

The Festival of Aries
New York, April 3, 2015

Michelle Pearce

We would like to welcome everyone here tonight, both sitting in this room here in NY as well as all those participating with us online and also all the other individuals and groups around the world who are also gathering to participate in this opportunity and spiritual work of linking with the energy of Aries in order to bring it more fully into planetary life.

As you know, the time of the full moon signifies a time when certain higher energies are particularly available. It perhaps bears repeating periodically that this time of meditation is not worship of the moon or really worship of anything. It is a festival and opportunity for service. It is a time when beings on the subtle realms unite in alignment and focus to bring these higher energies that are cycling in and around the incredibly and wonderfully large and deep cosmos itself to bear on planetary evolution and purpose. Because of its time of high significance, it is helpful for the group to take two days prior to the full moon meditation for preparation, using the Great Invocation throughout the day and remembering the increasing activity coming to a point of alignment and tension; and then to also take the two days subsequent to the time of the full moon as the time of distribution of the energies contacted. The two days of distribution might be remembered also by saying the Great Invocation throughout the day and by right thought about these energies impressing the mind of humanity and being distributed in the best way possible to meet the evolving needs of humanity and the planetary life.

There are three major Festivals each year, concentrated in three consecutive months, and leading therefore to a prolonged spiritual effort which affects the remainder of the year. Tonight we gather in Aries to celebrate the first of these three major spiritual festivals of Aries, Taurus, and Gemini; the festival of Easter, the festival of Wesak, and the festival of Goodwill.

These three festivals through our prolonged effort comprise the spiritual high point of the year. Through a sequence and synthesis of these three festivals we set the note and tone for the working out of spiritual energies for the rest of the spiritual year, to be applied and unfolded through each of the subsequent minor full moon festivals. The three spiritual festivals offer the opportunity to evoke and direct the three spiritual aspects—love, will, and creative intelligence—throughout planetary consciousness and life. The subsequent festivals are the opportunity to impress, uplift, and condition the planetary consciousness. The intention and tension that we bring to these three festivals, therefore, sets the stage for the flow and evolution in consciousness that occurs the rest of this spiritual year of 2015/16.

All of us here tonight, in person and online as well as the others around the world meditating with this same group purpose, feel the pull of spiritual responsibility, the impression and purpose of the soul group to help our fellow humanity and the

planet. There are many ways of serving the planet and its future; we do this tonight through working with spiritual energies as a soul group.

Let's take a moment of silence as we contemplate our spiritual responsibility and opportunity tonight and then voice the Gayatri mantram together.

O Thou Who givest sustenance to the universe,
From Whom all things proceed,
To Whom all things return,
Unveil to us the face of the true Spiritual Sun
Hidden by a disc of golden Light
That we may know the Truth
And do our whole duty
As we journey to Thy sacred feet.

The cycling of the energies contacted in the major and minor festivals helps to gradually bring to fruition a great Plan for the evolution of consciousness and the spiritualization of matter. As the energies make their sequential impressions on the planetary consciousness, all life is elevated and the vibration of the energy comprising both form and consciousness is intensified. All is lifted up. Each festival has unique energetic qualities that make their impression and impart their qualities. Hints as to those qualities are embodied in the keynotes given for each festival. There are keynotes for the involution of spirit into matter and for the evolution of consciousness out of matter also resulting in the spiritualization of matter itself.

The keynote for Aries, the first of three major festivals, is of particular interest to the evolution of human consciousness at this time. Each of the seven rays emanates energies embodying the will-to-good of the solar logos. Aries embodies the ray of will or power, which is the initiator of causes: the initiation of the stages of creation under the involutory arc and the initiator of the urge to evolve, proceed, and progress under the evolutionary arc.

During the involutory process, Aries initiated the impulse for spirit immersed within matter to seek out and work creatively with forms. Forms of all kinds provide the structure around which life energy, atoms, and then cells and organisms, are congealed. Each form has a different structure and varying qualities and functions. The form world that comprises our natural world is wonderfully diverse, beautifully integrated and interconnected, and reflects the expression of the flow of electric life of the planet. Through the impulse of Aries humanity as the embodied spiritual consciousness seeks out and works creatively with the form life that surrounds it and within which it exists and relates. We, humanity, have full access and jurisdiction or rule over the natural form world, rule being the natural quality of the first ray expressed through Aries. The biblical admonition for humanity to take on the responsibility to rule over and care for the earth recognizes this involutory initiating impulse of Aries.

During the evolutionary process, conscious awareness is differentiated from the form life within which it is immersed and is to rule over. Awareness of other life and form occurs, and then gradually self-awareness and then self-control are gained. Eventually awareness, as it is satiated with experience through form and as it comes under the initiating evolutionary urge of Aries, becomes detached from identification with the form, the body, and becomes increasingly identified as the simple spiritual awareness that stands behind all form life and activity. This is Reality and Truth realized. It is achieved through the creative activity of the mind. The keynote of Aries initiates a focus and creativity within the mind. The keynote is "I come forth and from the plane of mind I rule." Here we note the spiritual will ruling through thoughts and ideas. This is a very important idea for esoteric workers because the major purpose of this epoch of evolutionary work is for human consciousness to become skillful and creative at working with the mind.

