

News from the School

The Three Major Festivals

Festival of Easter 2005

The Life that Conquers Death

Keyword for Disciples: *I rise, and from the plane of mind I rule.*

The Flame of the Eternal, always burning;
 The Fire that is never extinguished;
 The Light that conquers shadows;
 The Life that conquers death.

Such is the message of Easter, a time of joy and hope, because Christ, the divine Son, is reborn among us. The Festival of Easter is the Festival of Resurrection, and it contains the symbolism of Life ever present, Life that is One yet variable in its diverse forms— inexhaustible, regenerating, in synch with cosmic order.

Easter marks the beginning of a cycle of events, behind which lies the influence of the energies and forces that carry divine Purpose. These events occur simultaneously in both the occult and the manifest worlds, and in this way, in a parallel fashion, all creation witnesses the presence of the all-encompassing One. Each year, in accordance with the Law of Cycles, the Sun awakens Earth from its winter sleep at the Spring Equinox. Darkness and cold are replaced by light and warmth. Nature becomes joyful with flower buds and colors, as if it were grateful for the breath of new life. Although Spring occurs at different times in each hemisphere of Earth, for the planet as a whole it is signaled by the sign of Aries, the portal of the Zodiac, which marks the arrival of Easter, the portal of life.

Aries is an important cosmic influence, linked to the Christ and His resurrection. This constellation transmits divine Will and is the initiator that opens a new cycle of manifestation. It is the left arm of the Cardinal Cross in the heavens, the cross of transcendence, of the

risen Christ, of the Father, the manifestation of the divine. Aries is the expression of the purifying fire that destroys the lower and thereby liberates.

Aries represents the exalted place of the Sun, the Spirit, and the fall of Saturn, the Lord of Karma, in a clearly symbolical relationship to Christ's resurrection: Spirit rises, liberated from material bonds and from the laws that govern the material world. From the cosmic realm our mundane world emerges. The energy of Life flows continuously throughout, characterized by periodic impacts, provoking expansions of consciousness and producing consequent effects on the different planes of manifestation.

Aries' impact on Life is so significant that it is a great celebration—the Festival of Easter. This festival is the first in a series of twelve important dates occurring throughout the year. The first three in this series—Aries, Taurus and Gemini—are spiritual events of special importance for humanity, but all twelve offer exceptional opportunities for a clearer line of communication between the world of effects and the world of causes, between ourselves and our Creator.

During the Easter Festival the resurrected, living Christ is recognized as the Teacher of humanity and the head of the Spiritual Hierarchy. We recognize the unbreakable tie that the Creator maintains with His creation, that of the Father with His Son, and the vital importance of the Son as an expression of the only possible way to return to the Father's breast: "I and the Father are one";¹ "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."²

Beyond the poetic or mystical content of these sentences lies the meaningful essence of a teaching that will only come to those who can understand it as the "word of God," to those

whose awakened intuition can process and assimilate it on the higher planes of consciousness in order to make it come alive for them. Christ has to become a living being, reality itself, so that He becomes the path of return and the abundant life of the Self. This Life must be understood as an eternal continuity, defeating the deceptions of illusion, glamour and *maya* in any of their forms of expression. We merge with this Life as we move along the path of return in compliance with the supreme Law. Such is the message that Christ gave us twenty centuries ago when, during the course of three years and in the person of His disciple Jesus, we witnessed by His example each of the steps that lead to immortality.

Much has been written about the presence of Jesus Christ on Earth: a cosmic event of such influence that it has divided history into before and after; it has initiated profound changes in humanity's consciousness and pointed the way to never before imagined spiritual possibilities for humanity. Nevertheless, such writings—with honorable exceptions—have been limited to historical and religious narration, a predominantly mystical vision of Jesus Christ, His disciples and His work, or—according to rationalist minds—the presentation of a being who is basically human, a social agitator, a rebel commander, and who is subject to the limitations and faults of an unredeemed personality.

Only through an intuitive reading of the Holy Scriptures, especially in the light of esoteric teachings, can we come close to the true significance of the events that came to pass during those three years in which we witnessed the public life of a great spiritual Teacher, an Initiate in the cosmic mysteries whose drama was enacted in public view so as to make us participants in its meaning. Humanity at that time was not prepared for comprehending such deeds. For that reason, during the course of 2,000 years, the message has remained in the realm of the occult, mediated through interpretations limited by ignorance and Piscean attitudes. At the end of the Piscean era and the beginning of the Aquarian, we see emerging a new interest in understanding Christ's message now that we have reached a sufficient mental

development. We are urged forward by the need to discover the divine that exists at the heart of the human family.

We are now capable of a new understanding of Christ's message thanks to the spiritual Teachers who have come forward and whose teachings contain the keys to an interpretation that is adjusted to the essence and transcendence of the happenings of our time. They teach us that our spiritual search ought to be conducted by cultivating the higher qualities of the mind and the development of the intuition, and not through pure devotion. They urge each aspirant to transcend the ordinary, to understand the deeper meaning of events and things, to interpret them and arrive at knowledge. Such is the Law, and for that reason we strive to transcend our ignorance and enter this sublime world of causes.

