

FESTIVAL OF CANCER

New York – July 2016

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Welcome to everyone gathered here tonight in the Lucis Trust library in New York City. And welcome to all who are tuning into this broadcast. It is a very hot time of the summer here, and the humidity feels so thick it's like you're swimming down the sidewalks.

This is an adequate depiction of the times in which we're living. As a whole, humanity is wading through thick, difficult circumstances. The currents of events are swift and emotional tides are high. The group of world servers are being tried as opportunities for service abound. Gleaning from the ancient insights of Cancer, we learn to wield the tools of exquisite sensitivity and compassion to *build a lighted house and therein dwell*. Aligned with this sign associated with the Cardinal Cross and an aspect of the secret of Life itself, we meet to meditate and materialize the Plan into existence.

We'll anchor our gathering tonight with a quote from Heart, 208.

"The happiness of the world is hung upon the cross. The future of humanity is redeemed through poison. The phoenix is resurrected only out of its own ashes. The pelican nurtures its young with the blood of its own heart. Thus is transmuted the highest energy, which lies at the base of the birth of the worlds."

There is a roiling happening within the field of humanity as the earth groans and quakes. An immense suffering that has been dwelling deep underground is erupting to the surface in a scourge of flagrant violence and deafening anguish. The illusion of safety and veneer of satisfaction has been shredded in the aftermath of our current events. Terror transforms the most ordinary scenes, like a promenade in France, a busy restaurant in Bangladesh, a dance club in America, or a train in Germany into a nightmare. Unexpected votes have been cast in the Brexit, unexpected candidates supported in America, unexpected coups in Turkey. The iniquities of racism and bigotry surface around the globe, rote traffic stops become crime scenes and injustice breeds more injustice. Millions of refugees wander in the night and many dare to cross dangerous waters hoping to find some new life to live. Many are bewildered, hurt, humbled, while others express outrage and fury; and no wonder. Terrorism rages like an epidemic, contaminating the airwaves with fear and exploiting every weakness in its wickedness. A war between "us" and "them" rages on all fronts. The sons of men are churning.

Let us seek to bring a unifying note into these scenarios by saying together the Mantram of Unification:

The sons of men are one and I am one with them.

I seek to love, not hate;

I seek to serve and not exact due service.

I seek to heal, not hurt.

Let pain bring due reward of light and love.

Let the soul control the outer form,
And life, and all events,
And bring to light the Love,
That underlies the happenings of the time.
Let vision come and insight.
Let the future stand revealed.
Let inner union demonstrate and outer cleavages be gone.
Let love prevail.
Let all men love.

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Tonight we gather to contemplate what it is to “build a lighted house and therein dwell”, not as a way to escape from what is happening in the world, but as a way to fortify a luminous presence around all of humanity. This “lighted house” provides a protective shield of love and compassion that includes all living beings, and brightens the lights of the Human Kingdom that we may assume responsibility as guardians and stewards of the good.

The blueprints for this lighted house are etched into the Soul, just as the keys to the Kingdom are never far off. But at this time we focus on the masses of humanity. We’re called to listen to the voices of the many. What do we hear? The language is often selfish and antagonistic, weaponized to inflict as much harm as possible like the automatic weapons of this era. Or concomitantly, the screeches of pain are dismissed as unintelligible and ignored, many quietly seethe in despair and pain festers. Differences of opinion are seized as opportunities to bludgeon the other, inflicting the wounds of criticism that are hard to heal. The raging is deafening and many shrink away, choosing to insulate in a more familiar or comfortable perspective, and close the door on the rest.

These voices represent opportunity for greater integration and understanding. They demand that we look deep beneath the appearance of things and see things *as they are*, and they call to us to demonstrate a willingness to work with what is given. As we do unto the least of these, our brothers and sisters, we do unto the Great One. To ignore or dismiss the voices we don’t like to hear can sometimes exacerbate the suffering. The cross beams of love and wisdom are fortified in right relations. Loving our enemies is never easy, but this is the strength of heart that must find expression through human hands and feet.

