

SAGITTARIUS DISCUSSION

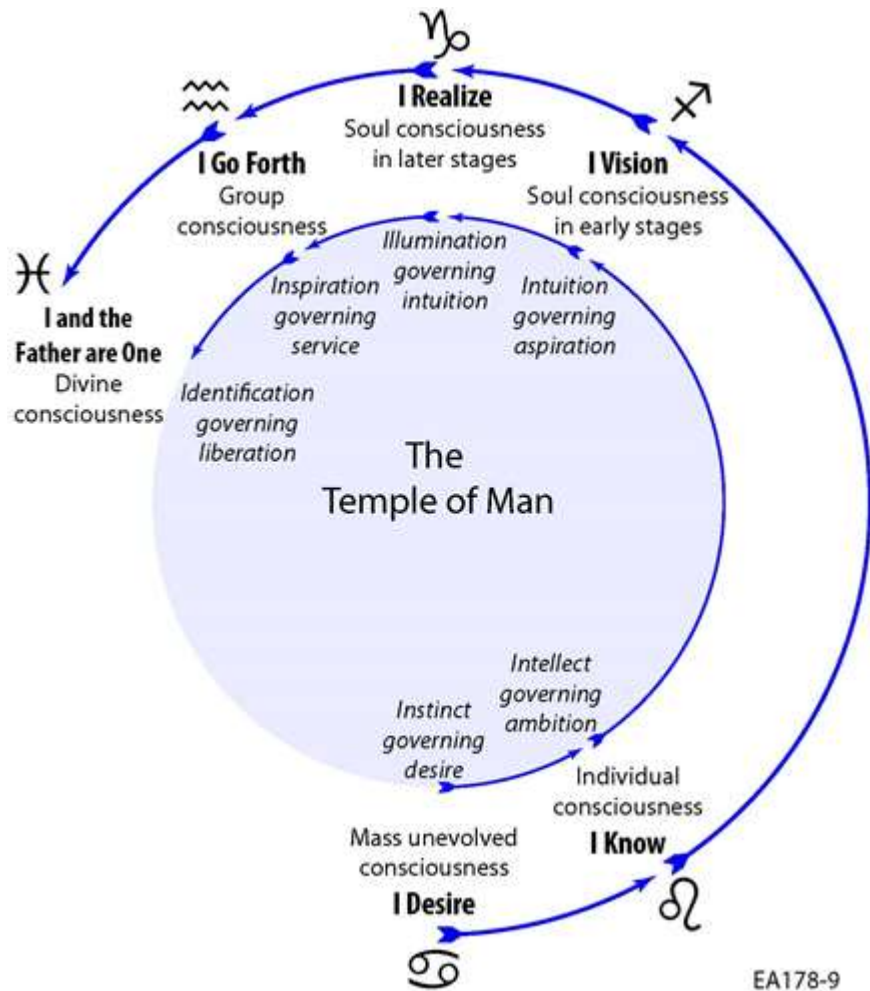
Francis Donald

We have entered (this artist's conceptualization of) the Temple of Man and stand beneath the portal of Cancer where aeons ago each of us began the long journey from mass consciousness to divine consciousness. If we were to look up we would see the injunction "I Desire" chiseled in the arch directly over our heads. As we begin our journey counterclockwise around the zodiacal wheel (here shown inset in the temple floor) we find ourselves in the dark half (note the dark outer band) of that great "year" which represents the sum total of our incarnations.



The Temple of Man, by Francis Donald

The temple floor-plan describes the direction of movement through the temple. (from *Esoteric Astrology*, pages 178-9)



As we progress, Cancerian desire becomes knowledge in Leo, which eventually leads us to the moment here represented— that last “point of tension” in the dark half of our great cycle of becoming. It is this nexus of energy that precipitates the Sagittarian archetype— an archer on his white horse about to loose from his golden bow yet another of his many arrows. In his long career, these “arrows of intuition” have led him from one object of desire to the next (the Sagittarian keynote is “I see the goal. I reach the goal, then I see another”) but now he lifts his gaze— and his aim— to align with that inner beam of light which leads to soul awareness. In that arrow is concentrated his entire directed purpose, and it is this refocusing which transmutes desire into aspiration. Thus both his focus and actions speak: “I Vision.” This single-pointedness will lead him (who is each of us) to a state of profound realization on the mountaintop of Capricorn, a realization culminating in his initiation. After the passage of a “month of lives” comes a further transformation: he will become the water-carrier who descends from the mountain-top and, bearing the healing waters of his own consciousness, will follow the river of life back into the world service.

