

THE SAGITTARIUS FESTIVAL 2016

14 Dec 2016

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Happy Holidays, Everyone!

Are we feeling the holiday spirit yet? Or do we feel more like dipping into the holiday ‘spirits’ and celebrating the fact that we made it through yet another year, or instead drowning our sorrows? There is no need for the latter, for there are many opportunities ahead of us. As for myself, this year I decided to bring more light into my life. I started my resolution (Yes, it is also time for us to begin considering our resolutions for the New Year!) by entering into the neighborhood *guerra delle luci* – the war of the Christmas lights – the annual American tradition of the stringing of the Christmas lights, to see which of the neighbors can outdo the rest. Most of the lights on our street here are very tasteful and understated, in typical Italian style. The displays range from very quaint and beautiful decorations of trees in people’s yards to the icicle lights hanging from the windows and so forth. Seeing the lights like that always puts one in a certain mood, and the cold air in the northern hemisphere adds to the effect. But this year our street is a little different.

Anyone walking along taking in the lights in our neighborhood will automatically be able to tell where the American lives. Our next door neighbor, for example, is a DJ and thinks himself to be quite the connoisseur of American culture, and he had basically thrown his lights up into a poor excuse for a bare tree he has in front of his studio. Not to be outdone, and also being an electrician, I couldn’t help myself. Oh yes, I did, for those of you thinking, “Oh no! You didn’t!” We went out and bought long strings of lights – not too many, really – and also a lighted sled with reindeer hanging between our own bare birch trees. I spent a day recently creating my masterpiece. I think it looks quite nice, and we have the most lighted house on the street. I had considered installing a sound system outside, activated with a motion detector to add some life to the street, but the building administrator must be a Capricorn type, quashing my idea before I even had a chance to start. Stick in the mud! My vision of the outcome had to be adjusted, but I am still pleased with the result. Our dogs don’t seem to mind, either, so long as I close the roller shutters at night.

This will be my final letter for the year, but we will leave a review of the year that is rapidly passing to the Chinese New Year letter, which will come out in the latter half of January. Chinese New Year for 2017 starts at the end of January. Suffice it to say, 2016 has been a year to which many of us will be glad to say goodbye. It has been a very tough year for many people. But, it has shown us a vision and a clear path forward for the immediate years to come, for anyone who has been paying attention. More about all that in the Chinese New Year letter, too. This idea of vision and outcome are rather important for this time each year, when we enter the Sagittarian phase of the year. It is the sign most associated with visionary purpose and the achievement of goals. For now, since we are in the Sagittarius interval, we will begin this letter with our usual consideration of Sagittarius, and what that will mean for us in the period immediately before us. We have an inauguration coming up, we have frazzled nerves in the US, Europe, an uncertain and suffering world and quite a lot to sort through in this intervening period of the next decade.

Starting with Sagittarius, then, there are a few main themes that mark this most important sign along the spiritual path – light, focus, direction, goals, devotion and fiery aspiration. It is at once a sign that suggests extremes of effort, but at the same time and in reality has as its major emphasis the idea of equipoise. These themes mentioned can be seen in the rulers of the sign: Jupiter as the orthodox ruler, indicating the Sagittarian’s natural inclination toward expansive and philosophical thought; the Earth as the esoteric ruler, representing the treading of the path of discipleship and of ranging far and wide in service and in search of one’s ultimate purpose; and Mars as the group ruler, which gives the intense focus on an ideal and the ability to fight for one’s beliefs. The symbol

for Sagittarius is, as we know, the archer on a horse, who takes careful aim toward the target of the goal, releases the arrow of devotion toward the target, and upon striking the target, sets off in search of the prize. Upon reaching the arrow, though, the archer finds that there is yet another goal to be had, that his or her quest is not finished, but is only just begun or is a continual effort. Little matter, though: the journey is as important to the Sagittarian as is the goal, and there is much to be learned along the way. One of the main realizations that comes through Sagittarius is that an attainment is not an end point, but is rather just another step along the way of ever-increasing light and love, with the increased power to be of service that comes along with it.

