

*The Rising Sun*  
The Festival of Capricorn  
New York, December 21, 2018

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2018 has been an interesting year -- it began with a Capricorn full moon and is now ending with a Capricorn full moon, and so we could say that the year itself has been bookended or sealed within the powerful energies of this sign. And we would certainly be able to say that 2018 has been a momentous year, just like Capricorn, full of many challenges but also opportunities for the soul of humanity to come forward into greater life.

Today's full moon is auspicious in that it coincides with the time of the winter solstice that has just passed at 5:22 this evening. The coming together of these two major events provides an opportunity for a deep pause, something the world needs. Whenever we pause at the time of the full moon it gives us the opportunity to attempt to capture the particular quality of light that becomes available via each of the constellations.

The particular light that pours through the constellation of Capricorn is the light of initiation itself. It is a transformative light, a light that transfigures. We know that transfiguration is that quality related to the third initiation, a time when you enter into the experience as a somewhat ordinary individual but you come out something wholly other. So the light available to us now is potent in its transfigurative abilities. And we might come to understand a little more fully what this particular light might mean as we ponder the phrase given to us by the Tibetan. That phrase is, "The light of initiation. This is the light which clears the way to the mountain top, and produces transfiguration, thus revealing the rising sun."

So let us pause now, taking a minute to ponder this image of the light of initiation clearing the way to the mountain top and revealing the rising sun .

Then let us sound together the Ancient Mantram:

“Lead us, O Lord from darkness to light,  
From the unreal to the Real,  
From death to immortality.”

The solstice has long been recognized as the time of the birth of the Sun-Gods, those who come forth at the time of greatest darkness to bring light to the world. It's known as a time when a love that comes from far away can be anchored on earth for Capricorn is the earthiest of all the earth signs

The solstices and equinoxes correspond to the chakra points within the annual cycle -- these are the zero degree points of the cardinal cross, the signs Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn. This is the most exalted of the three crosses for one cannot step onto this cross until the taking of the fourth initiation. So we can have very little real understanding of this cross but perhaps we could say that at these times of potency within our planetary life -- the solstice and equinox points -- as we work together in group formation perhaps we can touch a fragment of that higher will energy.

This is the cross of the "widespread arms, the open heart and the higher mind." And clearly one cannot touch the energies of this cross until one has built the higher aspect of the antahkarana bridge. Surely this bridge never ends for it is in essence the path itself, leading from one stage of consciousness to the next. The united energies of this cross are said to provide the portals for the influx of cosmic energy which is said to pour in through the center of this cross. These energies are said to carry the quality of that Super Cosmic Logos Who is sometimes referred to as the One About Whom Naught May Be Said. The energies pouring through this cross are said to be "tinctured with the light from the seven solar systems" of which our solar system is one. So there is a vast overshadowing that occurs at these times.

Some of the majesty of the four points of the cardinal cross are highlighted in the Kalachakra Initiation ceremony, one of the most sacred of all the rituals in Tibetan Buddhism—ceremonies that the Dalai Lama has done a lot to bring forward to the West. This ceremony is designed to help humanity to take in a touch of the higher realms of consciousness that become possible at these cardinal points. These points are said to represent the four gates into the sacred city of Shamballa, with each gate embodying a particular spiritual quality needed to move forward.

The journey begins at the Aries gate, the eastern gate, which is represented by the quality of Shraddha, a Sanskrit term which is defined as absolute faith, a quality that is said to confer utter fearlessness. It is the foundation upon which the entire path rests. The great Swami Vivekananda said that of all the teachings in the Vedas he had found the teaching on Shraddha to be the most important and the most transformative in his own life experience. For Shraddha taught him to have faith in his own divinity and consequently in the divinity of all whom he met for it brought him to the realization that there is no separation.

Once that Shraddha is built into the system we move on to the southern gate of Cancer which was represented by the quality of virya. Virya is related to right eliminations or strivings and here the quality of fiery aspiration, highlighted in the Yoga Sutras, comes to mind.

The western gate, ruled by Libra, was qualified by mindfulness, by that movement towards mental polarization which is the essential step which eventually makes possible all the higher alignments and leading at some point into the very courts of Shamballa. And then in the northern gate, the final quality, embodied in the Capricorn experience, is that of Samadhi itself, complete liberation.

The four gates when followed form a diamond and it is this diamond which serves to awaken the inner power of the soul.<sup>1</sup> It's interesting to consider the fact that the subjective symbol given for the Group of World Servers is said to be a triangle with a silver diamond at its apex, enclosing an even-armed cross. Perhaps this diamond is a symbol of the cardinal cross and the touch it confers to the group at these key moments within the annual cycle.

The teaching on the cardinal points relates as well to the stages of the breath which correspond in turn to the cycles in the meditation practice. The Tibetan gave an interesting set of aphorisms in the form of a meditative practice that, if pondered, can help deepen our understanding. Through the lens of these aphorisms meditation is related to the contacting, the holding and the distribution of energy in the service of humanity.

