

## Easter and the Path to Shambhala by Bill Trusiewicz

Dear friends, two years ago I brought to you by way of Chanticleer,<sup>1</sup> *A Week of Reflections for Easter: St. Paul's Initiation/Conversion in Light of the Easter Thought*. Last year I shared: *An Easter Thought: How Do I Find the Christ?*<sup>2</sup> This Easter season I would like to take you with me on a journey to the sacred land of *Shambhala*.

There are two sides to the Easter we celebrate nowadays: the Christian side with its palm fronds, hot-cross buns, Easter Lilies, butterflies and lambs (signifying the lamb of God)—all expressing the idea of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection; and the pre-Christian or pagan side with its celebration of springtime, budding and blossoming, Easter eggs, bunny rabbits and baby chicks. The Christian symbols, which conceal unfathomable mysteries and are too often taken for granted with little comprehension, are nevertheless accessible enough for intellectual reflection and meditation. While the depth of meaning, which lies deeper than our appreciation of and pleasure derived from the lovely natural phenomena of Springtime, is less accessible for reflection. In other words, a deeper meaning is hidden in these pre-Christian symbols, which can help us to penetrate the deepest of mysteries contained in the manifestly *Christian* Easter message. So, let us seek to gather from these slight indications a sense of what is "at the bottom" of this matter for a deeper understanding of Easter this year.

Starting with the word "Easter" we find Phoenician, Assyrian, Babylonian and Semitic goddesses of fertility named: Astarte, Ishtar, and Ashtoreth, behind the word. These names signify a "queen of heaven." One of the most grievous errors of Christian teaching, which followed closely after the Mystery of Golgotha, was the total rejection of pagan beliefs and rituals. Christ was actually the fulfillment of the spiritual dreams of the pagan world, something St. Paul may have recognized and sought to make known through his Apostolic journeys to the Gentiles. He saw in Christ's sacrifice an act of propitiation for all of humanity, not just for Jews or any other select group. He wrote the following words, speaking of the Gentile nations to the church in Ephesus. "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace..." The "dreams" of the pagan world were incomplete; they fell short to be sure, but the architecture of their dreams (beliefs) just needed to be raised up, to be elevated to another level; they needed to be Christianized, "crowned" we might say, to gain the "height" needed to connect with the Father in Heaven. As we know, eventually the church Fathers did bring over many of the cultic symbols and practices of the pagan world (like Easter); most obvious was the merging of Christian and Roman religion by Constantine.

So, the divine feminine aspect of Astarte and Ishtar made its way into the church with the name Easter, which eventually lost its natural association with the "queen of heaven," being overshadowed by the "immortal man" Christ, who died, descended into the sub-earthly realm and rose again to the right hand of the Father. To understand the part the divine feminine had to play in the resurrection of Jesus Christ we will attempt to get to "the bottom of things," as suggested earlier.

The *literal* bottom was reached at the descent of Jesus Christ into the depths after his crucifixion on the hill called Golgotha (the place of the skull). As the Apostle Paul said to the Ephesians long after the event: "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended..." The body of Jesus was taken by Joseph of Arimathea to his own tomb where he was laid. When Mary Magdalene went on Easter morning to the tomb she found his body gone; only the grave clothes were left folded where he had lain. The scripture says that there was an earthquake that moved the stone away from the grave and an angel was there waiting. (Matthew 28:2) Rudolf Steiner has indicated that when the earth quaked it opened to receive the body of Jesus into its depths.<sup>3</sup>

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1 The newsletter of the Berkshire-Taconic Branch of the Anthroposophical Society

2 These may be found on the Berkshire Taconic Branch's new website.

3 Rudolf Steiner, *The Fifth Gospel*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1985, p. 162

What occurred in the depths? Again, to the Ephesians Paul says: “When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.” This refers to the descent into “the lower parts of the earth,” from which he ascended. “Leading captivity captive” means that he led those captive in Sheol, as his own captives—out of captivity. Rudolf Steiner refers to this period of time, the Greco-Roman epoch, as one in which barely anyone, even great souls, were able to escape the “land of the shades” to enter into Paradise. These are the souls that were freed from captivity when Jesus Christ descended and then ascended.

But, what else happened? Spiritual research reveals that Jesus Christ was able to unite the Father forces in him with the Mother in the depths of the Earth. This was necessary for the creation of his resurrection body—the physical phantom. The Mother and Father had to reunite to create an immortal resurrection body for the human being of the future. Picture the transcendent meeting the immanent. The Spirit Archetype and the Soul Archetype. The Father spirit of the heights supplies the transcendent, concept-picture of the human form, while the Mother (matter) in the depths, supplies the immanent substance—the manifest aspect of the human form. Together they make up the human phantom or resurrection body of Christ Jesus. Once this sacred marriage, this Heiros Gamos was consummated, his earthly work was finished; Christ could ascend to the Father. But he would first spend 40 days with his disciples in his enigmatic phantom/resurrection body as a kind of confirmation for his disciples before his ascension. The ramifications of this union are tremendous and point to something that is beginning to manifest in our time.