Thus, as we look at the culminating event of those three years, the Resurrection, we are inclined to understand it as the fundamental reason for all that took place at the time, because the message that encapsulates the Christ's sojourn on Earth is the message of Life Eternal. From that point of view we see revealed the mystery of Life that negates death, the Light that emerges from darkness, the manifest that is born of the unmanifest. There we have proof of the unity of All. There the illusion of separate worlds is dispelled, the illusion of inexistence, un-beingness and nothingness as concepts of negativity and emptiness. Life emerges triumphant; the Christ-like life illuminates humanity's path, showing us the future, offering via His life an example of a potential future, a future that is realizable and inevitable.

With the Resurrection, a mission was accomplished simultaneously in both the objective and subjective worlds. Each perceptible event in the world of effects had behind it the cause, the goal, the Laws, Supreme Will. The protagonist in the objective world was a Teacher, recently arrived in the world of human beings, Who manifested in Himself a mastery of Christ consciousness that can only come from the pure spiritual realm. Divine Will is achieved on two levels: at the same time as the Master Jesus publicly undergoes the first five initiations, Christ undergoes the third through the

seventh initiations. Jesus Christ is simultaneously the one who transcended the human condition and acquired the privilege of entering the Higher World and the illuminated Being who already dwells in that world by right and divine recognition. That duality converted into Unity is a demonstration of the synthetic capacity of divine Will, and is a stimulus for us to break the rigid patterns that prevent us from comprehending the totality of the One. By presenting Himself to us as a man “born of woman,” and by living His life in our world, showing us the steps that make up the path of return, and reliving the vital crises that mark each stage, Jesus Christ not only taught us about discipleship, but He also demonstrated it as a possibility for humanity. He made us understand that that divinity expressed in Him is also our essence and can be manifested if we follow His example.

During those three years we were shown, one by one, the milestones to be completed on the path of return: the conquest of maya, glamor and illusion in order to transform the personality into the perfect vehicle for the Soul (Birth and Baptism, first and second initiations); the fusion of the Soul and personality in the Transfiguration, or third initiation; and the supreme sacrifice of the Soul, dissipated by divine Will, and the beginning of monadic rule in the fourth initiation of the Crucifixion and apparent Death.

Interpreting the message behind these events, we believe that by sharing with us His experiences Jesus is showing us the path and the stages of realization possible for humanity. He shows us the work that must be completed as incarnate Souls in order to arrive at that expansion of consciousness in which, by having built the Antahkarana—the mental bridge between

the higher and lower self, we will enter those realms of the monadic world upon the disappearance of the Soul and the causal body. Each one of these life experiences was demonstrated by the divine Envoy in full sight of humanity, who in some way participated in them from the first to the fourth initiation.

But the culminating moment, the Resurrection, took place without any human witnesses. It was an intimate act inherent to the pure spiritual Being that transcended the limitations of matter and the dual consciousness of the incar-

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nated Son. It revealed that initiation is something exceptional, something that transcends the strictly human condition and that belongs to a higher realm. Behind the teachings about the Resurrection there is a meaning that goes beyond our capacity to understand. Nevertheless, we cannot help feeling attracted by that prodigious event that crowns all the public activity of the divine Son. In the intimacy of a closed, dark cavern, an event is gestated during three days that will affect

forever our planetary life: the son of man is immortalized as the divine Son. The prototype of the human race, our paradigm, has completed His mission and declares our essential divinity.

Clearly it is not an event unrelated to humanity. Because even though it takes place in intimacy, suggesting that such a sublime event belongs to a level higher than our daily world, it happens in a place “hewn in the rock”,³ in the Earth, our habitat, in the density of matter. This important symbolism not only pertains to the human being as a planetary being, but it reminds us of the spiritual condition of matter,

a condition that will be liberated throughout a long evolutionary process.

Darkness is the guardian of the essence of the unmanifested One—the point of gestation, of proceeding forth and returning, the center of maximum balanced tension, the “divine darkness” from which light emanates. The darkness that is pure spirit, according to the Master Djwhal Khul, foments the processes of the Revelation, the fifth initiation for Jesus: “This vision concerns the Reality lying beyond any hitherto sensed or known”; and the seventh initiation for the Christ: “freedom from the hold of the phenomenal life of the seven planes of our planetary Life.”⁴

This double initiation, in which both protagonists experienced expanded consciousness simultaneously, marked the achievement of the main mission They had to bring about according to divine Will: to prove the eternal existence of Life in spite of any apparent limitation. The experience of the previous three years was condensed into these three days. Each expansion of consciousness translated into an initiatory state that created the necessary tension to refine the lower manifestations and bring them to the synthesis of the spiritual Being.

Work on the three levels, personal-Egoic-spiritual, has been accomplished. The triple personality has been harmonized with the Soul and later fused with it. The Monad has accomplished its synthetic work of destroying the causal body, the Soul, which has completed its own mission, and it remains as a nucleus of consciousness that, on reaping what has been sown, flowers in the spiritual Being.

The triple divine qualities of Will-Love-Intelligent Activity are manifested in the mystery of the subjective facts and in the objective events demonstrated to us. As the Tibetan teaches, “Christ did not rise out of a rocky sepulcher and reassume His discarded body.... Christ passed through the seventh initiation of Resurrection and returned back to His original state of Being—to remain there throughout all the eternities. This is the true and final resurrection.”⁵ Also, “The Master Jesus arose out of the tomb; the chains of death could not hold

Him.... The consciousness of the Universal Life is His.”⁶ This latter phrase describes to perfection His sublime state.

