

Doubt and Higher Reason

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Good evening and welcome to the festival of Scorpio. If someone were to proclaim that the solution to humanity's problems was simplicity itself, he would probably be thought at best naïve, but more likely a fool. And yet there is much transformative power in simplicity and we can see that much of the complex nature of today's problems is due to the over-active workings of the desire nature and the intricate scheming of the lower mind to achieve its goals.

The Tibetan told us that “if men carried the concept of brotherhood with all its implications into the life and work of every day, into all intercourse whether between the capitalist and the labourer, the politician and the people, between nation and nation, or between race and race, there would emerge that peace on earth which nothing could upset or overturn. So simple a rule, and yet utterly beyond the mental grasp of the majority!”

This comment was written many years ago and yet it seems to be as apt today as ever, if not more so. While we have moved on in one sense and more enlightened public thinking is emerging, it could also be said that we are further immersed in the spoils of commerce and industry. Technology, for example, provides many useful applications in medicine and science, but the proliferation of increasingly clever gadgets that aim to heighten the pleasure and ease of our stay on earth can all too easily become preoccupations. Where such obsessions dominate, the bigger picture of life is all too easily lost in the never-ending search to acquire the “next best thing”, as the previous innovation becomes out of date shortly after it has been acquired.

Our work in Scorpio concerns the substitution of love for desire, and higher reason for the doubt and fear that currently pervades the world. Only through this process can that essential simplification of life take place that can lead to a person or a world at peace with itself. Doubt hangs heavy over the mind that is busily pursuing its dreams in the material world, blocking the light of reason with a separateness that is corrosive to the spirit within. Where the spirit of materialism is present, so too are fear, suspicion and doubt, as its natural bedfellows – for the separative consciousness is constantly on the lookout for itself – alert to all opposing forces that it perceives as arrayed against it.

In contrast to this, those who have an inclusive spirit look upwards and within, and see instead, the rays of an invisible sun constantly pouring into and through them, bringing an appreciation of the higher commodities available to us on earth – the pure and simple blessings that are constantly circulating throughout the ethers. Such a person expresses the vital life – receiving stimulation not from ground level but from the spiritual air with its abundant and ever-changing qualities. Creative engagement with these qualities converts them into the type of radiation needed to serve the world, so hastening a simplified, more enlightened approach to life for all.

While doubt is associated with the lower mind, pure reason is a characteristic of the higher mind, open to the ethers and seeing at once, links between things that are invisible and unapparent to the materialistic eye. From this higher perspective, the open mind considers these relationships and is able to clarify judgements and ascertain truths that the concrete mind, whirling around at low altitude, cannot perceive or understand. The Affirmation of the Disciple which we are about to use, provides an insight into this heightened consciousness with its intuitional understanding of the nature of reality that flows freely through the heart and mind of the user. Let us now pause for reflection and then say the mantram together:

*I am a point of light within a greater Light.
I am a strand of loving energy within the stream of love divine.
I am a point of sacrificial Fire, focussed within the fiery Will of God.
And thus I stand.*

*I am a way by which men may achieve.
I am a source of strength, enabling them to stand.
I am a beam of light, shining upon their way.
And thus I stand.*

*And standing thus revolve
And tread this way the ways of men,
And know the ways of God.
And thus I stand.
OM*

At the time of the full moon, we can imagine countless strands of light projected towards the spiritual Heart of the planet by co-workers around the world, evoking a stream of divine reason into human consciousness. Our whole being is directed upwards and held at a point of tension, an interlude of reflection on the opportunity of this time. In that inner sanctuary we can reflect on the simplicity of divine reason and how its light can flood the lower mind and cast away all shadow of doubt. Franklin Roosevelt once said, “The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today” and this continues to be so as world problems challenge our strength to hold the mind in the light of the intuition and to keep our sense of faith and hope alive. This is not easy of course, as the news naturally reflects the doubt, fear and suspicion that, for so long, has undermined the establishing of right human relationships.

