* Aristophanes declared that man was originally androgynous but was cut in two by Zeus to curb his pride. Ever since, man has sought his female half, and vice versa.
- ⁴⁸ Böhme, *The Threefold Life of Man*, pp. 34-62. See also Böhme’s *Mysterium Magnum*. London, 1654, chapter 18.
- ⁴⁹ For a discussion of Böhme’s teachings on gender and their influence on William Blake see: Hirst, *Hidden Riches*, pp. 92-96.
- ⁵⁰ The pairs of opposites also include good and evil. For a discussion of the opposites as they are addressed in the Kabbalah see John F. Nash, “Duality, Good and Evil, and the Approach to Harmony,” *Esoteric Quarterly*, Fall 2004, pp. 15-26.
- ⁵¹ Jakob Boehme, *Confessions* (transl: W. Scott Palmer), Harper and Bros., 1954, p. 97.
- ⁵² Jane Lead, *A Fountain of Gardens*, Journal Entries: 1670-1675, Bradford, 1696. Lead was often spelled “Leade.” See also Julie Hirst, “The Divine Ark: Jane Lead’s Vision of the Second Noah’s Ark,” *Esoterica*, vol. VI, pp. 16-25.
- ⁵³ The Guglielmites of Milan, Italy, formed a small, close-knit sect devoted to “St. Guglielma” (d. 1282), a Cistercian oblate. Members of the sect were executed by the Inquisition in 1300.
- ⁵⁴ See for example Thomas Schipflinger, *Sophia-Maria: A Holistic Vision of Creation*, Weiser Books, 1998, Plate 17.
- ⁵⁵ Source: Sophia Foundation of North America. Translated from Old Slavonic by Natalia Bonetskaya.
- ⁵⁶ Solovyov inspired the character Alyosha in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*.
- ⁵⁷ Vladimir Solovyov, “The Three Meetings,” Quoted in Eugenia Gourvitch, *Vladimir Solovyov: the Man and the Prophet*, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1992, p. 25.
- ⁵⁸ Rudolf Steiner spoke of Mary as the “Virgin Sophia.” See his *Gospel of St. John*, Anthroposophic Press, 1908/1940, p. 191.
- ⁵⁹ Solovyov, “The Three Meetings.” p. 32.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 34, 36.
- ⁶¹ Pavel Florensky, *The Pillar and the Ground of Truth* (transl: B. Jakim), Princeton University Press, 1997, p. 239. Emphasis in original. Florensky’s Sophiological doctrines are interest-

- ing since he wrote at length about deep male friendships that express both *agape* and *eros*.
- ⁶² John F. Nash, *Christianity: the One, the Many*, vol. 2, pp. 280-283.
- ⁶³ Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia: the Wisdom of God*, Lindisfarne Press, 1993, pp. 138-139.
- ⁶⁴ See note 26.
- ⁶⁵ Bulgakov, *Sophia*, p. 50.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 65..
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 252. Emphasis and parenthetical comment in original. Eastern Orthodox theologians tend to use “hypostasis” rather than “person” of the Trinity.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253. Emphasis in original
- ⁷⁰ Sergei Bulgakov, *Sophia: the Wisdom of God* (transl. P. Thompson *et al.*), Lindisfarne Press, 1993, pp. 35-37.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- ⁷³ See for example Gregory Palamas (14th century), “Topics of Natural and Theological Science and on the Moral and Ascetic Life,” §105, *Philokalia*, vol. 4, p. 393; also Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Penguin Books, 1963/1977, pp. 33-34.
- ⁷⁴ See for example Christopher Bamford, Introduction to Rudolf Steiner, *Isis, Mary, Sophia*, SteinerBooks, 2003, pp. 7-44.
- ⁷⁵ Carol Parrish-Harra, *Sophia Sutras: Introducing Mother Wisdom*, Sparrow Hawk Press, 2006, p. 271.
- ⁷⁶ John F. Nash, “Festival of Goodwill: the New World Religion,” *Esoteric Quarterly*, Summer 2009, pp. 76-80.
- ⁷⁷ See for example Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, Lucis Publishing Co., 1957, pp. 393ff.
- ⁷⁸ See for example: Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, First Church of Christ Scientist, 1875, pp. 333, p. 336; Daniel Andreev, *Rose of the World*, 1.3, Daniel Andreev Charity Foundation, 1997; Annie W. Besant, *Esoteric Christianity*, Theosophical Publishing House, 1914/1953, p. 89; Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation: Human and Solar*, Lucis Publishing Company, 1922, pp. 43-44.
- ⁷⁹ John F. Nash, “The World Mother: Teachings of Helena Roerich and Geoffrey Hodson,” *Esoteric Quarterly*, Winter 2006, pp. 35-46.

The Path to Sirius

Barbara Maré

Abstract

This is a version of a paper originally written over the period of the 2002 Leo Full Moon at the Shamballa School in New Zealand. It attempts to penetrate the visual and verbal symbolism of the Path to Sirius as described in the books of Alice Bailey in order to understand and intuit the Principle of “Freedom.” The path to Sirius is a path of love, of mind (manas) and of karma. Following this path requires the awakening of the heart and ajna centers, the building of the Antahkarana and the eventual raising of kundalini. This is a path of electric fire whose methods involve rotary motion and rhythm. Its attributes are cosmic rapture and bliss. The significance of the number four is discussed, as is the zodiacal sign ruling this path. A conclusion is drawn about the Creative Hierarchy ruling the Path to Sirius.

Introduction

When we look up into the night sky, Sirius is the largest and most brilliant star in the heavens. It is situated in the constellation Canis Major and is located tropically at 14 degrees of the sign Cancer.¹

Sirius was astronomically the foundation of the Egyptian religious system. It was considered the embodiment of Isis, wife and consort of the god Osiris (who appeared in the sky as Orion).² There are several versions of the myth of Osiris, but in all of them Osiris is killed by his brother Seth. Grieving, Isis gathers up the body of her husband, breathes life back into him and conceives their son Horus. Thus, Isis is often depicted as a kite (a bird of prey) with outstretched wings, symbolizing her power over life and death.³

Sirius was also called Sopdu by the ancient Egyptians and Sothis by the Greeks.⁴ In ancient Egypt the heliacal rising of Sirius coincided with the annual flooding of the Nile, so this great star was associated with fertility, abundance and life. A number of the ancient pyramids were aligned to Sirius. Most famously, the southern shaft of the Queen’s Chamber of the Pyramid of Cheops at Giza points to Sirius (while the southern shaft from the King’s Chamber points to Orion’s Belt).⁵

Ancient knowledge about the star Sirius was revealed in the late 1930s when the elders of the Dogon tribe in Mali, West Africa, shared their most important secret tradition with two French anthropologists, Marcel Griaule and Germain Dieterlen.

The Dogon believed that Sirius had a companion star that was invisible to the human eye. They also understood that the star moved in a 50-year elliptical orbit around Sirius, was small and incredibly heavy, and rotated on its axis. The Dogon name for Sirius B—the smaller star—is Po Tolo, which means star (tolo) and smallest seed (po). Seed refers to creation, perhaps human creation. The Dogon say that this information was given to them by the Nommo, amphibious beings from the Sirian star system.⁶

About the Author

Barbara Maré was a student and then a teacher at Shamballa School in Palmerston North, New Zealand from 2001 to 2003. Editor, booklover and poet, in 2003 she established White Stone Publishing, specializing in the publication of books on the Ageless Wisdom and astrology. She currently lives in Wellington, New Zealand.

Dogon beliefs regarding Sirius' binary nature were confirmed by discoveries in astronomy. Although the Sirius star is visible to the human eye, Sirius B was hidden. It was not formally discovered until 1862 by Alvan Clark as he was testing the new lens he had made for Dearborn Observatory's 18½ inch refracting telescope. At first Clark thought he had found a defect in the lens, but later realized he had discovered the companion star that had been suspected since 1844. In the 1920s it was determined that Sirius B was a white dwarf star.⁷

Archaeologist, philosopher, scientist and alchemist Schwaller de Lubicz (1865 – 1961) amassed substantial evidence of the advanced level of scientific and metaphysical wisdom possessed by ancient Egyptian civilization. In his book *Sacred Science*, de Lubicz further confirms that the ancient Egyptians had knowledge of Sirius' binary nature. His work showed that the Egyptians associated Isis with the white star Sirius B and Osiris with the red star Sirius A.⁸

In the Ageless Wisdom tradition the Sirian system is said to be the higher self of our solar system. Sirius "is to our solar Logos what the Monad is to the spiritual man."⁹ The Blue Lodge of our Earth is an outpost of the White Lodge on Sirius. Once we have passed through "Earth School" and attained liberation we can then proceed upon one of seven Cosmic Paths. The Path to Sirius is the fourth Cosmic Path, and we are told that "the bulk of liberated humanity goes this way."¹⁰

We might wonder what the point would be of learning about the Cosmic Paths when we are all still struggling on the lower reaches of the Earthly initiations. It is important to remember though, that even the least probationer is evolving under Sirian Law, for the Law of Karma that guides all the initiations upon the path of human evolution is a Sirian Law. Thus Sirius is "the great star of initiation."¹¹ We might possibly aim to prepare for the third initiation during our lifetimes (the Transfiguration by which the personality comes under the control of the Soul). The

Third Degree or initiation is the First Degree of the White Lodge on Sirius.¹²

The Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul says that of all the Cosmic Paths, the Path to Sirius is "the most veiled in the clouds of mystery."¹³ In *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* he summarizes this path:

Path IV—The Path to Sirius

Attributes.....cosmic rapture and rhythmic bliss.

