

Sophia, Cosmic Consciousness of the Goddess

By: Olivia Robertson

Introduction

The Divine Wisdom lightens the sky of the seeker for Truth as the Veiled Goddess Sophia. "I am She who was, and is, and shall be. No man hath lifted my veil." In verity no analysis, no intellectual piecing together of facts, can penetrate that veil. It is the Paroketh of white light that distinguishes sphere from sphere. The impious, the inquisitive, the falsely clever prisoners of the material brain cannot even realise the existence of spheres beyond the veil. Their lives are bounded by passing time and changing space, by the extent of the five senses. Hence there is no desire to reach that which is to them unreal! For such, there is no ultimate truth, no Deity.

When the human intellect is regarded as the only tool for knowing the life around us, analysis supersedes synthesis: dissection of corpses displaces whole healing: paramount respect is given to the computer. Yet the separated parts of any being or thing on the material plane can never equal its totality, for it has its reality in many inter-related planes. The material part is a shadow of the eternal being which it represents. If a stone-deaf scientist were to analyse the score of the Choral Symphony by measuring the notes and their relationship in the score, he could find a mathematical system: but still know nothing of the Ode to Joy, Daughter of Elysium!

For those, whether child or adult, simple or clever, who truly seek within their minds and hearts for that harmony which comes from uniting wisdom and love, the Goddess may lift Her veil for an eternity, which may yet manifest through two seconds of passing time. So it was with Hypatia, Lucius Apuleius, St. Theresa of Avila, Emily Bronte. So it has been for many who are unknown to fame.

The Liturgy of the Fellowship of Isis has been inspired by She whose Name it bears; She who is crowned with the stars, is robed with the sun and standeth upon the moon. It deals with earthly, psychic and spiritual spheres. The three mundane facts of life, birth, work and marriage are treated in the Rites of Rebirth, Ordination and Wedding. Choice of one's role in the Divine Drama through identification with archetypal figures of myth are presented in Five Mysteries in "Dea." Two Rites of Time and Space, and three Elemental Rites of Sun, Moon and Earth are presented in "Urania," along with the ceremonial magic of The seven sacred planets. These relate to the psyche. The present zodiac contemplative ceremonies introduce the seeker to the Higher Sophia of the Trino-Sophia, thrice holy gnosis of wisdom.

The aim of stellar contemplation is to centre oneself in the motionless hub of the passing wheel of the stars. In ordinary life we journey from day to night, from year to year. Yesterday is as lost to us as yesteryear or childhood: tomorrow is non-existent and so as remote as death. The aim of the contemplative is to experience all-time, all-space, in greater consciousness. From such a stillness, many lives are experienced again in present consciousness: and greater spheres may be known, in which life is so vivid that this "normal" existence seems in comparison to be but a passing dream. This is where the ethical outlook of the neophyte is all-important. However dream-like any sphere may appear to be, the ethical and moral choices offered are real. Truth penetrates all realms, and free-will to choose the good is given, even in a dream. Judgement rules throughout the planes.

Petitionary prayer, is essential for profound contemplation. The Deity who presides over the Cosmic Night of the stars is Nuit of the starry night; "Sophia". Known by many Names in many lands, She is Mother of all the Star Gods and Goddesses. From Her dark womb beyond aeons of time and space come forth the stellar and planetary Deities, the Angels and Archangels; ourselves and all beings and

existences. Hence, as Hesiod relates, "the Deities and men come from One Source." We are all part of a mighty family. The greater is thus shown forth in the lesser.

Each stellar sphere is presided over by a Goddess representing Her Holy Mother, and the God Her Consort. There is in reality a plenitude of Divine Beings associated with every star. In these star ceremonies an Oracle has been bestowed by each Goddess through Her Priestess. From the Deities invoked in the rituals comes a shining tapestry woven from threads of many traditions, a rainbow cloak of Kwan Yin, bringer of harmony. All religions on our planet are related, for all stem from the Deities who preside over our galaxy, solar system and earth. In the Divine Spheres there are no divisions, no theological dissension nor philosophical contradictions. There are differences of approach, of emphasis, of radiation, for the stars are many-hued and bring differing gifts. Yet all spring from one source, the Cosmic Mother. Hence these rites draw together those religions which should never have been alienated from each other: the wisdom of East and West, North and South, uniting us all through the wisdom of the heart. Truth is indivisible and all powerful.

