

# *Discernment, Balance and Designing a Better World*

LIBRA FESTIVAL – NEW YORK – OCTOBER 2017

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Welcome friends to this full moon meditation meeting, with the sun in Libra. The moon will be full at 2.40 in the afternoon tomorrow here in New York.

The exact full moon time represents the peak moment for Libran energies to flow into the subtle etheric, astral and mental atmosphere of humanity. Through meditation we can cooperate with this flow over a five-day period: visualizing the waxing of Libran light as we move towards the full moon time, and the radiation that permeates consciousness in the days immediately after this peak moment.

These energies pour into consciousness from planetary lives, through Shamballa and the Spiritual Hierarchy, whether we visualize them or not. But as we contemplate and ponder what the teachings tell us about these energy flows, we can begin to recognize their unique qualities; and we can visualize these qualities and potencies impacting levels of soul and personality. The challenge is to train our intellects and imagination, so that over time we begin to sense what these qualities might mean for life on Earth in this second decade of the twenty-first century, noticing how and where they are finding human expression. The more we see how the energies are impacting the world, the more we can cooperate intelligently and wisely in the evolutionary process. Through active pondering a magnetic group aura is generated, and the group as a whole becomes positively open to intuitive impression.

Month after month, year after year, this contemplative pondering by a group of human beings, imbued with the insights and understandings of the Ageless Wisdom, helps to develop mental muscles (individually and as a group) making wise discernment and vision possible. Through radiation, this group work contributes to the refinement of discernment and vision amongst the greater group of servers and networks of intelligent goodwill within the entire field of human consciousness – the collective.

So, let's pause for a moment of silence.

*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.*

Libra is the sign of balance, represented by the scales of justice. In part this is about the process of balancing. There are times in life when individuals and nations experience a rough ride, swinging this way and that between opposing desires and dualities. Balancing is the act of navigating these turbulent seas and taking steps to find stability and alertness at a point of

awareness that is mid-way between two dominant forces; not this, not that; not the full light of the soul, not the desires and goals of the personality, but the quiet middle ground where both soul and personality are held in relation with each other. This middle ground is a point of stability, equanimity, balance and poise.

So, in Libra we reflect upon the power that is to be found at the center; still; quiet; holding a point between two great lines of force. The point of balance is a 'no man's land'. There are times in which the uncertainty and indecision of this 'no mans' land can be unsettling. But the balance that can be acquired in Libra is characterized by a sense of ease with not knowing where the future lies or what the way forward is. It is a time of waiting and acceptance. It is also a time of detachment – consciously not being attached to either personality desires or the purposes and priorities of the soul. This can lead to a life of passivity, yet it also marks freedom from the turbulence of the astral plane, and provides a safe space that is necessary before the way forward can be seen and then chosen.

Slowly, often unconsciously, the achievement of a state of balance makes an act of choice possible, and eventually probable. To "choose the way which leads between the two great lines of force" is to choose the Way ... to consciously set out upon a spiritual path that leads forwards from a point of balance and relative ease.

It is this element of choice that makes Libra the sign governing the moment in the spiritual life when the great wheel of the zodiac reverses itself. When the wheel is turning clockwise the soul's passage through incarnations is involutory; each life takes the soul deeper into the world of matter and emotions, adding substance, color and character to the elemental essences and slowly building up a personality footprint in time and space. It is a footprint that is inevitably immersed in the illusions and glamour's of separateness. After the Libran interlude, after the Way has been chosen, incarnations are about a forward momentum along the trajectory of the narrow, razor-edge path. This is not a linear path; not without periods, sometimes lifetimes of confusion and irritation. Movement along this way involves crises, tensions and stresses as the substance of now well-established personality vehicles are exposed to higher impressions, motives, purposes and intentions. The way that leads between two lines of force proceeds through regular testing and trial. It may often appear that for every two steps forward on the path there is at least one step back ... but we are often too close to incarnation to see the real process of evolutionary development at work.