If we look carefully at this idea of humanity embodying the spiritual will to initiate causes from the mind, we can see it demonstrated everywhere around us in the world today. Ideas and thoughts lie behind all human activity and creativity. They already rule human civilization and relations. Politics includes the creation or identification of ideas that are foundational for initiating structures, rules, regulations and systems by which humanity governs itself. Democratic countries ideally are countries that allow the people to choose those ideas and values by which they want to be governed.

Science uses the mind to perceive the world around it and to ask questions and seek answers. The questions are often recognitions of human or planetary problems, needs, and desires. The answers found lead to new creativity, new ideas and possibilities. Science often leads to technological discoveries that then lead to the unfolding of changes that create a future that is very different than the past. In some ways we might say that science itself is a quality of the mind which is a cause of the future. What science discovers and creates and then how humanity chooses to apply those discoveries leads to a different future. The future can be better or worse, it is how we use our minds, what choices we make that determine the quality of the future.

Education ideally trains the mind to think, to seek, to focus. Mental illnesses are a readily observable effect of a mind that is not functioning well. There is a continuum of mind functioning within humanity from those with very little functioning to those who have brilliant minds, sharp, illumined, able to perceive the world very accurately and able to think with great creativity and intelligence. Well-conceived and effective education is the means by which humanity trains its youth to use their minds rightly. Minds that are clear, illumined and selfless are a great asset to the future of the race. Minds that are selfish and crowded with ugly negative thoughts, ideas, and beliefs are projected out onto the world and cause much destruction and chaos. Essentially, having a mind is a great responsibility and humanity is only just beginning to recognize that it has a mind. We have a long way to go in terms of learning how to develop and use it responsibly.

We often talk of technology, social media, of many recent advances and how they are creating a very different world. Some believe this world is worse off because of the technology. But it isn't technology, discoveries, or even science that leads to problems, it is how we use our minds, how we engage with new discoveries, and what choices we make—which are functions of the mind. How can we expect people who have poorly developed irresponsible minds to make sound responsible choices. Our mind is the tool for our conscious awareness to express itself, to create things, and move us forward in life. If we don't know how to use that tool, don't have control over it, aren't intentional with it, then it won't serve us well. Without good mental functioning we will have a long way to go to really be self-controlled conscious beings.

Our cars are a sort of tool, a technology that takes us places just as our minds drive us into the future. If we don't know how to drive well, we can hurt ourselves and damage a lot of people. Or, maybe we have taken the time to learn to drive because it was fun or someone made us learn, but we are a little lazy. We don't want to take the time to give our cars the attention they need. We put low quality oil and gas in it, or maybe we don't even change the oil. We just want to drive it without caring for it. Then we can get where we want to go for a while, but we will be spewing out black stinky smoke and causing pollution everywhere we go, and then eventually it just won't take us anywhere anymore. We will be stuck, frozen where we are and maybe where we are isn't a very good place, but we don't know how to get anywhere else. Maybe we should give licenses for people to use their minds. Those with poor mind development get a license for very basic responsibilities and only those who have very well developed and enlightened minds get a license for jobs of great responsibility and decision making that affects many people. And, those who really pay attention to what they are putting into their minds get licenses to be inspirations and models and to lead humanity into the future.

This last century we have witnessed the deepening of consciousness from an exploration of thoughts and ideas through philosophy, science and psychology to exploring the mind itself on an unprecedented level through meditation and the contemplative sciences. True spiritual awakening and awareness involves the recognition that we have a mind and that we can learn to work with it, to control it, and from this point of control we can rule over our emotions, our behavior, and our relationship with self, others, and with all planetary life.

There is every reason to be hopeful of what we can and are learning and accomplishing with the mind. The Center for Mindfulness at UMass Medical Center has created what promises to be a very exciting new format for its spring 2015 conference which is taking place next weekend. Instead of the usual conference focused on sharing knowledge through educational workshops and talks, it is inaugurating a new format in which participants explore together what the real role of mindfulness in society is. This new unifying approach has as its overarching goal the "robust and intimate engagement by every participant with the aim of

identifying and explicating values and principles of ethical behavior and responsibility as mindfulness moves more fully into society.” We might recognize this as a new invocative note that has been lifted from engagement with the knowledge and facts of the lower human concrete mind into an exploration and intentional use of the higher abstract mind. What a fascinating thing to dive into an awareness of this subtle thing we call a mind and to discover its many qualities and uses.

Thousands and perhaps millions of people are now interested in the mind, what it is, what it can do, how they can explore it and create with it. Science is discovering how thoughts rule over the brain and the body, affecting not only our physiological functioning but actually creating changes in anatomical structure. The mind has power. As the ruler of this world, our individual world and our collective world, it has power even if we haven't yet learned to use that power with precision, skill, and for the right purposes. The key to how we rule from the mind seems to be our purpose and intention. Is our purpose selfless or selfish, is it to create right relationship or domination, harmony or chaos, love or separatism. We have always had choices, but we never had the technology to bring about mass destruction on the scope we can today because we had not yet tapped so fully into the creative power of the mind. We are just beginning to tap that power. That power is not wishful thinking, it is not an affirmation. It is real control used either purposely and consciously or not.

