

Good evening and welcome to our group meditation in the sign of Leo. It is a curious fact that, concerning Leo, both the Tibetan, in *Esoteric Astrology* and Alice Bailey in *The Labours of Hercules*, refer perhaps more than usual to numerology. Is this connected with the fact that Leo is one of the three constellations which act as conduits into our solar system of the fifth ray, the ray of concrete science? Science is perhaps the most obvious activity we associate with analysing the world into numerical terms. We could suggest that there are two major motives for this analysis, one which is more spiritually inspired, the other which is more materialistic. The spiritual motive is that of a deepened understanding, and is one which we can link with numerology, which seeks to reveal the deeper symbolic meaning behind events and forms, to give us living contact with the essence which is expressing itself through them – giving us greater connection and ultimately union with all that is. This is in accord with the Soul's keynote in Leo – "I am That and That am I."

The material motive for numerical analysis is that of prediction - being able to say in advance what will be the result if certain physical forces and energies are brought into specific relationship. Closely entwined with this desire for accurate prediction is the selfish impulse of control. This can be linked with the lower aspect of selfhood that Leo can give rise to. This is the lower self, the personality, as the dramatic centre of its own little world, seeing all other forms as separate to oneself, and therefore as objects to be ruled and controlled for the benefit of the one at the centre. This attitude naturally produces fragmentation and cleavage, and is unfortunately quite evident in the politics and economics of the current era. This is in line with the Personality keynote of Leo: "Let other forms exist. I rule because I am."

Ideally, the two keynotes, and the two motives of scientific numerical analysis, should complement one another, with the predictions of the material side used as guidance for a wise and principled understanding of the policies needed to unfold the inner meaning of life and all events. This is the ultimate goal, where the organising intelligence of the lower mind is the servant of the illumined, compassionate higher mind.

Understanding the meaning of things through the symbolism of number is integral to the ageless wisdom tradition. Recognising what 1, 2, 3, and 4, or the principles of unity, duality, trinity and quaternity may mean in different contexts is central to the work, and this is brought out particularly in the astrological writings, where there are a bewildering variety of triangles and squares and stars of relationship among the signs and planets to take account of - not to mention the extra layers of complexity of the rays and the hierarchies. Yet however complex it may be, everything in this field of study is ultimately rooted in meaning, in consciousness, and in integers, which are whole, unfragmented numbers. When we step into physical science, then numbers proliferate, and also fragment, with the decimal point marking the place where we move from integers to fractions. And it's not just in physical science this occurs - the statistical analysis of human behaviour reduces the self to a series of numbers open to manipulation and misrepresentation. One of the key problems that we currently face is that humanity has become accustomed to making decisions based on aggregate numbers rather than on principles. Making decisions based on principles may be

more time-consuming, but it is ultimately more soul-nourishing, more Self-making - it encourages the sense of active responsibility for society that is the mark of true citizenship.

Let's do a small experiment in numerology, at least as it's explained and applied in the books of the Tibetan (and leaving aside questions of whether this type of analysis would work in other languages!). For those who haven't encountered this, the basic method is to take a word or sentence, and add up the numerical position of each letter, and then reduce each number to a number between one and nine, by then adding their digits together. So for example, 'I' = 9, because 'I' is the ninth letter; 'am' = 1+13 = 14 = 1+4 = 5. Using this technique, it's interesting to note that 'I' and 'me' both equal 9 when reduced, but before reduction, 'me' is first 18 - which is of course two times 9, an instance of doubling. Is there perhaps a symbolic truth hidden there, as the 'me' can be regarded as the reflection or double of the true Self, the 'I', as it is projected into the matter of the three worlds? Could we say that the ever-changing sequence of 'mes' that make up our existence in the three worlds is like a series of three dimensional 'selfies' of the unchanging 'I' of spirit?

