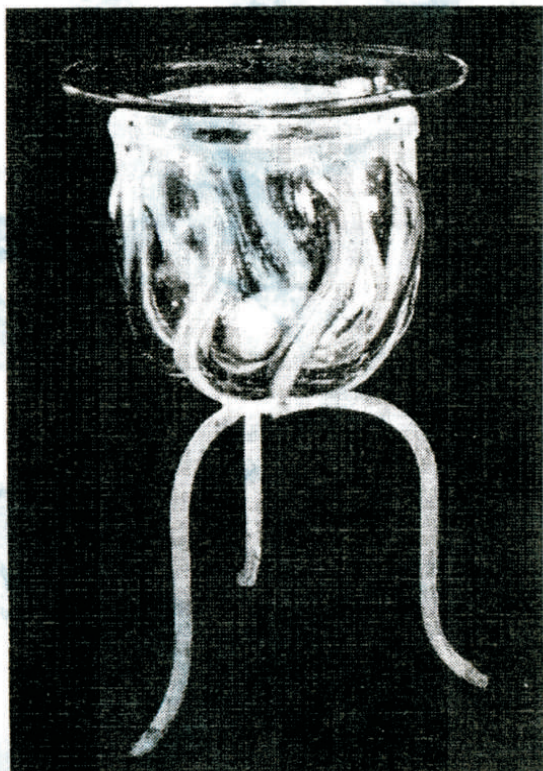


# Sophia

Creating  
a Soul

WISDOM  
Journal

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## Cover Story—Mary's Jar

**A**nd one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ... took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus. And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment... And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much..." [Luke 7:36-38; John 12:3; Luke 7:45-47]

Of the forms I admire are containers, especially beautiful bowls or jars on pedestals or other stands. I see them as representing a Soul carried by the physical body or lampstand; the bowl is the Soul, the lamp, and the contents, of course, is the Light. I think of this form as "Mary's Jar," full of something precious (the precious contents of her jar symbolizing Spirit) which, by giving back to Spirit, represents Spirit loving Spirit, or, simply, Love. Real Love permeates everything (as the odor permeated the house) and there is no telling where the object of love and the lover begin or end because they merge. Especially I like that she anointed him, rubbed the precious ointment into his flesh... what an earthy image, a holy act of love between masculine and feminine, where they become one, are no longer separate, but have created something new.

She is down on the floor (the foundation), at his feet (his purpose). Yes, she is "subservient" to Spirit, as are we, Awareness is. Spirit existed before our having entered this realm. Spirit incarnated into the unique expression here that is you, that is I. We are something new, and need to "create ourselves" in order that Spirit experience all we can do.

But "subservient" loses its meaning when the process is seen, when all works together. Ibn al 'Arabi puts it perfectly: "Where then is His self-sufficiency since I help Him and grant Him bliss?" We are needed.

The lamp and the lampstand work together in this realm, to support and direct the Light. That is the "duty" of each of us. But duty becomes privilege when imbued with Love.

I met a woman recently who is very bright and Works in her own way, entirely differently than I do, yet with the same Truth underlying her understanding and her efforts, and thus we resonated magnificently. In fact our visit together was as a symphony, more than the



He praises me and I praise Him, He worships me and I worship Him.  
 In my state of existence I confirm Him, As unmanifest essence I deny Him.  
 He knows me, while I know naught of Him, I also know Him and perceive Him.  
 Where then is His Self-sufficiency, Since I help Him and grant Him Bliss?  
 It is for this that the Reality created me, For I give content to His  
 Knowledge and manifest Him. We are His as has been shown,  
 As also we belong to ourselves.. He  
 has no other becoming except mine.  
 We are His and  
 we are through ourselves.  
 I have two aspects, He and I.  
 But He is not I in my I.  
 In me is His  
 theater of manifestation.  
 And we are for Him as vessels. ~ Ibn Al 'Arabi

sum of its parts. She Works primarily with women, and occasionally gets a little miffed, as are most women, at the patriarchal oppression that anyone over 40 knows so well. We were talking about this and she said, "Where's the Gospel of Mary? They deleted it!" No, they didn't. Maybe they tried (I don't know) but the creation of a Soul, "The Gospel of Mary," is in the Bible. But just like the Soul, it is subtle, not loud, supporting the Master, not usurping him. In doing so she directs his radiance. (One of my projects very soon is to highlight the Gospel of Mary within the Scripture for those who are interested.)

So the story of Mary at the foot of her Lord represents the union of Spirit and Awareness, "and the odour filled the house." A purified Awareness will radiate the light throughout your house—and beyond.

## The Dance

**T**hursday is rock & roll night at the pub. The piano player, an old man now, has worked with all the big boys—names every Baby Boomer knows, whether they liked such music or despised it. He's good.

The pub is not a dive; it's part of a nice old respectable dinner house, designed 75 years ago to replicate a Scottish inn. There are wooden beams and fireplaces, and paneled cubbyholes with tall wingbacks to snuggle into. Thursday nights the place is filled with middle-aged people pretending they are 17 again, and it sounds just like 1960 has returned... I don't go often—about every three or four months. But I've been going for years and I know the band and they know me and I always have a wonderful time.

Last Thursday was especially fun. The crowd was denser than usual and really enjoying themselves. Lots of people there I didn't know, including a new-to-me bass player, at whose elbow I was all evening at the piano bar. We chatted some and listening to him play I realized he was capable of much more than the Bubble Gum music that was prevailing that particular night since versatile Lou wasn't there. So I made requests which of course were honored and you should have seen your aged editor, face-to-face, belly-to-belly, with the bass player, dancing and swooping with him as *they* belted out Otis Redding and Sam Cooke and Ivory Joe Hunter. She had no inhibitions, which is to say no B-Side hovered anywhere near *her*, and just boogied all night long right in front of everyone, who seemed to enjoy because they applauded and sent drinks and gave hugs, and one who demanded anonymity even sent via the barmaid a darling inch-tall ceramic mouse! (I will have to ponder any symbolism in that one... but to be sure it was a sweet gesture, I received it as a party favor.) The Ricky Nelson-double guitarist commented that your editor always influences the crowd in a positive way and asked her please to come more often... Well... she would never want to be considered just "furniture" (i.e., a regular) and not only won't be there more often, but she leaves early, too, Cinderella-style, blowing kisses to the band, and off into the night. In other words, she plays



the role to the hilt and has as much fun as any music-lover (and attention-hound) could have anywhere.

