

And Thus I Stand

Capricorn II Festival 2020

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Greetings friends and welcome to our on-going work together in meditation for world service following the rhythm of the full moon.

The energetic environment of this Capricorn full moon is ideally suited for us to come together in a united approach to the forces of Light. The full moon follows on from the Great Conjunction in the heavens on the Solstice. When viewed from the earth, Jupiter and Saturn appeared to approach each other, almost forming what scholar and editor of the Journal of Archetypal Cosmology, Becca Tarnas, has called “a shining double planet”. Throughout the ages this rare event has been taken by philosophers and astrologers as a metaphorical sign that deep, systemic change is in the air and a new season is preparing to unfold in human affairs. Tarnas writes of the significance of the 2020 conjunction that: *A great turning of the tides is underway, the end of an era, a fall from inflated heights and a stabilization of new growth. Justice weighs out her scales, and every action has the potential to tip the balance towards failure or success.* [<https://beccatarnas.com/category/astrology-transit-updates/>]

As we ponder the significance of the Capricorn images, the mountaintop, and the goat, we can also hold close to the heart, the recognition that the entire human race, and the earth itself is today in crisis. Capricorn is one of three signs signifying crisis – and marking the attainment that is achieved after the upheaval and trauma of a crisis have been met. COVID and all the economic and political turmoil that emerged in 2020 provide a ripe set of circumstances for something profoundly new to emerge in the post-COVID era.

Humanity is the focus of the full moon meditation work. Our shared care for humanity as a kingdom in nature and our willingness to fully stand with humanity is central to our imaginative approach to Hierarchy. It is what we bring to this alignment. And this seems to be perfectly captured in the keynote for the disciple in Capricorn: “Lost am I in light supernal, yet on that light I turn my back”.

If the keynote were all about being lost in light that would mean a totally vertical orientation – a time to look upwards to the heavens and away from earth. But, in a sense it is as if the keynote contains three movements; three verbs (although one of the verbs is silent)! It suggests one process with three parts: First: treading the path up the mountain to become Lost in light supernal; Second, a moment of pause signified without words in the keynote, but with that simplest of all punctuation marks, the comma; and Third the natural instinctive result of the first two phases, the act of turning our backs on the light to return to our communities in need in the valleys of life. The hero’s task in Capricorn is to ‘revolve on the pedestal of light’; to turn

back, as a group, and become in the process a group light bearer; carrying the energies of Hierarchy and joining with others to serve in the evolutionary transformation of every field of relationship in the human kingdom; ensuring that the moment of opportunity signified by the Great Conjunction remains in the forefront of our meditative life.

Capricorn gives us a picture of synthesis. It speaks to us of the three as one. One cycle of breath: breathing in, pausing, breathing out; one cycle that captures both the heights of spiritual realization and the purpose of incarnation, to bring that light into the concrete, worlds of earth. Through this one cycle of breath, we are given an indelible impression of the apparently impossible task of restoring livingness, beauty and intuition to the culture of the post-modern age. In esoteric and masonic parlance this is sometimes spoken of as the work of 'raising' or elevating the 'dead body of humanity'.

So what might it mean at this time in the great story of human evolution to consider that the world disciple is itself – as a collective – absorbed in a three-fold focus: assessing the path up to the mountain-top, taking its lead from the image of the sure-footed goat; pausing for a moment on the summit to allow the full significance of the breath-taking vision to seep into the very bones of the discipleship group; and then taking the lead again from the sturdy goat to contemplate the all-important and arduous descent down the mountain and back to the valleys of time and space.

Writing about the New Group of World Servers, the Tibetan commented:

Those who have entered upon the Path of Probation have attempted to raise humanity and have failed. Those who have passed upon the Path of Discipleship have also tried and failed. Those who have themselves [Page 180] mastered circumstance and the illusion of death, and have consequently been raised unto life, can now attempt the task in united formation. They will succeed. The word has gone forth with the request for this united activity, and the urge to bend every effort to raise the dead body of humanity. A great and possible achievement of the Lodge of Masters is now imminent and all aspirants and all disciples can be swung into a synthetic recognition of power and of opportunity. [Esoteric Psychology, II, pp. 179 – 80]

In the past, evolution has tended to proceed through the achievement of heroic individuals. But as we pass through the great turning of the zodiacal wheel a New Era is unfolding, and the pioneering push forward is coming from a network of groups working to bring down into the realm of human thought, lifestyle and organization a civilization of intuition, livingness, brotherhood, universality and freedom with completely fresh expressions of goodness, beauty and truth.

