

## *Hope of Glory in Difficult Times*

Virgo Festival 2020

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Greetings friends and welcome to this meditation for world service in the spiritual festival of Virgo.

Our work together with these monthly meditations is preparing for what prophecy suggests will become a New World Religion. Changes in the Earth's cyclic relationship with the Sun are reflected in the lunar rhythm of full and new moon (with occasional eclipses) as well as the solstices and equinoxes. And these rhythms will, it is predicted, emerge as a unifying force in the religious life of humanity. It is intriguing to consider a future time when worshippers from different traditions and communities will gather for ritual, meditation, prayer, and worship during these periods in the solar and lunar calendar. There are some signs of this happening – for example, a recent focus on the solstice as a time to hold a shared global point of silence coordinated by the Global Silent Minute movement was launched on the December 21 solstice last year during the Lucis Trust gathering for the Festival Week of the New Group of World Servers; and then was again widely observed throughout humanity on June 21 with five minutes of silence; and will be similarly observed later this month, on September 21 – when a special focus will be placed on the United Nations 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN's International Day of Peace. We can see this as evidence that the cyclic relationship between sun, earth and moon is influencing the rhythm of the spiritual life in the time and space of our world – and we can expect this to become more prevalent.

Of course it is important to point out that from the scientific, cosmological perspective of esotericism the lunar rhythm is only significant because it offers a visible sign of the Earth's relationship with the Sun and the interacting network of planetary lives that constitute the solar system and the starry constellations of the heavens. The moon, after all, is full and such a dominant light in the night sky because it is illuminated by the light of the sun – and not from any light emanating from the moon itself.

For those of us who participate in the full moon meditations regularly it can be easy to forget the seed for the future that is being sown and nurtured through the very regularity of the rhythm of this work. So, it is helpful to try to imagine what it will be like to live in a world where large numbers of people come together through a diversity of religious practices during the full moon period. Clearly in such a future, religion will have a strong presence in the social and spiritual life. This energetic rhythm does not require that everyone share the same practices. I like to imagine local churches, temples, mosques and places of worship filling up in every community on the planet as millions gather during the 5 days of the full moon cycle to take part in a multitude of practices in a shared aspiration and approach to the divine.

At one level it is not difficult to imagine that activities during the full and new moons and the solstices and equinoxes will help to energetically focus, unify, and coordinate humanity's

aspiration. Yet at another level we can also expect that the awakening of a global religious spirit will produce a heightened spiritual tension in the mind of the intelligentsia during the full moon period. Imagine the intelligent thinkers and the esoteric workers from all traditions sharing more consciously in a concentrated, widespread global invocation to the Hierarchy of Beings of Light and Love during the full moon. Imagine, for example, the gatherings that might be expected to take place in all the theological colleges around the world. We can surely expect that as the passage into Aquarius continues, there will be many such places of learning and study – just as there will be probationary and advanced Mystery Schools, new monastic houses, communities, and centers of spiritual life. The imagination is one of the most powerful tools that we can use to nourish the seeds of future possibilities. So, this envisioning exercise can be undertaken with purpose and dedication.

Month after month, year after year, decade after decade ageless wisdom students have been gathering for this rhythm of group meditation for world service during the period of the full moon. It is rather like the rhythm of the group breath aligning with the rhythm of the breath of the Greater Ashram and of the breath of the Planetary Logos. So, this evening, we are stepping into a field of focused, heart-filled group mind that is substantial and well established. Can we just imagine for a moment the livingness and the presence of this body of purposeful human activity, carried on through time and in the spatial world of the physical lives of individuals and groups. Imagine the small groups gathering together to work with this rhythm yesterday, today and tomorrow ... in coronavirus times imagine all the ZOOM groups assembled for this work ... and think of the dedicated individuals sitting in the privacy of their own homes ... all contributing to the pulsating field of a group life on the mental plane working with laws of invocation and evocation in service of the greater Plans of God.

Aligned with all true esoteric thinkers from all traditions we can imagine that, in working with this full moon meditation, we are part of a shared human approach to the higher worlds and the great heart of the planetary life. An approach to the very core of Being – to the abode of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion of all traditions.

We might be led to think that such an interior approach is somehow separate from all of the issues that are churning through the human community at this time – coronavirus, economic crisis, crises in every area of life from education to race relations to health to disturbances in the psyche. But to the extent that the meditation group is sensitive to and cares about the troubled heart of humanity, it is this troubled heart that the group lifts up to the healing energies of the higher world; this troubled heart of humanity that is brought into alignment with Hierarchy. The radiation of love flowing from the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion during the sacred time of the full moon has the power to heal and transform. As this radiation reaches into the mind and subtle energetic realms of time and space it inspires, motivates, energizes, and sustains every creative initiative through which the Plan of Love and Light is working out.

