

Easter and the Joyous New Year
Easter (Aries) Festival 2019

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Good evening and welcome to the Aries full moon festival here in our New York headquarters. We also would like to extend a warm welcome to those of you who are joining in via the live audio stream.

Tonight we have a special full moon opportunity before us--the conjunction of two major points in the annual cycle -- the spring equinox and the exact time of the Aries full moon. The spring equinox just occurred at 5:58 pm, 32 minutes ago and the actual time of the full moon occurs at 9:42 pm, in just a few hours.

The alignment between these two potent events bodes well for the commencement of the higher interlude period of 2019. It is starting off with a blast of will energy for the zero degree cardinal points are always potent periods within the cycles of the planet, which correspond with the cycles of the planetary soul, which is the spiritual Hierarchy. When these two major points coincide in such close proximity, it surely represents a powerful opportunity for forward evolutionary movement, for Aries gives boldness and strength, the ability to overcome obstacles.

This combination of potencies charges this period and really this entire year with heightened spiritual potential which bodes well for the success of the upcoming Festival Week of the NGWS in December. The stimulation of this group is keys up of the whole planet for, in a sense, this mediating group between Hierarchy and Humanity is the means whereby hierarchical energy, which is essentially the energy of love, can blend with and turn human aspiration into the pulsation of the planetary heartbeat.

Each of us, therefore, can stand as an outlet for hierarchical energy within our environment. And all the cardinal points -- Aires, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn -- extend the alignment to the highest center, to Shamballa and therefore to the spiritual will and purpose of the One in Whom we Live and Move and have our Being, which can of course only be appropriated by spiritual groups.

Groups today are also coming increasingly under the growing tide of the spiritual will as it works out upon the physical-etheric plane, and this through the strong seventh ray energy which they are particularly responsive to. For as you know the first ray and the seventh rays are like two parts of one whole--"The highest and the lowest meet." And since Aries is the sign through which first ray energy pours most powerfully, with two Aries full moon periods this year we have the opportunity to strengthen our groups and ground will in matter.

This energy of this double Aries period can be used to expedite humanity's responsiveness to the Plan and assure that the externalization happens sooner rather than after a long delay. Of

the three spiritual festivals, this one is most closely related to the Christ, being the great Festival most closely associated with the Christ of Palestine, the Christ who came for the Piscean age. But the livingness of this Festival of course links it closely with the Gemini Festival, which would seem more linked to the Aquarian Savior, the One Who comes for all Humanity, the leader of angels and of men.

In many traditional societies, particularly in the East, the first day of spring was and is still considered the first day of the year, wherein celebrations honoring the feast of the new year are observed. This is the day when, each year, "life" begins, or renews itself, as the darkness and barrenness of winter recedes into the burst of livingness that is spring in the northern hemisphere. Aries is the sign of beginnings. It brings that optimism, a sense of expectancy that ever arises with the birth of something new.

According to the Tibetan, the Easter Festival is determined by the first full moon of spring, so esoterically at least, today is the day for the celebration of Easter. Christian churches will observe Easter next month, on the second Aries festival, based on the tradition that Easter occurs on the Sunday after the first full moon following March 21st. But perhaps we could say that we who work more from the realm of causes, have the opportunity to celebrate the esoteric Easter and by this means help prepare the stage energetically so that next month there will be a greater receptivity among the masses of humanity to the outpouring of the more exoteric Easter festival celebrated by Christians the world over. Surely both festivals are important and contribute to the shedding abroad of the Christ spirit, not for Christians alone but indeed for all people everywhere.

Because of these two Aries full moon periods, the higher interlude this year will encompass four full moons instead of three, bringing with it quite an extra charge of energy--surely, again, to help prepare humanity for the powerful influx of energy that will occur in December. The Easter period, like Aries itself, is associated with the tremendous power of transformation that is death or in the case of the Christian enactment -- crucifixion and subsequent rebirth and resurrection. This transformative experience in the life of Christ is the eternal symbol of the great and mysterious phase in the soul's journey when it is freed once and for all from the ashes of form life, making way for the direct alignment of spirit and matter.

We don't often think of Aries as a sign of initiation -- that understanding is generally linked with Capricorn. But in reality there are many different layers to the initiatory experience and it cannot be limited or isolated to any one particular astrological energy. That wouldn't make sense for there are different stages to the initiation process and in an archetypal manner these stages may very well be characterized by different signs of the zodiac.

Aries is the first sign of the reversed wheel, at least symbolically speaking. It rules the mind and it is the mental principle that enables the wheel to reverse, enables the individual to reason his or her way into another mode of living. And it is the strengthening of this mental control and its eventual stabilization that eventually enables the individual to hold that mind steady and then eventually become gripped by the light of the soul.

The first initiation is often symbolized by the Virgo experience, which confers the birth of the inner light within the cave of the heart. Scorpio is generally related to the second initiation and actually also to the taking of the third. Then in Capricorn, the initiate becomes initiated. But it does appear that through the experience of the two subsequent sign of service -- Aquarius and Pisces -- the individual demonstrates the sacrificial life that prepares him or her for the arhat or fourth degree and then the final human initiation, the fifth degree, which symbolically could also be related to the sign of Aries.

Of course we don't necessarily focus on the initiatory aspect of the Easter Festival, upon its incredible transformative energy. But as the covering veils that until now have separated the unseen worlds from the seen begin to thin as humanity collectively learns to widen the rents, the illuminating light of the soul and of the Triad will increasingly flood the etheric field of the planet and end the rule of death, or apparent death, bringing forth the recognition of the life eternal which is the true nature of reality.

