

FESTIVAL OF SAGITTARIUS – LONDON – DECEMBER 2021

On Wings of Fiery Light

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Welcome friends, to the Festival of Sagittarius. The festival period when each full moon takes place is the time when we join together in consciousness to approach the Spiritual Hierarchy and bring back to the physical world a little more understanding of the divine purpose and plan. The fiery energies of Sagittarius qualify our work, stimulating all who are moving forward from point to point along the spiritual path. It's an opportunity to sharpen our spiritual intention – something which is beautifully clarified in the keynote of this Sagittarius: *I see the goal, I reach that goal and then I see another*. The energies available from each sign of the zodiac build upon those of the preceding one, so the disciple emerges from the terrific tests and trials of Scorpio to move into the interlude of Sagittarius. Here, resources are gathered, and preparations made prior to entering Capricorn with its symbolic mountain which leads to the summit of initiation. As one test draws to a close and another beckons, an exquisite point of tension unfolds between the past and the future, as we prepare to move forward, setting our sights upon the goal, galvanized by fiery aspiration.

Fire forms the basis of everything - the Self is fire, the intellect is fire, and it is latent in the physical vehicles. We note from the teachings that there lies hid “a veritable fire that can either be a destructive force, burning the tissue of the body and stimulating centres of an undesirable character, or be a vivifying factor, acting as a stimulating and awakening agent.”¹ The aim therefore is to direct this fire along the prepared channels so that it acts as a purifier and connector between the personality and higher Self. This brings to mind the Greek myth of Icarus. In Greek mythology, Icarus was the son of the master craftsman Daedalus, the creator of the Labyrinth. Icarus and Daedalus attempt to escape from Crete by means of wings that Daedalus constructed from feathers and wax. Daedalus warns Icarus first of complacency and then of hubris, instructing him to fly neither too low nor too high, lest the sea's dampness clog his wings or the sun's heat melt them. Icarus ignores his father's instructions not to fly too close to the sun, causing the wax in his wings to melt. He tumbles out of the sky, falls into the sea, and drowns. Even today this myth still warns us in its saying "don't fly too close to the sun".

Interesting interpretations of the myth describe it as the consequence of personal over-ambition. Psychologists have made studies of the Icarus complex with respect to the alleged relationship between a fascination for fire, high ambition and ascensionism. In psychiatry, features of this disease were perceived in the form of ecstatic emotional highs and depressive lows of the bipolar disorder. The point has also been made that the interpretation in Western culture tends to ignore the warning not to fly too low because sea water would ruin the lift of his wings and in a sense, flying too low is even more dangerous than flying too high because it feels deceptively safe. The whole of the myth can then be interpreted as a warning against embarking on an adventure without due thought and preparation. Its talk of flight may also remind us of the two bird constellations neighboring that of Sagittarius. First is Aquila, the eagle, as it flies “straight into the face of the Sun,” symbolizing spirit and immortality as it soars out of time and space, into the Sun without being burned through unpreparedness. The second constellation is Cygnus, the swan with its stars forming a cross in the heavens symbolizing the soul's release from the crucifixion of matter.

Let's take a moment of silence at this point to reflect on the nature of fire and light, and then imagine ourselves flying towards the spiritual sun to bring back light and warmth to all of humanity: We'll then sound the Affirmation of the disciple:

I am a point of light within a greater Light.
I am a strand of loving energy within the stream of love divine.
I am a point of sacrificial Fire, focused within the fiery Will of God.
And thus I stand.

I am a way by which men may achieve.
I am a source of strength, enabling them to stand.
I am a beam of light, shining upon their way.
And thus I stand.

And standing thus revolve
And tread this way the ways of men,
And know the ways of God.
And thus I stand.

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In Sagittarius we prepare to make the next stage of our flight towards the spiritual realms. In humanity as a whole, we also see signs of this deepening spirituality, and have faith that the right decisions will be made and action taken to move the world forwards in line with evolutionary plans. The aspirant has to have faith that the subjective world underlying the physical is constantly being recreated by the downpouring energies and outflowing forces. In this way, the new is always present. It is in this ever-changing world of energies that the esoteric group and the New Group of World Servers are learning to polarize their consciousness. And, because it is a field of potential energy awaiting exploration and direction, it is also the inner cause of much of the uncertainty on the outer planes. For the solid, familiar world of forms we have come to know and experience are subject to a constant pressure to reform and even to die, reflecting the dynamic field of energies in which our consciousness resides.