Source.....Sirius via the Sun which veils a zodiacal sign.

Hierarchy.....veiled by the numbers 14 and 17.

Method.....duplex rotary motion and rhythmic dancing upon the square.

Symbol.....two wheels of electric fire, revolving around an orange Cross, with an emerald at the center.

Quality.....unrevealed.¹⁴

We will attempt to thin the veils of this mystery by discussing the key elements of the path to Sirius.

Love

The Path to Sirius is the path of Love. The energies coming from Sirius "are related to the love-wisdom aspect or to the attractive power of the solar Logos, to the soul of that Great Being."¹⁵ The path of alignment to Sirius is through the human, systemic and cosmic heart centers.¹⁶

Sirius

The solar Logos / Heart of the Sun

Jupiter

Venus

The Lord of Life Himself, the heart center of Shamballa

The life of the Monad

The Christ, the heart center of the Hierarchy

The Master at the center of His ashram

The egoic lotus

The heart center in the head

The disciple's heart center

In this Second Ray solar system, our solar Logos is the heart center.¹⁷ The energies from Sirius pass through the Heart of the Sun.¹⁸ Our Sun is heart-shaped, with a depression at what we might call its north pole, which is the result of the impact of the energies that come from the Great Bear, Sirius and the Pleiades. The Tibetan explains that "the main stream of energy enters at the top depression in the solar sphere and passes through the entire ring-pass-not, *bisecting it into two halves.*"¹⁹ [emphasis added] The two-chambered heart of the Sun is a fundamental expression of the duality of our solar system.

The "method" of the Path to Sirius is described as "duplex" rotary motion because the heart is two-chambered. It is two things both separated from and connected to each other. "Duplex" could also refer to the rotary motion of the stars Sirius A and B around a central point.

Rotary motion

The Third Ray of Active Intelligence "is the cause of rotary motion, and therefore of the spheroidal form of all that exists."²⁰ This is the Ray of Matter; Brahma. It is Fire by Friction.²¹ The Tibetan explains that the matter of our solar system is intelligent "because it is the product of the first solar system, in which Intelligence was the point of achievement."²²

The goal of rotary motion is to increase the vibration of matter.²³ This is the work we do on the path of evolution to lift the frequency of our vehicles by purification so that the light of the Soul can shine through.

Karma

From a cosmic perspective and through long eons of time, karma works out through matter and through all the systemic planes of nature, including our human systems. Esoteric philosophy informs us that Sirius is the source of karma for our solar system:

"The Lipika Lords of our system, the systemic Lords of Karma, are under the rule of a greater corresponding Lord on Sirius."²⁴ The stream of logoc Soul energy into the heart of the Sun from the Great Bear, Sirius and the Pleiades "enters that group of active lives whom we call the 'Lords of Karma.'"

The Tibetan explains that from the center they send out "to the four quarters of the circle the four Maharajahs, their representatives. So is the equal armed Cross formed—and all the wheels of energy set in motion. This is conditioned by the karmic seeds of an earlier system."²⁵ Perhaps this "equal armed Cross" of the heart of the Sun relates to the "orange Cross" that makes up part of the symbol of the Path to Sirius. The Cross of the Sirian path "is pictured in orange fire."²⁶

The planet Saturn embodies the Law of Karma from Sirius within our solar system. The Third Ray of Saturn is green in color; hence the emerald at the center of the orange cross symbolizes Saturn. The emerald is akin to the jewel in the egoic lotus—the point at the center that focuses higher energy.

Orange is the color of the Fifth Ray of Venus. Orange and green, the Fifth and Third Rays, were the colors of the first solar system.²⁷

Rhythm

The "method" of the Path to Sirius is described as "rhythmic dancing upon the square." Every rotating sphere of matter is characterized by the three qualities of inertia, mobility and rhythm.²⁸ Rhythm is Sattva, the highest quality of Matter. Rhythm is alignment with Will or spiritual Purpose.²⁹

As the dense physical is not a principle, these are the three qualities of etheric matter or prana.³⁰ Sattva is the Monadic aspect.

Sattva.....Energy of Spirit.....Monad.....Father.....rhythm or harmonious vibration

Rajas.....Energy of Soul.....Ego.....Son
.....mobility or activity

Tamas.....Energy of Matter.....Personality
.....Holy Ghost.....inertia.³¹

The sensing of the qualities of Matter “produces experience and eventual liberation.”³² When the Soul-infused mind becomes dominant, the disciple passes into the sattvic state where he is harmonized in himself and consequently with all around him.³³

Manas

Karma works through manas; “thus is liberation achieved.”³⁴

The star Sirius is the source of Manas or mind in our solar system, and within our systemic evolution it was Venus that carried the spark of mind to the Earth chain.³⁵ Venus is the planet of the Fifth Ray and the Fifth

Ray Lord is known as “The Brother from Sirius.”³⁶

We live within a system of duality and our human minds tend to divide things into opposites: good and bad, right and wrong. The lower mind analyzes and separates. The higher mind is more holistic and perceives interconnections. The heart seeks commonality. Venus is the goddess of Love and the planet of Manas or mind. It synthesizes the pairs of opposites through activation of the intuition. So Venus is the middle principle, the Soul or consciousness principle between Spirit and Matter. It establishes right relationship.

The five-pointed star is the symbol of Venus. The six-pointed star (King Solomon’s seal) symbolizes humanity because the Fourth Creative Hierarchy (the human) represents the intersection of the involutory and evolutionary arcs. From the inverted triangle stream the Seven (unliberated) Creative Hierarchies, and from the upright triangle stream the Seven Rays, “blending themselves with Reality on the horizon line

between shadow and substance.”³⁷ Our goal is the transformation of the lower nature, the redemption of Matter to Spirit through the vehicle of the human Soul, the transmutation of the six-pointed star into the five-pointed star through Manas, the fifth principle.

Zodiacal sign of the Path to Sirius

The “source” of the path to Sirius is “via the Sun, which veils a zodiacal sign.” The zodiacal sign is Leo, of which the Sun is the exoteric, esoteric and hierarchical ruler (veiling other planets). “August, which is ruled by Leo, is the month of the Dog-star, or of Sirius, which thus brings Sirius into close relation to Leo. Leo, in the cosmic sense ... is ruled by Sirius.”³⁸

The energies of Sirius come through the star Regulus, which is called “the heart of the Lion.”³⁹ In the sign Leo, heart and mind, the 2 and the 5, are synthesized. As Djwhal Khul explains:

“...that which is the fifth in order is destined to be the instrument, the vehicle or the implementary factor for the second. The Universal Mind, as it works through all the planes of our conscious planetary life, is the creative agent and the form-building factor which makes the revelation of love possible.”⁴⁰

The cave of the Nemean Lion is the cave of the heart; and the Fifth Ray comes through Leo. Sirius is the “bright sun where shines the light of love”⁴¹ as well as the source of logocic Manas.⁴² The path to Sirius through Venus and Jupiter also expresses the 5 and the 2.

The Four

The path to Sirius is the fourth Cosmic Path, so the number 4 has many correspondences: The human kingdom is the fourth Creative

The Path to Sirius is the path of Love. The energies coming from Sirius “are related to the love-wisdom aspect or to the attractive power of the solar Logos, to the soul of that Great Being.” The path of alignment to Sirius is through the human, systemic and cosmic heart centers.

