

*Silent aspiration and the Higher Life*

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Good afternoon and welcome. The sign of Sagittarius in whose influence we are working today provides a clarifying light through which we can enter a new reality. Prior to entering the gate of initiation in Capricorn, the disciple applies the fires of aspiration, transmutation and transformation to burn away all barriers. Sagittarius provides abundant opportunity to gather one's forces together and, with the tensed bow of the mind, redirect powerful arrows of thought towards the next goal.

The arrow is a well-known symbol of Sagittarius. Psychologically speaking, we are constantly firing arrows of thought, pausing to rest and reflect, then re-launching them to ever-higher altitudes. Following the tests of Scorpio, this sign is one of interlude or rest – not that there is any such thing as absolute rest in a universe that is constantly in motion. “Rest” is a relative term as the physicist Max Born points out. In ‘The Restless Universe’, he says, “*It is odd to think that there is a word for something which, strictly speaking, does not exist, namely ‘rest’, for rest or interlude still encompasses some sort of activity for even that which is still to the senses, is still moving at tremendous speed in space.*” Perhaps Emerson comes closer to the Truth though commenting, “*the soul in man may not sleep, but must live incessant. Not in his goals but in his transitions, Man is great; and the truest state of mind rested in, becomes false. There is no abiding principle in man, only change*”. So what may seem like achievement and rest in Sagittarius is only so from the perspective of the furious battle in Scorpio. What is really taking place here is a realignment, moving the magnetic pole of one's being – an ongoing response to the Sagittarius keynote: “*I see the goal, I reach that goal and then I see another*”.

As we near the end of a somewhat dark year, psychologically, this marks a time to recognize the unredeemed aspects of our nature and behaviour, and applying the fires of transmutation, to leave them behind by creating anew. Let's pause for a few moments and then sound together 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.  
OM*

In order to see the goal ahead in Sagittarius, we have to deliberately create a sanctuary of inner peace and silence. This involves clearing ourselves of illusory thoughts, one of the most difficult challenges because in many ways we have built our sense of identity through them. Having consolidated themselves in our aura over a period of time, these mental thought patterns condition our sense of reality and, consequently, are not easy to break through. Rather than battling with them or attempting to bring about peace and inner quiet through suppression of the old patterns, we can offset them through meditation. The technique uses seed thoughts which hold the vision of a new identity, and directing our thought in this way fires our aspiration and diverts our attention more and more until it does so throughout the entirety of each day.

As this occurs, the older forms of thought begin to recede and fade, as they are no longer fed by the sustaining power of the mind and desire nature. The new patterns of thinking steadily strengthen and become gateways through which a new goal comes ever more clearly into view. This reality of the new goal to which we are aspiring is both seen and “felt” – feeling the seed thought through the highest aspect of the astral body. Over time a point of tension builds in our consciousness – this is the “little gate” through which we can pass to contact realms of truth.

Alice Bailey referred to Sagittarius as “the little gate” – an entrance difficult to find in the crowded thought forms constantly swirling around the aura. Our minds are programmed through habit to produce thought forms related to the senses. When memory functions, for example, the sensual experience that accompanied a past event is re-experienced, whether it is the memory of the taste of food, the sound of a favourite song, the aroma of a flower. These in turn stimulate the feeling nature. A similar stimulation, but of the higher senses, occurs in meditation. Here the mind is directed towards the potential future rather than the past. A thought form of the goal ahead is held in mind alongside a sense of spiritual expectancy. As the vision is held steady in the mind’s eye, we can become aware of the higher feelings or qualities from abstract realms. These higher correspondences of the lower senses bring us closer to the Real, another dimension where different, but related, senses prevail.