When she walked through her front door that Thursday midnight the phone was ringing... the bass player wanted to say he had a great time and she returned the compliment with appreciation and went to bed knowing in her heart of hearts that Life is a party, no matter *what* age you are, if you just see it that way and play your part appropriately... be a guest, contribute—and enjoy.

And exactly twelve hours later she was sitting in a church at the funeral of a dear dear friend, sobbing to the strains of *Ave Maria*. She had actually gone there in a state of bliss—what the other four or five hundred mourners most likely didn't know was that their suddenly departed friend had recently turned his inner life around; had deeply questioned his purpose of living, had begun the very hard Work of examining all he thought he “knew,” looking at his conditioning and its roots, re-evaluating everything. At Thanksgiving the editor and her friend had danced together long into the night and though his Work was guided by someone else, he had thanked her for her part in his change of direction.

Although of course she was utterly shocked the previous Monday when she'd learned that he had simply dropped dead the day before, she was greatly comforted, in fact elated, that just in time he had begun the essential Work toward discovering What he was, and grateful beyond belief that she had been privy to this knowledge.

Alas the others had not been (and most would not even have understood it if they had), and the church was so full of grief. So many black-clad people, so many tears, women and men alike overwhelmed in sorrow that their charming, gracious, talented friend had been cut down in the prime of life.

Her intention of course was to try to balance this grief just a little, to sit there radiating joy, knowing everything was okay because our friend had Seen the Light before he left the party... and hoping to dispel a few tears with some light of her own.

At first this seemed to be happening, though those vibrations of grief gripping the congregation were an enormous challenge to bliss. And she considered all of this and sat quietly, doing what she could.

And then *Ave Maria* and grief she didn't even know was there burst through her own heart into bitter tears. Tears for her “self” who would not again dance with her friend at *this* party, nor share his inner journey. She was a little surprised at herself... oh, the pain... and of course it was okay... She got a grip, changed motion, got up and went outside for a moment, regained her composure, returned to her pew in the back and Worked to see if indeed she could continue to make some small contribution to this wake, this altogether different sort of party than that of the night before.

And as she sat there, silently radiating love to specific people who seemed to be overcome, it occurred to her that this indeed is Life—ALL of it—the dancing and the mourning, the joy and the sorrow, the lilt and the dirge, and everything in between. There is no escaping the fact that here in this dimly lit realm of the human experience, if we want to party, we will also have to ache sometimes. They go hand in hand, one cannot be had without the other. Maybe not usually in such dramatic fashion as the whole gamut in twelve hours... but sooner or later, laughter is replaced by tears, and of course, thankfully, although we never think of it at the time, tears will be replaced by laughter. The pendulum swings... and the pendulum swings...



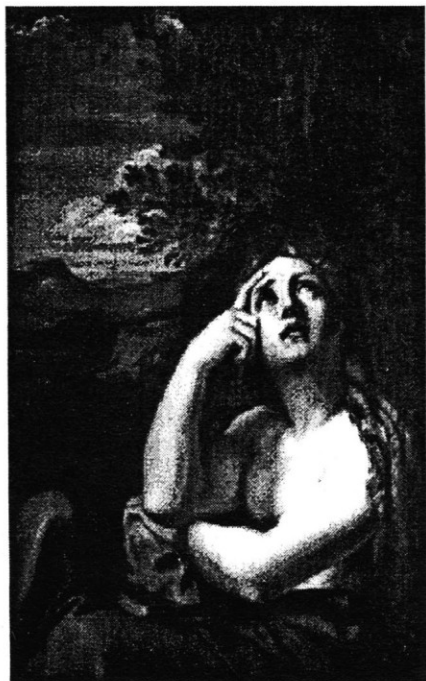
It is fascinating, to me anyway, how varied Life is, how many feelings we are capable of experiencing, how often paradox arises from sorrow or confusion, how contrasts could be made more often than we bother to make them. By that I mean one might have a nice time somewhere and the next day forget all about it... maybe have not so nice a time and isolate that into "Life is awful" or dreary or just too hard... How much wiser (and as a by-product, more comforting) to stand back a little and see a bigger picture, to consider *everything*. Of course someday we want to be able to disidentify with all of it, but in the meantime, alternately identifying and detaching is The Way.

And although I know I am about to mix metaphors—my story is about dancing, dancing for joy and swooning in sorrow... as I sat there in that church gazing at my friend's coffin, I noticed that instead of flowers, there was a beautiful silken ivory cloth draped over it, with a gold cross sewn into the fabric. And I smiled inwardly at *that* metaphor (a little gift,

a party favor)... our lives are a beautiful piece of tapestry, and the silken threads of it must move in perpendicular directions, like the two parts of a cross, for there to be any such thing as a piece of whole cloth... the Garment of Life contains warp and weft, it must, and has at its center, lest we forget, our cross, Initiative and Resistance, a post pointing toward heaven, and a crossbar intersecting it, challenging its effort to stand tall, weighting it in opposition, yet reminding us, this world is a place of contrast, that is its nature, and we *can* acknowledge and accept that and still have a wonderful time.



Thank you for your music, Ronnie and Fats and Scott and especially Dennis, we'll dance again, soon. Thank you for *you*, darling Allen, and we may dance again, someday. And thank you Life for inviting us all to your party... you're a heck of a Host, and what a bash.



## The Four Dual Basic Urges

**T**he newborn Awareness gets clouded because of a misunderstanding of the nature of Life on the earthly plane. She is not accustomed to discomfort, and her first greeting here is anything but pleasant to her physical senses. Unused to such stimulation, she rejects it. But rejecting pain is useless, it is part of the human experience, and very necessary.