The energies in the sign of Cancer revisit the metaphorical bite of incarnation that sinks its claw into the most tender place. In the Labours of Hercules, Hera sent the crab to bite Hercules’s foot, and even the great strong Hercules couldn’t deny that pain. What does that tell us about incarnation? In part, the bite of manifestation will hurt. No one, even Hercules, can deny the pain of the endeavor of life.

Humanity learns through pain and experience. Every mother knows that childbirth can be an incredibly painful experience, perhaps a pain unique to each mother, but that has not stopped the process. The threat of difficulty doesn't stop the determined, rather the challenges and birthing pains provide the steps upon which to propel us further forward in the process of creation. As the saying goes, it's easier to climb a rocky slope than a smooth one. Each creative deliverance or spiritual attainment is uniquely painful, whether it's a child, a business endeavor, a revelation, a new way of being, a work of art, or a discipleship life.

True artists and great mothers of form, can silence us with the beauty of their creations. They incarnate some beauty or encapsulate some intelligence carved out of their own being, and truly seem to nourish it with the blood of their own hearts. It is a beauty that is familiar, because in great art and beautiful lives we recognize something of ourselves. It's universal, and provides evidence of the power that resides in intelligent craftsmanship and the will to work with "the highest energy, which lies at the base of the birth of the worlds" (Heart, 208). And all are invited to work.

Disciples are like the apprentices to the Master Artist. Attendant and ever near to the Master, the apprentices offer their own life, stretched through time and space, as the very instrument through which to work. Passing with Him through the trials and bewilderments, joys and pains, the experiences of life provide the materials for the greater masterpiece.

To continue with the quote from Heart, 208: *Thus, when I spoke to you of an excessive load, I meant the highest energy, which is created only in tension. When I spoke of the redeeming courage of despair, I indicated the shortest path. Thus, let us realize the redeeming energy, for only by this path shall we avoid all the malignant threats.*

The work required is a hard, often painful, surrendering upon the cross. To live the high art of discipleship life is to be stretched to the limits of possibility, pressing the periphery ever onward toward greater inclusivity and oneness. It is a relinquishment that purges and strips all attachments, breaks all bounds, and deconstructs all images, washing the canvas clean. Upon the *redeeming courage of despair*, the discipleship life begins. It bewilders and disrupts the carefully constructed narrative, giving way to the new. No limited idea stands a chance, as we learn the approach to a state of being and doing beyond our wildest imagination. It is "the engendering of a magnetic aura upon which the highest impressions can play"^[1], and it is the purificatory field upon which the lighted house is built.

Yet on this purificatory field, in our painful creative labor, what to do with the experiences that generate much heat but little light; when it is unclear which way to turn or what to do and the sheer difficulty of the challenge is overwhelming. Perhaps these are the ordained circumstances that are given to refine our craftsmanship in life, where dues are paid and trial by fire is the only way. These are the moments that leave many soaked in suffering, and where the integrating handiwork of the highest skill is most needed. Training for discipleship is not easy, many come and few are chosen. The ability to upbraid the weight of the world with the supernal threads of the heavens is hard earned; perhaps experience is the only way.

This is where the true disciple is called to work, to weave between being fully human and fully divine. Not to retreat from the challenges that burn; not to soothe oneself in attitudes of superiority, or to coldly turn away in condemnation, but to be fully human; to stand shoulder to shoulder with the

masses of humanity while being fully divine. This is the vision of earth service, this is what brings the selfless initiates back to this plane to serve, to give and to give again; and what calls upon the legion of on looking angels to bend ever near.

The Tibetan says that part of the problem is that the spiritual people have not risen to the challenge of the hour, have not assumed due responsibility, and that this (in part) explains the mess we're in. The masses are making voices heard that have been hidden; in this sound and the actions cast, leaders are forced to listen and look carefully. During this time, world servers are rallying, rightly asking: are we rising to assume our measure of responsibility? Are we giving and giving again? Are we building the bridges that unite and the lighted houses that illumine the dark? Or are we shrinking back in defeatist glimmers, impotency, doubt and despair?