Hierarchy.⁴³ The path to Sirius is focused on the buddhic plane, which is the fourth Cosmic Physical plane. Mercury, planet of the Fourth Ray, is buddhi or intuition. As hierarchical ruler of Scorpio, Mercury governs the fourth Creative Hierarchy, Humanity. Helena Blavatsky writes: “Sirius was called the ‘Dog Star.’ It was the star of Mercury, or Buddha, called the ‘Great Instructor of mankind.’”⁴⁴

Likewise, Scorpio—the sign of the Disciple, ruled hierarchically by Mercury—has a close relationship to Sirius.⁴⁵ Djwhal Khul says:

“Scorpio is under the influence or inflowing energy of Sirius. This is the great star of initiation because our Hierarchy ... is under the supervision or spiritual magnetic control of the Hierarchy of Sirius.”⁴⁶

The plane of buddhi is the plane of at-onement, the blending of diversities into group unity.⁴⁷ The Law of Magnetic Control is the law of the buddhic plane, governing the Spiritual Triad (atma – buddhi – manas). It controls the Ego in the causal body on the mental Plane. The Law of Magnetic Control governs the manifestation of Spirit into Matter through the permanent atoms of the causal body, which store the essence of the qualities of the subtle bodies (physical/etheric, astral and mental). Therefore, when we attain a touch of buddhi, human evolution is advanced.

Cosmic Rapture and Buddhi

One of the “attributes” of the path to Sirius is “cosmic rapture.” Rapture is buddhic enlightenment. The last step on the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha is “Right Rapture.” The message of the Buddha is about detachment from Matter in order to attain Liberation:

“Cease to identify yourselves with material things; gain a proper sense of the spiritual values; cease regarding possessions and earthly existence as of major importance; follow the Noble Eight-fold

Path which is the path of right relations.”⁴⁸

The Antahkarana

The path to Sirius is about building the Antahkarana. The Antahkarana is the bridge between the higher and lower mind that the disciple builds by meditation, study and service upon the path of evolution. The Tibetan tells us that it will be through a comprehension of the human Antahkarana that an understanding of the path to Sirius will eventually be gained.⁴⁹

The Antahkarana is the path to Sirius, linking the lower Quarternary with the Spiritual Triad (atma – buddhi – manas) and the Monad on all levels of the microcosm and the macrocosm.

Venus and Mercury are the two planets primarily involved in the building of the Antahkarana. Gemini—ruled exoterically by Mercury and esoterically by Venus—forms the point of entrance for cosmic energy from Sirius.⁵⁰ A magnetic field was established between Earth (whose hierarchical ruler is Gemini), Venus and Mercury, allowing the White Lodge on Sirius to intervene with the spark of Mind for humanity.⁵¹

It is interesting to note that Venus is the higher self of the Earth. Venus rules right relationship and the synthesis of all opposites. Our Planetary Logos came from the Venus chain of the Earth scheme.⁵²

Mercury, “The ‘divine Intermediary,’ carries messages between the poles with speed and light.”⁵³ Governed by the Fourth Ray of Harmony through Conflict, Mercury functions as the communicator, the “messenger of the gods.”

Venus rules the Fifth Creative Hierarchy, the human personality, and Mercury rules the fourth Creative Hierarchy, humanity as solar angels, the initiates. Together Mercury (Hermes) and Venus (Aphrodite) form the divine hermaphrodite upon the buddhic plane, the eventual goal of human evolution.⁵⁴ The divine hermaphrodite is a theme of Renaissance alchemy. Through the

“chemical marriage” of opposites—sulphur and quicksilver (mercury), sun and moon, male and female, king and queen, soul and body—the human becomes whole again, united with the divine. Thus, after a long series of transformations, the Philosopher’s Stone is created out of the fires of the alchemical retort.⁵⁵

Heart and Ajna

The ajna center is the center of personality force and integration.⁵⁶ The third eye is the esoteric correspondence to the ajna center.⁵⁷

The right eye is the eye of buddhi, of wisdom and of vision, and the left eye is the eye of mind and of sight.⁵⁸ Therefore the third eye is related to Atma:

The Third Eye – the head center – Will.
Atma.

The eye of the Father, the Monad.
SHAMBALLA.

The first aspect of will or power and purpose.⁵⁹

The Tibetan tells us that “the Monad is to the planetary Logos what the third eye is to man.”⁶⁰ So the connection between the third eye and the ajna center creates a link between the Monad and the lower quaternary or personality.

This relationship also applies between our solar Logos and Sirius: Sirius is to our Sun what the Monad is to the disciple.⁶¹ Our solar system is the heart center of the Cosmic Logos, and Sirius is the ajna center.

The raising of the energies of the heart to the ajna center constitutes the fourth initiation, the Crucifixion or Renunciation, when the causal body burns up and consciousness becomes Monadic.

The method of the Path to Sirius is described as “rhythmic dancing upon the square.” The square refers to the quaternary, but also the alignment of the personality to the rhythm (Sattva) of the Monad.

Bliss

Another attribute of the path to Sirius is “rhythmic bliss.” This is the rhythm (Sattva) of the Monad: “bliss is the consummation which the Monad bestows upon the initiate.”⁶²

When speaking of Christ as he undertook the fourth initiation, the Tibetan reminds us “that climax of suffering, for the man who could endure unto the end, was his entrance to ‘paradise’—a name connoting bliss.”⁶³ At the fourth initiation the last Sacrifice petal is opened, the egoic lotus burns up and the disciple is freed from the Cross of Matter.

All suffering or resistance to Spirit is then eliminated and one experiences bliss and freedom from matter.

Electric fire

The symbol for the path to Sirius includes two wheels of electric fire, described as “a duality of interlocked wheels revolving at a great pace in opposite directions, and producing a unified whole.”⁶⁴ This symbol expresses the duality of our solar system, which has its energetic cause in the star Sirius.⁶⁵

Electric fire is Spirit, the highest aspect of divinity. It is the Will aspect, the fire of Shamballa, which manifests as synthesis. Electric fire comes into the Cosmic Physical plane from the highest plane of Adi (ruled by Leo.)⁶⁶ However, in this Second Ray solar system, Will is expressed through Love, so electric fire expresses through the buddhic plane. The Tibetan explains that on the systemic level, the twelve Creative Hierarchies that give rise to manifestation on all planes in accordance with the divine Plan, are an expression of the love nature of the solar Logos, “and it is for this reason that buddhi is found at the heart of the tiniest atom, or what we call in this system, electric fire.”⁶⁷

He goes on to say that on the cosmic level, “the center in the cosmic body of the ONE ABOUT WHOM NAUGHT MAY BE SAID OF which our solar Logos is the embodied force

is the *heart center*. Here we have one of the clues to the mystery of electricity.”⁶⁸

On the microcosmic level, the Life thread (Sutratma) is anchored in the human heart. Therefore, electric fire comes through the Love aspect. In other words, “The Secret of the Fire lieth hid in the second letter of the Sacred Word. The mystery of life is concealed within the heart.”⁶⁹

Following the 2 – 4 – 6 line, electric fire is also the expression of Monadic Life. This makes the jewel in the heart of the lotus a point of electric fire.⁷⁰ From all of the above we can see that the path of initiation is the path of electric fire, leading toward identification with the Monad.⁷¹

Kundalini

Since Spirit pervades Matter, electric fire can be found at the heart of every atom. This is what makes evolution possible. The liberation of matter to Spirit is equivalent to the rising of kundalini⁷² and the meeting of the energies of the base and the crown centers at the fifth initiation.⁷³ At the fifth initiation the initiate becomes a Master of Wisdom and enters the Lodge on Sirius.⁷⁴

The earlier mentioned orange cross could represent the base chakra. This cross “is pictured in orange fire.” Likewise, the base chakra is described as four petals in the shape of a cross that radiate with orange fire.⁷⁵

Hierarchy of the Path to Sirius

In *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* we learn that the Creative Hierarchy governing the path to Sirius is “veiled by the numbers 14 and 17.”⁷⁶

$$1 + 4 = 5$$

$$1 + 7 = 8$$

The seventh Creative Hierarchy is the fifth counting down and the eighth counting up.⁷⁷ We might also note that the Path to Sirius leads to the Cosmic Astral Plane⁷⁸ and that

the seventh Creative Hierarchy is the lowest plane of the Cosmic Astral plane.⁷⁹

DYNAMIC ENERGY...Electric Fire

| Cancer

Sirius...|Saturn....Fifth Creative Hierarchy

| Capricorn (the 8th Unknown)
The Cardinal Cross

This Hierarchy is ruled by Cancer and by the Seventh Ray. Appropriate to the Sirian quality of freedom, it is the Hierarchy on the verge of liberation.⁸⁰ Cancer is the sign of incarnation and governs the Law of Rebirth, so this is indeed liberation from Matter. Sirius, the fixed star, is actually located in Cancer at 14 degrees 05'. Neptune—the hierarchical ruler of Cancer is known as “the Initiator” or the Christ, who “introduces the water of life into the ocean of substance and thus brings light to the world.”⁸¹

According to the Tibetan, “the ‘heart of the Sun’ employs Neptune as its agent.”⁸² He also tells us that the Path to Sirius is through the Heart of the Sun. There is a close connection between Neptune and Venus, since Venus is the home of the Sixth Ray Lord. Neptune is also the esoteric ruler of Leo (veiled by the Sun), which is the zodiacal sign veiling the energies of Sirius.⁸³ In Leo, Neptune opens a gateway to the intuition of the buddhic plane via the astral plane.

