

Aries Festival Meeting – New York - April 2014

Resurrection and the Livingness of the New

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Welcome to this full moon meditation. Easter, celebrated at the time of the Aries full moon, is the first of three major spiritual festivals. These three festivals form a peak in the annual flow of energies pouring into humanity during the period of the 12 full moons. The festivals celebrated during the full moons of Aries, Taurus and Gemini set the note for the rest of the year – they mark the highest point of tension. And they symbolize the fact that as we are impacted increasingly by the energies of Aquarius, and as we move more solidly into the Aquarian Age, a universal religious spirit will become increasingly pronounced – we will become not just respectful of religious differences, but sensitive to the fact that different religions give sometimes different and sometimes very similar insights into the realities of the higher worlds of spirit and soul.

Of the three festivals the first is a Christian festival, Easter, and the second a Buddhist festival, Wesak, while the third is known by various names – including the Festival of Humanity and the Festival of Goodwill. The universal religious spirit of these 3 Festivals is symbolized by the fact that the Christ and the Buddha are celebrated in Easter and Wesak as two great spiritual brothers, potent and living in the higher dimensions of soul and spirit, working in the closest cooperation for the uplift and transformation of consciousness. In Gemini the focus is on humanity itself “giving birth to the soul and taking its first collective steps on the spiritual path”.

Can we spend a moment imagining a future when the rhythm of the full moon is reflected in the religious and spiritual life of cultures around the world? This is the future predicted in the Alice Bailey books. A universal religious spirit will see a harmonizing of rituals and ceremonies. It is not necessarily a vision of one particular religion becoming the world religion - but rather of a common sensitivity to the sacred, observed in a diversity of forms and practices and ways of worship - and responding to a universal rhythm.

Right now there tends to be a weekly rhythm with different faiths getting together on different days. For some it's Friday that is the holy day - for others it is Saturday, and throughout the Christian world it is Sunday that is the day to go to church. And beyond this weekly rhythm every faith has its own special festivals, different times of the year when the religious life mounts towards a peak of intensity.

The Pew survey of the Global Religious Landscape, published in December 2012, found that over 80% of the world's population identify with a religious group : 32%, around 2.2 billion people, register themselves in national censuses as Christians; 23% (1.6 billion) Muslims; 15% (1 billion) Hindus; 7% (500 million) Buddhist; 6% (400 million) traditional and indigenous religions; and down to the smaller religious groups like Sikhs at 0.375% (25 million) and Jews at .2% (14 million).

Who is to know what the future will bring, but imagine what it will be like for Sikhs and Buddhists, Muslims and Christians, Baha'is and Jews, Jains and Taoists - to be heading off to temples, churches and mosques for worship, prayer and meditation on the days and evenings of the full moon.

It makes sense that the full moon should emerge as a universal time when the relationship between human and cosmos, earth and heaven moves into the center of the awareness of people and communities across the globe. The full moon is such a presence in the world. It's not just that it dominates the sky, forcing us to look up, but the light that is reflected off the face of the moon reaches right into our immediate environment embracing everything in a soft, gentle luminescence. Who could deny during the full moon that the cosmos is alive and that this livingness resonates within us?

There is a paradox here. The dramatic presence of the full moon is the most obvious explanation why people throughout time have observed religious rituals at this time. Yet, as we all know, moonlight is reflected sunlight. It's not about the moon – even though it's the moon that we see. The drama of the moon, dominating the night sky, reflects the power of the Sun – the source of light. This is its spiritual meaning and the source of its power as a symbol.

Today, during the period of the Aries full moon, we might be especially mindful of the 32% of the world's people who are Christian and for whom Easter is an occasion for worship, prayer and reflection. In our meditation work we can seek to be sensitive to this field of prayer that is so active during Easter – and we can take our stand in solidarity with the more esoteric fields of Christian thought – circles of contemplative prayer, for example, or the prayers and devotions of communities inspired by the writings of Teilhard de Chardin. And then next month we can make a point of linking with the Buddhist community around the world in all its diversity as groups of Theravada Buddhists join with their Mahayana colleagues in observance of the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha.

For students of the Alice Bailey material, this year's Easter festival can be thought of as being rather special because it also marks the conclusion of an important cycle of activity characterized by qualities of emergence and impact on public consciousness. The Wesak Festival in May, next month, will see the beginning of a new cycle where these energies of emergence will be replaced by energies of consolidation.

