

FESTIVAL OF LIBRA  
New York, October 18, 2013

### **The Way that Lies Between**

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Tonight we gather to celebrate the full moon festival of Libra. These full moon festivals are special occasions, as the moment of the full moon each month offers a wonderful opportunity for meditation — particularly in group formation. What makes the full moon the optimal time for mediation is that the moon is actually fully out of the way at these times, allowing for a free and unimpeded alignment between our planet and the source of our planetary life, the Sun.

So, at this juncture in the meeting, let us take a moment of silence in which to gather ourselves. Let us link with our soul and our group of souls. Let us link subjectively with all our group brothers around the world who, with us, also undertake this work of invocation and evocation at the full moon. Let us link with all those who join our meeting subjectively and with all those who join this meeting via the BlogTalk radio broadcast. Let us sound together the *Ancient Mantram*:

Lead us, O Lord,  
From Darkness to Light;  
From the unreal to the Real;  
From death to Immortality.  
Om

There is a story about Ganesh that seems to have a special relevance to the Libra full moon festival, and its esoteric keynote: *I choose the way that leads between the two great lines of force.* I choose the way that leads *between* ....

As many people know, Ganesh is the popular Hindu God with the head of an elephant and the body of a man. Ganesh is the remover of obstacles. That Ganesh is pictured with the head of an elephant seems to symbolise his great strength with which to remove any and all barriers. In the Hindu pantheon, Ganesh is a much beloved figure; he is said to be the lord of all beings, and his father and mother (Shiva and Parvati), are no less the creator and center of all being.

Once upon a time ... Ganesh set out to race his brother around the world; whoever was the first to circle the world three times would win a prize. But, before taking off on the race, Ganesh reflected on his liabilities, as he knew that his humble vehicle (the mouse) was no competition for his brother's vehicle (the peacock). By all outward appearances, it was likely that his brother would win the race. Yet, in the end Ganesh *did* win the race, but not in the expected manner. Unlike his brother, Ganesh decided he would not run around the outer surface of the earth. Instead, remembering that his father and mother were the *source and center of all being*, Ganesh simply walked around his parents three times. By circling the source and centre of all being, Ganesh circled the inner reality of the world, instead of its outward manifestation, and thus, Ganesh won the race.

Ganesh's recognition of the source and center of all being is what makes him the remover of all obstacles. It is not any *outer* show of strength, but his inner *realisation* that makes him the great lord of all beings. The story of Ganesh's race is a parable about the inner journey, which is the journey that counts the most. It is the inner realisations that take us where we need to go and bring us all we need. It is the inner reality that can remove any and all barriers to success. And, it is interesting to note that Ganesh's vehicle in the race was his friend, the humble mouse, whereas his brother rode upon a peacock. The symbolism here seems evident — that humility is a key element of Ganesh's boundless strength.

As the story suggests, sometimes we can get so busy focussing on all that is happening in the outer worlds, that we forget about the great source of being, strength, and possibility; the source that can remove all obstacles in the manifest world. Often we become so engrossed, with our attention drawn outwards that we forget the inner worlds even exist at all.

Along these lines, artists — such as painters, sculptors, and designers — are trained to pay as much attention to what is not seen in a composition, as they do to what is actually portrayed. What is not seen is equally important; both the subject of a painting and the space around the subject are significant. In the art world, the space around and between the subject is called white, or negative space. The use of negative space in a composition is considered an important design element and in modern art, sometimes the space around the subject even becomes the focal point.

At any rate, negative space is not really empty, but is rather the element that enables an object to exist in space. The balance between positive and negative elements of any design is the key to an aesthetically pleasing and harmonious design. This is recognised by all artists, across all disciplines. For instance, the musician works with points of silence between notes, as do poets, sculptors, dancers, and so on. In fact, in nature, the presence of space, or an in-between element, seems to be everywhere. There is a little space that occurs between breaths, between steps, between heartbeats, between drops of rain, between the surge of surf, the rising and setting of the sun, and so on.

In our own lives, we also have a foreground and a background to consider and with which to work. Perhaps we might do well to consider what is in the foreground of our lives, and what we have relegated to the background. The background of our lives might be thought of as negative, or white space, corresponding to inner space, or the inner life. We might pause to ask ourselves if we have left any room in our lives for the in-between space so necessary for a harmonious composition. Or, has the in-between space been left out of the structure of our lives? Have we allowed the composition of our lives to become entirely filled-in, so that it mostly consists of a dense tapestry of foreground? Presumably, life should be a rich and multi-dimensional, rather than a flat surface, filled-in with material concerns and a constant stream of outer stimuli.