It is also a fact of Life that Life likes attention (I see attention as the very first step toward Love, the Essence of Life). But the human experience shows us that we cannot possibly be attended to every minute of every day (we have to learn to take care of ourselves, don't we.)

Approval, the second step toward Love, feels very good and little ones thrive on it. When it is withheld, or its "opposite" comes instead, Awareness who feels the whole purpose of living is to gain these things feels terrible.

Eventually conditioning, which is a mechanistic way of getting things done, getting Life lived, tells Awareness that her real drive to accomplish some purpose, to evolve and unfold, is met by outside validation—that other people's need for her gives her value. She may indeed be valuable to other people, but this is not her purpose. Her purpose is to be valuable to Life by being herself.

None of the four dual basic urges is bad or wrong, they are side-effects of living in the physical realm, they are here for everyone. What is inaccurate is to perceive (and value) them as the whole purpose of living—they are merely by-products.

### The Four Dual Basic Urges

Level	To Gain	To Escape
Physical	Pleasure	Pain
Mental	Attention	Being ignored or rejected
Emotional	Approval	Disapproval
Transcendental	Feeling useful, needed	Feeling inferior, useless

## Symbols—Form and a Meaning of Form

**S**ophia is a sort of homage to Form, that product of creativity, Third Force, that we often admire. As I was putting this issue together, with the intent of making "The Dance" between Spirit and Awareness the theme, I got sidetracked with Containers, and as I pondered how to reconcile the two, I thought again how symbols overlap, how they can mean this or that as well as this and that... How rich is the tapestry of Creation, we can look in any corner and see a lovely part containing the whole...

As I looked at some of my beautiful Mary's Jars and thought how I could fit them into The Dance theme, I thought how The Dance itself was both Spirit—the movement, the idea—and well as Soul, the container, the shaping of it, because The Dance contains the Essence of Life, and Awareness contains it all. Both are the Picture of Man.

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand And a Heaven in a Wild Flower  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand And Eternity in an hour. ~ Wm. Blake*

I have come to realize over the last few years that one of the compensations of the dreaded physical signs of growing older is the infinitely valuable increasing ability, because aging means experience, to stand back and see the broad view, the bigger picture. To do this is an incredibly liberating activity. To stand back and see that, for instance, symbols such as dancing and containers can show us the same idea, the unfolding of Life.

I see various people able to do this to varying degrees, but I know very few who stop, consider, do this on purpose. It is a wonderful practice to do this as often as possible, because the broad view contains the understanding of relationships that are utterly invisible when we have our nose to the pane. And when we see that things or people or events that we once thought were isolated, of little or no value, or maybe painful aberrations, are in fact connected, that they are all part of the balancing and unfolding going on always, it is such a relief and such a joy. A relief because suddenly things do make sense, after all, and a joy because seeing extended relationships puts us on the verge of seeing the unity of everything, and leads to the ultimate joy, knowing What I am and *that* "I Am."

Wise Ones know they will sometimes have to make an effort to stand back, to climb the mountain in order to get a whole view of the valley... and they know that this effort becomes easier and easier with practice, and that extended observation is extended Awareness, and thus a very great contribution to Life, who depends on us, as Awareness Function, to do just that.

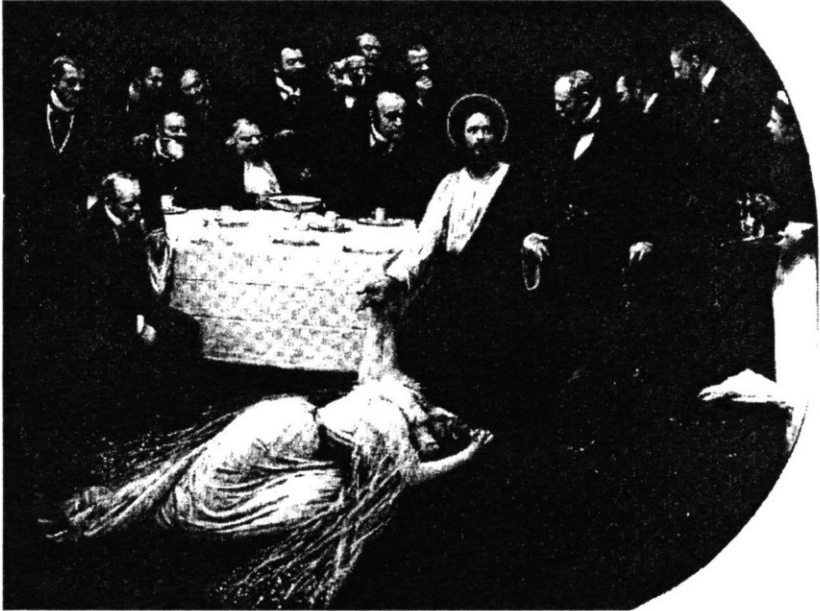
Stand back, let the valuable container that you are embrace an ever-growing magnificent dance. And know that by doing so, you are "giving content to His knowledge."





## What's Going On Here?

I was amused and curious when I came across this picture of “Mary Magdelene in the House of the Pharisee” (Jean Beruad, 1891). It certainly grasps one’s attention. I stared at it a while and so many ideas came to mind... I wanted to write about it and realized that would take up more space than I have—and maybe deprive you of pondering and arriving at your own insights. So I won’t say much, just pose a few questions to get you started seeing relationships.



Just who are “the Pharisees”? In Biblical times, in Victorian times, now?  
 What are they murmuring? What are they saying to Jesus? What is he saying to them?  
 Who sees himself as invited guest? Host? What is the truth of it?  
 How do the Pharisees see themselves? How are they seen by the observer? Jesus?  
 Just what is the nature of “scandal”? How important is it to Mary?  
 Why is Jesus dressed as he is? Is Mary in a ball gown?  
 Ever see another picture of this scene that included another female? What is her place?  
 Where is the light in this picture?  
 I hope you have as much fun with it as I did.