The solitary seeker can enact any of these rituals with the most wonderful magical instrument of all: the creative imagination. Even a small room in a city can be enjoyed in relation to the cosmos! The dull white ceiling with its electric light bulb is but a veil hiding the starry dome of the night sky illumined by the Great Bear, Cassiopeia and Pleiades. In the East, where the gas fire murmurs, is the great land of China where the sun will soon rise: to the South, beyond the transistor, glow the land of Egypt and all Africa! The chair guards the gateway to Atlantis beneath the great Western ocean, now humbly represented by a glass of water. And the bed in the North is stationed in the direction of the polar constellation ever circling round the Grael, the pole star, in Caer Arianrhod. Awareness of "Now" becomes expanded from waking state to a greater awakening, without even any intervening trance state.

When an invocation is made to the Goddess, and Her Oracle is read, the lone seeker may experience all that many worshippers can enjoy in a temple with others: even more, if the soul be ready. Awareness of the sun sign, as delineated in a daily newspaper, can relate the most mundane people with a heavenly gateway into the unknown! As a star influence is dimly sensed, a relationship develops. Hopes of more earnings, of a flat long sought for, of love so far unrequited, is promised through use of a symbol thousands of years old. Comradeship develops through comparison with other people's "signs". Soul communion may ensue.

The scientific validity of astrology has no consequence in this form of intuitive awareness. It is spiritual discovery of our kinship with the stars. So perfect can this relationship be, that one realises that the Sages were true magicians of the psyche, and taught wisely concerning the influences of heavenly bodies. The music of the spheres brings radiations that affect the spirit within us. The tropical or sidereal forms of horoscope readings can refer to different but relevant types of relationship: the sidereal, with stellar influence: the tropical, with seasonal effects of the year. A horoscope may thus be seen as a psychic mandala given to us by our spiritual Guides as a useful map of our lives, understood through the symbolic language of the ancients. The actual appearance in the sky of constellations seen as ram and fishes, virgin and scales, are picture hieroglyphs used by Adepts on that mighty blackboard which is the moonless night sky! Thus the precession of the equinoxes is relevant, teaching us about the coming of a new era, described as a move from Pisces to Aquarius. Mathematics are essential for astronomy. Inspiration is all-important for reading star symbols. Each symbol can be a key that will open the door to an unknown realm! The Ankh is the opener of all doors: it is the Key of Life held by Isis, Daughter of Nuit.

The contemplative needs to learn the art of entering semi-trance state, in which the brain is temporally put aside to allow the intuition to take control. Yet consciousness must not be lost entirely, but kept, as it were, with one foot on the earth! Conscience must also be as important in trance as in waking state. Prayer overcomes that instinctive fear of the supernatural which halts the seeker on the threshold. Not only is it best to have a guide on the earthly sphere, but it is also vital to have a teacher in the inner

planes. There is also the Watcher by the Threshold - whom followers of the Egyptian tradition know as Anubis, the Jackal. He protects the soul in that vulnerable state, entering and leaving trance.

Let us take one Star Rite - that of Pisces and Ceridwen. The Invocation of Her name and Her myth brings the devotee into communion with Her. When true communion occurs, time and space extend through the star gateway of Pisces, so that a lifetime may be experienced through seconds of earth time. The voyager awakens from this dream of existence into the greater sphere of the Star Deity and those who dwell in Her House. It is obviously essential that the traveller should be able to return successfully to everyday consciousness! Companions on the path who wish to attain trance through F.O.I. Rites are advised to work with a group in an F.O.I. Centre. An experienced Priestess and Priest can guide the soul with wisdom and, so reassured, the seeker may attain deeper experiences.

