



Easter Festival in Aries

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"I come forth and from the plane of mind, I rule."

A Matter of Life and Death

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Welcome to the Festival of Easter and a celebration of the living Christ principle. This spiritual festival during Aries is destined to become a time of universal recognition of the spiritual Hierarchy that the Christ guides and directs; a time when the nature of God's love is invoked with its power to produce resurrection and spiritual livingness. Easter will then become the great Western festival when all eyes and thoughts are fixed on life, not death. And it will be realised that death is but the force of liberation – a force to be celebrated rather than feared.

The perplexing relationship between life and death has, of course, been the subject of poets and philosophers throughout history, the following poem by Dylan Thomas addressing the mystery with haunting melancholy:

*The force that through the green fuse
drives the flower*

*Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of
trees*

Is my destroyer.

*And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.*

*The force that drives the water through the rocks
Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing
streams*

Turns mine to wax.

*And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
How at the mountain spring the same mouth
sucks.*

*The hand that whirls the water in the pool
Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind
Hauls my shroud sail.*

*And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.*

*The lips of time leech to the fountain head;
Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood
Shall calm her sores.*

*And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind
How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.*

*And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb
How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.*

The poignancy of these verses touches something deep within; it troubles the mind and intensifies the hunger to understand the seemingly inscrutable mystery of life and death. Poets such as Thomas capably portray the psychological anguish of the human soul, which always struggles in darkness and bewilderment prior to the state of enlightenment. Indeed, it is the psychological pain of darkness that eventually propels the consciousness through the door of death and into the living light of resurrection. The initiated consciousness is then privy to the beautiful secret of death which is entrance into greater life – the following affirmation from the Master’s archives succinctly expressing this reversal of common understanding:

"Bear in mind, O Chela, that within the known spheres naught is but light responsive to the WORD. Know that that light descends and concentrates itself; know that from its point of chosen focus, it lightens its own sphere; know too that light ascends and leaves in darkness that which it—in time and space—illumined. This descending and ascension men call life, existence and decease; this We Who tread the Lighted Way call death, experience and life."

This turning of the perspective of life and death on its head is beautiful and inspiring to contemplate. As the worlds were created through the enunciation of the WORD so, on a lesser turn of the spiral, each of us is a word enunciated by the soul and made manifest on the physical plane. The WORD attracts lighted substance to itself, which then solidifies into flesh providing our temporary shell or home. And when this form grows old or outgrows its use, as all forms do – why keep it?

This taking and releasing of form is the spiritual side of the evolutionary process, the consciousness that resides in each form is never lost, but spirals in and out of different forms, experiencing, adjusting, learning and evolving in line with what we can only call a plan of some kind in the mind of divinity. Pondering on this we gain a better sense of proportion as we take our eyes off our own personal fate in favour of a more macrocosmic perspective. It is through this impersonal approach that we become filled with awe as we sense the unconditional love that lies behind universal processes and which is driving all onwards to some unknown goal.

The secular west has increasingly insulated itself from the natural cyclic process of death. Ever in search of new sensations, our uncontrolled rampage down the path of materialism has resulted in too strong an identification with our coat of skin; we’ve become enmeshed in its senses and consequently out of touch with our inner nature. The senses are meant to inform, not to possess, and only by disentangling ourselves from them and internalising our line of enquiry, can we hope to gain any real understanding of the nature of death. We have to awaken the inner, esoteric senses and follow their lead in order to touch the eternal core of our being that stands unmoved and serene throughout the long cycles of life, death and rebirth.

Alice Bailey tells us that the work of the Great Life ensouling our planet applies energies and forces under cosmic law...and creates continuously the new forms needed to express the "life more abundantly" and the "increasing purpose of His will" which the progress of the ages makes cyclically possible. We live at this time in a cycle wherein His intense activity

is utilising the technique of divine destruction for the release of the spiritual life. Simultaneously, this great Life is creating the new structure of civilisation that will express more fully the evolutionary attainment of the planet and the kingdoms in nature, leading eventually to the perfect expression of His divine life and purpose. Fortunately we are told that this period of destruction is nearing its end and that if we initiate the necessary changes in consciousness, an era of loving understanding will emerge.

