

FESTIVAL OF CANCER

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Good evening, friends, and welcome. Tonight we celebrate the Festival of Cancer, one of the two great “gates” of the zodiac, as the Alice Bailey writings call them. Capricorn is one gate, which leads to the lighted mountaintop of initiation, while the gate of Cancer leads into incarnation. In Cancer the human soul descends into “dark matter”, into the life of Earth and mass experience.

I’ve been thinking about the meaning of the “mass” and the sense it might convey to some that persons with strong influences of Cancer energy probably haven’t yet reached the stage of individuality associated with Leo, much less the stage of group consciousness of Aquarius. Yet no less a person than Albert Einstein was born with Cancer rising, and H.P. Blavatsky was too. So how does the energy of Cancer express through the disciple and initiate, as these individuals surely were? That’s something for us to ponder on tonight.

The keynote of Cancer, which we’ll work with in our meditation, is “I build a lighted house and therein dwell.” At this time in the solar cycle, the sun has just crested at its zenith and light pours into the world. At the time of the full moon each month, the moon stands out of the way, so to speak, and allows the sun and Earth to stand in open, unimpeded alignment with each other. An ancient prayer, the Gayatri, expresses humanity’s aspiration for light and the sense, from ancient times, that the sun conceals, veils, protects and directs light both physically and spiritually into our world. Let us take a moment to link up with the many groups and individuals who are meditating at this time, and then say together this ancient prayer of aspiration.

Light needs a channel, and that’s the purpose of these monthly group meditations. We’ve been holding these meetings, along with many other groups throughout the world, for many years now. The capacity to be a pure channel and an unimpeded distributor takes a long time to develop, and the Tibetan says that the goal for the neophyte in this process is simply to be a channel: to be open and available for the in pouring energies to circulate through the group and into humanity. We don’t look for personal enlightenment but rather serve selflessly as part of a vast planetary-wide channel for the in pouring Light and Love of God.

The growth of the new group of world servers over the past century is verification of the dynamic and creative nature of this channel which now permeates every aspect of our planetary life. One of the main responsibilities of the new group of world servers is “to free the prisoners of the planet” and that is an apt and curious description of the Cancer experience. Its keynote, “I build a lighted house and therein dwell”, refers to this. The house can be considered a metaphor for the soul’s abiding place while in incarnation – in a body on Earth, and limited by that same body. That body both gives the soul a point of anchorage in the world, defining a particular field of service and a particular group of relationships shared with other incarnated souls to whom it’s related by eons of karmic ties, and inevitably constrained and limited by that same body.

“Cancer, with its urge to incarnation and the taking of form, is a place of symbolic imprisonment. As evolution proceeds, it’s an imprisonment that the soul increasingly chooses to submit to “in order to salvage the lives with which it has an affinity”, as the Tibetan puts it.

“The prisoners of the planet” is an inclusive term that encompasses all lives which are embodied in forms, on any and every level of consciousness right up to the planetary Logos Himself, who is described as the “Divine Rebel”. Of this high Being, the Tibetan writes the following:

“The great stream of living energy which is manifesting itself in our Earth scheme of evolution is conditioned by a temperament, an attitude and an orientation that is that of a "Divine Rebel." It is only rebellion that produces pain and sorrow, but this rebellion is inherent and innate in the Deity of our planet

Himself, the "One in Whom we live and move and have our being." It is, therefore, a tendency greater than the individual unit. It is only possible to express this amazing truth about the planetary Life under a veil of symbology and in terms of human thought. In this there is ever a risk, for men interpret all they read and hear and experience in terms of themselves.

The *Old Commentary* says:

"He entered into life and knew it to be death.

"He took a form and grieved to find it dark.

"He drove Himself forth from the secret place and sought the place of light, and light revealed all that he sought the least.

"He craved permission to return.

"He sought the Throne on high and Him who sat thereon. He said 'I sought not this. I looked for peace, for light, for scope to serve, to prove my love and to reveal my power. Light there is none. Peace is not found. Let me return.'

But He Who sat upon the Throne turned not his head. He seemed not e'en to listen nor to hear. But from the lower sphere of darkness and of pain a voice came forth and cried: 'We suffer here. We seek the light. We need the glory of an entering God. [I can find no other words except these last two to express the ancient symbol from which I am translating.] Lift us to Heaven. Enter, O Lord, the tomb. Raise us into the light and make the sacrifice. Break down for us the prison wall and enter into pain.'