On the Path to Sirius, Jupiter—the hierarchical ruler of Virgo—rules the plane of the Monads. Jupiter is exalted in Cancer (Cancer rules the lowest plane of the Cosmic Astral plane). In its higher aspect, the Love/Wisdom of Jupiter nurtures the construction of forms and structures on the etheric, astral and mental planes for the expression of the higher self. Through the power of Love, Jupiter reveals the divinity latent in all creation.

There must be a relationship between the Cancer Hierarchy (on the verge of liberation) and its polarity—Capricorn ruling the fifth Creative Hierarchy, the Human Personality on the mental plane of the Cosmic

Physical plane. The ruler here is Venus. This is Makara. Makara are the crocodiles, who “live half in the water and half on dry land”; a combination of desire (water) and animal nature (earth).⁸⁴ The crocodiles represent the human personality. The Mystery of Makara has to do with the transformation of the lower nature into the higher, the victory of the solar pitris over the lunar pitris, the transition from self-consciousness to Christ consciousness. The catalyst for this transformation is Venus, the planet of Love and Mind.

Saturn, Lord of Karma, exoteric and esoteric ruler of Capricorn, must play a significant role in relation to Cancer and the Law of Rebirth, for rebirth occurs according to the Law of Karma. In Cancer, Saturn is in detriment, producing “those difficult conditions and situations which will lead to the needed struggle.”⁸⁵ Hence the Earth is a planet of pain and suffering.

Saturn is also connected with Leo, the zodiacal sign veiling Sirius. The energies of Sirius are said to come through the Hierarchy rather than through Shamballa.⁸⁶ Yet Saturn provides a direct link through Leo to Shamballa.⁸⁷ And as hierarchical ruler of Libra, Saturn governs the atmic plane, the plane of the will and the highest plane of the Spiritual Triad.

The fifth Creative Hierarchy on the verge of liberation is governed by the Seventh Ray. Uranus, planet of the Seventh Ray, is “the home of fire electric,” the electric fire of the buddhic plane.⁸⁸ Uranus unites the highest and the lowest, bringing Spirit down into Matter. Appropriately, Uranus (as hierarchical ruler of Aries) also rules the buddhic sub-plane of the Cosmic Astral plane, the plane of electric fire.

Conclusion

The Mystery of Makara has to do with the transformation of the lower nature into the higher, the victory of the solar pitris over the lunar pitris, the transition from self-consciousness to Christ consciousness. The catalyst for this transformation is Venus, the planet of Love and Mind.

To briefly summarize what we have learned, the Path to Sirius is the path of Love, passing through the human, systemic and cosmic heart centers. Its methods involve rotary motion to increase the vibration of matter in order to bring through the light of the Soul. The Path to Sirius is a path of karma and the disciple is under the dictates of Saturn until released from the Cross of Matter. Eventually the disciple attains the rhythm of the Monad by aligning with the higher Will. On this path we stabilize in Manas (mind) and develop a synthetic and intuitive perspective, establishing right relationship and overcoming dualistic thinking.

The Path to Sirius is governed by the zodiacal sign of Leo, which brings heart and mind into

synthesis. The fourth Cosmic Path has numeric resonances with the fourth or human Hierarchy, the fourth plane, which is the buddhic plane, and with Mercury, planet of the Fourth Ray. The Attribute of Rapture associated with this path is buddhic enlightenment.

This Path involves the building of the Antahkarana on the human, systemic and cosmic levels. The heart and the ajna center are aligned to connect the personality and the Monad. When the rhythm of the Monad is attained, suffering turns to bliss. On this Path we learn to bring Will through Love so that the electric fire of Spirit can eventually be expressed through the buddhic plane. The redemption of Matter to Spirit requires the rising of kundalini.

The author suggests that the Creative Hierarchy ruling the Path to Sirius is the seventh Creative Hierarchy on the lowest plane of the Cosmic Astral plane—the Hierarchy on the verge of liberation.

So at the end of this enquiry, can anything be said about the divine cosmic principle expressed through Sirius “of which humanity knows as yet little,” and which can only be inaccurately translated in our terms as freedom?⁸⁹

Freedom is liberation from Matter. It is identification with Spirit, the Spirit that is in Matter: “The principle of *freedom is a leavening energy* [emphasis added] which can permeate substance in a unique manner.”⁹⁰ Freedom also suggests some sort of immunity. For if sacrifice and bliss are synonymous, then Matter can have no effect.

A paradoxical thought: Freedom may mean “acting according to Law.” If one’s Will is completely aligned and identified with the Laws of Spirit, resistance to Matter does not occur because all is recognized as One. The very formulation of this question about the principle of freedom sends a very small spark at least a little way up the Anahkarana. Stretching towards the answer is an affirmation of Life itself.

¹ See http://winshop.com.au/annex/new_page_1.html (accessed July 11, 2009).
² <http://www.crystalinks.com/sirius.html> (accessed July 11, 2009)
³ Manfred Lurker, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, Thames & Hudson, 1980, 72; <http://www.egyptianmyths.net/myhis.html> (accessed August 9, 2009).
⁴ *Ibid.*
⁵ <http://www.mysteries-in-stone.co.uk/greatpyramid.html> (accessed July 11, 2009).
⁶ <http://www.crystalinks.com/dogon.html> (accessed July 11, 2009). The Dogon also claimed that a third star *Emme Ya-sorghum female* exists in the Sirius system. Larger and lighter than Sirius B, this star revolves around Sirius A as well. It has not been proven to exist; though some people have called it Sirius C. Sirius C translated from the Dogon language into English is called “Sun of Woman.” It is described by the Dogon as “the seat of the female souls of living or future beings.”
⁷ <http://www.mystae.com/restricted/streams/scripts/Sirius.html>. (accessed July 11, 2009).
⁸ <http://www.scaredscience.com/store/>

Commerce.cgi?page=Schwaller2.html (accessed August 9, 2009).
⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 413.
¹⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation Human and Solar*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1922), 188.
¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 197.
¹² Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 159.
¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1925), 1258.
¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1260-1261.
¹⁵ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 416.
¹⁶ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1944), 767-768. The Cosmic Antahkarana actually extends from the heart of the Sun through Sirius and on to Alcyone in the Pleiades, and then on to the seven stars of the Great Bear on the Cosmic Buddhic plane. (Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 334).
¹⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 512.
¹⁸ Bailey, *Rays and Initiations*, 96.
¹⁹ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1182-1183.
²⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.
²¹ *Ibid.*, 42.
²² *Ibid.*, 174.
²³ *Ibid.*, 143. The goal of rotary motion is “by the revolution of matter, to increase activity and thereby make matter more pliable.”
²⁴ *Ibid.*, 570.
²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1183.
²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1260.
²⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1922), 216.
²⁸ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 127.
²⁹ Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, 4. Superhuman lives express sattva, the guna of rhythm and of harmonious response to divine urge, of perfect display of coordinated cooperation with purposeful manifestation.”
³⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 60.
³¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1927), 32.
³² Bailey, *The Light of the Soul*, 153.
³³ *Ibid.*, 154-155.
³⁴ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 400.
³⁵ *Ibid.*, 347. “The Sun Sirius” is the source of logocic manas in the same sense as the Pleiades are connected with evolution of manas in the

