

The Spirit of Truth and Right

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Good evening friends. Welcome to the Sagittarius full moon meeting and welcome too to all those who are able to join us via BlogTalk radio this evening.

Sagittarius encompasses the quest for the Spirit of Truth and Right; "the sum of all truth growing out of individual revelation". This quest for truth can be a lonely one, and when it comes, it can be both discomfoting and releasing at the same time.

As I began writing this talk, the news of Nelson Mandela's passing reached us, someone whose very life was all about upholding truth and right, a Life of both enforced solitude and of crowds, the former empowering the changes needed on behalf of the latter. While we have all been inundated with news and memoirs of his life of imprisonment and subsequent freedom, it is significant to reflect a little on his contribution. According to the records of his birth time, Mandela had Sagittarius rising, and the fact that he also died in this sign, make the most quoted words attributed to him, the Long Road to Freedom, take on even more significance, for they convey so well the keynote of the disciple in Sagittarius: *I see the goal. I reach that goal. And then I see another.*

I have walked that long road to freedom
I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps
Along the way. But I have discovered the secret that,
After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are
Many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to
Rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me,
To look back on the distance I have come. But I can only
Rest for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities,
And I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended.

The keynote of Sagittarius shines through this statement as each hill climbed reveals another goal. Sagittarius can bring interludes of apparent rest on the journey where the disciple gathers up his forces again after the battle in Scorpio before ascending to the mountaintop of initiation in Capricorn. There's always a hill to climb and thank goodness for that, for the spirit moves ever onward. Sagittarius is where past accomplishment is acknowledged and the sights are set on the next incline to be surmounted.

This brings in the whole idea of vision, and it was Mandela's vision that kept him on the path of truth and freedom no matter what came his way – he had a preparedness to face the truth and to universalise what he found in his heart, his fears and hopes, knowing them to be shared by all humanity, irrespective of race. This was something that no doubt clarified for him during the long years in prison. He started out an angry young man understandably filled with a sense of injustice but he subjected those emotions to the fires of his heart and tempered them to attain his goal of justice. His search for truth wasn't satisfied by just the keen perception of facts, it required him to live as authentically as possible – to live as a soul, as a true human being. This is living by example, lifting the burden of the future for others, not by false political promises or expedient short term measures, but by turning things around completely and doing what is right, and often doing so in ways that were completed unexpected.

Apartheid or separatism could only be countered by a higher force, truth emanating from a place of unity and reason. Coming out of prison at last, with jubilant crowds and knowing that the nation was on a knife edge, Mandela embarked on his path of forgiveness in order to achieve his goal of doing what was right for the nation. I remember he made what was considered at the time

a very shocking move when he invited the wives of Nationalist Party MPs to a tea party, thereby completely disarming and winning them over. That was just one small act in a series of identifications he made with people of all colours, no matter what their past. Perhaps we could say that, in his quest for the greater good, he was a living example of the affirmation: “forgetting the things which lie behind, I will strive towards my higher spiritual possibilities”. His striving was for the higher possibilities of the people. Can we take a few moments of reflection and then say together the Noontime Recollection:

I know O Lord of Life and Love, about the need.
Touch my heart anew with Love
That I, too, may Love and give.
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Mandela said something of great significance for a man whose sun sign was in Cancer (giving him sensitivity to the masses) and whose rising sign of Sagittarius presented him with the battle for truth and right. The vision of truth for him was simple justice and a correcting of a great wrong. He wrote:

“I had no epiphany, no singular revelation, no moment of truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people. There was no particular day on which I said, ‘Henceforth I will devote myself to the liberation of my people’; instead, I simply found myself doing so, and could not do otherwise”.

This illustrates the server who responds without compromise to the need around him. There was no sign from God calling him to his destiny, and no recording of one single vision, but with humility, he responded subjectively to an immense vision. This motivating, inner vision was prompting him forward, but his compassion was absorbed in the plight of the people around him and on the “plains of earth” he worked at his goal, preparing the way ahead.

