

Second Gemini Full Moon, 2016

I recognise my other self and in the waning of that self I grow and glow

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Friends, welcome to you all here in the Lucis Trust Library for our Gemini full moon meditation meeting this afternoon. And welcome also to all of you who are joining us over the internet. We appreciate your participation in this service to humanity and the planet. Although physically we are in many different locations all around the world, on the level of the soul, of the lighted mind, and of the giving heart we are one in intention, one in love and one in service. This afternoon we are holding a relatively rare meeting when the full moon occurs in an astrological sign for a second time in a month. We have already had one Gemini meeting almost a month ago at the time of the Arcane School Conference, and now we have the privilege of working with the Gemini energies once more and releasing them constructively into human consciousness.

In her book, *Problems of Humanity*, Alice Bailey wrote: “The revelation of the nature of God has been a slow unfolding process, paralleled by the evolutionary growth of the human consciousness. It is not for us to define or limit it with our concrete thinking but to prepare for it, to unfold our intuitive perception and to live in expectation of the revealing light.” It seems to me to be a good idea to explore some of the implications of this idea before we go into our meditation, for we can be sure that this will give us a sense not only of the unfoldment of the spirituality that lies at the heart of human evolution, but also a quiet conviction of optimism and hope for the future.

We are all familiar with the impact of soul energy in our personal and group lives. From an individual point of view, there is first of all the touch of appropriation when the soul is able to begin to assert control over the physical/etheric body. This happens to us relatively soon after birth as we learn to coordinate the physical form.

Then there is the touch of acquiescence when the emotional nature comes under the impact of soul energy. This occurs for many people at the time of adolescence when the mood swings of a rampant astral nature can seriously disturb the consciousness of the maturing child. But these can often be tempered by the apparently spontaneous experience of the soul and this accounts in large measure for the mystical tendencies that many experience at this stage of life. One is reminded here of the keynote for Gemini for the person not yet on the path “Let instability do its work”. What a perfect description of adolescence this is! And what a perfect description, from the mystical point of view of the adult beginning to emerge from the chrysalis of adolescence, is the first part of the Gemini keynote for the disciple: “I recognise my other self”. For the mystic, the ‘other self’ is the soul of course. And the literature from every part of the world and over all time contains the most beautiful and inspiring descriptions of this core spiritual experience of the human condition. But when we leave childish and adolescent things behind we come to a new understanding of the Gemini influence. We learn to look at everything from the vantage point of the soul and come to understand that the ‘other self’ referred to is actually the personality. And this is what the keynote for the disciple in Gemini is all about. ‘I recognise my other self, and in the waning of that self I grow and glow.’

Next there is the touch of enlightenment on the mental plane. It marks the period when the active, roaming, questioning, doubting, experimenting mind ceases to be governed by the quality of mobility – or the guna of rajas – and comes under the influence of sattva, or the quality of spiritual poise and rhythm. The mind then learns to stop being the slayer of the real and become instead the revealer of the real. We will come back to this later.

But let us now make time for a moment of silence and then we will say 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.

These personal episodes of the soul taking possession of its vehicles are reflections of what has happened to humanity over the long course of its history, esoterically understood. What we call the Lemurian period, when a human being was simply a material form with only embryonic emotions and a complete absence of the quality of rational thought, saw the touch of appropriation by the soul. Atlantean times marked the period when the emotional nature started to become developed and rampant, but eventually subservient to the soul among the leading members of humanity. Desire gave way to aspiration and the yoga of devotion – bhakti yoga – became widely practised. This yoga actually still forms the basis of the popular religious life of humanity. And we now see it existing in a variety of forms and in varying degrees in the major world religions. And then we come to our own time, our present age which is predominantly one of the development of the mental faculties, the ability to think, to discriminate, to analyse and so on.

Now we all know that life is cyclic and that the gains of one life, or perhaps a succession of lives, are recapitulated in moments of challenge, of illumination, of discovery and insight. Even the development of the human embryo records the different stages in the evolution of the human form, from a single cell organism, through a fish like stage with gills, through a period with a tail, until the modern human form begins to take shape.