How do we speak about this higher realm of being which is the custodian to our true selves and what is it that causes us to identify with something that we are not, namely our combined lower mental, emotional and physical nature? In all aspirants, the duality that rages between these two states of identity has its basis in the fact that two kingdoms of nature are to be found working along their own particular line of evolution in every person – the human and the deva kingdoms. The “lesser builders” of the deva kingdom rule the form and matter aspect of all we can see and touch in the world, including our mental, emotional and physical make-up over which we seek dominion. These fiery lives are moving on the downward arc into denser manifestation – on the other hand, human evolution is the struggle through this downward moving wave towards liberation from their control through co-operation with the higher devas who, like humanity, are on the upward sweep of evolution.

Our line of evolution and goal is therefore fundamentally different to that of the deva kingdom, but both are of equal importance: one cannot advance without the other. The human being is the creative, positive element that needs to remain detached from all creative works, while the deva kingdom supplies the material that clothes the intended creation. This process is directed by higher devas that transmit the sound of the idea to the lesser builders. The devas advance through feeling and experience via the forms that they create in cooperation with us. Also known as the angelic kingdom, these lives are the substance and forces of nature and supernature, the third aspect of divinity. The following quote from *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* sums it up well:

“...the groups of devas and elementals [can be divided] into evolutionary and involutionary Builders – those who are in themselves positive force, and those which are negative force, the conscious and the blind workers...The greater Builders are the positive aspect of substance or of electrical phenomena whilst the lesser Builders are the negative aspect. Two types of force are represented in the activities of these two groups and it is their interaction and interplay which produces Light, or the manifested solar system. Their sum total is substance in its totality, the intelligent active form, built for the purpose of providing a habitation for a central subjective life”.

The creative work of God, the manifested world came into being through sound and initially swept these little lives into form, and in so doing provided habitats for units of

consciousness to develop and give expression to divine purpose. The elemental lives act as "blind forces", working under direction without any self-volition. As human beings we are naturally creative, constantly manipulating deva substance through our thinking, dreaming, imagining. Most are unaware of this of course, but as we develop an understanding of the laws of creative thought and the livingness of the substance we think in, we will start to become vigilant and take care not to become ensnared in that which we create. The well-known practice of detachment has particular relevance here.

When we fantasise or construct self-serving mental images, it is because we are impulsed to do so by the sensation that interacting with deva substance produces. But as we build in line with the divine Plan, we stay detached from our creations and help to evolve these little deva lives on their parallel path. When working without detachment, the feelings and desires that arise from contact with our emotional and mental natures feeds a false sense of identity which we then project through our creations, be they basic wants and ambitions, pet theories on life or even ideals in service. It is only when we understand that we have a responsibility to become conscious participators in a Divine Plan that we will refuse to be enslaved by low grade deva substance that is on the involutionary path, and re-engage with their higher counterparts on the evolutionary path, and work from a position of detached control and guidance.

The devas can only be safely communed with on buddhic levels where the kingdom of souls, the spiritual hierarchy of enlightened beings, dwells. The Tibetan says that a major function of the spiritual Hierarchy is "to provide sanctuary" to those who have succeeded in freeing themselves from the ocean of deva energies in which our bodies of expression, mental emotional and physical, live and move and have their being. However, wherever we advance to, as long as we find ourselves in form, no matter how subtle, it is the deva kingdom that provides it. As we move from one habitat of expression to another, our consciousness constantly finds temporary refuge before moving on again seeking higher goals and sanctuaries of thought in which to abide. Humanity's major challenge revolves around the fact that it has outgrown certain frames of thought, certain modes of creativity with the devas, and needs to summon the will to rise into a new sphere of creativity – a new dwelling place.

It is when we cease to move forward in consciousness that the mind loses its independence from the deva kingdom and starts to intermingle and come under the influence of involutionary forces. Deva substance is fiery and frictional and the sparks which fly from it are the cause of sensation – but as we know, we can become burnt by sensation if we allow ourselves to become slaves to desire. To avoid this pitfall, it is important to keep reviewing our thinking with detachment and to keep the mind flexible and set on a spiritual goal. As we build a lighted home of consciousness in Cancer so must the arrow of purposeful direction in Sagittarius move ever onwards to higher levels on the plane of mind. We have to learn to build new homes for consciousness on these levels. When we are capable of building on buddhic levels, then it is lawful to make conscious contact with the higher devas that dwell there. Here the human and deva evolutions approach one another very closely. From this great plane of love and fusion, the enlightened human being can direct the forces of evolution in the lower kingdoms assisted by devas of development equivalent to his own.

