

## Easter Festival, London, April 2017

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Good evening friends, and welcome to our celebration of the Festival of Easter.

T S Eliot begins his poem *East Coker* “In my beginning is my end” and ends it “In my end is my beginning.” Thus, he reminds us of the cyclic nature of existence, with birth and death and re-birth succeeding one another rhythmically. And in *The Journey of the Magi*, he has his narrator, one of the Magi, ask:

“...were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.”

Eliot’s Magus is recognising the Earth-shattering implications of the birth of the Christ, a world-historical event which will change human consciousness for ever. Rudolf Steiner, in his reflections on the Crucifixion, considers the esoteric implications of Christ’s death and how it changed the spiritual nature of the Earth in a fundamental way.

Easter occurs in the sign of Aries, which is a sign of birth, and also of death. The central Mystery of Easter, Christ’s death on the Cross, and His Resurrection, enacts a Cosmic process as a historical drama. Thus, human society is brought into transformative contact with cosmic energies. The world will never be the same.

Aries is the first sign of the zodiac, which makes Easter the first major spiritual Festival, and the beginning of the spiritual year. And in the northern hemisphere, it also happens not long after the spring equinox, when the green mantle of the vegetable kingdom is beginning again to burst into vibrant activity. In the 2017 Lucis Trust general mailing, there is a short folder discussing the three spiritual Festivals, and on Easter, it says:

“Easter is a time of energetic movement, as yet again forces of gravity are surprised by the upsurge of new life. Each burst of greenery reveals the great struggle of all creative endeavour. Creativity is a raising process – an act of resurrection as the inertia of matter is overcome. This lends a powerful beauty to spiritual creativity as it surmounts, indeed requires, opposing forces to ply its craft. It is what the Christ was referring to when He proclaimed, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ The opportunity before us is to carry this spirit of renewal into our lives.

At Easter we rejoice in the spirit of the living, risen Christ and look forward to the future when the ‘resurrection principle’ will be invoked worldwide... Concepts of death and sacrifice, and of the vicarious at-one-ment will be superseded by the concepts of resurrection or of livingness, of spiritual unity and of service, so that a new note will enter into human life, bringing hope and joy and power and freedom. Religious teachings will focus upon the use of the will in bringing about the living transfiguration of the lower nature and this will lead to the resurrection of the spirit in mankind.

Today we see this resurrecting force in those who are actively responding to some aspect of human need. These people communicate a forward-looking attitude and a conviction to work towards a more equitable world. They represent the hope of the future - a hope that is powerfully vitalised at Easter.”

Before we continue, let's pause for a few moments of silence, and then say together the mantram of the New Group of World Servers, which is on the cards, with one change – in the last line, instead of “May I fulfil my part”, we say “May we fulfil our part”. In so doing, we recognise the group nature of service as we move into the Aquarian Age, and our subjective participation in this work tonight through group meditation, in unison with co-workers around the world.

May the power of the One Life pour through the group of all true servers  
May the love of the One Soul characterise the lives of all who seek to aid the Great Ones  
May we fulfil our part in the One Work, through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness and right speech.

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In *Esoteric Astrology*, we learn more about the creative power of Aries to begin and end cycles. Aries is one of the three signs – the others are Leo and Capricorn – which directs the first Ray of Will or Power into the solar system. It is also one of the three signs – the others are Cancer and Capricorn – which anchors the seventh ray of Rhythm and Organisation. So its influence extends from the heights to the depths, and from the very first stirrings of a creative impulse to its final realisation in ordered beauty. Its connection with the first ray also links it with the first aspect of Spirit, and it forms part of the Cardinal Cross, the Cross of Spirit. The Tibetan tells us that Aries is “the expression of will or power as it expresses itself through the great creative process”, (p.91) and that when the initiate transfers on to the Cardinal Cross, he identifies himself with the will of divinity and with the eternal plan and purpose. It becomes his plan and purpose. This sense of identification explains how Christ was able to pass through the terrific trial of the Gethsemane experience and say the tremendous words, “Father, not my will but Thine be done.” In so doing, He anchored on Earth for the first time a tenuous thread of the divine Will, and made it possible for the will-to-good of Shamballa to work out through goodwill as right human relations. Thus, in facing up to His death, Christ gave birth to a new cycle of energetic relationship between the kingdoms of nature.

This act of the Christ in Aries is a supreme example of the nature of Aries as the ‘birthplace of divine Ideas’. As we read in *Esoteric Astrology*:

“In the sweep of the zodiac there are four signs which are signs of birth, of beginning and of renewed cyclic realisation.