So we should be on the lookout for episodes in the life of humanity which are in the nature of recapitulations or perhaps better, recognitions, of past experiences and achievements. With this in mind let us consider an extraordinary event that took place over the course of several hundred years in the middle of the 1st millennium BC. Somehow the collective mind and heart of humanity must have been ready for the processes of appropriation by the soul, for all over the

then known world movements and individuals appeared in a striking parallel development without any obvious direct cultural contact. The work of these great people and movements revolutionised humanity's awareness of itself, gave insights into our true spiritual nature and anchored new spiritual values for us all to live by and help create a happier and better world. The German psychiatrist and philosopher, Karl Jaspers coined the term "axial age" for this striking phenomenon, for it was a truly pivotal age. He points out that in these few hundred years: "Confucius and Lao-Tse were living in China, all the schools of Chinese philosophy came into being...; India produced the Upanishads and Buddha and, like China, ran the whole gamut of philosophical possibilities down to materialism, scepticism and nihilism; in Iran Zarathustra taught a challenging view of the world as a struggle between good and evil; in Palestine the prophets made their appearance from Elijah by way of Isaiah and Jeremiah to Deutero-Isaiah; Greece witnessed the appearance of Homer, of the philosophers – Parmenides, Heraclitus and Plato, – of the tragedians, of Thucydides and Archimedes. Everything implied by these names developed during these few centuries almost simultaneously in China, India and the West."

Is it possible that we can also see in this a recapitulation, an outer rediscovery of humanity's past achievements made in the night of time long before the records of exoteric history began?

It is also important to recognise that these great people didn't just emerge into vacuum. The ground work had already done by countless others unknown to us, who had collectively created the right conditions for a series of stupendous achievements in the life of humanity. Indeed, in her biography of the Buddha Karen Armstrong describes how so many people in 5th century BC northern India were renouncing normal life for the quest for enlightenment that they almost became a fifth caste. So these great people emerged because the condition of real ferment within human consciousness had prepared the way and evoked them. It is a lesson to us all that our individual striving is important. "Attain and conquer. You do not conquer for yourself; your victory is important for the General Good," says Agni Yoga. And as Isaac Newton so tellingly remarked in his letter to Robert Hooke in the 17th century: "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants." Here we see writ large the priceless value of group aspiration, group discovery, and group sacrifice. We see how the evolutionary growth of human consciousness has again and again inevitably evoked progressive revelations about the nature of truth, of God.

It is interesting to note – and more than in passing, as we shall see – that into this world of ferment, of religious quest, of deep philosophising, of scientific discovery later emerged the Christ, whose simple, inspiring life and works have conditioned subsequent history in a remarkable way. Of course his message has been often misinterpreted and misunderstood by even his most devoted followers. Sometimes it was even hijacked by those who did indeed understand but who preferred selfish temporal power to the general uplift of humanity.

Now the exciting thing is that all the signs tell us that in our own time we are actually living through a new axial age. In fact the economist, David Korten, has called our present time the Turning Point. There is everywhere the same ferment, the same quest for discovery, the same yearning for truth, the same almost desperate search for meaning. Simultaneously of course there is a resolute hanging on to the status quo, a denial of the need for deep change, a search for truth misdirected into old understandings and mythologies which have passed their sell-by date, rather than risking the new which beckons us all every day. One is at times reminded of W H Auden's despairing phrase "We would rather be ruined than changed." Fortunately this view is countered by the irrefutable facts of change everywhere in the world. Let us look at some of them now.

Perhaps among the most important is the emancipation and empowerment of women. While this is still definitely unfinished business, it is nevertheless remarkable what has been achieved over the past century. Women now have the vote and can stand for elected office in almost every country in the world. The international community is insistent that women's education and empowerment is key to solving the problems of poverty and violence. The millennium development goals and the new sustainable development goals put a great focus on this. Sometimes it is difficult to grasp in the abstract the impact that these policies can have. So particular examples are fruitful for the imagination and can incentivise further action. Here is one. The United Nations proclaimed the year 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives. To mark this, the Cooperative Movement here in Britain held a celebration meeting in the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre in Westminster. The head of Oxfam UK gave a talk in which she described how field workers would come across individuals or groups who had an idea for some business initiative which required a small micro-credit loan to get going. In her own case she was working in the Horn of Africa and came across a village where three women were wanting to start a bee-keeping business to earn money so that they could afford to send their children to school. She arranged for a small loan from the Cooperative Bank – something in the region of perhaps £150, I don't remember the exact figure – and set the project going. Two years later she was again in that part of Africa and decided to visit the village to see how the project was going. To her delight, the project was working well. The loan was being repaid, the bees were producing plenty of honey, and the children, dressed in their nice uniforms, were going to school. So she sat down with the women and asked what they had learnt from this experience. "We learnt that if we could do this, we could do anything," was the response. "And what other things have you done?" they were asked. The women replied, with the nodding approval of the men gathered around, that the first thing they did was to stop all female genital mutilation. What an extraordinary story! For an investment of about £150, several children were going to school who otherwise wouldn't have, and a barbaric primitive practise was stopped. Not only that, but the experience must have filtered out into the surrounding communities and probably helped lead to transformation there too.