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For the occultist/enthusiast, here are a few more tidbits and quotes:

1. As the Earth is the esoteric ruler of Sagittarius, it appears in the center of the temple's zodiac.
2. The glyph of the ruling planets of the three signs depicted in the temple appear in the first three windows above the gates. Hierarchical on top, then esoteric, followed by the orthodox ruler. The actual planets are depicted in (some of) the windows above their glyphs.
3. In this artwork the "river of life" gathers its waters from the mountain of Capricorn then flows to the Aquarian gate. The statue of the water carrier striding counterclockwise is by Bernhard Sopher.
4. The zodiac, as well as each of its 12 signs, are divided into a light and a dark half.
5. The quote on the temple wall reads in its entirety "*Unveil to us the face of the true spiritual Sun, hidden by a disk of golden light, that we may know the truth and do our whole duty, as we journey to Thy sacred Feet.*" Treatise on White Magic, p. 59

The Archer On the White Horse: "*...signifies the orientation of the man towards a definite goal. The man is then not part of the horse but is freed from identification with it and is the controlling factor.*" Esoteric Astrology, p. 175

"...this Rider is essentially One like unto ourselves—human and animal combined as are we all, but fused with divinity and inspired from on high." Esoteric Healing, p. 269.

"Where is the horse, the white horse of the soul? Where is the rider of that horse, O Lanoo? Gone towards the gate, O Master of my Life. But something speeds ahead between the pillars of an open door—something that I myself have loosed." Esoteric Astrology, p. 176

The shaft of light: "*...the intuitive and focussed attitude of the pledged disciple.*" Esoteric Astrology, p. 177

Winter Solstice: "*From the very night of time, the period wherein the sun moves northward has been regarded as a festival season; for thousands of years it has been associated with the coming of the Sun-God to save the world, to bring light and fruitfulness to the Earth and through the work of the Son of God to bring hope to humanity.*" Destiny of Nations, p. 147

"The plunge is downward into matter. The point descends, darts through the watery sphere and pierces into that which looms inert, immobile, darkling, silent and remote. The point of fire and stone unite, and harmony and union on the downward path are reached.

The flight is upward into spirit. The point ascends, lifting the two behind and reaching out the three and four towards that which lies behind the veil. The water fails to quench the point of fire; thus fire meets fire and blends. Harmony, union on the upward arc are reached. Thus shall the sun move northward." The Light of the Soul, p. 401-2.

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Let's look at the image, 'The Birds of Stymphalus' (a reference from Hercules 9th Labor). From his arduously gained, elevated vantage point on the Path of Return, a Sagittarian disciple looks out across the long Way that lies ahead. He sees the waters of his own astral domain ruffled by the thought-forms that stream from the dark realm of his unconscious, crowding his inner landscape with the chaos and cross-purposes of self-focused attention.

As he struggles for self-mastery, he intuitively raises his bow, and aims the arrow of his intent towards his goal. Silence fills him, an opening forms, and by the power of *'the flame that gleams beyond the mind,'* he breaks through the disabling influence of kama-manas (desire-mind).