A significant part of Mandela’s life was one of physical inaction, solitude and reflection. He symbolises the fact that true meditation serves to liberate the consciousness from the barriers to love and right relationships which the personality has erected. In the same way each person must fully accept the Truth of Self in all other Selves before he or she can love fully and in freedom from social-ethical-cultural conditioning. Mandela’s twenty seven years of imprisonment raises an interesting symbolic point about a sign of interlude such as Sagittarius, for it does not necessarily indicate spiritual inactivity. In Mandela’s case it was a transformative period that saw him emerge with a renewed and even more encompassing sense of identification with the whole – one that would break down many barriers in people’s hearts and minds the world over. As the Burmese human rights activist, Aung San Suu Kyi, said, he was a great man who “raised the standard of humanity”.

Helping to prepare for a new and better humanity, each disciple accepts and mounts the Cross, so that the truth will be seared into the soul-substance of the incoming era. Truth and falsity are hitting us every moment of our lives, and our task is to discriminate between them so that we do not echo the sentiments of those who see no truth but their own. It is a huge task to widen our perspectives of truth on the one hand, while on the other to follow an ever-narrowing path to the mountaintop. The narrowness of the path, reminiscent of a single arrow of fiery aspiration and one pointed intention, provides the impetus. We may fall off every now and then unless the focus is sure and steadfast with no diversions on the way. But if we persevere along the path of truth, at a certain point of the journey, Sagittarius brings us directly to the gate of initiation and the lighted entrance to the fifth kingdom – the spiritual Hierarchy.

A useful hint that points towards this entrance into the fifth kingdom of nature is given in the relationship between Sagittarius and its polar opposite, Gemini: When the dual forces of the cosmic brothers (Gemini) become the energy of the one who rides towards the light (Sagittarius)

then the fourth becomes the fifth. Humanity, the link, becomes the Hierarchy, the bestower of all good. Then all the Sons of God rejoice. This inspiring thought reminds us that, when the power of thought is used for the common good with consistency, it is lifted into the intuition.

The arrow is the direction of thought, guided by the intuition. When the faculty of sensitive direction is rightly developed, it becomes, in the early stages, an effort to identify all soul and personality activity with God's Plan or the ordered direction of God's thought: "there is no true direction apart from thought, and ... thought is power". This statement of the Tibetan's is one upon which we are called to ponder, for we can achieve no real comprehension of the direction of God's Plan unless we consciously work with our own lives by subjecting them to the discriminating mind and mental direction.

Of course, we reflected on the power of mental direction and the fact that energy follows thought at our World Goodwill seminar, and we worked to deepen our understanding of thought as power. World Goodwill works with the simple idea of mobilizing the energy of goodwill to overcome separateness which is the major evil and cause of all the other evils in the world. As noted, goodwill can seem a somewhat warm and well-meaning sentiment, but lacking essential dynamism, perhaps due to an over-familiarity with the term. Breaking the word down into its two component parts however, we have the force of will and the force for good brought together – the will to good. Essentially, the Will is the driving force behind all creative acts, from the Divine Will from which universes, stars and planets spring forth in line with Divine Purpose – to its distant, relatively feeble reflection in the human being who strives towards various goals and accomplishments in life according to his or her desires be they low or high. In short the Will is an impulse that drives consciousness forward towards an envisioned goal.

If the will is the essence of all true creativity, it makes sense for each of us to align our little individual will with the greater will and contribute to the overall drive of consciousness towards truth, beauty and goodness. We see so many people and groups around the world who are part of this creative good-will – so many inspiring people of goodwill, so many non-governmental organisations, charities and philanthropical movements. Their activities are all outer expressions of the energy of goodwill – of spiritual energy in purposeful, directed activity.

Energy follows thought – a beautifully succinct and life changing law to ponder. Human progress is built on powerful thought patterns that condition and hold societies together for a time then give way to other ideas. The role of goodwill is to see that emerging ideas are born for and informed by the greater good of whole, impelled by the good and towards unity. The power of group thought is immense and strengthens the work of the new group of world servers and those outstanding figures like Mandela whose destiny it is to strike an outer blow at the forces of separatism.