The resurrection body of Jesus, from the viewpoint of spiritual science, is invisible. The visibility of physical, corporality, says Rudolf Steiner, is due to the fact that mineral substance “fills in” the otherwise invisible physical form. The pure human archetype is invisible and when it gains strength in us it gives transparency to the material world. The world becomes transparent allowing the spiritual sun to appear at midnight. What is at the center of the earth is the primal spiritual sun. Through the strength of Christ the human being becomes transparent allowing the glow of the divine human archetype to be seen within it—like a glowing coal appears transparent. These are the same thing. This capacity to see through the maya of the material world is fostered by the presence of the Archangel Michael who adjures us, with his help—to see the highest in the other. Seeing the highest in the other is possible because of this transparency, which is another way of understanding clairvoyance. Clairvoyance (from the French) is simply clear-seeing or the ability to see through things—to see what inheres that is not normally visible.

The Temple of Humanity is built on this principle of clairvoyance, which is why the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ (the Biblical culmination of human development), is described with language such as this: “..and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;...and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass...and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.” (Rev. 21)

Now, we must realize that The New Jerusalem (trans., City of Peace) and The Golden Land of Shambhala (trans., Place of Peace or of Silence) are the same—they are imaginations of the culmination of earthly human development. The former is a Western conception and the later is from the East. But they concur in restoring the Paradisical union with the divine after a long painful journey. Of the future arrival of the New Jerusalem it is said “...there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” (Rev. 21:4) Jesus Christ, through his life, death and resurrection has secured a path to the Mother in the interior of the Earth: he has opened the path to Shambhala, the Golden Land.<sup>4</sup> Rudolf Steiner says of Shambhala that it is a land always known to initiates as a place to which they can repair at will.<sup>5</sup>

Goethe, through his character Faust, refers to “the Mothers.” In a scene in which a conversation unfolds between Faust and Mephistopheles,<sup>6</sup> Mephisto, in essence, tells Faust of the realm of the Mothers: there is nothing there, that he will be lost in nothingness. Faust replies, “In your nothing I hope to find the All.” Faust subsequently, proceeds to stamp upon the Earth, “with key in hand” and descends to the realm of the Mothers. This is no fantasy. The realm of the Mothers is open to those with sufficient love for the Earth, without egotism. This is the

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4 See Steiner’s discussion with the Countess Johanna Keyserlingk in her memoir *Esoteric Conversations*.

5 Rudolf Steiner, *The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric*, SteinerBooks, 2003, p. 105

6 *Faust II*

“key in hand,” that allows one access to such mysteries as the realm of the Mothers. Stamping upon the Earth with key in hand one can descend to the promised land of Shambhala, where Silence gives birth to the Word, where the fractured sword of the Word is repaired and made whole again.

What was true of initiates in past ages is true today for Christians who are working with Christ in the Etheric. Christ is already here! The path to Shambhala is open! And in our time of the great trial, which is coming upon the whole earth, many souls will discover the path to Shambhala—to the realm of the Mothers. This will be a new turning point for humanity; it will be an awakening of Johannine Christianity, in which ideas of the human being as an opaque “earthen vessel,” will be transformed into ideas of the human being as a “grail vessel,” a transparent container for the divine power and the divine will. This is the result of the resurrection in human consciousness of the divine human archetype—the invisible resurrection body of Christ, which can be seen with etheric vision, which is a capacity that Christ himself bestows upon those who follow Him in the building of the new community. It is the ability to see through the opaque outer covering of the human form to the “life which is the light...that lights up every person that comes into the world,” spoken of by St. John in the prologue of his eponymic Gospel. This transparency is the lens by which we will be able to see through to the sixth epoch community of Philadelphia and into the far distant future to the New Jerusalem.

The Great Dark Age (5,000 years) of Kali Yuga, which began in 3101 BC, ended in the year 1899. And almost a hundred years has passed, in which a slow dawning of the Christ Sun has occurred, since His second coming began in 1933. An age of darkness has given way to a new Age of Light—a Krita Yuga: a new cycle, a new Golden Age is beginning. Petrine Christianity, which is based on outer authority, is now giving way to Johannine Christianity. The church of Peter is giving way to the church of John. Outer Christianity is giving way to an inner Christianity. A new universal Christianity which is not founded on outer authority but on the inner authority of Christ in human hearts is arising.

Dear Friends, this is the Easter message I wanted to bring to you. A great hope lies on the other side of darkness. This is the message of Easter: out of death comes life; out of evil comes the good; out of nothingness we can find the All. It is my hope and prayer that you will be able to see the light that is coming, the light that can be seen beyond the great dark trial that is upon us and which has not yet unfolded in its terrible fullness. May these words of Rudolf Steiner give us courage at this time: “Through the experience of evil it will be possible for the Christ to appear again.”<sup>7</sup> “It is exactly this climax of materialism in human evolution that must converge with an intensification of the human evolution that leads to the ability to truly see Christ in the ether.”<sup>8</sup> “We should enter this land...in full consciousness and guided by Christ...The portals of this realm of light will open, and human beings will enter the holy land of Shambhala through them.”<sup>9</sup>

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7 Rudolf Steiner, *From Symptom to Reality in Modern History*, lecture 4, RS Press 1976, p. 112

8 Rudolf Steiner, *The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric*, SteinerBooks, 2003, p. 150

9 Ibid, p. 105