Interestingly, when we apply this technique to the higher keynote of Leo, which is 'I am That and That am I' (9 14 49(13) 19 49 14 9 = 9 5 4 1(0) 4 5 9 = 9 9 1 9 9 = 18 1 18 = 9 1 9 = 19 = 10 = 1) we arrive at the conclusion that its numerical value is one, which echoes the shape of the capital 'I' - both of which remind us of the vertical connection with spirit, and of the Self standing at the centre. This may also remind us of Leo's role as one of the three signs which direct the first ray into our solar system, a point we will return to later.

Let's pause briefly, before we say together 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, focussed 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.

OM

As with so many esoteric concepts, the self, or perhaps better, the process of self-identification, is a complex and sometimes paradoxical one, which only resolves into

simplicity at a relatively high point of spiritual development. We can think, for example, of the sense of self as spiralling *inward*: an ‘onion self’ where we peel back the layers of identification with physical characteristics, emotional habits of mood, ways of thought, voice, nationality etc. to get to the essential self. The Tibetan comments to one of the disciples in His group:

“For you, as for so many disciples in this particular life cycle, the lesson has been to learn to move forward in spite of the activity of the pairs of opposites, paying no attention to the reactions of the senses and standing free and unafraid whether the experience being undergone is one of high import and of spiritual satisfaction, or is one of the ‘dead-level’ happenings, where nothing brings joy and where only pain, fear and suspense are to be found. You must learn to move forward steadily *between* the pairs of opposites, saying to yourself: I am not this; I am not that; eternally, I am the *Self*.” (*Discipleship* Vol.I p.664)

Recognising that this process is at different stages for all people whom we meet helps us to develop compassion. All must learn to see past the hall of mirrors which we create, not just over one lifetime, but over many, if we are to relate to each other as our true essential selves. It is only in this way that we may enter into right relationship.

Thus self-identification is an ongoing process. Once the Self has been reliably identified inwardly, through Soul contact, then the sense of Self can be expanded outwardly, recognising the Soul in all things. Hence the apparent paradox that in the earlier passage the disciple is asked to say “I am *not* this, I am *not* that”, but the key note of Leo states “I *am* That”. The latter phase represents the redemptive illumination of the “mes”, the organic, living pattern of lunar lords which embodies the ‘outer’ self in the three worlds. And as the disciple becomes increasingly identified with all that is, so this redemptive radiance expands, allowing the ‘one at the centre’ to carry an ever-widening sphere onwards and upwards in the great sweep of evolution.

Since we are focusing on the sign of the Lion, we might ask why the Lion is given the title of the King of the beasts? It seems a bit strange, since it is not obviously the most powerful animal – the elephant is clearly stronger, and even among carnivores, that other great astrological beast, the bear, is also more powerful. There is also the legend that the Lion is slain by the unicorn – it’s worth noting in this context that this is an animal that exists in the three worlds, being defeated by a mythological creature, which immediately makes us think of the spiritual realms. Is the title related to the specific virtue of courage? Again, this is not a virtue unique to lions – for example, the honey badger is renowned for being prepared to fight much larger animals when cornered, including lions. However, this is perhaps not the best way to think about the virtue of courage, and we’ll return to this thought.

Can we then say that the Lion is the ultimate expression in the animal kingdom of ‘individualising’, the isolation of a self from the mass consciousness? But wouldn’t then the tiger be more appropriate, as an equally powerful predator that is more of a loner? Although certainly the cat kingdom seems to be more generally an expression of independent self-centredness than many other animals - hence the well-known joke that “dogs have owners while cats have servants”! Perhaps the simplest explanation of “King of the Beasts” is that it doesn’t refer to lions at all, but to the human who has incorporated the

full impact of the energies of Leo, and is now the ruler of the animal part of the self through the true Self, the Soul? Certainly, the idea of kingship, of rulership, is strongly suggestive of the connection noted earlier to the first ray.

