

The Living Flame

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Welcome everyone and thank you for coming to work together with the inpouring energies of the Cancer full moon. Cancer falls at an interesting juncture within the spiritual year, following as it does upon the potent period of the higher interlude. Perhaps as a result of that placement, it doesn't always receive a lot of attention, but that is in the nature of this sign. Within the cycles of the breath we're now working in the period of outbreathing. And we can see this period of outbreathing, or this pouring out of light, reflected in the world because this is the time of greatest light and that's a symbol of Cancer and what it has to offer to us. Because it is a time that we can collectively distribute the energies that have been poured in during the higher interlude period and ground them within the etheric-physical plane because Cancer is related to manifestation, it is the sign through which the energy of the seventh ray pours most fully for the disciples and the initiates of the world.

The quality of the sign of Cancer, this quiet sign, is reflected in the simplicity of its keynote, "I build a lighted house and therein dwell." People across many traditions or of no particular tradition at all, could respond to these simple words, and that is fitting for a sign related to the mass consciousness. For despite all the tumult and darkness in the world, the chaos and the strife, this message of light, and of the need to identify ourselves with that light, resonates deeply with many people today. The stage of mass consciousness is immersed in the astral plane, in the world of desires that appear real but which gradually begin to lose their luster. This inner shift, this awakening to the unreal and the determination to approach the Real, is the turning point on the path. As we come to recognize the blinding nature of form life, we begin to seek out a new direction.

The keynote and the message of this sign encourages us to do just that--to build something lasting and to put our faith in that, instead of continuing to live in this imagined world composed of our fears, envy, longing, dreams, memories and desires. One enters the path and begins to see how all of these imaginings are as a veil over reality. And the purpose of the path then becomes the unveiling of all this and the discovery of the reality lying behind or within.

Radiance we are and power.

We stand forever with our hands stretched out,
linking the heavens and the earth, the inner world of meaning and the subtle world of glamour.

We reach into the light and bring it down to meet the need.

We reach into the silent Place and bring from thence the gift of understanding. Thus with the light we work, and turn the darkness into day.

OM

There is a beautiful passage in the teachings which could be meditated upon during this period, giving insight into the nature of the energies now available to us and how we can work more effectively with them. The passage runs as follows, “That which is to be revealed lies all around us and within us. It is the significance of all that is embodied in form, the meaning behind the appearance, the reality veiled by the symbol, the truth expressed in substance (*Esoteric Psychology, Vol. II*, pp. 247).” This passage could be viewed as a reflection of the symbolism hid within the sign Cancer and as manifested through its planetary rulers, the moon and Neptune. For the moon is representative of the form life, of the symbol, of that which veils and hides the inner light and Neptune stands for the indwelling majesty,

During the sun’s passage through this sign we can take advantage of the opportunity to free ourselves from some of these separating veils, at least momentarily. The veils are related to obscurations within consciousness, to old and outworn thoughtforms that are tamasic in nature, possessed of that inert quality that ties us to the matter aspect and holds us back from our next step forward upon the path.

It’s interesting to note, however, that the Vedic system of astrology is moon-based. For the moon is not only related to the form nature but also to the divine feminine, to Shakti, to the sense of being in harmony with prana or the life-force. The moon, or Chandra as it is known in Sanskrit, is defined as “illustrious” and is understood as a window or a reflector of the power of the soul’s light. Surely the seers of this sacred tradition in ancient India saw beyond the veil of the moon, into the sacred planets that lie behind and, in this case of Cancer, the planet the moon veils is Neptune.

It’s said that the quality of a sign is reflected by its planetary rulers and it would seem therefore that this triple rulership by Neptune, for disciples, is a clear indication of the spiritual potency and tremendous opportunities offered by this rather quiet and innocuous sign. The potential channel for spiritual impression and inspiration offered by this time within the annual cycle when the sun is passing through this sign, is surely significant. With the triple influence of Neptune governing, the available energies are a potent opportunity for alignment with Hierarchy for Neptune is related to the buddhic plane, the plane wherein the ashrams are to be found.

Neptune is one of the most sacred of all the sacred planets in our system. The Secret Doctrine tells us in fact that Neptune does not even belong to our system at all, but stems from to an extra-systemic energy related to the heart of the sun. It would seem that as Neptune is in the nature of a sacrifice, that the great Logos who embodies that planet is performing some kind of sacrificial role, bringing in second and sixth ray energies from another system altogether, aiding our Solar Logos in carrying forward the task that is before him within this system, a task that is concerned with the manifestation of love, of releasing and generating an ever greater love.

Neptune is, in the ancient books, called the Christ and this influence is surely responsible for preparing human consciousness for the coming externalization of the ashrams, an act that will bring about a greater release and stimulation of the second ray soul of our planet thereby

enabling us to fulfill our dharma within the life of the Solar Logos, the Grand Man of the Heavens.

Neptune has another role to play. There are three synthesizing planets in our system and Neptune is the synthesizing planet along the second ray line. Eventually all the planets in our system will merge within these synthesizing planets, hence their name, and, as such, since this is a second ray system, one day perhaps we could speculate that all will merge into Neptune and eventually merge within another system altogether.

Hence the opportunity we have now because of this potent Neptunian influence to undertake that task of trampling on the outer sheaths that separate us from our divinity and coming into alignment with those forces that can serve to bridge the gap within the antahkarana bridge and bring through spiritual impression with potency, effecting a merging between the inner and outer planes.

In order to work effectively with these energies involves building, as the keynote suggests.

