

The Philosophical Heart

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Welcome friends to the Festival of Leo.

The keynote for the disciple in Leo is “I Am That and That Am I”. This is in contradistinction to the keynote of the personality in Leo which is simply, “I Am” – a depiction of the self-conscious, selfishly oriented individual. But while the “I Am” state of consciousness may be a separative one, it nevertheless represents a landmark achievement in the long term plans of the soul and the Divine Plan for humanity.

Although the spiritual path out of matter may seem a long and difficult one, descending into matter to develop the sense of “I” was no easy task in the first place – it was a long and complex descent, requiring the assistance of many deva hierarchies. Contrary to the prevailing theory of man’s ascent from the apes, the human being was present on earth right from the start as the planet slowly descended from the inner planes, taking on ever coarser sheaths of substance until the densest point of physical concretion was attained. Even back in the days when dinosaurs roamed, this densest point hadn’t yet been reached – the earth was still condensing and solidifying, its gravity much less than it is today which is why such large creatures (including giant human beings) were able to exist at that time.

As the spiritual self moved down into matter, the psychic senses that belonged to subtler levels still remained active for a long time. Through these faculties there was no sense of separation between the self and its environment and consequently no incentive to think about the phenomena it perceived – it felt connected to everything – an intrinsic part of higher spiritual beings and dependent upon them – much as a cell in an organism. As long as this sense of unity existed, self-consciousness and the emergence of “man” – the individual, creative thinker, could not occur. Only through a sense of aloneness – of separation from all around through confinement to the prison of the physical body could he learn to think for himself. Although endowed with the spark of mind way back in Lemurian times many millions of years ago, only when this spark was brought right down into functioning activity in the physical brain was man fully incarnated – physically, emotionally and mentally. At this point only could it be truly said that his involutionary journey was complete.

It wasn’t until the beginning of the Ancient Greek civilisation that the clairvoyant senses were completely shut down and the Aryan race became fully trapped in the maya of the phenomenal world. And it was at this point that the nascent thinker started to wonder, where he was, who he was, and why he was. Everything seemed outside of him now – the subjective senses no longer providing a sense of connectedness to the whole. The forging of relationships with the outside world had to begin in earnest in search of a state of unity once known but now relegated to a dim memory in the recesses of the subconscious. The stage was now set for man to think himself back towards the spiritual self – towards a state of unity, taking with him a hard won prize – the sense of “I”. And so the birth of western philosophy took place in Ancient Greece – and through the centuries that followed – the steady development of the reasoning mind.

As far as the evolution of consciousness is concerned, a culminating moment in the history of western philosophy occurred in 1640 when Descartes famously proclaimed “I think, therefore I Am”. The symbolism of this statement is profound, for only when man, the thinker can make that declaration with understanding can the re-ascent towards spirit be made. From that point onwards, the developed sense of the “I Am” state of consciousness can be steadily reunited with the whole as epitomised in the keynote of the disciple in Leo: *I am That – and That am I*.

Let's pause here for a moment of reflection and then say together the affirmation of the disciple:

*"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*

As we have been considering, prior to the Ancient Greek civilisation, the Aryan root race didn't think independently – thoughts were not self-generated – but were perceived in nature. Human beings had a lower psychic awareness of the thoughtforms that substand all natural phenomena and therefore felt closely identified with them through an astral, feeling type of consciousness. As these senses began to atrophy, the consciousness moved down to become focused in the darkness of the physical brain. Western philosophy then led the way for the mind to think independently of the psychic faculties – to think rationally, deductively, and to link cause and effect in the outer world. A type of thinking could now develop that was detached from sentient biases and the spark of mind steadily expanded until the present time where we see a widespread ability in the more advanced members of the race to think deeply on a whole range of issues.

Western philosophy has thus been an outstanding success in helping to produce the independent thinker, but having achieved its goal it seems unlikely to progress much further as long as it depends on the intellect alone. Over the last hundred years or so, this reliance has led to interesting but strange perspectives on the nature of reality, a notable example being Existentialism – a branch of philosophy that emphasizes the inexplicability, the uniqueness and the isolation of the individual experience in a hostile or indifferent universe; existentialism has worked its way into popular culture in dark undertones of disorientation and angst, famously parodied in the films of Woody Allen.