The effects of the choices about which ideas and thoughts to embody and create from are readily apparent all around the world today. People are more powerful today than ever before both as individuals and as groups and the ideas and values that drive their choices lead to the effects that are created. People make choices based on their ideas and beliefs. For example, Individuals may choose suicide either based on a principle, an idea, or out of despair and the misguided deluded belief that it is the only viable option for relief from suffering and they may choose to involve others in their destruction such as we have seen recently. Groups may choose war, oppression, and violent destruction in a misguided zeal to rule from a certain ideology or belief, or they may choose inclusiveness, love, and peace from a similar zeal but guided by different, perhaps higher and more selfless ethics, values and motives.

To get a sense of just how important ideas are I invite you to do a google search of 'ideas that have changed the world'. In 2008 CNN published ten ideas that changed the world. The ten ideas they write about include: Farming, the unconscious, relativity, vaccination, human rights, evolution, World Wide Web, soap, zero, and gravity. In 2010 Tim Crane, a professor at Cambridge University, listed his choice for the ten greatest ideas that changed the world. His top ten are: the computer, the Copernican revolution, democracy, communism, relativity, free market, quantum theory, evolution, feminism, and human rights. Perhaps there is an idea that has lighted *your* mind and changed *your* life. What new ideas are right there on the horizon ready to change the world? What kind of ideas do we need to move human

culture forward into the direction of right relations and harmony and towards higher more selfless ethics? Is there an entirely new way of looking at things that will shed some important light and show us the way forward to a better world?

Time magazine in a 2011 article by Charles Kenny entitled “10 ideas that will change the world” describes in some detail the greatest power for change as youth. Now youth isn’t exactly an idea, but he points out that youths played a major role in “bringing down some long standing dictators in the Middle East and Africa. Youth are tech savvy and are able to bring about rapid and miraculous feats of activity and consensus using social media. With the right motivation one can envision entire mass groups of humanity being moved to action by certain values and ideas using social media as a platform.” He also describes the growing “bulge” of youth brought about by rapidly declining child mortality rates, which most economists see as a problem, but David Bloom at Harvard indicates that his work has demonstrated that the youth bulge may actually speed economic development when they reach working age.

At the end of his article, Kenny sums up his case for optimism citing the spread of global democracy, better health, more education, and less violence and suggests the biggest new idea of all: that it is time to “abandon our usual pessimism about the state of the planet and the course of history.”

Pessimism and an oppressor/victim stance can be a pervasive quality affecting our minds negatively. It is the quality of our mind through which we perceive the world and all future creative possibilities and as such quality has a great deal of effect over the kind of future that we create. How might the transformation from pessimistic thinking and perception to a more enlightened and empowered quality of mental perception change the course of history itself? Imagine not simply changing the ideas and thoughts that are in your mind, but changing the entire tenor or note of your mind itself, filling it with joy, possibility, and enthusiasm for what can be achieved. So many people have such negative qualities to their mind that cause them tremendous suffering; just as the Buddha taught. But recognize that the race is learning to heal and work intentionally with the mind, learning to nurture the inherent inner qualities of positivity, equanimity, clear thinking, and great creative possibility. Now multiply this hopeful picture by more than 7.2 billion, which is the estimate of the current world population.

Now that is power. And, here is another interesting question to ponder—what effects would the mental embodiment of love have on the mind and on the world? Not sentimental grasping love as in the desire to be with another, but real agape, the love that Christ talked about. Do we actually know that, can we imagine it? Would it eliminate certain selfish lines of thinking altogether? Would it allow entirely new thinking? How can we create such a spiritual flow that love pours forth into human hearts and minds? We might imagine a person with such a mind as a walking fountain of light and love, giving off those spiritual qualities freely and abundantly,

radiating the energy that humanity needs to lift itself out of the mire of pessimism and into the mind of creativity, hope, and enlightened loving will.

This is The Festival of Easter, the festival of the risen, living Christ, the Teacher of all men and the Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy. He is the Expression of the Love of God. On this day the Spiritual Hierarchy which He guides and directs is recognized, and the nature of God's love emphasized. The spiritual hierarchy is comprised of those individuals who are in training and preparation to tread an even higher way. They have little recognition as yet in the minds of humanity. It is only the adepts, saints, and saviors who have periodically made some impression upon humanity who are known. In Tibet the hierarchy of masters is sometimes called "the society of organized and illumined minds—illumined by love and understanding, by a deep compassion and inclusiveness, illumined by knowledge of the plan and aiming to comprehend the purpose, sacrificing their own immediate progress in order to help humanity. This is the Master." (p 256, The Unfinished Autobiography).

So, at this point let's stop and before we begin our group meditation, together ask ourselves what our job, our spiritual responsibility is in light of this festival of love and the recognition of ruling from the mind. Realizing that our responsibility involves the mind and love and that the mind has ruling power and love is simplicity itself, perhaps one way to perceive our job is simply to be the love and hope for the world.
