

FESTIVAL OF CAPRICORN
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Working from Inside Out

So here we are at the peak moment of the Festival Week ... preparing ourselves to work with a flow of energies to be released at the time of the Capricorn Full Moon.

Let's pause for a moment and ponder what this means. We are living at a time when more and more human beings are waking up to the fact that there is a withiness to life ... an inner dimension of presence, soul, where we touch the divine, and in so doing become open to layers of beauty, meaning, being that change us, change our perspective, change our orientation, change our values, change the way in which we see ourselves, life and all events.

What is especially important about this awakening, now, is that it comes after a period of absorption in a culture and a science that has denied interiority, denied the power of the heart, denied any sense of relationship with Life in all its infinite variety of forms, denied any understanding of the Great Chain of Being. So the awakening to presence, consciousness and conscience brings with it the seed of something new – something not yet born – something waiting to emerge.

It is also especially important that this awakening is taking place at a time when denial of the inner dimension has led to a civilization and an economics that is damaging basic earth systems – climate, air quality, water. The habit of living and thinking as if things and creatures and fellow human beings are separated from each other, independent and simply responsible for themselves has become unsustainable. The thoughtform of separation is in crisis – just as worlds of economics, governance, ecology and health are in crisis.

Our time is one in which a revelation of Wholeness and of the interconnectedness of Life is seeping deeply into all areas of consciousness – from the intimate private world of the self through to the array of professional worlds of thought and activity. Every area of life is now touched by insights of wholeness. It is difficult to imagine a profession or field of activity in which there is not a tension, a struggle between understandings of wholeness and habits of separateness and selfishness. How to live wholeness? How to give birth to an economics of wholeness – not just personally but in our towns and cities, our States, provinces and nations? How to allow a religion of wholeness to grow within our minds, our hearts, our lives, our families and our communities? How to foster a democracy that resonates to the wholeness vision, fosters responsibility and is genuinely empowering of individuals and communities? These are questions that are both personal and collective. They are our questions. As we grow in our ability to look these questions in the eye, to be challenged by them, to begin to live lives in response to them, the human is changing. What it is to be a human being is changing.

And so we come to the culmination of this Festival Week as we prepare for the Capricorn full moon. Let us recall something of the magic of this week. Every seven years since 1935 Alice Bailey writes that there has been an alignment of heavenly forces: the energies of Capricorn

augmented by forces from a still greater unnamed constellation which, we are told *is to our zodiac what the zodiac is to the earth*. [Psychology II, pp 195-6]. Imagine that – a constellation that is to our zodiac what the zodiac is to the earth. Every seven years this alignment takes place and the energies pouring from the greater constellation through Capricorn into the kingdoms of life on Earth have a special impact on the New Group of World Servers – the group of all human beings who are inspired by a vision of wholeness and whose lives are about bringing that vision into expression.

These Festivals Weeks have been observed over the decades by meditators loosely associated with the writings of Alice Bailey – no other major esoteric writer refers to them. And now, this year, when the New Group of World Servers is becoming the Group it has always been destined to become – this year the beginning of the festival Week is being observed globally by hundreds of millions of people. While the great turning predicted by the Mayan Calendar as taking place on December 21 2012 has been a field day for doomsayers who predict the end of the world, the real significance of the mobilization that took place during the three days December 20 – 22 was in the hundreds of millions of people who took steps to affirm that a new world and a new age are in process of being born: Peace 2012, Birth 2012, Push4Peace, Three Days of Love. These have been global events observed around the world.

This is the magic – in 2012 countless millions inspired by a vision of the new humanity have invoked higher energies during this Festival Week. Imagine the invocative appeal – embracing all the levels of invocation: simple heartfelt appeal to divinity, elements of religious fervor, reaching in to those more trained in arts of prayer, meditation, intention, and visualization. This Festival Week has seen, is seeing, One Invocative Act. In terms of the history of a coherent synchronized global focus in consciousness, it would not be inappropriate to refer to this as One Great Invocative Act in Humanity – something that has never before occurred in human history. That is pretty amazing.

