

Good evening, and welcome to our group meditation in the sign of Aquarius. Aquarius, along with Leo and Sagittarius, forms a triangle which acts as the conduit into our solar system of the Fifth Ray. The Fifth Ray is spoken of as being the Ray of Concrete Science or Knowledge, and is particularly associated with the fifth plane, the mental plane. We could therefore say that the mental plane is the abode of knowledge, the place within the system where it becomes visible to consciousness. The ability to acquire and use knowledge might be said to be one of the main distinguishing signs of passage from a purely animal state of consciousness towards the human state. It is thus a kind of gateway between kingdoms. And as we will see later on, because of its threefold structure, the mental plane also grants access to higher spiritual wisdom, reflected in the mind as spiritual knowledge. Before we reach that point, let's briefly consider the association of the Fifth Ray with Concrete Science.

Science as it is currently practiced may have something of a bad press with esotericists, because of its association with materialism. Most science as we currently conceive of it is indeed rooted in the material world, in the realm of dense physical elementals. So its knowledge concerns the behaviour of those elementals, both individually, and in groups, and does not usually consider the fact that this behaviour is conditioned by the individual and group behaviour of etheric elementals, which are in turn under the influence of emotional and mental devic lives. And this only covers the lower three worlds! The vast complexity of the many interlocking levels is merely hinted at in *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, and we may pause with a sense of awe at what a more expansive scientific understanding will look like when the entire cosmic physical plane, with its many hosts of devas and elementals, is open to the scientific investigator. Of course, there are pioneering efforts, such as the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and the Scientific and Medical Network, that seek to probe beyond the dense physical. Yet we should not forget that these initiatives, like all true science, are just as subject to error and future correction as any dense physical investigation. Before we continue, let's pause briefly, and then say together the Mantram of the New Group of World Servers.

May the Power of the one Life pour through the group of all true servers.

May the Love of the one Soul characterise the lives of all who seek to aid the Great Ones.

May I fulfill my part in the one Work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech.

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Here is a statement by the scientist and educator Carl Sagan, which helps get to the core of the scientific method, and its relationship to knowledge and truth. "In science it often happens that scientists say, 'You know that's a really good argument; my position is mistaken,' and then they would actually change their minds and you never hear that old view from them again. They really do it. It doesn't happen as often as it should, because scientists are human and change is sometimes painful. But it happens every day. I cannot recall the last time something like that happened in politics or religion." (1987)

If we consider knowledge to be the result of mental perception, we can recognise, as Sagan indicates, that perception can be inaccurate. Thus, although there is a tendency to link knowledge with truth, the link is not guaranteed. And certainty is another dimension – we can *feel* certain of something even when our knowledge is still very limited. Conversely, we can remain uncertain, even when we have a very large body of knowledge available to us. In fact, the latter attitude, of a persistent determination to remain open to new evidence, is one way of defining the scientific method. It may be one of the reasons why it can be so difficult to find ways to present scientific evidence constructively to the general public. This has become alarmingly clear in the current pandemic.

A number of forces are at work, and not all of them are in alignment. The public naturally wants clear guidance. Those in government are not always willing, for a number of reasons, to present all of the evidence that they have access to. Scientists are themselves working under conditions of enormous stress and urgency, and may thus be tempted to present results without fully checking them. There are pressures from businesses and lobbying groups. Education, particularly of the young, is being asked to transform its methods almost overnight, in ways that make the pastoral and psychological care that good teachers embody more difficult to carry out. And all of this is happening in a situation where more work, and more recreation, is happening online, where the sources of information are proliferating like the heads of the hydra, and the reliability of those sources is increasingly doubtful.

Now imagine in this situation trying to present through the media a complex scientific judgement, in a nuanced and cautious manner, that may nevertheless have massive consequences for how people live; and to do so in simple enough language that most people understand it, without over-simplifying it to the point of making it easily distorted or mis-represented. Bear in mind that, if the scientist is acting in accordance with the scientific method, they cannot, in good conscience, state their guidance with absolute certainty – which is the very thing that the public is desperate for! And this does not even take into account differences in national psychology, with attendant differences in how ‘official’ pronouncements are made and implemented in political terms – how much freedom individuals have to respond to the guidance, for example.