Existentialism undoubtedly gained momentum from Einstein's theory of relativity that has dominated the twentieth and early twenty-first century view of the universe, introducing a strange, unsettling view of reality that undermines the sense of logic and reason so beloved of the lower, concrete mind. As anthroposophist Tom Mellett puts it: "What Albert Einstein showed us was the finite barrier to our perceptions, not the infinite essence of our being. He really pointed out the illusion of the external world created by our 'I am' consciousness in trying to measure infinite light.... [Einstein's relativity] dictated the barrier of the finite speed of light measured by all observers in this universe. But the law was not dictated by light itself but rather by human measurement of that light. For light, in its unmeasured essence, a state physicists call 'virtual,' is everywhere all at once. The 'virtual photon' as it is so prosaically called, has no mass; it exists in some realm outside of our space and time. Thus for such an essence the concept of a 'speed of light' is an absurdity, quite possibly the greatest oxymoron of the 20th Century! For unmeasured light is not a noun-like object; it is a verb! It is the activity of seeing, not a passive thing seen! But when light is made into an object by the human act of measurement, the light is completely annihilated

and the shattered remnants of its corpse are registered by precise instrumentation to have a finite speed of 186,282 miles per second in a vacuum.”¹

Tom Mellett acknowledges that it isn’t possible to overcome this barrier, but that it must be respected for what it is. As Rudolf Steiner himself said the great legacy of Albert Einstein was bringing western philosophy to an end so that a spiritual philosophy could take over from that point. Steiner remarked that “. . . for many thinkers a science of nature was previously considered to be something that [could] be mathematically demonstrated, [but] one finds in [Einstein's] theory of relativity nothing less than an attempt to declare any real science of nature null and void. For just this was regarded as the scientific nature of mathematics that it could determine the laws of space and time without reference to the observation of nature! Contrary to this view, it is now maintained that the things and processes of nature themselves determine the relations of space and time. . . According to this view, every thought of an essential reality that manifests itself in Nature is precluded. Everything is only in relation to something else.”

Relativity theory thus confines philosophy to a universe of fictitious black holes and warped space-time – or what the esotericist would call the realm of illusion and maya. Naturally, any philosophy based on a theory of warped space-time will itself be equally warped and distorted. It’s not surprising then that the theoretical physicist and cosmologist, Stephen Hawking pronounced philosophy as dead at a recent Google Zeitgeist conference. In his book *The Grand Design* he admonishes philosophers for failing to keep up and believes that since science has so far outstripped philosophy that it is time for them to leave the field to those who deal in high energy physics. The irony is that he is right about philosophy being dead in one sense – for there can be no sensible philosophy constrained to the world of maya and illusion where, in Steiner’s words “Everything is only in relation to something else”.

To quote Tom Mellett again: “The conundrum is that the spiritual self had to give up its sense of itself in everything else in nature in order to develop and now it has done that it is in a trap of its own making and cannot perceive spirit in nature with the tool it has developed. It has to realise that it is just a tool and now must reconnect it to the higher senses once given up lest it spin round in relativistic circles for ever.” The time is now ripe for esoteric philosophy to be more widely known if sense is ever to be made of the “I Am” state of consciousness. Philosophy has to be expanded into the subtler realms of the soul to understand the causes that lie behind the effects perceived in the phenomenal world. And through this spiritual broadening of the field of relationships, the “I Am” consciousness will gain a truer perspective of its place in the scheme of things as “a point of light within a greater Light...a strand of loving energy within the stream of Love divine...a point of sacrificial fire with the fiery Will of God.” This will lift the human being into the state of soul and group awareness encapsulated by the higher keynote of Leo “*I Am That and That am I*”.

The key to this new way of thinking is to be found in the very word ‘philosophy’ which comes from the Greek *philosophia*," from *philo-* meaning "loving" and *sophia* meaning "knowledge or wisdom,". And so we have the "love of knowledge and wisdom". One cannot be a “lover of wisdom” without engaging something other than the mind – and that other is the great agency of love – the heart. Interestingly, the etymology doesn’t distinguish between knowledge and wisdom, but to the esotericist, knowledge is of the mind and wisdom is of the mind and heart combined. Thus the new philosophy requires “thinking in the heart”, for the energy of love is focused in the heart and this reveals the true field of relationships within the whole.