The stage of Inhalation corresponds to the period of the year which we are just about to enter which is qualified by the phrase, "With self-forgetfulness I gather what I need for the helping of my fellowmen." The idea here is reminiscent of the teaching that the personality is to be left outside the door of the ashram. We then move on to the higher interlude phase wherein we are asked to ponder on "The strength, the wisdom and the love which must be shown to our fellowmen," corresponding to the period of the higher interlude within the annual cycle. Then we move to the period of exhalation, the Cancer, Leo and Virgo phase when we ponder, "in self forgetfulness I pour out love upon my fellowmen." And then the final phase of the cycle, that of the lower interlude, is the time in which we ground the energies, pondering the phrase, "Love to all beings."<sup>2</sup>

So at this time of the ending of the lower interlude, this time of deep pause, we can stand together and pour out love to all beings in concert with the faithful all over the world. Through the seizing of this spiritual opportunity we can aid in the redirecting and lifting up of all the planetary prayers and meditations that are going on at this time--giving them direction, strength and purpose--lifting them into the planetary heart center, the spiritual Hierarchy. Through this means, as we stand upon the periphery of that Hierarchy we can cooperatively reach into the highest center Shamballa and together appropriate the Light and Love there to be found and release the energies thus aiding in effecting a "healing of the nations."

The solstice period is associated with the Group of World Servers as every seven years their "Festival Week," occurs during this period. This is known as a week of group impact. The next Festival Week occurs during the solstice period in 2019. This is, therefore, a year of preparation for this next festival week period, which is a major event in the life of our group. This week can provide a real impetus to the final stage of this time of the forerunner, moving as we are towards 2025. We have the responsibility to be prepared and to be available. During the Festival Week groups everywhere can provide a powerful portal for the influx of Capricornian energies wherein this great constellation is overshadowed by an extra-zodiacal constellation of tremendous potency that stands to the constellation of Capricorn as that constellation stands to our Earth. So the potencies are great and groups everywhere are asked to avail themselves of this alignment. This influx of energies stimulates the Law of Group Progress to work out into our world, a Law governed by Capricorn and the seventh ray.

Another important point related to this 2019 Festival Week that should be noted is that there is an unusual alignment of six major points in the sign of Capricorn occurring during this week. This is a very unusual occurrence and it would seem to be a symbol perhaps of the fact that these other planets in our system are somehow cooperating with Earth in the grounding of these energies, aiding humanity to utilize the initiatory energies. One of the ways in which we can prepare for these events is to encourage others to form small groups because it is through small groups, here and there, covering the planet that we can establish a grounding of spiritual energy

One of the key symbols of Capricorn is of course the mountain top and the vision there to be found. The ability to rise above the normal constraints of the clouds and mists, the fogs and impediments that abound in the three lower worlds, is the powerful symbol held out to us at this stage in the path. It's not easy to climb a mountain. It takes stamina, perseverance and at each turn of the spiral we must confront ourselves, often a difficult task. The fact that so many people today have climbed to the peak of Mt. Everest indicates that this is a time when increasing numbers of people are passing through

initiations. It's as if the path has been prepared and the climb a little easier because it is undertaken as a group and the members support and strengthen one another.

It's said that the vision conferred upon the mountain top is one of wholeness wherein all the constellations and stars converge into great streams of light and color that flow in in a kaleidoscopic glory. There is an interesting story about this type of vision portrayed by Lama Govinda in *The Way of the White Clouds*. He told the story of an incident in the life of a Tibetan saint, Tomo Géshé Rinpoché. This event, which certainly appeared as an initiation of sorts, took place on the Tibetan plateau, near the northern border of Sikkim. The guru stood on the foothills of the Himalayas, the place where there does not seem to be any distinctions between heaven and earth. It was there that he began to behold the whole pantheon of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, from all time and from every dimension, dazzling in all the colours of the rainbow, slowly moving across the sky from the eastern to the western horizon. All the differentiations of mountains and waters and rocks and plants, and all that makes up our common world, blended into one another and faded away, leaving only the indescribable experience of primordial unity.

This vision lasted for many, many hours as the Rinpoche stood on the plateau. At first the vision was seen by him alone, but just as a great artist is able to make his visions visible to other through the creative power of his mind the guru made this wonderful vision visible to all who were present. The effects of his enlightenment led Tomo Géshé to step out of his quiet valley and travel the world spreading the message of the dharma and of the coming Maitreya Buddha. We who work to support and strengthen the group of world servers can stand together at this time, on the periphery of the great ashram, and partake of the vision which the group can precipitate at this time.

Another of the symbols of the sign of Capricorn is, of course, the unicorn, the fighting creature of god. At this stage in the journey of return, the initiate, white and pure, is said to become this unicorn, in which the two horns and the single eye are blended and through this means the individual pierces beyond the obstructions and constraints of time and space. For a moment at least he sees that which the Great Ones, the Rishis and Bodhisattvas the Tomo Geshe throughout time have seen, the all-encompassing vision of the possibilities of what might be and what forever is.

He stands then upon the mountain top wherein the air is clear. His vision extends both far and wide, into the distant heavens and also down into the dismal, weary veils of earth. He knows then what he has to do. Into those veils he pours the light and love that life confers, bringing heaven to earth, peace to humanity and beauty to reconfigure the harshness of the world. He blends and fuses the many lights and colors and weaves them within the fabric of the world. He stands in awe of the immensity of the plan and yet knows for certain the part which he can play in aiding its manifestation and thus he turns his back on that vision, and returns.

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<sup>1</sup> *Symbols of the Eternal Doctrine*, Helen Valborag

<sup>2</sup> *Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. I, p. 246