

FESTIVAL IN AQUARIUS
New York, February 8, 2009

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Good afternoon friends and welcome to this Festival in Aquarius. The moon is out of the way and the sun is focused on channeling the spiritual influence of Aquarius. The sun and the earth, representing the soul and the personality, are in direct alignment with the energy flow. This is why the time of the full moon each month is such a unique occasion; it is full of spiritual opportunity for service. Remember this word 'opportunity'; it is a keynote for the times in which we live. The opportunity of the times is the reason why we and many other groups in the world are meeting in meditation. It is a time when humanity and Hierarchy can approach each other in consciousness. And because of this closeness we are able to radiate the energies of Light and Love more effectively into human consciousness. So let us take a moment to linkup with our co-workers around the world and with the whole of humanity in silent attunement and oneness. And then we will sound together the ancient prayer, the Gayatri.

O Thou Who givest sustenance to the universe,
From Whom all things proceed,
To Whom all things return,
Unveil to us the face of the true Spiritual sun
Hidden by a disc of golden Light
That we may know the Truth
And do our whole duty
As we journey to Thy sacred feet.

"That we may know the truth and do our whole duty as we journey to thy sacred feet." This is the essence of humanity's task for the next two thousand years. Humanity will not make much meaningful progress until a sizeable number come to the realization that all of us, together, are on a definite journey in this material world. A journey that will eventually take us into a new kingdom and a more subjective expression of Life. To make this realization real and meaningful it must unfold from within one's own consciousness. The challenge involves human consciousness and the realization that it is the group conscious soul that is making this journey and not any individual personality. It is the effort of the soul, working through consciousness, to bring light and love into the world. What we do as personalities either contributes to that objective or stands in the way and impedes the flow of soul qualities into everyday life, and thus impedes the realization of the new kingdom.

It is fortunate that we are now working with the qualifying energies of Aquarius. Not only because of the particular time in our country's history, but also because it is the conditioning sign for the next two thousand years. The timing is just right because human consciousness is growing in sensitivity and is increasingly open to the need for a substantial shift in emphasis in this globalized world. The interdependence of nations is making it imperative that the energy of goodwill be used to build right relationships--whether they are political, economic, financial or cultural--rather than applying the old method of erecting selfish barriers that just lead to an inevitable conflict. A network of goodwill provides the foundation upon which the spiritual Will of God can play. If humanity is to advance in the new age, it is imperative that the spiritual qualities of the one soul become a more dominant force in human decision-making.

What is being demanded of humanity in the new age is outlined in the three keynotes of Aquarius:

1. The service of the personality, the lower self, which eventually transmutes itself into the service of humanity.
2. Superficial and selfish activity which changes into deeper and active intention to be active on behalf of the Hierarchy.
3. Self-conscious living, which changes finally into a sensitive humanitarian awareness.

The challenge of these keynotes requires a significant breakthrough in human consciousness. Before soul qualities can truly manifest, there must be some sensitivity to these higher values. As long as selfishness and self-centeredness reigns, there will be little willingness to change. And without a recognition of the soul and its service there will be little recognition of the kingdom of souls which is overseen by a spiritual Hierarchy Who is guiding human progress on earth, and Who is responsible for working out the great Plan of God in the world. For many, this recognition requires a considerable leap in consciousness.

It is a considerable leap to realize that we are not here on earth to simply serve ourselves; we are here to serve the greater Plan. The Plan becomes the basis, not for service to humanity, but for the service of humanity. This is our group conscious responsibility. We also have a responsibility to the lower three kingdoms; they are also included in the service of humanity. And this responsibility will become strengthened and enhanced with the recognition that we don't have to do this alone; that we must work with members of the spiritual Hierarchy and try to follow the patterns of thought that They have laid out on the fabric of human consciousness.