1. *Aries*, the ‘birthplace of divine Ideas,’ whether these ideas are souls brought into incarnation and controlled by Mars until they reach the point of reorientation and become sensitive to the influence of Mercury, or whether they are the birth of the ideas of God in the form of the hierarchical plans to which the initiate becomes sensitive.
2. *Cancer*, the ‘birthplace into the life of form,’ the door into physical incarnation. This is the sign in which humanity, as a whole integrated unit, is born, the scene of the emergence of the fourth kingdom in nature. Humanity has ‘emerged from rock and water and brings its habitation with it’ (as the *Old Commentary* expresses it) and mass instinctual consciousness comes into being...

3. *Leo*, the 'birthplace of the individual,' the coming into form of individual self-conscious man who emerges out of the mass and herd in Cancer, substituting, for instinctual consciousness, self-awareness and a sense of responsibility of an individual kind.

4. *Capricorn*, the 'birthplace of the Christ,' the place of the 'second birth' and the scene for the emergence of the fifth kingdom in nature when the right time comes. In this sign, the initiate comes into a spiritual awareness which demonstrates later in Aquarius and in Pisces as man, the world worker, and man, the world saviour—both of them with a universal mission." (pp.102-3)

These four birthplaces are also the four signs which are involved in the two triangles of Rays I and VII.

While the example of the Christ giving birth to the new relationship between Shamballa and Humanity at Easter is perhaps the highest conceivable example of this type of activity, this generative power of Aries is available to every disciple. Dane Rudhyar notes that to handle it correctly, the disciple must display the quality of adaptability. He says:

"The act must be adapted to the need, if it is a spirit-conditioned act. It must have the character of inherent necessity and it must meet necessary conditions. To be truly compassionate is to adapt oneself to the necessary conditions of one's environment, while pouring forth what the environment calls forth from one's fullness of being..." (Dane Rudhyar, *An Astrological Triptych*, p.13)

"... the truly creative Aries person is constantly confronted with the necessity of accepting the kind of adaptations which save from waste or permanent personal injury, while rejecting those which mean compromise and adulteration of seed.

This is a difficult task of discrimination! To be adaptable, yet to retain the purity and total integrity of one's vision and one's ideal; to accept detours, yet not lose the direction of the goal; to be understandable and acceptable to those who need the spiritual arousal, yet not distort or lower the character of the message; to use the values born of the past, yet not sell short the future to the uncertain present; to be kind to men, yet uncompromisingly true to the spirit – such are the problems which the creative Aries person will constantly meet, in one form or another." (*op. cit.*, p.12)

Rudhyar also connects this power of initiating activities with the rhythm of spiritual inflow, once again reminding us of Aries' connection with Rays I and VII. He notes:

"...whoever finds himself acting according to the pattern characteristic of the Aries type should not 'take for granted' that life or spirit will be available to satisfy his desire for action and creative release. He should, on the contrary, learn as fully as he can the nature of life or spirit, and the laws of their operation. He should learn to be a trustable manager of life-energy and spirit-power. He should account for his seed, and use it wisely according to the cyclic character of the moment.

Both life and spirit operate rhythmically. Rhythm is the first attribute of the universal creative Power." (*op.cit.* p.13)

Rudhyar concludes these observations on adaptability, creativity and rhythmic action with the following poetic description:

“The individual who is consecrated and true to the spirit acts as the spirit, in terms of human needs. Turning towards humanity or towards those few it is his privilege to serve, the man of initiative will say: ‘Your need be filled’. And, bowing reverently and gratefully to the source whence comes all creative power, he will add: ‘Thy rhythm will lead me’. Performing thus the acts of the spirit, carrying forth the dynamic purpose of life, the individual will know fulfilment and harmony. He will know it as the cyclic linking of God and of man within the creative act. He will know it as the lightning knows the earth, as the wind feels the sea, as light experiences the worlds it stirs out of space.” (*op. cit.* p.14)

Elsewhere in *An Astrological Triptych*, Rudhyar reflects upon the crisis in the disciple’s life which corresponds to the Crucifixion, and indicates how it relates to the theme of death and resurrection:

“The risen individual is no longer bound by the cycle which his birth on earth as a person has opened. He has emerged at long last as a centre of divinity, as a Source of spirit-activity, as a ‘Celestial’, as a Star in the Constellation which is the sacred Company of Those who like him are servants of the great Orphan, humanity. He has become the component part of a vaster cycle, bound by ‘[Humanity]’, rather than by an individual ego. He has transformed the conscious death of his Crucifixion into the prelude to a final entrance (i.e. Initiation) into the realm of divinity. He has made of an end a beginning – a beginning which need have no end. For, as the end of the new cycle will come near, it can once more be made into a greater beginning; this, for ever and ever, from cycle to always vaster cycle. Immortality is the power to make of every conscious and significant end the beginning of a larger cycle.” (*op. cit.* pp. 290-1)

