

Easter Festival, London, March 2019

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Good afternoon and welcome to the Easter festival in Aries. Before I start, I just want to add a brief explanation about the fact that we are celebrating the Festival of Easter tomorrow. In Alice Bailey's writings, the Easter Festival is determined by the first full moon of Spring (*The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* p420). Throughout the Christian world, Easter will be observed in April, following the second Aries full moon on 19th April.

A festival is a period of celebration. It is an observance, an honouring, a marking, a keeping... It is an act of maintaining, as well as protecting something.

The United Nations currently observe 170 or so international days (<http://www.un.org/en/sections/observances/international-days/>) of bringing humanity's attention to an increasing number of issues, beginning with the World Braille day on the 4th of each January and ending each year with the Human Solidarity Day on the 20th of December. Tomorrow, March 21st, is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, but also the day of World Poetry, the day of Down Syndrome, the international day of Forests, and the day of Norwuz, the Iranian New Year.

And while, as it should be, the appointment of specific days for honouring and celebrating substantial exoteric aspects of planetary life is proliferating, the Easter festival in Aries, the first of the three annual Spiritual Festivals, in essence marks the commencement of a time-honoured period of observation, maintenance, practice and furthering of humanity's willing, intelligent cooperation in the evolution of consciousness.

Let's pause to take a few minutes of silent reflection and then say together the Noon Time recollection:

I know, O Lord of Life and Love,
About the need.
Touch my heart anew with love
That I, too, may love and give.

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The resurrection of the Christ being celebrated at the time of the Easter Aries festival, is humanity's call for a transition into a new consciousness. It symbolises the renewal that comes with the beginning of each new cycle in the spiral of evolution, of the opportunity for tearing down the lesser to construct the higher. Its ultimate gift is one of a reality where death is nothing more than a means by which the infinite makes itself gradually known through the finite, employing the illusion of time. It points to a path which leads to "a consciousness of true being and into a state of knowledge which will prove ... the fact of the soul, beyond all doubt or questioning."

We are told that "in the Aquarian Age, the religion of the Risen Christ, and not of the newly born Christ or the crucified Christ, will be the distinctive keynote."

To the esotericist, the Easter festival is a celebration not only, as per ecclesiastical tradition, of the magnitude of the personality of Jesus and of His divine attainment, but of the *metaphor it provides*, for the transformation of all human consciousness through His externalised "re-enactment [of the] eternal process of crucifixion and death, resurrection and life," - a symbol of "the motive of the entire manifested universe, [which is] the consequent salvation of the

wholeⁱ."

In this context, Christ's crucifixion can be perceived as an expression of the crucifixion upon the Cross of Matter of the soul of man, the Lord of sacrifice and persistent loving Devotion, so that lives such as those embodied in the personality of man may rise to new levels of spiritual expression - so that they, too may rise to the "resurrection which is in Christ."

This expression is as much a promise as it is a demonstration of the "eternal self which is in everyone," of a rebirth into a reality where the lower nature dies only "in order that the higher may manifest". In this light, death at any level, from the death of lesser illusions and desires all the way to the perceived finality of physical death is but a portal to this reality, a fundamental process of evolution, a necessary step along the path to divinity, towards the absolute truth. It is towards this new consciousness, which transcends the death of the physical self, that - through each renunciation of the lower human nature - we progress.

The concepts of rebirth and of the eternal nature of the soul point to the cyclical return of the ego to physical incarnation. This repeated descent, or involution into matter is generally perceived as a necessary part of the process the ego undergoes in its effort to complete the task of perfection, or satisfy some unrealised desire. However, this understanding is but a partial truth, the full meaning of which is veiled by the limited perception of the uninitiated personality. The ego or soul does not lack perfection, for it is already perfect. It is not motivated by desire but by will and the knowledge of the Plan. Its main incentive is "sacrifice and service to those lesser lives that are dependent upon the higher inspiration ... and the determination that they too may attain planetary status equivalent to that of the sacrificing soulⁱⁱ."

A beautiful depiction of this process of redemption of the lesser by the higher, is to be found in the following phrases in the *Old Commentary*:

"Those who are demanding to be saved have cried aloud. Their voices penetrate into the formless world and there evoke response.

"Those who in distant aeons have pledged themselves to save and serve respond. Their cry too rings forth and, ringing, penetrates into the dark and distant places within the worlds of form.

"And thus a vortex is established and kept alive by that constant dual sound. And then a touch is made and for a space and during time, the two are one—the Saving Souls and the Units to be served.

"Slowly the vision of the Saving One becomes a light which guides the Crying Ones into the place of light."

One cannot help but recognise the Christ, the World Saviour in this last phrase of the Old Commentary, for His teachings, but mostly His sacrifice and subsequent resurrection, today constitute a beacon which guides billions towards the light.

If we consider our place as individuals, but also as a group, within the vast spectrum of entities composed of energy, we must realise that we find ourselves in relation to all other individuated and group lives, along the two axes of the cross of life:

On the horizontal axis are to be found those lives with which we are in contact and resonate at one level or other through similarity of vibration, forming a subjective group.

"Above" and "below", along the vertical axis, we find ourselves - in terms of progress and

vibrational frequency - standing midway between the "lesser" and the "higher."

We are thus at any given point in our evolution both redeemers as well as being redeemed, like cells of an intricate structure being held from above as well as holding others below.