Such facts should not be separated but understood as part of a single context, because the message is: Life is One, although it manifests on different planes; Life evolves—which explains the different levels—and we, as human beings, are part of that evolution. Thus we have the emphasis on Christ’s example and the teaching we must follow, the teaching that He transmitted up till the end of His mission, opening for us the Path of Higher Evolution in accordance with divine Will.

The message of Christ and His Resurrection must be assimilated into each one’s consciousness, made one’s own, understood and lived. Otherwise our path will end in front of an empty sepulcher. Thus, even though we may not be ready to experience the sacred act of the Resurrection, we see, via one who underwent it, proof that it is indeed possible and is something that, as sons of the Father, we will also someday be able to achieve. Three times Christ clearly demonstrated to His disciples that He had conquered death and that He, Son of the Father, was the Life. He communicated this to them when “He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”⁷

Christ presents Himself to us as a Son of the Father, as our Older Brother who goes before us to show us the way. Along the way He shows us that we are an important link in the evolutionary chain and introduces us to the world of relationships, demonstrating the eternal rule of the principle of Love that He represents and that He so frequently emphasized to His disciples.

Love is continuity of Life; it contains all that exists, a global tapestry of threads of energy whose beginning and end is the Creator, the One Cause. In that Life each one of us has his or her place within an invocative-evocative system, an ascending set of steps that rise from the dense world of matter up to the divine. It is a hierarchical world where each kingdom is succeeded by a higher kingdom, where the human kingdom is an important link.

When we accept Christ as our prototype, we know that to attain such status requires reaching ever-higher levels of consciousness, and we understand the world of relationships as governed by a lifting process directed toward a Center. We also accept the existence of a Hierarchy of Masters who have transcended our kingdom and reside in the spiritual realm. The recognition of Their existence links us to Them and orients us definitively toward a higher level in the world of relationships. In this way we play our role as intermediaries between the kingdoms that we have left behind and that kingdom whose door is waiting for us to open it. Such is the assigned task of the human kingdom in the restoration of the Plan

Christ waits for us at the doors of this higher kingdom, since—according to the Tibetan—His seventh initiation still remains to be completed. This will occur at His second coming. The cycle that began 2,000 years ago in the

sign of Pisces must now end in the sign of Aquarius. The mystery must be revealed. Humanity, as a planetary center, must know how to reap what was sown during that long-ago Spring. The Christ consciousness must flower in each one of us. In that way we will always keep the flame of Life burning, and we will be able to be “the stone upon which Christ will erect His Church.”

Dr. Luisa Romero de Johnston

¹ *John*:10:30.

² *John*:14:6.

³ *Matthew* 27:60.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey. *The Rays and the Initiations*. Lucis, 1960, p. 686.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 730.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *John* 20:22.

Wesak Festival 2005

The Externalization and the Three Planetary Centers

Welcome to the Wesak Festival at which time we share, along with countless people and groups the world over, in the great planetary alignment of, and approach between, Shamballa, the Spiritual Hierarchy and Humanity, and seek to aid the work of the Christ and the Buddha in their task of implementing the Will of God on Earth.

I have been keenly aware of the relationship of these three major planetary centers, and I propose we focus on that theme and relate it to world conditions, which—while so disturbing—are, I believe, moving forward in line with the unfolding Plan. At last year’s Wesak Festival I closed my talk with the following quotation from *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*:

It might be said that for the past 700 years the chain of Hierarchy has been complete; by this I mean that the planetary rainbow

bridge uniting the three major centers has existed. The task ahead of all these three centers—Shamballa, the Hierarchy and Humanity—working in alignment through adjustment, is to strengthen and beautify, to electrify this bridge, thus producing full planetary intercommunication between the three centers and the four minor centers, so that the “weight of the Will of God, the momentum of the Purpose of Sanat Kumara and the Plan of His Representatives may progress unimpeded from point to point, from sphere to sphere and from glory to glory.”¹

Last year’s Wesak talk touched on the externalization of the Hierarchy, but was largely centered on the Hierarchy’s task with humanity, with the interplay between the lower two of the three major centers. Now let us extend that picture. The information given to us about the Hierarchy falls into three major categories, according to the Tibetan:

1. The work of the Hierarchy in relation to man and to the three worlds of human evolution.

2. The interior constitution of the Hierarchy and its internal activity.
3. Its superior relation to Shamballa and to extra-planetary livingness.

The Tibetan tells us bluntly:

A great deal that has been conveyed to you in the two final categories has been merged by you into an interested but totally impractical realization that the Hierarchy apparently has a life of its own which proceeds independently of humanity and that it also has its own goals and objectives which are no concern of yours. These deductions are dependent upon your domination by the separative mind, for in reality the work and the activity proceeding in all three centers – Shamballa, the Hierarchy and Humanity – are merged, fused and interdependent; they are mutually evocative and invocative.²

He then goes on to say that the fact that the Hierarchy is approaching closer to Humanity and will eventually make an appearance upon the physical plane is due, not only to Hierarchical intent, but also to the demand of humanity and to the strong vibration and note that humanity has set up. To that extent humanity controls some of the activities of the Hierarchy and thus precipitates action. But at the same time all that is happening can be traced to Shamballa, is inherent in divine purpose and is impelled by Shamballa energy. Also, both the Hierarchy and Humanity are brought under the influence of extra-planetary forces that make their impact upon the planet via Shamballa.

