

Easter 2019: Trip A Little Light Fantastic

A Mary Poppins song for Easter. What will she think of next? Well, when you think about the movies, Mary descends from and ascends into the sky, as described in various places in the Bible. She hasn't aged between the first and second movie. Miraculous things seem to happen around her. OK, so the sermon isn't about the second coming of Mary Poppins. It's just the lyrics to a song in the new movie seem so Eastery to me!

The song, Trip A Little Light Fantastic, is sung by the lamplighters. It is a song about darkness and the persistence of light and our ability to choose to bring light to the darkness. Sounds like a Unity kind of song!

In Unity, we tend to shy away from talking about darkness. We admonish people to stay positive and do not dwell in sadness and anger. Yet without darkness, light has no context. If there is only light it is harder to appreciate light as something to celebrate. The traditional message of Easter is "Christ the Lord is Risen Today". Risen from what? Rising from a gruesome and violent death is a much more dramatic story than just rising every morning from sleep yet some day, that morning rise is an effort. Many Unity ministers look forward to discussing the resurrection but some will never speak about the death that made the resurrection necessary. I am certain the caterpillar would prefer to step into a phone booth and come out a butterfly. A magic, painless transformation that really is kind of Mary Poppins-ish. Instead, the caterpillar comes apart in the cocoon, dying to its previous form before taking on a new shape. How do we greet the news that a coming apart, spiritual transformation is the process before us? We'll be dying to an old way of life, it will all come completely apart and THEN there will be a glorious new form revealed. We **always** want to skip to the *glorious new form* part. It is human nature. We want the spiritual transformation that only requires us to step into a phone booth and step out a new creature in spirit. And is that the way it happens for you? I would happily **build** a phone booth if I could use it that way.

Instead I often find myself in the darkness of a situation coming completely apart. The best I can do is practice non-resistance as Jesus modeled in the Garden of Gethsemane—not my will but Spirit's will and way unfolds. I accept that the Universe is still for me and evolving my life towards my highest good no matter what the appearance is before me. Trusting the process is **faith** to me. I can recognize that much of my suffering comes from wanting this moment to be different than it is.

I have to be compassionate with myself when my humanity is plunged in grieving what the moment is. The good news of the Easter gospel is that when we are in the darkest place, we have assurance that the light we seek is within us and it is eternal. The light that we have access to; the light that persists beyond the darkness; the light that is before and after and within this human experience was the message Jesus not only taught but demonstrated. Jesus is often referred to as our “wayshower” in Unity. Which means no one demonstrated *for him* this light within was available. Instead he had to rely upon---God. Divine revelation. Ultimately, that is often what our “crucifixion” experiences are about—outer conditions that we grow weary of trying to fix until we are surrendered enough to open to the revelation of Spirit. We let down our ego guard and receive the gift of wisdom, guidance and insight.

Everything we read about the historical Jesus seems larger than **our** life, so we find it easy to put this character on a pedestal and worship the man instead of the teaching. This was no ordinary man. Yet **he was**. An ordinary man. Until he began doing extraordinary things. Isn't that the way of history? Once we see the extraordinary things someone is capable of, we begin to romanticize the ordinary beginnings. We do this especially with figures whose early beginnings were before we had much accurate historical accounting. Albert Einstein was slow to learn to speak; rebellious and expelled from school with the headmaster saying he would never amount to much. Perhaps Einstein was not chronicled as a genius in the beginning but what might we have said without those early school records? I suspect much of the beginning of Jesus' life was created to support the end of his life and to fulfill the prophesy of the messiah. Jesus was charismatic enough to attract a group of very dissimilar disciples to follow him and study with him. He spoke boldly of a quiet wisdom that rocked the political hierarchy and empowered an oppressed majority without violence. When healings and abundance manifest around him, those unfamiliar with spiritual principle called these activities miracles and did not trust that these arose from Spirit or Source. So the grand violence of his death tends to lead us to believe that his life is not related to our lives. Charles Fillmore writes that crucifixion represents “crossing out in consciousness of certain errors that have become fixed states of mind” and resurrection occurs, “every time we rise to the realization of eternal, indwelling life, making union with the Father-Mind.” And rather than taking place magically in a phone booth, this is a process of transformation represented by time in the tomb. “By mentally reviewing our experiences, we recognize that nothing is really destroyed, but rather transmuted.

