

One Step at a Time on the Discipleship Path

SAGITTARIUS FESTIVAL – NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 21, 2018

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Welcome to this full moon meeting and meditation. In an esoteric world view, time is mapped by cycles. Lesser cycles circle through their rhythmic dance within greater cycles. In the process divine qualities pulse into the psychic, psychological and social environment of the kingdom of nature known as *Homo sapiens* with peaks of intensity, and periods of quiet.

Immersed as we are in time and space it can be difficult to see these cycles at work. Our brains and our eyes are trained to see little beyond events as they play out in the limited span of generations, decades or even centuries. Teachings that have stood the test of time however, remind us that humankind is, as a species, on a path towards wisdom, hence the term *homo sapiens* meaning “wise men”. As cycles coincide, they build up to peaks of initiation marking the beginning of a new chapter in the journey through time as humanity proceeds on a destiny path towards wisdom.

Full moon meditations represent a lesser cycle in the working out of this destiny path, spanning the 12 months of the year: 3 festivals setting the note for the year, followed by 9 festivals that flesh out this note with specific qualities and opportunities, shining light onto different areas of the psyche and different aspects of the bigger cycle of transition into Aquarius. But as we pay attention to the regular rhythm of these lesser cycles, we can begin to gain insight into the greater cycles, and equip ourselves to approach ideas like initiation and the Coming of the World Teacher without being caught up in the glammers that such ideas can often attract.

Shifting relationships between zodiacal beings, starry presences and the qualities of the seven Cosmic Rays’ bring their unique energies into the inner environment each full moon. They condition the steps along the way towards wisdom. Over time, these energies trigger the evolutionary development of the Self in the billions of incarnated human lives, just as they condition the long process of transforming the consciousness of the species. The monthly rhythm of meditations and meetings help the community of ageless wisdom students around the world to pay attention, inviting the intuition to reveal new layers of meaning.

Today, a day marked in the regular outer cycle of celebrations and festivals in the US, as the day before Thanksgiving, is on the esoteric calendar, the first in the five-day cycle of the Sagittarius full moon.

Sagittarian energies affect the role that objective and purpose play in the lives of individuals, nations and peoples. It is all about orientation. The subtle energies pouring into humanity send a quiet background electrical charge into our sense of where we are heading. True idealism, in other words ideals that bring inspiration *from on high*, can be stimulated by these energies. We are invited to pay attention to the quality of *persevering devotion* during the Sagittarian full

moon. Because of the relationships and alignments that take place during this full moon, we can expect intuition to be enlivened. And we are offered a vision of the disciple moving steadily forward *upon the plains of the Earth*.

Sagittarian impulses bring with them a certain steadiness for those on the Path. Spiritual heights and depths fade out, replaced by a sense of slow, regular movement between the pairs of opposites. While this is all about purpose, it is not the purpose that arises out of an intense, passionate vision of a new goal. That can be a short, often over-stimulating focus that quickly burns itself out, often leaving a sense of failure and depression. The quality of purpose Sagittarius brings to the disciple is more about the plodding general orientation of the life. The Archer learns to stand poised, feet on the ground, free from distraction; eyes on the next step ahead. The keynote for meditation, summarizing the opportunities for the disciple is *I see the goal, I reach that goal, and then I see another*. That's a very practical image. In common parlance it seems to be saying one step at a time. Don't get lost in the far-off vision; or frightened by the apparent immensity of the transformation the personality needs to go through on the discipleship path or humanity needs to go through in the transition into right relations or a sustainable equitable global civilization. One goal at a time.

Let's pause for a moment as we ponder the keynote. Remember that through this pondering we are seeking to evoke an intuitive sensibility about life and all events; seeking to enter the livingness of the Sagittarian energy and to grow in understanding of what this combination of energies means for disciples in the world now, and what it means for the Group of World Servers.