Each time we watch the news, the mess that the world has gotten itself into becomes ever more apparent. Whilst writing this talk, for example, the UN Wire news on the day, contained the following news briefs:

“The vast majority of countries are failing to pay UN dues with only 22 out of 192 paying in full, leaving a \$1.3 billion deficit for the budget.”

“Development experts and scientists fear a sufficient supply of land, water and expertise will not be enough to raise food production levels high enough to fend off mass starvation in the decades to come”.

“The head of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change doesn’t think that a fully fledged new international treaty [is] going to happen... in view of the limited time remaining to Copenhagen..”

“Afghanistan’s production of heroin and opium supplies 15 million addicts worldwide and kills 100,000 people a year ...”

Such reports weigh heavily on the mind – the implications of it all seem overwhelming, and yet, if we recall the Tibetan’s words, the simple practice of brotherhood has the ability to transform these problems and bring peace. This is the relevance of group meditation – to keep on empowering the thoughtform of love and brotherhood until it fully awakens in human consciousness and becomes the prevailing power behind individual and world affairs. This is the outstanding work that needs to be done and it is service of the most practical kind. For only when humanity is motivated by love and brotherhood can the root cause of these problems be removed and peace finally reign on earth.

One of the greatest challenges for the modern disciple is to have faith in this work – to remove the doubt and uncertainty that renders meditation impotent. Even for the disciple who has touched the heights of soul contact and experienced the companionship of group life, doubt can still come at unexpected times, well fed by the imagination and with all its debilitating anxiety and depression. Doubt is very subtle and often so all encompassing that it can even cause us to question our own divinity. It dampens the fires of aspiration in the heart so crucial to enlightenment. Fear of our impotence and inability to deal with life can then quickly overwhelm us. The concrete mind perceives a world of uncertainty and, full of doubt, its intellectual fire mixes with the watery, emotional nature to create a haze that blots out the light of reason. It then formulates truth at this depleted level. The resulting reasoning of the lower mind can be seen currently in the intellectual doubting as to all matters spiritual by large swathes of the intelligentsia, and the obscure logic that is so determined to explain life and consciousness by nothing more than the random, fortuitous collisions of fundamental particles.

The challenge is to restrain this process, and call on the higher reason for a more enlightened and accurate perspective. The intuition is sorely needed but can only function in the mind that is controlled and stilled from excessive activity. When we are overwhelmed by doubt, we can question the lower mind's capacity to explain, interpret and comprehend; then we soon come to realise its inability to find solutions to life's big problems at its own level of mentality. However, it is only when the effort at this level has been exhausted without reward, that we can find the faith and conviction to abandon our roamings on the lower planes of thought and feeling, and open the mind to the light of pure reason.

This of course all relates to the central theme of Scorpio. Here Hercules faced the hydra with nine devouring heads that renewed themselves each time one was severed. The hydra, as a symbol of the mind, had to be lifted as a whole into the light of the higher reason in order to find its resolution. Humanity is on the verge of this but not yet able to realise that the hydra of world problems has to be solved through vision and higher reasoning. But when mankind raises its problems above the slough of desire-mind and into the light of that wisdom we call the soul, then the perception of the world dilemma will be transformed. Then the hydra will be overcome and its immortal head symbolically buried beneath the rock of the will. Rightly controlled and channelled, it will then become a source of power and upliftment rather than the scourge it now is.

This is how the labour ends, with the immortal head having synthesised the lessons of the obstacles that the other heads symbolised. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the hydra or serpent is also a symbol of Wisdom. Its movements portray the harmonious and rhythmic self-expression of wisdom in the individual and in the universe. Its tongue is bi-polar – susceptible of both low cunning and deception or of elevation into lofty intuition. The eyes of the snake are also compelling, hypnotic. Hypnosis, when wrongly used, inflicts a stronger will upon a weaker, more receptive one; hypnotic oratory can persuade people and nations to be controlled and led down the wrong path, by the misuse of power and selfish will. Equally we have the positive vision and oratory, such as that of President Obama, using speech to unite the world and awaken in people their common humanity. The lower and higher aspects of Scorpio are therefore seen in the symbol of the serpent. On the one hand we have deception as reflected in the lower keynote of Scorpio: *"And the Word said, Let Maya flourish and let deception rule"*; while on the higher path we have the triumph of the intuition, and the soul chanting and singing, *"Warrior I am and from the battle I emerge triumphant"*.

