

Initiation, Light Supernal and the Crisis of Our Time

CAPRICORN FESTIVAL – NEW YORK – JANUARY 2017

Steve Nation

Welcome friends to this Capricorn Festival Meditation meeting, marking the start of what will surely be a significant year in human affairs, in the discipleship community, and in the world esoteric group.

The monthly rhythm of full moon meditations leads us into an experience of time as cycles. We become participants in the rhythmic ebb and flow of evolutionary impulses, *bringing the developing world into line with the divine will*. The full moon is the one regular feature of the night sky that is most noticed and commented upon. Its beauty speaks to all peoples, and has done so down the ages. It can have a visceral, almost physical impact. We will all, no doubt, recall a time when a particularly beautiful full moon has sent shivers down our spine. Our minds, educated from an early age in the most basic understandings of astronomy, tell us that the gentle light radiating from the face of the moon, which moves us so deeply, is reflected sunlight. Esotericists understand that the magnificent presence of the full moon in the night sky is a reminder of the sustenance provided to our souls by the light of higher levels of being, symbolized by the sun. It is a sign that a fresh pulse of energies imbued with the Plan is pouring in a tidal flow from the Central Spiritual Sun, through the Spiritual Hierarchy, the heart of our planetary life, and into the wide field of human consciousness.

Month after month, year after year, decade after decade, century after century that tide ebbs and flows; the pulse continues, exposing the substance of human consciousness to the transforming, redeeming purposes of the Divine; irradiating consciousness with Light and Love and Power. As we imaginatively work with this rhythmic tidal pulse we can begin to see something of divine will, and of the Light of Life Itself, the Light Supernal. The very act of seeing or touching this great mysterious light inevitably changes us. To the extent that the greater purpose begins to resonate within us our whole being undergoes something of a reorientation. Our life purpose noticeably shifts. Our sense of self changes. Regular practice of the full moon meditation work helps us to notice and become absorbed in the on-going, apparently timeless processes that are transforming the whole.

During this Capricorn Festival we observe the role of the mountaintop experience in the evolution of consciousness. From one perspective this means looking at human affairs through the lens of initiation: the path of effort, strain and struggle leading to initiation; the arising of ancient forces of separateness which must be faced and transformed before the next step can be taken; the conclusion of one whole stage of development, leading to a wholly new understanding of what it is to be human.

From another perspective, Capricorn enables us to see how the element of Earth has a tendency to crystallize consciousness. As established qualities, opinions, attitudes, prejudices and habits solidify they lose their plasticity. They become rock-solid and unshakeable. In an evolutionary sense, and in terms of the unfolding Plan, this aspect of earth is valuable because it leads to shattering and destruction and prepares the way for something new.

The esoteric and exoteric ruler of Capricorn is Saturn – one of the most potent of the four Lords of Karma. Saturn brings lessons of the past into sharp focus, dominating the vision of the way forward. It ensures that as we stand on the verge of an age of interdependence, the mind-set and heart-set of separation which has been carefully nurtured and cultivated through eons of human experience, can no longer be buried, repressed, or ignored. Relationships derived from all the accumulated separative thinking emerge as a problem that must be dealt with. Saturn ensures that poisons of the past become lessons providing the material through which we learn the skills of transformation.

From an Ageless Wisdom perspective, we might say that the work of the Lords of Karma find expression in the great problems of humanity – and Capricorn is one of the energies that give us the strength and the ability to face these Lords. In one sense this means that we see the whites of the eyes of centuries of hatred, fear and prejudice, see how it blocks the manifestation of love in all fields of relations: economic, racial, international, inter-faith. We see the damage, the harm done by that sense of separation; a sense that we know only too well within ourselves. But if this was all that the Lords of Karma reveal it would simply cripple us with a sense of hopelessness and almost total inadequacy; individually and collectively. So, as well as revealing the essential problems of separateness, selfishness, self-centeredness and materialism, karma also reveals the healing potencies of Love, Forgiveness, Truth and Beauty. And it shows us the power of Will. We learn that these are tools and energies that are available for us to use, individually and collectively; as families, communities and nations.