The Lord of Life returned. He liked it not, and hence the pain." (*Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II, pp. 97-8*)

All lives embodied in forms are prisoners of the planet, but they fall into two basic categories: Those lives which act under the influence of a conscious purpose and knowingly consent to limit the life that is in them for a time, such as the planetary Logos but also including the solar Angels – those Lords of Ceaseless Devotion who are ourselves – our monads, our highest selves if we could be seen from the level of the monad. The other type of prisoners of the planet is those lives limited to forms and not yet self-conscious – not yet aware of their individuality. As the Tibetan puts it, "Some lives are prisoners and know it. Others are prisoners and know it not. The clue to suffering lies right here in the realm of mind. Pain and agony, rebellion and the conscious urge towards betterment and the changing of conditions are only found where what we call individuality is present, where the "I" complex is controlling, and where a self-conscious entity is functioning. There is of course the equivalent to pain in kingdoms below the human, but it enters into another differentiation. It is not self-related. Sub-human forms of life suffer and undergo discomfort and are subject to the throes of death but they lack memory and prevision, and possess not that mental apprehension which will enable them to relate past and present and anticipate the future. They are exempt from the agony of foreboding. Their entire reaction to what are called evil conditions is so different to that of humanity that it is difficult for us to grasp it."

Each field of awareness, when entered into, reveals an expansion of consciousness – opens up a wider vista than had previously been recognised. The boundaries of that field of awareness create, in time, a prison. The objective of all the work of liberation is to release the consciousness and expand its field of contacts. "Where there are boundaries of any kind, you have a prison. Where there is an apprehension of a vision and of a wide unconquered territory of contacts, then there will inevitably be a sense of imprisonment and cramping. Where there is realisation of worlds to conquer, of truths to be learnt, of conquests to be made, of desires to be achieved, of knowledges to be mastered, there you will have a festering sense of limitation, goading on the aspirant to renewed effort and driving the living entity on along the path of evolution. Instinct, governing the vegetable and animal kingdoms, develops into intellect in the human family. Later intellect merges into intuition and intuition into illumination. When the superhuman consciousness is evoked these two—intuition and illumination—take the place of instinct and of intelligence."

This liberation of the prisoners of the planet is a true definition of the service of the soul. Service saves, liberates and releases. This is an excellent measurement for evaluating right action: does it liberate and release another life. Or does it, even with the best of intentions, serve to bind and hold that life?

The form serves the soul for a time. Without the form and the need to respond sensitively to conditions in the environment, the soul would never awaken to knowledge in the three worlds, mental, emotional and physical, and therefore, would never know God in manifestation. Yet at some point in the life cycle of every form, the boundaries of that form become a prison, a confinement to the indwelling life, and death ensues as an act of the Principle of Expansion, and all of this occurs under the great spiritual Law of Evolution. It is utterly benign.

The most important effect of liberation takes place in consciousness. Each kingdom in nature serves as the liberator of the kingdom of forms below it. The vegetable kingdom draws nutrients from the mineral kingdom, the animal kingdom draws upon the nourishment of the vegetable kingdom to further its evolution, and the human kingdom serves as the liberator of the animal kingdom through the impact of the mind.

The human mind itself isn't unified but rather multi-layered, the mental plane being composed of seven subplanes. In terms of consciousness, this boils down roughly to three types: mass consciousness (Cancer), individual consciousness (Leo), and group consciousness (Aquarius). "The masses" is a term used by the Tibetan to refer to the vast numbers of human beings who still are subject to the impression and impact of more powerful minds than theirs, because they haven't yet really learned to think for themselves. One of our students put it very succinctly when she said, most people put their feelings into words and call that thinking. But it's not. The Buddha dedicated his life to helping people to learn to think by drawing upon the inner light that dwells within every human being. "Brothers, I do not come to offer you any dogmas, and I do not ask you to believe in that which so many others believe; I only exhort you to independent This liberation of the prisoners of the planet is a true definition of the service of the soul. Service saves, liberates and releases. This is an excellent measurement for evaluating right action: does it liberate and release another life. Or does it, even with the best of intentions, serve to bind and hold that life?

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that he contacts, be they his fellow aspirants, or an animal, or a flower. He will act as a transmitter of light in the darkness. He will dispel the glamour around him and let in the radiance of reality.

When large numbers of the sons of men can so act, then the human family will enter upon its destined work of planetary service. Its mission is to act as a bridge between the world of spirit and the world of material forms. All grades of matter meet in man, and all the states of consciousness are possible to him. Mankind can work in all directions and lift the subhuman kingdoms into heaven and bring heaven down to earth."

Let us work now in meditation with our seed thought, "I build a lighted house and therein dwell."