Finally, Rudhyar notes, “The Crucifixion is the drama of the release of the spirit-impelled individual from the *outer* collective mind of the society of his day and age. The Resurrection from hell is the release of this individual from the *inner* collectivity of mankind’s ancient memories of fear and failures.” (*op.cit.* p.295)

Returning our focus from the disciple to the Christ, Rudolf Steiner suggests that the Crucifixion had a profound etheric effect on the Earth. He notes:

“The whole of the Gospel of St. John culminates in that event in human history which we call the ‘Mystery of Golgotha.’ To comprehend this Mystery of Golgotha esoterically predicates also the ability to decipher the deep significance of this Gospel. If we turn our attention to what exists at the very central point of this Mystery and wish to express it in occult terms, we must contemplate the moment of the Crucifixion when the blood flowed from the wounds of the Saviour, and at the same time we must remember..., that for one who knows the spiritual worlds, all material, substantial, physical objectivity is only the outer expression, the external manifestation of something spiritual. Now let us permit the physical event to arise before our souls: Christ-Jesus upon the Cross, the blood flowing from His wounds. What does this picture, the content of which is a physical event, express for those who are able to understand the Gospel of St. John?

This physical event — the occurrence on Golgotha — is the expression, the manifestation of a spiritual event which stands at the central point of all earthly happenings.” (Rudolf Steiner, *The Gospel of St. John*, p.111)

Steiner goes on to explain this assertion in light of the fact that every planet has an etheric and an astral vehicle. Thus, he states that if an external observer with higher clairvoyance were able to observe the astral and etheric vehicles of the Earth, which would be visible as the planetary aura of light, over the course of planetary evolution, then that observer would notice a very definite change of colour in that aura at “the very moment when the blood flowed from the wounds of Christ-Jesus upon Golgotha.” Thus, according to Steiner, “All spiritual earthly relationships, as such, changed from this moment.” Why? Because:

“It has been previously stated that what is called the Logos is the sum total of the six Elohim who, united with the sun, present the earth with their spiritual gifts, while externally the physical sunlight is falling upon the earth. Therefore the light of the sun appears to us like the outer physical body of the spirit and soul of the Elohim or of the Logos. At the moment of the Event of Golgotha, that force, that impulse which formerly could only stream down upon the earth as light began to unite with the earth itself. And because the Logos began to unite with the earth, the earth's aura became changed.” (*op. cit.*, pp.111-12)

This seems to be another way of expressing the Tibetan’s observation that the Christ is the first Avatar Who “transmitted the divine energy of love [in other words, the energy of the Solar Logos] directly to our planet”.

Thus, Easter is concerned with three profound Mysteries which mark the beginnings of new cycles – a new relationship between Shamballa and Humanity; a new contact between the Solar Logos and the Planetary Logos; and in the Resurrection, an event which is more veiled, a new approach to the energy of Life. In *The Reappearance of the Christ*, we learn that when the Christ returns, one of His roles will be the *Dispenser of the Water of Life*. We read:

“In His public work, two thousand years ago, He said: ‘I am come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly.’ (John X.10.) The Life Aspect—from the angle of the vision of Christ—expresses itself in three ways:

1. As *physical life*, nourishing the cells of the body. This life is found within each atom of substance as the central point of living light.
2. As *livingness*, seen as love and light within the heart. When this livingness is present and expressing itself, the human atom becomes a part of the spiritual Hierarchy.
3. As *Life more abundantly*. This life can be known as light, love and power within and above the head of the disciple of the Christ. This abundant life enables him to cooperate, not only with humanity and with the spiritual Hierarchy, but also with Shamballa itself—the centre of life in its purest essence.

If we say that *life is the livingness which enables*, the words are relatively meaningless, are they not? If, however, the livingness is referred to the physical plane life, to the spiritual life of the disciple and to the living purpose of God, then some faint concept may come of the wonder of the work undertaken by the Christ in

the past, and foreseen by Him as His future responsibility. Christ can draw upon the energies which are defined by the phrase 'life more abundantly,' because they will set loose (in the Aquarian Age) in a new and dynamic manner the new energies needed in order to bring about restoration and resurrection. This new energy is the 'implementing force of universality'; it concerns the future. This inflow of Aquarian energy is one of the factors which will enable the Christ to complete His task as world Saviour and world Teacher." (pp.84-6)

Easter gives us much to contemplate, so let's now turn to this work in meditation. Our seed thought is: "I come forth and from the plane of mind, I rule."