

Easter Festival (Aries) - London - March 2013

The End Approaches the Beginning

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This evening we celebrate the Festival of Easter, the first of the three major spiritual festivals marking the higher interlude of the year. The outstanding message of Easter, of course, is the resurrection of the Christ-principle from out of the tomb of matter. In our own lives, we witness a reflection of this process as the forces of resurrection strip away those immediate obstacles that block the soul's progress into greater light. At a certain stage on the path, this entails the consciousness being replanted firmly in the open fields of the spiritual realm and exposed to those elements that can awaken it to life. These resurrecting forces are also known as the *forces of restoration* because the indwelling Christ principle is being restored to its former glory, plus the experience gained through a long series of incarnations.

The religious interpretation of resurrection is distorted as it has been more focused on the death and raising back to life of the form rather than the consciousness. However, the essence of resurrection is the "lifting up" of consciousness into the Life of "unalterable Being." This unalterable Being describes the nature of the Monad or Spirit and when Christ attained this awareness as a World Saviour he guaranteed, by the force of His achievement, the same point of attainment in the future for all of humanity. Resurrection is not an isolated individual act but a perpetual process and an ever-active principle as the spirit rises within humanity. It is this whole concept of resurrection which is the new and most important revelation which is coming to humanity, and which will lay the basis for the new world religion. It is a revelation of the life-giving nature of the will.

Aries facilitates the resurrection process as it is a sign of death by fire and, at an advanced stage, the burning in Aries releases man into the highest centre of planetary life – Shamballa. And it was in Aries that the long journey towards this event began for Aries provides the initial mental impulse for the whole series of incarnations in human form and journey around the wheel of the zodiac. After many incarnations into matter and its associated pain, struggle and strife, the soul arrives back at the beginning, its body of expression on its own high level of the mental plane enriched with quality and light from the knowledge extracted from its experiences in matter. Now it is able to cast off even this exalted form and create a sheath for itself that is suited to its new surroundings on the higher spiritual planes. There is a beautiful phrase in an ancient mantram that summarises this return to the beginning in the words: "I seek the Way; I yearn to know. Visions I see, and fleeting deep impressions. Behind the Portal, on the other side, lies that which I call home, for the circle hath been well-nigh trod, and the end approaches the beginning." The same sentiment is also contained in the well known poem "The Four Quartets" by T.S. Elliot: "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

The energy of the first ray of Will or Power which pours through Aries is associated with Shamballa, the planetary head centre – the initiating energy of the solar system. This is both an initiating and a destroying energy – a dynamic driving force that destroys that which is crystallised at the same time as it introduces that which is to replace it. This first ray energy is primarily concerned with the Life aspect and its impulse promotes abstraction from the world of form into the presence of the Christ consciousness, and later, absorption back into essential Oneness of the spirit associated with the synthesizing centre of Shamballa.

Let us pause now in silence for a few minutes and reflect upon the prevailing energies available to us and then say together the *Mantram of the Will*

In the centre of the will of God I stand.
Naught shall deflect my will from His.
I implement that will by love.
I turn towards the field of service.
I, the Triangle divine, work out that will
Within the square and serve my fellowmen.

OM

Aries is a sign of tremendous creative power. Through it pours the Will of Deity, closing one cycle of growth and inaugurating another. It gives the injunction to the incarnating son of God to “express the will to be and do” and to “unfold the power to manifest.” It “awakens the will to reach the lowest and there control, to know the uttermost and thus to face all experience.”

In *Esoteric Astrology*, five keywords are given that describe the impelling energy of the Lord of Aries and the story of the cyclic nature of evolution that He drives forward. These keywords are:

Creation – Being – Activity – Strife – Synthesis.

Creation and *Being* (manifestation) plant the life-force in its new environment during incarnation, while *Activity* and *Strife* depict its struggle to accustom itself and gain mastery over its new surroundings. Finally, *Synthesis* signifies the flowering and radiation of the soul through the human form – the culmination of a kind of spiritual photosynthesis that takes place through the conscious appropriation of light.