It is worth taking a little time to explore this idea of the cycles of the new group of world servers. It gets very little attention in Alice Bailey's books, only coming up once in a passage in the first volume of *Discipleship in the New Age*. DK writes about the three year cycles in a message to the disciple identified in the book as 'J.W. K-P'. In 1936 DK wrote to JWK-P that all creative processes connected with the life and activities of the New Group of World Servers follow a three year cycle, and that those who seek to aid the work of the New Group would be well advised to develop their creative plans in conformity with the three year cycle of the *rhythm of creation*.

During the first year in the cycle the keynote of any creative project should be one of consolidation: *Lay you emphasis, DK wrote, upon the activity of the manifesting principle, using that which appears and with which you have to work.* In this sense consolidation is about ideas manifesting in concrete action – a good way of understanding what it is to consolidate. The second year has the keynote of *expansion: let the clarity and the quality of the note to be sounded by the manifesting form appear and be heard.* The expansion is about the quality of the note behind any particular project receiving attention and radiating through the form. And in the third and final year of the cycle (the spiritual year 2013-14 which is now coming to an end) the keynote is *the making of a definite impact on the public consciousness: behind the form and expressing itself through the quality, let the livingness and the work of the indwelling life emerge for all to see.* So we are at the end of a period when the life behind the form of any project reveals itself – emerges for all to see.

Elsewhere we are told that the three year cycle is part of a series of nine year and twenty-seven year cycles. On the nine year cycle: three years consolidation; lead to three years of expansion; followed by three years of impact on public consciousness. And in the twenty-seven year cycle nine years of consolidation lead to nine years of expansion which is followed by nine years of impact on public consciousness.

What makes this a very special Easter Festival is that it marks the end of a year of impact on public consciousness on the 3 year, the 9 year and the 27 year cycles. All three cycles coincide. And in the new year that will begin with Wesak all three cycles will be again coincide as we enter a new beginning with a focus on consolidation. The last time there was a synchronicity in the three cycles was in 2001 – and the next time it will happen, after 2014, will be 2027.

So this Easter festival we can be thinking of the life of creative projects dedicated to world service reaching a crescendo of impact on public consciousness. Let us affirm that the livingness, the vitality, of the Work envisaged by the Master DK has taken a step forward in its expression during this past year. May this living reality of energies be able to impact public consciousness in ways that have not been possible before?

Let's just pause for a moment and sound together the Noon-time recollection, imagining ourselves to be a group of spiritual warriors – assembled together in conclave, with representatives from all cultures and peoples, all faiths and spiritualities: our task is to attend to the hidden, esoteric, opportunities of the Aries festival.

*We know, O Lord of Life and Love about the need;
Touch our hearts anew with love,
That we too may love and give.*

At an outer level we know that Aries is the time of Easter and, in the Jewish tradition, of Passover. So apart from anything else a vast number of people are thinking deeply in a cosmological and mythological sense at this time. Every year, during Aries, the field of

human consciousness is more focused on the divine and the sacred than at any other time. As we build the image of a group of spiritual warriors, assembled together in conclave – we can place ourselves within this religious and devotional orientation – seeing it as an expression of a basic human call to the divine and as a yearning for relationship: a yearning for relationship with the mystery at the core of our being; a yearning for relationship with the holiest of holies we sense within.

In addition to our sense of this yearning spirit in the human heart, let the group of spiritual warriors pay attention to the points of opportunity and of crisis in the world. Consider the human suffering in Syria, the vulnerability of the situation in the small border nation of Ukraine linked closely as it is with the destiny of the peoples of Russia, the nationalistic and xenophobic forces sweeping through the great peoples of Russia, momentarily distracting them from their path into Aquarius. And consider the vision of future possibilities being explored at the United Nations as global negotiations continue for the design of a new set of Sustainable Development Goals. Some of you may have seen the recent interview with Gordon Brown, United Nations Special Advisor for Education, on the PBS Newshour in which he described the work of the Global Education Countdown Campaign – aiming to ensure that the 57 million out-of-school children are able to attend school by the end of 2015.

As we observe the opportunities and crises of the world from the orientation of the soul and the ashram there is a flexing of the muscle of the group heart. The petals of the heart chakra in the group shudder as higher hidden forces of love flow through and out into the world, and as humanity and hierarchy move into momentary alignment.

This focus on what is happening in the realm of the human forms the base, the ground, for our work together as a group learning to serve the Plan through meditation.

