

Keys to the Aquarian Age

Joann S. Bakula

Introduction

This article contains an explanation of the term “Age of Aquarius” as the combination of the sidereal zodiac of astronomy and the tropical zodiac of astrology. In it are discussed compassion and synthesis, two of the characteristics and qualities signifying the emergence of the Age of Aquarius. The article concludes with a new, gender-free Aquarius version of the Great Invocation.

Aquarian Age

As we all know by now, the Aquarian Age, or the new age, is an astronomical cycle of over 2,000 years based upon the sidereal, helio-centric zodiac, which is determined by the path through the constellations that the sun apparently circles through. Astrologers use the tropical, geocentric, Earth-centered zodiac, minus adjustment for the equinox precession, to determine the natal chart. Jungian astrologer Alice Howell¹ points out that it is the interaction of the tropical and sidereal zodiacs that determines these ages. The significance and interpretation of the influence of the stars is mythological, hypothetical and useful in placing Earth in the cosmos and recognizing the larger whole in which we all live. Psychologically, therefore, it represents a “mandala of totality”² or a symbol of relationship with the whole that can’t be overestimated in an age of apparent isolation of the individual and the planet. Space travel and exploration began at the beginning of the Aquarian Age and end of the Piscean Age, signifying our first steps as we enter the larger whole. Seen as great cycles of time, the ages have an interface of several hundred years due to the amount of starless space between the visible constellations.

Even though some denigrate anything called new age or Aquarian Age, the ancient Mayan predictions for 2012 only reinforce the cosmic picture of great cycles and ages beginning and ending.

Can we visualize what humanity will be like at the end of the Age of Aquarius? Alice Bailey writes, “The soul, the consciousness aspect, that universal urge in each of us that puts us in rapport with God, will have surged to the front....we will have left behind the human kingdom and... our consciousness will be focused in the fifth kingdom of nature, the spiritual kingdom. That is the prophecy, the thing that lies ahead for humanity.”³ The fifth kingdom is already *in* nature, but we do not see it. Awakening Soul or consciousness will change our perception so that we can see what is all around us all the time to which we are blind. This awakening is to a better relationship to our environment, but this is only the tentative beginning. “The perception of a higher reality, in itself, is little more than an insight. Only when such an insight is vitalized by intense aspiration can it gather enough momentum to become a catalyst for transformation,” write Seifer and Vieweg in *When the Soul Awakens*.⁴

About the Author

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In *The Labours of Hercules*, the eleventh labor is associated by Alice Bailey with the eleventh month and constellation of Aquarius. Hercules is seen as the mythic World Disciple, representative of the archetypal hero or humanity itself. The labor of the ancient Greek hero in the sign of Aquarius entails cleaning up the stables, long neglected despite constant use. Hercules is said to have diverted two rivers into the stable to flush out the corruption. Bailey has called these two underlying streams of energy the rivers of “life and love.”⁵

Today, there is general awareness that corruption exists in many areas and needs to be cleaned up. One such area is our physical environment, which has been polluted by irresponsible practices. Who can doubt that this is indeed one task ahead of humanity as we face the tasks of Aquarius? The Hercules of today would have to deal with what past generations have left polluted, even to the point of changing the climate. Meditating on Hercules, as the archetypal World Disciple, taking responsibility for past behaviors and developing a cleaner lifestyle respectful of nature and the climate would demonstrate a more mature and holistic behavior. It would signify an intention to regulate our destructive behaviors. Visualization is one method for stimulating the energy of purpose, intention and responsibility. Through visualization, prayer and meditation as world service in an esoteric, religious or secular group, we can form a common voice enhanced by deep contemplation. Many people in these various groups are already united in their commitment to care for the Earth and stop climate change. Meditators bring the added dimension of intuition, visualization and apperception.