Our work now as a global meditation group is in two phases, two movements. In the first movement we can visualize this Great Invocative Act by humanity penetrating into the Halls and Council Chambers of Divinities on the Inner Side of Life. Imagine this cry of humanity touching the heart of the Christ – reaching the ears of the Mother of the World – echoing through the circles of the Ashram. Imagine the richness of the field of intentions, hopes, dreams and visions rising from hundreds of millions of human beings during this special week, and during this special period of the Capricorn full moon.

While the first movement of our meditation is about invocation, during the second movement we become as a group absorbed in and with the flow of energies pouring from that Greater Constellation; feeling, seeing, understanding, knowing the empowerment that these energies will bring to the New Group of World Servers – human beings, in incarnation, who are pioneering the birthing of the new.

Remember we do this work in visualization and meditation not as individuals but as a group – as one meditating group, at the heart of the New Group of World Servers. This simple idea of meditating as a cell within a group mind and heart might come naturally to us or it might be something we have to work on. Think as if “I” am part of the Group – what would it be like to be

immersed in a field of group mind? It might appear that this would be in opposition to one's own mind and heart, that there would be some conflict. And if it is approached from the perspective of 'my mind' as separate from "your mind" it may be that this appears to be the case. But if we ponder the nature of our higher mind and of our intuition we get a different perspective. Through the authentic pondering, thinking and contemplation of common seed thoughts and images by each one of us, each meditator in the world group, we begin to see and think from the perspective of the higher mind and the loving heart. This is a group perspective looking out on the world or into the world of thought in such a way that we begin to see something of the sacred dynamics of the unfolding Plan. It is mythical thinking in which we become one with the group. The individual meditator is not obliterated in this - the group sees through the lens of each individual, drawing on the individual's particular life experiences, engagement with particular sacred teachings, images, deities and so on. As "I" begin to identify with the group mind and heart, "I" understand that it is this group mind and heart that is invocative of higher energies and that is thinking through those higher energies into a multitude of human expressions.

The individual becomes the universal without losing individuality. Unity reveals itself through infinite diversity. This is why global issues and the spiritual dynamics held within them are often best seen in the way in which these dynamics are playing out in the local environment. When we look locally we begin to see how previously unused human muscles of mind and heart are beginning to be exercised in responding to a particular problem, how will and goodwill begins to be tested and refined in the furnace of lived situations, how building right relations, or giving birth to right relationships from the inside out, is not some abstract idea but the central challenge for all members of the New Group at this time – and how in fact it is the central challenge in our lives.

Contemplation, pondering, visualization and thinking through or imagining higher energies, lighted, loving energies conditioning human affairs – these are the key elements of our meditation work together.

It is important for us to be clear about the group field of mind and heart that is sharing in this meditation work – now during this special Capricorn full moon as well as during all the monthly full moon festivals. It is a coherent field with a specific purpose of invocation and distribution. At the heart of the New Group of World Servers there is a field of concentrated lighted, loving mind and heart. It can be thought of as the World Esoteric Group. It consists of all who are trained and experienced in the use of meditation and contemplation (from diverse traditions), who are in process of developing a loving mind, and who see their lives as contributing to the evolution of right relationships. This World Esoteric Group draws on the inspiration of a variety of esoteric and wisdom traditions – so many different pathways in service of the One.

Within the World Esoteric Group the field of mind and heart that is specifically working with the opportunities of the full moon rhythm under the inspiration of Alice Bailey's writings is itself diverse. This is one of the great strengths of the group. There are now a variety of different groups, organisms, schools, networks and study centers working in the spirit of the Alice Bailey material – each one bringing particular gifts to the group whole. Yet it is important that we affirm that when we work in meditation during these full moons our affiliation is to the group as a whole – one defined, coherent field of mind and heart, inspired by a shared perspective on the

Plan, the New Group of World Servers, Hierarchy – and above all moved by humanity's need to reawaken to the soul – moved by a tenderness towards humanity at this time of transition and transformation.

We need, as a group, to hold in the forefront of our thinking that our purpose is to work from the inside out, in solidarity with others, to contribute to the One Work of building right relations. This overall purpose of working for right relations is quite accepted within the service network. Take the Earth Charter, for example. It is a product of a decade-long, worldwide, cross cultural dialogue on common goals and shared values. First developed in cooperation with the United Nations during the lead up to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, it was finalized as a people's charter in 2000, and has subsequently been endorsed by over 4,500 organizations.