## Music

People who appreciate music as much as I do often send tapes or lyrics or articles about musicians and songwriters. Here are some that my friends found interesting, and so did I:

Excerpt from article from *Los Angeles Times Sunday Calendar* sent in by Patricia: "I think that people are born whole and as they start getting older their spiritual self and their physical self become separated because they get hurt or they become interested in things that aren't important. Material things, power, fame, things like that. And I think it's a courageous person that can get whole again like they were when they were a baby. That's the trick in life, I guess." Quote Flea, Red Hot Chili Peppers

Paul O. sent in an article from *The Orange County Register* about Enya: "The 34-year-old pianist-songwriter's ... got a theory about why she's popular enough to have sold more records than Eric Clapton (if fewer than Madonna) over a three-album stretch. It has to do with quiet space, the need people have for introspection and contemplation. 'I've been thinking about it and in today's society, a lot of people don't take a lot of time to themselves. They're actually afraid to. They're used to noise, TV, radio, traffic, the office. And a lot of people are so focused on problems all the time: What do I have to do next? Problems, problems, problems, thinking ahead all the time.' Her music, she suggests, helps people make constructive use of that time alone, provides an atmosphere in which thought flourishes." Please treat yourself to a copy of Enya's *Shepherd Moons*, some of the most beautiful and ethereal modern music I've ever heard. I am sure you will like it.

Cindy B. brought me Van Morrison's *These Are the Days*, and correctly thought I would like both music and words so much that she typed up the lyrics for me. My favorite lines: "These are days of the endless dancing and the long walks on the summer night... These are the days by the sparkling river, His timely grace and our treasured find, This is the love of the one great magician, Turned the water into wine."

Kelly sent Sara McLachlan's tape *fumbling towards ecstasy*, full of good songs. From "Mary"—"Mary walks down to the water's edge and there she hangs her head to find herself faded. A shadow of what she once was She said How long have I been sleeping and why do I feel so old why do I feel so cold, my heart is saying one thing but my body won't let go... in her suffering she could not understand that no one seemed to have the time to cherish what is offered..."

From George: "The Fourth Way musical group Dead Can Dance on an older CD (1991) called *A Passage In Time* do 'Song of Sophia'—and it's good. She really sings operish, sufi-ish, 16th century-ish, really hard to categorize. They don't advertize. Gurdjieff musical octaves makes it obvious. 'Song of Sophia' 'With one wish we wake the will within wisdom, With one will we wish the wisdom within waking. Woken, Wishing, Willing.' (Sung in another language?)"

## The Gospel of Mary

The Teachings of Jesus are full of “feminine” symbols, that is, the way “feminine” is used here, to represent a Soul, or container for Spirit.

Throughout the Gospels Jesus remarks that he knows What he is: “I and the Father are one.” There are many such references. Well, imagine him knowing his divinity—all the power that implies. And he used his power, always in service, not for himself. That is the integrated human, conscious, androgynous, strong and gentle at the same time. I think of him treading toward his destiny, not flinching, utterly willing to face pain, degradation, death. The part of him that was “feminine” or passive (receptive) is that part that allowed



his Spirit to endure such humiliation, without complaining, with wisdom and understanding: “Forgive them, they know not what they do.”

One thinks how tempting it must have been to want to “fix” everyone and everything, to create comfort all around... to forget his Purpose. It was his well-developed “feminine” aspect that bridled the great power of the divine and assisted it through such sorrow, and let it be.

Last night I came across a lovely passage in a book titled *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* by Carolyn G. Heilbrun (Norton Paperback). It's a scholarly treatise whose back cover notes state that the author "opens our eyes to the ways in which the concept of androgyny—the realization of man in woman and woman in man—has run, like a hidden river, from its source in pre-Hellenic myth through the literature of the Western world. The androgynous ideal shows itself to be a creative and civilizing force conducive to the survival of a truly human society." I couldn't agree more. (Androgyny = Integration)

I would like to quote you a passage about Jesus... where the author begs to differ with the critics of Christianity about the patriarchal subjugation of women. She says certainly "The Church" did this... but don't blame Jesus:

"[William E. Phipps, in *Was Jesus Married?*] shows that Jesus in fact held women in higher esteem than did the Jewish tradition from which he came, going so far indeed as to suggest that the life of thought might be preferable for some women to a life of domesticity. [Re the story of Martha's grouching because she has to do the housework while Mary sits at Jesus's feet being taught, and Jesus told Martha, 'Mary has chosen the better part.' ~ct] So distorted is the traditional view of Jesus's attitudes toward sexuality and toward women that a bishop at the turn of the century was able to insist that Christ had provided the strongest arguments against giving women the vote. The good bishop had forgotten the story of Martha and Mary... Perhaps it is no wonder that the women were first at the Cradle and last at the Cross. [The Gospel says only the women stayed with him at the end. ~ct] They had never known a man like this Man—there never has been such another. [Not so. She just hasn't heard of them ~ct] A prophet and teacher who never nagged at them, never flattered or coaxed or patronized; who never made arch pokes about them, never treated them either as 'The women, God help us!' or 'The ladies, God bless them!'; who rebuked without querulousness and praised without condescension; who took their questions and arguments seriously; who never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be feminine or jeered at them for being female; who had no axe to grind and no uneasy male dignity to defend; who took them as he found them and was completely unselfconscious. There is no act, no sermon, no parable in the whole Gospel that borrows its pungency from female perversity; nobody could possibly guess from the words and deeds of Jesus that there was anything 'funny' about women's nature. But we might easily deduce it from His contemporaries, and from His prophets before Him, and from His Church to this day."

Amen to that.

Jesus *knew* the meaning and value of "the feminine principle," developed it formidably, and indeed left a template for anyone Working to create a soul... if she but pays attention, looking past demons—misinformation, distortion, lies, imposed interpretations, and lets the Light shine through.