The adage "As a man thinketh so is he" when extended to "As humanity thinks, so humanity is" has great ramifications. We are witnessing the growth of the power of a collective public opinion across nations which lies beyond the confines of self or national interest in expressing concern for the state of the planet, the loss of democratic freedoms, inadequate response by governments during a time of medical emergency and so on. There is a worldwide awareness of the need to purify the environment in which we live, and to look after each other. While far from perfect, public pressure on governments is an effective means of change in issues of universal concern. Nevertheless, the plight of many millions of people remains – from those who leave their home and country and travel on a "wing and a prayer" hoping for solace and a new home to live and raise a family, to those desperate people in countries of conflict, awaiting practical help and an awakening of the heart of fellow human beings.

This stage of human evolution might be thought of as that of the caterpillar's chrysalis. Alice Bailey talks about the caterpillar's threefold cycle – that of the crawling insect, the chrysalis and ultimately the butterfly and it could be said that Humanity has now entered the second stage of the chrysalis in which everything has broken down. She writes of the chrysalis "*...in that fluid are what are called three centres of life, and because of the interplay*

between those three focal points of energy, a change goes on, a rebuilding, until there emerges out of the period of silence, a wonderful butterfly. It is almost as though in the chrysalis there were three aspects of divinity symbolised and working to a pattern, the Christ pattern."² The New Group of World Servers is the embodiment of this process – with its task of creative restoration, undertaken through receptivity to divine impression and commitment to its expression in all of daily life and relationships. Through this process, meditation becomes mediation, and it brings to human understanding the tools needed to create a new and better order for all. How humanity will react and employ the inflowing energies remains uncertain, but the New Group of World Servers continues to act as a balancer of forces, as a reasoned interpretation of events, and as an upholder of vision.

Getting the message through to humanity is difficult though – judging by the general state of affairs, there doesn't seem to be a clear vision of a united goal, just a stumbling forward through one crisis after another, almost "on a Wing and a Prayer" to use that saying again. The phrase is credited to an American pilot, Hugh G Ashcraft Jr, who on returning from a bombing mission over Germany in a crippled plane with one wing missing, said to his crew, "Those who want to, please pray". News reports called them the crew that "prayed" their plane back. The expression came to mean doing something in the hope that you will succeed, or with the hope of averting disaster, despite a desperate situation teetering on failure. Aspirants on the spiritual path may often feel like they are teetering on the edge of failure but hope and faith sustain them through the hard times and eventually the goal is reached.

Perhaps then, we might interpret "on a wing and a prayer" in a more positive light. From an esoteric perspective we know that clarity of perceived direction accompanied by fiery aspiration generates energy which elevates consciousness to a higher level. And sometimes when we feel defeated, we are, literally lifted on the wings of angels – their protective "wings" enfold us and guide us forwards. Angels oversee every plane of nature and the evolving life forms upon them. And in the use of the Great Invocation, we join the angels in their great work, for they are the essence of light and pour their energies forth as powerful messengers of the Divine Plan when evoked by human invocation. This touching and transmitting of specific qualities of light is a skill that is slowly acquired along the path of discipleship.

At the time of each full moon festival, we offer ourselves as a clear channel for the light of Hierarchy, striving to mirror its light. Participating in these festivals over the years steadily sensitizes us to light and our ability to discern the quality of light available consequently grows. To enhance this facility, we examine our thoughts, words and actions on a regular basis, these are after all the vessels into which we are condensing the light of the direct channel between the sun and the earth – with the moon, or in our case, the personality, "out of the way". We can also work with our aspirations and imagination. In this way we begin to assume responsibility for the degree of truth or falsity that we bring into the world, for both can be considered in terms of light, but differing of course, in their clarity, beauty and strength. And because light can be revealing or blinding, so must we be discriminating in the truths that we radiate and convey. Different qualities of light are suitable for different stages of evolution, the light that we wield in our relationships can be either impotent or overwhelming if used inappropriately.

