

Climbing the Inner Mountain

The Festival of Capricorn, December 23, 2015, New York

By Barbara Valocore

Good evening and welcome to all here in person and to those listening and participating through the internet for this celebration of the Festival of Capricorn, whose keynote is "Lost am I in light supernal and on that light I turn my back." We are meeting this evening at a special time of the year for many cultures and religious traditions. Much of the world is preparing to celebrate the Christmas holiday, and if you just came in from outside here in New York, you would have just been walking among crowds of people doing last minute Christmas shopping and meeting for holiday parties and gatherings. A noisy time on the street! Earlier in December, people of the Jewish faith celebrated Hanukkah, called the Festival of Lights and earlier in November, Hindu people observed the Festival of Diwali, also known as the Festival of Lights. There are twinkling and colorful lights everywhere reminding us of the light of the soul peeking through and looking for ways to appear to humanity. At these annual holidays, thousands of people send out joyous thoughts of renewal and the hope for peace. Prayers that express the desire for unity rise up into the mental atmosphere of the planet evoking renewed efforts to manifest true goodwill and brotherhood.

The Winter Solstice is the moment in the Northern Hemisphere when the sun turns around and begins its climb northward. We are told that it is at this point that the Hierarchy begins planning for the Higher Interlude and the peak of the spiritual year at the Wesak Festival. The Winter Solstice signifies the coming of the light, and all over the world, humanity recognizes that this time of deep darkness contains the promise of coming light. As students of the Ageless Wisdom, light has an even deeper meaning as, "the great theme of LIGHT underlies our entire planetary purpose."¹ Without light, we could not live, and our work is to cooperate with the purpose of the planetary Logos, as much as we might intuitively grasp that purpose, by bringing more light into the living fabric of the planet; through meditation, inclusive thought, goodwill and the use of Triangles and the Great Invocation. In these painful and difficult times of seeming increasing separatism and terrorism, the world needs ever more light, the light which has the power to dissolve the destructive thought forms of religious ideology and fear. The light of the soul.

Humanity as a whole is destined to become the planetary light bearer, to bring light into living expression through form. The nature of the soul is light, and as soul influence increases in the lower self, the energy of the Christ and His Company can flow into the earth shedding ever more light on this planet of sorrow and struggle. In this season when the birth of Christ is celebrated, all of humanity is reminded of the reality of living light, uplifting the consciousness and opening into an awareness of the Oneness of our shared life and the innate connection with all creatures and kingdoms on earth. This shared life will eventually be characterized by tangible goodwill and right human relations, enabling the Christ and the Masters to physically exist on Earth. Earth's destiny is to become a sacred

planet, and as cells in the body of Sanat Kumara, each human being is involved in this sacrificial process, a process of raising up into spiritual being, a climb together up the inner mountain.

Let us take a moment leaving the noise and bustle behind and ready ourselves for an act of group service, a group meditation at the full moon, a time in the monthly cycle when humanity is the closest to the Hierarchy and has the opportunity to approach the doors of the Ashram on a "band of golden light", a path of electrical solar energy which draws us upward and inward to the center of life and light. Take a few deep breaths and imagine your body filled with light supernal, feel every cell permeated with glowing and vibrating living light. The Angels and Masters who are always with us can inhabit that light and through us, can bring healing light to others, not only in this season of light, but all the time, in all places. Thus we serve the Plan, the Christ, all of humanity and all life in this season of goodwill and joy. We'll say together the ancient prayer, the Gayatri.

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.

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The energies of Capricorn represent the long and arduous climb up the mountain of enlightenment and initiation, a journey up and away from the plains of sorrow and strife into the light of revelation and truth. It is the gate into the life of the spirit and "admits the soul into conscious participation in the life of that world center called the Hierarchy."² In Capricorn, the hidden light is finally revealed and the Christ consciousness is fully realized. When Christ was born in Capricorn, the Light of the world was released, illumining the path up the mountain as the way forward in the evolutionary process and the path into the "Temple of Retreat". This way embodies the Law of Abstraction, a law which impels the disciple away from the three worlds of physical life, into the life of the spirit and freedom from form limitations and suffering.

Worldly ambition, so long the ruler of the person in Capricorn who is focused on materialism, is destined to evolve, through the experience of the one pointed disciple in Sagittarius, into spiritual aspiration, driving the would be initiate to leave the world behind through the painful processes of detachment and renunciation, the only methods that will permit entry to the summit of spiritual achievement. One cannot reach the peak carrying a heavy burden, or encumbered by the attachments and glammers of the physical plane. It all must be left behind as the vision of the light supernal is intuitively felt although not yet clearly seen. Blindness still covers the vision and this occult blindness is a blessing and a

protection against the awesome power of Life itself, a power not yet fully available to the uninitiated.