Before synthesis and harmony rule, long lives are characterized by the keywords *Activity* and *Strife* that condition growth of every kind. It is not surprising therefore that Mars and Mercury are the exoteric and esoteric rulers of Aries respectively:

“Mars embodies sixth ray force which leads to idealism, destructive fanaticism frequently, struggle, strife, war, effort and evolution...Mercury, embodying the energy of the fourth ray, eventually carries the man around the wheel of life and through the medium of conflict enables him to achieve harmony. Mercury illumines the mind and mediates between the soul and the personality, being the Messenger of the Gods. This mediatorship, in the first instance, produces an inevitable opposition between the pairs of opposites and a long drawn out conflict. This conflict finally works out into victory and the dispelling of illusion through the illumination of the lower mind.” (Esoteric Astrology p

Aries’ role as a creative, regenerative sign is clear here and the planetary rulers help humanity and the individual move forward through the inner battle of gaining control of the forces of the lower nature, with the mediating help of the mind which, when held steady in the light, reflects the will of the soul. Such a process is depicted in the world as this struggle and battle between energy and force is fought. After the long experience of struggle and strife in the attempt to exert control over form and circumstance, the final keyword of Aries, *Synthesis*, is realised. Here the third ruler of Aries, Uranus comes into play which *embodies the energy of the seventh ray [of ceremonial order] and its work is analogous to that of Mercury, for the seventh ray is the ray which relates spirit and matter...Uranus leads the soul to the burning ground during the final stages of the Path, when the fire of Aries and the fires engendered through the potency of Uranus produce the flaming heat of the final burning ground.*

Synthesis is the great expression of the will and the relevance and importance of the will in regeneration and restoration, has long been known to seers and sages. Patanjali, the founder of Raja Yoga, the kingly science of the mind, and who was thought to have lived 7,000 BC, stressed the importance of the will all those years ago. He advocated the siddhi of “irresistible will”, a beautiful adjective which allows us to glimpse its dynamic

nature, inextricably moving forward, a force which cannot be resisted. From the point of view of meditation, control of the restless, forever fluctuating mind which prevents us from reaching our goal is attained through "tireless endeavour" and non-attachment. It is only when the goal is sufficiently valued, and efforts towards its attainment persistently followed without break, that the steadiness of the mind is secured.

Human beings are essentially 'willing' beings, driven mainly at this stage of evolution by various qualities of desire. The psychologist Roberto Assagioli, commented that "to awaken the will requires the formulation of a specific goal to be reached and to adhere to it throughout all stages of the execution, even when complex and long." This means avoiding giving too much attention to the means employed to reach the goal, as so often one can lose sight of it resulting in the means becoming the ends in themselves. In this instance, Assagioli reminds us that "man becomes enslaved by the means he has chosen to employ". The idea is in effect hijacked. A wonderful recent example of this right use of the will is depicted in the film "Lincoln" showing how the 16th President of the United States drove home his goal, even when the means were not so good, they were still admissible to his mind, "lesser evils" that paled into insignificance in the battle against the immeasurably great evil of slavery. Lincoln, described by the Tibetan as a lesser Avatar, is an example of a person skilled in first Ray leadership who used the will effectively to drive through his objective. This Will can be discerned informing these few famous quotes by Lincoln:

"The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just."

"Let's have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."

"My concern is not whether God is on our side; my greatest concern is to be on God's side, for God is always right."

As is apparent from these last two of Lincoln's memorable quotes, the Will in essence is pure Being, the stuff of divinity itself; as such, it can't be summoned neither should it be associated with force but rather through a direct infusion of consciousness with its silent presence bringing strength and assurance to all that we do. In a book called "Power vs. Force," the psychiatrist, Dr. David Hawkins, offers further insight into aligning oneself with the power of the Divine Will. He writes that, in order to reach states of higher consciousness, "there is a need to hold desire in abeyance while surrendering personal will to God, eradicating the thoughts which constantly materialise in the mind until they fragment, making it possible to turn over the energy behind thought itself, before it even becomes thought". This is the world of energy, of meaning, which requires an unrelenting fixity of focus, throughout the day – a process he describes as being like "a rocket leaving Earth that initially requires enormous power, but which steadily lessens as it leaves earth's gravitational field until it finally moves of its own volition."