Returning to the topic of art, the concept of negative space in a composition is something the Japanese call *ma*. *Ma* refers to the gap, the space, the pause, or the interval between two parts of a structure. The word *ma* connotes the consciousness of space; however, *ma* is *not* space. *Ma* is something that takes place in the imagination upon experiencing the space that plays *between* compositional elements. *Ma* is the *experiential place* that happens in the intervals and gives shape to the whole. There is not really a comparable word or sensibility in the Western world, and this

very absence seems to suggest the materialistic bent of the Western mind. In *The Art of Looking Sideways*, Alan Fletcher talks about the importance of understanding space as substance. So too it may be that the materialistic world tends to overlook the worth, the value, and the reality of the inner life — the interval, or the place between.

Related to this is the Chinese concept of *Wu Wei*. *Wu Wei* is an important concept in Taoism and literally translates into English as *without action*, or *effortless action*. *Effortless action* is action that is carried out in complete harmony; complete harmony not only with one's environment, but harmony between self and others as well. *Effortless action* flows from the source and is harmless, natural, authentic, balanced, and uncontrived. To the esotericist, this suggests the idea of acting in alignment with the dynamic, radiant presence of the soul-infused personality.

*Wu Wei* is the teaching that a man's actions should be like the planets in their orbits, or the growing of a tree. Do without doing. Grow like the tree without trying; simply do what is in one's nature. *Wu Wei* is the Chinese idea of enlightenment, wherein effortless action flows from the source, like Ganesh's realisation and ability to overcome any and all obstacles.

As esotericists, we might reflect upon *source* as first the soul, and then the Triad, leading to Monad. This effortless flow from source to manifest action is the Way, the razor's edged Path, the antahkarana. But first, the Way is the Way of the soul; the Way of consciousness, intuition, love/wisdom, and buddhi. The soul and the plane of the Soul, literally and technically, form the Way known as Taoism, or the Path referred to by esotericists.

In Taoist texts, *Wu Wei* is associated with the yielding quality of water. The *effortless action* of *Wu Wei* is also emphasized as the right way to govern and lead. Chapter II, verse two of the *Tao Te Ching* reads as follows:

The Sage is occupied with the unspoken  
And acts without effort.  
Teaching without verbosity,  
Producing without possessing,  
Creating without regard to result,  
Claiming nothing,  
The Sage has nothing to lose.

Translation: Priya Hemenway

This key precept of Taoism, that the way to lead is to follow, seems to suggest that the self-control and self-discipline the disciple seeks, is actually more of a flowing state of harmonious balance and ease, than a firm and rigid grasp that insists upon control. Pay attention, but go with the flow. Such is the paradox, suggesting that enlightenment is joyous and yielding, like the quality of water that works its way into all the nooks and crannies of matter, and whose power is derived from this unique ability to yield. Perhaps this yielding quality of water is synonymous with the idea of sacrifice, emphasised in Western spiritual traditions.

Along these lines, there is a modern scholarly concept known as *liminality*. Liminality deals with the evolving flow of consciousness from one state of realisation to another. Liminality was

developed by anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in the early 1900's and is a term that describes the rituals that mark an individual's transition from one state to another; rituals that shuttle the adolescent from puberty to adulthood, and rituals that mark birth, graduations, marriage, baptism and burial. These ceremonies center around the *liminal*, or the fluid in-between phases wherein the individual crosses over from one state to another. Liminality is the in-between phase that allows for the dissolution of the old state, by creating a malleable situation wherein a new order can be considered and then established. The third and final stage of liminality occurs when the individual crosses over and becomes established in the new state of awareness.

In short, the fluid liminal stage ferries the individual between old and new ways of being. Certain types of situations can also provide the liminal, or transformative experience. Such as situations where the individual finds themselves outside their normal environment, causing them to question existing individual and societal norms. The typical liminal situation often involves pain. For example, the tribal rituals that transition youth from puberty to adulthood usually involve pain, which serves to disorient the individual, and causes them to feel random and disconnected from their normal ways of thinking, feeling, and being. Thus, the disorientation of the liminal state frees the individual from the past, allowing them to move forward to something new.

We find that liminal periods occur when social structures break down, such as when young people go off to war and return a different person. Other typical liminal situations are vacations, road trips, natural disasters, and pilgrimages. In these circumstances, the individual finds themselves separated from their normal environment, in a situation wherein social structures have broken down, and often situations where upper and lower classes mix and mingle as equals. Liminal situations such as these are stock and trade in movies and books; such as the classic road trip movie, or the coming of age story, and so on. The liminal experience is always destructive, as well as constructive, and involves a significant in-between phase where everything is fluid and moving to another shore.