And Mandela did strike a major blow to the forces of separateness that prevented a Nation's integration through social engineering. South Africa became deluded by a thought pattern that limits and confines its thinking to a single idea or ideal to the exclusion of all others. The ideal of separate development led to sadistic enforcement and great cruelty. It demonstrated a blindness to the truth that all men and women are inherently or divinely equal based on the great law of Love. This delusion and glamour ties, limits and imprisons the man. In the case of South Africa, the whole country was imprisoned by its leaders' wrong thinking and the wrong action that resulted. Thankfully, the wrong thinking that led to the socially engineered and institutionalised racism is now largely understood to be inherently wrong. Even so, racial and minority discrimination continues even in democratic and supposedly free thinking, open societies.

Esoterically, all ideas which help to guide human life and civilization emanate from great Lives who themselves express a divine idea. It is the role of the thinkers of the race to pick up on these ideas and make them their own and so help humanity progress. Of the three Lords of Liberation one is said to be closer to the earth and to humanity and "it is He Who can be reached by those who comprehend the nature of freedom and who desire beyond all things to be liberated and

to see all the oppressed and enslaved people of the world also liberated." In recent years we have surely seen the truth of the statement that "the freedom of humanity and the liberation of its power to be self-determining (which is an aspect of freedom) has become the dearest ideal and the best thought of her thinkers in all nations."

However, the separateness which people hold in their minds can often be far more subtle and difficult to discern and overcoming the heresy of separation is no small undertaking for we learn that "The moment a man differentiates his life into triplicities (as he inevitably must as he deals with the pairs of opposites and identifies himself with one of them) he succumbs to the glamour of separation". Intriguingly, we are told that "the secret of world glamour lies hid in the thought that this triple differentiation veils the secret of creation. God Himself produced the pairs of opposites – spirit and matter – and also produced the middle way which is the consciousness or soul aspect".

Fortunately, there is no escape from truth in the end, for the forces of evolution move ever onwards – and at each stage of the evolutionary path – truths have to be learnt one way or another, humanity often opting for the hard way. But what is truth essentially? We are all at different levels of evolution so different truths apply. Although this may be so, humanity as one race is at a level where a certain standard of truth applies to all. Furthermore, as one race it is also ready to receive further truths that apply to all, and these truths are that part of the Plan of Love and Light referred to in the Great Invocation.

In our meditation tonight, we can reflect on the truths that humanity needs to assimilate and express at this point in this rather chaotic period of world history. Sagittarius is known not only as the spirit of truth, but also as the spirit of right; for while truth is the goal, right thought and action are the means of achieving it. For those who are striving to tread the path of discipleship, one of the means of relaying truth and right to humanity is by joining together and holding an unbroken conscious line of thinking so that the Master can add his power to it in order to affect changes in human consciousness.

As we know, it takes tremendous effort and strength of will to do this in these restless and chaotic times. The mind is all too easily pulled outwards through the senses in response to the physical and emotional environment instead of towards the inner "Call" of those who are seeking to impress human consciousness. Most of us who have travelled the Path for some time and know its tests and struggles naturally begin to feel a little "battle-worn" after a while. And it is at this stage, that we need to recall our earlier enthusiasm, and evoke the fires of aspiration to renew the vision, not just of what the future holds, but of who we essentially are. In the Agni Yoga series, the arrow, which is a symbol of Sagittarius, is frequently used, and here too it is associated with the Will, as conveyed in the statement: "I urge you to sharpen your will – it aids the flight of arrows. The will is the bow-string of the consciousness."

It is only our intense interest in the salvaging of humanity arising from our responsive heart, which will fix our minds sufficiently on the task at hand such that the returning arrows of the intuition will guide us into the kingdom of the soul. May we, like Nelson Mandela, all have the strength in our hearts to tread the path of truth and right no matter what.