

## Festival of Capricorn, London, December 2018

### Discipleship, Karma and Time

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Welcome everyone to the festival of Capricorn – a sign very much associated with the transmission of light and its concretisation on the physical plane. In fact, Capricorn’s concretising energy in conjunction with Saturn, the Lord of Karma, plays a significant part in bringing about karmic conditions on the physical plane: “*Saturn is one of the most potent of the four Lords of Karma and forces man to face up to the past, and in the present to prepare for the future. Such is the intention and purpose of karmic opportunity.*” On the reversed wheel of the zodiac which comes into effect on the path of discipleship, the Saturnian influence of Capricorn finally succeeds. The disciple stands free and can now proceed with world service undeterred, no longer held back by any thought of self or selfish desire.

Before exploring this in more detail, let’s take a few moments for reflection and then say together the Great Invocation.

From the point of Light within the Mind of God  
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.  
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God  
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.  
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known  
Let purpose guide the little wills of men—  
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men  
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.  
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth

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While Saturn is known as the Lord of Karma He is also the Lord of Time. It follows that, when karma has been fulfilled and the disciple is freed from “effect producing causes,” he is simultaneously freed from time. Liberation is gained from the prison of matter and the sense of time that governs it – the disciple enters into that state of consciousness known as the ‘Eternal Now’. Until that goal has been attained, time is something that seems to wax and wane according to our state of consciousness. If we’re enjoying ourselves, time flies, if we’re bored, it drags. This makes it easier to understand that metaphysical abstraction “the Eternal now” – the continuity of consciousness that occurs when the mind, body and emotions are freed from the fluctuating states of personality. From the angle of consciousness, time is then

understood in terms of energy cycles that operate in the realm of causes behind the mundane world. It is here that the initiate operates, *controlling* time rather than being controlled *by* it, a condition that the Christ referred to as “in the world yet not of the world.”

Clearly, there is a long way to go before that goal is reached and until that becomes a reality, time remains the great teacher; or to quote the composer, Berlioz: “Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately, it kills all its pupils.” This witticism contains a lot of truth. Time is intrinsically linked to karma – and it is this combination that chains mortal man to the wheel of rebirth until he balances the pair of opposites, rising above them into the life more abundant. Until liberation is attained, we are all the product of our experiences on the wheel of rebirth. In response to them, we have set up patterns of vibration in consciousness through which we meet the outer world and form our sense of time. While time is measured in the three dimensional world by the vibratory pattern of the caesium atom, in the world of consciousness, time is measured by the quality of our *thought* processes. As the mental substance in which we think increases in quality, so does our freedom from the constraints of time.

Saturn provides those karmic conditions that enable each new born child to steadily pick up the threads of force from previous incarnations and carry on the evolutionary work. The rings of Saturn are a beautiful symbol of the ring-pass-not that is set up at each incarnation – the reservoir of forces which each of us must engage with to carry on the evolutionary process of perfecting the ‘Christ body’. As we know, a pivotal part of this process is consciously bridging across the mental plane between the lower concrete and the higher abstract aspects of mind, and it is Saturn that provides the force substance to build this bridge of consciousness. Time and karma have shaped everything the disciple has come to be, a product of the past, standing in the present and projecting the mind towards the future. Armed with the experience of countless incarnations, he begins the Saturnian activity of weaving a spiral of mind-stuff around his life-thread.

On the path of discipleship, Saturnian energy provides the psychological impulse to keep progressing. Until this liberation is achieved, we have the duality of discipleship with its alternating cycles of light and dark, of progress and of seeming failure. These occur with increasing rapidity and intensity until the disciple understands the cyclical nature of this process and fuses them together to produce a conscious, forwards motion. The energies of life and consciousness are now working in cooperation as the disciple takes control of his own fate.

Every person who sets foot on the path of discipleship is occupied with this challenge of taking command of the ebb and flow of consciousness; until this is achieved, there can be no mastery of time. At first, time can seem to take over, leaving us with the feeling of being a slave to fate. But this is an illusion for it is consciousness that governs life’s circumstances. When this is understood, we can begin learning how to work rhythmically and creatively with time – it is a spiritual art that requires wisdom and patience. But as conscious adjustments are steadily made karmic forces no longer descend onto the physical plane for they are addressed and offset on mental levels.