There is also a Libran quality that emerges on the spiritual path when, regardless of the trials that the life is going through, there is a sense of strong, orderly poise. The disciple has taken the identity of observer, watching the tension between soul and personality; but watching with a sense that all is well and with a certainty that the way forward will be revealed when the time is right. It is this sense of the pilgrim who has achieved a measure of balance and poise that makes Libra one of the signs most conducive to the intuition ... and the sign that represents the stage of contemplation in meditation. In this sense 'balance' suggests an absence of excessive irritation, and a touch of serenity at the core of one's identity.

The hierarchical ruler of Libra is Saturn. This is a planet that is important in understanding the meaning and significance of our historical period because Saturn rules the first third of the Aquarian Age, what is called in astrology the first decanate. So, we are in a Saturnian time now. And, as so often happens when the subtle energies of planets have a heightened impact on

human affairs and human consciousness, Saturn has become prominent in the global news cycle. Images of the planet, its moons and its rings, have been featured on news programs, websites and countless Facebook posts; documentaries have been broadcast in prime time around the world. This news blitz in recent weeks about the planet is the result of ending of the 19-year Cassini Saturn space probe. On September 15, the satellite was purposefully destroyed following a series of spectacular dashes through the gaps between the planet and its inner rings, attracting the interest of millions of people. A few years earlier, in July 2013, the probe produced a similar peak of publicity and popular interest during an event when the spacecraft was taking images of Saturn with its entire ring system and the earth during an eclipse of the Sun. Back then a visionary scientist who led the Cassini imaging team, Carolyn Porco, came up with the idea of inviting people on earth to reflect on their place in the Cosmos and, on the day when Cassini was looking at earth and taking its photos, for human beings to look up and smile in celebration. The project, known as *The Day the Earth Smiled* received massive news coverage. NASA ran a 'Wave at Saturn' campaign as part of the project. Citizen astronomers were encouraged to take photos of Saturn on the day that photos were being taken of earth from Saturn. A photomosaic collage of Saturn, incorporating around 1,600 images was later released by NASA, as well as a high-resolution photo showing the earth and its moon as distinct points of light, seen from the perspective of Saturn.

Remember this is the planet that rules the first third of the Aquarian Age – the Age destined, during the second decanate, ruled by Mercury, to be a time of brotherhood and cooperation. We are not there yet, Mercury is not the dominant influence; but we are on our way. And it is, in part at least, because of the influence of Saturn, and of Libra that we have come as far as we have since the horrifying years of the Second World War. Sometimes we forget the long-term stability and balance that has been built; and periods of extreme balancing, swinging this way and that, such as the present, emphasize our wish to return to a state of relative balance and order. These periods of 'mood swings' in the collective life, and in international relations, also evoke the will to choose a forward path based on a sense of unity and wholeness. This is why the teachings tell us that Libra dominates the planetary horoscope and, as a result there is really no need for concern, and no need for great anxiety.

In the esoteric tradition, Saturn is known as the Lord of Karma, removing obstructions, breaking up existing conditions. It forces humanity to *face up to the past, and in the present to prepare for the future*. [EA 164] Another way of looking at this is to see Saturn as *the planet of discipleship and of opportunity ... presenting to the world disciple those difficult situations and crises which will involve free choice, discriminative pioneering, wise response and correct decision, thus bringing about the destruction of that which hinders without the relinquishing of any true values of which humanity may be aware*. [EA 148] As Lord of Karma and engineer of choice and decision, Saturn prepares the way for Mercury, the ruler of the second decanate in the Aquarian Age. It is Mercury that will bring the beneficent *intuitive and illuminating* light of the soul into human thinking enabling us, as a species, be in a better position to interpret the significance of events through *our own illumined minds*. [EA 148-9]. But we are not there yet!

In a little over 6 weeks, on Saturday November 18, World Goodwill will be holding its annual seminar in New York, London and Geneva when the focus will be on *Discerning Truth in these Turbulent Times*. Details of the New York Seminar are available online ([worldgoodwill.org/seminar](http://worldgoodwill.org/seminar)) and on your chairs. There will again this year be a special event in

Geneva at the United Nations on the Friday before the Seminar when the theme will be: *The Sustainable Development Goals in the Light of Right Human Relations: Discerning Truth in the Information Age*.