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.*

We seem to be passing through a dangerous time in the world. Things that may have appeared to be stable now look to be uncertain. Nations that until quite recently thought themselves to be on a trajectory towards a more egalitarian Aquarian future are in turmoil. Cooperation between nations is suffering in response to the increasing tide of refugees that is bringing chaos

into regular, normal migration patterns . Elemental forces of separation have burst forth into public discourse, and too often, it seems, these are met by doctrinaire, simplistic often sentimental views of liberty, equality and fraternity, from the traditional left and the right, representing the glamour's of Aquarius. So, we have increasingly polarized public spaces, dominated by angry frustrated voices and shouted slogans.

It feels like a very Scorpic environment – where thinking people of goodwill are being tested and pushed to extremes; confronted by their own hydras. It is as if the modern story of an evolving global consensus around the values of cooperation and multilateral action is being held to the fire to see how real and deep that consensus is. Clearly humanity is not as far on the road towards interdependence and wholeness as it may have appeared from the triumphs of 2016 when the Sustainable Development Goals were proclaimed by the nations of the world, in a special session of the UN General Assembly, preceded by the high ritual of an address by Pope Francis. And as a further boost to the sense of future possibilities 2016 also saw, on the international stage, the dramatic and hopeful conclusions of the Paris Climate accord. Yet all was not well. The climate agreement was preceded by the violent attacks by separatist religious fanatics in Paris. And earlier in that year Britain voted to leave the EU, and the US voted in significant numbers to replace the global vision of interdependence with a new emphasis concentrating solely on national interests.

All of this has produced something like a shock wave through the Group of World Servers, around the world. It has taken time to adjust; time to let the dust settle. So that the Group of World Servers might be envisaged as entering Sagittarius this year, a little scarred and fatigued but with a new, healthy realism. Those who find their life meaning and purpose shaped by a vision of the Plan are now in a much better position to manage the glammers and superficialities of Aquarius and direct their energies more fully into the shaping of cultures aligned with the Aquarian soul. Servers now are called to go beyond the simplistic slogans of unity in diversity or wholeness to find the living essence of these slogans. This is a time to explore what works. What truly advances the cause of sharing and allows polarized communities to work together for the common good. Goodwill is flourishing in this environment. It is even more important for those who seek to observe the world with a trained esoteric eye to shine a light on these expressions of goodwill and learn from them.

So, it might be useful to look at the Group of World Servers through a Sagittarian lens. Drop the focus on the hydras and try to discern what is happening to the archer who releases one arrow at a time. Amidst the changeability and fluidity of the mutable cross, what signs do we see of a more stable and solid idealism emerging? How is the intuition revealing the presence of the sacred? Where is cooperation emerging as a tool for building a better world?

The UN's Marco Toscano-Rivalta addressed this during his talk at the World Goodwill seminar here in New York a week-and-a-half ago. He was reflecting on signs of movement in the will to cooperate and harmonize our actions for the common good. What happens at the scale of relations between governments, reflects what happens at the scale of relations within a

country; within a community and in our own individual lives. The story of the development of right relations in the critical decades following the second world war can be usefully viewed as the story of the care and attention human beings are willing to give to develop the cooperative muscle. Viewing human consciousness as a field, Marco noted that more attention tends to be given to cooperation at the international level than it is at the individual and small community level. This suggests that we might usefully look for Sagittarian persistence in realms like education for cooperation, the psychology of cooperation, the practice of cooperation between organizations and organisms, between religions, esoteric groups and so on. There are efforts to develop genuine co-operation between different partners, and these deserve our attention.

Marco reminded us that the UN Charter represents a *fundamental turning point in the history of humanity* because, for the first time, it introduced the concept of international cooperation for development. *We the peoples have undertaken to care for the development of the planet. We have agreed on it.* This agreement was a sign of an emerging common human will; a sign of *the liveliness of humanity*.