- Seven Heavenly men, and Venus was responsible for the coming in of mind in the earth chain.”
- ³⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology Vol. I*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1936), 77.
- ³⁷ Manly Palmer Hall, *The Secret Teaching of All Ages*, (Los Angeles: The Philosophical Research Society, 1955), opp. LXXXI.
- ³⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 229.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 300. “The influences of Sirius, three in number [Love, Manas, Karma], are focused in Regulus, which is, as you know, a star of the first magnitude and which is frequently called “the heart of the Lion.”
- ⁴⁰ Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, 593.
- ⁴¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 433.
- ⁴² Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 347.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1259. “The reason why the majority of the sons of men follow this Path lies in the fact of its numerical position. These units of the fourth kingdom, the bulk of the fourth Creative Hierarchy on this fourth globe of the fourth scheme in a solar system of the fourth order are innately compelled to seek this fourth WAY in order to perfect themselves.”
- ⁴⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 659 (H.P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine II. 391*).
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.
- ⁴⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 328. “In both the cosmic and solar physical planes, the plane of buddi is ever the plane of at-one-ment, or the meeting ground of diversities, and of their blending—not into a fundamental unity—but into a group unity.”
- ⁴⁸ Bailey, *Externalization of the Hierarchy*, 463.
- ⁴⁹ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1258. “This path is of all the Paths the most veiled in the clouds of mystery. ... Curiously enough it will be through a comprehension of the human antahkarana, or the path which links higher and lower mind and which is constructed by the Thinker during the process of evolution, that light on this abstruse matter will come.”
- ⁵⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 349.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 355.
- ⁵² Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 387.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 353.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 328.
- ⁵⁵ See Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul*, (London: Stuart & Watkins, 1967, Chapter 11.) The expression “chemical marriage” is from Valentin Andraee.
- ⁵⁶ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I*, 495.
- ⁵⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1953), 571. “This eye of the Soul can and does transmit energy to the ajna center and is itself the agent (before the fourth initiation) of the Spiritual Triad. This esoteric relationship is only set up when the Soul is dominating its instrument, the personality.”
- ⁵⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 430.
- ⁵⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 148.
- ⁶⁰ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II*, 397.
- ⁶¹ Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, 414. “This great Sun [Sirius] which is to our solar Logos what the Monad is to the spiritual man. Has a peculiar part to play where our Earth is concerned.”
- ⁶² Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I*, 181.
- ⁶³ Bailey, *From Bethlehem to Calgary*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1937), 217.
- ⁶⁴ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1260.
- ⁶⁵ Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1937), 217. “Dynamic electric energy entered into our planetary sphere from extra-planetary sources and from a point of definite focus upon the cosmic mental plane, this energy was paralleled by a secondary energy from the sun Sirius, thus accounting for the dualism of manifestation.”
- ⁶⁶ Electric Fire is Spirit, the highest aspect of divinity: See Bailey: *The Light of the Soul*, 350. Electric Fire manifests as synthesis: See Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 607. Electric Fire is the Will aspect, the fire of Shamballa: See Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, 91. Electric Fire comes from the Cosmic Physical plane from the highest plane of Adi (ruled by Leo): See Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 947.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1225-1226.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 511.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 11, *Stanzas of Dyzan*.
- ⁷⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 23.
- ⁷¹ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 57.
- ⁷² Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 147.
- ⁷³ Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, 399.
- ⁷⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 299.
- ⁷⁵ Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation*, 77.
- ⁷⁶ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1260.
- ⁷⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 35.
- ⁷⁸ Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, 399.
- ⁷⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 50.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.
- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 219-220.
- ⁸² Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 296.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1260.

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- ⁸⁴ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 153-154.
⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 342.
⁸⁶ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II*, 520.
⁸⁷ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 435.
⁸⁸ Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 1154.
⁸⁹ Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations*, 416.
⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 416.

The Joyous Sacrificial Will

Donna M. Brown

“Self-sacrifice is the miracle out of which all the reported miracles grow.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Abstract

This article seeks to explore the theme of sacrifice in relation to joy and the First Aspect or Will. In an effort to better understand this life-affirming relationship and eliminate some of the distortions around the idea of sacrifice, this paper examines the concept of sacrifice as a universal animating principle. It touches upon the more elevated patterns of thought around the theme of sacrifice existing within the major religious traditions and concludes with some thoughts on why willing self-sacrifice can only lead to increase, enhancement and joy.

Introduction

The Ageless Wisdom teachings inform us that the *joyous sacrificial will* must eventually replace the obsolete thoughtform of sacrifice as suffering and renunciation.¹ Although joy, sacrifice and will can be distinguished from one another, from a higher perspective they are related and might be seen as facets of one and the same energy. Inseparably bound together, they are an expression or manifestation of Soul or Spirit. These three qualities are part of a dynamic synthesis and do not exist in absence of each other. Rather, each builds upon each other as part of a continuum.

While the *joyous, sacrificial will* exists as a sustaining whole, all too often humanity has failed to grasp the connection between joy and self-sacrifice. Human understanding and reaction to self-sacrifice has been complex and varied. Misinterpretation and, at times, distortion by the major religious traditions have caused much sorrow and woe. New ideas of what it means to sacrifice are beginning to emerge, but in many quarters the old outworn thoughtform of sacrifice as suffering and self-abnegation still controls. Self-sacrifice and

spontaneous inner joy continue to be viewed as incompatible opposites that can never be fully reconciled.

In the western, secular world in particular, the notion of self-sacrifice has largely been rejected. Self-sacrifice is frequently seen as a character flaw or a self-defeating behavior and has been replaced by the idea of utilitarian individualism and self-interest. In family and social scientific theory the idea of self-sacrifice has been almost completely neglected.² In other areas, such as in the field of evolutionary biology, and to a lesser extent in the field of psychology,³ the concept of altruism or self-sacrifice is a well understood topic. The theoretical ideas have been widely considered and confirmed, yet arguments persist as to whether pure self-sacrifice really exists, if it has evolutionary significance and beneficence, or whether self-sacrifice or altruism is an evolutionary instinct.

Sacrifice as a Universal Archetype

Esoteric philosophy, as exemplified by Alice A. Bailey, offers a much more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of sacrifice. The teachings relate joy and will with self-sacrifice, and inform us that sacrifice is a universal animating principle and one of several universal laws that govern creation. The Law of Sacrifice and Death, along with the Fourth Ray of Harmony through Conflict (to which-

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this law is related), are the dominating factors in our solar system.⁴ Together they hold the secret to progress and evolution. Under the Law of Sacrifice—the basic law of giving and group work—the human and subhuman reaction to sorrow and pain can never really be eliminated from our planet.⁵ For it is only through sorrow, pain and destruction that the beauty of livingness, harmony and oneness can be realized on Earth. Although suffering seems to be more or less unavoidable on our planet, our individual reaction to sorrow and pain can be lessened once we achieve a measure of self-realization and come to understand the true nature of the will and sacrifice.

From the esoteric perspective, the notion of sacrifice—which the Ageless Wisdom describes as a “taking over through identification”—is irrevocably linked to Love; a love that desires to give of itself so that others might be saved.⁶ One might say that all life is an expression of the love nature of the One About Whom Naught May Be Said. Such an inconceivable Love also characterizes the Solar Deity who sacrificed or gave His life to our solar system. It was as a result of “His impulse, His will, His desire, His incentive, His idea and purpose... that the process of manifestation began its cyclic evolutionary existence.”⁷ Love is the impelling motive for creation and the underlying cause behind the death and destruction of form. In this system—a system ruled by the Second Ray and the will-to-unity—Love is the governing influence.

The theme of sacrificial love and the pulling away from the confines of limitation and form also has its roots in the Sirian principle or Law of Freedom. It is this principle that enabled Sanat Kumara—the Lord of our World—to become the “Great Sacrifice” for our planet.⁸ His sacrificial act not only provides the life and governing impulse for existence on Earth, it embodies a path of service, selflessness and surrender that leads to release and reunion with the Creator. Neither can we forget that it was the sacrifice of the solar angels, those who took human bodies and “chose to die,” that brought the fourth or human kingdom into being.⁹ Their sacrifice made it possible for consciousness to indwell and evolve within humanity. This same impulse also produced the great World Saviors, such as the Buddha, Shri Krishna, and the Christ who enacted the drama

of sacrificial love and salvation, along with the many “prodigies of self-sacrifice”¹⁰ such as Joan of Arc, St. Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa and Oskar Schindler.¹¹

Since all organized life is sacrificed via evolution for that which is higher,¹² and in order for others to thrive and evolve, the connection between the sacrificial impulse and the existence and progression of all Earth forms is difficult to ignore. Thus sacrifice is revealed as a universal archetype rooted in love and related to the Law of Freedom that all life must inevitably emulate.

The Language of Sacrifice in the Major Religions

Not surprisingly, the Law of Sacrifice is “the first of the laws to be grasped by the human intelligence.”¹³ While distortions about sacrifice have always been present, at times they have existed alongside a number of more enlightened presentations, some of which date back to the very dawn of civilization. For example, sacrifice is one of six main themes found in the Egyptian Pyramid Texts, the oldest known recorded texts, believed to be composed as early as 2494-2181 B.C.E.¹⁴ The myth of Osiris not only constitutes one of the first cosmogonies or creation myths, it contains the earliest example of the ritual action of self-willed sacrifice—a process that results in the gradual death of the lower self and the journey of transformation and transcendence.