Power uses the unifying factor of the will through principles of freedom and selfless sacrifice. Force, on the other hand, is divisive as it uses the seductiveness of glamour and distorts the nature of reality by over-emphasising the importance of a specific part of it. This leads to such things such as false patriotism and the rise of chauvinistic feelings that have been the scourge of humanity throughout history. Whatever we think of the scientific validity of Dr Hawkins work, it provides a useful method of understanding the difference between power and force, keeping in mind that we are considering force in its negative connotation as the imposition of one set of desires upon another.

Both Power and force can be clearly seen at work on the world stage today. While we have many politicians trying to impose their beliefs and wishes on others, we also have seen statesmanship and visionary leadership that leaves people free to agree or disagree with the voiced perspective. This is power expressed through wisdom, power without coercion but reliant on its inherent energy of truth and unity to stimulate the soul

nature in others and encourage them to reach towards a wider and more encompassing vision. Part of the work of an esoteric group is to strengthen the hands of those who serve in this way, holding the vision of the Plan before the consciousness of humanity and using the planetary energies available to them. During the Aries full moon increased power is accessible in the form of the Will-to-Good which can safely descend upon a group of service oriented meditators and direct the group's life expression from the plane of mind. This essential love overcomes individual inertia and sets up a spiritual rhythm which allows a greater Will to enter – an impulse which, being based in life, will overcome all hindrances and obstacles to lift, lighten and sweeten human existence.

The further up the evolutionary chain we progress, the more we see leadership through use of the Divine Will taking the form of subjective impression through the influence of powerful, directed thought through a highly magnetic aura. The new group of world servers could be considered as an externalisation of the Christ's aura and the means whereby new ideas and energies are tested out and humanity safely reached without risking over-stimulation by direct impression. They are therefore a conditioning agent preparing men and women for the arrival of a stupendous life.

It is interesting to ask ourselves what constitutes a spiritual leadership of love. For some it is a person, for others an ideal, for others still it may be the ideas emanating from their own souls. For many Christians, Jesus Christ continues after two thousand years, to be this primary source of inspiration. In the case of Christ, we see the demonstration of a powerful magnetic and radiatory life who was able to introduce ideas that were so confrontational and revolutionary at the time, that rather than any superficial victory, He actually went to the cross and suffered the death of the physical body. And yet despite the death of the form, the true inner man stood victorious and rules the world with the love and wisdom he displayed then and now.

We also see, through the legacy that Christ and other great leaders have left, that as well as powerful ideas being initially rejected, they are also subsequently diluted and crystallised by lesser minds that cannot cope with the light of the initial idea. While the essential message of Love and service to others continues to inspire so many by its simplicity, much Christian doctrine demonstrates how the essence of a teaching can become crystallised into dogmatic thought forms. History has shown how numerous domineering personalities and ambitious nations have tried to usurp spiritual teachings and undermine freedom of thought.

The Christ was and is a leading light in every sense and as World Teacher, leads through the radiance of His inner Being. He demonstrated this to humanity by simultaneously revealing both the darkness in human nature and the source of light to which humanity could journey and cast off these shadows. He brought the fires of love down to earth and synthesised within Himself the divine aspects of will, love and intelligent activity into one united expression, indicating the glorious possibilities that lie ahead when these qualities are all integrated and related in us.

So as we move into our meditation period let us keep the “livingness of the Christ nature” alive in our minds and reflect on the use of the will-to-good in bringing an end to one cycle and inaugurating another through the forces of resurrection. In the aforementioned cycle of *Creation – Being – Activity – Strife – Synthesis*, let us focus on synthesis and the raising of humanity's life towards the Christ and all that he represents. And let us affirm the great truth for those on the path of return that “the circle hath been well-nigh trod, and the end approaches the beginning.”

We will use the keynote of the disciple in Aries “I come forth, and from the plane of mind I rule”