The Charter states: *We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.*

In laying out and clarifying principles of democracy, non-violence and peace the Charter recognizes: *that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.*

So every full moon when we affirm our group unity on the mental plane it is as well to remind ourselves that we stand with all who have endorsed the Earth Charter in re-dedicating ourselves to the work of building right relations. Right relations between the different aspects of self; right relations between human beings; right relations between humanity and all the other kingdoms of the Earth; right relations between inner and outer, above and below, near and far; right relations between humanity and the cosmos.

Capricorn, in particular Capricorn in 2012, leads us to ponder our time in history as a time of initiation. Through the application of fire, in a subjective sense, veils that hide us from the real are being burnt away and purified. As a result it is becoming possible for us as a group to see more clearly, to see ourselves, and our world of fellow humans, animals, plants and minerals in process of reshaping and being reshaped around the wholeness vision. Life is in process of cohering around the human response to wholeness and synthesis. And it is happening through us and through every single human being alive on the planet at this time. As a result of initiation, a collective initiation overseen by the Christ, whatever name we may give to this Most Exalted One, more and more of us will look at our lives, our communities and at our historical time, from this perspective of making whole. All that is meaningful in the outer world of our lives and our communities will come to us with new layers of insight, heights of perspective, and vibrations of the heart.

In Agni Yoga there is the image of the heart tirelessly throbbing and pulsating with sensations of tenderness, intensity and response to *that which is near and most far*. [Heart, 340] This quality of tenderness calls forth the will – it calls forth our own quiet way of acting from this tenderness

– it calls forth patience - and it leads to our understanding of the beauty of the transformation taking place, for example, in new approaches to money, finance, labor and capital, investment and sustainability. There is a prophecy that a senior disciple will emerge on the world stage who will play the role of an *adjuster of finances* – ushering in a new economics of sharing. So we need to observe the field of economics always ready to extend a tender heart to those groups and initiatives that are preparing the way for this adjuster. As we follow and support groups like the New Economics Institute in the US, the New Economics Foundation in UK, RSF Social Finance, and a host of such groups in every country in the world, and as we keep them alive in our heart – nurture them and the thinking and practices emerging out of them so do we begin to see the beauty that is emerging all around us.

In part the Capricorn story leads us into an understanding of human development and the nature of ambition. Material, personal ambition drives an individual into deeper and deeper immersion in the worlds of separation. After a turning of the wheel, spiritual ambition replaces material ambition and energies are concentrated into a struggle to achieve enlightenment and liberation. Yet the deeper future presented to us in the keynote for this sign tells another story again – contact with the soul leads to a vision of reality that *supersedes both earthly and spiritual ambition*. As the eyes adjust to the higher vision, all that is seen is the unfolding Plan and the opportunities of the time for human consciousness to awaken to Aquarius, the opportunities of wholeness. Then, humbled, and on bended knees, there is no other goal than to serve and assist and help midwife this awakening. *Lost am I in light supernal, yet on that light I turn my back.*

The image of the goat fits so well. It is such an earthy creature – rugged, tenacious, not to be messed around with. It can survive in the most difficult of climates, roaming through deserts and rocky terrain in search of what little food and water is available; and at the same time it is so sure-footed and willful that it can climb right up to the top of the mountain when other creatures would give up or perish.

In the poetry of the image the goat that takes the path up the mountain and keeps on keeping on up the most testing cliff-faces gradually changes shape as it approaches the summit. We suddenly see the rough and rugged creature with its two battered horns transform into the mythical unicorn. Now our whole impression is of a being of radiant beauty – the strength is still there but it is a pure inspiring and uplifting strength. And the two horns have become the golden, single horn of vision, insight and enlightened direction.

The unicorn stands on the mountaintop, gazing outwards towards the great beings of light, the stars and constellations of the Milky Way. The journey now appears to have come to a stop, for, while still keeping the feet firmly on the ground no further ascent is possible. So having stood for a time bathed in the light supernal the path now leads downwards again, taking the insight and understanding back to the valleys and plains in service.

And this is the image we might take into meditation. The light supernal shining into human consciousness during this Festival Week will, throughout the next seven years, be taken by the Group of World Servers down the mountain paths emerging as insight and understanding and a renewed cycle of effort, shining into in all of the valleys and plains of human experience.