The symbol of the arrow has more than a usual sort of importance, though, as it has a direct correlation with one's mental state. The arrow in Sagittarian symbolism represents the attainment of one-pointed concentration, or the attainment of *shamatha*. An arrow is single pointed. It flies in a predetermined, straight flight path. Once released, it either attains its target (goal) or is deflected by another object or encounters obstructions. Such is the way of meditative practice until perfection of concentration is attained. But in the end, the arrow will eventually find its mark. All that is needed is sufficient 'target practice' by the archer. In this way the spiritual eye, or 'third eye' is gradually opened. So, although the Sagittarian type might be in full gallop toward some desired objective, there comes a point where they must make a mental pause, take careful aim, and fire the arrow. The horse below them, in full motion, falls below the level of consciousness as aim is taken at the goal. The horse is our lower nature, always restless and in motion, sometimes running away with us, carrying us away from our desired path. Our goal is to become a sort of 'horse whisperer', gaining the trust and control of our 'mount', and thus also confidence in ourselves and in the horse. The fact that Sagittarians naturally have a sort of self-confidence is evidence of the state of our present human evolution, in that we can control our lower natures and rise above it in times of crisis or when we desire to do so. We can dismount the horse if we desire. We are no longer a part of it as a centaur, the more ancient symbol of the sign, as we were in the earlier days of our collective evolution.

So, if we are born as a Sagittarian type, with the Sun or ascendant in that sign, then our path in life is fairly obvious: At some point we must learn to steady ourselves, take careful aim at our goals, and then become unwavering in the face of the energies that impact us at every moment, which have at any time the capacity to spook the horse and throw us from the mount if we lose our concentration. What comes then, once we have learned the equipoise and learned to 'shoot true', is the dawning of inspiration – the flooding in of light once the arrow of one-pointed concentration we have developed pierces the veil of whatever has blinded us from a true perception of what we seek. Then, once we have followed the arrow of our concentration to its destination, we can, in a sense, dismount and then climb the mountain of initiation. Sagittarius, which is the one-pointed seeker, precedes Capricorn, the initiate, or the mountain-top experience. The arrow, lightning, a shaft of cold, clear light, etc., all represent the same thing, which is the attainment of inspiration, which leads us ever-onward to seek the next experience of blissful union with the divine. In its highest essence, Sagittarius can represent the attainment of the completion of what is known as the *antahkarana* – the rainbow bridge of light which links us finally and forever with our divine nature when completed. Sagittarius represents an extreme of human attainment in one way, but in another it represents the *sattvic* peace that comes from union with that divine, innermost essence of ourselves. Such is the gift of this most human and interesting of signs for humanity.

Leaving Sagittarius, then and moving on to the full moon and the world at large, we find ourselves facing a year of extremes in many ways. Firstly, there is weather. I have a theory about this, and if it holds true, we are likely to see a very major weather event in the coming year or next which will send a clear message about what is happening with our environment, as well as about our vulnerability to nature and what happens when we do not pay attention to the signs of the times. People can deny climate change all they like, but there is no doubt that pollution affects all of us.

Just look at things like pollution levels in China and India, the Fukushima fallout in the Pacific Ocean and so forth. Our planet is warmer, and this heat engine is driving extremes of weather, cold and hot, all over the planet, droughts, floods and fires, etc. Earth changes are becoming more accelerated. Climate change deniers miss the fact that increased heat drives extremes, not just warmth. It doesn't simply make the world warmer. It also creates cold spots on the earth. I do not think it is all man-made, but we do contribute a great deal to it. And clean air and water should be a priority for all of us. Without those things we face a very grim future.