The “catalytic task” that Seifer and Vieweg referred to is for the united group of compassionate, intelligent and wise people of all ideologies to strengthen their vision and motivation until this intention becomes the policy of the nations. Even though there was no legally binding new green document signed at the 2009 Copenhagen climate change summit, world leaders met to talk about the prob-

lem. Progress may seem slow, but we have come very far in the last 100 years in understanding integral environmental relationships. Careful meditation precedes wise action before the calculations of the lower mind can be tasked with working out the details. “The Aquarian law is based on spiritual illumination, on intuitive perception and brotherly love, which is identification with every form in every kingdom in nature. A tremendous future lies ahead; two thousand five hundred years will have been consummated. We are on our way.”⁶

Compassion

One of the most comprehensive definitions of compassion is from Tibetan Buddhist and Tibetologist Robert Thurman:

[C]ompassion... means the will to free others from suffering, based on an empathetic sensitivity to that suffering. Its opposite is hatred, which wills others to suffer. Its counterpart is love, which wills others to have happiness along with freedom from suffering. Universal compassion is considered the automatic reflex of perfect wisdom, since the realization of essential selflessness is an experience of the ultimate unity of self and other, which causes the suffering of others to become one’s own, making the will to eliminate it spontaneous and immediate.⁷

This ultimate unity of self and other is described by Bailey as a function of the intuitive state or intuition, which, when functioning, produces a “complete loss of the sense of separateness. At its highest point, it is known as Universal Love, which has no relation to sentiment...but is, predominantly, in the nature of identification with all beings.”⁸ Intuitive identification, in esoteric philosophy, results in an ability to see the divine essence latent in all forms and to “contact the light centre in all forms.”⁹ Seeing light as latent in all forms is what establishes relationship with all life. When this identification is known, the “the sense of superiority and separateness recedes into the background.”¹⁰ Intuitional understanding “connotes personality-soul unification, wide experience”¹¹ and under-

standing resulting from a sense of synthesis. Bailey called this “synthetic understanding,”¹² which is associated with the intuitional plane or buddhic plane, as it’s called in Theosophical literature. She describes “intuitional activity” as “always spontaneous” in meditation, dreams, events and other occurrences. “Where the reasoning to an understanding enters, it is not the activity of the intuition....[Intuition] is that synthetic, inclusive grasp of the life and needs of all beings... [It is] the sense of universal Oneness.”¹³ The activity of intuition expresses, then, as spontaneous universal compassion or universal love.

Critical analysis, concentration, study, increased awareness and experience in meditation all help to prepare for the flashes and flickers of spontaneous intuition.

Compassion has been held up as the highest ideal in many fields from religion to pop culture. Karen Armstrong, author of *The Case for God*, said that traditionally in religion “Compassion was the major test of any true spirituality and the chief means by which human beings came into contact with God, Nirvana or Brahman.”¹⁴ Armstrong initiated a multinational, interfaith movement that produced the Charter for Compassion, which is on the Internet and to which you, too, can add your name:

www.charterforcompassion.org. Song writer and poet Leonard Cohen—whom some call the conscience of a generation—voices realistic fear for the future in the song and album named *The Future*. Despite his concerns, he shows the way through in the line, “Love is the only engine of survival” in “the order of the soul.”¹⁵ Love/compassion is widely considered to be a generating engine for life.

Tibetan Buddhist Kalu Rinpoche writes that in Mahayana Buddhism, meditation on compassion is considered on three consecutive levels: “compassion with reference to beings, compassion with reference to reality, and compassion without reference.”¹⁶

1) Compassion for living things first arises when we see people, creatures and na-

ture suffering, and we are compelled to respond. A good heart is required.

2) Compassion for reality begins “when we have a genuine experience of the power of ignorance” and the suffering brought on by misperception and illusion, when “motivations and actions contradict one another.”¹⁷ The power of ignorance brings on additional suffering. The knowledge of underlying reality beyond space/time requires an intuitive, compassionate, intelligent mind.

3) Compassion without reference has “no notion of subject, object or intention.”¹⁸ It is the ultimate form of the bodhisattvas’ or buddhas’ meditation and depends upon the realization of emptiness, or formless, dimensionless, limitless meditation on no-thing, from no-thing.¹⁹ This ultimate form of compassion might be compared to Kaivalya, the state of “Isolated Unity,” as described in the last of the four books or stages of the ancient source book on meditation called the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*.²⁰ This ultimate end state of Being is called “illumination” by Bailey,²¹ “liberation” by Isherwood and Prabhavananda,²² and “enlightenment,” among other terms, by Mishra.²³

The last stage of meditation or ultimate meditation takes us back to the First Noble Truth of Buddhism, “Existence is suffering” (*dukha*). Karen Armstrong reminds us that this is “an insight that in nearly all faiths is indispensable for enlightenment.”²⁴ Realization of the impermanent nature of life, along with the awareness that life inevitably leads to the suffering of death, disease and old age—not to mention the daily hunger and thirst of millions—is the first noble truth that opens the mind to the eight-fold path of right relationship. Such a path leads to enlightenment and compassion without reference or permanent freedom from maya and illusion, described as kaivalya.