It all takes time. And time really does mean life-times; eras; epochs. But of all the full moon festivals, Capricorn is the one that reminds us that evolutionary cycles rise to transformational peaks and initiatory triumphs. It reminds us that right now, in the present, we are preparing for a final push towards the peak; summoning all our energies; ready to face the truth and in full expectation of the revealing light. Who, you might ask, is this anonymous 'we' who are preparing for the final push to the summit? Does it include me? It is all of us: 'We', the world esoteric community, the central pool of loving, lighted mind at the heart of every spiritual tradition; 'We', that vast diversity of people of spiritual intention and loving hearts. In Capricorn, WE, all of us in our interlocking circles of affiliation, are reminded of the potential for initiation and the emergence of circumstances that will lead to profound and permanent change, followed by a new cycle of fresh challenges and opportunities.

And so, let us together, as a single planetary group in consciousness, figuratively take our seats in the great Hall of Silence. Let us as a group contemplate the mountain top of initiation and the

mysteries of the Light Supernal: open to impression from Hierarchy and sensitive to the needs of the present, so that we may together prepare for the future.

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.

The keynote for the disciple in Capricorn speaks of initiation: *Lost am I in light supernal, yet on that light I turn my back.* This is a reference to the figurative mountain-top experience marking the culmination of the Path of Discipleship at the third initiation. The astonished disciple is presented, we are told, with a vision: all twelve constellations are said to be seen as *weaving lines ... rivers and streams of light* intersecting and interacting as if in a grand and choreographed cosmic dance. It should come as no surprise to learn that the disciple, when confronted on the mountain top with the secret of the Hidden Glory of the Light of Life, loses all sense of self.

Capricorn is dominated by the third and the fifth rays. The Third Ray is known by many names, including *The Forerunner of the Light* and *The One Who veils and yet reveals*. The names speak of this ray Lord's relation to *light, to time, to space, to the manifested Logos, to matter and to the "power which evokes the form."* His energies are especially significant at this time when there is an intense focus on science, technology, electronics; on the best practices in all the professions and particularly in the new disciplines of sustainable development; and on the mental development of the entire human species. Third ray energies are also significant as we approach a multitude of interlocking crises of choice. In economics, race relations, human rights, environment, climate change, health and every other field we are being forced to choose between ways of separation and cooperation. To make this choice we need light shining upon our way, so it should be no surprise that one of the qualities of the Lord of the Third Ray is mental illumination. In Volume I of *Esoteric Psychology* Alice Bailey uses a series of phrases to encapsulate the qualities of the ray Lord. One phrase seems especially relevant to Capricorn:

Let mind control. Let the clear shining of the sun reveal the mind of God, and set the shining one upon his way. Then lead him to the central point where all is lost within the light supernal. [Rays I, p. 69]

The Capricorn keynote speaks of the initiate turning her (or his) back upon the light supernal. This makes perfect sense in the language of initiation. When on the highest summit of the mountain, the climber has nowhere higher to go. The realities of time and space require that the transfigured initiate turn around and carefully return to the world – as all the prophets who received mountain top revelations have done. In returning to the world the memory of what transpired on the summit remains, will never be lost. The light supernal encountered on the peak has done its work. All sense of separated self has been lost. Soul and personality are fused: one whole. The one who returns down the mountain is different from the one who struggled to climb up the mountain.

Yet there is another way of looking at this. By turning away from the revealing light, and re-entering the world the initiate symbolically brings divine light out into the world of time and space (of incarnated mind and heart) where it can be seen, experienced and expressed. This is captured in the Tibetan's description of the fifth point of revelation, expressing one of the laws governing Hierarchy. The fifth point is all about the manifestation of light supernal. This great Light is a blend of the lights of all seven Ray Lords; a synthesis; a light that is intrinsically itself, more than the sum of its parts. The revelation speaks of a coming time when the lights of all the seven rays will find expression through the light of the seventh ray. When this happens, we are told, *then the highest aspect of the divine light can penetrate down into the physical plane.* [DINA II, p. 425].

This may sound like something destined for the far-off future, particularly in the current global environment in human affairs. But time is speeding up, and our time, these early decades of the twenty first century, might well be viewed as an initiatory time. To do so is to give us hope and some guidance about how to act. This is certainly a time of crisis, and from an esoteric perspective it can be seen as a human crisis which coincides with a spiritual crisis.

We know that the Aquarian Age is in its early beginning stages. The seventh ray is coming into manifestation – there are signs of this everywhere in popular culture as well as the culture of the Group of World Servers. Stunning developments are occurring in such fields as conflict resolution; integral medicine; mindfulness and an emergent conscience economy. Yet at the same time lawlessness abounds: lawlessness in respect to our treatment of the environment; lawlessness in the application of human rights; lawlessness in the rise of violent religious separative movements; lawlessness in the inadequacy of national and international responses to the needs of migrants.