At this stage a resonance is developing with the higher keynote of Capricorn: *Lost and I in Light supernal yet on that Light I turn my back.* Life is now given over

to the art of evoking and concretising light on the physical plane in line with the Divine Plan. It involves a new way of understanding how to concentrate energy with the mind; concentration as taught in the schools and universities of the world is approached from a new perspective. While ‘concentration’ is generally defined as the “focusing of attention”, it also means the “action of bringing to a centre” and “a mass so collected.” This raises the question as to whether something substantial is undergoing transformation in the process? And the answer is yes. The substance of the mind – the chitta – is being concentrated and gaining in power – just as the sun’s rays grow in power when they are concentrated by a magnifying glass.

Focusing the mind on any truth – be it objective or subjective – establishes a beam of shining mind-stuff between the perceiver and the perceived. The more intense the concentration is, the greater the stability of this ‘mind bridge’ will be, and the projection of the “I” consciousness to project across it to some degree and merge with the subject of attention. To the extent that this is achieved, the perceiver then becomes a living expression of the truth contacted. On the path of discipleship training, the focus of attention changes from the truths of the mundane worlds to the truths of the spiritual worlds – the substance of which is far more powerfully charged. According to the intensity of sustained concentration on a spiritual truth, so is the measure of power that passes from it across the ‘mind bridge’ to be expressed in the lower worlds. The culmination of the process is the white magician with the ability to concentrate the power of truth to such a degree that thoughtforms can be instantly externalised on the physical plane.

Reflection on the above may help us to appreciate why the word ‘Power’ is substituted for ‘Will’ in the last stanza of the Great Invocation. The spiritual demand to “Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on earth” is the most potent of incantations when uttered by the concentrated disciple. As to what the Plan is in terms of truth and power – ultimately, it is for each of us to become a concentration of our Divine identity on the physical plane – A Christ incarnated on earth. It is through such a concentration of power on the densest of the planes of manifestation that the tiny lives that make up all its forms can be fully released and “matter raised up into heaven.”

Although this spiritual goal lies in the far distant future, as the educational systems of the world place more emphasis on the learning of values, social responsibility and service, as indeed some are doing, the living truth will be expressed ever more powerfully on earth through the masses, and the Plan of Love and Light restored. This is one of the great spiritual demands we make when using the Great Invocation – “Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.” Another is the reappearance of the greatest living demonstration of Love and Light that the world has ever seen – the Christ – the Prince of Peace as He is sometimes referred to. In this connection, we read in the Bailey writings that a great Cosmic Life is overshadowing the Christ at this time – the Spirit of Peace – also called the Spirit of Equilibrium as He works with the Law of Action and Reaction, Cause and Effect. The idea of peace as an active power that holds opposing forces in equilibrium or dynamic balance brings a note of realism to resolving the terrible conflicts that plague our world, as a true mediating principle of this kind serves to redirect and transform inimical forces into progressive ones.

At a fundamental level, peace is the dynamic balancing of the pairs of opposites with which we are so familiar in esoteric teachings, and the energy of peace is the Path

of Light itself – the Noble Middle Way of Buddhism – the Narrow Razor-Edged Path of esotericism, and indeed, the Path of Return for the Christ. The opposites that we are considering here are not those of good and evil as sometimes thought, but the opposites of personality extremes such as desire and aversion, indulgence and forced abstinence, religious fanaticism and cynical atheism etc. The list is endless but all of them fall under the general category of “pleasure and pain” which form the great pairs of opposites in the lower worlds. It is the intention of evil to widen the gap between these pairs of opposites and plunge humanity into further darkness; while it is the intention of good to narrow the gap and propel humanity into further light. Until good is victorious and the opposites are balanced and fused into the middle path, the two forces of good and evil will remain pitted against one another, and as one increases so will the other. Hence we are currently witnessing the flare up of hostilities in the world, while equally witnessing the growth of goodwill. As the Christ approaches closer to humanity, the vibration of evil is temporarily exacerbated prior to its ultimate defeat.

