

FESTIVAL OF AQUARIUS – LONDON – JANUARY 2019

From self-consciousness to group consciousness

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We are working this afternoon within the influence of Aquarius in our monthly cycle of meditation meetings, the keynote being: *Water of Life am I, poured forth for thirsty men*. We are also working within the greater 2300 year cycle of Aquarius which means its influence is gaining momentum and potency as the years pass by. In this regard we are reminded in the Ageless Wisdom teachings "...that astrology is essentially the purest presentation of occult truth in the world at this time, because it is the science which deals with those conditioning and governing energies and forces which play through and upon the whole field of space and all that is found within that field." ¹

Having only recently entered the greater cycle - moving on from Pisces, we find ourselves in the first decanate of Aquarius - a period of approx. 800 years and it is proving to be a fascinating time in the long experience of the human race - a time when Saturn still rules, following on from the Saturnian influence of Capricorn (discussed during last month's meeting). We're told that Saturn "opens the door of opportunity" to develop the spiritual side of our nature and move from darkness to light ² although the Saturnian influence eventually exhausts itself in Capricorn on the reversed wheel ³.

Spirituality means different things to different people but from an esoteric perspective it can be said to concern that which lies beyond the present point of achievement - that which leads to a higher goal - a fuller expression of livingness. Spirituality can, therefore, be expressed in so many ways whether through outer visible humanitarian service, through the radiance of the loving heart, or the fusing of both head and heart in the advanced servers of the race.

Let us pause of a couple of moments and then we will say together the 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.*

In terms of the spiritual progress of humanity, initiation is the means by which man unfolds the truth and does his duty. Initiation is a subject extensively dealt with in the Ageless Wisdom teachings and for the disciple it concerns the point of inner attainment expressed through creative service to humanity. From a higher perspective it's said to have a more profound meaning in that it is "in the nature of a great experiment" of the planetary Logos. It is an optional path for man may follow the slower natural course of evolution but when the light of the soul shines brightly it constitutes a self-chosen forcing process which serves the greater good.

It's said that the time between the first and second initiations is a time of distress and is profoundly difficult involving many incarnations. The first initiation stands for commencement - the Birth - where the soul struggles to makes its presence known through its instrument - the personality. It can be assumed that all who serve with pure motive and who are responsive to the direction of the soul have taken the first initiation. ⁴

We're told that the second initiation - the Baptism "...is closely related to the Hierarchy as a planetary centre and to the activity of the second ray. This initiation will produce in the disciple a growing sense of relationships, of a basic unity with all that breathes, and a recognition of the One Life which will lead eventually to that state of expressed brotherhood which it is the goal of the Aquarian Age to bring into being. ⁵

The second initiation concerns the crisis in the astral body and here the disciple develops emotional control - an intensely difficult task which symbolically involves purification by fire which, when applied to the waters of the astral plane, brings the fogs and mists of glamour. Emerging from this the disciple attains a higher focus and a sense of perspective as to his place in the larger whole. There is a new creativity, yet old attitudes and desires may still persist with an underlying deep dissatisfaction with things as they are, and in this regard perhaps the dissatisfaction of thinking people about materialism and the inequalities of the economic system are signs of the second initiation doing its needed work.

Returning to the influence of Saturn, which is active today on the ordinary wheel of life, we can see that humanity, individually and collectively, is confronted with points of crisis leading to conflict which may, however, offer opportunities to evoke the love and wisdom of the soul and its impulse towards light, inclusiveness and right values. It is a critical time in the evolution of human consciousness - a time of change that is forcing humanity to confront the old ways of doing things. The choices are not yet clear for illusion and glamour are rampant but as crisis does its work the light of the soul illuminates the mind. The crises that we are experiencing today concern all humanity - individuals, groups and nations, as is evident from the current world situation. We may stand before the gateway to a new world and age, as the esoteric teachings confirm, but to enter that gateway and grasp the spiritual principles that will change the world requires a determined affirmation of the spiritual will blended with love-wisdom and intelligence.

Aquarius is associated with group consciousness - that is identification with the Whole. In the early stages of the Aquarian age we can expect group consciousness to be quite tentative, for example, groups may work for their own exclusive and separative ends - holding to their own vision of the Plan without recognising the principle of unity in diversity.