The lower keynote of Cancer thrusts a defiant tone, "Let isolation be the rule...", pain naturally causes withdrawal and retreat. If you accidentally touch a hot pan, the hand automatically pulls away. So, what a revolution it truly is for humanity not to shrink from pain, but to enter it with some measure of consciousness, literally and metaphorically enter the field of suffering to serve. Whether that pain is physical, mental, or emotional, it is an incredible service for each to receive their due measure of pain and to give even more--not in spite of the pain, but because of it; to render out of the experience the right tension to work with redemptive energies needed to build the lighted house.

In *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol 1*, we're told:

Pain is that upward struggle through matter which lands a man at the Feet of the Logos; pain is the following of the line of the greatest resistance and thereby reaching the summit of the mountain; pain is the smashing of the form and the reaching of the inner fire; pain is the cold of isolation which leads to the warmth of the central Sun; pain is the burning in the furnace in order finally to know the coolness of the water of life; pain is the journeying into the far country, resulting in the welcome to the Father's Home; pain is the illusion of the Father's disowning, which drives the prodigal straight to the Father's heart; pain is the cross of utter loss, that renders back the riches of the eternal bounty; pain is the whip that drives the struggling builder to carry to utter perfection the building of the Temple.^[2]

There is a difference between pain and suffering. Pain is like a head-on collision with the intensity of life; it is the immediate encounter with the ineffable; it is an instant that penetrates all glamour and illusion because it is beyond comprehension; it cuts through space and time forcing the immediacy of now.

Suffering is the story that accompanies that pain. It is the grasping for explanation; it is the wishful thinking that conditions could be anyway other than the way they are; it is the resistance to what *is*--adhesion to a particular concept that refuses to adapt--and without adaptation and acceptance, suffering arrives full force.

The Buddha was one of the Great Ones who outlined the problem of suffering and paved a clear path out. Through detachment, skillful practitioners and world servers with grit learn how to work with the very substance of life; detachment initiates the heart and mind into the beauty of unconditional love; detachment is immersion in the art of living for service; a mind immersed in detachment does not suffer because it is free of expectation; it demands nothing and gives everything.

In this freedom of giving, unified consciousness flourishes, the Law of Economy is in surplus, patience and cooperation and all the great virtues of the Soul shine. In this luminosity, the future of humanity indeed stands revealed.

As we make our way through the heat and humidity of these times, swimming along the sidewalks of our summer harvest, let us be ever mindful that we face these times as one humanity. The awakening of the masses is occurring, and nourishing this budding awareness is of paramount importance. A recent headline in the New York Times read, *Divided by Race, United by Pain*. May our upward struggle through matter ultimately unite us to work together and bring forth the birth of healed, whole worlds.

After labor is complete, most mothers can barely recall the pain. The pain has done its work, and new life is delivered. Just as a great masterpiece or revelation stands free from the pain that aided in its delivery. So too, let us work with the pain of these laborious times to ensure “the utter perfection [of] the building of the Temple”, is delivered and illumined, knowing that when our work is complete, we too will stand free.

As in the Mantram of Unification:

Let pain bring due reward of light and love.
Let the soul control the outer form,
And life, and all events,
And bring to light the Love,
That underlies our times.

To finish the quote from Heart we started with, “Who, then, would prefer slow decay to radiant flight? Only by a broad flight can one reach the shore of Light! But he who thinks that peril is demanded is unwise. The ultimate degree of tension is needed only for a distant flight. Hence, We speak of victory, not of destruction.”

Let us go into meditation now using the Keynote, *I build a lighted house, and therein dwell*.

[1] Telepathy, p 94

[2] Discipleship in the New Age, Vol 1, p 677