In Capricorn we are presented with a great mystery, the true Spiritual Sun is hidden by a disc of golden light. The ineffable vision is too destructive for an unprepared instrument which cannot stand the blazing light of the mountaintop. Long preparation must be undergone before the candidate is ready to stand in the presence of the initiator, a preparation full of obstacles and difficulties. It takes lifetimes of hard work and many failures before the light of the soul has burned away all impediments to its expression, before the mind has become its skillful servant and the heart its mouthpiece.

But as the climb progresses upward, and the richness of the lower atmosphere dissipates, there is a sense of a growing light, the awakening of a more reliable intuition and an unmistakable recognition of the light of the soul, irradiating the mind and engaging the will. The inner journey leads to an extended vision, a revelation of light and complete freedom. Not only is the personality freed from entanglements in the three worlds, but the soul itself is now completely free to manifest fully through form and to exert its influence through its willing vehicle. The soul and personality are no longer at war, and have become united through the light. The view from the summit is clear and unobstructed and there is expanded vision through the clear cold light of the group love.

Humankind has always been drawn to and fascinated by the mystery of mountains. We recognize their innate sacredness and their breathtaking beauty and power. We want to climb them, to conquer them, to stand at the highest point around. This impulse is the outer reaction to the inner reality that the true mountain climb is within, that the true spiritual journey takes place in the solitude of the heart and the silence of the mind. The Tibetan remarks that humanity's efforts to climb Mt Everest, the highest of all mountains, are symbolic and are "being watched with much interest by the Hierarchy..." When he wrote this, the summit of Mt Everest had not yet been achieved, which was not until 1953. He goes on: "When humanity emerges into the light and relative glory of the new civilization, they will at the same time conquer this last remaining summit. That which is of the densest materiality and which is the consummation of earthly grandeur will remain - but it will be beneath the feet of humanity."³

Are we now well into the new civilization? Do we have a sense of the glory of which he speaks? Mt Everest has been climbed now many times and we have climbed well beyond that, traveling beyond physical mountains into outer space. We are exploring the known Universe and have traveled farther than humanity could have imagined even 50 years ago. We can see images of galaxies and nebulae of incredible beauty light years away. They appear as realms of ineffable majesty and contain mysteries yet to be discovered. If our eyes are focused down toward the earth and we see only destruction and violence, killing and competition, we are missing the vision of the glory in which we really exist.

In the Himalayan mountains, there are two peaks considered to be especially sacred and revered; Mt Kailash in Tibet and Mt Kangenjunga in Sikkim. Every year hundreds of Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and now many westerners, make the difficult pilgrimage to Kailash to

circumambulate the sacred peak all the while chanting prayers and invocations. Some, in the traditions of the ancient methods of pilgrimage in India, move forward on their knees or progress by prostrating themselves fully face down in sight of the mountain which is considered to bestow special blessings on those who are in its sight. They move as if in a trance of meditation, prayer and devotion, devotion to the spirit and the inner life and to the inner mountain, leaving the outer world behind. Special celebrations and rituals are performed. Prayer flags are planted and everywhere are the signs of humanity aspiring to lift itself up into the light. It is a once in a lifetime experience and many consider it a type of initiation. They have a mountaintop experience, an inner event of light and truth making lasting changes in the consciousness. Kailash has never been climbed, being considered too sacred to have human feet upon it.

Buddhist scholar and teacher Robert Thurman refers to Mt. Kailash in his book, *Circling the Sacred Mountain*, as "the most magical site on earth, the abode of the father and mother of the world, the gods Shiva and Uma." He continues, "it is known as Kang Rinpoche or Snow Jewel to Tibetans, and Mt. Meru by Indians. It is the spiritual crown of the planet, atop the very northernmost sector of the Himalayas, in the most remote region of Tibet". Pilgrims spend years getting there and those who have succeeded are thought to have received special spiritual power. Even more important than the physical journey however, is the inner journey to the sacred summit, the ascension of the inner mountain and the recognition of an inner light, the light of the soul, the light of God.

The planetary center of Darjeeling is overshadowed by the great Kanchenjunga, the third highest peak on earth. It hangs in the sky above the town as a massive and benevolent presence, constantly reminding one of the awesome grandeur and spiritual power of the Great Ones, the Hierarchy of Masters who guide and guard the race and whose plans we seek to cooperate with. It is frequently hidden by clouds, so its physical presence is often elusive and fleeting, but the inner vision is always there once it has been seen. Its mysterious outer appearance reflects the keynote of the Darjeeling planetary center; "I hide the light", at first glance a curious phrase, but a truth expressing the fact that the vivid light of the Presence is hidden until the third initiation, the Transfiguration, when the full revelation of light is possible to the initiate and all ties and pulls of earth life have dissolved in the Monadic radiance now consciously available to the heretofore blind pilgrim.