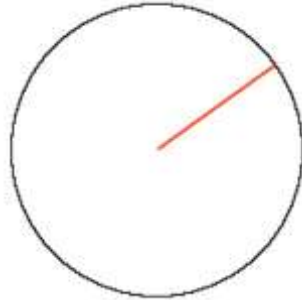


The Birds of Stymphalus, by Francis Donald

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The **Geometry** of Sagittarius, the radius of a circle, can be seen in the drawn bow and arrow. This gives rise to two opposed perspectives: 1) From the point in the center, the Sagittarian aspirant releases the arrow of his intent towards the bounds of his own ringpass-not. When he retrieves that arrow, he discovers that he now stands at the center of a new, expanded circle. 2) Standing on the periphery of his circle, the disciple focuses his intent on the centerpoint. When after great struggle he reaches that goal, he finds himself on the periphery of an even greater

circle. Paradoxically, both these perspectives are often active at the same time. But when the disciple becomes increasingly decentralized and is thus more identified with his goal than with himself, the second scenario begins to dominate. In either case, the radius must be traversed, thus it is the most fundamental symbol we have for the Path of Return.



Ideas and Thought-forms: The great hint given to Hercules just before the start of his Sagittarian labor was *“The flame that gleams beyond the mind reveals direction sure.”* That flame is the intuition, the language of the idea. The word ‘idea’, as used occultly, connotes a far more elevated concept than that which is commonly understood by the term. The Tibetan, Master Djwhal Khul (DK) tells us that ideas, which are to be found on the buddhic plane, are used by the Hierarchy to galvanize the minds of humankind, and thus direct us towards an ever-greater experience of life, and that: *“This contact opens up from the moment a man has aligned himself and brought the lower nature into touch with the higher.”*



Genesis of an Idea, by Francis Donald

I have attempted to illustrate this concept in ‘Genesis of an Idea.’ This image depicts the planes that make up the human quaternary— the mental, astral and physical planes, with the light of the buddhic realm informing the whole. Superimposed on these horizontal strata is the domain, shown here as an ovoid, wherein the experience of a human being takes place. Above this ovoid is the realm of the idea *on its own plane*, shown here as the large sphere whose lowest part is just visible at the top of the piece. Notice that it is only this realm’s reflected light that penetrates the crown of the ovoid.

At the center of this human ovoid is a much smaller sphere that represents an apprehended idea, or as DK tells us, *“The idea, revealed, becomes then an ideal to the attentive mind and eventually something to be desired and materialized. The thought-form-making faculty of the mind then comes into play; the “mind-stuff” becomes actuated by the energy of the idea, vitalized by the recognition of the soul, and the idea then takes its first real step towards embodiment.”* In this illustration you can trace an idea’s genesis as it passes from the buddhic down through the various sub-planes of the mental plane, then on down into the astral, where it is further reduced and distorted (represented by the drop of water and the ripples it causes). Finally, at the lowest physical plane level of the ovoid, it becomes a fragmented shadow, (or as DK would say, a mere idol).

Thought-forms: The above quote by DK gives us some idea of the difference between an idea and a thought-form. This difference is also illustrated by the two images. In the first piece, I’ve used the metaphor of the Stymphalian birds as kama-manasic thought-forms, which presented Hercules with the challenge of his Sagittarian labor. Control through self-mastery is the key here. Interestingly, Hercules gained that control through a gift from Athena (who represents higher mind) of cymbals capable of producing a sound intolerable to the ‘thought-form-making faculty.’ Were I to lift ‘The Birds of Stymphalus’ one degree further towards the esoteric, I might show Hercules with lips parted, his intoned sound actually forming the bow, the arrow, and the open passage that separates him from the mountaintop.

Whereas in ‘Genesis of a Thought-form’ the buddhic plane is shown as a sphere informing the human ovoid, in ‘The Birds of Stymphalus’ this same realm is depicted as a distant radiant mountaintop. We see that those thought-forms closest to this radiance begin to take on the luminosity and color of that intuitive realm. However, no thought-form in service to the lesser self can enter this holy place— for only through profound silence can this temple be known. Alice Bailey tells us in the ‘Labors of Hercules’ that *“Sagittarius is called in some ancient books ‘the sign of silence’ [for] that is the lesson of Sagittarius: restraint of speech through control of thought.”*

Keywords: *“‘I see the goal. I reach that goal and then I see another.’ May the words of this final injunction to the disciple carry meaning to the heart and mind.”*

Thank you for sharing this work with me!

Highest Regards,

Francis