A great interdependence emerges, of which the heart, head and solar plexus centers in the individual man's etheric body are symbols; their unified relation keeps a man functioning as a coherent whole. It is essential that students endeavor to grasp this and so develop within themselves at least the rudiments of this synthetic unified grasp of living conditions, of a vital situation, and strive to develop the type of understanding that is distinctive of the Hierarchical type of mind—concerned with itself as a divine group, conscious of the pull and evocative power of the higher center, Shamballa, and responsive to the demands of humanity.

Today [written in 1946] human beings as a whole are so loudly invocative that the entire trend and plans of the life of the Hierarchy have been changed, and certain interior and purely Hierarchical determinations have been postponed so that certain plans originally slated to take place several centuries ahead are seen as likely of achievement in the short time between 1946 and 2025.³

This reminds us that sometimes the individual disciple's work on unfolding and developing himself must be temporarily set aside in order to give all he has toward meeting the demands unexpectedly arising in connection with his particular service in the world. These changed plans of the Hierarchy are, we are told, to fulfill the larger purpose of the Planetary Logos working through all three major centers. This purpose covers three great changes in all three centers:

1. The absorption by those great beings in the Council Chamber of Shamballa of certain extra-planetary energies.
2. A great expansion – numerically and in consciousness—of the Hierarchy. This means not only a great influx of initiates and disciples, but also a tremendous inflow of “angelic essence” from the deva kingdom under the direction of certain Great Devas who have affiliated during the past few hundred years with our Spiritual Hierarchy. It reminds us that the deva evolution is a vital part of the planetary life, but the Devas the Tibetan is speaking of, of course, are great Beings who are as far ahead of the lower devas in our three worlds as the Masters are ahead of the average individual. The inflow of angelic essence and action by the Great Devas had not, the Tibetan says, been expected so soon, stressing the overall acceleration of the evolving lives on our planet and of the Planetary Logos.
3. A great awakening in the human family and a major spiritual reorientation. This had not been believed possible of accomplishment until the Capricornian Age, roughly 2,000 years hence. But it has taken place and thus necessarily

brought about the adjustment of the Hierarchy's plans and a renewed emphasis on the purpose as registered by Shambhalla.

The Tibetan then states:

All this, being factual, and the time right for decision, has caused an intra-planetary ferment and great activity in the three major centers. In the last analysis (and this is a factor of supreme importance) this development—this unexpected right absorption of spiritual energy, and this seizing of spiritual opportunity—is due to humanity itself. Above everything else, it is the readiness of humanity for that which is new, and humanity's determination to create a new and better world, adapted more adequately to their "renewed" spiritual nature, that is responsible for all the activity.⁴

What we have considered so far reinforces our opening statement about the existence of the "planetary rainbow bridge" uniting the three major centers and that the as yet relatively limited interplay already established has produced a

speeding up of the destined task of the Planetary Logos and in the life of our planet Earth.

Because we are constantly beset by world problems and crises that tend to blot out the overall larger picture, I would like to look at some of the Tibetan's forecasts presented to us in 1946 when he gave us the information we have just touched on. If we look at what was said and what has since taken place, I believe we can face with new courage, new inspiration and renewed dedication, the present seemingly negative world picture, and so work with greater effectiveness in throwing all that we are and have on the side of the forces of

Light—knowing we *are* winning, that the dark negative forces *are* being pushed back, preparatory to their utter defeat and their being "sealed away," as was forecast in the Bible. We might consider the key points of the two preliminary stages of preparation for the externalization:

The first stage, which had already begun in 1946, was and *is* (for the work is still going on) the stage in which a few isolated disciples and initiates, senior members of the New Group of World Servers, were and are doing the important task of destruction, plus the enunciation of principles. This work was and is largely concerned with three major fields: religion, economics and politics. As the Tibetan said:

New values can rarely be instilled by mere exhortation, and where there is no vision, people only give up existing materialistic and selfish values through personally experiencing the unhappiness they inevitably bring. Thus when a determined group with a wider vision demands change both for themselves and others, conflict and violence often result.

The task of the disciple thus laying the foundation for the New Age methods is hard indeed. He stands for so much that is deemed visionary and impossible. He teaches truths whose first effect is necessarily destructive, because he endeavors to rid humanity of old forms of religious, economic and political doctrine; his impersonality—which recognizes faults as well as virtues—enrages many. His failures to be impressed or attentive to

old rites and ceremonies, to ancient and obsolete but precious ideas, and his constant warfare on conditioning glamors and illusions meet in these early stages with little encouragement. He works frequently alone and usually with little recognition and lacks time for his own personal hierarchical contacts; he is not necessarily connected with any so-called esoteric groups and—if he is—his task is that much harder.⁵

The second stage of preparation—which overlaps the first—had only just begun in 1946 and is carried forward by disciples and initiates who will be the real builders of the new world.

These disciples and initiates working on this second preparatory stage—and even the Masters in the later stages of the true externalization—will work as members of the human family and *not* as proclaimed members of the kingdom of God. They will appear in office of some kind or another; they will be the current politicians, businessmen, financiers, religious leaders or churchmen; they will be scientists and philosophers, college professors and educators; they will be the mayors of cities and the custodians of all public ethical movements.

The spiritual forcefulness of their lives, their clear, pure wisdom, the sanity and the modern acceptableness of their proposed measures in any department in which they choose to function will be so convincing that little impediment will be set in the way of their undertakings.⁶

They will assume leadership and take high office not because they are disciples or initiates but because they are wise and intelligent servants of the public; this will come about by the free choice of the people and by virtue of their leaders' advanced and proven merit.