Through faith we take stock of the progress we have made and find that we are getting a consciousness of radiant substance and of a higher life. Nothing is lost. When sense consciousness is raised to a higher plane all that belongs to it is saved with it.” We can’t change what happens in our world but we can change what it means to us. We can let go of fixed states of mind in our review of what we are experiencing in this moment and lift our beliefs and thoughts up to a level of truth being revealed. **Every. Single. Day.** No bunnies, or tulips or chocolate needed. Ok, maybe chocolate is needed.

What I love about the Trip A Little Light Fantastic song is that it takes our experiences down to a level that feels more relevant to our mundane human lives. AND is the resurrected Easter outcome of our **personal transformation** experience any less glorious when we discover, choose and shine the divine light within us? I think not. I think that was Jesus whole message. “The things I do, you can do also and more.”

The song begins with “Let’s say you’re lost in a park, sure you can give in to the dark, or you can trip a little light fantastic with me. When you’re alone in your room, your choice is just embrace the gloom or you can trip a little light fantastic with me.” Lost and alone. **Anyone** ever found themselves in this human condition? The song says lost in a park. Let’s contemplate lost in life. Lost in a way Garmin and Siri can’t guide you out of. Alone. No one can tell you the path that is right for you. Or maybe you tried following all the paths everyone else said were right for you and you find yourself lost and alone in the darkness of becoming authentically you. Maybe I am just describing conditions in my life but maybe some of you can relate. In these transformational experiences we begin to see how little the outer world is true or lasting. We stumble upon the idea that we really **do** have to claim our own power and in that revelation we discover we **have** our own power and it is from **Spirit**. I can’t say how long this process of transformation takes but it is real and not magic. Because once we **know** the truth, we may forget it but we cannot **un-know** it.

A couple lines in the song speak to me of our typical method of problem solving when the Universe is trying to present a transformational experience to us. “Now when you’re stuck in the mist, sure you can struggle and resist or you can trip a little light fantastic with men. Now say you’re lost in the crowd, well, you can stamp and scream out loud or you can trip a little light fantastic with me.”

Struggle and resist. Stamp and scream out loud. Me? Never! I know in a Unity congregation this is not our method—is it? Well, it is for sure not the method we teach. Or the method we usually own up to. The *grace of transformation* gives us space to privately reflect upon the **possibility** that our ego-driven personality might be driving our beliefs and actions. We might have settled into functioning in fear or anger as ego's way of protecting and defending itself. As we reflect we might come upon some fixed state of mind that has told us, "No pain, no gain" "You are **not** enough. But if you fuss enough, no one will know." "You can figure this out if you just work hard enough." "Find someone to blame and the problem will be solved." Once we discern that these beliefs are false, we can lift our mind up into the awareness of Christ consciousness. We can stand in the light of Truth and know that I am the Light, and You are the Light and we are All the Light that is fantastic! If you are worried about being seen as special and powerful, just try showing up as your Christ-self and not your ego-self. Stay aware of the differences in your choices and actions when you act from the Christ center and the ego center.

So perhaps my favorite line in the song is this: "So when life is getting scary, be your own illuminary who can shine the light for all the world to see, as you trip a little light fantastic with me." Who hasn't had a moment when life seemed a little scary? Big changes in life. Events we are not in control of. The unexpected. The persistence of darkness. Be your own illuminary. We must discover the light within us *ourselves*. The reality is that I can be here every Sunday telling you about your light. I can record a track on YouTube that you can play every day telling you that you are a creation of the Divine with the Light that is yours to shine. None of what I can do will have the power of that moment when you know it for yourself. Teachers and gurus and books and music can point to the Truth. It is only in moving your feet and your thoughts in that direction and knowing it at the level of our core beliefs that it becomes a practical tool that you use in your life.

Finally, the line that is perhaps the essence of Easter: "So when troubles are incessant simply be *more* incandescent, for your light comes with a lifetime guarantee". Perhaps a guarantee that is beyond this physical lifetime. When it is darkest, shine your brightest. That is a tall order. That is a time of transformation as the fixed states of mind that have been blocking the light and creating our darkness are revealed and we free ourselves to let more of our light shine. When troubles are incessant we **are** more incandescent!

The resurrection, the lifting into Christ mind happens every time we have an AHA moment realizing our own divinity. Every time we discern a false belief or an old way of choosing and we recognize its error and set the intention to let go and stop giving error thoughts power we experience transformation. Every time we choose to be the light for all the world to see, it is Easter morning. Not just on this Easter morning but every single day I invite you to trip a little light fantastic with me!

And all the people said Amen!