

The Universal Self

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Good evening friends and welcome.

We are meeting at what is clearly a significant time in human affairs. Consciousness is stirred, emotions are running high and nations are making important choices about the future. While ancient patterns of separateness are rising to the surface and on the other hand forces of unity and goodwill are deepening and becoming stronger.

For those inspired by a vision of wholeness and the dream that humanity is developing a collective consciousness of itself as a species, unified through its rich diversity, the raw waves of fear, grief and uncertainty about the future can be disturbing. Therapists and priests attest to the spiritual nature of the crisis that countless individuals now find themselves in.

It is easy to get caught up in the analysis of events as they happen. Opinions and judgements about what and who is right and wrong quickly solidify and become concrete in this environment. But we are gathered here to stand with humanity during the full moon of Leo. Our primary task is to approach Hierarchy and invoke Lighted energies of divinity; knowing that these energies will help us to imaginatively sense how the Christ and the Buddha might be observing this time; and knowing too that these energies will empower, support and nourish the forces of goodwill that are already so strongly present in the world.

We can imagine the global group of meditators observing the events of the time with a measure of love and intuitive understanding; noticing ways in which the Plan and Will of the Divine appears to be working out. The more we imagine the group observing in this way, from the perspective of the Ashram, the more we will see with increasing clarity where we can best be of service and of use.

The seeds of Aquarius are germinating and putting down roots within the hundreds of millions, the multitudes, of people of goodwill. The future mass culture is emerging out of the field of consciousness created by these multitudes; just as the more refined culture of the future intelligentsia, the intuitives, the mystics and the occultists is emerging out of the group of World Servers. It is worth reminding ourselves that because of incoming Aquarian energies, and because of educational developments around the world, and because of the intensification of human experience in recent decades the body of human consciousness that is identified by the quality of goodwill is larger, stronger and more energetically alive than at any previous time in history.

There are virtually no commentators writing today who recognize DK's vision of the significance of the goodwill that exists in the world and the way in which it is being empowered and

mobilized. It crosses all boundaries of culture, faith, ethnicity, ideology and political opinions to form one great heart of goodness in the consciousness of humanity. Commentators, politicians, and social scientists do often refer in passing to 'people of goodwill' but these passing comments are usually no more than that: passing comments. It is a mistake to equate people of goodwill only with activists and civil society movements; or only with local church or temple groups (important those these undoubtedly are in human development). Organized goodwill is part of it but by no means does it cover the full richness of goodwill. It ignores the diversity of levels and degrees of concentration of goodwill.

At the core of what we might call the muscle of goodwill in human affairs, as its pulsating, radiant heart, is a relatively small group of what Alice Bailey students would call disciples and initiates. They come from a diversity of spiritual traditions. Consciously or unconsciously they are in process of bridging across the planes of mind into Hierarchy yet they remain firmly anchored in their humanity and in their transparent will to serve. This esoteric group of disciples and initiates provides the energetic core of what DK refers to as the New Group of World Servers. This is that strong, muscular group of intelligent, will-oriented men and women who find their life meaning and purpose in some field of work that takes humanity forward on the path towards right relations. The 'work' of members of the group is hugely diverse covering every profession and field of activity – art, dance, religion, politics, business, science, engineering, technology and so on. There is widespread recognition of the existence of the Group, especially through the literature on Cultural Creatives following the research by sociologist Paul Ray and psychologist Sherry Ruth Anderson and Paul Hawken's magnificent 'Blessed Unrest'.

From DK's perspective, one of the primary functions of the Group of World Servers is to inspire, mobilize and organize the multitudes of people of goodwill. These multitudes include many who are centered in the mind and many more who are centered in the emotions. The distinguishing characteristic of the multitudes of people of goodwill is their basic orientation towards goodness, beauty and truth – they are the people of good character – those whose moral conscience is at least in process of waking up. These are the people in every neighborhood of the world who have a basic orientation towards goodwill even though their essential goodness may often lack focus or concentration or a strongly developed will. The multitudes of people of goodwill are more centered in getting on with their lives. Any involvement they have in progressive or humanitarian social movements will usually be peripheral to their core identity and purpose – although evolution (and the initiation of humanity) is to a great extent about the potential for their goodwill to become increasingly concentrated and central to their lives.