Aside from weather, 2017 is going to be a year of extremes in other ways, too, especially when one considers the connection between human emotions and weather patterns (yes, there is a connection). The polarization we see in society is going to increase this coming year and reach a head unless we do something about it. It is useful for us to remember that where there is emotion, there is glamour. The stronger the emotion, the greater the illusion – in other words, the greater is the clouding of our minds – and this is especially true of the more negative emotional states. So, if we cannot sit back and divorce ourselves from those issues that engage our more strident emotions, then we can be assured that we leave ourselves open to be deluded, either by ourselves or others. When we take a step back and look at the voting cycles we have just seen both in the US and abroad, how much did emotion play a part, for example, and what did we buy into as a result? With regard to this last point, we might consider the following quote, written over 60 years ago, but still valid today, and it indicates world repercussions:

...The United States [along with another European country] are materially selfish and capitalistically engrossed. Russia is also selfish but it is the selfishness of a fanatical ideal, held by an immature, a too young a people [This has been somewhat moderated since the fall of the Soviet Union]. The selfishness of the United States is also due to youth, but it will eventually yield to experience and to suffering; there is – *fortunately* for the soul of this great people – much suffering in store for the United States...[Further on, applying also to the US], strain, economic privations and anxiety may teach her; the result will be stability.

In the hands of the United States, Great Britain and Russia, and also in the hands of France, lies the destiny of the world disciple, Humanity...The Lords of Karma (four in number) are today working through these four Great Powers; it is, however, a karma which seeks to liberate, as does all karma. In the coming crisis, true vision and a new freedom, plus a wider spiritual horizon may be attained. The crisis, if rightly handled, need not again reach the ultimate horror...[meaning the World War]¹

The 'coming crisis' referred to above was in reference to another period, but we need to look a little more closely before we dismiss this as 'old news'. The US has not really suffered since the time frame of that quote in the way like countries such as Russia, the European countries and many other countries in other continents have. And, are we not in a time of crisis worldwide? While it is true that we fought the Civil War and the Indian Wars at tremendous cost of suffering, went through the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War and so forth, only the Civil War and Indian Wars have visited widespread bloodshed on the America shore. There have been other forms of suffering, to be sure. But blacks and minorities – blacks and indigenous Americans especially – still suffer prejudices and marginalization since those days of overt slavery in the 1800s. There are prejudices still existing that are used by people in power to keep the country divided along racial and cultural lines and which are taught to children by otherwise basically good but mistaken people, ignorant of the lies about race and culture that they have been taught, and often willfully so. Now we seek to liberate ourselves from the specter of financial slavery.

Currently, we do have strains and anxieties, many of them misplaced, about immigrants, ‘wars’ on various things like drugs, poverty and so forth, and very great financial worries. This will not be helped by the incoming US administration, much as people might want to believe so. There is already talk of increased military spending (What are they getting us ready for?), tax cuts for the rich, roll-back of ‘entitlements’, etc. We will get to more of this later. Then, in Europe we have sluggish economies, fear of Islam and economic migrants, etc., and the narratives there are similar to what they are in the US. In Asia, Africa and South America we have the ongoing financial worries, as well as authoritarian regimes, etc. We could go on and on. We live in decisive times. Yes, they can seem troubling, but they can also be seen as opportunity. But with the preceding points in mind, let’s have a look at the full moon and then go on from there.

The full moon takes place on 14 Dec 16 at 11:05 AM AEDT (00:05 UT), or 7:05 PM EST on the 13th in the Americas. The Sun is conjunct Saturn on the day and square to Chiron. Saturn square to Chiron is well known as a painful aspect, and this indicates some sort of situation coming home to roost which is not easy to face. However, the Sun/Saturn conjunction is also trine to the Ceres/Uranus/Eris conjunction and sextile to Jupiter, indicating a humanitarian turn of events and these, along with the trine between the Moon and Mars, make an ‘easy opposition’ of the full moon axis, ameliorating the heaviness of the Sun/Saturn conjunction. In addition, the Sun and Saturn are conjunct the dwarf planet Ixion, a plutino, which can indicate a sort of madness or of throwing caution to the wind. There is also a t-square with a Mercury/Pluto conjunction at the apex, with the Jupiter/Uranus opposition as the base. Media will be very important through this period, as Sagittarius also represents big media, and we are likely to see some attempts at using the media to either overblow efforts to sway opinions one way or the other, or at concerted efforts at psy-ops and the like. However, we may also see the media pull the finger out and do some real investigative journalism for a change, which this latter t-square could also represent.

