

The Festival of Capricorn
January 15, 2014

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Good evening everyone and welcome. We have a good opportunity tonight to work together because in less than five hours, at 11:53 pm, the exact time of the full moon of Capricorn occurs. So we're well within the full tide of the inflowing energies from this great sign of initiation that are pouring into our planetary life. Let us now link with all others throughout the world who are likewise working at this time to contact, hold and distribute spiritual energy in the service of humanity and the planet. I'd like to encourage you all who are able to do so, to be in meditation at this exact time this evening and to sound the Great Invocation. So now let us link up in silence, followed by a sounding of the Gayatri:

O Thou Who givest sustenance to the universe,
From Whom all things proceed,
To Whom all things return,
Unveil to us the face of the true spiritual sun,
Hidden by a disc of golden light.
That we may know the truth and do our whole duty,
As we journey to Thy sacred feet.

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For those of you who might be new to this work of meditation at the time of the full moon, I'd like to say a few words of introduction. The full moon, as well as the new moon periods, are known as the interludes, those periods of pause within the monthly cycle wherein we are asked to establish an inner condition of receptivity within consciousness that engenders sensitivity to the spiritual energies available at that time. The interludes generally consist of two days of preparation, followed by the day of safe-guarding—the day of the full moon itself--followed by two days during which the contacted energies are distributed. If we place ourselves within the rhythm of this full moon work each month we'll gradually find that over the years it will enable us to pass spiritual energy more readily through our etheric, or energy bodies and radiate it outwards into the world.

We also work in alignment with the astrological energies of the sign under consideration, as well as with the energies of the rays and planetary rulers that work through and condition the sign. It is our responsibility to bring through and distribute the higher qualities of each sign into outer manifestation by pondering upon them. And the Tibetan gives another technique we can implement within our lives to further aid our ability to work effectively with these energies. During the full moon cycle each month at dawn, at noon, at five o'clock in the evening and at the sunset hour--as well as at the exact time of the full moon—we're asked to join together in consciousness and link with the worldwide group and sound together the Great Invocation. If you go out in the morning as the sun is rising it's possible to feel the potencies of the energies available at that moment. When the sun is rising the rising sign is always the same as that of the sun. This seems a symbol of the coming together, planetarily, of soul and personality. So if you can remember to concentrate on the qualities of each sign at the sunrise hour you can play a part in aiding to build those qualities into human consciousness.

The constellation of Capricorn is triangular. And the strongest point of the triangle is facing downwards, towards the earth. Perhaps this is a symbol in the heavens of the power and potency of the energies that pour through this great sign of initiation. For we know that the signs and their underlying

constellations are transmitters of energies---energies that emanate from the overshadowing “major constellations,” and from even more distant points, as well as from the ray energies pouring through the signs and perhaps the shape of the constellation is an indicator of the quality of the inpouring energies, the ancients certainly thought so, and the triangle is ever a potent symbol of the Trinity--a fusion of the three aspects. Capricorn is a culminating sign, from certain perspectives. We know it is not the last sign of the zodiac, but rather the tenth sign. But it is in certain ways a culminating sign because it is the sign of initiation, the sign of the mountain top experience. After one experiences the influx of light and illumination in this sign one has to then come down from the mountain and the two final signs are related to the distribution of the contacted energies through service and sacrifice. That’s why in the ancient teachings Capricorn is known as the sign of “periodic arresting” -- the sign beyond which no further progress is possible. Five times within the human experience the student climbs the mountain of initiation and five times he/she have to descend from that mountain. This sign is related to all five of the human initiations--to the birth of the “Christ” within the cave of the heart, to the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. If one studies the life of Jesus, who was overshadowed by the Christ during the last three years of his life, one will see a vivid portrayal of these five initiations and learn a lot from the study of them. In fact, in one of the books that Alice Bailey wrote herself, *From Bethlehem to Calvary*, she outlines in a very fascinating way her understanding of these five initiations.

I wanted to read a quote related to these five different initiations from an ancient teaching given out by the Tibetan:

“The disciple climbs the mountain, its five peaks illumined by the sun. From point to point he goes and the way moves upward all the time. Out of the dark, into the light, from the jungle, through the open space, from night to dawn.

From point to point he moves and at each point gets new revelation. Five are the mountain peaks and as he moves towards each peak he receives five times the light. Five to the five and so from five to five until five fives have brought him light. Ten lie ahead but these concern him not as yet.”

This presents the idea that at each initiation there is an influx of light that increases five-fold with each initiation. One can begin to sense the power of the spiritual path. As the individual traverses this path, as he or she begins to mount each of these five peaks, he sees beyond another peak yet to be mounted, and strength is garnered for that which lies ahead. For any of you who have ever done any hiking you will know that it is not easy--at least for most of us! In any expedition there is the leader who sets the pace and keeps the hikers safe and on track. Many within the group struggle to keep up with the pace, while others have to slow themselves down—an apt symbol for the spiritual path and group. The path of discipleship is related to various group or ashramic affiliations and these groups are composed of people at different levels of spiritual attainment and just as in a group of hikers some have to slow down their progress to accommodate the others in the group while others make the effort to rise to a higher level. But nonetheless the group as a whole moves steadily forward, step by step with a rhythm, perseverance and will that carries it along. This is one reason why the mountain has always been a symbol of the spiritual life and the ability to keep going even when one doesn’t feel like it, and when to even take another step appears impossible. And another thing about the winding mounting passes is that at each turn of the spiral one must face oneself, giving many opportunities for self-knowledge that is garnered as one struggles to free oneself from projection.