Zodiac contemplation may be undertaken in any order helpful to the group. The rites of the four Kerubs, Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius may be undertaken in that order, followed by the other two quaternaries. As presented in this volume, Pisces brings unformed creation through the Cauldron of Ceridwen, followed by the primal fire of Durga. Life on earth is next shown in animal form, coming through Isis in Taurus, Osiris incarnating in his primary form as the bull Serapis. Development of thinking humanity is inspired by Artemis and Apollo in the House of Gemini. In Cancer, control of the dragon of the unconscious instincts is wrought through Tiamat and Marduk, and the use of the passions by Sekhmet of Leo. Dana in Virgo bestows spirituality and Kwan Yin, balance of mind and feelings, with Her Libran scales. In Scorpio the fire of Kundalini is activated, and the transmutation of this occult energy is wrought by Brynhild in Sagittarius. Finally, the Aquarian down-pouring of the waters of spirit, the Higher Sophia, is brought to all beings by Juno. The Queen of Heaven gives the successful pilgrim The Corona Borealis, the Crown of Ariadne.

For those who find the degree system helpful, bringing achievement through structured progress, there are 32 degrees in the F.O.I. liturgy. The 33rd degree and those beyond refer to expansion of consciousness bestowed directly by the Deities, hence not to be codified.

The student of the Qabalah can relate these degrees with the symbolic Tree of Life of Ancient Babylon. Its roots extend through the Underworld of the Goddess Allat. Its mighty trunk with its twenty-two branches extend through the heavens. Shining radiations flow through the branches, which bear the constellations as flowers. The fruits thereof are sun, moon and earth and the seven sacred planets. On the summit of the tree shines the Star of Ishtar.

Let us follow the course of an imaginary girl who wishes to follow the spiritual life, one who would have taken the veil in the middle ages. She longs for her twin soul not now on earth, and so will not marry in this life-time. She undergoes the Rite of Rebirth (1) and Ordination of Priestess of Artemis, (2). She chooses to act as Persephone in Her Mystery, that she may experience the deep roots of the Tree that grow in the Underworld, (6). Because of her involvement in reincarnation she chooses Time Magic, (10) and the tides of the Moon, (12). She is attracted by Atlantis, so she learns the Magic of Neptune and Ngame, (20). She wishes to help others to attain harmony through contemplation, so she chooses the Mystical Awakening of Libra and Kwan Yin, (29). Altogether she has taken 7 degrees through many years. She has evolved psychically and mystically, and is successfully leading a group in trance work, particularly regression and prophecy. She calls her group "The Centre of Persephone."

Let us now imagine a vital, cheerful man, a Healer, who wishes to take a course to develop his gift, and also to help him in his career in the social services. He begins with marrying his magical partner, (3) followed by a double Ordination with his wife in the Priesthood of Hathor, (2). He identifies with the hero Theseus in the Mystery of the Labyrinth, (8), for he too wishes to build the celestial Athens. Expansive by nature, he enjoys Space Magic, (9) and enlarges his healing capacity through The Sun, (11). His wife and he practice the ceremonial magic of Venus and Vishnu, (15), and together contemplate the Mystery of Aries and Durga, (22). It is noted that this pair are like brother and sister in their vitality and expansiveness. The Healer would be more in polarity with the chaste Priestess of Artemis and, if they

were to work together, powerful results from the union of opposites could ensue.

Those who wish to balance rather than enhance their potentiality could do a course directly in opposition to their natural bent. Our Priestess of Artemis might - against the grain - undertake the Healer's degree course: he could struggle to attain the chastity and introspection of the Priestess of Artemis. But this is not advisable save in few cases, because we do best that which we love best! Identification cannot be forced. Spiritual growth must be natural.