According to the Tibetan, three major ashrams are concerned in this second stage of preparation: the Second-Ray ashram of the Master Kuthumi, the First-Ray ashram of the Master Morya, and a Fifth-Ray ashram. The efforts of the Second-Ray disciples are directed toward educating the general public, working primarily in the fields of education and religion. Eventually steps will be taken in these areas, over which the Christ rules, to reorganize the entire religious field in preparation for the restoration of the Mysteries. The Mysteries, when restored, will unify all faiths.

The First-Ray disciples are working in the field of right human relations to produce a synthesis of effort that will bring in a new intuitional consciousness and—consequently—a new political consciousness in which humanity will stand together for three basic values:

1. The freedom of the individual—embodied in the Four Freedoms given

by that First-Ray disciple, Franklin Roosevelt.

2. Right international interplay and the abolition of war.
3. Clean political regimes.

The immediate group work of the First-Ray disciples is to help clarify the political situation and present those ideas that will eventually lead to a fusion of those principles that govern a democracy and that also condition the Hierarchical method. The Tibetan predicts that this will produce a third political system that will not be entirely dependent on the choices of an unintelligent public or on the control that the Hierarchical technique involves.

To achieve this, First-Ray disciples will work in close cooperation with Second Ray disciples, who will educate the general public in truer values. Allied to these combined efforts, are those working in another major ashram under a Master on the Fifth Ray, the custodian, among other things, of science and that which relates and brings into expression the duality of spirit and matter. For the Tibetan predicts that it is through the scientific use of energy that the world will be rebuilt.

Once the three major ashrams have done their work, disciples from other ashrams will continue the task. Third-Ray workers will carry out a financial readjustment and build a new structure of material relations—a most difficult task owing to human selfishness. But public opinion will provide the impetus so that certain fundamental ideals will motivate business to change. The Tibetan says that the new financial relationships will be more humane, superseding big business and private enterprise, retaining those aspects of modern enterprise that draw out the individual's initiative and resourcefulness.

All that we have considered so far is part of the picture given in the book *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, in 1946. And how much has happened in the meantime! Humanity has been immersed in so many problems, crisis situations and conflicts that it is difficult to put ourselves back into the world situation and the pattern of thinking that then obtained in 1946. I believe we can gain much assurance that the

work envisioned in the first two stages of preparation for the externalization of the Hierarchy has gone forward in line with the Plan and with the Will of God. And the interplay between the three major planetary centers has increased.

Certainly we can see evidence of the work of the first group of disciples, whose task we said was at first largely destructive, aimed at old forms and glories in the religious, political and economic fields, coupled with the enunciation of wider, more universal principles that reflect the growing recognition of the One Humanity and its needs, as distinct from purely personal, national or racial interests.

In the field of politics in particular there has been a terrific process of dissipation of glamour, as witness the healthy credibility gap. Many people are openly rejecting the hypocrisy, political chicanery and hidden political-business agendas that deny the very ideals of democracy.

In religion the authoritarian control of various churches is being challenged and weakened. We find congregations of formerly antagonistic church groups holding common services, and many clerics in various denominations acting in defiance of the ruling church powers. The growth of interest in Eastern religions and philosophical ideas points to a growing recognition of the common foundations in the various world religions. The growing identification with the One Humanity will inevitably lead to the new world religion.

In economics, industry's disdain of ecological factors and the multinational corporations' financial malfeasance are making the public question the values behind big business and causing them to ask, "Can business go its own way without considering the greater good of human society and international peace?" The sheer lunacy of our present economic system is becoming more self-evident as we observe the world's colossal productive capacity and yet real needs are still unmet. Knowledgeable people in business and economics have been sounding the note of a new economic system geared to meet real needs and not simply to produce any kind of product that will produce

a profit. More economists are telling us to consider quality of life and not just quantity. Even the average person knows that economically we are one world, as witness what happened with the OPEC countries and oil prices.

No present system of government or business has the answers, and the present crisis will probably get worse before humanity is forced to create totally new systems, such as were forecast by the Tibetan. But in all three fields—economics, politics and religion—the final solutions rest on changes in values: of self-interest yielding to the good of the whole, the acceptance of God immanent, and living spiritual experience replacing dogma and blind belief.

New values can rarely be instilled by mere exhortation, and where there is no vision, people only give up existing materialistic and selfish values through personally experiencing the unhappiness they inevitably bring. Thus when a determined group with a wider vision demands change both for themselves and others, conflict and violence often result. Think of the fighting and suffering involved in producing the Magna Carta in England, of the struggle of the French Revolution for the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, of the wars of independence in various countries, and the fight for racial equality occurring everywhere.

I believe that we, Humanity, are moving ahead farther and faster than was believed possible. As the Tibetan tells us, the Spiritual Hierarchy is doing likewise, and Shamballa. So too is that great Entity, the Planetary Logos, within Whose life "we live and move and have our being," Who, in turn, is fulfilling the purpose and loving will of the Solar Logos within that still vaster scheme of "Him about Whom naught may be said"! With all this in mind, a fitting seed thought for group meditation is:

From the highest spiritual being upon our planet, through the graded spiritual groups of enlightened and perfected individuals who work upon the inner side of life, on into the outer world of daily living, where thinking, loving men and women serve, the tide of the new life sweeps.⁷

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¹ Alice A. Bailey. *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*. Lucis, 1957, p. 535.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 560-561.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 561-562.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 563.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 571.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 570-571.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 485.