This good/bad polarity is also reflected in ancient mythology where the serpent is sometimes used as an emblem of the intelligence of God, whilst at other times, it denotes the subtlety of evil and deception. It is a symbol of illusion generated by the lower mind and its sense of separateness. Here ignorance, falsity and pride appear and the creator of illusion is said to devastate the soul inasmuch as

it is the cause of the sense of desolation, emptiness and satiety that follows the long use of the senses and lower mind.

But the serpent is also the symbol of the higher self, the divine healer by means of the power of the intuition that harmonises and “raises the dead to life” by transmuting the lower into the higher. When this occurs we have the disciple triumphant over matter and form. To have vision indicates that one is on the way to sensing “the Presence throughout the Universe in all forms and in all presentations of truth – that life and light which stands behind the soul and all forms.” If a vision such as this were to catch fire and spread throughout the world, it would make a significant rent in the veils of maya, the seat of deception, and let in the light so desperately needed at this time. This deception includes the apparent reality of earthly life and its forms for, as the great seer, Patanjali, reminded us “In the case of the man who has achieved yoga (or union) the objective universe has ceased to be. Yet it existeth still for those who are not yet free.” To consider the objective universe – the environment in which man functions and interacts by means of the five senses, as ceasing to be – would seem incredible to many – even the devoutly religious. Yet, so it is for the initiates of the race who function in a completely different reality to the ordinary human being.

It is only when we summon up the courage to take that extra step of detachment from the world and form life that we can finally understand the illusory nature of matter and its warped representation of the real. But to be more precise, it isn't matter that is unreal it is man's distorted perception through wrong engagement with it. Through the misuse of creative forces, humanity has created distortions in the etheric veils. They were meant to reflect the beauty and truth of the higher worlds into the lower in line with divine intention, however, the selfish use of force has distorted them so that the light of the higher realms is cut off leaving us seemingly alone and bereft in the universe.

It is the energy of love that can put things straight by establishing right relationships with others as well as restoring the ethers' ability to become a truer reflector of Divinity. To establish this soul cognition will take great courage as it means not only standing against established belief systems but also prevailing against doubt, that great enemy of reality. Then we shall see the Christ nature, group consciousness, much more in evidence, with the faculty of intuition bringing an instantaneous insight into all of life's manifestations and circumstances. This development will be some time in coming, but such awakening intuitives are sorely needed now to bring vision and wisdom to humanity and demonstrate what will one day come to be common place.

We are reminded that as soon as we are determined to triumph and to function as a server of the race, a refocussing of all the forces of the personality and soul (in unison) is brought about and this in itself raises its own difficulties. It's at this point that many give up, but when we persevere and subordinate ourselves, our affairs and time to the need of the hour, we triumph. We wilfully occupy ourselves with the group life and plans; and by doing this we overcome the dweller, the personality with its ancient faults and habits, by relegating it to its place as part of the Great Illusion and by allowing the Angel of the Presence to take over.

So let us go into meditation and work with each other to awaken the higher reasoning and cast away the shadows of doubt. As we do so, let us bear in mind the wisdom contained in this instruction from the Old Commentary which enjoins the disciple : “to seize hold of the tail of the serpent of wisdom, and having with firmness grasped it...follow it into the deepest centre of the Hall of Wisdom. Let him not be betrayed into the trap set for him by the serpent of illusion, but let him shut his eyes to the colourful tracery upon its back, and his ears to the melody of its voice. Let him discern the jewel, set in the forehead of the serpent whose tail he holds, and by its radiance traverse the miry halls of maya.”