Four Facets to Spirit  
 Having a Human Experience  
 Mary & Spirit Radiate

The LIGHT  
 of Life

The Lamp  
 or  
 Mary's Jar

CONTAINER  
 of the Light  
 AWARENESS

"Containment" determined  
 by perception,  
 evaluation-  
 PURPOSE

The  
 Lampstand

MOVER of  
 the Light  
 Physical  
 Body

The EVENT  
 of Life

## Wisdom

**A**lthough it is said that we originate elsewhere and come here with what wisdom we had earned to that point, there is no way to check this out except by experience. We are interested in our experience *here*, because that is our Work. So we will say that the newborn infant, lacking much experience in this realm upon her arrival, has little if any wisdom about the here and now. There are four facets to her existence in this realm: Her essential Spiritual nature, Awareness, the little package this appears to reside in (Physical Body), and whatever Activity she carries out.

The newborn Awareness has been for some months unchallenged—she was probably comfortable in the womb (though in our times no telling what events such as amniocentesis or sonograms may have felt like). But we will assume that before birth there was little disturbance.

The event of birth was a sudden change, and a huge challenge, most likely the first violent event of her physical existence. Her response to this violence was a desire to escape it. So about the time of birth into the bigger world, little Awareness made the decision that the whole purpose of living was to regain the undisturbed state.

Grown-ups, at least readers of such publications as *Sophia*, can see that that is quite a limited view, in fact, not even accurate. To “live” to escape “life,” to “exist” to escape “existence,” doesn’t make sense. But to the shocked little Awareness, that is all that matters.

It is a feature of the human experience that once a decision is made with feeling, it remains operative until re-examined and re-made, with feeling.

So the little one faces her new life with an already clouded Awareness, with little chance of building a strong container for the expression of her essence, with such things as Wisdom very far off, indeed.

She continues to make decisions to aid and abet her desire to return to the womb, to be undisturbed. She complains when uncomfortable, and eventually demands her way. As she grows she realizes that smiling and cooing gain rewards and she sometimes connives to use this to get her way. The toddler is aware that almost everyone is bigger and stronger than she, knows more, can do more. She naturally allows them to be in charge of some of her actions, appropriate for a toddler. But she imbues them with special powers, too, that of deciding for her how she will feel.

Great conflict arises from all these decisions, because cooing and crying conflict and she wants to do both. Having her “rights” right now conflicts with being a good girl and minding. She is miserable and more determined than ever to regain undisturbance. One day in a misguided grasp of a wispy idea that she might be responsible for herself, she feels guilty and tries to improve. Instead of creating a comfort zone in which to live, this makes

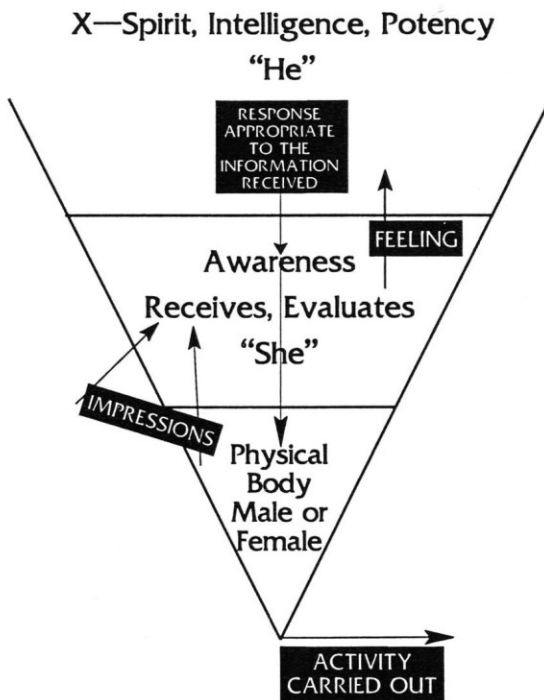
her more miserable until she can't stand it anymore and blames everyone and everything in sight (and out) for her woes.

These seven ideas, that the whole purpose of living is to be undisturbed and the way to achieve this is to complain, demand, please for effect, obey, feel guilty and blame are wrong ideas, and identified with. In some literature they are called devils, though they are not real living entities at all, they just mimic life, they are ideas that are incorrect, won't work, but are allowed to rule—and torment.

It is a Teaching principle that discomfort is a gift of sorts, and the more it increases, the bigger the gift it is, because when it has increased to the maximum tolerable, the Awareness will look elsewhere—outside of non-disturbance—for the understanding of what is going on to make life so miserable. This is the first baby step toward Wisdom.

When these decisions are truly seen as what operates one's life, when the Prime Mover of life is identified and re-evaluated, when the seven false ideas are recognized as untenable, and when this introspection is accompanied by the feeling that it is okay to risk giving them up in order to see what else can be done, a strong container for Essence can be built, is being built by this process.