⁸ Originally given at the Wesak Festival of 1978.

Festival of Goodwill 2005

Christ and Humanity

Two of the three full-moon festivals that make up the “Higher Interlude” have well-known antecedents in religious tradition. The Christian feast of Easter is celebrated on the Sunday following the full moon in Aries, and the Buddhist Wesak festival is observed at the full moon in Taurus. But the third festival at the full moon in Gemini is, for us at least, a new creation. Known variously as the Festival of Goodwill, Festival of the Christ, Festival of Humanity, or World Invocation Day, it was announced by the Tibetan Master, Djwhal Khul after World War II and was first celebrated in 1952. The new festival can occur anywhere from the last week of May to the third week of June; this year it falls on Monday, May 23.

Announcement of the Festival of Goodwill and its placement in relation to the other full-moon festivals came in the context of prophecies of far-reaching importance. Although no dates were given, the Tibetan prophesied that the Christ will reappear on Earth, the Hierarchy of Masters will be externalized, and a New World Religion will emerge to serve humanity’s spiritual needs in the Aquarian Age. The New World Religion, we were told, will grow out of, but eventually replace, the sectarian religions of the Piscean Age. Rather than dividing people it will embrace people of every persuasion and from every nation. The new religion will also embrace some aspects of Masonic tradition, restoring ritual to the importance it had in the ancient mystery schools.

The Festival of Goodwill is closely linked to emergence of the New World Religion. In-

deed it will be the high point of a liturgical calendar which, like those of so many ancient traditions, will be based on lunar and solar cycles. The new festival celebrates the increasing presence in the world of the Second Aspect of Deity. It celebrates not the transcendent but the immanent presence of Love-Wisdom, expressed through humanity. The Tibetan explained:

[It] will be the festival of the spirit of humanity—aspiring towards God, seeking conformity with the Will of God and dedicated to the expression of right human relation... It will be a day whereon the spiritual and divine nature of mankind will be recognised.¹

He added that the festival, while new to us, has long been observed on Hierarchical levels. It synthesizes the messages of Easter and the Wesak Festival, the messages of the historic Christ and the Buddha:

On this festival, for two thousand years, the Christ has represented humanity and has stood before the Hierarchy and in the sight of Shamballa as the God-Man, the Leader of His people and “the Eldest in a great family of brothers”... Each year at that time He has preached the last sermon of the Buddha before the assembled Hierarchy. This will therefore be a festival of deep invocation and appeal, of a basic aspiration towards fellowship, of human and spiritual unity, and will represent the effect in the human consciousness of the work of the Buddha and of the Christ.²

The New World Religion will no doubt include traditional religious activities, such as collective worship, participation in the mysteries,³

and missionary work. But, in a larger sense, it will also embrace the whole range of individual and collective activities that enhance human consciousness. These activities can pervade all areas of human endeavor, including health care, education, business, government, the military, entertainment, and sports. The essential ingredient will be the Will-to-Good: the impulse to reach out to other people, to express those soul qualities that break down barriers, motivate service, and improve the human condition. The Christ Festival will celebrate that reaching out, that new sense of joyful involvement in all things human, that commitment to building a better world.

Recently we were given a glimpse of the New World Religion in what might seem an unlikely place: the funeral of Pope John Paul II. The late pope helped free Eastern Europe from Communism; publicly apologized to the Jews for centuries of atrocities perpetrated in the name of Christ; and personally forgave the Turkish man who shot and wounded him. Throughout a life of service John Paul reached out to heads of state, religious leaders of all persuasions, people at all levels of society. He drew the masses to him by his humility, his deep humanity, and his concern for ordinary people, but also by people's conviction that he expressed something higher than the purely human.

However, it was in his death that John Paul truly drew the world to him. His final illness and death dominated the news media. Then, at the end of a week of mourning, his Requiem Mass—the time-honored ritual honoring death and resurrection—was the largest religious event of all time. Leaders of almost every nation, representatives of every world religion, and people by the millions all converged on Rome. The requiem was broadcast throughout

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the world and watched by hundreds of millions more. Not everyone who participated shared the late pope's beliefs; there are even disagreements within the Catholic Church itself. What we saw was the ability of people of different traditions and different beliefs, Christian and non-Christian, to come together to share in a spiritual experience that far transcended doctrine and authority—an experience that many of the participants said they would carry with them for the rest of their lives. Something happened that day that was unique in human memory.

To set aside differences, as people did at the funeral, to experience the unifying divine pres-

ence in the world is what the New World Religion is all about. This is, in no way, to say that the new religion will grow directly or even indirectly from the present Church of Rome. Like every Christian institution, it has perverted the Christ's message;⁴ and some of its beliefs and practices have become crystallized forms. But what lies behind those forms, and be-

hind the forms of other religious (and even some secular) traditions, can provide the foundation on which the new religion is built. The new religion will give new meaning and significance to what is preserved and will offer new spiritual opportunities.

The Festival of the Christ is a time to celebrate these new opportunities. The Christ is not the property of a particular sect but the expression of the Second Aspect of Deity to all religions and all people. The Christ is not divisive but unifying, bringing into harmony all that has been separated and discordant. The sign of Gemini, in which the festival occurs, expresses the juxtaposition of pairs of opposites; but the transit of the Sun/Son through the sign expresses their resolution at a higher level. Tension between the opposites provides the crea-

tive impulse to build what has yet to come into manifestation.

