

WHY EGGS AT EASTER



BY KEN PROCTOR

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The humble chicken egg, like Easter, represents the potential for new life. They develop in the hens for over a week before she lays them in her nest. At this point—as anyone who has ever prepared eggs for breakfast knows—there is no chick inside, just all the basic ingredients required... and a very hard to see little dot nestled on the surface of the yolk. And in that dot is implanted the seed of life, just about eight undifferentiated cells packed with all the genetic information required to build a chick.

But then nothing happens. Everything stops. Stasis. The egg rests in the nest surrounded by up to a dozen of its siblings. And it waits. But this few days of rest is critical. Until the egg has had a chance to cool, to feel the chill away from its mother's warmth, the dot cannot resume growing into the chick it ought to be. Until the heat returns.

At exactly 101.7 degrees F, cell division resumes. And a miracle happens. In only 21 days, that tiny dot of undifferentiated cells—fixed to a gigantic sack of yellow nutrition and floating in a sloppy, wet opaque gel—turns into a fully developed living, breathing being able to thrive in the big wide world. The chick is fully formed, awake and peeping.

But stuck. It can hear its mother's deep kuckling voice calling, already speaking to her brood, but it's still trapped within the shell that has been its home and haven from the beginning. If unable to escape its shell, the chick will die. Out of food, out of water, out of time. So the chick wriggles around within the shell, orients itself and begins to peck. First it pecks a single hole letting in a little light, a little air, its first sniff of the world beyond. Then slowly, over the next couple of hours, the chick turns itself round the axis of the egg, pecking, turning, pecking. This, too, is a critical time. As the chick struggles to turn, the last vestiges of the yolk sack are still hanging outside its tiny body; but as it struggles, the yolk is tugged into its belly, and the hole in its middle is closed up. Without the struggle, the baby chick will die, born with the last of its nutrient reserve hanging out.

Having worked itself almost all the way around while pecking from the inside, one final push pops the shell in two and the exhausted chick is free. Its mother hears its voice and they imprint on each other, able to find one another even in the darkest night. Within two days, the chick is up on its feet following the hen around, learning what to eat and where to find water by keeping close to mom, sheltering under her wings at the first hint of cold or danger.

We are that chick. Little more than a dot in the big scheme of things yet containing within all the basic ingredients for a new life. Provisioned by our creator with enough to sustain us, but still trapped in our own little worlds. We sense that there is more, another dimension beyond the scope of our understanding, just out of reach, but we aren't quite ready to go there. Yet.

Then comes the miracle. When we choose to peck at our shell, make a crack, let in a bit of light and fresh air we get the first sniff of what real life can be. Then comes the struggle to turn ourselves round, to keep pecking, let in more light, more understanding. We can hear a voice calling, already speaking to us, bonding with us, waiting for us on the other side. Already we are absorbing, internalizing the basics we will need to flourish in that new existence.