Can we pause for a moment to identify with the group mind of all who are meditating for world service at this time; a field of mind that is quiet, focused, and flooded with the Light of the Ashram. And then as the group of full moon meditators, reach out to link with fellow servers in

the esoteric group, with the Group of World Servers, and with all the people of goodwill in the world, in all their varying degrees of concentrated goodness as we sound together 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.*

If the comments in the book *Esoteric Astrology* are anything to go by the energies of Leo will provoke, or rather are provoking, a defining crisis in the transition into Aquarius. This is because Leo governs the sense of self, and because Aquarius is the polar opposite of Leo. A good part of the story of the development of modern consciousness is the rising Leo sense of individuality and self-assertion. But an equally important, and in the long term more significant, part of the story is the transformation of the sense of the separated self into the sense of the universal Self. It is clear that in the issues of this time in history the two aspects of Leo are facing each other – in stark contrast. Those who have a preoccupation with the needs and desires and fears of the separated self, appear to stand in opposition to those who are pre-occupied with the well-being of the whole. The tension between the two is palpable – even if the way forward, the middle way, is sometimes not so easy to discern. But what we need to remember is that Leo achieves its consummation, the peak of its spiritual potential, as ‘service to the self’ transits into ‘service to the Whole’.

One way of understanding the crisis of transition is to think in terms of a battlefield between forces of materialism and forces of light. Yet the difficulty with this image is that it draws attention to winners and losers rather than to the subtleties of the process itself and to the purification of consciousness that is taking place as the multitudes of people of goodwill are provoked to deepen their understanding of the policies and programs they believe will truly benefit all people (and not just their own ethnic group, or their own economic class, or even their own nation). This is a slow process of clarifying a sense of a possible future that will work for the benefit of all and not just a few – regardless of ideologies, marketing claims and political spin.

Ever since the end of the World War the problems of separateness: race, religion, economics, men and women, children and education have been the subject of debate, negotiation, conflict and division. Progress has been made and the quest for societies that enhance human rights and provide opportunities for the exercise of human responsibilities has moved through cycles of obvious progress together with cycles when little seems to be happening – even though the deeper transformation of consciousness has continued out of the spotlight.

And now, through the crisis of the times, the sense of self is reforming and realigning – it is not something that we might think of as taking place at one particular time, in one symbolic choice (like an election or a referendum) – but rather through a series of choices and judgements that serve to awaken the sense of a higher, more Real Self.

Part of this can be seen in debates about nationhood. There is a tendency to view all aspects of national identification as inherently separative and in opposition to a growing sense of global citizenship. But this is not necessarily the case. National conversations about identity and place in the world are a fundamental part of the maturing of a nation. Even though we think of this period as a time when globalization is the central dynamic in international affairs – the reality is that globalization forces nations to deepen their sense of self. It really challenges ideas of nationhood and national self-interest. The divided nation becomes increasingly divided under the intensity of globalization (just think of the tensions created by national debates about refugees and migration).

Leo directs our focus to the process whereby a nation becomes secure and at ease with itself – including its divisions, conflicts and tensions. Before a peoples can look out to the greater whole with a measure of freedom from fear, pride, and self-centered-ness there needs to be some stability and integration in the national psyche. A true global spirit can only emerge when nations have, at least to some degree, dealt with their glours and illusions, so that they can stand secure in who they are and freely share gifts they have to bring to the whole.

Britain's forthcoming departure from the EU can, at least in part, be seen in this light (indeed the Spiral Dynamics thinker, Don Beck has recently suggested this and discussed the idea with a group of British parliamentarians. <http://evolutionarycollective.com/conversations/cracking-the-code/>). It brings opportunities and incentive for the people of UK to re-discover national identity and a sense of place in Europe and the world. As the nation hopefully grows through this crisis into some measure of balance between soul and personality, acceptance of and learning from its history and with a realistic vision of future possibilities, Britain (if it is able to hold together through the crisis) will be in a better position to join with other strong, independent nations in Europe and the Commonwealth with a renewed purpose of deepening cooperation and service. Before the referendum the situation may have been different, but now that the vote has been cast opportunities can be seen for a transformed national identity.