We speak of “celebrating” the Festival of Goodwill. But it would be a mistake to think of the festival as simply a new public holiday—a day when the schools close and there is no mail delivery. The fact that it has been observed at Hierarchical levels for 2,000 years should remind us that the festival is not just for souls presently in incarnation. It is a time when the Christ and the masters reach out to us, drawing together everyone in the “three worlds” and raising them to a higher consciousness. It is a sharing—a communion—in which entities on every plane of reality experience the divine presence:

Perhaps one of the major messages for all of us who read these words is this great truth and fact of the physical Presence on Earth at this time of the Christ, of His group of disciples and executives, of Their representative activities on behalf of mankind and of Their close relationship. This relationship comes out at certain of the great spiritual festivals where the relationship demonstrated includes not only the Kingdom of God but also the Father and the Father's Home.⁵

So what should we do? The day of the full moon and the two days preceding and following it are “sacred times.” During the whole five-day period we should open ourselves mentally to the master's approach, allow ourselves to receive energy and impressions flowing to us in greater abundance than at any other time of the year. Then we should work individually and in groups of every size to impress upon the collective human consciousness the qualities of acceptance, compassion, forgiveness and goodwill that can transform our world. For this very purpose we have been given the Great Invocation. Significantly, the festival is one of “deep invocation and appeal.”⁶ Moreover, we are told that the Christ himself uses the Invocation during the Higher Interlude:

There is the Festival of Easter, the Festival of the Buddha Who in physical Presence expresses the spiritual solidarity of our

planet, and the Festival in June [as it was in that year], peculiarly the Festival of the Christ, when He—as leader of the New Group of World Servers—employs the new Invocation on behalf of all men of goodwill in all lands; at the same time, He gathers up the inchoate and unexpressed demands of those masses who seek a new and better way of life. They want love in daily living, right human relations and an understanding of the underlying Plan.⁷

For those who have yet to make the Great Invocation a regular part of their esoteric work, this year's Festival of Goodwill will provide an opportunity to participate in a worldwide act of group service. For those already using the Invocation on a daily basis, the festival can be a time to enhance its effectiveness through special attention to its objectives, energy, and mantric quality. The science of invocation and evocation⁸ will become of major importance in the New World Religion. In place of conventional prayers addressed to a personalized God, we shall directly invoke needed energies, making use of universal laws that we shall come to understand and utilize.

The responsibilities are great, but the opportunities are unlimited. Let us celebrate the Festival of the Christ in a way that will honor the divinity in each one of us and in the whole human family. And may we allow that divinity to express itself through new commitment to love our neighbor and put into practice the principles that will produce a new and better way of life. Humanity is at a turning point in the evolution of consciousness. Let us not falter as we prepare to move forward. Through the collective efforts of humanity and the Hierarchy we shall restore the Plan on Earth.

Dr. John F. Nash

¹ Alice A. Bailey. *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*. Lucis, 1957, p. 421.

² *Ibid.*

³ .It is worth noting that, in the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the sacraments are referred to as “the mysteries.”

⁴ Bailey. *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, pp. 542-543.

- ⁵ Alice A. Baily. *The Reappearance of the Christ*. Lucis, 1948, p. 46. See also: *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, pp 599-600.
- ⁶ Alice A. Bailey. *Problems of Humanity*. Lucis, 1964, p. 164.

- ⁷ *The Reappearance of the Christ*. Lucis, 1948, p. 46.
- ⁸ See for example: Alice A. Bailey. *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*. Lucis, 1950, pp. 71ff.

Book Reviews

***The Gentle Art of Blessing* by Pierre Pradervand.** Published by Cygnus Books, P.O. Box 15, Llandeilo SA19 6YX, United Kingdom. Email: publications@cygnus-books.co.uk. Paperback. £15.00.

In his introduction, the author describes how a painful experience and his effort to heal his thinking and overcome a deep-seated resentment gradually gave birth to this book. Pradervand shares a simple and practical method, grounded in years of heartfelt and persistent practice, for developing an awareness that is constantly centered in the transformative and benevolent power of Love.

The “art of blessing” is based on the idea that there are “precise and effective spiritual laws” behind the “veil of material appearance.” These laws, such as the Law of Positive Expectations, along with the Laws of Attraction, Right Return, Right Thinking, Harmony and Unconditional Love, are what make the universe a place of infinite good and abundance. The author illustrates their munificent operation via a wealth of anecdotes and a varied range of quotes from the world’s spiritual literature. He shows how it is possible to attune to and activate these laws through *The Gentle Art of Blessing*.

Pradervand describes the technique of blessing as actively affirming from the deepest recesses of the heart, “unrestricted good for others and events.” He goes on to say that when “we bless from our innermost beings, each situation and all those we meet without the slightest concern for expression or appearances” we will “ex-

pand our heart from a narrow cubicle to a temple without walls.”

He shows how blessing attracts joy and goodness into our own life and into the life of others, how it opens us up to the possibility of healing, to an experience of Unity and to “an awareness of the omnipresent beauty hidden from material eyes.”