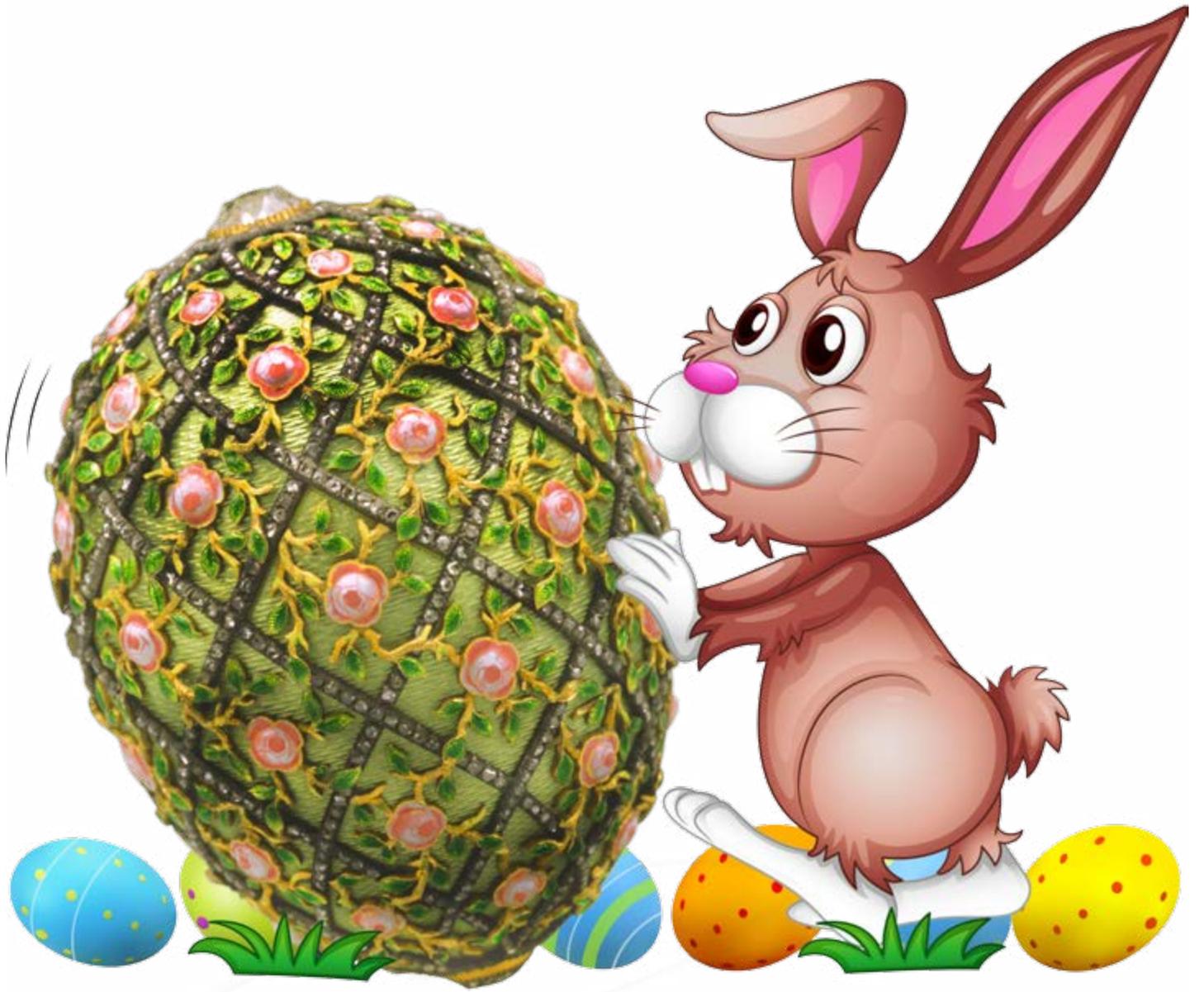
But we aren't there yet. We must take that final step, push ourselves clear, shrug off the old, become the new creature we were always intended to be.

Jesus is that voice. Softly calling like a kuckling hen. And he is able to lead, to teach, to guide, to shelter, protect. But also to challenge us, cause us to grow, to mature. Life in Christ is not all sweet corn and deep wood shavings to lie down in. It will rain... so that we will shelter beneath his wings. There will be darkness at times, when we must listen really closely for his voice. Oh, and we may have to eat a few bugs along the way. Don't say I didn't warn you.

That is what Easter is all about. New life. Outside our shell. With Jesus. He died to atone for our sins, but God restored him to life on the third day... so we can live, too. A new, changed life now. And an eternal life, with him, later.

So what are you waiting for?

Peck!



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A friend of Spirit Driven Leadership introduced Ken Proctor to us because Ken has a gift of communicating valuable lessons through stories and poetry. Fortunately, Spirit Driven Leadership has the wonderful opportunity to bring to our audience Ken's work. This material will come primarily in the form of articles, poems, short stories, lyrics and books.

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