We have been taught that the challenge facing spiritual disciples is to take themselves as they are and then, regardless of the circumstances of their life, to subordinate their own interests

and affairs to “the need of the hour”. And if this challenge is not itself strong enough, we are reminded of the particular importance of this orientation “during the phase of group, national or world crisis”. One way of looking at this admonition might be to affirm that those, from any spiritual tradition, who are adopting this posture, absorbed with poise, balance and right tension in the need of the hour, are, by definition, the discipleship group. And we can affirm as well that within this group, something remarkable and unprecedented is happening. It can be seen in the new sense of responsibility that has manifested throughout the world during this coronavirus period – a sense of responsibility that is palpable within the group of World Servers and within the vast net of the people of goodwill. It sometimes seems as if an electrical fire has been set ablaze in the groups sense of purpose and sacrificial will.

The Tibetan has described the Work facing disciples and those of purpose and will as being to “perceive the needs of the coming cycle—a cycle wherein the new ideas and ideals must be stressed and for which a fight must be made, wherein the wider plans for the good of the whole must be understood, endorsed and [communicated], the new and clearer vision for human living must be grasped and finally brought into being, and a cycle wherein the effort of all members of the New Group of World Servers must be given to the lifting of humanity's load.”

There is a mantram which is said to embody this attitude of the group of unified, poised, focused disciples “striving, in cooperative effort with others, to link hierarchical intent with human aspiration and thus bring humanity nearer to its goal.” (Telepathy, pp. 197). The Mantram is known as ‘The Affirmation of the Disciple’.

Can we enter now into a point of active, listening silence, as if the entire group of all who meditate for world service, regardless of what path or teaching they follow, are absorbed into a point of spiritual tension: poised between the opposites of heaven and earth. After holding this silence for a full minute let us together use the Affirmation of a 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, focussed 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.

This affirmation echoes the refrain 'And thus I stand'. So, it is interesting to consider the image of Capricorn as the Divine Goat standing on the mountain summit – the Divine Goat symbolizing the Group of World Servers. The Goat, the group, honed by lifetimes of experience on the mutable and fixed cross, standing in full sovereignty before the fiery reality of the Cardinal Cross – with all the wisdom of the past. It is an image of strength, skill, and remarkable persistence. And yet 'standing thus' we are told that Capricorn rules not the feet, but the knees, and that before being trusted with the secrets of initiation, it is the knees that must touch the earth. The feet know the earth in a way that the knees do not. The initiate must kneel in a symbol of humility – and accepted vulnerability -before the vision can be revealed. For illusion, glamour and maya remain in the personal vehicles. Personality and soul remain separate and distinct. Prior to fusion personality must bow down before the greater light of the soul – not so much as an act of submission but more as an acknowledgement of place and role in carrying out the soul's deeper purpose – of being an integral part of the soul's work. Long term goals are held by the soul; the personality's focus is necessarily short-term. Fusion suggests right balance, harmonious and right relationship between long-term and short-term. In our modern culture it is as if we are to recognize that to fully acknowledge and experience the destiny and purpose held in the kingdom of soul, is neither to demean nor deny nor repress the personal and the human. Only by kneeling before the greater can our full human potential be realized; only then can something of the soul's natural selflessness and harmlessness sweep through our being. The kneeling is a natural response to the eternal within us; it is a response to the awe and glory and wonder of the spiritual realms that lie at the core of our being. It cannot be forced by an act of will. Only by freely and spontaneously kneeling before that which is beyond death, can we 'see' the stupendous vision of the presence – and seeing that vision be empowered to turn and walk down the mountain carrying that presence quietly in service to our kingdom, the human, and to that place where it is our destiny to truly stand on our own two feet. Because we have kneeled, the greater light can shine through us. By learning to kneel; learning to bring the transcendent into the incarnated world of time, space, place, culture, and personhood, the Group of World Servers is learning to stand as a group.