Given that the full moon takes place close to the ingress of the Sun into Capricorn (the solstice), we need to have brief a look at [that figure](#) as well. Seeing that the ingress takes place within a week of the full moon, it will have essentially the same planetary dynamics as the upcoming full moon, with a couple of notable exceptions. To start, the Moon will be in Libra, square the Sun. Since the ingress figure essentially applies for the first quarter of 2017, we find a moderating influence with the Libra Moon, and also important decisions to be made. This particular Sun/Moon combination is good for resolving legal matters and for negotiations, and also points to a more opportunistic tone, with a great deal of negotiations around business interests, which is probably to be expected with the incoming administration in the US. But it applies worldwide. This is also a pairing that is not particularly noted for its warmth, but it is quite a social combination. It is what we might call a ‘center-right’ combination. We can expect quite a lot of back and forth between sides, trying to bring people on board with plans, which is enhanced by the Sun/Mars sextile. There is also a more combative note that can come with the Libra Moon. The Sun is also conjunct the dwarf planet Quaoar, which enhances the imaginative tone of this quarter and also places a stronger focus on finances, which will be important for countries like Italy, the EU in general and the US. An example of [how Quaoar works](#) can be seen in the likes of Albert Einstein, Paul McCartney, Bernardo Bertolucci and Peter Sellars, all of whom had Quaoar on the ascendant. Imagination was the key word with those people, and the same sort of influence is found when Quaoar is conjunct the Sun. Quaoar was a creation deity.

Will the full moon affect anyone we know? Indeed it will – Donald Trump. He will have Jupiter trine to his Sun from now all through his honeymoon period in the White House (the first 100 days in office). Saturn will then be trine to his Mars/ascendant conjunction, where it will make its retrograde station. Jupiter will make its final trine in September of next year, when Saturn makes its final opposition to his Sun, the latter of which passes on toward the last of October. This will bolster him through the biggest part of his first year in office, if nothing happens to him before he makes it

to office. There is still too much uncertainty, planetary-wise, and he is making moves that are not going to go in his favor in the long run – such as making questionable calls to world leaders for countries in which he has business interests,² making a dubious deal to keep jobs in the country,³ keeping his support base fired up with his rhetoric,⁴ his picks for cabinet members⁵, etc. His cabinet members are not altogether on the nose, though.⁶ These things, along with the uncertainty that America is feeling at the moment and its feeling that the average American has had a raw deal for the past 30 years, means that the eyes of the nation will be on Trump and he had better deliver, or things will start to go bad for him and his administration toward the end of 2017 and onward.

Some readers might say that this is being anti-Trump and that he has not been given a chance yet, the latter of which is true. But his past record isn't going to go away. Anyone who thinks that Trump is going to come in and make sweeping changes to the established order has not studied the man, his record or the entrenched system that he faces. *Any* administration these days needs to be watched very closely, because the world in general is in a state of change the likes of which we have not seen for some time, and actions by leaders need to be taken with great care as to the consequences and need to be transparent. With the bashing that the major parties and the media just had with the US election, perhaps we will see more transparency, perhaps less. The biggest concern with Trump as president is not Trump himself, either, but rather the Republican Congress, and many of those representatives have been instrumental in putting the systems in place that have disadvantaged the public. They seek to do great damage to public well-being with their policies, such as privatizing Medicare, Social Security and the like. Time will tell.

Speaking of Sagittarius and its horse symbolism, along with the Eris/Uranus (Eris incited the Trojan war) connection with the election, if we have chosen well, then Trump will not turn out to be an unwitting Trojan horse for oligarchic interests, but will instead begin to reverse the trends we have seen in the past decades. A big worry with Trump is the specter of crony capitalism. And, if he seeks to build wealth from the top down (think 'Reaganomics' and 'Thatcherism') instead of from the ground up, then he is likely to be made a scapegoat for a collapsed economy at the end of his term as President. Reaganomics was one of the biggest Trojan horses ever foisted on the American public. It served to create 'the 1%', served to privatize services that should have never been privatized, engendered 'free trade agreements' – which are actually corporate protection agreements – greatly enabled the biggest financial collapse since the Great Depression and has steadily disadvantaged the average American. Its reflection in other countries, especially in the West, has done the same in those countries, most notably in Britain and Europe, and is one of the things with which Europe struggles greatly at the moment. Trump's current tax plan favors the very rich and cuts corporate taxes,⁷ much like Reaganomics did. In fact, it would likely create a tax shortfall of trillions of dollars over the next decade if things go according to what we are seeing so far. The shortfall would likely be made up for by 'the necessity' (according to Republicans) of cutting public programs, like Medicare and Social Security. Just wait and see what happens when Congress sits for its first session under a Trump administration.