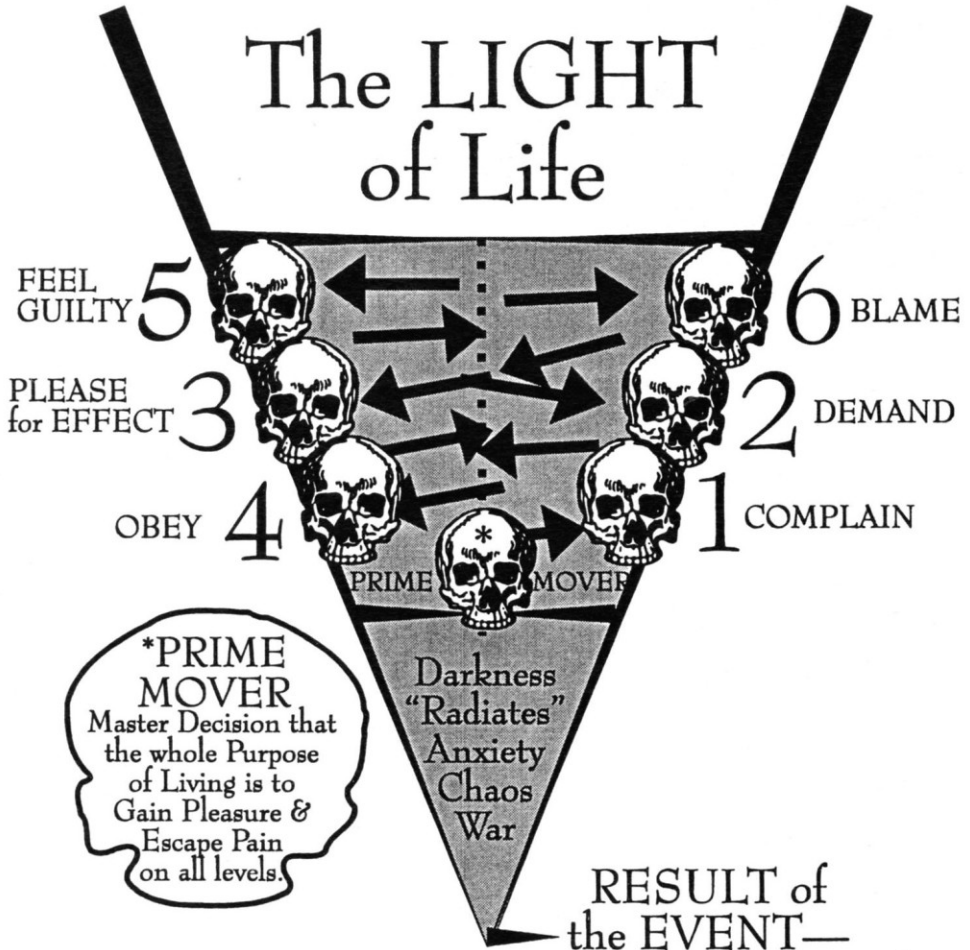
Then the four facets, Essence, Awareness, Physical Body and the Activity the three carry out is a harmonious flow, conflict ceases, distinctions between the facets diminish and the person becomes integrated and able to express his or her divine Essence. Eventually the lampstand and the lamp and the Light being radiated are virtually indistinguishable. This is Wisdom.





Mary with "Seven Devils"  
Contaminated Container  
Awareness Clouded  
Light Does Not Radiate

# The LIGHT of Life



**\*PRIME MOVER**  
Master Decision that the whole Purpose of Living is to Gain Pleasure & Escape Pain on all levels.

RESULT of the EVENT—  
Binges, Disease, Death



Postcard of Venice carnival, costumes from The House of Dreams. Sent by Neil. All the figures are dressed in the most magnificent deep blue, and white satin (and faces).

I wouldn't say that *everything* I need to know about Life I learned from my girlfriends, but they certainly have enriched my life beyond measure. This tee-shirt is advertised in the Paragon catalog and I thought the sentiment kind of charming. (The speaker needn't be a woman, either.)

## All I Need To Know About Life I Learned From My Girlfriend



« The best things in life are "girl things" » Never break a date with a girlfriend to go out with a man » Great minds think alike, assuming they are female » An understanding girlfriend is cheaper than a therapist » You're perfect just the way you are » There's a little wild woman in each of us » What's a bad hair day between girlfriends? » Girls just want to have fun » Gems may be precious but girlfriends are priceless »

E

## Book of Wisdom

If you love words and feel as I do that ancient texts have endured for *some* reason, but because they often don't "speak" to us as Friend or Guide makes it seem there is something amiss... if you understand them only because you got the key to them elsewhere, allowing you at long last to extract meaning, and yet you are a little sad that such beautiful works remain opaque and dense, requiring such effort, *get this book!*

*Desert Wisdom* by Neil Douglas-Klotz (HarperSanFrancisco)

The author has taken verses of well-known ancient texts, including Old and New Testaments and the major Sufi poets, and rendered them into a language that modern Westerners, who are full of knowledge about science and are products of generations of dualistic and materialistic thinking, can "relate" to... Instead of appreciating their beauty while smiling at their apparent naïveté, (or frowning at their patriarchal stridency), you will read these works with astonishment at the Truth and Wisdom they contain.

Be sure to read the introduction, and his commentaries at the end of each work (which delightfully he calls a midrash). in which Klotz explains how he arrived at his final product. On first glance one will be hard put to recognize the versions as translations, (they might even seem like wishful thinking) but he proves his point of view, at least to my satisfaction. (And to those who appreciate Coleman Barks' gift of a Rumi we can feel and smell and taste, you will like that Klotz and Barks are friends, that they use the same method to arrive at their final forms.)

If all this wasn't enough ("freeing these birds from their cage," as Coleman Barks was asked to do with Rumi's poems), Klotz has gone even further: after each passage, he presents what he calls a prayer or movement, wherein he instructs how to put the idea into action, using sounds from the original language, thoughts from our modern perspective. It is an amazing contribution he has made.

If you read this book and appreciate it, please let me know.

From the Introduction to *Desert Wisdom*:

"The book is divided into three parts. Each corresponds to one of the three foundational principles of how the universe and life on this planet have evolved based on the research of modern physics, paleontology, and biology. These three principles have been articulated by scientist Brian Swimme and historian Thomas Berry in *The Universe Story* (1992). They are diversity, inner presence, and communion.

"Because the universe as we know it developed through the principle of *diversity*, no two individuals are ever exactly alike, whether they are galaxies, planets, living beings, atoms, or elements. Because the universe developed through the principle of *interiority*, each individual organizes a 'self' that seems to move toward its own unique goals and purpose.

Because the universe developed through the principle of *communion*, every individual self maintains or tries to maintain a relationship with other selves around it. ...

“To the extent that modern culture has lost touch with nature, it faces collapse in all three areas. The Native Middle Eastern tradition, in the form of orthodox religion, has been used to justify this collapse. But its voices of wisdom, prophecy, and mysticism speak strongly to all three of these universe—and universal—principles. And they may help us recover parts of our psychic life that have been suffering from collective amnesia.”