This book teaches that “everything is grist for the mill” from the most mundane activity to the most challenging circumstances; that blessing is the “ultimate form of giving,” “a way of developing a constant awareness of the divine” and a means for teaching us to live without judgment in the present. *The Gentle Art of Blessing* is a practical and potent tool for invoking and evoking greater Light, Love and Power. Since the jewels of wisdom it contains can be easily incorporated into virtually any spiritual practice it is sure to have universal appeal. This is a book we will want to use and share with others.

Donna Brown
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***Agni: Way of Fire* by Bruce Lyon.** Published by White Stone Publishing, New Zealand (whitestone@highden.org), 2004. 265 pages, 30+ colour diagrams and charts. Hardback \$55.00US or paperback \$22.00US.

The other day I accompanied a group of young people to Gravity Canyon just south of Taihape in New Zealand’s North Island. This is

prime bungee jumping territory. Watch out for the adrenalin rush. They secure your ankles to a thick elastic rope and you leap into thin air from an iron bridge over the Rangitikei River and fall some 80 metres. Depending on body weight and miscellaneous other factors, you either bounce about madly or glide gracefully until equilibrium is reached and you are lowered onto a waiting raft. I'm happy to say I've made the jump! During my visit this time I noted with amusement that for the comfort of jumpers and non-jumpers alike they have built a nice little café on the edge.

The Café on the Edge is a transition point between understanding our life purpose and expressing it. ... We stand on the edge and wonder whether perhaps it might not be our time to jump. We sit down for a minute just to catch our breath and summon our courage. Maybe we should have a cup of tea and consider things for a little before actually jumping...after all we are going to jump eventually. Then we might need to build a little shelter—just for the night of course, because in the morning... A week goes by and we have added a few temporary modifications to our shelter so that when the next jumper comes along we are in the position to offer him a cup of tea and even—should he require it—a warm safe place to stay the night before we both jump in the morning. Pretty soon we are running a great little Café on the Edge. (Agni, pp.226-7)

I missed my chance. I should have snuck in a copy of Bruce Lyon's *Agni: Way of Fire* and left it like a sort of Gideon's Bible for potential jumpers. Only thing is, *Agni* is really not a "coffee table" book. Actually you might say it's a practical manual for all those who are really ready to take a leap.

Agni is the Lord of Fire. Agni Yoga is the yoga of synthesis. The basic premise of Agni Yoga is this: There are no external circumstances which can defeat the human spirit. Funnily enough, the average bungee jumper might understand this better than the average esotericist.

"Knowing something and being willing to

put it to the test are two different things... It is right here that the chasm between the average esotericist and the true Agni yogi opens. Learning esoteric information is acquisition. Putting it into practice requires a stripping away." (p.191)

Agni is targeted nevertheless towards those who have some familiarity with the trans-Himalayan teachings. But the key lies in their practical application. This is the way we fuel the fire. The book has three sections: Meditation, Study and Service. The first section describes the progression of meditative work starting with that spark of inspiration when we first make soul contact. From there we learn to cooperate with the higher Will, and progress to becoming an instrument of divine causation in the world as we define and carry out our "masterpiece"—that piece of the Master's Will that is our joy and responsibility to bring into expression. Eventually as consciousness expands we move into full identification as soul through which the Will of the monad can pour into the world:

The Third Degree initiates...focus the eye [of the ashram] through their manifested work in the three worlds. When they teach, write and express the energy of Hierarchy they create a double channel for the flowing in of Hierarchical power and simultaneously a "window" through which the Masters can perceive. (p.52)

The Meditation section ends with a whole chapter of specific meditative exercises, alignments, mantrams, prayers and formulas to be used in the everyday practice of Agni Yoga.

Actually my favourite page of *Agni* is in the Study section in the middle: page 134. It's a detailed picture of Agni. A two-dimensional representation that we are to imagine in multiple dimensions. It is an inspired description of the cosmic planes and subplanes utilising coloured spheres to show the intricate interrelationships of the rays that create the energetic fabric of our solar system. The centre of each sphere is the point of synthesis of each entity, from a human being right up to a Solar Logos. A theory of astrological rulerships is also incorporated. Like any good symbol the unrav-

eling of the multiple layers of this one picture draws us closer to the mysteries of the universe. If you are curious about the mysteries of colour and number, the question of good and evil, the purpose of the sacrifice of the solar angels or the mysteries of the Creative Hierarchies, this chapter is well worth a read.

The leap of the Agni yogi is first a leap in consciousness. Agni Yoga is the yoga of the soul. But the fire of divine Will must be brought through Love into action. The Service section outlines the four stages for bringing Will into expression right now in our everyday lives. The first is alignment with Purpose. The second stage is commensuration and commitment:

“This commensuration can be likened to the tuning of a piano wire. Too much tension and the wire will snap, too little and it will not ‘sound’ its true note. The soul ‘stretches’ itself between the monad and the personality creating a living antahkarana down which the fire of spirit may flow.”
(p.202)

Then what is required is leveraged action. The soul working through the personality must make leveraged decisions on the best use of resources at its disposal. The final stage is surrender: Surrender to Life through the abstraction of identification so that the higher Will can flow directly through the instrument of the personality.

Ultimately the fire which is Agni, the fire which is ourselves, burns up the causal body which is the anchoring point of the soul in the world of human endeavour. We can take all the time in the world drinking lattes at the Café on the Edge but one day we will liberate ourselves. To jump now, a willingness is all it takes.

*You are the One you have been waiting for.
Let me break you open from the inside
And water your desert
With the flame of the ONE LIFE.* (p.251)

Barbara Maré
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