

The Way from Suffering to Joy

Kenneth Sørensen

We are once again approaching the spring equinox and the full moon in Aries, also called the Festival of Easter, which marks the beginning of the Three Linked Festivals during which the defining energies of the new year will be invoked, received and distributed to humanity.

We can participate in this blessing by embodying these energies through our own initiatory efforts, which is not an easy task. It entails learning to work through points of crisis, points of tension and points of emergence to mature in our capacity to contribute responsibly to the common good.¹ In some cases our maturation process might imply going through a crisis in which we examine how we engage with the world; it can involve acknowledging life transitions and confronting feelings of loneliness as a challenge to work through and dissipate the illusion of separateness, and then emerge into a New Life affirming the reality of the One Soul. A symbol that is related to the Festival of Easter is the Gethsemane moment narrated in Matthew 26:38. It exemplifies what it takes to bring in New Life and the fact that many of us fail to register the potency of the moment.

The Easter Festival is an opportunity to align ourselves with incoming purpose, the New Life and the resurrecting energies of Aries. We face once again a death and resurrection cycle in which we can let go of the old self in order to be reborn through an act of the will. Our challenge is to face the conflict by choosing between the personal will and the Transpersonal or Monadic Will, a choice between prolonged captivity or freedom.

Taking on the cross of responsibility

The symbolism of the Easter Festival is about surrendering the personal will to the divine source, symbolically aligning each of the three vehicles – the mental, emotional and physical bodies – with the New Life. In the Gethsemane episode Jesus took three disciples with him, but none of them was able to stay “awake” during the spiritual crisis, they all fell into a deep sleep, which is one of the prominent defense mechanisms of the personality. Not paying attention – allowing oneself to forget one’s responsibilities – is what we all must guard against during this cycle.

The Master Jesus knew what was coming – the descent into hell and resurrection into life more abundant. And with a determined will and loving kindness, *he showed us the way from suffering to joy and the science of redemption.*

We would all benefit from pondering the following questions:

- What is my responsibility for ushering in the New Life?
- How large a load will I be able to carry?
- When will I embrace this New Life? How will I do it?
- What must die in me in order that I might resurrect?
- What fears, resistances and avoidances must I face, see-through and redeem in order that I might embrace this New Life and fulfil my potential?

Master Jesus faced his decision alone, unaided by his close disciples, and it is through this burning ground that we must all pass in order to become like tempered steel.

Vitalization of the spiritual warrior

Aries channels Rays One and Seven, which means that this is a time for decision, action and the reorganization of all our available resources. There is also at this time a tremendous desire and will to realize and

manifest the New Life in a physical way, like the buds of spring bursting out of the ground. Aries is a sign that signifies Battle, due to the Sixth Ray of Mars and the Fourth Ray of Mercury; Aries brings new dynamic ideas, which *insist* on being incarnated; Aries also provides a fighting spirit to help us oppose the energies of transgression in our subconscious and the surrounding culture.

The four key notes in Aries are the will:

1. To express the will to be and to do;
2. To unfold the power to manifest;
3. To enter into battle for the Lord;
4. To arrive at unity through effort. ²

Drawing upon all of these insights, we can conclude that receiving the energies of Aries is a call to become spiritual warriors – and this will test our courage because there is no renewal without conflict and we better have our motives right during battle.

The great redemptive experiment

In *Education in the New Age* we read that esotericism is the science of redemption³, so let us pause and contemplate what we are here to redeem. We learn that we are descending Solar Lords partaking in a great experiment, which the Tibetan speaks about in this way:

This theme of redemption (which underlies all the initiatory processes) is hidden in the karmic responsibilities of Sanat Kumara; stage by stage, initiation by initiation, disciples arrive at an understanding of redemption. First of all, they learn to bring about the redemption of the threefold personality; then the concept enlarges along parallel lines as they seek the redemption of their fellow human beings; later, they share the redemptive work connected with all true hierarchical endeavor and become an “active part of a redeeming Ashram.” At the later initiations, and after the fifth Initiation of Revelation, they see with a new clarity some of the karmic liabilities that have led the planetary Logos to create this planet of suffering, sorrow, pain and struggle; they realize then (and with joy) that this little planet is essentially unique in its purpose and its techniques, and that on it and within it (if you could but penetrate below the surface) a great redemptive experiment is going forward; its prime implementing factors and its scientific agents are the “sons of mind who choose to be the sons of men and yet for all eternity remain the Sons of God.” These “sons of mind” were chosen, in that far distant time when the fourth kingdom in nature came into being, to carry forward the science of redemption.⁴