It is therefore not so surprising that even scientists, who, until recently, have tended to be seen as a source of certain guidance, are finding that their words are being doubted or ignored. Of course, at least some of the reason for this is that the advice they are presenting is often unpalatable; and a related reason is that some who might choose to disagree for other reasons are using the fact that honest science does *not* make claims with absolute certainty either to dismiss its claims altogether, or to present as equally valid ‘competing’ science that may be far less grounded in evidence or careful theoretical reasoning. This latter area is a particularly hard one for esotericists to navigate, since they may also be aware of relevant science that goes beyond the dense physical, which, simply because society does not yet recognise it, is under-resourced, and therefore currently unable to conduct studies on the scale of conventional science.

Thus the COVID-19 pandemic crisis is presenting humanity with one of its most subtle, comprehensive, and urgent tests in collective discrimination. In this, it

resembles the climate change crisis closely, with the one exception that the needed civilisational adaptations that climate change requires have, until quite recently, been perceived as far less urgent. Climate change has been described by the thinker Timothy Morton as a ‘hyperobject’, which is something that is so massively distributed in time and space that its totality cannot be realized in any particular local manifestation. Another way of describing this might be as a pattern of knowledge that is too vast and intricate in scale to ‘fit’ into one individual human mind. An image that springs to mind are some of the stunning pictures which the current Juno mission has sent back from the atmosphere of Jupiter.



When we bear in mind that these images are static, while the clouds are in constant motion, and from the esoteric angle are themselves outer manifestations of the life of this great Logos, then we gain perhaps an inkling of the extraordinary complexity and beauty of beings that are, to use an old-fashioned phrase, ‘beyond our ken’. And even from the angle of pure materialist science, there is a positive story to be told. These amazing patterns within the clouds of Jupiter are a manifestation of one of the great unsolved scientific mysteries – turbulent flow; and the instrument which captured these images, Junocam, is an example of citizen science – amateur astronomers are encouraged to send in proposals for specific phenomena to image.

If we think a little more about a ‘hyperobject’ not fitting into any one human mind, maybe we can see why science needs to be primarily a group endeavour. By creating group minds, which are patterns and systems of cooperation amongst many thinkers, the wider problems of human existence can be approached. And science seems particularly skilful at assembling such group minds, perhaps partly because of its

willingness to accept that all conclusions are provisional and temporary, and also because it generally confines its attention to the 'outer garment of God', as the lower planes are sometimes spoken of. In working in this group fashion, science helps to create a seed for other types of group work that the Aquarian Age will no doubt see.

Let's now consider in a little more depth the connection between the Fifth Ray and the fifth plane. It is said that:

"...the fifth ray is one of unique and peculiar potency in relation to the human kingdom. The reason is that the fifth plane of mind is the sphere of His major activity and it is on this plane that we find the triple aspects of mind:

1. Abstract or higher mind, the embodiment of a higher triad.
2. The concrete or lower mind, the highest aspect of the lower self.
3. The ego or solar Angel, the pure Son of Mind, Who expresses intelligence, both abstractly and concretely, and is the point of unification.

This Life has also much power today in connection with the fifth root-race and with the transference of the consciousness of humanity into the fifth or spiritual kingdom. Students would learn much if they contrasted the building power of the higher mind with the destroying power of the lower. Just as the personality has no other function in the divine plan than to be a channel for, and the medium of expression of, the soul, so the lower mind is intended to be the channel for the pure inflow of higher mind energy.

This fifth ray is a Being of the intensest spiritual light and in His manifestation on this fifth plane, which is peculiarly His, He symbolises the three aspects in a way achieved by no other ray. Through His quality of higher mind, this ray is a pure channel for the divine will. Through the septenary grouping of the solar lives on the mental levels whereon they appear, He brought into functioning activity seven corresponding reflections of the seven centres of Deity, as far as our planet is concerned, a thing which none of His six brother rays have done. This statement means little to you, but the tremendous sacrifice and effort thus involved are paralleled only by the life of the Buddha, and this is one of the reasons why, in this fifth race, love and mind must eventually and mutually reveal each other." (*Es. Psych. Vol.I, pp. 76-7*)

More detail on the fifth or mental plane appears in *Cosmic Fire*, where we learn: "The mental plane is, as H. P. B. has pointed out, the vastest of all the planes with which we are concerned. It is the key plane of the solar system. It is the pivotal plane upon which the great Wheel turns. It is the meeting place of the three lines of evolution and has been for this reason esoterically termed '*the council chamber of the Three Divinities.*' On this plane, the three Persons of the logoi Trinity meet in united work. Below two Persons may be seen associated; above another duality functions, but only on this plane do the Three make an at-one-ment.

