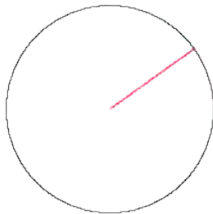


Let's begin by taking a look at the first image, 'The Birds of Stymphalus'¹: From his arduously gained, elevated vantage point on the Path of Return, a Sagittarian disciple looks out across the long Way that lies ahead. He sees the waters of his own astral domain ruffled by the thoughtforms that stream 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.²

¹ Stymphalus is the setting for Herakles 9th labor.

² kama-manas: literally means 'desire-mind'

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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 ring-pass-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 Thoughtforms: The great hint given to Herakles 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 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."*

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*

thoughtform-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 subplanes 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).

Thoughtforms: The above quote by DK gives us some idea of the difference between an idea and a thoughtform. 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 thoughtforms, which presented Herakles with the challenge of his Sagittarian labor. Control through self-mastery is the key here. Interestingly, Herakles gained that control through a gift from Athena (who represents higher mind) of cymbals capable of producing a sound intolerable to the 'thoughtform-making faculty.' Were I to lift 'The Birds of Stymphalus' one degree further towards the esoteric, I might show Herakles 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 Thoughtform' 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 thoughtforms closest to this radiance begin to take on the luminosity and color of that intuitive realm. However, no thoughtform in service to the lesser self can enter this holy place— for only through profound silence can this temple be known. AAB 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 these images with me!

Highest Regards,

Francis

PS If any of you are interested in studying the works of Djwahl Khul (which I often quote in these notes), and through His works connect with a like-minded group of disciples, there is an extraordinary online school called the 'Morya Federation' which might prove of interest to you. Classes begin this month at the winter solstice— so it's a perfect time to look into this online spiritual community! <http://www.moryafederation.net/>