The prototypical pattern of sacrifice is also present in the Vedic texts dating to 1500-1000 B.C.E, as discussed in a recent *Esoteric Quarterly* article on *Purusha Sukta*.¹⁵ In Vedic thought, all the energies and forces that adhere to divine law are believed to participate or share in the Purusha’s ritual act of sacrifice. This pattern is believed “to apply not only to the macrocosm and the microcosm, but to every creative act.”¹⁶

Sacrifice is inherent in the very name that Allah gave to his religion. Islam, an Arabic word replete with meaning, is interpreted by most scholars to embody the principle of submission or self-surrender to God’s Will. But one must not equate that idea with the notion of suicidal sacrifice, since historically Islamic mores placed a strict ban on suicide.¹⁷ Only in the last twenty to thirty years has the idea of a “suicide

bomber” become prevalent. The idea of self-sacrifice—*shahid* or martyrdom—is part of Islamic belief, especially in Shi’ite piety, but the term in its true spiritual sense is applied to “one who has born witness with his or her own being to Divine Oneness.”¹⁸ Today countless Muslims and Sufis continue to practice their faith guided by the ideal that “Oneness with Allah can only be realized by total surrender, dedication, service and above all self-sacrifice for the good of humankind.”¹⁹

Sacrifice also forms the very basis of Buddhism. One of the primary features of the Mahayana Buddhist School²⁰ is its emphasis on universal salvation and self-sacrifice. A Bodhisattva is the personification of self-sacrifice, one whose immense compassion compels him or her to work for others and deter his or her own salvation for the welfare and benefit of all sentient beings.²¹ This concept also exists within Judaism, especially among Kabbalists who believe that God’s *self-sacrifice* created the universe. This benevolent sacrifice is described as a *tsimtsum* or contraction of God’s essence which allows for the creation of independent realities. However, this “quantum leap from the infinite to the finite”²² necessitates a *Tikkun*—a healing or repair of the differentiation and chaos that ensues. Such a healing involves willing self-sacrifice and service in order to restore divine light and the essential Unity or Oneness of Life.

The theme of sacrifice lies at the heart of Christianity. In the early Christian milieu the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was thought to release humanity from the fear of death.²³ His death served as “prelude to resurrection” and spoke to the universal implications of resurrection for humanity as a whole.²⁴ The Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul emphasizes this point by making it clear that Christ’s death upon the Cross was not primarily concerned with each individual or with absolution of sins; rather, it was a great cosmic event,²⁵ signifying the surrender of the personal will to the transcendent source from which all life stems. Likewise, in the hymns from the Acts of St. John—among the earliest of the apocryphal Christian acts—Christ’s sacrifice was believed to be part of an initiatory process leading to union with God, his seem-

ing death a model or prototype. As late as the fourth century Christ was viewed as a *mystagogue* or initiator into the Sacred Mysteries; his disciples were the *mystai* who were to become the *symmyasti* or fellow-initiates of Christ.²⁶

Sacrifice is revealed as a universal archetype rooted in love and related to the Law of Freedom that all life must inevitably emulate.

These more enlightened attitudes eventually gave way (in Christianity and other major religious traditions) to negative and sometimes pernicious distortions surrounding the idea of sacrifice. Today, many people still view sacrifice as recognition of God’s

dominion, as a means of gaining salvation, and a necessary appeasement from the universal condition of sin. In some parts of the world, these attitudes seem to be stronger than ever. In other places, the notion of sacrifice has been replaced with self-interest. Despite the modern attitude that sacrifice is not a virtue or a good, there are several mainstream efforts underway to unveil and redefine sacrifice in order to lift it above the decidedly Sixth Ray focus on deprivation and destruction. For example, within the Catholic tradition a newer understanding has begun to emerge that views sacrifice not as a forced or necessary atonement, but as “a perfectly free, responsive, self-giving, self-communicating, en-Spirited love...”²⁷ This understanding was undoubtedly encouraged by the reforms of the second Vatican Council in its attempt to move away from the negative associations around sacrifice, Christ’s Passion, and the Cross. Clearly some have rejected the new attitudes of the Church as a liberal dilution of the faith, yet this new understanding that views sacrifice as “ethical living” and a “self-giving response to love,”²⁸ is a welcome reversal.

The Sacrificial Will

Various religious traditions speak to the idea of sacrificing our personal will to God’s Will. Unfortunately, this concept is frequently based on the thought that giving up our personal desires and wishes involves a loss of identity and a sacrifice based on and proven by faith. Sacrifice is believed to be a duty grounded in the recognition of God’s dominion over humankind and on a sense of undeniable

guilt for being born in such a state of sin that Christ had to die for our offenses.²⁹

Esoteric philosophy also encourages us to subordinate and sacrifice our personal will to Divine Will, but this step is taken from a position of strength based on the existence of real love and the evocation of the sacrificial will and not on a life-denying or nihilistic attitude. Esoteric doctrine defines the sacrificial will as a “blending of the will to save, plus love shed abroad, and active intelligent aid based on truth.”³⁰

This links the sacrificial will to the realization of the spiritual self—to our defining essence. Stemming from the central nucleus of power within—the power of the Soul, and later the Spirit—this threefold power allows us to fulfill our duty to the Hierarchical Plan, to liberate and advance the evolution of matter, and create unity, fusion and synthesis. Through its development and use, we are able to recognize and implement some measure of divine purpose and help close the door where evil dwells. The sacrificial will enables us to release ourselves, with full deliberation and force, into “a vortex of force in which we learn to handle the planetary correspondence of that which we ourselves have overcome.”³¹

The awakening and functioning of this saving force requires the elimination in us of all hindrances or impediments and the conscious sublimation and channeling of the separative impulses and energies of the personality into an entirely new creative activity³²—an activity focused on group well-being, elevation and freedom. It involves a paradigm shift from self to others, a metamorphosis of self-will or desire into the will of the Soul. When our life attitude is steadfast and unflinchingly directed to furthering human evolution and life as a whole, when we can stand in spiritual being and consciously choose self-surrender with no expectation of loss, the sacrificial will arises and becomes active in us.

Thus do we assume responsibility as spiritual scientists, leaders and co-creators in the effort to expand, enhance and empower. Then our actions are authentic, effortless and spontaneous³³ with no real sense of self-denial or deprivation involved. Wielding the unified force of Light, Love and the Power of Death, we become a living sacrifice, a link between cause and effect and the one who, according to St. Paul, has nothing and yet possesses all.

The Joyous Sacrificial Will

Two of the possessions or gifts that we receive and learn to embody are freedom and joy. As the sacrificial will begins to develop and manifest, we gain an ever-increasing measure of freedom from emotional reaction and the narrow limitations of the lower self, release from life’s burdens, from fear and egoistic conceit. We also acquire the freedom to investigate, to decide, to plan and execute our goals.³⁴ Additionally, we acquire the freedom of spiritual ascent. We open to higher channels of spiritual energy and enter a future of limitless creative growth and potential.

Joy is developed through a focus on the good, the beautiful and the true, on the benefit of what might be, and the vision of the countless possibilities for humanity.³⁵ While joy is a quality we must learn to cultivate, joy is ever present within the Soul.³⁶ Joy begins to pour into the vehicles when the Soul begins to dominate, when we are energized not by the note of sacrifice, but an altruistic attitude and the desire to see others flourish.

Various studies in the fields of medicine and psychology show evidence of the connection that exists between joy and willing sacrificial service. This connection, often termed the “helper’s high” describes a state of joy or euphoria followed by periods of calm and increased energy. The concept was first formalized in 1965 when it was observed that the act of helping another heals the helper more than the person being helped.³⁷ Recent studies corroborate this finding and show that the performance of altruistic responses is facilitated by positive feelings that are associated with prosocial behavior. Altruistic behavior creates a positive feedback loop that contributes to the contiguity of prosocial activities and the maintenance of well-being.³⁸ Similar findings are borne out in the field of evolutionary biology where research reveals that genetics favor self-sacrifice over self-interest because it promotes survival, well-being and general health.³⁹

Various mystics, poets and philosophers have long commented upon the relationship between sacrifice and joy. Tulsidas, the great medieval Hindu philosopher and poet, penned the following lines: “This and this alone is true religion — to serve others. This is sin above all other sin — to harm others. In service to others

is happiness. In selfishness is misery and pain.”⁴⁰ Another Indian poet, playwright and essayist, Rabindranth Tagore, wrote about the link between joy and sacrificial service in the following way: “I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”⁴¹ In his essay “On Compensation,” Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “every act rewards its self” and “one of the most beautiful compensations of this life is that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”⁴²

These many thoughts link back to the Tibetan’s statement that will is an expression of the Law of Sacrifice and that the deepest joy is one of the results.⁴³ The travails of our Soul disappear and our hearts are filled with the divine recompense of joy when the sacrificial will is present. Joy also emerges from the intentional choice we make to meet world need and from the “realization that the entire planet will achieve.”⁴⁴ The connection we establish with our spiritual source is an immense source of peace and joy.

