



Virgo Festival

London, 9 September 2022

*I am the Mother and the Child, I, God, I,
Matter, am*

Simon Marlow

Friends, a warm welcome to our Virgo full moon group meditation this evening here in the Lucis Trust library in London. And a very warm welcome to all of you out there in cyberspace too. It is lovely to report that we are noticing increasing numbers of people from various parts of the world tuning in and contributing to both phases of this planetary service, the full moon and the new moon cycle. It is wonderful to see so many of you committing yourselves to participate in this work. Of course, we have always known that it has been of a planetary dimension, but now it is truly and demonstrably so in the minds and hearts of so many.

And how important it is to have this perspective. We are living in a time when there is increasing tension between those of us who know that all humanity is One – that we are collectively the planetary centre of spiritual creativity – and those who see their particular identities of nationalism, of culture or religion as predominantly important in their lives and as such separate and superior to all others. They cannot or will not see themselves and their political and cultural identity as seamless parts of the fabric of the whole and to which they can give a meaningful and beautiful contribution. So, on the one hand there are those of us who have a united vision of the world and of humanity's loving, cooperative and destined path into a shared future with its crucial role in the planetary life. On the other hand, there are those who still inhabit the old paradigm of personality competition and embody what has memorably been called the "jack principle" – as long as I am alright Jack, it doesn't matter what happens to the rest!

From a truer and more spiritual perspective, we know that humanity is gradually becoming the planetary light-bearer bringing spiritual energy to all life forms, in particular to what are often referred to as the lower kingdoms in nature. Increasingly, I think that it is surely better to refer to these as the pre-human kingdoms. It has been poetically pointed out that "God sleeps in the mineral, dreams in the vegetable, stirs in the animal and awakens in man". The Tibetan puts it another way: "May I remind you of the occult statement that every living being or manifested life – from the planetary Logos down to the tiniest atom – either has been, is, or will be a human being." This reveals to us two things. Firstly, that we know we have an essential identity with the life within all forms, from the microscopic to the macrocosmic. It reveals the principle of universality. This thought is staggering in its implications. It introduces us to the reality of ourselves as intrinsically a part of the One Self that lives in each and all. Secondly and consequent to this is the recognition of the never-ending path for us as human monads that stretches forward into the infinity of love, once consciousness has fully experienced and absorbed the whole gamut of what human life has to offer. This ranges all the way

from the extreme selfishness and cruelty of the utterly self-centred person to the selfless sacrificial love in the life of a world saviour. And of course it encompasses all the gradations that lie in between.

We are now at the stage of identifying ourselves with all those who know that they are passing that major tipping point in the evolution of consciousness when they are rejecting their previously held identification with the form and are coming rapidly to realising their true identification as the soul itself – in the form but not of the form, as the saying goes – non-separative, loving, healing, wanting the best for everyone, and deeply committed to a life of group service.

So now let us pause for a moment of recollection and of alignment as souls with the Divine Plan for our world and for all the myriad of lives of the different evolutions – seen and unseen – that are upon their chosen paths of development within it. Then we will say together the words of the mantram that many of us use as a noontime recollection and which are now about to appear on your screen. But before we do so, I would like to share with you what the Tibetan says about this mantram which is really inspiring. He writes that: "It is the thought of the free circulation of energy between the three world centres – Shamballa, Hierarchy and Humanity – which motivates this mantric sentence." And he adds that "a study of this will show you how the implication and significance of apparently simple words may be far deeper and far more wide-reaching in effect than you have been able to conceive. A recognition of this and a creative impassioned use of the imagination may serve to add greater potency to your thought and to your personal will-to-good as you use the Great Invocation and this subsidiary mantram. The keynote of the first aspect is Sacrifice, and of the second, Love. The words therefore 'that we too may love and give' can produce a contact between the two." So let us now make our pause:

We know, O Lord of Life and Love, about the need;

Touch our hearts anew with love, that we too may love and give.

I would like to stress the phrase the Tibetan uses – 'a creative impassioned use of the imagination'. In these difficult times, we all need to strive our utmost to help magnetise the vision of the better future that can come to birth now if all disciples, all aspirants and all people of goodwill play their part "with stern resolve" as the Esoteric Catechism puts it, and we should also add, with a joyful enthusiasm. Never before has a vision of realistically possible and good future for all life on the planet been more necessary. For our encouragement we can know that the abstract ideas for this have already been precipitated into concrete thoughtforms which are ready to materialise in the world through the sacrificial work of groups around the world. What we can do as meditating groups is to help make these thoughtforms really desirable to people in their millions and help set their hearts on fire with love and a deep longing for that better future.