We have a little microcosm of this process in our daily meditation practice, when we let go of self-reference and dissolve into contemplative intuition, returning renewed, and with fresh understanding and insight. In a much less pleasant manner, and at the societal level, usually the kind of liminal experiences that create the kind of disorientation that allows for change, are things like wars, revolutions, natural disasters, plagues, and economic crashes. Currently, the whole world seems to be passing through a liminal period — a period of uncertainty, with civilisation standing somewhere between destruction of the old and construction of the new. For instance, with the collapse of financial institutions around the world, humanity can no longer seem to hang its hat on the idea that greed is good. And yet, the other shore of a new stability, based on sharing and cooperation, has not yet been reached, or even clearly defined. All over the world we can see societies struggling with the in-between shift from old world values and structures, moving to a new world order that has yet to become apparent and evident, for all to see.

The other shore toward which we move must be defined so that the mass of men can find their way. The other shore must surely be defined as a place where there will be a more equal sharing of the world's resources, a move away from materialistic values, a recognition of one humanity, and the value of each and every individual clearly recognised and embraced. Once ideas such as these become established, they will act as the guiding values on which humanity can set its sails. In the

past, greed and self-interest were so often unchallenged as the standard operating procedure. Now, as a society, we are in-between letting go of shameless self-interest and establishing the idea that *shared interests* are really in everyone's best interest.

And it is here that all those with a true desire to serve the world can model, exemplify, and point the way to the other side where universal sharing and goodwill are the logical next step in human endeavor, and reasonably, really the only sustainable solution for the problems facing the human race and the planet.

The key feature of liminality, is that it serves to re-orient the individual to the final stage — the stage wherein reintegration into a new state has taken place; i.e., puberty achieves adulthood; the single individual, becomes married; the student becomes the graduate; and so on, with each new state conferring its privileges as well as responsibilities. This is precisely the problem with which the world is faced today. As a society, we are still in the fluid, yet formative in-between stage. Scholars note that the liminal, in-between experience should be transitory. When the reintegration process does not take place, tricksters often step in and prolong the liminal phase for their own ends. Tricksters (such as Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini) promise to lead society to the other side; they promise answers and certainty, but in the end they fail to deliver and only feed on people's uncertainty. Perhaps we can see this in the extremist and fanatical leaders now found in both this country and abroad. Wherever the old order is dissolving, tricksters step up to prolong the disorientation, rather than helping societies move on to a new understanding

So, in this day and age, who is it that can lead our society and our civilisation out of its current impasse? Who has the power to lead? Traditional leadership such as politicians and religious leaders no longer seem to reliably lead the way. Accounts of scandal and corruption, in political and religious institutions have become common place, and undermine the public confidence that was previously placed in these leadership groups.

Yet, many today are ordained by the light of their own souls. And perhaps humanity's salvation will come, not as it has in the past, from those we place on a pedestal. Perhaps the new leadership will take the form of a grass roots movement, sounding the mantram of the value of the individual and the fact of one humanity. Perhaps a grass roots movement will turn out to be the vehicle that can ferry humanity to the other side. Perhaps a grass roots movement of singular individuals acting as one to serve the world, can break the current impasse so that the walls of materialism come crashing down. And with this crashing down, we may find that these new world servers will have done what was needed to make room for the reappearance of the Christ.

Scholars write that society needs stable institutions and concrete individuals to whom they can look for guidance. Perhaps at grass roots level, the singular and collective group of all those who truly serve the world may be able to get through, like yielding water, where traditional leadership seems to have fallen short in our current era.

Perhaps a grass roots movement will be able to sound a note so insistent and clear, that although not outwardly organised, the new note and new values will be seen on every hand as something wholesome, good, intelligent, desirable, and reliable on which the mass of men can depend and move towards, like a beacon in the night. Perhaps the new values of universal sharing, manifested

in various ways, will become clearly defined as the other shore towards which humanity must move, and the other shore towards which the mass of men must, and will, eventually desire and demand.

Our current point in human history is a difficult one, but, there *is* a way through. All those, who in their totality are self-ordained, having discovered their innate divinity and the way that lies within can provide that Way — the Way that creatively, magically can overcome any and all obstacles. Each and all who form this new group of world servers knows that the inner Way, of nature's laws and nature's God, is the source of all being that can resolve all problems.

The in-between space, or the inner life, is part and parcel of our lives and nature. The significance of the magical liminal interludes have always been pointed to in the Ageless Wisdom: new moons, full moons, eclipses, dawn, twilight, equinoxes, solstices, and even new year's days. The razor's edge Path, the Rainbow Bridge, or the Way, is not so much a destination as a presence, a consciousness, a point of balance and equilibrium that effortlessly flows and shifts between evolving states of realisation, and ferries us between one state of awareness to another. And so let us now turn towards our meditation work tonight, using the esoteric keynote for the full moon festival of Libra: *I choose the way that leads between the two great lines of force.*