

Scorpio Festival Meeting, London, November 2016

The Art of the Possible

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Friends here in the Lucis Trust Library, welcome to our meditation meeting this evening. And a big welcome as well to all of you tuning in to us on the internet. This evening we are celebrating the full moon festival in Scorpio – the pre-eminent sign not only of testing but also, it is important to hold in mind, of triumphant emergence. The binary quality of this astrological sign is well embodied in the keynote for the disciple in Scorpio which is “Warrior I am, and from the battle I emerge triumphant”, and as usual we will be using this as the seed thought in our meditation in a few minutes time. For your information, the full moon occurred earlier this afternoon at 1.53, so we are working within the full outflow of the energies now.

As I set out to prepare this talk I happened to notice that the last time I led the Scorpio full moon meeting was eight years ago in 2008 just after Barak Obama had been elected as President of the United States. We will all remember the extraordinary enthusiasm many people throughout the world experienced at this electoral triumph. He represented to so many a real sense of vision and of the empowerment of progress. He represented hope that America would again work for global co-operation after the failed and hubristic policies of full spectrum dominance and the disasters of shaking the mailed fist – to use the Tibetan’s phrase – over various parts of the world. What a contrast to today when the recent US election campaign has plumbed such sordid depths of personal vilification and mendacity, and has produced a result that of course we will have to work with, but that fills one with real anxiety for the future.

We, also, haven’t been immune to a political downward spiral on this side of the Atlantic. A few months earlier here in the UK the referendum on membership of the EU produced similar displays of dishonesty and false promises, though not the same level of character assassination. And now there is a risk – unthinkable a few years ago – of Europe fragmenting into the dangerous competing nationalisms that twice plunged it and the world into war in the last century.

Probably most of you will know that there are elections pending in Austria, France and Germany where there are now strong nationalist parties and if these get into office, the likelihood is that they will work to emasculate the power and strength of a united Europe and try to end the great experiment of the European Union. And Europe could and should be a beacon of rational stability, of transnational co-operation and of out-going service in a world that is imploding into barriers, wall building, selfishness, xenophobia and the recrudescence of a worrying nationalism. This scenario needs to be vigorously addressed by all whose hearts are bigger than their country of birth and whose minds are learning to embrace the world with a great and growing love.

For example we need to question nationalism. For many countries in the world, the work of nation building is essential, progressive and a spiritual enterprise. One of our Nigerian co-workers a few years ago wrote about this in respect of his own country. There the National Youth Service Corps programme is an important Nigerian government policy under which all university students after graduation have to go and work for one year in a different part of the country to the one in which they were born. The inevitable happens and these young people intermarry, the former tribal divisions are starting to be overridden and a common identity as Nigerian can slowly begin to emerge.

But overcoming tribal division and working at this sort of nation building are virtually meaningless in most of Europe now, though perhaps there is a remnant of tribalism in places like Northern Ireland and the Balkans. In the major European countries surely our spiritual emphasis and project should be the cultivation of a healthy transnationalism, of thinking in terms of the one life and the one humanity and of serving the whole. To do this we need effective transnational and global institutions that serve the common good. Perhaps one of the great tragedies of our time is that the present tendency towards globalisation – an inevitable and unstoppable movement, by the way – has favoured the few over the many, has lined the pockets of the one percent and marginalised and impoverished the 99 percent, dangerously increasing the gap between the rich and poor, and contributing incidentally to the election results we are seeing now.

Whatever one thinks of the political process, it is good to remind ourselves that the development and practise of democracy is one of the great and on-going achievements of western civilisation. Now the Tibetan has some interesting things to say about democracy and one of them is that this fledgling experiment in governance reflects the pre-eminent ray of relationship – the 2nd ray of love-wisdom. This means that democracy is the path of least resistance and greatest opportunity for humanity. He points out that “the democracies, with all their present ineffectiveness, have in them the germ of that which is truly new, for they are the expression of an upward surging towards self-rule and self-mastery by humanity as a whole.” This leads us to know that when the heart and mind of a country or a group of countries is sound then democracy will truly work.

Any disciple treading the path quickly discovers that self-rule and self-mastery are really difficult to achieve. They require a ruthless honesty, a polarisation in the mind which in turn is gradually held with increasing steadiness in the light of the soul, and an enthusiastic willingness to right wrongs, correct mistakes and to create the vision of a better future and work for it.