With Libra, and Saturn in mind, it seems especially appropriate for us to shine a light on the principle and practice of discernment. People of goodwill are being challenged as never before to develop skills of discernment in their approach to Truth in fields as diverse as journalism, science, education, politics, religion and art. Everyone who recognizes this need is called upon to sharpen and refine their skills of discrimination and discernment – skills that lead to choice. Without the cultivation of a sense of the Real with all its beauty and promise, there is a real danger that despair will characterize the vision of the future. This must not be allowed to happen. Meditators have a unique responsibility. Skills of discernment need to be developed through years of practice, so that the origin of impressions received can be reliably assessed and their significance understood. The Seminar is one contribution amongst many to the fostering of these skills. With three locations, in the midst of three different political and cultural environments, each facing their issues, the Goodwill Seminar will shine a light on this theme. In addition to two outstanding speakers, the New York program will allow more time than we have done before for small group sessions, aiming to deepen participants understanding and practice of discernment. In addition Arcane School students around the world have already begun the work of pondering the theme with the goal of building thought forms of clarity and lucidity by selecting quotations from a variety of sources for a new publication from World Goodwill, shortly to be available on the web and mailed out to everyone on our lists. Copies of this booklet are available here tonight. Please take some with you tonight and consider ordering bulk copies to pass out to friends and interested networks; when the web page featuring the quotations is ready, share it on facebook; and email a pdf copy to your networks. By doing this we will be expanding the groups influence in the generating of a thought form making wise discernment attractive and desirable.

In the work of fostering healthy and wise discernment in public thought and conversation, Libra shines a light on what has been called the *judicial mind*. This suggests an approach to controversial issues that listens carefully and seeks to understand where and how principles and higher laws, of sharing, cooperation and oneness have an opportunity to move beyond sound-bites, slogans and ideologies to become practical ways of living and of organizing communities. The judicial mind does not rush to judgement. It weighs up pros and cons, causes and effects; and tries to discern where there is a spirit of goodwill that can become the basis for agreements between different sides to an argument.

Interestingly the Tibetan suggests that it will be through the practice of the judicial mind and the establishing of a point of balance between the male and female principles that the pairs of opposites will be balanced and what is referred to as ‘the sex problem’ will ultimately be resolved. Issues of the relations between the sexes, sexual identity, sexual expression, and the ordered self-imposed regulation of sexual behavior have become increasingly important in modern western civilization. It will take time for these issues to work themselves out into a state of balance, and it is interesting to see how they eventually evoke the judicial mind that is able to legislate and govern actions, understand the relation between cause and effect, clarify goals and purposes and gradually control impulses in the light of deeper life goals. This is legislation as a psychological process that accompanies the path to freedom – personally and as

communities. The legislation by the self of the self grows out of the responsibilities that freedom brings to the surface. When issues around sex find political expression they tend to be accompanied by strong, sometimes violent emotions and polarized attitudes. DK suggests that solution to the problem of sex will not come through government legislation, religious pronouncements, psychological inhibition or legalized license. It will come as through a combination of four developments: *the united activity of the spiritually minded consciousness, the judicial attitude, the intellectual perception and the steady urge of the evolutionary process* [Esoteric Astrology, p. 236]. Slowly the judicial mind is beginning to be exercised and in the midst of apparent license, we can visualize a healthy balance and wisdom growing. In this area, more than any other area of human relations, it is time and experience that will enable balance to deepen and mature.

Saturn is governed by the third ray and Libra carries a powerful dose of third ray energy. When we think of the third aspect, we think of active intelligence, adaptability, creativity, manifestation and initiatives organized to lead civilization forward on the path towards cooperation, sharing and goodwill. The third ray adapts the Will and the Love of the Soul into concrete programs to give them physical expression. It is an energy which moderates between spirit and matter ... moulding spiritual purpose so that it can find expression in the world. Not surprisingly Libra is the major conditioning factor for Law, Sex and Money.