The evolution of consciousness is evident in the astrological interpretation of the Labours of Hercules by Alice Bailey. Hercules - the ancient Son of God, in His twelve labours, symbolises humanity treading the path and through his long journey Hercules eventually discovers the meaning of the occult saying: Man Know Thyself - which is the key to all psychological development and unfoldment and the means by which the threefold personality and the soul are brought into alignment. In the labour in the sign of Aquarius, again the influence of Saturn is discussed, which brings political upheaval, world cleavages, nationalism, patriotism, and divisions between those who rule by authority and dogma. ⁶ However, on the plus side Saturn also brings the beginnings of a vision of the international spirit and a more universal viewpoint, which emerges alongside upheaval and crisis.

The objective of the test that faced Hercules in Aquarius was to aid the cleansing of the world by right direction of forces - he had to clean the Augean stables - a down to earth task where two rivers were diverted and their waters cleared away long accumulated filth - symbolically the materialism of the world and the accumulated thought forms that bring selfishness, harmfulness and wrong speech so highly visible today. ⁷ Yet, paradoxically, in terms of human progress and development it's of interest to note that selfishness is the means to learn the futility of self-interest. In the evolution of consciousness every stage must be gone through and experienced first-hand - there are no short cuts in the quest to align the higher and lower consciousness.

Whilst there is much disorder and chaos in the world the detached observer, viewing life and events from a soul perspective, will also see evidence of an upward shift in consciousness and the development of the Aquarian spirit. For example, the study of the natural world, using observation satellites and laser technology, allow man to understand more about our planet and how all forms of life are interrelated. Science does much good work in highlighting threats to the planet, although there is the danger that scientific orthodoxy shuts out new more radical and intuitive thinking that may contradict existing scientific knowledge. Of course, it is human nature to defend one's sphere of influence and retain power and position - that is, of course, the lower human nature, whereas the illumined mind sees things in more universal terms. It's worth recalling that pioneers in any field are often not recognised until they are long gone - they lead the way, think ahead, see a wider vision but are not understood by those whose vision is focused on the status quo.

In the transitional period between the age of Pisces and Aquarius the clash of ideas and thoughts can make life very difficult for sensitive people. Sensitivity is an interesting attribute because new energy frequencies are only experienced if the mechanism is correctly tuned in. If it is not then, as with a TV or radio signal, there will not be a decent reception.

There are three keynotes of the sign of Aquarius, outlined in the book *Esoteric Astrology*, by Alice Bailey, which involve a shift from the self and its desires and wishes to group awareness and world service. On the reversed wheel the individual ceases to be at the centre of his own little universe, although not surprisingly progress is difficult.⁸ In this connection we can be encouraged and inspired by the subjective spiritual influences that have brought into being the great global humanitarian service initiatives of our current era.

In relation to the keynote of Aquarius it is of particular interest to consider how much progress has been made since the late 19th C with regard to water purity and also sewage disposal systems that do not pollute our rivers and in this regard The Thames Tideway Tunnel is a huge ongoing project in London. Civilisations rise and fall and we learn of sophisticated water systems in Roman times and even in the myths and legends of more ancient civilisations. Clean water is such a necessity that its lack - natural or enforced - may lead to conflict, yet the water cycle of our planet symbolises the sharing and circulation of life giving waters around the globe, although there are, of course, arid places and deserts where water is scarce. Now, due to human ingenuity water desalination systems augment the natural systems in many parts of the world, although this can bring with it problems of pollution and contaminated water.

Aquarius, governs the blood system and its circulation⁹ and in this regard, it's interesting to note that blood plasma is approx. 90% water.¹⁰ The circulation of water, of the blood, of energies and forces in the individual, of ideas and thoughts, for example, through the forum of the United Nations General Assembly and UN agencies, the trade in goods and commodities and electronic communications - all veil a deeper subjective meaning in terms of human progress, because we're told that there is a divine circulatory flow that has to be restored.