In this way we see that death is not just something that affects individuals – it's all part of a larger process whereby the soul conforms to spiritual laws. This involves the periodic breaking down of all that is crystallized and in need of liberation into new forms. It takes place everywhere at all levels and we see huge cataclysms like earthquakes in the mineral kingdom and the extinction of species. On the human level we see the death process working on an emotional and mental level too; thus we have the constant death and rebirth of institutions, religions, political movements, and cultural trends. We see construction, deconstruction and reconstruction all around us, and all of it made more painful by the fact that we are trying to hold onto the known and familiar forms of the past.

It is hard for us who are so identified with the form aspect to understand this greater purpose of death, especially in the case of natural disasters of which we've seen quite a few of late. According to the Ageless Wisdom Teachings, all so-called Acts of God proceed under Law and Plan, and this causes a troubling paradox, for who can reconcile such terrible suffering with a benign and all loving God? Perhaps part of the contradiction is due to the tendency to unconsciously project onto Deity a personality intimately concerned with the affairs of every individual on the planet. The truth though is that the great Lives who reside in the Centre where the Will of God is known, not to mention the Logos Himself, are focused more on interplanetary relationships and the direction of cosmic forces for the good of all kingdoms of nature.

We can surmise from this that, in natural disasters and times of war, individual destiny and karma are generally superseded by group and racial karma, and even planetary karma in the case of natural disasters. And of course, esoterically death is simply liberation into greater life via the relocation of consciousness into another area of the Divine scheme. So while natural disasters such as earthquakes are under the guidance of planetary intelligences, the great law of Love that rules the solar system is never contravened. It is just that form has to yield to "the pressure of the divine idea", or to put it another way "*The garment of God is driven aside by the energy of His movements...*"

Let us pause here for a few moments of quiet reflection and then say together the Great Invocation:

From the point of Light within the Mind of God

Let light stream forth into the minds of men.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God

Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.

May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known

Let purpose guide the little wills of men—

The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men

Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.

And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth

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Overcoming death by turning it into something we consciously participate in is the next step ahead of intelligent people of goodwill everywhere, and meditation is the key to understanding the process. For the major part of the cycle of incarnations, the soul on its own plane takes little notice of our daily affairs and activities, but when we start to tread the path and deliberately invoke its light, the first law of White Magic enters the equation: *The Solar Angel collects himself, scatters not his force, but in meditation deep communicates with his reflection.*

When this occurs, the personality experiences the impulse to introspection and the liberating energy of death is brought to bear on all that obstructs the soul's light. St Paul spoke of this process in his speech to the Corinthians when he said "I die daily". This leads all the way to the Crucifixion and the Great Renunciation – the call of sacrifice that brings death to the lower nature. Only by the daily practice of bestowing death upon the lower nature can the final Death be "met and endured."

Indeed, even words such as crucifixion will lose their terror when they are considered from a wider angle. For what does crucify really mean – simply "to fasten to a cross". A purely physical interpretation of this definition is understandably abhorrent. But crucifixion really means to bring the cross to bear upon an unwanted state of consciousness. And what is this cross? It is the vertical line of force that connects a human being to the divine, down which spiritual power pours into the consciousness; while the horizontal line is the means of transmitting this power into the mundane world as a redemptive fire. The centre of the cross is where the divine fire is held in a state of spiritual tension, to wax in power before being released in an act of creative redemption.

The work of creative redemption 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 has to surmount, and indeed requires, opposing forces to ply its craft. The stronger the opposition, the greater the work of art, and the more Aries can assist the creative process through the "unfolding power to manifest" that qualifies its energy. Here then, we have the opportunity to recreate ourselves by rising into a state of magnetic tension that provides a protective force-field from the lure of the three worlds while simultaneously allowing us to create through the substance therein.