And because the resurrection initiation, the fifth great and mysterious initiation of Mastership, is intimately related to this Easter Festival it might be useful for us to review some of the qualities of this highest achievement for the human being. The Tibetan describes it as "the rare efflorescence of a generation of enquirers." And although it is rare, we are encouraged, at our level of understanding to seek to approach an understanding of the means by which this mastery is achieved. Of course we know it is preceded by death or destruction, which is the keynote of the Crucifixion initiation involving the destruction of the causal vehicle, that wonderful temple or storehouse of all the jewels that have been accrued by the individual through the long course of his or her many lives. Interestingly, it is said that each life is preserved in only three seeds at its end and while these are harvested and stored in the causal body all else from the incarnation is combust. Perhaps this is an encouragement for the use of the evening review when we can follow in the footsteps of Krishnamurti who was said to "combust his day," as if with fire, and leave it behind at the end of each day. On this sacred day we might want to consider what more we can do to leave the past behind and tread the way of fire.

In *A Treatise on White Magic* the Tibetan gives us four key qualities that he says are possessed and practiced by those who are moving towards adeptship and eventual mastery. These are qualities we can all strive towards and seek to cultivate in our daily lives. These qualities are to:

1. Enquire the Way.
2. Obey the inward impulses of the soul.
3. Pay no attention to any worldly consideration.
4. Live a life which is an example to others.

And although these qualities may appear simple, as we attempt to practice them, we quickly realize the challenges they pose. To enquire the way is very much in the nature of Aries and its keynote, "I come forth, and from the plane of mind, I rule."

The inquirer is the one who is dissatisfied with the knowledge of his generation and who seeks and is enabled to penetrate into new realms of thought that are seeking revelation. Essentially he is someone who is concerned with planetary purpose, as was the Christ. And this would be true of all four of these demands. This inquiry, therefore, pushes one beyond alignment with the soul and into an alignment with spirit. This is the next step for humanity. This inquiry of course leads to the recognition that in reality there is no one who can save us, no one who can really point the way for us and it therefore throws us back upon ourselves, to find the way alone and unaided. This first characteristic of those who are seeking the way brings in the needed quality of strength, of self-reliance which is of the essential nature of a Master of the Wisdom.

To obey the inward impulses of the soul is another challenge--for quite often those inner impulses stand in stark contrast to the wishes of the personality, creating a conflict, a lack of clarity, a seeming loss of time. Amidst the many voices, the seeker must somehow accept what the bell or note of the intuition, once discerned, brings and stand by it. The path itself in one way could be characterized as one long exercise in discrimination, and at each turn the discriminative necessity increases and becomes more exacting. One learns that one's decisions have group implications and to an increasingly wider audience.

To pay no attention to any worldly considerations, that can be a difficult one, living as we do in a world wherein those considerations often do demand quite a bit of attention and they seemingly cannot be ignored. But surely the counsel here is to not dwell upon these demands and to know that they will be taken care of, for the individual trusts in the Law. As we do make progress in putting the demands of the soul above and beyond the desires of the personality, we signal to the soul that we can be relied upon when the going gets a little choppy in our lives.

The fourth quality needed for mastery is that of the living of a life that is an example to others. This example is demonstrated surely in different ways through all the many different people. It occurs as we allow our particular soul qualities to shine forth, while our personality colors, with their often harsher hues, to recede more into the background of our lives.

Another key quality often arising in our minds in relationship to Easter and, therefore, in relationship to these higher initiations is, of course, the quality of Joy, which should be the overriding focus as Easter holds bare the fallacy of death. Clearly in the northern hemisphere this joy is not hard to come by at this time of year because of the awakening that occurs within the natural world. All life is infused with the tremendous rush of life energy, following upon the ending and death that Pisces always symbolizes. This is indeed the joyous new year. It releases fear and, as fear departs, JOY rushes in as it is always looking for outlet in our lives but it cannot flourish alongside fear. Joy is, therefore, the great releasing factor. We can touch a fragment of joy at holiday seasons or spiritual ceremonies, at weddings and births. But joy is generally more akin to the quality of Being, of living in the here and now, casting aside regrets, fears and

forebodings and relishing in the underlying potential and opportunity which each moment contains when it is captured and savored.

For after all the soul lives in the moment, in the eternal. These artificial divisions related to time, while very important in the functioning of life in the three worlds, nonetheless are non-existent in the soul's realm. As we cultivate this quality of joy in our own lives, we begin to intersect the two worlds by attuning our vibration to that of the soul enabling it to merge more fully with us. For joy is a quality of the ashram and so as we seek to live within that ashram we naturally can begin, through the medium of light, to radiate joy within our environment, thus serving as does Hierarchy. A beautiful keynote given to students for contemplation aids us in understanding this. It states: "The peculiar type of radiation which [the Master] wants you to endeavour to express is that light which reaches others upon the wings of joy" (*Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I, p. 181.*)

So let's do what we can during this extended Aries period in our planetary life, to set a new rhythm in our lives, to live above the fray that is so strong in the planet at this time and do what we can to radiate the light of joy within whatever atmosphere we might find ourselves, remembering that as we learn to work etherically, the planet becomes our playground. Then we become as the golden bird that flies free above the rosy cross of the much loved and cherished but nonetheless from which the soul, the bird, remains free.