In this connection, what is most needed today is the transmission of a vibrant new philosophy to counteract the destructive influences of the over-rationalising intellect. Such a philosophy will breathe fresh life into human consciousness. And for those who are drawn to serve esoterically in this field, the Tibetan gave a Formula that, amongst other things, can help resurrect

philosophy into a golden age. Suitably entitled “Lead usFROM DEATH TO IMMORTALITY,” the formula concerns “Time and the consciousness of the spiritual man who is unaware of separation, of divisions in time and space or of the spell of the Great illusion.” The Tibetan said that the formula has been called “the seed of all philosophies”, and “in that phrase you may find light on the subject—provided you know what philosophy is”, he added somewhat enigmatically. As we have explored, the word ‘Philosophy’ can be traced back to its root meaning of *loving wisdom*, that all pervasive energy of the solar system, and therefore the sure foundation on which all philosophy should be built. And through this new philosophy will come an understanding of the love that relates all things, elevating the consciousness into the Divine Plan and revealing the pattern for the new heavens and the new world.

The formula itself consists of six sentences, and we are encouraged to interpret them from the world of meaning; “they concern world movement, great and universal developments, and human progress (as a whole) towards the divine”. The formula has been preserved as a series of trumpeted words – great sounds or chords massed together and interspersed with certain ancient phrases. The Tibetan comments that “To the initiate who uses this formula, creating the necessary sounds and enunciating the ancient words in due place (and these I may not give you), the following six thoughts are emphasised in his consciousness; these six thoughts will give you the intent of the formula as clearly as is possible. It is not possible to convey to you the true beauty of the concepts, but if you will have in mind the thought of meaning as light on life, of cause as the breath of experience, and of Being as the initiator of all that is, then some vision may come, some dream arise in your consciousness, and some power of accomplishment pour in.”

The power of this formula staggers the imagination and brings to mind the sound of those long trumpets that are used to unearthly effect in Tibetan rituals. Here, one can sense the deep commanding blasts of sound disturbing and arousing the elemental kingdoms. What then must be the power of these inner sounds and trumpeted words with which the initiate works in conjunction with the greater deva hierarchies on a much higher turn of the spiral? With the energies available now, perhaps we have an opportunity to sense and absorb some of the potencies of this formula to empower our work together; this attempt to think in the abstract, as the Tibetan encourages us to do, will help to organise the subtle essence of the higher mental and intuitional planes into a bridge of communication between the human kingdom and the divine.

So here are the six thoughts that the Tibetan gave out. They are emphasised in the consciousness of the initiate as he hears and emulates the ancient words and chords on which they are trumpeted forth:

1. God IS. The Lord for aye stands firm. Being exists alone. Naught else is.
2. Time IS. Being descends to manifest. Creation is. Time then and form agree. Being and time do not agree.
3. Unity IS. The One between comes forth and knows both time and God. But time destroys that middle One and only Being IS.
4. Space IS. Time and space reverberate and veil the One who stands behind. Pure Being IS unknown and unafraid, untouched, for [ever] unchanged.
5. God IS. Time, space, the middle One (with form and process) go, and yet for [ever] remain. Pure reason then suffices.
6. Being cries forth and says: ... (untranslatable). Death crumbles all. Existence disappears, yet all for ever remains—untouched, immutably the same. God IS.

If this formula is the seed of all philosophies – the seed of ‘loving wisdom’ – then the Christ is its immortal flower – the perfect demonstration of harmony and balance, beauty and life more abundant. And the greatest service we can offer at this time is to reach up along the rainbow bridge and pour the waters of Life on the Christ principle silently budding in the heart of humanity. By breathing into the philosophy of loving wisdom and directing it outwards, we will naturally find ourselves standing together as One and declaring together, “*I am That and That am I.*”

1. Albert Einstein’s Theory of Relativity as Rudolf Steiner’s Final “Riddle of Philosophy. Tom Mellett
<http://www.southerncrossreview.org/8/einstein.htm>