In the realm of politics there have been instances of the achievements of these qualities in many parts of the world by individual politicians and political movements with, of course, varying degrees of success. Outstanding examples can be seen in the vision and adherence to principle of leaders like Nelson Mandela and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It can also be seen in ground breaking political initiatives like the labour movement in the

19th century and the green movement in our own time. Here, aspects of the divine Plan have been precipitated into a structured vision of progress and the embodied principles reflecting deep truths have acted as a focal points of attraction for the thoughts and aspirations of the people. These great leaders and movements have emerged and are emerging in answer to human and planetary need, and they have led by stimulating the soul of the people – in other words they have helped break the fetters of the old ways and led the world into new freedoms and into a heightened sense of responsibility.

But when political and governance decisions result from demagogues appealing to emotions and prejudice and fear, then we don't have democracy at all – we have what might accurately be called 'astralocracy'. People revert into embodying the herd instinct and focussing in the solar plexus centre. They lose independence of thought and their opinions are manufactured by others who have their own agendas at heart – and usually this is not for the good of the whole. This whole thing is summed up very well in a maxim of Lao Tzu frequently used by the late British politician, Tony Benn: "As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honour and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate ... When the best leader's work is done the people say, 'We did it ourselves!'" It is most interesting to look at this maxim from a more esoteric standpoint. When we do this it becomes obvious that what Lao Tzu calls "the best leader" is actually the spiritual Hierarchy. Their existence is generally not noticed by the bulk of humanity. Yet their evocative influence is behind all the good in the world for they stimulate the soul of all things and work to draw out what is best in us all.

So what is needed for democracy to really work is that the consciousness of the people is raised from the level of glamour and emotion to the realms of rational thought and a grasp of the principles which underlie the various segments of the political spectrum; in other words to step into the light. As we rise into the light we actually invoke the downflow of more light into the mind of humanity. And never in recent years has the need for a mass evocation of light been so important as now. Let us therefore pause for a moment at this point to contemplate the nature, the meaning and the effect of light in the spiritual sense, and then we will say together the first stanza of the Great Invocation.

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

We have been told many times as a fact and for our encouragement that humanity is becoming the world disciple. The human race very clearly embodies the qualities of the 4th Ray of harmony through conflict. The conflict aspect of this ray has been so powerfully and so cruelly evident in the history of the humanity; but we always need to hold in mind that conflict is ever the prelude to the harmony that expresses the soul side of this Ray.

We are now absolutely at a turning point. Does humanity have to persist for decades more, perhaps centuries more in the conflict mode with its inevitable continuing panorama of major tragedy and suffering? Or can the whole human race in all its

diversity of culture, perception and evolutionary achievement now together emerge triumphant from this battle and take a major step forward into the light, the love and the will-to-good of the soul?

This was the big question at the end of the 2nd World War and it was why the Spiritual Hierarchy was so concerned then to influence and inspire the participating nations in the 1945 San Francisco Conference that established the United Nations. In reality the United Nations is one of the first faltering steps – and my goodness they do falter! – of humanity raising itself from the conflict mode of the 4th Ray into the mode of harmonious, loving purpose and of progressive activity and relationships.

This question rang loudly in 1945 after the unspeakable tragedies and traumas of war; but it should be ringing just as loudly and insistently in our minds now. Today the crises facing humanity are compounding and there is no way anymore in which they can be avoided. To put it in a cliché of a nutshell; we are all in it together. The recognition of this is now global. The human heart is awakening and world understanding and compassion is greater than it has ever been. But is this enough to motivate the necessary changes that will steer humanity away from a future of dangerous personality confrontation into one of true co-operation and progress which will benefit all the people and the world – not just the powerful elite?

Perhaps the democratic experiment is key to how we answer this, for, as we have seen, self-mastery and self determination are at its roots and are also prerequisites for the discipleship path that humanity is beginning to tread. It is in the world of politics where many of the important battle lines are being drawn for humanity today. These lines lie between the often selfish ambitions of those in power and the just as often ignored needs of the people they govern, between the competing ambitions of national entities and the crying needs of humanity as a whole; between the exploitative and destructive behaviour of humanity towards the environment, that is propelled by economic and industrial forces, and the need for integrity, respect and care which the natural world requires and which, if ignored, will catapult the biosphere into a place of impoverishment and major species extinction. Actually, this is already happening to an alarming degree. How appropriate it is, therefore, to address all these issues at this Scorpio full moon.