For the first time in planetary history group initiation has become possible. The system of initiation is only in place on two other planetary schemes in our solar system—on Venus and at some point in the future it will be instituted on Mars. As Alice Bailey's first book written with the Tibetan, *Initiation, Human and Solar*, makes clear, the path of initiation encompasses all forms of life large and small. So the evolutionary development of planet Earth is very much aided by the light which the planet Venus shines upon us and at some distant point in time the Earth will provide the same service to the evolving souls on Mars.

Throughout time, one by one, individuals have stood before the one great Initiator, or before the World Teacher (depending upon the initiation being undertaken), and received a powerful purificatory influx of energy. But now, because of the sheer number of people in our world who are ready for initiation, the spiritual Hierarchy decided to initiate a system of group initiation. And so now humanity moves forward as the hikers do, as a group and stand together before the Great Ones and receive the tremendous force of the rod of initiation together with one's brothers on the path. The group supports one another and learns from the others in the group and each at times struggles with each other. The task is to learn to submerge one's personal interests in that of the group so collectively it can "raise the dead body of humanity." It's said that in the past history of humanity groups of aspirants and groups of disciples have tried to do this lifting and failed but only now, under the impact of initiate groups, will this lifting of humanity be successful. Surely the impact of last December's Festival Week stimulation gave a strong impetus to the subjective work to be done.

The Tibetan gives us this mantram to ponder: "Live on the mountain top and walk there with your brothers. Keep the vision clear above the fogs of earth." This mantram points to the benefit and symbolic meaning of the five mountain-top experiences. When one reaches the peak of any particular summit, one stands above the fogs and mists—the maya, glamour and illusion, which hitherto prevented one from seeing life and its events more clearly. When one finds oneself in the midst of glamour it is difficult to make an accurate assessment of any situation. And so it is incumbent upon one to "climb" and lift one's consciousness into the light of the mental plane wherein solutions can be found.

The tests, trials and confusion in the lower vehicles--the physical/etheric, the astral and mental bodies (depending upon the initiation being prepared for)--easily cloud the understanding, making it difficult to know and discriminate as to the right course of action or decision in any given situation. These decisions are difficult but as one passes through the burning ground and the waters of purification, eventually clarity and understanding are achieved. This is the result of the powerful transformation that the process of initiation brings. And as the individual sees more clearly he becomes better equipped to free humanity from similar fogs and mists.

We are all familiar with the challenges confronting our planet related to the effects of climate change and our seeming unwillingness to adopt new and sustainable policies to combat it. The greenhouse effect poses a real threat to our ability to move forward into the next century. But those of us who study the teachings of the Ageless Wisdom understand that perhaps a greater threat stems from the subtler forms of pollution that exist on the astral and mental planes, which distort all aspects of life. The work that we undertake at the time of the full moon and through the processes of initiation, enables us to work and stand together upon the mountain top--becoming the divine goat, which is the name given to the spiritual group that becomes a point of light, helping to dissipate the fogs and mists in our world through an application to the path of radiation.

Capricorn is another sign in which humility is needed and practiced. In many of the world's religious traditions, one of the rites that the faithful undergo is to climb up mountains upon their knees focussing on the need for humility. The advanced Capricorn individual needs humility in order to pass through the tests of the third or transfiguration initiation which is related to the climbing of the mountain and the passage through the narrow gate, freed from encumbrances of the lower self. This experience is related to the garnering of vision and to "the passage across from one state of being to another, through the agency of fire." The needed alchemy is prepared for by the new and incoming Yoga of Fire, also known as Agni Yoga. This yoga is also called the yoga of life for it comprises the essence of all life, which is all-embracing, evading naught. It's said that at the time of the third initiation divinity stands revealed and the outer form, which has hitherto veiled and hidden the light, dissolves and is so transformed that only the inner reality is registered.

This initiation is related to the piercing through of a very powerful veil that has hitherto separated the individual from his/her true self. A symbol of this initiation can be found in that which occurs when a caterpillar is transformed into a butterfly. And if you want to see what that experience is like you can watch a time lapse video of it on YouTube. It is truly amazing to see how seemingly all of a sudden, as if in a flash, out of this incredibly confining space, pops out a fully formed butterfly. Alice Bailey, in her book, spoke about the idea that the three disciples who accompanied Jesus at the time of the third initiation were symbolic of the three personality vehicles who stood astounded at the transfiguration that occurred within him. We're told that Peter, the rock, stood for the physical/etheric vehicle, James symbolized the emotional or astral vehicle and John stood for the symbol of the mental vehicle. All three of those bodies felt the power of the radiatory impact of the transfiguration that occurred upon the mountain. Alice Bailey said that prior to that experience Jesus and the disciples spent six days serving the people and that as a result, as a type of reward, the disciples were allowed to accompany Jesus during the transfiguration experience.

Capricorn is related to the will aspect and to the monadic energy pouring through the soul-infused lower vehicles that results in a tremendous charge. This is a beautiful passage in which the Tibetan gives us a glimpse of the experience undergone at this particular initiation. He wrote, "It has been occultly said a vision of these powers [of the rays, the constellations and the planets] and their many weaving lines (seen as rivers of light) is given to the initiate from the mountain top of Capricorn, once that summit has been reached."

So, as we work together with our group perhaps we can, when the time comes for this Capricorn festival each year, take one step further along this mountain path, one step nearer to the summit towards which we are steadily climbing.

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