

Sagittarius – The Sign of Silence

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We are in the midst of the full moon energies of Sagittarius, the sign of one-pointed mental focus, and known as the ‘sign of silence’. It is through mental focus and the right use of thought that there comes restraint of speech and consequent harmlessness on the physical plane. When this is considered in the light of the general thought-life of humanity we can begin to see the extent of our problem. The mental world of the majority consists of much judgmental and critical thought which is often fuelled by a constant stream of negative media, leading to much harmful speech. Judgmental attitudes come about due to the crystallization of thought, which happens when beliefs are accepted without much questioning and when there is considerable emotional attachment to them. The average viewpoint is further crystallised when beliefs are reinforced by certain powerful sections of the community, such as business leaders, governments, class systems or religious traditions, whose interests are bound up with the maintenance of the established order and the ideas on which it rests.¹

As we all know, it is difficult to change preconceived ideas and opinions, established beliefs and habitual responses. The mind is naturally quite lazy and new ideas which challenge deeply ingrained thoughtforms require a rearrangement of the mind, a process that uses considerable brain power and energy. Sticking to entrenched beliefs to which there is much emotional attachment is therefore the easier option to which the majority conform. It is this inherent laziness of the mind and its tendency to crystallize that was the concern of the great philosopher Socrates. He sought to counter this in those he met through encouraging debate and he taught those with whom he conversed to bring all popular beliefs before the bar of reason, to approach every inquiry with an open mind, and not to judge by the opinion of the majority or the dictates of authority. He inspired debate by urging people to break down a problem into a series of questions to bring about greater understanding of the problem - the Socratic Method as it is known today. He saw debate as providing a forum for the dismantling of concrete thought, reducing ignorance and encouraging a pursuit of wisdom.

Debate is very much part of our modern world and technology and social media have made it all the easier to engage with other people’s points of view. Social media on the other hand, with its power to manipulate and its use by the unscrupulous is often cited as encouraging a greater polarisation of thinking. There is evidence to suggest however, that the great battle with Covid 19 has worked to counter this trend to some extent. The support for populist beliefs in general has been shown to have fallen during 2020, the year of the pandemic. It is reported that in Europe it has fallen markedly over the past year, with significantly fewer people across a range of countries likely to agree with key statements designed to measure it. The YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project, surveyed about 26,000 people in 25 countries and showed a more or less steep decline in populist tendencies in 2020.²

Populist beliefs tend to dominate media coverage which gives the impression that extreme thinking is rising fast. Yet, in reality, the majority of people sit on the vast line between the

extremes. This brings to mind the Hermetic Principle of Polarity that states that the difference between things seemingly diametrically opposed to each other is merely a matter of degree. Love and hate are generally regarded as being entirely different; unreconcilable. But when we apply the Principle of Polarity; we find that love and hate are merely terms applied to the two poles of the same thing. There are degrees of love and hate and there is a middle point where 'like and dislike' become so faint that it is difficult to distinguish between them. Courage and fear come under the same rule. Spirit and Matter are also two poles of the same thing, the intermediate planes being merely degrees of vibration.

The pandemic has come at a time when humanity is fighting to understand truth while immersed within a sea of 'fake news'. The fear and uncertainty associated with the pandemic has perhaps woken people up from their mental stupor that allowed fake news to escalate. The pandemic due to so many competing voices, so many vested interests, has forced us to utilise our minds to understand what is important and what is not, helping us to shape our own response to circumstances. Being more aware and sceptical of information is encouraging the use of our analytical faculties to test information, checking its provenance, for example. People are having to turn inwards to analyse their own truths rather than just accept what they are being told. This is helping to bring a greater realisation of individual responsibility. The Hippocratic Oath, 'do no harm', does not apply exclusively to the medical establishment, it is a moral principle that when followed to the best of our ability, even if the personal costs are high, brings release. Socrates is famous for his statement 'the unexamined life is not worth living'; the tools of reflection and self-awareness are particularly important when, like today, everything about is shifting.

Release comes through the control of thought; we are held in the human form, imprisoned on the planet, not by some outside force that holds us here, but instead by our thoughts and actions. As Alice Bailey tells us 'The moment we no longer set up wrong relations with people by the things we say that should not have been said, the moment we stop thinking things about people that we should not think, little by little those ties that hold us to planetary existence are severed.'³ The fostering of goodwill brings about right thought which will eventually allow humanity's release, so with that in mind let us now go into meditation.

1 Esoteric Astrology pg. 217

2 European support for populist beliefs falls, Jon Henley and Pamela Duncan – The Guardian Mon 26 Oct 2020

3 The Labours of Hercules pgs. 160-161