As we poise ourselves to be world servers, our will is initially directed upwards, towards establishing and maintaining contact, through the soul, with "those who have pledged themselves to save", so that our cry for salvation can be heard, and responded to.

Then, as we establish our foothold on each step of the evolutionary ladder, we are called upon to employ the will-to-love which brings about inclusiveness, identification with the "other", and a melting of boundaries that allows us to receive the cry of those demanding to be saved, so that we, in turn, may respond accordingly.

It is this latter gift, the gift of love, that the Christ brought to the world of men when, responding to the cries of humanity, sacrificed Himself on the cross. With the crucifixion of Master Jesus, the overshadowing Christ "...was deemed worthy of embodying in Himself a new principle in evolution and of revealing to the world the nature of the second ray aspect—the divine principle of love (as humanity calls it) or of pure reason (as the Hierarchy calls it)ⁱⁱⁱ."

It is through this principle, through love as an act of the will, that we, as members of the New Group of World Servers, are enabled to consciously participate in the evolutionary plan. As we move out of the Piscean age into the age of Aquarius, the inflow of the Christ force is no longer contingent on the spiritual attainment of any single personality but, as the Tibetan tells us, on "the sum total of the general accomplishment [of] the entire group... "The Christ", the Tibetan continues, "[will] again appear on earth, incarnated this time in the many and not in the one personality. Each member of the group is a Christ in manifestation, and all together present the Christ to the world, and constitute a channel for the Christ force and life^{iv}."

Our task therefore at this time as members of an esoteric group, is to work both individually towards becoming increasingly more effective channels for the Christ force and life, and as a group in preparation for His embodiment. The themes of vertical contact and horizontal cohesion once again come into play, pointing at a systemic structure and hinting at the nature of love as pure reason, as "the law of the system in demonstration on all the planes^v."

In the book "A Treatise on Cosmic Fire" we read that "it is love that keeps all in ordered sequence. Love ... builds the forms that cradle temporarily the inner hidden life, and [again it is love that causes] the disruption of those forms, and their utter shattering, so that the life may further progress^{vi}." Though love, in the teachings of the seven rays, is associated with the second Ray of Love and Wisdom, the Ray of Christ poured into the world through the second planetary centre which we call the Hierarchy, this shattering of the forms that is necessary for the evolutionary process is brought about by the powerful force of the first Ray of Will and Power.

This provides some initial insight as to the nature and potency of the opportunity presented by the full moon in Aries for those "aiming at the development of the Christ consciousness and at the bringing in of the rule or law of Christ, which is Love."

Aries, as we read in the Alice Bailey books, is "... one of the constellations of the Cardinal Cross of the heavens [...] ... the cross of God, the Father, and therefore, of the incarnating Monad." It is "the zodiacal sign through which the first Ray of Will or Power reaches our planetary life" - and it "*provided the impulse and energy which enabled [the Christ] to inaugurate the Christian era.*" The keynote of the disciple in Aries is "***I come forth and from the plane of mind, I rule.***" The chitta, or "mind-stuff," as the Hindus call it, to which our minds are related and of which our mental bodies are an integral part, are also part of the mind of Christ^{vii}.

The relation, therefore, and interplay of the second and first rays which sets the stage for the establishment of the Christ principle in human consciousness are echoed quite clearly at this particular point in the annual cycle, presenting the esoteric group with the conditions to invoke these forces.

Having worked diligently and consistently through daily meditation towards the building of a bridge between the personality and the soul, aspiring from there to reach the shores of the spiritual triad, we employ at this time "an unswerving focused intention based upon the Will," to identify with the Christ consciousness, remaining responsive to impressions coming from the higher spiritual realms, inviting the life and force of Christ to pour through the prepared channel into the group. The Tibetan teaches us that "No esoteric group is soundly handled and correctly motivated unless the spiritual energies which are available to it and the knowledge and the wisdom unfolded find expression in definite service^{viii}."

Provided the link between the personality of the soul has been established, such expression in the form of service occurs naturally. As the centre of consciousness of the individual shifts from the personality to the soul and to the group, the pettish desires and selfish plans of the personality diminish in importance until they are finally rendered irrelevant and null. Through gradual, systematic and rhythmic effort, and through subsequent moments of crisis, the personality is renounced. The individual dies to the personality and form life and is reborn to the life of the Soul, to the manifestation of Christhood. Following the footsteps of the Christ, the crucifixion and subjective death of the personality have signalled the resurrection of the individual into a new consciousness, his rebirth into a new life, of higher spiritual expression.

Few texts match the power and beauty of the following of passage from the Old Commentary, which portrays the fiery nature of the cycle of life, death and rebirth in Aries:

"The fire blazed forth and through that fire I died to life and so was born to death. And then again I died to form."

Let's go into meditation now, using the full moon meditation outline and the keynote for Aries: "I come forth and from the plane of mind, I rule"

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- i The Externalisation of the Hierarchy, p.166
 - ii Esoteric Astrology - A treatise on the Seven Rays, Vol. III
 - iii The Rays and the Initiations, p. 387
 - iv Esoteric Psychology, Vol. I
 - v A Treatise on Cosmic Fire, p. 594
 - vi A Treatise on Cosmic Fire, p. 594
 - vii Esoteric Psychology, Vol. I, p. 96
 - viii Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II, p. 89