Kanchenjunga, the majestic giant of the eastern Himalayas with its five peaks, is closely associated with Shamballa and the Hierarchy. Literally meaning "Five Treasures of the Eternal Snow", it is considered by local people to be their patron deity and said to protect them from harm. Local legends speak of hidden passageways in its foothills marked by unusual rock formations that are doors which open for the devout at predestined times and lead to Shamballa and the abode of the Masters. Legend states that the five peaks are home to the five holy items considered essential for life: minerals, grains, salt, weapons and holy scriptures. Nicholas Roerich, the Russian painter and mystic who spent so much of his life in the region, writes in the *Abode of Light*, of the five treasures in this way: "It is said: there will come a time when famine will overtake the whole world. On that day will appear a Man, who will unlock the giant gate to those vast treasures and will nourish all mankind.

Certainly you understand that this man will nourish humanity not with material, but with spiritual food."

Life is governed by cycles, from the smallest rhythms of the systolic and diastolic actions of the heart, to the uncountable eons in the cycles of life of a star or a Logos. The seven great breaths of the Logos created our system and we are subject to its laws. In meditation, we practice holding the mind steady in the light, and in the higher and lower interludes, the periods between the inbreathing and the outbreathing, magical work can be accomplished. The yearly cycle has its own cycle of interludes and breaths, and this moment of entering into Capricorn marks the beginning in the annual cycle of inbreathing to be followed by the Higher Interlude, the high point of the spiritual year. In reality, we are beginning to prepare for that high period of contact of the full moons of Aries, Taurus and Gemini. In the macrocosm, inbreathing corresponds to the evolutionary cycle wherein all experience, all knowledge and all life force is lifted up to be returned into the One source, the origin of life and the merging into the One in Whom we live and move and have our being.

Although it may not seem so today, especially if we are looking through the lens of the popular media reporting on endless war, violence and killings, the involutionary cycle is finished, we are on the upward way, so everything that happens is part of our growing pains toward spiritual awakening, spiritual attainment and conscious participation in the abstraction process of the long inbreathing of the Logos. Together as the human race, we are climbing the inner mountain of renunciation and sacrifice. We are learning to move away from material concerns and the ties of Earth toward a greater and increasingly brilliant light, the blinding light which blots out all form and difference.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing humanity today as we collectively strive forward on the evolutionary path, is the battle to overcome materialism and recognize soul life as the only true reality. It is clear we are experiencing a crisis of values, but this crisis comes from soul stimulation, an agitation coming from the inside. We are crossing a burning ground prior to realization of the Angel of the Presence. There are so many people now who are in contact with their souls and the power of the soul light is unstoppable. The Hierarchy is moving closer to the Earth plane and the powerful incoming energies are stirring up the status quo. We observe how long cherished values and lifestyles are being challenged and we are charged with building the new civilization based on the spiritual values of inclusiveness, brotherhood and freedom. We see the painful process of detachment being undergone by millions of people as they lose their homes to war, famine and destructive natural events and this observation evokes greater compassion in the face of deep suffering.

We need to observe this crisis through the eyes of love, to learn to view events from the soul's perspective, with the clarity and breadth of vision as seen from the mountaintop. Every little victory of detachment and relinquishment is a step closer to full union with the soul and the soul views these efforts of its reflection with love and joy. Just the act of observing changes the outcome as proven by science. In this season of light and goodwill, all the prayers and acts of kindness and generosity of people in every tradition and faith are weaving together "rivers and streams of light", reaching across time and space, creating the

network of light in the world and uniting humanity in a common purpose, a purpose of love and shared responsibility. This network is part of the light body of humanity and through it, the Ashram can work and assist us in the quest for enlightenment. Christ has never left the earth and signs of His approach are everywhere.

As we prepare for our group meditation, our act of service, let us be reminded of the full moon opportunity available to us. The door to the Ashram is wide open and our soul consciousness resides naturally there. The Forces of Enlightenment seek expression through us and their energies always surround us with love and compassion as we struggle through the dense atmosphere of the physical plane to ascend the inner mountain, touch the light supernal to descend again to work in service to our fellow humans.

Thirteenth Century Zen Master, philosopher and poet, Dogen Zenji wrote: "Mountains have been the abode of great sages from the limitless past to the limitless present. Wise people and sages all have mountains as their inner chamber, as their body and mind. Because of wise people and sages, mountains appear."

¹. *Rays and the Initiations* pp 142

². *Esoteric Astrology* pp 168

³. *Esoteric Astrology* pp 159