Though the will-to-sacrifice is based on pure choice, in reality this choice is an outgrowth or expression of the Law of our own being. Whether present instinctually or consciously, the urge to sacrifice is inherent in biological organisms all along the chain of being. As an innate, creative devotion to the greatest good,⁴⁵ its effects are unifying and uplifting and have a definite curative, uplifting and releasing effect. Willing self-sacrifice provides a sense of accomplishment that goes well beyond accomplishment for oneself.⁴⁶ The urge to sacrifice acts to dissipate negativity and glamor in us and in our surroundings by beckoning us to cultivate love where there is hate, light where there is darkness, hope where there is loss of faith.⁴⁷ This makes the sacrificial will a way of fulfillment and liberation for us and for others; a way of purpose, governed by reason—a spiritual activity aligned with the joyous note of this solar system. From this perspective, sacrifice cannot be regarded as suffering or giving up, rather, it signifies our joyful participation in Life, the Creator’s inexhaustible abundance and the great work to which we are all called.

Conclusion

Rather than seeing sacrifice as a negation of life, as a diminishment or as necessary suffering, we can learn to recognize self-sacrifice as the consciousness of Spirit and as a powerful Life-affirming and fully intentional act arising from our appreciation of life, the pursuit of truth, our sense of purpose and abiding trust in the Universe.

Seen in this light, willing self-sacrifice does not conflict with self-realization or fulfillment. Instead, it is a spiritual elevation or enhancement—a means of supernal completion. Sacrifice connects us with our own inner strengths, with humanity and the Creator’s Power. Arising out of the fullness of our true nature and a clear sense of Plan and Purpose, the will-to-sacrifice represents a unique sharing from the deep well from which all life springs. As the purest form of spiritual interchange, selfless sacrifice releases a tremendous potency into the world. It is a joyful creative act and the “miracle out of which all other miracles grow.”

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⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II* (New York: Lucis Trust, 1942), 91-92.

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⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis Trust, 1951), 1226.

⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II* (New York: Lucis Trust, 1942), 89-90.

⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and Initiations* (New York: Lucis Trust, 1960), 416-417.

⁹ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II*, 92.

¹⁰ Sherri Fisher, *Why Not Me? Self-sacrifice As The 25th Strength*

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¹¹ *Ibid.*, (accessed July 31, 2009).

¹² Lucille Cedercrans, *Creative Thinking* (Whittier: Wisdom Impressions 2007), 494.

¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II*, 88.

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- ²⁰ Mahayana Buddhism differs from the orthodox Hinayana School in several ways. Two basic differences are that the Mahayana School sees the Buddha as the first cause and shifted the emphasis from personal to universal salvation.
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- ²³ Eugene Webb, “Rene Girard and the Symbolism of Religious Sacrifice” (*Anthropoetics* 11, No 1, Spring/Summer 2005), 3.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ²⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *From Bethlehem to Calvary* (New York: Lucis Trust, 1973), 176.
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- ²⁷ Robert J. Daly, “Sacrifice Unveiled and Sacrifice Revisited: Trinitarian and Liturgical Perspectives,” www.highbeam.com/doc/IGI-98541722.html (accessed June 26, 2009).
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- ²⁹ John Shelby Spong, *The Sins of Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2005), 172.
- ³⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I* (New York: Lucis Trust, 1944), xvi.
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Book Reviews

How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas, David Bornstein, Penguin Books, India, 2005. Hardcover, 313 pages. US\$30.00.

It was the title that caught my eye: *How to Change the World*. In October 2007, I had the honor of participating in the Berkana Institute's Women's Learning Journey of South Africa. In Johannesburg, we met with an organization called Ashoka. On their display table were copies of this book.

Ashoka was founded in 1980 by Bill Drayton, a former McKinsey & Company consultant and assistant administrator at the Environmental Protection Agency. According to their website, since 1981, Ashoka has funded and supported over 2,000 social entrepreneurs working in 60 countries.¹

David Bornstein, the author of this book is a journalist who specializes in writing about social innovation. He grew up in Montreal, Canada and now lives in New York City with his wife and son. He has travelled extensively in Bangladesh, India, Brazil, North America and Eastern Europe, researching the global rise of social entrepreneurship. His first book, *The Price of a Dream*, traces the history of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Grameen Bank. It describes the emergence of the anti-poverty strategy of micro-finance.² On September 11, 2001, Bornstein was halfway through writing *How To Change the World*. After witnessing the destruction of the World Trade Center towers in New York, he found himself unable to continue with his book because its optimistic tone seemed hopelessly naïve. However, he came to realize that in the face of terrorism and violence it is even more important to publicize the work of those who are creating positive change around the world. He says: "If I learned one thing from writing this book, it is that people who solve problems must somehow first arrive at the belief that they *can* solve problems. ... Those who act on this belief spread it

to others. They are highly contagious. Their stories must be told."³ Here, in brief, are just three of the inspiring stories in this book about social entrepreneurs who have changed the world.

Veronica Khosa worked as a nurse in the AIDS clinic in Pretoria, South Africa. By the early 1990s, it was clear that hospitals and clinics were unable to meet the need for AIDS information and care. In 1995, she left her job and used half of her retirement fund to establish Tateni Home Care Services in Mamelodi, a former "township" 10 miles east of Pretoria. Khosa says, "It was an emotional response to seeing problems and just reacting and saying, 'I can do something. I can help. People cannot just be left to die like dogs.' Something needed to be done."⁴ She also set up a complementary program for the young unemployed people of Mamelodi offering training in all aspects of home care. Between 1995 and 1999, Tateni's staff had made 224,000 home visits, trained 2,100 family members to care for sick people in their homes, and provided home care orientation to 980 nurses, 176 teachers and 66 social workers. Its AIDS workshops had reached thousands of youth in Mamelodi.⁵ Due to Khosa's work, by 2002, 20 million Rand had been allocated to home care and hospice beds by the Gauteng health department.⁶

Erzsébet Szekeres has revolutionized the care of mentally disabled people in Hungary. In 1976, her son Tibor was born with microcephalus and with severe mental retardation. She says, "I knew it was up to me to create a place for my kid to live and work, a place for him in society."⁷ She created Alliance, an assisted living center, on the outskirts of Budapest in a building once used by a farming cooperative. Between 1994 and 1996, Szekeres helped to establish seven new assisted living centers across Hungary.⁸ By 2001, thirteen more centers had been established. In May 2000, Árpád Göncz, Hungary's president, hon-

ored Szekeres for improving the life of disabled people. The Ministry of Health regularly contracts services to Alliance and enlists Szekeres in pre-legislative consultations.⁹

Fabio Rosa has brought inexpensive mono-phase electricity to the poor area of Palmeras in Brazil and has bored artesian wells to enable rice farmers to grow their crops. To do this, he had to convince the state electric company to change their electricity standard and also allow the use of less expensive materials in the construction of the rural electricity network. Due to the success of Rosa's project, displaced farmers returned from the city because their farms had become viable again. Between 1990 and 1993, his company, Pro Luz (Project Light), carried electricity to 25,000 low income rural dwellers.¹⁰ In 1996, São Paulo State launched a \$240 million rural electrification project based on Rosa's system to provide electricity to 800,000 people.¹¹ Rosa then developed solar electricity to provide cattle farmers with cheap electric fencing and within a few years this system was expanded to serve rural districts in ten states.¹²

So why is this of interest to us? Might readers of this journal want to know How to Change the World? It might seem so. The Master Djwhal Khul says the cry of the disciple is: "Aid the work. Forget yourself. The world needs you."¹³ Way back during the crisis of World War II, DK called for "the mobilization of every disciple: This mobilization involves the focusing of the disciple's energies, his time and his resources on behalf of humanity; it requires a new dedication to service, a consecration of the thought-life ... and a forgetfulness of self... On the physical plane, it would mean the conditioning of all active, outer living so that the whole of life becomes one focused active service."¹⁴

In true Seventh Ray fashion, the Master R (through the work of Lucille Cedercrans) is specific about the need to bring spiritual ideals into practical form for the benefit of humanity: "The disciple is needed, is sought after, who will, once he has grasped the Plan, once he has received the Wisdom of his own Soul, formulate his own plan of action, his own service activity and carry it forward."¹⁵

Today, we stand at a point of global economic and environmental crisis and opportunity. We also stand at the cusp of the Aquarian Age. Uranus, the exoteric ruler of Aquarius, "initiates a new order of life and conditions." This fuels "the desire to change the old order and the old orientation into the new".¹⁶ We have only to look at the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to recognize how much has yet to be done.¹⁷

Unless we can act upon our beliefs, our ideals never get further into manifestation than the mental plane. So what inspires people to "measure up by an act of the will to what they know and believe"?¹⁸ What motivates people to purposeful and practical action? What kind of people does it take to change the world?