Even more than 2015 or 2016 (when we might say that lawlessness was matched by the stunning achievements of the consensual agreement by the worlds governments to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Change Agreement) we are now entering

a period when the prophecy of a Coming One who will be the *embodied soul of all reality* makes perfect sense. Imagine an Avatar Who speaking with the voice of the Angels, is heard by people around the world – truly heard. Imagine such a One eliciting a willful powerful response from people of goodwill in every walk of life – from politics and economics to race relations, psychology and the arts. The Coming One will bring illumination. This *Great Lord will act as a lens through which the light supernal can be focused and adapted to human need.* [DINA II, p. 426]

And so, in expectation of the revealing light supernal, let us draw our attention to this time, these days in the beginning of a new year. There is a darkening in the atmosphere of human relations following recent political developments in this country, the UK, several European countries, the Middle East and elsewhere. Yet this darkening should not blind us to the light that is already present.

Writing about the US elections, theologian Cynthia Bourgeault draws on Teilhard de Chardin's perspective that *evolutionary change flows over deep time*. She notes that: *Events which, viewed at the wrong scale (i.e., too close up), look like devastating upheavals may actually prove to be relatively minor systemic adjustments. Beneath the surface ripples and rapids, the river itself is still flowing smoothly in its channel.*

For Bourgeault, *the vision of a single, unified humanity burns as strongly as ever as these tectonic plates of consciousness and culture grind up against each other.* [<https://cac.org/wisdoms-hour-reflection-following-election/>]

Yet as we look out upon the world today, on this Capricorn full moon, we might see more than the brightness of the forces of universal vision persisting amid unexpected waves of separateness. For the very grinding of the tectonic plates is itself a result of the progress that the Oneness vision has made. The light reveals the dark that has always been present – it brings it to the surface where it can be observed, understood, transformed. The grinding of tectonic plates of culture, mind-set and world-view can be expected to draw forth some needed basic spiritual qualities.

Recent events may be exactly the sort of shot in the arm needed to force people of goodwill and of good heart to wake up, move beyond simplistic clichés and high-sounding morality in thought and speech, enabling the vision of oneness to incarnate more deeply, more genuinely; and to strengthen its roots into the living substance of consciousness and community?

Darkness serves to refine our vision of the light. It causes us, forces us, to take steps to bring the light we sense within into the center of who we are. When seeds are sown into the darkness of the soil, life sends roots downwards, sensitively finding the richness that is in the soil, anchoring and incarnating the being that the seed is to become. This process, which darkness brings, of becoming rooted in the substance of incarnation, rooted in a unique personality of energies, body, mind and emotion and personality is accompanied by another process which also takes place in darkness – seeking the light.

Part of the challenge for human beings who have a sense of the reality of soul and of spirit is to locate ourselves within a world of becoming. The possibility for love, compassion and right relations is known in the soul. At the recent World Goodwill Seminar in New York, John Bloom called this the soul's innate sense of 'compassionate interdependence'. The contrast between this possible future, known in the soul, and the realities of a world and a self which is still in process of becoming whole can be experienced as a source of sorrow, even despair. It leads to an acquaintance with grief and the sorrow of the world.

The spiritual challenge is to find the resources within to enable one to be both acquainted with grief and rejoice in the possibilities revealed by the light within. It is to notice in ourselves, our loved ones and companions, and our communities and nations a world that is in process of becoming. As human beings on a path of becoming who we know we are in the soul our task is to learn about how we can best support each other, to listen and lift, to stand with others in solidarity as we face the reality which the light reveals; noticing the goodness that is arising as well as the next challenge on the horizon.

The task for esotericists is to cultivate a realistic sense of the Plan of divinity working out through time and in time; through our time and in our time. With this sixth sense of a higher, greater Light transforming the world, we can continue to serve (live, and move and breathe) with some measure of serenity, resting in the knowledge that the heart of love beats behind all outer seeming. Together as a world esoteric group let us affirm that every tiny measure of energy expended in the will to serve selflessly and transparently is taking us, as a group and as humanity, closer to the mountain top. For these are initiatory times and Capricorn offers a vision of a future when the world esoteric group (with members drawn from different spiritual paths) becomes for a time figuratively and literally 'lost' in light supernal. With nowhere else to go, the group revolves, brings the light down, and re-enters the world of family, community and nation; of institutions, professions, businesses, religions and schools.