Furthermore, there is circulation in both the microcosm and the macrocosm - "as above, so below", as confirmed by H P Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*:

*There is a regular circulation of the vital fluid throughout our system, of which the Sun is the heart—the same as the circulation of the blood in the human body—during the manvantaric solar period, or life; the Sun contracting as rhythmically at every return of it, as the human heart does.*¹¹

The transition from the age of Pisces to Aquarius is especially notable in recent times for the circulation of people, trade, information and knowledge - especially through television, film and the Internet, although there is censorship and therefore restricted circulation in some countries. Circulation brings

to mind the influence of Uranus in Aquarius - “the god of the higher heavens located symbolically above the atmosphere and signifying the ethers... which is the medium of our relationship with the whole”.¹² Interestingly, Alan Oken, in his book *Soul Centred Astrology*, refers to one of the major effects of Uranus as instantaneous and telepathic communication, the prefix tele coming from telos meaning “afar” or “distant” hence - telepathy, television, telecommunications, telephone, and telescope.¹³ This is highly significant when we consider that Aquarius is a sign of constant movement which is today quite distinctive as compared with life just a 100 or so years ago.

This sense of seeing things from “afar”, or from a distance, is helping to bring a more universal perspective and moving man away from being the centre of his own little universe. The thinker is becoming an Observer and the ability to observe, which is developing at a rapid rate, is being matched by an increased sense of responsibility for the natural world. Responsibility is a soul quality and its manifestation is evidence that the soul is awakening, for example, through the impulse to serve others without expecting anything in return. This impulse to serve, as well as circulation and sharing, can also be considered in relation to the theory of the ether, which is now making a reappearance. Indeed, according to the Ageless Wisdom teachings, the etheric body of the individual is related to the etheric body of humanity, the planet and the solar system. The idea that everything is interrelated is an occult truism which is now being sensed by many sensitive people, including, for example, new scientific thinking about the electrical nature of the universe, as confirmed in the following quote from the book - *The Thunderbolts of the Gods*:

From the smallest particle to the largest galactic formation, a web of electrical circuitry connects and unifies all of nature, organizing galaxies, energizing stars, giving birth to planets and, on our own world, controlling weather and animating biological organisms.

*There are no isolated islands in an electric universe*¹⁴

To conclude our reflections it's helpful to note that the etheric body is a generic term covering the ocean of energies which are all inter-related and which constitute “that one synthetic energy body of our planet”¹⁵ and of the solar system and beyond all in that entity called Space. Through the etheric body myriad threads of force or streams of energy affect the physical body and condition it according to its quality and receptivity. Essentially the ether of space is the field in and through which energies play - energies from many different sources within the etheric body of the universe. “It forms one unbroken field of activity in constant ceaseless motion—an eternal medium for the exchange and transmission of energies”.¹⁶

Thus we live and move in a vast ocean of energies and forces and it's said that in the “electrical force of the soul” lies the mystery of interrelationship and the necessity of unity, cooperation and sharing, in contrast to selfishness. The divine circulatory flow has been interrupted and it is humanity's task to restore it and, notwithstanding our current world problems, we can gain inspiration and encouragement from the emergence of new ideas and thoughts that will help bring about a freer circulation.

1. Esoteric Astrology p. 5

2. Labours of Hercules p. 185 and Destiny of The nations p. 138

3. Esoteric Astrology p. 138

4. The Rays and the Initiations p. 484

5. Destiny of the Nations p. 138

6. Labours of Hercules p. 187

7. Ibid adapted pp 186/7

8. Esoteric Astrology pp. 135/6 (adapted)

9. Ibid p. 142

10. https://www.lucistrust.org/the_electric_bridge/the_cosmic_bloodstream/the_cosmic_bloodstream_part_3

11. https://www.lucistrust.org/the_electric_bridge/the_cosmic_bloodstream/the_cosmic_bloodstream_part_2

12. Meditation and the Rhythm of the Year, p. 59. Michal J. Eastcott.

13. Soul Centered Astrology. p. 49 Alan Oken

14. https://www.lucistrust.org/the_electric_bridge/general_articles/arcanes_school_talk_on_the_electric_bridge_london_2008/the_ageless_wisdom

15. Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle p. 2

16. Esoteric Astrology, p. 10