In Tibetan Buddhism, once there is the enlightened feminine (receptive) principle of space and wisdom, the enlightened masculine (dynamic) principle of compassion and skillful means can arise for both genders. Once a

principle has been accepted by the mind, a door to its energy can open and the presence of the energy behind the principle can empower the meditation, the service and the life.

This begins with an attitude of expansion, inclusiveness and possibility combined with an acceptance of the spiritual and holistic nature of life.

Interior Synthesis

The holistic view, which embraces the interdependence and interaction of all parts of the whole, is already permeated with synthesis and is widespread among intelligent, compassionate people. But it takes time to find workable practical applications. That deep meditation precedes intelligent, loving and harmless action is a given in most esoteric philosophies. Bailey reminds us that “synthesis is an aspect of the first divine characteristic, the Will, or rather, the will-to-good”²⁵ and that when the will-to-good supersedes the will-to-dominate, then the quality of the new Aquarian Age will be apparent. “The Aquarian Age will be predominantly the age of synthesis and light,”²⁶ Bailey writes, in addition to the brotherly love and the rivers of life and love already mentioned. She also writes that the principal quality of the Aquarian Age is world service symbolized by the water carrier glyph of the astrological sign Aquarius. This glyph is depicted as a man or woman pouring water from a jug for others. Bailey goes on to say that “through symbolism of water and purification, we shall learn how to be the Soul and not the human being.”²⁷

This gives us a profile of a Soul-infused personality compassionately serving the world with the will-to-good, pouring forth waters

for the purification of selfishness, illusions, unskillful means, distortions and maya. As a Soul, we can begin to quench humanity’s thirst for truth with the spiritual teaching of

synthesis, light and love.

The interior work of bridging between the Spiritual Triad and the Soul-infused personality is accomplished through meditation, study and service. Eventually, if successful, “it is as if a magnetic field were then established and these two vibrating and magnetic units, or grouped energies, swung into each other’s field of influence.”²⁸

This happens only occasionally at first. “By the time the third initiation is completed, this Way is completed, and the initiate can

‘pass to higher worlds at will, leaving the lower worlds far behind; or he can come again and pass upon the way that leads from dark to light, light to dark, and from the under lower worlds into the realms of light.’”²⁹ This higher triad of spiritual energies must be blended and fused with the lower triad and physical livingness. “After the third initiation the ‘Way’ is carried forward with great rapidity, and the ‘bridge’ is finished which links perfectly the higher spiritual Triad and the lower material reflection. The three worlds of the Soul and the three worlds of the personality become one world wherein the initiate works and functions, seeing no distinction,”³⁰ regarding both together as forming one world of activity. “Spiritual mind, conveying illumination; the intuitive nature, conferring spiritual perception; and divine livingness,”³¹ as Bailey says, must be blended with the lower mind, emotional/

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feeling nature and in the life lived. Psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli, a student of both Freud and Jung and a longtime friend of Alice Bailey, gives techniques for achieving a synthesis of higher and lower aspects in *Psychosynthesis*, best carried out in didactic form if possible, but through auto-psychosynthesis or through self-synthesis.³² The later stage of this process, to be discussed in what would become his later book, *The Act of Will*, concerns the functioning of the will, which “does not produce results by means of sheer force..., but through regulation and harmonizing of the other psychological functions, which it ‘steers’ toward the chosen goal.”³³

Sri Aurobindo developed the “integral and synthetic Yoga” of union with “Life-Divine”³⁴ which “while it embraces the knowledge received from the past...seeks to organize it anew for the present and the future.... By this Yoga we not only seek the Infinite, but we call upon the Infinite to unfold...in human life.”³⁵

Aurobindo’s integral experience involves three factors: non-temporal union (Shiva), mobilizing powers of will (atman) and the creative fellowship of Shakti.³⁶ Haridas Chaudhuri, head of the California Institute of Asian Studies, later to become the California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS), developed a system described in *Integral Yoga* that represents a “higher creative synthesis of the traditional ideals”³⁷ of the previous forms of yoga: hatha, bhakti, karma, jnana, raja, tantra and purna. Agni Yoga, developed by Nicholas and Helena Roerich, presents methods for achieving union (yoga) through identifying with the animating fiery life principle in all sentient beings. It is called the yoga of synthesis. The Lucille Cedercrans material describes an Aquarian Age synthesis of ashrams in the pamphlet *The Synthetic Ashram: Its Purpose, Meaning, and Work*.³⁸ It is one of the many works in which the idea of synthesis is expounded.