The Charter has been around 73 years. It is *73 years young* in Marco's words. In human history 73 years is like the blink of an eye, its nothing. We are only beginning to come to terms with what this means for us – especially what it means for us as individuals – to care about the development of the planet and of relationships within the planet. Referring to developments in international law, the greatly expanded number of governments making up the United Nations, and the staggering increase in the numbers of people, organizations and associations working to develop a better world, Marco referred to the past 73 years at the UN as evidence of a *massive explosion of the will*; culminating in the unprecedented level of engagement around the world with the Sustainable Development Goals. This is Sagittarius. Nations and individuals are orienting themselves towards cooperating with others for the common good – and doing so in a quite scientific way – with concrete goals to achieve by 2030, for example. The muscle of cooperation for the common good is developing because of the attention and care that is being given to it by individuals, groups, professional bodies and nations.

Marco also referred to this time as one of those special moments in history when our view of the world, and of what is possible in the world, changes. Such moments do not happen often, and when they do they must be taken seriously. The difficulties facing cooperation are being highlighted by governments and individuals. These difficulties challenge those who value cooperation to approach this period through the eyes of the disciple: in order to find the wells of goodwill that feed cooperation it is necessary to dig deeper. These wells exist within communities around the world. Just as they burst out naturally in times of disaster; they can also be tapped in the most difficult of political circumstances – and this is the work that the Group of Servers is currently undertaking.

So that, to my mind is one lens through which to look at the service network. Another perspective comes from a recent article by Otto Scharmer of the Presencing Institute: *Axial Shift*. <https://www.presencing.org/#/transforming-capitalism-lab/stories/axial-shift> He writes

of an axial shift away from what has historically been a divide between the left and the right in politics and between government initiatives versus the free market in economics towards a new cultural and spiritual divide between what he refers to as open and closed consciousness. The upsurge of a closed mind-set on the national and global stage challenges open-mindedness and open-heartedness – forcing a tremendous growth spurt in this new open level of awareness; and causing a great amount of care, love and will to be invested in the task of building more open-minded societies, professions, economies and so on. At the same time, on the international level, Sharma suggests that the challenges posed by resurgent nationalism is fueling a new spirit of entrepreneurship, creativity and grounded experimentation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

That section of the esoteric community working with the vision of future possibilities presented in the Alice Bailey teachings is also challenged by the current situation. The difficulties of this present period can be used to force us, as a community, to deepen our understanding of the teaching on the Coming One; and what it means to prepare for that possibility. It is in difficult times, when the idea of the coming one seems as far from public consciousness as it has ever been that we are challenged to dig deep in pondering that possibility. It needs to be looked at with a fresh spirit, so that it can be built into our living orientation towards the world.

Part of this can be thought of as the need to shine the light of the soul onto the glamour's associated with this possibility. After all history is littered with examples of groups inspired by a fantasy of the Coming One – examples in Christianity are well known, but similar examples can be found in most if not all the world's religions and spiritualities. Yet after dogmas and doctrines and idealistic dreams are dispensed with, there is a core truth of a World Teacher who will bring the Heavenly Reality into incarnation for a new time, bringing a sacred livingness and enchantment that lifts peoples and nations into a new idealism.

To prepare for this is to be rightly oriented to the will that is now emerging in humanity to create living relationships of sharing and cooperation. This will is the sign that the Teacher Who will inaugurate and mark the beginning of the Age of Interdependence is coming; that Teacher's group of disciples is digging in and preparing the grounds for His coming. We can train ourselves to see this process without concerning ourselves about the when or the where or the how ... this is not our responsibility. Our task is to see the preparation underway; to be alive to the possibility; and to hold the thought of imminence – noting the Hierarchical Conclave in 2025, and noting the widespread time-scale established by the SDGs while still recognizing that our task is not to fix dates or places to the reappearance.

The keynote for our meditation in Sagittarius is *I see the goal, I reach that goal, and then I see another*. As humanity moves steadily forward, one step at a time, with persevering devotion, on the path towards becoming World Disciple ... so are the circumstances created making the Reappearance inevitable.