The Old Commentary uses the language of symbol to speak of the transformation of self that is what Leo is all about:

The Lion begins to roar. He rushes forth and, in his urge to live, he wields destruction. And then again he roars and — rushing to the stream of life — drinks deep. Then, having drunk, the magic of the waters works. He stands transformed. The Lion disappears and he who bears the water pot stands forth and starts upon his mission.
[Destiny of the Nations, p. 146]

It is what happens following the working of the magic of the waters that we might focus our attention on. When this magic has done its purifying work, and when the Leo subject has begun to tread the reverse wheel, the process of the lion disappearing to become the one who bears the water pot is a process of fire. The quiet, background, flowing, persistence of purification by water is replaced in Leo by a burning away of all that obstructs the mind's recognition of the strong universal self. Preceding initiation, fire in Leo brings an intensification of light *and eventual revelation to the purified man who stands in light.* [Esoteric Astrology, p. 293].

One way of looking at the impact the light of Leo is having on the transformation of self and the emergence of the water bearer is to look at the Millennium generation – those born after 1980 who have come of age in the new millennium. A couple of years back there was an interesting program on NPR 'Getting Some 'Me' Time: Why millennials are so Individualistic'. The article explored the widespread view that millennials are *a class of self-centered, self-absorbed, selfie-snapping 20-somethings'* and offered some different perspectives. For example Jeffrey Jensen Arnett directs the Clark Poll of Emerging Adults. He agrees that Millennials are taking more time to become adults, often spending their 20's to find themselves and explore their options before settling down. As he says people in their 20's today are freer from social rules than they have ever been before, but this does not mean that *they're selfish.* He speaks of it as a more *self-focused time in life... I mean that they have fewer social rules and obligations – the freedom to be self-directed.* We are now seeing the second wave of the millennial generation of emerging adults, 18 – mid to late 20's. The phenomenon of this group having the freedom to explore self is becoming a feature of the age.

This development of *self-directed* individuals reflects the language used by DK in his discussion of Leo in Esoteric Astrology: *Leo is of paramount control in the life of the aspirant. He has to know himself through true self-awareness before he can know that divine spirit which is his true Self and know also his fellow-men. ... the only truly self-conscious person is the man who is aware of purpose, of a self-directed life and of a developed and definite life plan and program. Where these are present, the inference is that there is mental perception and some measure of integration.* [Esoteric Astrology, 288- 289].

Returning to the NPR story there is interesting comment about the apparent lack of political engagement amongst emerging adults. *"The reality is when you look at young people, all the data shows that young people are civic-minded in a very different way," says Erica Williams Simon, a social impact and communications strategist. "They are not as interested in politics, but are interested in social change and finding creative, innovative ways to make a difference that are in a way more effective than the systems of the past."* Jeffrey Arnett, the pollster, sums up his thinking with the thought it is *inaccurate* to call millennial emerging adults *narcissists.* He sees that they get used to making their own decisions. And this affects long-term relationships. Fifty years ago the median age for women to marry was 20 – in 2014 when this broadcast was made it was 27. As Arnett comments, for millennials it is challenging *to partner with somebody*

else and have to compromise about things. I think people will make much better choices if they have their 20s to figure it out. <http://www.npr.org/2014/10/14/352979540/getting-some-me-time-why-millennials-are-so-individualistic>

This is all very hopeful and positive from a Leo perspective. During the fifty or more years since the end of the Second World War people generally, from all parts of the world, have been becoming steadily more individualistic, building the sense of the separated self and the separated family. But at the same time as personality's have been integrating and becoming increasingly assertive a deeper sense of Self has been emerging – as is evidenced in these comments about the Millennial generation. We are witnessing a time now when the lion who roars is being balanced by the lion who is becoming the water-carrier. In public discourse the two are beginning to engage directly with each other – conversation and dialogue is becoming essential. Through our meditation work, and through the positivity of our lives, may we strengthen the emergence of the universal Self.