Building is a seventh ray quality and during this time in the annual cycle this ray influence is powerfully controlling through the ray triangles. The fact that Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter illustrates the symbolic importance of the work of building. This inner house isn't raised quickly, we have to learn how to do it and we're an apprentice for a long period of time, watching others, following in their path. Step by step, over a long series of lives, we slowly begin to construct this inner house. But in all building work it is helpful to have a blueprint we can follow.

One such blueprint available to us is found in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, a 10 page document that provides a systematic method by training. The word sutra is a Sanskrit term meaning thread and comes from the same root as to sew. The sutras literally therefore provide a close-knit, step-by-step approach to spiritual progress. The constructed thread "leads [eventually] from the Hierarchy and a point of tension in that Hierarchy...to distant places, to many planes and into many hearts. This thread enables the disciple (if he has been permitted to learn how to use it) to return instantaneously to his centre of work and to reach at any desired moment the 'Master of his life (*Discipleship in the New Age*, Vol. I, p. 742)." It all starts with the garnered ability to live within that center within oneself wherein dwells the higher self.

Western scholars today state that the sutras were compiled anywhere between 500 BCE to 300 CE but Alice Bailey said that Hindu scholars place their compilation as far back as 10,000 BCE. It's interesting to note that the Sutras were lost for over 700 years until Swami Vivekananda and members of the Theosophical Society resurrected them in the early part of the 20th century. Clearly the sutras were found because humanity demonstrated the ability to respond to them in a new and deeper way. And, as a result of this inner responsiveness, the sutras were elevated by Western students to a status unknown to them in the past.

Patanjali begins the treatise simply with the enunciation of the sacred word -- the AUM (the OM). And then he went on to state that the purpose of the teaching was yoga, or union, union of the individual soul with the Oversoul. The sutras provide the means whereby the soul can be made flesh and demonstrate as a living flame through an individual on the physical plane.

In the 2nd sutra, Patanjali gave us the means whereby the student could realize that goal. The method he said was control of the mind, or as it is called in the East, the control of the modifications of the thinking principle. The rest of the sutras lay out the steps by which this control of the mental modifications could be achieved. This teaching provides the basis of the entire raja yoga system of training that has guided and remains the guiding force of disciples and certain members of the spiritual Hierarchy as well.

The inner light grows as a result of spiritual practice, coupled with a life of service. Deep within ourselves we possess this reserve of light which when fanned can illumine matters both large and small-- revealing the solution to problems and situations, bringing clarity to that which was formerly obscure, enabling the individual to become a light bearer to others..

The first step towards this awakening occurs through the subjugation of the lower nature and a focusing on the heart through the practice of love. All true and safe paths begin with the focus on the master within one's own heart. But gradually, through the growing influence of the mind, the mystic becomes the occultist and the consciousness shifts from the twelve petalled lotus in the heart center to the 12 petalled lotus found within the head center at the center of the 1,000 petalled lotus.

In one of the Sutras we find a practical counsel that relates to the means of expressing divinity upon the physical plane, which is of the nature of Cancer: Sutra 23 in Book III states, "Union with others is to be gained through one-pointed meditation upon the three states of feeling—compassion, tenderness and dispassion."

We know that we can only begin to build the new world, under the impress of Aquarian energy, by working with others, through the fostering of community. And this sutra holds out to us some of the keys for realizing this goal--one-pointed meditation on compassion, tenderness and dispassion are states that enable us to identify ourselves with the souls of others. These three states relate to the three lower vehicles --dispassion to the mental vehicle, tenderness to the astral and compassion is said to be related to physical plane expression and so I'd like to touch a little on that quality.

In the Tibetan's and AAB's commentary on this sutra in *The Light of the Soul* we read a powerful definition of compassion. Compassion is defined as the ability of the student to "adapt his vibration so that it responds to his brother's need; [and, as a result] he is enabled to share in all that is taking place in his brother's heart. This he does through the keying up of his own

vibration to respond to the love nature of his own ego, and through that unifying principle all hearts everywhere are open to him.”

The teacher who most embodied a life demonstration of compassion was surely The Buddha. At a certain stage on his initial path of asceticism he began to ask himself why he was denying himself all human pleasures? Where had this path gotten him? It was then that he recalled a type of joy that had spontaneously arisen within him as a child as a result of a feeling of compassion for some insects that were being killed in a plot of land that was being tilled for farming. Joy flowed from his compassionate heart in response to viewing this situation. As a result of recollecting this experience he vowed to cultivate those mental states that paralleled his childhood experience so he could become a vehicle for this compassionate joy.

He actively began to avoid any state of mind that would impede his enlightenment. He began to practice harmlessness and kindness to counter any incipient feelings of ill will. He cultivated right speech making it reasoned, accurate, clear and beneficial. He learned to banish malevolence, indolence and anxiety from his mind and as a result became full of compassion, desiring the best for everyone and everything.

He infused the old and punitive disciplines with new ones based on compassion and loving kindness. Thus a new type of human being was birthed--one not dominated by craving, greed and egotism. Through his meditative practice he came to evoke “that huge, expansive and immeasurable feeling that knows no hatred”--and he directed these feeling states to the four corners of the world. He did not omit a single living thing--plant, animal, demon, friend or foe--from the radius of his benevolence

This distribution of beneficent energies seems very much in the nature of this fluid sign of Cancer. So let us use the opportunity of this full moon period to create a group channel.

Together we can use the opportunity of this period to distribute the energies of light, love and power to the masses of humanity. We can aid in this distribution by cultivating a compassionate response to life, by cultivating those mental states that are geared towards this realization, building them into the fabric of our minds and hearts, thereby rooting out self-centeredness and greed. Let us use this sacred time to play our part to making ourselves, our group and our nation and our world, a lighted house.