Although it is the Deities who bestow Divine Revelation at their own good time and place, not at our choosing, nonetheless rituals can produce sudden onset of psychic gifts, and even sometimes extended consciousness. For instance, during the Mystery of the Awakening of Osiris in the Temple of Isis in Clonegal Castle, both Priestess and Priest wished to attain this particular degree. Both succeeded in experiencing some part of Isis and Osiris consciousness. The Priest, lying for some time in the old dungeon - now Chapel of The Mothers - found himself in deep trance. In a pre-Atlantean state of disembodiment he discovered the essential unity of all minds in One Mind. The Priestess, meanwhile, was acting the search of Isis for Osiris through the Chapels of the Elements, and from shrine to shrine of the zodiac. She felt a gathering identification with the role, a terrible sense of loss. So identified with Isis was she, that on discovering the entranced body of the priest in the dungeon, she underwent the shock of finding Osiris dead! His gradual return to consciousness through her help was for both of them a spiritual resurrection.

On one occasion an Initiate in the Chapel of the Mothers saw The Goddess in all Her beauty manifest through Her enthroned Priestess.

There are usually two sorts of experiences that may happen during ceremonies. While being ordained, candidates in the Clonegal Castle Temple usually report strong tingling when receiving holy oil on the forehead. They feel energy pouring through the body. This power had been seen clairvoyantly as rays of light, by participants at the ceremony. One may term this phenomenon "Kundalini", or Fire power.

However, Zodiac Rites are more apt to bring on trance states. One method is for the seeker to gaze upon the true stars in the sky. Though horoscopes are drawn from heliac positions, stellar psychic contact may be obtained by looking at the relevant constellation in the sky, and then using visual memory of this for contemplation. I worked with one member who lay in trance, seeing a vision of his sun sign, Gemini. He saw the stars as two young Greek Gods, one far behind the other. Through the constellation he received teachings from the God Hermes, who showed Himself as a magician with His caduceus, amidst the snow white causal forms of various creatures, as yet virgin and colourless like clouds.

Another member saw visions of the seven-fold stars of the Taurus triangle, the Hyades. He was given pictures of the red Aldebaran and the other Hyadic stars from the view-point of the pendant of the triangle, Prima Hyadum. Spiritual Beings were visiting earth from this star, he said, who used the Hyades triangle reversed as a symbol upon a staff. One can see this sign in the Pope's hand in the Marseilles Tarot deck. The Hyades are also typified in "The Star" card, seven stars, one of them red. The visionary told me of the influence these Beings had on American Indian religion. He was shown Giant Rock in the Yucca Valley, California, as being an ancient meeting-place between these Star Beings and American Indian medicine men. He was taught about the Taurus connection with South American and Egyptian pyramids, especially the third pyramid, which was connected with the Cow Goddess, Hathor. I myself was given a vision related to this part of the sky, the Hyades and Pleiades, and was shown a luminous copper-coloured Goddess with long black hair, seated cross-legged, Her South-American Indian face seen in profile. I was given Her Name, Maya.

Many years ago I was shown a vision of starry twins, a youth and maiden. They were made of white light, with long black hair. They were together and yet distinct. Their attributes were innocence, truth and youthful joy. Later I recognised them as the presiding Deities of the binary stars of Sirius. They had a

connection with our earth, bringing us arts and psychic gifts. I received the Names Isis and Osiris.

In the Mystical Awakening of Virgo and Dana in this volume, an apparition seen by Sean Dairan the Irish healer, is described. He told me She gave the name of "Dana", which resolved for me a question in my mind. Years ago I had seen a Goddess while in a deep state of consciousness. I have described this in "The Call of Isis." The Goddess had luminous wavy golden hair, a long pale face and wore a turquoise blue cloak embroidered with gold. I experienced a happiness unknown to me in earthly life. But I had no name. Later this Lady showed Herself to a clairvoyant and myself, and gave the Name "Dana." But still I awaited confirmation. For though all Goddesses are in harmony, each have their sovereignty over various spheres. I have painted a picture of Her for our Temple as Goddess of Virgo: all Goddesses in their spiritual Being are of the stars.

I offer these Rites as twelve doorways into stellar consciousness for those who have the faith of children and the wisdom of their elders. For the Divine Sophia enlightens all who seek Her, and speaks more potently through myth and faery tale than She can through learned tomes of philosophy! She lifts Her Veil and shows Herself lovingly to those who would enjoy that bliss which comes through the union of Love and Truth.

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