Our task is to point the Way and hold a positive soul vision of what can be. As we are close now to the solstice and approaching the Christian celebration of Christmas, I wanted to share with you some of the uplifting thoughts of Dora Kunz who wrote about "The Christmas of the Angels"³. She described how Christmas is experienced by this kingdom of nature, of the different effect it has in the Northern or Southern hemisphere, and just what a time of joy

and unity it is for angels. This in turn has a positive effect on humanity whether we are aware of it or not. While Christmas commemorates the birth of Christ for human beings and celebrated with ceremony, the conception of Christmas by angels is something very different. She notes:

“...the angels see Christmas from the life-side, as a turning point of all the forces of Nature on every plane and at every level, as a time in which a direct and mighty outpouring of creative power and spiritual energy from God takes place. Christmas in the Northern Hemisphere occurs just after the shortest day in midwinter, while in parts of the Southern Hemisphere it is celebrated just after the longest day in midsummer; and thus throughout the whole world it marks a point of balance of deep significance in the hidden life of Nature. The change between the negative forces that bring about the cessation of creative life in winter, and the positive, dynamic energies that cause the earth to burst into blossom in the spring takes place at Christmas; and it is to initiate and make possible this tremendous change in polarity that the Christmas festival is celebrated so joyously both in Heaven and Earth. It is in truth a birth that is celebrated—not only the physical birth of the Christ, not only the symbolic birth of the Sun, but the far more splendid birth of the Indwelling Christ in Nature, the yearly renewal and reawakening of creative Life, so gloriously to be consummated in Easter. Because of the union of the Christ in the heavens with the Christ Incarnate both in Nature and in the heart of humanity, the solar symbolism—for the Sun is ever the symbol, and even in some mysterious way the very vehicle of the Christ Himself—has figured most prominently in all the great religions given by Christ the World Teacher....

“...the angels are the active agents of the Christ in Nature; they control and balance her mighty forces, direct her evolution in all its many aspects, and act as the channels and instruments of the life and energy of God throughout the whole of creation. The rhythmic changes of the seasons are indeed expressions of the consciousness of God; but it is the angelic hierarchies who are His intermediaries and who are responsible for the bringing about of the changes in the lower worlds. Christmas, therefore, is a time of enormous activity in the angelic kingdom; the forces of that kingdom are temporarily concentrated upon the great work of preparation for the influx of the new life, and all angels, whether their work is primarily connected with Nature or not, lend their aid at this great cosmic festival. They give themselves to the service of the Christ by helping to bring about this inner birth; they watch the changes with deepest interest and enthusiasm and throw all their power into the work—and very naturally they evolve by so doing. This ability to work with Nature’s processes is due to the fact that the angels’ consciousness is directed toward the life-side of evolution, and, therefore, that which has to do with the downpouring and outflowing of life to a great extent comes through them and is in their charge.”

Dora Kunz goes on to describe the difference between the influences outpoured during Christmas in the Northern and in the Southern Hemispheres - the Northern Hemisphere, being the center of life on earth, contains the channels of those energies which shape the evolution both of Nature and of humanity; while the Southern Hemisphere has in the past in many ways been less creative, less vital in its natural forces.... “The angels who direct the evolution of the two hemispheres are different too in the sense that the two halves of the earth’s surface contain complementary characteristics, positive and negative, which, united, form a perfect whole. While in the Northern Hemisphere it is a true birth which takes place at Christmas, a birth which corresponds very closely and beautifully with the birth of a little child, in the Southern Hemisphere it is rather a deepening of life which occurs, a further descent of the life of the

Christ into forms already prepared to receive it. In the North joy and love and beauty are the predominant influences; in the South power and strength are outpoured.”

Finally, there is the role of the great angels of music in the Christmas festival which enhances this celebration in the inner worlds and whose “Celestial music no longer resembles that of harps and violins, but rather the chiming of myriads of sweet-toned silver bells. Each angel is, as it were, a bell, each bell a note in the mighty harmony. The chiming of the Christmas bells may be heard all through Advent, but on Christmas night and throughout the following day the angels gather round the Lord in all their hosts; the whole angelic choir is united into one glorious chant, and the swelling music of the bells peals forth in a single hymn of worship to the Lord of Love. That music draws all living things together, harmonizes and attunes the whole world, floods it with divine beauty, beauty which is reflected in the beauties of woods and mountains, of lakes and trees and flowers... Such is the festival of Christmas in the inner worlds—a time of wonderful power and realization for both angels and mankind, a time of close communion with the Christ.”

Let us now go into meditation with these thoughts, conscious of the beauty, harmony and vitality of this season of goodwill and link together with all those on the life side and who stand ready to assist and respond to every invocation for more light and love in the world.

References:

- 1 Letters on Occult Meditation, p.102/3
- 2 The Labours of Hercules, p.163
- 3 The Christmas of the Angels, Dora Kunz