The blending of the deva or angel evolution and the human "is a mystery which will be solved as man arrives at the consciousness of his own solar angel."<sup>1</sup> For each of us has a great deva, called the solar angel, which fuses it's consciousness with the soul on the mental level, until the soul has evolved to the point that it is no longer needed. Until that point at the fourth initiation, they work together with the light that the incarnated aspect of the soul – the personality – manages to generate from its experiences on earth. The living light of human experience and expression is developed into quality and attribute on the soul's own plane – it

is wrought into the soul's vehicle until it is fully developed and in a condition of radiatory glory. Our task while we are in incarnation is to focus on the spiritual light and make the "solar angel the sole luminary in our microcosmic sky" and refuse to let the lesser light of elemental essence distract and limit our thinking.

To create with thought in a positive and powerful way in this world of noise, perhaps the most urgent need is to cultivate occult silence. This involves the silencing of personality emanations – uncontrolled thought, the roar of desire, unnecessary speech. Doing this allows the circulation of energy to build in the etheric body which, in turn, lifts us into the life of spiritual creativity. So perhaps we can conclude that, rather than a lack of activity, ***occult silence is an intensification of the Will in preparation to create with sound.*** The attention is a directed arrow – directed away from lower distractions and towards the soul, the goal being to carry a spiritual charge deep into the heart of manifestation, implementing some aspect of the Plan. The silence created for this is cultivated in all three bodies and is one where the tongue is silent and the ears are open while the desire nature is quiet and the mind still. In such a state, one is constantly living in a field of potential energy – energy that can then be used in general service, but also more specifically, to alleviate suffering in others by awakening and lifting them to a glimmer of heart consciousness where the solutions to their problems lie. It may involve vibration through the spoken word or through silent communication from heart to heart. The point is that the whole life is dedicated to the right use of creativity through sound, and silence is a preparation for working with this creative power.

This, then, is the goal and opportunity before us, the conversion of noise into "the silence that sounds", but how to reach this stage of composure is a problem for those of us living diffuse and distracted lives. Perhaps we can understand the silent watcher more clearly if we think of silence as being allied to the practice of harmlessness. As we know, harmlessness, was the great lesson of the Buddha whose Noble Middle Way demonstrated its practice and which still illustrates the path through consciousness constructed by a redirection of energy away from form life towards the soul.

For the disciple there is a constant need to expand his consciousness on the one hand, while on the other to follow this ever-narrowing path to the mountaintop. The narrowness of the path, reminiscent of a single arrow of fiery aspiration and one pointed intention, provides the impetus. We may fall off every now and then unless the focus is sure and steadfast. But if we persevere along the path of truth and right, at a certain point of the journey, Sagittarius brings us directly to the gate of initiation and the lighted entrance to the fifth kingdom – the spiritual Hierarchy.

The goal then and now is complete fusion with the light of the solar Angel and, for us now, as mentioned previously, Sagittarius presents this interlude that assists us to achieve this. It provides an inner space to retreat and recollect ourselves, to gather in our forces in spiritual tension ready to move ever onwards and closer to this goal. Maintaining these meditations at the time of the full moon amidst all the diversions and distractions of our times increases the spiritual energy available to meet today's challenges. It constructs a "Tower of Silence" for the lower self, as well as a place of entrance into "The Secret Place of the Most High". Most importantly though, it forms part of the spiritual sanctuary that the worldwide discipleship group is building to embrace humanity with love and bring light into the darkness where isolation and despair might otherwise prevail.