As well as the idea of Kingship or rulership, the first ray, particularly as it is expressed monadically, is also said to be the ray of the Director. It is interesting to consider that the Aquarian art form of the cinema has brought the idea of the director to prominence – a creator surrounded by a widely diverse group of others, who are all concerned with manipulating light, sound, thought and emotion to produce a group thought-form. And among those who assist in this process, the most celebrated tend to be the actors, who also display a Leonine side, for we could say that acting is the ability to ‘put on’, like a mask, different selves. This may explain why those who are able to do this convincingly are given such high material status, as it is an implicit recognition that their ‘I’ and their ‘mes’ are becoming decoupled in a sense - that the ‘I’ is definitely in charge of the ‘mes’. This is not to suggest that all actors are highly advanced spiritually, but that this facility shows that they have reached a certain stage of personality integration. And as prominent representatives of the materialistic culture of fame and celebrity, actors are examples of how a spiritual process can be darkly mirrored in the three worlds, enveloped in glamour and false perception. We could say that, on a much higher turn of the spiral, the actor’s ability to produce different personas is reflected in the Master’s ability to create a body for specific service purposes?

Expanding our scope from the individual self to the impact of Leo on humanity and the planet, and incorporating our earlier reflection on the importance of number, let’s reflect on the role of Leo within the threefold Triangle of Aries – Leo – Capricorn which expresses the First Ray in our system:

“2. *LEO*. This is the constellation through which the will-to-fulfilment or to achievement pours into humanity and on to the planet. It is essentially the spirit of self-determination. It is at first the determination of the little self, the personality, the self-conscious individual. It is next the determination of the Self, the soul, the group conscious individual, aware of the greater Whole and of itself as the part, integrated and basically at-one.

This will-to-good (achieved through fulfilment) works out in relation to the human being through the medium of three climaxes:

1. The will-to-good, demonstrated by the achieving of self-consciousness. This is the first stage of completed, divine fulfilment. It connotes body, appearance. It is the expression of the third aspect.
2. The will-to-good, demonstrated at the third initiation when self-consciousness gives place to group consciousness. This is the second stage of divine fulfilment. It connotes soul, quality. It is the expression of the second aspect.
3. The will-to-good, demonstrated in the higher initiations when God-consciousness is achieved. This is the third stage of divine fulfilment. It connotes Monad, Life. It is the expression of the first aspect.

It is useful to see these relationships. It will also be obvious why the Sun rules Leo, both exoterically and esoterically. The Sun reveals or 'lights up' the two stages of the hidden will: the physical sun, lighting up the personality upon the physical plane and the Heart of the Sun revealing the nature of the soul." (*Es. Astro.* pp.619-20)

In terms of rulership, one other significant comment that the Tibetan makes is that "Leo, in the cosmic sense (and apart from our solar system altogether) is ruled by Sirius." (*Es. Astro.* p.299) Elsewhere, He notes: "This is the great star of initiation because our Hierarchy (an expression of the second aspect of divinity) is under the supervision or spiritual magnetic control of the Hierarchy of Sirius. These are the major controlling influences whereby the cosmic Christ works upon the Christ principle in the solar system, in the planet, in man and in the lower forms of life expression. It is esoterically called the 'brilliant star of sensitivity.'" (*Es. Astro.* p.197)

Adding to this conditioning energy of sensitivity, we also have the influence of Neptune, for the Tibetan tells us that the hierarchical ruler of Leo is Neptune, veiled by the Sun. Thus we recognise the self as standing at the central point of a sensorium, a field of senses, that extends furthest through sight; and naturally, as the consciousness advances, this will come to include the subtler senses.

This presents to us a picture of the ideal king, sensitive to the needs of his subjects, brave in their defence against evil. The courage of the king is then recognised as a virtue expressed on behalf of the wider whole, as part of the ability to step into and identify with an ever-widening sense of self. The Leonine ruler stands at the centre, unmoved by environing forces, yet irradiating them with spiritual potency, and drawing them onwards and upwards. This is the destiny of the enlightened Leo, and thus the destiny of humanity. So let us turn now to bringing that destiny closer through our efforts to illumine the consciousness of humanity. Our keynote is "I am That and That am I."