At this time of the year when we celebrate the birth of Christ, two words stand out as keynotes of the season. They are "peace" and "goodwill" – words which have much deeper meaning than humanity as yet realises, clothing as they do two powerful concepts or energies which find their point of origin in Shamballa. For this heavenly city is the true and only place of complete "peace" and the transmitter of the fiery will-to-good. Ancient scriptures call it the "place of serene determination and of poised, quiescent will" – the destination to which Christ aspired during His last incarnation two thousand years ago.

While it may seem that Shamballa and the guiding Lights that reside there are too distant and out of reach for meaningful contemplation, a clearer picture of this Holy City has been given out so that its reality can be formulated into a definite point of spiritual focus in our consciousness. Our primary service to humanity is in preparing for the reappearance of the Christ, and this requires an understanding of the conditioning forces He will wield this time round – not only as the head of the spiritual Hierarchy of the planet, but also as a representative of the Council of Shamballa. This great centre embodies planetary purpose and emits the fiery force of divine Will, and while the nature of its existence is part of the newer truths which have been given out to humanity, the great legend of Shamballa is one which has appeared widely in mythology down the ages. It has been thought to be located in many parts of the world, the Alice Bailey books setting it on etheric levels in the Gobi desert. It is more accurate however, to consider the Council Chamber of Shamballa not as a location or place but rather as a state of consciousness within the all-enveloping Life of the planet.

Before each aspirant a long but radiant Way stretches out that will ultimately lead to the glory of the freedom of the Holy City. We see a reflection of this in many parts of the world where there is a tradition of symbolically awarding the freedom of the city to those who have performed outstanding acts of service to their fellow citizens or to the world at large. The distant goal of the initiatory process is to hand humanity the key to Shamballa and the freedom of this Holy City which is described by R.J. Campbell in *The Gates of the City of God* as follows:

*"The City of God is a beautiful figure of speech wherewith to indicate the goal of our spiritual pilgrimage, the glorious end towards which the purposes of God have been tending since creation began. In a manner of speaking we do not have to make it; it exists eternally; it is the only reality; it is the source*

*from which all human life has come. It is the full realisation of what humanity eternally is in God. It includes everything that can rightly be thought of as constituting the ideal good".*

At the third initiation, which is associated with Capricorn, opportunity emerges to "stand free" of that which impedes our way to the first fleeting glimpse of the Holy City. The ancient thoughts and desires that have accumulated around us through the ages and which have conditioned us for so long are finally dissolved as sovereignty is handed over to the solar angel. At this time we are no longer the Dweller in "the city which stands foursquare" as the personality is sometimes called. A migration takes place through entering into increasing light until even light itself is left behind and nothing is present to separate or protect us from Reality. At this advanced stage one is said then to stand "before the Initiator face to face, and the freedom of the City of God is his".

This distant goal seems almost impossible of achievement, and this would certainly be true if it wasn't for a supreme act of sacrifice by the ruler of Shamballa, Sanat Kumara, the Lord of the World, the Eternal Youth and the Ancient of Days. Long ago He turned His back upon the Central Spiritual Sun "and with the light of His countenance irradiated the path of the planet". This supreme sacrifice is reflected by the members of the Hierarchy whose work we co-operate with at the time of the full moon meditations. Each month we recall the wonderful prelude to the meditation outline, *"He who faces the light is blinded to the issues of the world of men; he passes on the Lighted Way to the great Centre of Absorption. But He who loves his brother on the darkened path, revolves upon the pedestal of light and turns the other way. He faces towards the dark and then the seven points of light within himself transmit the outward streaming light, and lo! the face of those upon the darkened way receives that light. For them, the way is not so dark. Behind the warriors - twixt the light and dark - blazes the light of Hierarchy."*

This passage is particularly suited to the spiritual keynote of the disciple in Capricorn - *Lost am I in light supernal yet on that Light I turn my back.* Though we pass on to greater freedom and knowing, it is the vision of suffering humanity that occupies our attention. The more absorbed we become in this service, the faster we move along the path of discipleship, the more we neutralise karma and the more we gain mastery over time. We esoterically turn around to face the dark and prepare to re-enact, on a tiny scale, and together with all world servers and saviours, the urgent business of transmitting light into the dark places of human consciousness.