All the Logoi of the differing schemes are expressing Themselves upon this plane. There are certain schemes in the system which find their lowest manifestation on this plane, and have no physical body such as the Earth, and the other dense planets. They *exist* through the medium of gaseous matter, and their spheres of manifestation

are simply composed of the four cosmic ethers and the cosmic gaseous [i.e. the systemic mental]. But all the great Lives of the solar system do possess bodies of our systemic mental matter, and therefore on that plane communication between all these Entities becomes a possibility. *This fact is the basis of occult realisation, and the true ground for the at-one-ment.* Matter of the abstract levels of the mental plane enters into the composition of the vehicles for all these greater Existences and through the medium of this energised substance each can get *en rapport* with each, no matter what Their individual goal of attainment may be. The units, therefore, in Their bodies can equally get in touch with all other Egos and groups once they have achieved the consciousness of the mental plane (causal consciousness) and know the varying group 'keys,' the group tones and colors." (pp.848-9)

So it would seem that the Fifth Ray, operating on the fifth plane, is a great unifying factor, through telepathic interplay. This contrasts strongly with the perception of science as analytic, concerned with breaking things apart. But even in conventional science this need not be the case, where a more holistic gaze can recognise how parts and wholes are in mutual interplay and dependency, presenting self-similar fractal patterning. Take for example this quote from the Nobel Prize-winning biologist, Barbara McClintock: "Every component of the organism is as much of an organism as every other part." McClintock also reveals the compassion and sensitivity in her gaze where she notes: "I start with the seedling, and I don't want to leave it. I don't feel I really know the story if I don't watch the plant all the way along. So I know every plant in the field. I know them intimately, and I find it a real pleasure to know them." And she also says: "The ability of a cell to sense these broken ends, to direct them towards each other, and then to unite them so that the union of the two DNA strands is correctly oriented, is a particularly revealing example of the sensitivity of cells to all that is going on within them. They make wise decisions and act on them."

Maybe the key word that we have not yet given sufficient attention to in the title of the Fifth Ray is 'Concrete'. In other words, at least from this angle, the fifth ray is concerned with the accurate prediction of the behaviour of concrete forms, as opposed to abstract principles. Its approach to this may *appear* separative, but as the Tibetan notes in *Esoteric Psychology* Volume I, "Science is separative in its approach to the differing aspects of the divine manifestation which we call the world of natural phenomena, but it is non-separative in actuality.... The reason for this is to be found in the fact that the true scientist, being a coordinated personality and working therefore on mental levels, works very close to the soul. The developed personality produces the clear distinctions of the dominant lower mind, but (if one may use such a symbolic way of expression) the close proximity of the soul negates a separative attitude." (pp.51-2) Also, we should bear in mind that, while for humanity, the mental plane marks the boundary between concrete and abstract, for greater Lives, the boundary lies elsewhere, so They would experience the nature of the Fifth Ray differently. Indeed, some of the other Names of this great Ray Lord, such as "The Rose of God" and "The Cloud upon the Mountain-top" may point in this direction. We should not forget that while the Fifth Ray energises the fifth plane so powerfully, which is highly significant for this fifth root-race of humanity, the Fifth Ray, like all the rays, operates on every plane.

Jupiter, the esoteric ruler of Aquarius, is a manifestation of the Second Ray, and there is a close connection between the Second and Fifth Rays. So we read:

“What is the effect of this ray upon humanity as a whole and at this time? The effect of these influences is very great and of supreme importance in this fifth root race, the Aryan race, in this second solar system. Again you can see the clarity of the correspondences which are emerging. I would have you note them again.

1. Ray II, the Ray of Love-Wisdom; and Ray V, the Ray of Concrete Knowledge or Science.
2. The second plane, the monadic plane; and the fifth plane, the mental plane.
3. The second solar system of love; and the fifth root race, the Aryan race, of active intelligence.

In all these basic relationships, that which is the fifth in order is destined to be the instrument, the vehicle or the implementing factor for the second. The Universal Mind, as it works through all the planes of our conscious planetary life, is the creative agent and the form-building factor which makes the revelation of love possible.”
(*Rays & Initiations*, p.593)

So let us now turn to our work in meditation, seeking to aid in the process whereby the Fifth Ray, acting through Aquarius, can assist the mutual revelation of love and mind. Our seed thought is, “Water of life am I, poured forth for thirsty men.”