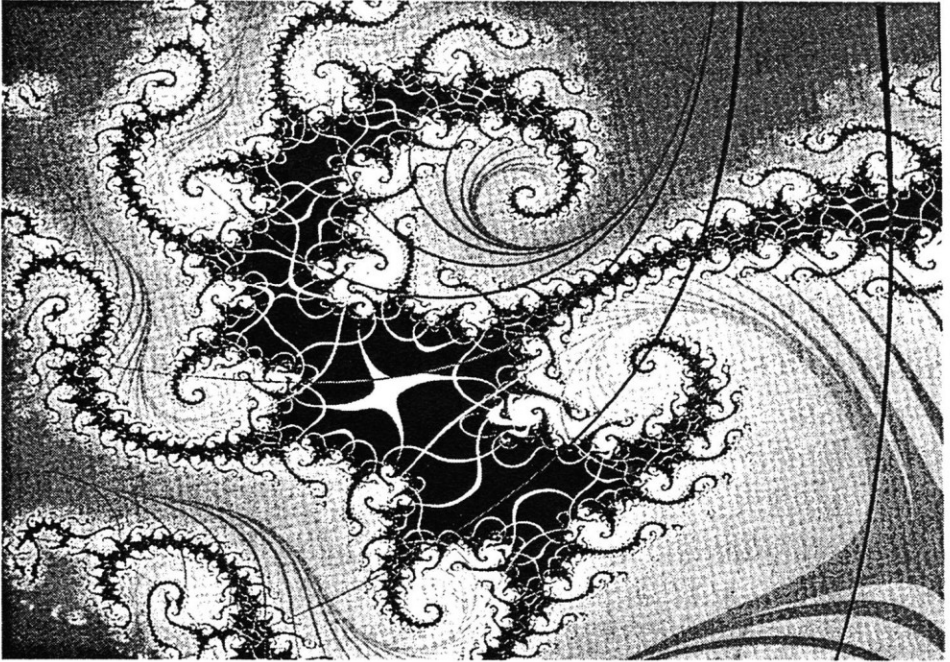


Photo by Mario Markus, Max-Planck Institute, Dortmund, Germany, from *Fractals* by John Briggs, A Touchstone Book published by Simon and Schuster.

*Desert Wisdom* is available from Harmony Workshop. (We are currently developing a new inventory of good books for sale.) It is available only in hardcover at present and lists for \$20. For a limited time we will discount it 10% and pay both postage and sales tax—your price \$18 total (and well worth it!).

PARTICLE AND WAVE

King James Version: In the beginning God created the heaven and earth.

[Klotz' version]:

In the beginning...  
which means:  
in archetypal form—  
with the power to be something in principle—  
like a point that unfolds itself  
in wings, in flame,  
in all directions,  
conceiving the idea of a universe  
for better and for worse...  
In that time before time and space,  
the Being of beings,  
the I-They-Who-Are,  
the One that is Many,  
the Ultimate Pronoun...  
Drew upon unknowable Otherness,  
to convert into knowable Essence  
two tendencies of our universe-to-be

the cosmic tendency toward the Limitless:  
the ocean of light, sound,  
name and vibration—  
all that shines in glorious space,  
that rises in sublime time

as well as

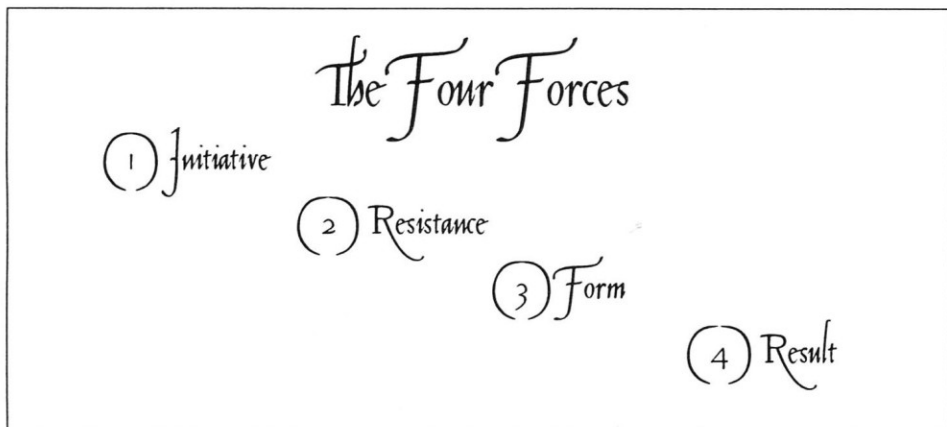
the cosmic tendency toward the Limited:  
a formed and fixed energy that moves  
straight toward goals and solutions:  
the sense of purpose that we see in  
earth, water, fire, and air.

In Principle,  
In Beginning-ness,  
Oneness envisioned the wave and the particle.

## The Four Forces

All creation unfolds in a process of four forces (which go far beyond the mechanical model of cause and effect). These forces are (1) Initiative, the idea, desire to create; (2) Resistance, the “opponent” that arises to shape the idea; (3) Form, the idea manifest; and (4) Result, the response to the process of the first three forces.