As for the US in general, the last time Saturn opposed the US Mars, as it is now, was in November of 1987, and Ronald Reagan was formally charged with 'ultimate responsibility' in the Iran Contra Affair.⁸ Mars sits in the seventh house of the US chart, which is especially indicative of our foreign policy and the often militant nature thereof. That transit was also the activation of an eclipse, as is the case this time. In mid-December this year at the time of the full moon we will have a double activation of the current eclipse with the Sun and Saturn. In fact the full moon falls within a degree of the US Mars, adding extra weight to the event. There will likely be some sort of crisis or event in the US related to law, public enemies (7th house), hidden enemies or institutions (12th house) or the youth of the country or ambassadors (5th house). I would suspect the problem to come from Trump's overseas business interests and his trying to get out of divesting his business interests while he is in office. Of interest, too, is that his children (5th house again) are a key sticking point in

the issue of his business interests, their security concerns relative their sitting in on meetings with foreign officials and security clearances, and so forth.

There are increasing calls for investigations into these matters and for Trump to divest himself of his business interests, even though he is not legally required to do so.⁹ The problem would come from Republican obstruction of efforts toward such investigations. It would take concerted public pressure to bring such a thing about. What we might see instead of a full blown crisis is for Trump to finally cave in to pressure and do the right thing about his business interests, especially his overseas holdings and foreign contractual arrangements. This again will be a gauge of his Leo ascendant and the amount of soul force it demonstrates. If he is truly interested in the public good he will do right by the voting public and put his business interests in a true independently-managed blind trust – without his children’s involvement. If the Gemini persona still rules, then he will finagle a way out of it, or simply ignore it altogether.

Speaking of Gemini, Mercury (Gemini’s ruler) begins its retrograde station on Pluto in Capricorn on the 19th when the electoral college makes its final pronouncements on the election. Pluto in Capricorn has brought the issue of plutocrats and plutocracies squarely into the public eye since it has been in Capricorn, and we know what retrograde Mercury usually signals – confusion, turns of events in ways we had not expected, reversals of fortunes, difficulty with contracts, communications, electronics and machinery, etc. A retrograde station of Mercury is a moment wherein people are likely to say, “Wait a minute...am I sure I want to go with the status quo or do I want to change my outlook?” Often, our outlook gets changed for us during Mercury retro periods. Mid-December is going to be a most fascinating period, especially in the US and Italy. We can easily see why it will be so in the US, but why Italy, one might ask?

Leaving considerations of the US aside for the moment, Italy finds itself in a very interesting and potentially advantageous position in the current and future world view. Sagittarius is the soul expression of this ancient people. Sagittarius also rules the soul of Washington, DC, as well as the personas of Belgium and Spain. The Italian persona is ruled by Leo, and Leo rules the persona of Russia, as well as the soul of France.¹⁰ Italy can act as a mediator between all the countries just mentioned if it chose to do so, using its soul force and its long-time experience in world affairs. It is making overtures to Russia and cooperating there through business interests, bypassing somewhat the sanctions placed on Russia by the US and EU after the Crimean incident. There has been a long friendship between Washington and Italy, too, with the US having seen a large migration of Italians in the 19th and 20th centuries.¹¹ Americans and Italians have a sort of mutual curiosity and admiration for each other. People from both countries list the other as one of their preferred travel destinations, for instance. We could go on, but perhaps we see the possibilities. Italy, for instance, can act as a mediator between Russia and Washington, if it can straighten out its internal struggles.