The second example of major and irreversible change in the world is how everywhere people are learning to think for themselves. Education is now almost universal, and concentrating the mind is everywhere practised. A business entrepreneur, a teacher, a musician, a medical researcher, an agronomist are all exponents of this. We are often told in spiritual writings that the power of the focussed mind is extraordinary, yet more often than not the evidence for this seems to come from the outer world. An example of this is the experience of Sir John Sulston who most famously headed the Human Genome Project at Cambridge. Earlier as a PhD student, his work on the nematode worm *Caenorhabditis elegans* required him to observe the pattern of cell division under the microscope. For hours at a time, and day after day he would shut himself in a semi-darkened room and just concentrate on what was happening under the microscope and drawing what he saw – total concentration in fact. The inevitable happened, beautifully delineated by Patanjali in *The Light of the Soul* where the knower, the act of knowing and the object of knowledge become one. He became the cell he was watching, he divided when the cell divided, he could see where all the pieces fitted because he was totally identified as the cell – a truly spiritual experience.

This brings us to acknowledge the general quality of integrity in the world of science and of the fearlessness of those who will go wherever experimental truth leads them. And how much, how much has the world scientific group done to make life better for humanity. Christ fed the 5,000 in the wilderness, but science, wisely used, can feed a world population of 9 billion. Christ healed the sick, we are told. Yet science has eliminated smallpox from the face of the earth and is about to do the same for polio which only exists now in small pockets in Afghanistan and Pakistan. One is reminded of Christ's statement: "Greater things will you do than I do, because I go to the father."

This brings us to the third area of irreversible change. It is the result of the application of critical thinking to the world of religion and is a crucially important feature of our present time. The concentration is upon the form of religion, and inevitably all the old certainties, power structures and superstitions are disintegrating under the impact of the light of reason. For people who have invested their security in these certainties, this is a very uncomfortable experience, for they are having to face the fact that the theological history of humanity – with notable exceptions – has made the enfolding unity of being which we call God a projection of our own very flawed image, rather than the other way round. But all this is being thankfully destroyed. Referring back to our earlier comment about the guna of rajas governing the mental processes. Are we not seeing here a perfect example of this as the concrete mind, the intellect, comes under the illusory belief that the material reality is the only one, that life is an accidental collocation of atoms, that before birth we are not, that after death we also are not for consciousness is caused by brain activity. Consequently the atheist members of the scientific community who are spearheading this work truly embody Alice Bailey's description of them as "repudiating violently the unproven". Much that is of value of deep symbolism is temporarily being rejected. But from a detached point of view, we can see that the ground is being prepared for something new and better to take its place. One of the many signs of this is the prime place of ethics in the new atheism as these pioneers tread a path to a new understanding of truth and morality, ever of course one of the hallmarks of the soul.

The fourth and perhaps the most important area of change is in humanity's perception of itself and the world. People everywhere now know that humanity is one, that the world is one. And we know this from the world of biology and DNA, from the world of paleo-archaeology, from the world of linguistics, from the world of light based digital technology, from the world of the arts, from the world of business and commerce, from the world of comparative religion, from the world of philosophy, and last but not least from the science of esotericism. All these magnificently transcend the silly little boundaries erected by the fear motivated aspects of the human personality.

All these changes, upheavals and advances are now combining into the new axial age and present a powerful invocative opportunity for a new spiritual dispensation. Into this world will emerge – actually, is already emerging – the spirit of the Christ, remembering that the Christ, the soul, is the central reality of every human being. We talk about the festival of Gemini as being both the Christ's own festival and the festival of humanity (celebrated 21 May 2016). Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that Christ as the God-man not only is the archetype of all humanity, but in a deep sense he *is* humanity. Here it is so important not try to define or limit this mystery with our

concrete thinking but to prepare for it, to unfold our intuitive perception and to live in expectation of the revealing light. More prosaically, we need to expect the unexpected.

What attitude should we cultivate to help us in this? What can we do to help offset the false materialism of our time and allow the soul to flower? Here is what the Tibetan suggests. We should be ready for the instant relinquishing of all that seems futile and unnecessary and inadequate to the need of the hour, and for the reception of the power from on high which breaks and destroys that which has become crystallised, which has served its purpose and become old and useless; we should be ready to work as practical occultists (and not only as a mystical idealists) upon the levels of vision as well as upon the levels of practical human affairs.

So with these words firmly in our minds let us now go into our meditation.