During this time of crisis, lawlessness, danger and hazard members of the New Group, initiates, disciples, and aspirants, are increasingly finding their spiritual group – their home and place of shared purpose; the place where their soul's affiliation is most alive and real, and where the call to both the sacrifice and the joy of service reaches most clearly into their being. From this centre of soul affiliation it becomes possible to reach out with humility, recognizing and perhaps at times working with other soul groups, and other circles of activity. Each group today, if it is spiritually aligned, and there are surely a multitude of such groups, works in its own way as a seed group in the great work of raising and bringing to life the dead body of the thought, culture, and civilization of the human world. It can be tempting to think of one's own soul group as if it were 'the' group; 'the' centre of the world esoteric group, and that the task is simply to

convince others that we have found the Way and the Truth. Yet the truth of this time is to be found in the bigger picture of a whole ecology of diverse groups and circles of discipleship activity. Each point of lighted group work is itself precious, significant and of value – yet it is through the whole group, in all its diversity and multiplicity, that the power of the new; the power of the One Life is flowing. It is through this world group, made up of countless groups, that the Hierarchy is externalizing.

We can well imagine that one of the results of the initiates exposure on the mountain top to a vision of ‘weaving ... rivers and streams of light’ will be to permanently and forever reveal the spirit of synthesis underlying all the elements involved in the raising to life of humanity. Exposure to the Light supernal will reveal the Glory of the One shining through all the activities of the Group of World Servers from the gritty work of progressives and conservatives whose focus is on bringing goodwill and a vision of right relations into politics, diplomacy, law and creative economics through to the work with the Mysteries in circles as diverse as esoteric groups, schools of transpersonal and archetypal psychology and astrology, incarnational spirituality, the new monastics, circles of mindfulness, the revival of indigenous wisdom, and so on. Each circle of activity has its part to play in the whole. And with this in mind, in Capricorn it becomes possible to observe with love the events of the time as a crashing and a crumbling of at least a portion of the mountain load of karma – clearing the ground so that the new life may take root in this living, breathing human center of creativity in the planetary life.

One of the delights for me in pondering Capricorn is that it is an Earth sign, representing the “densest point of concrete materialization of which the human soul is capable”: solidity, earthiness, density, and hardness. At first glance this all seems very surprising when considering the loftiness of the keynote for the disciple with its promise of an initiatory experience of ‘light supernal’.

It begins to make sense when considering the two keynotes together. For the disciples lofty call to light and service must be seen in relation to the words for Capricorn on the ordinary wheel: “And the Word said: Let ambition rule and let the door stand wide”. It is as if we see portrayed for us in this sign the destiny of the soul’s journey to Earth – first it is a journey to solidity, planting the feet firmly on the ground .. and then much later it becomes a journey to bring the full light of the divine into the solidity of earth, first by kneeling on the mountaintop with only the knees and the toes of the feet touching the earth, and then by choosing to turn away from the source of light and to carry that light down into the world of the solid and the established. First, Spirit (‘light supernal’?) initiates the evolutionary urge to incarnate – to enter into the drama of the human story - place the feet upon the earth and be governed by ambition to rule and conquer. And through life-times the spirit becomes crystallized; set in the ways of earth; strict; governed by rules and regulations; dogmas and traditions, weighed down by its unchanging solidity and inability to adapt, be pliable and creative. But that very solidity reaches a point of crystallization when it can easily be shattered and destroyed. The earthiness of Capricorn, we are told, holds in itself “the seeds of death and finality”.

In both phases in this process of life becoming grounded and earthed in the human community Capricorn represents what has been called a “sign of conclusion” and “periodic arresting”. The mountaintop is used to symbolize initiation and revelation in most of the scriptures of the world. It marks the highest point of earth that can be reached – beyond this there is only air and sky – nowhere for the feet to tread other than back, down to the valley, and to the start of a new cycle of effort.

So it is that this Capricorn full moon gives us much to ponder as we look out upon a world in crisis. So much of the established order has crystallized. The materialism of the age; the absence of awe and delight and inspiration that have come to characterize a soulless consumerism is cracking and breaking under the strain of a constant flow of hazards – from natural disasters to disasters of material and spiritual poverty. As old established ways of doing things break down a new spirit of being together in the earth and on the earth and of the earth is being carried down from mountains of vision as a new ‘cycle of effort’ begins. Capricorn asks us to gird our loins and prepare, perhaps not so much for battle, as for “effort, strain, struggle” to fire a new creativity in the world. Our task is to be on the lookout, and to notice every spark of this new light, this freshness, that is being brought right into the very earthiness of life. May intuition guide us as we observe with care and discrimination the outlines of new thinking and new ways of being – so that we may together become a group of participant observers, who, together with Hierarchy, lend support and stand in strength with all who are actively engaged in the attempt to raise the dead body of humanity.