On consideration, it will be realised that this type of creativity is what the Christ was referring to when He proclaimed "Behold, I make all things new", and the opportunity before us to carry this spirit of renewal into our lives is both immediate and real. The magnetic aura of a developed Son of God such as the Christ lifts the consciousness of those who come into its field of influence into a state of critical suspension, where creative potential is heightened to a greater degree than is customary. New possibilities are momentarily visioned, the subtle influences of that which is as yet unseen and unheard flit through the consciousness and from the dead each Lazarus is raised.

The crisis produced by this energy inflow inevitably entails a decision being made, for the energy is too powerful to be contained and must be expressed through creativity of some kind. Either it will be applied in service or it will turn the other way and become destructive. The New Testament illustrates this in the many episodes of good and evil that were the creative responses of those who came in contact with the Christ, reactions varying according to the calibre of consciousness that He touched. As we look around the world today and see how interrelated society is compared to two thousand years ago, where the power to destroy the whole planet lies in the unsteady hands of humanity, we can see why adequate preparation must be made before the Christ can reappear – good must outweigh evil for catastrophe to be averted.

To some degree, the power to 'raise from the dead' exists in all of us and the inspiration that we draw from Christ and all the other great representatives of God can be applied in our lives to turn each moment of the day into one of creative opportunity. The science of social interaction that is currently flowering in the world is a foundation for this and one on which spiritual creativity can flourish. Communication, silent or vocal, when carried out in the ethos of right relationship becomes a spiritual dynamo through which the light of renewal is generated. As energy surges between the communicating parties and the point of creativity produced between them, a heightening of magnetic tension naturally occurs which is experienced as joy. As such, joy is the touchstone of true creativity and an indicator of the degree of spiritual enrichment that is occurring – it appears like a rainbow when the soul is shining through substance, disappearing as suddenly should the personality stand in the way.

Joy is felt no matter whether the personality is in happy or distressed mode. Joy is felt in the realisation that, through the Christ, we have the opportunity to join in the great scheme of things as conscious collaborators; and the more we give ourselves to this goal, the more the chaotic motion that naturally characterises the lives of those who are unaware of any spiritual goal will steadily give way to order. The whole of existence then becomes a field of service,

where various potencies or ideas are used to stimulate all manifested lives into accelerated, directed motion towards the Christ and the spiritual Hierarchy.

Every time we have a thought, we are participating in the creative processes of the universe and either assisting or hindering the whole. As there is nothing motionless in the universe, every thought and action carries its creator and those whom it influences a little step forwards into spirit or backwards into matter and it is therefore evolutionary or involutory; and perhaps this throws light on Christ's pronouncement "Those who are not with me, are against me". Doing nothing is actually impossible because the sea of substance in which we live out our lives, and which is sometimes referred to as "elemental essence" is flowing steadily towards the pole of matter on the involutory cycle, and so what we describe as 'doing nothing' is more a drifting backwards down this line of least resistance through previously attained states of consciousness which we have outgrown and which we revisit at our peril: as Master Morya puts it, they are "Habits of residence that imperil the resident". Many of us probably feel stationary, as though we are making little progress on the path, but on closer inspection we will recognise that we are still "treading water" and summoning up the energy to take another step forward.

Following in the footsteps of the Christ demands an unwavering focus of our creative energy. And this is encapsulated in a beautiful statement in the Alice Bailey writings: *sustained effort is the seed of synthesis, the cause of achievement and that which finally overcomes death*. The spiritual path is the path of sustained effort to draw spirit and matter together in a supreme act of synthesis; for Spirit and Matter are the true pair of opposites, not Life and Death as we had hitherto assumed. Death is simply a liberating force, and one of many players in the vast scheme of Life that embraces them all.

Through this understanding comes reconciliation for philosopher and poet alike. "*The force that through the green fuse drives the flower*" is a beautiful force to ponder at Easter time when fiery renewal is seen all around us. Each burst of greenery exemplifies the struggle of growth entailed in all creative endeavour – a force of resurrection that would not be possible without first being released by that which "*blasts the roots of trees*". Though this force is indeed one of destruction, it merely takes us a step closer to the full flowering of the Christ child within – and is therefore to be welcomed with joyful anticipation.