We are helped in this with the gifts that the constellation, Virgo, gives us at this time of the year. The Tibetan writes that among other things Virgo represents the stage of quickening in the womb when the foetus becomes at last possessed by the overshadowing soul. And this symbolically marks the stage of Probation or Awakening, of the baby leaping in the womb, so beautifully described in the New Testament story

of what happened to Elizabeth who was carrying the future John the Baptist when Mary went to visit her.

Everywhere people around the world are now becoming spiritually alive. They are, as it were, leaping in the womb of the form world preparing to precipitate their birth as souls. They are struggling against the restrictions of the old worn out civilisation of cut-throat competition, of a world of business as usual with its win-lose model based upon a philosophy of scarcity, of a world permeated by ideological conflict, which instead of leading humanity forward into a new synthesis, has been mishandled and has instead led to large-scale human impoverishment as well as the degradation of the biosphere. This ideological conflict has had a necessary and important part to play in human progress, for it has led to the development of the ability to discriminate, to think through, to understand and implement values. But it must now be discarded and make way for a new paradigm of co-operation which is assuredly a central part of the vision of a better future.

One of the seed thoughts in their meditation that students in the Arcane School use is: "Each life crisis can lead to extended vision or to a separating wall". And one student from eastern Europe, perhaps responding to this, wrote as follows about humanity, "But the powerful contrasts at work now will bring a wave of change that will create a good or bad place. It depends on who has a stronger imagination."

This beautifully highlights the fact that serious crises are facing humanity in our present time. There are basically two ways to respond to these that are challenging us to the core of our being. The first leads is to an extended vision – more to say about this in a moment. The second leads us all to a separating wall. And how interesting to note the selfish, fear-driven propensity to erect these separating walls that has existed since the end of the 2nd World War. The most obvious was the iron curtain between the Soviet communist bloc and the democratic and capitalist West. Only a few years later another barrier came into being roughly on the 38th parallel that divided and still divides North and South Korea. Nearer our own time we continue to witness the building of walls, for example to separate the state of Israel from the surrounding Palestinian lands.

We all know that those who build separating walls have eventually to demolish them. And at this time following the recent death of that great world server, Mikhail Gorbachev, we can see both the necessity and the pain that was involved in removing the iron curtain, for which he and his small group were such a political catalyst. And we also note with gratitude the growth of freedoms and good relationships that initially eventuated from it. And yet there seems still a great appetite to continue to build walls.

As Pope Francis said a few years ago in response to President Trump's avowed intent to build a wall between the US and Mexico: "*Societies should build bridges – not walls – to encourage good relations among people.*" He amplified this later on a papal visit to Morocco: "*In the dialogue here in Morocco we saw that we need bridges, and we feel pain when we see persons that prefer to build walls. Why do we have pain? Because those that build walls end up being prisoners of the walls that they have built. On the other hand, those who build bridges go forward....To build bridges is for me something that almost goes beyond the human, it needs very great efforts.*"

Yes indeed this is true. But as the book *Agni Yoga* expresses it (§ 393): *"There can be no obstacle that cannot be overcome by the human will. I do not say this as a consolation, or for encouragement, but as a thing immutable."*

This bears out humanity's present need not just for goodwill, essential though this is, but for the Will-to-Good and that which ought to be. This is where the "extended vision" is leading us. Disciples of the world have a crucial part to play as they use their unfolding love nature as a springboard to touch and express that mysterious energy which we call the Will.

The Tibetan tells us that, *"the secret of the will lies in the recognition of the divine nature of man. Only this can evoke the true expression of the will. It has in fact to be evoked by the soul, as it dominates the human mind and controls the personality. The secret of the will is also closely tied in with the recognition of the unconquerable nature of goodness and the inevitability of the ultimate triumph of good."*

This Will force is ... available for right usage, but the power to express it lies in its understanding ... and in its group use."

It seems to me that one of the ways in which the spiritual Will is finding expression in the life of humanity at the moment is in the efforts of many groups to promote and materialise the principle of sharing. In this respect it is interesting to note that the cycle now being inaugurated in the world has been called "Growth through Sharing". For the increasing number of disciples within advanced humanity this means that they can now share the work, the responsibility, as well as what the Tibetan calls the "trained reticence" of the Hierarchy.

