

## ***'Eòlas' – the Light of the Holy Mother Earth***

I woke early yesterday morning and got up to open my window wide, as usual, to see what the day looked like. It was a dull morning, with a gunmetal grey sky and a cold Easterly wind blowing on the snow drifts that still lie, fixed like white lace on the hillside.

The sheep and lambs were lying quietly in the field by my house - a peaceful time then, before the early morning chorus of birdsong and lambs' cries for milk. I saw several mothers lying with their lambs tucked into their sides – shielding them from the wind's icy blast. It is deeply moving to witness this innate loving attention of a mother to her young. Quietly and calmly, the ewes took the full force of the wind against their woollen backs, tenderly nuzzling the tiny lambs as they slept.

I woke in the early hours last night, to hear one of the lambs bleating for its mother in the darkness. The lambs often wander off and then find themselves separated. The lonely call of the tiny lamb was plaintive and heart-rending. I could not rest until silence told me that mother and lamb had been reunited.

I found myself thinking about 'The Mother' and the power of that archetypal energy in our lives and in all of nature; how ancient systems since time began have honoured and treasured the Divine Feminine; and how we are seeing a return to that place of respect in a world that for too long has turned its back on the power and beauty of the female force within the world. It is no accident that the cry of a young one pulls at the heart, insisting that someone take action to help. Evolution depends on it.

Last night as I listened to the anxious calls of the lost lamb, the sound seemed to resonate deep within me in a way that signalled a resonance that was about more than just compassion for a lost one, searching to be found. As I listened to my own heart, I realised that the lamb's cries had the same vibration as the call of the soul that longs for home. The song of longing that persists in its urging until we take the right steps to find the path that will take us to the place we belong.

There is a beautiful Gaelic word which I often use as part of my spiritual practice. The word 'eòlas' is one of the many Gaelic words for 'light'. It has a beautiful set of imagery associated with it, and particularly relates to the idea of the Light within the World, or the light of the Holy Mother Earth. It can also mean 'wisdom' and 'magic', or the power to bring into manifestation, or incarnation. A Gaelic chant or mantra that is often used as a prelude to contemplative practice uses the words: 'O thou Mother God, your Earthly light'. Sung in Gaelic, this chant is like a call to prayer, taking the heart into connection with the Beloved through the wisdom and light of the Mother.

Julian of Norwich, 14th century mystic, also spoke of the Mother God in her vision of God speaking to her, as if to say "*I am the power and the Goodness of the Father, I am the Wisdom of the Mother, I am the Light and the Grace which is blessed love, I am the Trinity, I am the Unity, I am the supreme Goodness of all kind of things, I am the One who makes you love, I am the One who makes you desire, I am the never-ending fulfilment of all true desires.*"

In the words of the mystic, and in the scriptures of Nature, there is no duality. For me,

the Divine force is the ultimate incorporation of all that is. Male, female, dark, light - all the polarities that we cling to in our human lives have no place in the world of Divine Truth, where the Divine is the Mother, and the Father, and the Divine Child.

This morning, I opened my window to see five brown hares in the field – racing across the frosty ground, leaping and circling in their spring mating ritual. In ancient Celtic mythology the hare is a symbol of rebirth, promise and fulfillment. As I watched, they ran onto the frozen snowdrift that still lies by the dry stone wall in the field by the old packhorse bridge. Brilliant bronze against the white, they spiralled round to form a ring and were motionless for a moment – the hare community held in a moment of stillness, with some unknown communication passing between them. In country folklore, this phenomenon of seeing hares sitting together in a circle was known as ‘The Hare’s Parliament’.

Two of the hares entered the ring and began ‘boxing’ – the behaviour which has led to the term ‘mad March hares’. They were displaying their courtship ritual as a prelude to mating. I found I was holding my breath as I witnessed this powerful symbol of the ‘greening energy’ of nature. The life force rising in the land and in all her creatures at this time with its irresistible call to create – to bring new life to the world in whatever way we can.

The start of May will soon be here - May Day or Beltane, which brings the celebration of the fullness of life. It has been a harsh spring time here. And yet the 'greening energy' - 'Viriditas' - of the Divine life force continues to pulse in the land, whatever the weather. A spiritual practice that is close to the land opens the heart to this power within our own lives. As I walk in the Dene among the lambs and the nesting birds, my own creative spirit hears the song of 'eòlas', responds to the light of the Divine Mother and begins to unfold.

*Julie Darling*