The whole wide world of time and space, the world where we live out our lives as separated personalities, is in process, through aeons of time, of becoming sacred. This is the great macrocosmic trajectory of evolution. Consider the idea of the Earth in process of becoming a sacred planet: the Earth, with humanity and all the expressions of life, as a place of light in the universe; the Earth as a planet with an inherent, timeless, natural reflection of goodness, beauty and truth radiating through the entire universe.

What of our role as a species in this process? As human beings we are learning to become the primary agents of creativity – expressing our divinity with a natural, uncontrived concern for the good of the whole – expressing our divinity in a multitude of ways through our human-ness. This is what we are becoming; it is what we are learning, what our apprenticeship is about, and it is the essence of human development. The vision of an outer world radiating harmonics of goodness, beauty and truth only makes sense if we expand our sense of time into the cycles of lifetimes – lifetimes during which small jewels of goodness are nurtured at a cellular level. Through the millennia, our creativity is birthing strings of elemental DNA, which, through time, provide cellular memory and code for a future humanity naturally expressing itself through fresh, unique manifestations of beauty, goodness and truth. Always there will be challenges – always

there will be growth through the rubbing together of the light and the dark – yet the basic note, the overall harmonic of the spiral dynamic of all the levels of being is rising as each meme, each cellular unit of culture, takes a step onto the next evolutionary rung of that ladder made so famous by the story of Jacob's vision.

This evolutionary process is historically measurable in so many ways as economists, sociologists, psychologists, and environmentalists trace the development from tribal consciousness of a responsible, caring global human community – in right relationship with Earth, with Soul and Spirit.

In the continuum of consciousness soul is both personal – where each one of us, each of the six billion humans alive on the planet, is an expression of the work of an incarnating soul, a solar angel – and soul is communal: the greater community of the One Soul where we find our spiritual home, and also where we find the Ancestors and Teachers– those who have passed through the lessons of human incarnation to become Guides and Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, charged, among other things, to mother the evolutionary process taking place in the outer worlds of incarnation.

In the Bailey writings there is much material about the significance of Aries as the Festival of the Risen Christ. Our attention is directed to Forces of Restoration and an Angelic being Who, in 1945, when the peoples of the world were grief-stricken and exhausted after the end of the War, rose 'with healing in His wings'. This living spiritual Entity, known as the Spirit of Resurrection, irradiated the consciousness and the subtle energy fields of the human community with the 'resurrection life'. We are told that as people of goodwill began to think clearly about the future, demanding social structures and laws centred on human rights and recognition of the oneness of life – as the will to good began to find expression – then this energy of resurrection would be poured forth, in full measure.

This 2014 Aries festival it is worth noting exactly how the Tibetan describes the healing impact of this flow of Resurrection energy. Imagine what a flow of energy from such a Being as this would bring to the human community now – imagine this as the wind behind the backs of the visionaries struggling to achieve the best possible set of Sustainable Development Goals for the post-2015 world – and all the multitude of citizens' movements in our local and national environments. Imagine all these movements and leaders as representing the arising of the will within humanity. And in response to this arising will and to the forces of opposition struggling to hold to the old visions of Pisces, imagine the Spirit of Resurrection standing now, with healing in His wings, pouring a tide of resurrection life through the human community. This is what DK writes about the effect of these energies:

It is this living spiritual Entity, working temporarily under the direction of the Christ, Who will restore livingness to [people's] spiritual aims and life to their planning; Who will engender anew the vitality needed to implement the trends of the New Age and Who will guide humanity out of the dark cave of death, isolation

and selfishness into the light of the new day. [Externalisation of the Hierarchy, p. 457]

Livingness to our spiritual aims ... life to our planning ... the vitality needed to implement the trends of the New Age. This gives us an approach to the current crisis. In meditation – and in all of our thinking around the multitude of issues facing peoples in all parts of the world as economic and political choices are made - we can be looking for this livingness of the New – feeling it in our heart as well as sensing it intuitively in our mind – we can be giving attention to the arising of the new – attention to its vitality in ourselves as well as in our neighborhoods and communities.

Will and creativity in all fields of living – citizens' engagement; these are themes that can be seen to be expressing the vitality and livingness of the Resurrection Spirit now.

Our keynote for meditation gives us a hint about the importance of paying full attention, being mindful, of the presence of the Resurrection Spirit alive now. The keynote is: *I come forth and from the plane of mind I rule.* In meditation let us take careful note of the livingness of the spiritual aims of our time – and let us ponder how planning for the future (in our own life as well as in our communities and nations) can reflect and is reflecting these spiritual aims.