

Building the Chalice of Great Service
Festival of Aquarius, New York 2021

Barbara Valocore

Good evening to this first full moon Festival of 2021, the Festival of Aquarius. It is interesting to note that in this year, which follows the important Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of 2020, the first solar festival in the new year is in this sign because as we know, Aquarius is the sign into which our sun is passing in its lesser round of the zodiac, approximately for 2,300 years. But even more than that, it is also the sign governing the greater cycle of 25,000 years into which we are simultaneously moving. We are told that this is the most “amazing period in the history of Humanity” and that we are ready for revelation, so we should prepare for the new with enthusiasm. After the devastating year the entire human race has undergone and with many difficulties still remaining, the conditions for revelation are ripe. Humanity has been learning painful lessons and suffering tremendously and now with a new year, all collective eyes are looking toward the future and how we can start building the new ways of being together, Aquarian ways which will honor not only the individual, but will be characterized by group work, group consciousness and eventually, universal brotherhood.

The opportunity to work with the full moon energy is especially important in Aquarius because this is the energy that will influence Humanity for many centuries, causing profound changes in the way we live and work, changes the nature of which we cannot really predict. As we know, the energetic exchange between Hierarchy and Humanity is free and open at the time of the full moon and every effort we can make to keep this energy exchange vital during the 5 day full moon period strengthens the link between the 4th and 5th Kingdoms which are growing ever closer. Groups who can work with the full moon energies and with awareness of the significance of the time can greatly facilitate the birthing of the New Age.

Every zodiacal sign is divided into three segments, each of which is called a decanate and each of which is ruled by a different planet. For some of the signs, the planetary rulers are not clear, but for Aquarius they are. If the aspirant or disciple is on the reversed wheel, the entry into Aquarius is ruled by Saturn. Saturn brings opportunity but also requires discipline. It presents all kinds of crises and tests and basically facilitates the destruction of forms, structures and modes of thought that inhibit the divine flow and the expression of soul values. Aspirants and disciples have always faced these tests as individuals but now, for the first time in history, Humanity as a whole is moving onto the reversed wheel and beginning to mount the Fixed Cross of the Disciple. Saturn’s influence will be with us for quite some time and turmoil and confusion will continue to burn away the non essentials to full expression of the spiritual life. There’s much work to be done to move away from collective materialism and separatism to a culture of peace and a recognition of universal values.

How are we to understand the implications of the whole human race as the world Disciple? How can we imagine a future in which Humanity understands its role as the

planetary Server, working cooperatively together for the redemption of all lives and the planet? We know that meditation in group formation, especially at the time of the full moon, is an invocative activity that by law, evokes response to the higher energies and helps to draw the spiritual Hierarchy closer to Humanity. Let us take a moment to still our bodies and focus our minds as a collective lens through which the divine energies can flow, sending loving and healing intentions outward to all in need. We'll voice the Mantram of the Disciple:

I am a point of light within a greater Light.
I am a strand of loving energy within the stream of love divine.
I am a point of sacrificial Fire, focused within the fiery Will of God.
And thus I stand.

I am a way by which men may achieve.
I am a source of strength, enabling them to stand.
I am a beam of light, shining upon their way.
And thus I stand.

And standing thus revolve
And tread this way the ways of men,
And know the ways of God.
And thus I stand.

OM

The eleventh Labor of Aquarius for the world disciple Hercules is a very apt metaphor for our time and contains many clues about how to face the coming restoration. The world is basically in a big mess and we have to clean it up. After having succeeded in reaching the mountaintop of Capricorn and fully experiencing the streams of living light, Hercules' challenge was to turn his back on that light, descend down to Earth and help bring light to others in humble service; the fundamental theme of Aquarius. The task he was given was to go to the kingdom of Augeas and cleanse it of an ancient evil. The stables of King Augeas had not been cleaned in 30 years and the accumulated dung and filth created an unbearable and dangerous stench. The fields had been spread with so much manure that crops couldn't grow and a pestilence was literally, "wreaking havoc with human lives." What a vivid description of the situation we are in now!

Complicating his task was dealing with the duplicitous nature of King Augeas who couldn't believe that Hercules would be able to single handedly clean the stables let alone do it for no reward. He was suspicious that Hercules wanted to take his throne and usurp his power, something he was clinging to with all his might. Knowing it could never be accomplished, the King issued a challenge that if Hercules could clear all the filth away in one day, he would receive a tenth of the king's great flock of cattle.

Aquarius is the sign of the world server; the selfless and humble servant who has awakened to the reality of the life within and realized the necessity of raising his fellowmen

out of the darkness of materialism into the light of the soul. He has successfully descended down the mountain of initiation after turning his back on the light and returned to the plains of Earth to serve and stimulate his brothers on the darkened path through the use of a lighted mind and loving heart. The work is to synthesize and blend the various qualities and streams of energy into a diverse and harmonious whole. The soul infused Aquarian server has a natural sense of universality which admits all points of view while keeping to the highest ethical principles and values.

The symbol of Aquarius as the world disciple is the person with a water jug balanced on her head, not bowed and burdened by a heavy weight, but standing firmly at the center of the even armed Cross, easily and freely pouring forth the living waters of the Christ life. These living waters never run dry and pour out to all those in need. They are living purifying waters that heal and inspire all who receive them.