We just had a constitutional referendum in Italy. It did not go well for [Matteo Renzi](#), the Italian PM. The [referendum](#) went against him by almost 20%, which was a very clear rejection of his proposals. At the time of the vote, Uranus, Eris and Ceres were all square to the Italian Venus/Saturn conjunction, and Saturn was transiting opposite the Italian Sun/Uranus conjunction. Renzi also had the Uranus, Ceres and Eris conjunction transiting square to his Sun, with Pluto approaching the conjunction and with Saturn on his Mars. I believe I would have chosen another day to have such a vote. The Italian referendum, along with the election in the US, other elections in Europe where populist candidates are faring well, and Brexit, have led to a lot of wild speculation about the future of Europe and the Eurozone. A wait-and-see approach is probably better at this point. The reason we might say that is because of the Italian referendum, and also the recent election in Austria where the Greens candidate won out over the far-right candidate. Memories are still fresh in the collective consciousness of Europe regarding the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe in the last century and the disastrous effects it had on the continent. The causes of the rise of nationalistic fervor in those

times were quite similar to what we see today, and people recognize this. Economies had tanked, people were out of work, there was fear of communism, etc. Problems were blamed on immigrants and minorities. This was one of the primary reasons the older and more conservative sector of the population of Italians voted 'No', and why the Austrians turned toward the Greens candidate.

In Italy, the referendum would have placed too much power in the hands of the central government, taken away the sovereignty of the regions of Italy and laid the ground open for the rise of another Mussolini. 'Il Duce' was a Leo, and he played into the Leo persona of Italy at the time, just as Trump has played into the Gemini persona of the US, and as did George Bush Sr. in the '90s. Mussolini's rise was all about making Italy great again – a sort of 'new Roman Empire'. The government setup was similar then to what we would have seen in the reorganized Italian parliament post-referendum, and it would have enabled a strong authoritarian figure to rise to power once again. The Italians were wise to reject it, at least at this point in time. But it still leaves Italy in a weakened state and with many internal problems to face, not the least of which is its banking sector. However, the main reason people voted 'No' in Italy was economic (Saturn transiting opposite the Sun) and the tide was turned by southern Italy, where anti-establishment sentiment is strong, and who have seen the greatest privations due to the economic policies of the last decades. It was a situation similar to what we saw in the US elections and in Brexit.

If we want to see real change in the West we must make a concerted effort to end the neo-liberal economic systems in place and find another way of doing business. It will mean regulation and increased taxation of big business, busting up of conglomerates, re-introducing things like value-added tax on American imports (the Europeans already do this with their own economies), a wealth tax, etc. Socialism, you say? Well, this is exactly what Teddy Roosevelt did in the early 20th century. What we have seen in the past 30 years is that deregulation of business only disadvantages the average citizen and places too much wealth in the hands of a few, which is where it tends to stay. We have entered a new kind of 'robber baron' era in the US. There are many similarities. Change has to start form the grass roots or it will be unsustainable. Leaders in the US like Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump recognize this, which is why they are working hard to keep their support bases motivated. But their economic and rhetorical methods differ greatly. The major parties in the US and abroad seem more intent on keeping things as they are, which is why we stay in the mess we are in. There is too much money involved in politics.

What all this means for the world at large is that these next years are going to see great changes in public policy and activism. It can either go the way of authoritarianism as it did in the early decades of the last century, or we can see a true coming together of diverse sectors of the public, educating ourselves about the real reasons we feel disadvantaged, and working together to change it. The latter way is not so pie-in-the-sky as one might think. Public pressure is usually the only thing that has brought real change to governments. In the US we did so back in the early decades of the last century, through labor unions, demonstrations, etc. Such action ended the era of the 'robber barons' and brought in labor reforms, a decent living wage and workers' rights. And, it increased the prosperity of the nation. There was a further adjustment that had to be made after the Great Depression, which had its roots in WWI, and it took another Roosevelt to do that. The fight needs to be enjoined again, and public sentiment is rising. People are voting for *real* change now, not window dressing, the latter being how many people saw the Italian referendum, and Hillary Clinton as well. How the US fares in the coming years will send strong messages to the rest of the nations. Will we see window dressing in the US, or true change wrought through the public? Again, we will have to wait and see.