We are here on planet Earth to raise the frequency of energies, to transfigure the planetary consciousness into a living expression of love-wisdom, to transform the “planet of suffering, sorrow, pain and struggle” into a joyful and harmonious interconnected whole. This is why we enter into battle for the Lord! However, we soon discover that the battle is internal, because the warring forces are in our innermost being; we also intuit that the peace and harmony we endeavor to manifest are also inside, located at the center of the heart, where we find joy and the fountain of endless summers.

We are here to redeem our three basic vehicles and through this effort redeem the group body we have chosen to serve and in which we live, move and have our being. We realize that it is through our own self-initiated growth and (partial) enlightenment that we can step into a position to serve. We serve through our radiation to the degree that we can allow our Solar Angel to shine through; we serve through our ability to create new thoughtforms and manifest them in tangible forms that can act as a vessel for the divine life.

We might ask ourselves during this full moon:

- What will I sacrifice (put to death) to be of greater service to the group?
- What types of physical forms have I created that can be used to clothe new ideas?

Finding our planetary address through the seven rays

To partake in the redeeming effort of the planetary Logos we must find our “planetary address” in the larger scheme; we must find our unique redemptive function and role in the divine Plan. A crucial key in this respect, according to Alice Bailey, is for each of us to “discover the nature of one’s own qualified energies (and here the nature of the governing rays enters in) which are expressing themselves through one’s three lower vehicles of manifestation, and later through one’s integrated personality.”⁵

The rays of our Soul and personality, the rays of the three vehicles, the sun sign and the rising sign, all of these will guide us to our planetary address by informing us about the nature of our redeeming purpose. They designate the type of energies we must learn to identify, observe, control and harmonise, and the sorts of groups we must collaborate with.

We can all participate in the inauguration of the new psychology of energies by building a new thought-form representation:

You can – if you so desire – help construct the thoughtform of the New Age teaching. You do this, above all, by your thought; by your practical application of any truth, which you may have understood, to your personal life at any cost; by your sacrifice and your service to your fellow human beings and by the constant dissemination of any knowledge that you may possess.⁶

So how can we prepare ourselves for the New Life that rushes in with the full moon in Aries?

We can align ourselves with our subjective affiliations and objective groups and with the purpose that lies behind our efforts of service – this is basic.

We can also strengthen our identification with the Observer – that point of pure consciousness and will – so we don’t fall asleep.

In a message to the disciple W.O.I., the Tibetan affirms the necessity of reflecting on the Observer and the value of observing the Observer. The Tibetan creates an illuminating review of the attitude of the Observer⁷. Some of his suggestions are particularly relevant when it comes to the theme of redemption, as follows:

21. I am the redeemer of the lower nature. In what way does observation aid in this redemption?
22. Does redeeming force, released through observation, pour through me?
23. In what fashion will the observation of the Observer bring changes in my life, my habits, and my attitudes?

It can be said that we are not just consciousness but also a potent dynamic will, which is emphasized during the month in Aries. The degree of will and its evolutionary stage are reflected in what we do as individuals and as groups. As we increase our ability to shoulder responsibility and take on leadership, we stop being a follower and start being an initiator. So further themes for reflection could be:

- What have I done in the last year to prepare the ground for the New Life?
- How successful and efficient have I been?
- How much time did I spend on my personal needs and how much on my group’s needs?
- How can I purify and expand my influence in the world and thereby help to redeem the particular aspect of humanity I am pledged to serve?

Let us all prepare ourselves for our “Gethsemane Moment” and together step into the stream of death and resurrection so that we might build the way for the One who comes.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1948), 68.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 93.

³ Alice A. Bailey, *Education in the New Age* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1954), 65.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 385.

⁵ op.cit., *Education in the New Age*, 66.

⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 712-713.

⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 1*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1944), 443.