Psychologist Ken Wilber has developed the “Integral approach” in such books as *Integral Psychology*³⁹ and *Integral Spirituality*.⁴⁰ These terms might be more accurate in de-

scribing the integration of the various functions within the personality and higher aspects of cognitive development, such as the Spiritual Triad of atma-buddhi-manas of Theosophical literature. Wilber correlates the various systems of Aurobindo, Theosophy, Vedanta, Kabbalah and others using a number of charts that refer to the highest state (in his system) as non-dual. He also charts cognitive development through Piaget and others, naming many levels of post-formal development such as “logic, psychic (vision), subtle (archetypal), causal (formless) and nondual.”⁴¹ His is the broadest of all the psycho-spiritual approaches and is known for the integration of all levels of development in the quadrants he has used to describe the complete human psycho-social evolution.

Exterior Synthesis

In *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*, Alice Bailey informs us that there is “relationship, interplay and mutual impression between the beings or lives who make up the sumtotal of our manifested universe...leading up to a planetary synthesis or a planetary integrity of a nature hitherto not even envisioned.”⁴² This relationship is both extra-planetary and inter-planetary and thus creates “in time and space a living intelligent planetary Entity of systemic maturity, qualified by immense attractive and integrating energies.”⁴³ We can regard these energies as having centers similar to the familiar human ones of head, heart and throat, Bailey says:

1) The head center is the “dynamic Agent of the extra-planetary Purpose, the expression of the divine planetary Will as focused in Shamballa. This is the energy of Synthesis, the source of all planetary life; it connotes essential Being.”

2) The heart center is the “Agent of the Plan of evolution. This is the expression of divine Love or pure Reason, the Hierarchy. It is essentially the energy of Attraction, the kingdom of souls.”

3) The throat center is the “Agent of all the three Aspects in relation to the three sub-human kingdoms in nature, the expression also of the divine Intelligence, Humanity.

This is the energy of active Mind and makes humanity the macrocosm of the microcosm, the three subhuman kingdoms.”⁴⁴

Here we have presented a living world with each level or holon a part of a larger whole, interrelated in both livingness and life. What remains is for us to consciously awaken to the larger world and relationships that live in us and in which we live.

The Great Invocation

The extraordinary power of the prayer, or mantra, called the Great Invocation is in its linking of the individual mind, heart and will—universally the same in structure for everyone, if not in content—with the planetary centers of mind, heart and will. It reveals an interior structure of patterned synthesis. Beyond this, it begins the evolutionary chapter of the Aquarian Age with conscious cooperation in the process of integrating the three planetary centers to each other in a great triangle of subtle energy, interaction and interrelationship as it exists in the larger exterior pattern. The importance of saying the Great Invocation for world service is crucial. This prayer allows us to focus on the whole macrocosm of Earth within the solar system from the highest center of evolutionary will and purpose to all kingdoms in nature in one great synthesis of energy expressing quality and form. It is the Aquarian Age mantra *par excellence* for revealing the microcosmic/macrocosmic pattern of the planetary and systemic whole. Through the use of the Great Invocation, we can accelerate the integration of humanity as the throat center with the heart and head centers of planet Earth, producing the first effects of an evolutionary integration of the three primary centers. The cause and effect of this integrated triangle is compassionate service to all kingdoms of nature, including the spiritual.

Today, women are more aware of and sensitive to inequality than ever before, especially when bias is in the very structure of a language. Alice Bailey noted the increase in sensitivity to human and civil rights, injustice and inequality as an evolutionary trend resulting in the Universal Declaration of Hu-

man Rights, the United Nations, and other laws, courts and documents. Indeed, history could be written as the slow evolutionary growth of human and civil rights, based upon increased sensitivity and awareness. In keeping with this, an alternative version of the Great Invocation was written omitting gender and culture bias, but disrupting the rhythm of the original and changing its quality. A continuous meditation has been going on ever since to find gender-free word choices in the Great Invocation that would restore the original rhythm.