Law, Saturn and the third aspect make us think about the radical changes that have occurred in recent decades in approaches to design. The word 'design' used to be associated with solely with subjects like graphic design or interior design – but today design (and 'planning') represents a way of thinking about manifestation: the design, for example, of social and economic systems at neighborhood levels, urban levels, and within states, provinces and nations. Or the design of systems that facilitate people of goodwill to move beyond politics and ideologies to work together with others to solve problems of poverty, poor health or housing and so on. There are projects designing structures of relationship between humanity and the natural world – systems like Permaculture and eco-villages; biodynamic and organic agriculture; community based preventive health care; organizing resources in a community so that problems like drug addiction can be tackled as health problems rather than legal problems; facilitating and nurturing creativity and an entrepreneurial spirit ... and so on. As Saturn spreads its reach through these early decades and centuries of the Aquarian Age, understanding of design will naturally grow in every profession and all areas of life.

Perhaps the supreme example of the Third Ray influence in our time (associated as it is with the fifth and seventh rays and Watched Over by the Lord of Civilization) as it is expressed through a design way of thinking, is the incredible way in which the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals have become so central to the life and mission, not just of the UN and its multiple agencies, but of many of the Third Ray Workers in different departments of living in different parts of the world. It's true that here in the US one probably does not hear as much about the SDGs as in most other parts of the world. It is less of an incentive to action, locally, nationally and globally in the US than it is in many countries; and less important in the governance of health, urban planning, agriculture, fisheries and so on at local, regional and national levels in the US than in many other countries – through Europe, Canada, Latin America, Asia, Africa, the Commonwealth of nations and so on. In spite of this there is action in the US to begin to gather the statistics needed to measure progress within this country in meeting the numerous targets

and goals by 2030; and to design approaches that will lead communities towards meeting those goals.

Under the leadership of Geoffrey Sachs who is Director of Columbia University's Center for Sustainable Development and the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a new group, SDG USA is to be launched on October 9<sup>th</sup> – 5 days time. The website states: *To promote prosperity, reduce inequality, and protect our children's futures, we need bold goals to take on the challenges of sustainable development in the United States. Through extensive consultations with thought leaders, practitioners, and policymakers, these goals will help set a better course for America and encourage policy solutions to improve lives for all.* <https://www.sdgusa.org>. The greatest progress on SDGs in the US to date comes from the USA Sustainable Cities Initiative, supporting SDG achievement strategies in three pilot US cities: San Jose, New York and Baltimore. In August a report, *Achieving a Sustainable Urban America: the US Cities Sustainable Development Goals Index 2017* was published. It assessed progress in achieving 16 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the 100 most populous cities in the nation.

*Cities such as San Jose (CA), Baltimore (MD) and New York City (NY), to name a few, are taking steps towards a more sustainable future, by looking to implement the SDGs within their jurisdictions. They are surveying how their citywide plans and data monitoring systems could be made more holistic and ambitious, consulting local stakeholders to define priorities, and developing strategies to achieve sustainable development through evidence-based policy and investment. This commitment to sustainable development is paying off: the San Jose MSA region is the top scoring city region within this U.S. Cities SDG Index.* <http://unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/US-Cities-SDG-Index-2017.pdf>

In conclusion, it is useful to have in mind the Tibetans comment in *Light of the Soul*, that aspirants can be divided into three groups, each portrayed by a symbol. The goat symbolizes *the intense group*, often born under the sign Capricorn; a fish symbolizes the moderate group, often born in the sign Pisces; and the crab, the *gentle or slow group* often having an incarnation conditioned by Cancer. In a sense every aspirant probably has a little bit of each group in them, but some are more obviously living lives of intensity, moderation or a more gentle, plodding slowness. We are told that each of these groups passes *into the sign of Libra ... towards the close of their endeavour. When in incarnation under this sign they balance the pairs of opposites with care, they equalise their one-sided development, modifying the unevenness of their efforts hitherto, and begin to "set an even pace."* They frequently then enter the sign of *Aquarius and become bearers of water, having to carry "on their heads the bowl of living water."* Thus the rapidity of their climb up the mount of initiation has to be modified, or "the water will be spilt and the bowl be shattered." Because the water is intended to slake the thirst of the masses, they must hasten their progress for the need is great. Thus the "first shall be last and the last shall be first" and the hare and the tortoise meet at the goal. [*Light of the Soul*, 45 – 46].