Can we pause with this thought for a moment and then use the Affirmation of a Disciple? And can we make a special effort to use this affirmation together, as a group? The Affirmation

asserts that “I am a point of light” and so on. Because of this there can be a tendency to focus the attention on the “I” of the self, and one’s own private spiritual journey. To use this as a group means to identify as a group “I”; as one singular group identity, a discipleship group, that is greater than the separated individuals that would be implied by the word ‘we’, which suggests a group of disciples. And so, it is that in imagination, and in symbol, we can imagine the group rising to “stand” as if it were one fused being.

*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.*

That great feminine principle of time, space, the three worlds of the personality, and the manifest world that we see all around occupies a central part of the group’s focus in Virgo. So often the materiality of the world and the materiality of the incarnated human is seen as being separate from and in opposition to the lighted abundance to be found within. The experience of soul and personality as a duality dominates much of the spiritual journey. This is a necessary part of the Path. The two need to be separate if the mission of individualization is to be achieved and the way towards integration and ultimate fusion between soul and personality is to be prepared. This is inherent in a fourth ray system where the pairs of opposites are in a dynamic relationship, at times duking it out, pushing against each other before the right balance can be attained and spirit can radiate through matter.

Virgo gives us another perspective on the soul/personality dynamic with its message “Christ in you, the hope of Glory”. In this classic phrase from the Bible, Christ is likened to the fetus particularly at the time of quickening – the “hope of Glory”; while the personality is likened to the pregnant mother, responding to the increasingly insistent muscular movements of the new life within. Without being nurtured and nourished for the required time within the dark warm

embrace of the mother's womb, there would be no birth; none of us would be here in time and space; and there would be no "hope of Glory".

The energies of Virgo encourage us to ponder this interdependence in the relation between soul and personality – both need each other. Evolution and all the Plans of God for the Earth to become a Sacred Planet depend upon the relationship between soul and personality. The 'hope of Glory' or the future possibilities predicted by spiritual teachings, requires that soul consciousness be embedded within the personality for as much time as is needed. Rather than the three bodies of the persona being the enemy of soul, the reality is that they provide the environment needed by the soul as it prepares to fulfill its purpose of becoming a shaper and definer of the world. Personality provides the enclosed boundaries of human experience in time and space within which the world of spiritual reality takes root and incarnates. Without the push-back from the personality the forces of light would be relatively powerless in the world – lost - not knowing the language or the culture or any of the norms of the world of time, space, desire and materiality. The human is destined to reveal and create the new bottles needed to hold the wine of the spirit. Virgo reminds us of this greater process that we are a part of.

The universal symbol of the sign points to the Virgin birth – emphasizing the meaning to be found in what mythologist Joseph Campbell refers to as *"the birth of the spiritual life in the human animal."*

Yet there is, as we know, more to this than the story of the individual spiritual path. For Virgo represents the nurturing qualities of the feminine and the Goddess and its role in the evolution of consciousness. Time and space, earth and materiality, act as a womb, an enclosure, within which consciousness develops and matures in preparation for the painful hours of pulsing crises leading to birth and the emergence of the new life.

Beyond the individual this image of the Christ in you offers a powerful way of understanding the love that underlies the happenings of the time. Particularly times like these: Interesting, chaotic, crisis-filled times when everything seems to be shaken up and meaning can be hard to discern. Some of the earliest spiritual teachings echo the thought that it is in such times that a Virgin Birth occurs. As the Gita famously notes *"Whenever there is a withering of the law and an uprising of lawlessness on all sides, **then** I manifest myself ... I come to birth age after age."* Such times as these are times of hope both because they direct our attention to what is to come; but perhaps more importantly because they evoke the will to step into our full creative potential to use our time wisely in building solid foundations for the new. It's a bit like the parents getting the room ready for the new baby and reimagining their lives – no longer two individuals getting to know each other and establishing their relationship – now facing the responsibility of caring for a child – that which is to come after the crisis marking the transition of labor and birth.

In the womb of time and space the Christ who is about to emerge has grown and quickened in the hidden darkness of a world caught between separation and wholeness. The Christ spirit in the human heart has been stimulated. Enlightened servers within the Group of World Servers

are being collectively overshadowed by the Christ life and the Christ spirit. And now, it is as if, the labour has begun in earnest – what midwives refer to as active labor, which will culminate in a transition phase preceding birth. Working in symbols like this does not relate well to a linear view of time. The actual moment of birth, of the reappearance, is not for us to know or speculate about. What we can know however is that the process of birthing is surely underway. And it is that which can give us hope.