In light of this, the following alternative wording is offered: we suggest that the word “all” quite simply be substituted for the word “men” in the first three stanzas. We offer this version in honor of Helena Roerich, who wrote that the coming era will be called both the Epoch of Woman and the Epoch of Great Compassion.⁴⁵ This small change offers a version of the Great Invocation to those women who will use nothing but gender-free language. Gender bias keeps some women from using this powerful mantra, which is intended to sound a universal note. Increased awareness changes customs, and women and men alike are beginning to realize, with Helena Roerich, that women who are slaves give birth to men who are slaves, and that men will not be free until women are. For the numerologists,⁴⁶ the same mantric, rhythmic form is used with the same number of words, syllables and letters.

It is further suggested that in an Aquarian age alternate version of the Great Invocation, the word “all” instead of “men” carries with it the added quality of synthesis, a characteristic of the new age of compassionate world service, not just to humanity, but to all kingdoms. For those long-time meditators who have used the original Great Invocation for many years, it is suggested that you might even try including all sentient beings and whole kingdoms in nature, as initiates do, when you meditate using “all” instead of “men.” The qualities of unity and integration stemming from the underlying reality of synthesis can expand our meditation to include all sentient life, all kingdoms in nature and

all planes of expression. This new, expanded and inclusive view of the recipients of light, love and power from the Great Invocation stems from the sense of synthesis that is ushering in the new era of Aquarius.

In saying the fourth stanza of the Great Invocation, the Sanskrit term “manas,” meaning higher mind or higher intelligence, can be shortened to “man” as a substitute for “men,” in recognition that we can only be called intelligent when we treat each other with intelligence. Replacing the “race of men” with the “human race” is also a viable alternative from the first alternate version. The Aquarian version changes only the word “men” four times.

The issue of culture bias in the name “Christ” is more difficult. As we know, Alice Bailey transcribed the Great Invocation in 1945 in her native language, English, which was not its original language. Since then, the Great Invocation has been translated into over thirty languages. Each translation reflects its own religious term for the archetypal, historic figure or avatar who brings redemption, salvation and liberation to the world in every age, regardless of whether this figure is called the Christ, the Messiah or the World Bodhisattva.

In esoteric philosophy, “Christ” refers to a planetary office, the head of the Hierarchy or heart center of the planet, rather than to a cultural figure such as a racial avatar. In reality, the Christ is said to be the same figure no matter by what name He is known. Keeping this and our new global village in mind, Avatars are said to appear at the beginning of every new age. Two great manifestations are expected now, according to Bailey.⁴⁷ The first is the coming of the Avatar of Synthesis to the spiritual heart center or Hierarchy. The second is the coming of the Avatar known as the Christ, to the human center. The film *Avatar*⁴⁸ increases familiarity with this Sanskrit term, even though the word in the movie has quite a different meaning. Do a web search for the Vedanta Society S. CA and look under “avatar” for more on the original Sanskrit meaning. No substitution for the word Christ is offered.

It doesn't matter if you say the Great Invocation in its original form or choose an alternative version in order to reach out to women, or if you extend your invocation to all sentient beings. The important thing is to *use it*, building a strong and lasting thoughtform of integration and synthesis interiorly and exteriorly as an act of Aquarian world service. To repeat a key phrase from Alice Bailey's lecture on Aquarius, “The Aquarian law is based on spiritual illumination, on intuitive perception and brotherly love which is identification with every form in every kingdom in nature. A tremendous future lies ahead.... We are on our way.”⁴⁹

The Great Invocation

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men (all).
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men (all).
May the Christ return to Earth.

From the center where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men (all),
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the center which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the
Plan on Earth.

Conclusion

Conscious cooperation with the evolution of consciousness is seen as emerging in this, the transitional era, as we enter the epoch named after the constellation Aquarius. Writings of diverse spiritual leaders emphasize the emergent qualities of world service, compassion and synthesis. The macrocosmic pattern is reflected in the microcosm and both are united in the Great Invocation, which may be used by individuals and groups in meditation for the purpose of consciously cooperating in the plan of love and light.

(This article is an adaption of an Aquarius 2010 commentary online at: www.worldservice-group.com, entitled *Compassion and Synthesis: Keys to the Aquarian Age*.)

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- 4 Nancy Seifer & Martin Vieweg, *When the Soul Awakens*, 2nd ed. (Reston, VA: Gathering Wave, 2009), 52-53.
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- 8 Bailey, *Glamour, A World Problem* (NY: Lucis, 1950), 3.
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- 36 Ibid., 15.
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- 42 Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (NY: Lucis, 1980), 124.
- 43 Ibid., 124.
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- 49 Bailey, *The Labours of Hercules*, 184.