It might be an idea to briefly try and understand what this work really means for us. Necessarily there will be major aspects of the work of Hierarchy that we have not the faintest idea about and obviously cannot share in. But aspects of it that we can realistically and usefully participate in will surely involve the intuition and transmission of the ideas whose source is the Divine Plan and whose precipitation into the chaos and conflicting energies that characterise the mind of humanity at the present time is of such great importance. In this way a steady stream of light is brought into the areas of darkness on the lower mental planes that are obstructing human progress right now. And it almost goes without saying that a major occupation of Hierarchy is to maintain the steady radiance of love as a beacon of attractive and magnetic energy. We too can be a part of this. It is this that calls to human beings everywhere summoning them through freedom to tread the path into consciousness of the Soul with its results of cooperation and right relationships.

At the same time as this, the mass of so-called ordinary people are learning the lessons of economic sharing. "And, my brothers", says the Tibetan, "in this lies the sole hope of the world." (Alice Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age II* 317)

This is actually an extraordinary statement. It suggests basically that if we cannot steer humanity in the direction of a new economics of sharing that serves the needs and aspirations of all humanity with a healthy sufficiency and not profligate excesses, that nurtures the One Life in its many forms, then we are scuppered. If we look at the field of economics we find that there is a profound division between those who see in money

the precipitation of planetary prana that can facilitate the flow of the necessities of life to every part of the body of humanity. They see money as occupying an analogous position to the blood which carries life-giving oxygen to every part of the body with a free flow of abundance. In this view money is the means of loving distribution and a spiritual asset to the developing life of humanity.

In contrast to this is its selfish hoarding by the rich – whether it's by the mega corporations whose wealth exceeds some countries annual budgets or the world's oligarchs and billionaires, more than 2700 of them – and a paralleling condition of extreme want in many of the world's population. We all know that this condition of mal-distribution must end. But we might well ask, how on earth do we turn this global financial juggernaut around, when so many of the rich and powerful have so much of a vested interest in its continuance, despite the fact that they must know that continuance on this path will eventually end in serious tears for everyone.

Here it is useful to remember a book that came out about a decade ago called "*The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*" by Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson. This book highlights the "pernicious effects that inequality has on societies: eroding trust, increasing anxiety and illness, (and) encouraging excessive consumption". It shows that for each of eleven different health and social problems: physical health, mental health, drug abuse, education, imprisonment, obesity, social mobility, trust and community life, violence, teenage pregnancies, and child well-being, outcomes are significantly worse in more unequal rich countries. Conversely in societies where there is greater equality these indicators of social malaise correspondingly decrease.

This is where the collective and "impassioned" use of the imagination that we referred to earlier is so important. And it is wonderful to be able to say that even a brief survey of the internet and social media will reveal so many groups coming up with new and interesting ideas about the economics of sharing, or resurrecting old ones that were never tried properly, or which were suppressed when they were tried and proved successful, such as happened to the early versions of the various local currency schemes in the late 19th century.

One imagines that conventional economics is inextricably bound up with an enthusiasm for competition, so it is heart-warming to find a mainstream economist like Jeffrey Sachs saying recently in a conversation with the Prague Finance institute: "I believe that our environmental and social crises are so severe that we need cooperation right now above all of the differences that we might suppose to divide the world."

So here we actually are arriving at two visions. One is of a dystopian future, of the sort prefigured in George Orwell's 1984 and Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World". The other is a vision where people wake up to the finality of the crises humanity is facing and take the upward path into a better and sustainable future. Together humanity can do it, I believe.

These crises are rather like the muscles of a mother's womb in the birth process contracting inexorably, and not relaxing in between the contractions. Without these contractions the baby would not be born. Similarly these world crises are forcing the

birth of the human soul. They are inexorably contracting around the consciousness of humanity. If humanity cooperates in the process, and there is wonderful evidence of this happening in thinking and practical experiments all around the world, then the outcome is likely to be well, and the human soul will be born.

Let us remind ourselves what that Arcane school student wrote that I referred to earlier. "But the powerful contrasts at work now will bring a wave of change that will create a good or bad place. It depends on who has a stronger imagination."

So let us now go into our meditation, and because we are doing this as part of a serving soul-inspired world group, let us make our imagination beautiful and strong and help the good to prevail.