The withering of the law and uprising of lawlessness in our time can be understood as the passing away of norms governing relationships. Established norms of diplomacy, for example, have been shaken up in recent years; norms and standards of race relations are being revealed to be unacceptable in the light of the increasing respect for all lives – regardless of colour, faith, culture or language. The recognition that some lives matter and some communities matter more than others is shattering existing norms ... leaving many in confusion, despair and depression and many with a strong sense of mission to be part of the shaping of the new norms. In a similar way the recognition that animals, plants and even minerals have an intrinsic value and worth beyond their superficial usefulness to humanity is shattering established patterns of relationship with the earth. The new norms have yet to be born in the mind and heart of human communities, nations and peoples .. but they are clearly taking shape in these interesting times ... and they remind us that the Christ in You is not only a hope of glory, but also a clear sign of what is to come.

In such times, it is as if active labor with all the painful contractions experienced by the mother, provides an appropriate metaphor. Before labor, the mother's instinct has been to hold, protect, nourish, and nurture the growing life within. In active labor (the final stages of which are referred to in midwifery as 'transition') the mother's task is to cooperate with the baby's push to be born. Birth is a messy affair. And so it is that if we look too much at the disturbance in the world we can lose sight of the deeper happenings of the time and the anticipation and preparation for the new norms that are being born – and the reappearance that can be expected to emerge.

With this in mind, it seems that one of the most useful services that esotericists can provide is to develop an eye of discernment in observing the happenings of the time – each drawing on the skills, interests, education and professional experiences developed through our various lives – to identify the Aquarian norms that are in process of emergence at this time. We can expect there to be many – and we can expect them to come not just from one particular perspective ('progressive' or 'conservative' for example) or from one particular culture or nation or religious group – but from within different perspectives as norms for a right way forward take shape in fields as diverse as law and order; psychology; conflict resolution; overcoming the economic inequality in cities, nations and regions; education of children and adults; and so on. Norms are different from the means or ways in which the norms are expressed in different settings. They are better likened to a commonly shared purpose or sense of direction or ideas about standards of behavior. Social norms, for example, are defined in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy as “the informal rules that govern behavior in groups and societies”.

So much of the Virgo theme leads us to ponder the nature and the value of time and experience in the transition between the Piscean and Aquarian ages. We forget that passage between two dominant sets of norms takes time, passing through crises, Libran moments of pause and rest when changes in consciousness can penetrate the roots of DNA and glandular structures. It takes time for the substance of the desire life of nations and peoples to be reshaped and redirected. With the final birth of the New everything appears to suddenly change – yet that has only happened because of all that has taken place before. We do not see the subterranean changes that are occurring, so that when the labor of birth finally comes upon us as a species we can be taken aback, not realizing how much progress has been made.

The thought to hold on to here is the role of the will. DK refers to the second ray quality of the Mother's *sustaining will* as the hidden Christ life is shielded, protected and nurtured during the lifetimes when it is being enmeshed within the three-fold world of the personality. Gestation bears fruit in all the messy labor of birth. Indeed, from a metaphysical perspective, the birth of the Christ child also marks the death of the relationship between Mother and Child: the moment when *the Christ Child will emerge from the womb of time and of matter and stand free in the light*. And all of this (evolution, transformation, emergence into the norms of the Aquarian Age) happens, DK tells us, primarily because of "*the sustaining will of the Mother, plus the dynamic will of the Christ Child.*" [Esoteric Astrology, p. 627] As we observe the world in our time, it can be helpful to have in mind these two aspects of the will – the externalizing push from the Hierarchy of Light and the ability of the three realms of the personality to hold steady and keep going and keep things together. The Mother has these remarkable qualities of maintenance of some semblance of normality even amidst the nausea, the discomfort and absence of certainties, and the messiness that accompany the birth of the new.

In conclusion some words of Joseph Campbell seem especially appropriate:

*I have read somewhere of an old Chinese curse: "May you be born in an interesting time!" This is a VERY interesting time: there are no models for ANYTHING that is going on. It is a period of free fall into the future, and each has to make his or her own way. The old models are not working; the new have not yet appeared. In fact, it is we who are even now shaping the new in the shaping of our interesting lives. And that is the whole sense (in mythological terms) of the present challenge: we are the 'ancestors' of an age to come, the unwitting generators of its supporting myths, the mythic models that will inspire its lives."*