So now, Hercules' dilemma was to figure out exactly how to accomplish his task, all in one day! As he wandered and pondered, the magnitude of the pestilence became clear; people were sick and dying and a cart piled high with dead bodies passed by. With heavy heart, he observed two rivers nearby and as he stood in quiet contemplation of the waters, the solution came to him in a flash of intuition. So he set about his work with perseverance and strength to divert the streams so that they would flow into the stables and sweep away the filth.

When his task was finished, he went to the King who angrily exclaimed that it was a trick and that the rivers did the work, not Hercules, so our hero was banished from the kingdom on pain of death and with no reward, not that he was looking for one. He returned to his teacher now having become the world server wielding his energies freely and fully for the highest good so that others may prosper.

In all his labors, Hercules still stands as an example for Humanity of the illuminated and selfless server who calls on his intuition and the light of the soul to solve the problems before him. Now, as the Aquarian energies grow stronger and more insistent, and the conflict between the old and the new is raging, Humanity as the emerging world disciple must do the same *as a group* and use its collective creative imagination to solve the world's most pressing problems with new and innovative methods.

The problems and challenges brought on by the global pandemic have been an alarming wake up call and we have seen a tremendous outpouring of effort and dedication to the welfare of others most noticeably through the health care profession. Every day, nurses and doctors heroically put their lives at risk to help others. Those in professions that serve the public have now become visible as essential. One example of a group of true world servers reported in the *New Yorker* magazine, are those scientists who have designed a vaccine for Covid-19 in record time. They have worked globally together with common purpose in the culminating moment of their entire careers. A vaccine designed by virologists Barney Graham and Jason McLellan and used by 2 pharmaceutical companies has been found to be 95% effective and is now being distributed.

When Dr. Graham received the news of this success he was at his home office. He says, "I told Cynthia (his wife) 'it's working'. I could barely get the words out. Then I just had to go back into my study....All that had been built up over those ten months just came out." He wept profusely with relief and joy. The royalties from the intellectual property of the vaccine will all go to the federal government so Dr. Graham and his colleagues will not receive any financial gain. But he feels amply rewarded. Later he said, "Almost every aspect of my life has come together in this outbreak... the work on coronavirus and pandemic preparedness along with all the things I learned and experienced about racial issues in this country. It feels like some kind of destiny." Thank you Hercules.

At the start of any serious spiritual discipline, a period of purification and strengthening is required. Often people embark on fasting to cleanse the physical body to make it fit for the higher energies, with care being taken so that the toxins are not released too quickly causing illness. Water is a key part of this process as it washes away the waste elements preventing perfect health. Then comes a purification of the astral nature; a neutralization of the so difficult to control emotions and feelings that result in personal glamour and its resultant confusion. Astral purification occurs from consciously evoking the soul, whose light dissolves the fogs of glamour and renders the emotional nature into a clear still pool reflecting the mind. The mental nature becomes cleansed when separative and selfish tendencies have been eliminated through love of whole. Then compassion and true love are released to flow outward to all through a sense of universality and the awakening of a true sense of brotherhood.

When the powerful light and life of the soul begin to fully pour onto its threefold vehicles, it illuminates everything. Higher qualities and talents are strengthened; flaws and impediments to the soul's expression are brought to the surface to be dissolved by the light. Purification has begun. This can be a painful process for the lower self because all the accumulated toxins, flaws and retrogressive tendencies seem to grow stronger as they float to the surface. To disciples and aspirants who have already mounted the Fixed Cross, this is all too familiar. But now, it seems we are seeing this process play out on the world stage. Corruption, institutionalized racism, selfishness and greed are visible for all to see. Falsehood, devious manipulation and the collapse of governmental policies and laws have become normalized. These are the poisons which the soul of Humanity must root out and destroy if we are to truly become Aquarian citizens. Our herculean task of cleansing has begun.

The Law of Service is the third Law of the Soul. It begins to become active when the personal self, with its wants and desires, has been subordinated to the higher way, allowing soul energy to naturally pour through. As the soul energy flows outward into the environment, it cleanses and purifies all substance, uplifting others with its unstoppable life force and eliminating the barriers to its expression. Service then becomes the spontaneous result of soul contact and the Law is fulfilled. Related to this, Alice Bailey writes: "This law is the imposition upon the planetary rhythm of certain energies and impulses which emanate from that sign of the zodiac into which we are steadily moving. Therefore, there is no escape." EP II 119

Aquarius, the custodian of "life more abundantly" calls humanity to enter into the Great Service, to express the true nature of the soul, absolute love. It requires us to lift and redeem ourselves up into the consciousness of the heart so that a true awareness of the oneness of life becomes possible. It asks us to enter into the group awareness that knows neither time nor space, boundaries or distance. It bids us to fill our water pots with the Christ's love, the water of life, so that all hearts across distance may be united in the Chalice of service. Agni Yoga instructs us how to stand in the fire of love:

From the book *Heart*: "Where then is that sentiment, that substance with which we can fill the Chalice of the Great Service? Let us gather this feeling from the best treasures. We shall find its components in religious ecstasy, when the heart quivers at the Highest Light. We shall find its components in the feeling of heart-felt love, when the tear of self renunciation glistens. We shall discern it in the hero's achievement when power is multiplied in the name of humanity. We shall find it in the patience of the gardener when he ponders over the mystery hidden in a seed. We shall find it in the courage that pierces darkness. We shall find it in the smile of the child when it is attracted to a sunbeam. We shall find it amidst all flights that carry us into the Infinite. The feeling of Great Service is unlimited; it must fill the heart which is forever inexhaustible." Sl. 509