Drayton developed an intensive interview process, based around some tough criteria, to recognize social entrepreneurs for Ashoka:

1. Creativity: The person must have an idea that is new and potentially pattern-setting, a unique vision. He or she must exhibit problem-solving creativity.
2. Entrepreneurial quality: Drayton describes this as an inner knowing from a young age that you are going to create widespread and significant change in the world. Such a person must be possessed by a vision of change. They do not give up no matter how many times they fail. They are practical and know how to get things done. They are people who are in touch with their environment.
3. Social impact: Social entrepreneurs must have the ability to apply ideas in many situations, circumstances and environments. They must create blueprints for change that can be used by other people. Their actions must deeply affect people's lives for the better.
4. Ethical fiber: The person must be trustworthy and have integrity.¹⁹

But the main key is motivation. Social entrepreneurs have a deep sense of connection with others. And there is often some deeply painful

personal experience or situation that motivates them to want to change the world:

“Usually something has been brewing inside for a long time, and at a particular moment in time – often triggered by an event – personal preparedness, social need, and historical opportunity converge and the person takes decisive action.” There is a moment when they say, “I *had* to do this. There was nothing else I could do.”²⁰

The phenomenon of social entrepreneurship sets a new benchmark for practical discipleship. Not all of us have what it takes to be a social entrepreneur. Yet this book impels us to look anew at our own motivations for making positive and practical change in the world.

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New Zealand

¹ www.ashoka.org, accessed 3 May 2009.

² Biographical information on David Bornstein: <http://davidbornstein.wordpress.com/home/> and

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³ Bornstein, *How to Change the World*, 282.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

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¹⁵ Lucille Cedercrans, *Leadership Training*, (Whittier, CA: Wisdom Impressions, 2003), 132.

¹⁶ Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 224.

¹⁷ See www.un.org/millenniumgoals/, accessed 3 May 2009.

¹⁸ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1936), 187.

¹⁹ Bornstein, *How to Change the World*, 118.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 240.

Inside the Occult: The True Story of Madame H.P. Blavatsky, by Henry Steel Olcott, with a preface by Daniel Grotta-Kurska. Philadelphia: Running Press, 1975. 490 pages and index.

I have often wished that I could have been a fly on the wall during the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875. The energies circulating through that group of people must have been colossal. I happened upon this book by chance and found that it gives as clear a picture as one would wish of those people, circumstances, and early meetings. Although, just as we would imagine, HPB was the fountainhead from which most of the communications and spiritual energies flowed, she insisted from the beginning that Henry Steel Olcott be the president. It was a wise decision, as he was highly trained, multi-talented and as steady as she was unpredictable. He had the fortunate habit of keeping a daily journal, which he later drew on to write this chronicle, aided by

scrapbooks that enabled him to nail down some exact quotes.

The book’s original date of publication, under the rather un-magnetic title, *Old Diary Leaves*, was 1904, but the republication, under the above revised title, was in 1975. It’s actually the first of *six* volumes bearing that title. This republication contains a preface that gives a historical sketch of HPB’s early life, and adds a few facts about both HPB and Olcott, as they finished out their lives (she died in 1891, he in 1907) in India and Europe. One of the more interesting statements offered by Mr. Grotta-Kurska, is that in his last years Olcott developed psychic abilities that were even more startling than HPB’s had been; he became a noted healer using a technique that would now probably be called Reiki, and wherever he went people lined up to receive his healing energies. I discovered in my own research that Olcott became a famous writer on esoteric Buddhism, and his *Buddhist Catechism* is still

used in Sri Lanka, where his memory as an influential spiritual teacher remains fresh.

When we first meet Olcott in this book, he is an almost colorless lawyer and journalist. Still, his writing is excellent. Take, for example, the first words of Chapter One: “Since I am to tell the story of the birth and progress of the Theosophical Society, I must begin at the beginning, and tell how its two founders first met. It was a very prosaic incident: I said, ‘*Permettez moi, Madame,*’ and gave her a light for her cigarette; our acquaintance began in smoke, but it stirred up a great and permanent fire.”

This auspicious encounter took place at the Eddy farmhouse in Chittenden, Vermont, where notorious psychic and mediumistic events had attracted Olcott’s attention. As a journalist, Olcott was primarily interested in debunking the fakes in order to establish whether the phenomena were valid or not. The results were encouraging, and his account of them was published in the *New York Sun* and reprinted in many other newspapers. *The New York Daily Graphic* then hired him to return to Chittenden with a sketch artist to make a thorough investigation. There, on September 17, 1874, he sat down for noontime dinner across from a woman of very unusual appearance and manner, who was accompanied by a female friend. Olcott used the cigarette lighting as a pretext to enter into conversation—a conversation that continued with few breaks for more than 10 years.

HPB’s visit to the Eddy farm, and also her sudden relocation to New York from Paris shortly before, had a very different incentive. She was simply obeying her inner guidance. This brings up one of the truly important issues treated by Olcott. Leaving the identity and the nature of HPB’s inner directives aside for the moment, she was apparently instructed to establish a new spiritual movement on the shoulders of the current spiritualism craze, in order to attract the quantity of attention needed to supply the new movement with the needed energy. This she rather unwillingly cooperated with, almost upstaging the Eddys with phenomena of her own. She publicly identified herself as a medium for the time being, and

also participated in the debunking process as needed.

If Olcott is to be believed, this was truly a different time, when the usual procedures of Hierarchical-human interaction were temporarily suspended. Of course, the Masters had nothing to do with the “madcap personality” (as Olcott describes it) of HPB and her irrepressible tendency to entertain by materializing items large and small out of thin air. One senses that they put up with it because she, with all her personality limitations, was the person in incarnation who was best equipped to carry out the primary purpose the Hierarchy had in mind. This purpose was actually a two-pronged task: the anchoring of the Ageless Wisdom by assembling the right people in New York and later in India, and the writing of *Isis Unveiled*.

This writing task takes up a large portion of this memoir, and it makes for a surprisingly entertaining narrative. Although Olcott was not on hand when HPB wrote *The Secret Doctrine*, apparently *Isis Unveiled* was written in the same way. Just after the Theosophical Society had been established, one day HPB sat down and began writing furiously. When Olcott asked about it, she couldn’t say exactly what she was writing about; only that she had been told to write. Olcott assumed the position of editor for every page she scribbled, correcting her faulty English, reorganizing scattered thoughts, and making further suggestions for improving clarity. HPB was not well read, and had no real talent for writing—indeed, she had never had any literary interests at all. She was evidently *copying* most of what she wrote from some inner source, and in addition—this becomes most interesting—she wasn’t always HPB when she was writing. This is a curiosity for modern spiritual students: HPB apparently gave over her body to one or another Master (one hopes it was a Master!) with some frequency, and the occupant of the body used his own handwriting, and influenced her personal mannerisms and behavior as well. Olcott became somewhat adept (no pun intended) at identifying the writers by the frequently changing handwriting. He doesn’t share their names

for the most part, but he seems to have enjoyed their presence, which of course was more predictable and refined than HPB herself usually was. He comments that when HPB was in one of her frequent rages, the only Master who would work as usual with her was Morya, her personal guru.

HPB had little to say about this process, only occasionally referring obliquely to the “Somebodies” that occupied her body from time to time. This may explain her tendency to contradict herself concerning her age and various occult facts. Olcott theorizes that on the one hand she didn’t know much about the mechanics of her inner work because she was a passive participant, and on the other hand, the person often speaking and writing was not HPB at all, but one of the “Mahatmas,” as she termed them. In these situations, the

Mahatma would refer to HPB in the third person, sometimes using the masculine pronoun. Students of Master DK may remember that He has done the same thing on occasion, when referring to HPB. Since DK has mentioned assisting in the dictation of *The Secret Doctrine*, could He have been one of those “Somebodies” trading off in the writing of *Isis* twelve years earlier?

The book contains many other riches to be savored, including an account of the first cremation in America. (Yes, Henry Steel Olcott founded that practice as well, and the circumstances make a great story.) Having looked through the contents pages of the other volumes, I’m tempted to take on *Old Diary Leaves, Book Two* next!

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