Will we together respond to the illumined thoughts and soul energy pouring into the human mind and heart, and take the right action that is symbolically depicted in Scorpio? Or will we sink back into the personality reaction to the energies of this sign: “Let Maya flourish and deception rule”?

It is very significant that the labour of Hercules which relates to Scorpio is the slaying of the Lernean Hydra. This monster lives in the murky swamps of the astral nature and with its nine heads represents the main material distortions of the unredeemed personality nature. With the enthusiasm of ignorance Hercules sets about the task by chopping off the heads with his sword, only to find to his dismay two more heads emerging for every one that he cuts off.

To our modern understanding this is a classic description of the uselessness of repression in dealing with a psychological problem; it just makes things worse. The result of this experience of futile action is that finally we realise that we have to deal with the real causes of the problem. In the myth this is depicted by Hercules remembering the instruction of his teacher: “We rise by kneeling”, and he realises that he has to lay down his sword, kneel – as a symbol of humility towards that which is spiritual in himself – and lift the monster into the clear light of the sun or soul. It is here in the realm of truth that the hydra shrivels away and reveals a final but sacred head which is the embodiment of the spiritual will, and which is treasured as a talisman for the empowerment of future service.

How can we apply this solution to humanity today? Perhaps a good starting point is one of St Augustine’s great psychological insights. “Pray as though everything depended upon God: Act as though everything depended upon you”. In modern language we could perhaps express it in this way: Constantly have in mind the great Hierarchy of Being of our Planetary life. The cry of the human heart will always evoke a response from the spiritual realms. Remember that Purpose and Plan and Love underlie the kaleidoscopic panorama of unfolding events of the material world.

Remember as well that humanity has the priceless gift of freewill and that this can be used for good or ill, that we can create obstacles to the Plan or help further it. Realise that our thoughts and emotions have significant effects on the outer world of form and events. Therefore determine that these shall be positive and constructive and always aimed at right relationships. Take part in one or other of the great redemptive initiatives of spiritual development of which there are many, the Arcane School being one of them, and start to become the person that you truly are. Know that consecrated group meditation has a dynamic effect on the inner planes where the real energetic causes of outer events are to be found and worked with and which, redeemed, can precipitate as a blessing into the outer world. Determine, if you are not already doing so, to ground this rising inner livingness in some form of outer service. It is this last especially that will make the soul come alive and open the door to unexpected understandings and opportunities – and to joy.

Every field of human interest and activity offers immense opportunities for service. Much of this service involves lifting the unacceptable into the light, exposing it to the gaze of the soul and remedying any situation. This of course must include the world of politics. Listen to the Tibetan’s advice: “The reason for the corrupt politics and the greedy ambitious planning of so many of the world’s leading men can be found in the fact that spiritually minded men and women have not assumed—as their spiritual duty and responsibility—the leadership of the people. They have left the power in the wrong hands and permitted the selfish and the undesirable to lead.”

This was written 70 years or so ago and humanity has grown since then. Evidence of the progress today can be found in the fact that there are many, many very brave men and women around the world who in their perception of the need of their people and in the light of their soul are attempting to do the best for their communities and countries in this field. Tragically, some of them are imprisoned, or come to an untimely end, but

many others – we can think of Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi, for example – make it through and become powerful agents for change and stand as forerunners for the new humanity.

And this leads to our final point before we go into our meditation. This is the recognition that it is humanity that has to do this. “Hierarchy with all its knowledge, vision and understanding and with all its resources, cannot coerce and cannot forecast what mankind will do. It can and does stimulate to right action; it can and does indicate possibility and responsibility; it can and does send out its teachers and disciples to educate and lead the race; but at no point and in no situation does it command or assume control. It can and does bring good out of evil, illuminating situations and indicating the solution of a problem, but further than this the Hierarchy cannot go.”

So, the ball is firmly in humanity’s court. We can intelligently appraise the world situation, we can assess what’s going on in terms of the gold standard of right human relations. We can give our committed support to anything which promotes this. We must not shrink from facing the unacceptable and helping to end it. Education is a major way to achieve this. Again as the Tibetan wrote: “True democracy, at present only a dream, will be founded on education for goodwill.”

Will humanity emerge triumphant? Will a new period of suffering be needed to awaken the soul? These questions will be answered by what every person not just as individuals but more importantly and usefully as members of dedicated groups are able to do. Everyone can be a part of this great manifestation of the soul in the world, whose disturbing presence is now shaking humanity awake with love and urgency, lifting the unacceptable into the clear light of day, and bestowing upon us the spiritual will to achieve real progress.