The next years in the US and in Europe are going to be very telling as to what is to come after 2025, when the next conclave of the spiritual forces guiding our world meet.¹² If the four nations mentioned in the quote earlier in this letter – the US, Britain, France and Russia – hold the tone of

spiritual progress on this planet, then relations between and within those countries need to be watched very closely, and better relations be fostered between them. Russia is a part of Europe, even though it bridges the East and the West. France is undergoing strong tests as to its ideals. Germany, for instance, is making moves to distance itself from US hegemony¹³, and possibly to foster better relations with Russia, which is more hopeful in many ways, and other European nations are beginning to think in kind. The US is suffering under its financial and political self-interests. China and Russia are undergoing their own economic experiments, and challenge the corporate interests that influence Washington as well. Propaganda needs to be shifted from divisiveness toward a more unifying message. It is far from that at the moment. Media of all types these days tends to be quite a cesspool of emotion-grabbing misinformation on all sides and it is difficult to see the truth sometimes. Much of this is propagated by moneyed interests, tending to be more right-wing,¹⁴ and what we see in everything that is taking place is a test of the resolve of humanity to either rise above and control our instinctive separative instincts and materialism or to be further bound by them.

To end on a brighter note, we recently saw a victory at the Standing Rock standoff in the US, when Obama finally decided to act and the Army Corp of Engineers decided to deny a permit to authorize the completion of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) across indigenous lands. It was a perfect example of what can happen when people band together and stand for their beliefs and their future. It brought in diverse allies (veterans, politicians, local governments and celebrities for example) and sounded the note that people will stand and fight for their environment and the legacy for their children, and for each other. We are also witnessing the fall of the rebel stronghold in Aleppo, the last urban stronghold of the rebellion against Assad in Syria, which was fomented by Western corporate interests. Both of these are victories against corporate meddling and selfishness. It shows what can happen when there is sustained, focused effort toward a cause, and both of these took place in the Sagittarius interval this year. The war is not won. The battles continue, but the more materialistic forces are on notice, and the tide is turning. There will be many more such incidences to come.

We might take a lesson in civil disobedience and activism from the Sioux this year at Standing Rock. The Sioux have as one of their symbols the 'four medicine arrows' – four arrows with their points meeting in the center, dividing the circle into four quarters. Each of the arrows has a unique meaning, among others: wisdom, innocence, the ability to see far into the future, and the importance of inner vision through introspection. It is quite Sagittarian in a way. Not to detract from the Sioux symbolism, but the arrow is universally seen as a symbol of one-pointed purpose. In this coming year may we never lose sight of the goal before us and the path we must take. In joining with others along the Way, the journey is made easier. Let our focus be clear, our minds unwavering and our efforts be resolute. Wishing all of you a happy safe holiday season for 2016, we look forward to an inspiring and very active year of the Red Rooster, the Rooster of Solitude, in 2017. Happy travels, and I'll see you in the New Year!

Blessings,
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7 Dec 2016

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- ¹ Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, p. 429
- ² http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/26/us/politics/donald-trump-international-business.html?_r=0 and <http://www.wsj.com/articles/trumps-foreign-business-entanglements-would-create-unparalleled-conflicts-1478083150>
- ³ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/eriksherman/2016/12/04/trumps-carrier-deal-means-nothing-for-future-jobs/#5a73c4464c7b>
- ⁴ <http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2016/12/populist-back> and <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/12/01/politics/donald-trump-thank-you-tour/>
- ⁵ https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/30/donald-trump-george-monbiot-misinformation?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Facebook
- ⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/12/02/donald-trump-deserves-more-credit-than-hes-getting-for-his-cabinet-picks/?utm_term=.2928a247991a
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- ⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OeDaGffyfw> , video starting at 15:17
- ¹⁰ Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations*, table, p. 67
- ¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_Americans
- ¹² Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, p. 530
- ¹³ <https://www.rt.com/news/365750-trump-election-clinton-germany/> For the original German article, see: https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2016A64_tmm.pdf
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