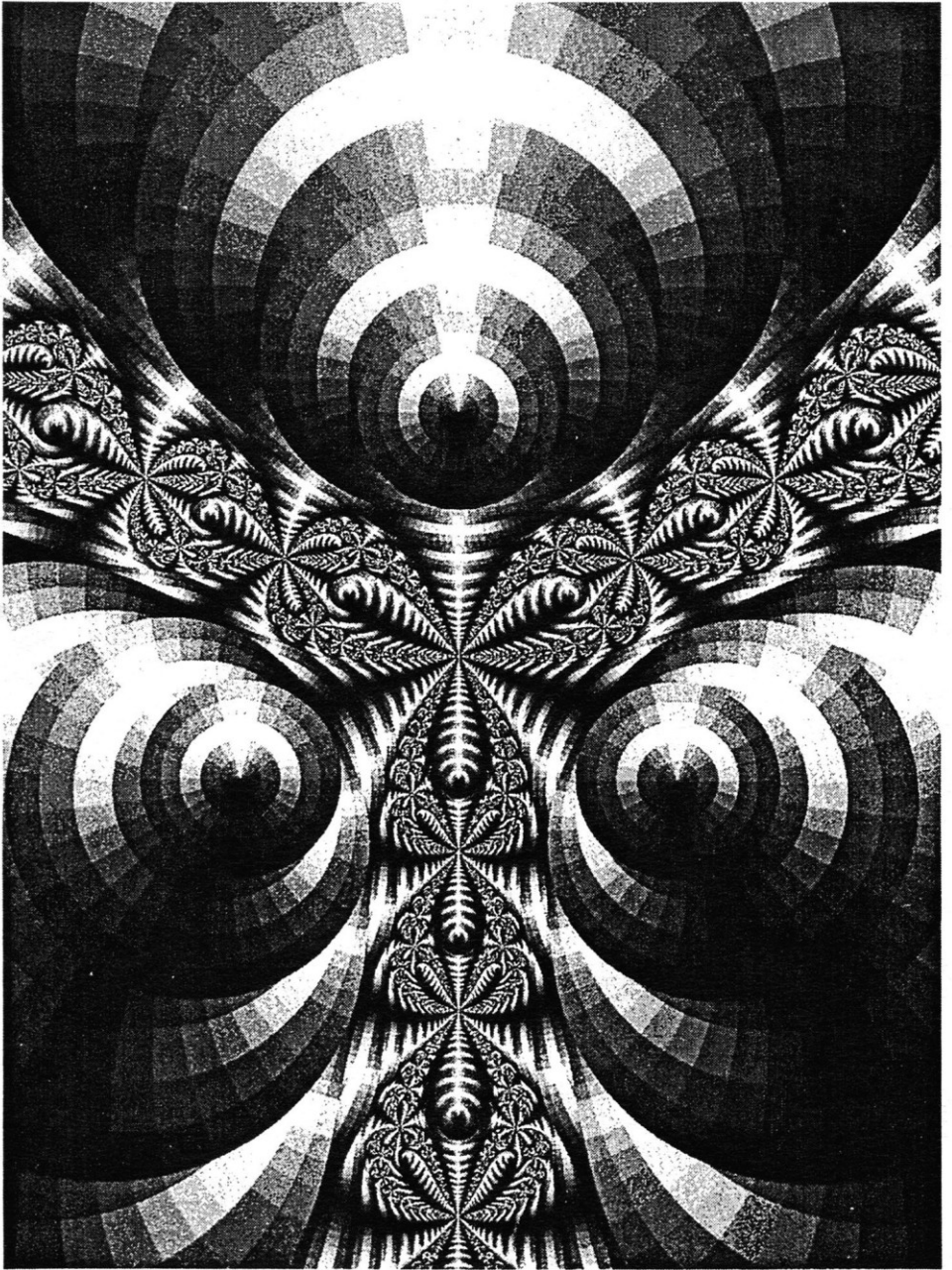
Some examples: A Dance. First is the idea of dancing, the desire to express creativity. Second is the challenge of moving in a melodic (or other) manner within the “confines” of physical forces, both space and gravity, and those of the physical body. Third is the event of the dance, a Form. Forth force is a response (or if perceived unconsciously, a reaction). That may be enjoyment, exercise, discovery, an inspiration to do similar, or any number of responses.



In the creation of a jar, there is first the idea that a container will be created in order to hold something (or to represent the possibility of holding something); second are the physical necessities to manifest an object in matter; the two together produce the form, the jar; third is the result, it may indeed contain something, it may be admirable for its beauty (or not), or inspire understanding of symbols, just to name a few responses.

The picture opposite was done on a computer (by C. Pickover, from *Fractals* by John Briggs). I liked it as representing the four forces because the pattern looks like a face, to me, reminds me of a living form. First force in this case is the idea and desire to manifest mathematics in a physical representation; second force is the software, and all the requirements of generating pictures on computers; third is the picture; fourth is our response to it.

The Four Forces are inherent in all creation. Looking for them and identifying them is a great aid to waking up, to seeing the Universe for what it is.



## Mailbox

Dear Christine! I would like to express my protest about you changing "Sophia" to "Sophie." Did your pleaser voice convince you? What is wrong about men reading a "woman's journal" and enjoying it? Why is it necessary to accommodate and alter? The name Sophia is the classical version of "Sophie." It was never a gender name particularly since it means wisdom. Now it certainly has the making of a more discriminating definition and loses its individuality, therefore freedom for interpretation. Sounds extreme? Well, that's how I feel about it. *Birgit*



I laughed out loud when I read your letter and called you and we laughed together. Your point is well taken and I agree, there is certainly nothing "wrong about men reading a woman's journal and enjoying it." But in addition to this there is some misunderstanding here. I didn't change the name Sophia, but I often nickname my little babies; for instance I refer to *Seeking the Rose* as my Baby Rose, and call *Awareness Journal* AJ, and so on. My friends hear me refer to *Sophia* as Sophie all the time, it has nothing to do with anything, especially pleasing men. When you saw Sophie instead of Sophia, you saw an endearment, that's all. I *did* change "Wise Woman's Journal" to "Wisdom Journal," and not to please men but to accommodate myself. I had heard from several men who were "closet readers" and wanted to subscribe but thought somehow "Wise Woman's Journal" excluded them. It was never meant to, but I was glad to learn that this impression was there, and I corrected it for the simple reason of economics: It costs money to put out publications, and especially *Sophia*, which does not yet pay for itself. If anyone wants to subscribe but does not because of a misunderstanding of the meaning of words, I want to correct that and sell more copies. Simple. I have no ax to grind of any kind, feminist or otherwise. I want my material available to *anyone* who wants it, and I do what I can to make it so.

So I thank you for your thoughts and feelings, and in concession to them I am delighted to print your letter. To please you? No, to say thank you for your efforts; every bit of feedback I get helps me to hone my little experiment, *Sophia*, so that it does become something useful to those who are interested in the Work. Thank you!

Christine, Enclosed is a check for \$25 for a subscription to *Sophia, Wise Women's Journal*, which D. showed me when we were at her house. I like it very much. I am hoping that men can subscribe, too. If not, please send it in care of my wife. *Harry*.

Your Sophie is on its way, in your very own name. Thank you.

Chris, Sara showed me a copy of your newsletter for women. So *that's* what women are all about! Now I am informed! *Jon*