They have established certain patterns of thought that will, in time, work out and eventually synchronize with the divine Idea laid out in the Plan. And it is instructive to consider the whole process of how divine Ideas held in the Mind of God eventually work out through the Hierarchy and then through humanity. There are basically five phases of activity:

1. The phase of Purpose, originating in Shamballa and registered by the senior Members of the Hierarchy.
2. The stage of hierarchical Planning. This is the formulation of the Purpose in terms of possibility, immediacy, appropriateness and the availability of the disciples, plus the energies to implement the Plan.
3. Next comes Programme, wherein the Plan is taken up by the particular ashram involved in its implementation and is then reduced to the formative stages of human impression and direction, the conditions necessary to bring about its emergence, and the two phases of this conditioning. These are usually in two parts; i.e., the destruction of all hindrances and the presentation of the Plan.
4. The emergence of the hierarchical Pattern (based upon the recognition of purpose, careful planning and a detailed and carefully thought-out programme), both in the minds of the disciples in the Ashram who are involved in the implementation of the Plan, and among the intelligentsia on Earth. These two groups have the task...of bringing the pattern of things to be into the mass consciousness.

5. Then comes the final phase of Precipitation, when all the subjective work has been done on the basis of possibility, and when the pattern and a part of the programme are recognised by the world thinkers in every nation, either favourably or with antagonism. The planning, having reached this final stage, then proceeds under its own momentum.

Now it is good to hold these five phases in mind, especially because our subjective work involves being sensitive to the emerging patterns, and then helping to bring "the pattern of things to be into the mass consciousness". We stand at that crucial stage in this process--the stage of precipitation--where much can go wrong, because human selfishness and greed can sidetrack the accuracy of the original pattern. That is why the financial crisis we are experiencing today is really a golden opportunity to correct the mistaken direction of the past. As it has been said, "a good crisis should not be wasted."

The worldwide esoteric group has a unique responsibility during this period of crisis. On the one hand, because of our closeness and identity with the consciousness of average humanity, we can easily identify with their pain and suffering. On the other hand, because we have the capacity to work subjectively with the spiritual Hierarchy, we can help Them, the Hierarchy, as They adjust the patterns of thought that are necessary to move humanity forward toward a more accurate expression of the Plan. The crisis we are facing today is very likely still part of the on-going destructive process that is necessary before the higher soul qualities of the new age can appear. There is still much wrong thinking governing the financial and economic world that needs to be changed. As we have seen, selfishness and greed prevail as a conditioning force in human consciousness; its impact needs to be diminished and replaced by a stronger, universal attitude of selfless service, and a greater respect for the life of the whole. And what's at stake is essentially making way for a new, dynamic expression of Life itself.

As we know, the Aquarian keynote that will govern the activities of the spiritual Hierarchy for the next 2500 years is: "Waters of Life am I poured forth for thirsty men." Christ is the highest example we have of one Who brings forth the divine essence of the energy of Life. As He said, "I am come that you may have life more abundantly." And He meant life in the true sense of the word. His teachings have enabled us to deepen and expand our appreciation and understanding of the Life of God in expression in the world. *Water of life*...does not of course refer to water per se. It refers to the great stream of Life, that essential electrical energy which flows through and sustains every living form down to the tiniest atom. It is the life-force that is dispensed evenly by God to the good and the bad, the saint and sinner alike. And it demonstrates or is expressed in the word *livingness*, which is a little difficult to understand, as is *life more abundantly*. We might define *livingness* as the degree that the Life of God is manifesting in the world. In other words, how much of the intent of God is shining through His Creation. Thinking about life in this way forces us to go beyond the fact of creation itself to the very cause and purpose of creation in the first place. Receiving life more abundantly is like receiving more of God's essence—His qualities, His Light and Love and His Will-to-Good. Christ, as the true Aquarian and the Dispenser of the Water of Life gave us, and continues to give us, His essential life as an example of a more perfect expression of God in manifestation. His more perfect qualities express a highly refined degree of livingness and as a model, which we can all emulate, if we have the will.

Livingness must encompass more than just a physical way of life; it must include the emotional and the mental expressions as well. When Christ said, "I am come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly", He was referring to life expressed in three ways:

1. *As physical life*, nourishing the cells of the body. This life is found within each atom of substance as the central point of living light.
2. *As livingness*, seen as love and light within the heart. When this livingness is present and expressing itself, the human atom becomes a part of the spiritual Hierarchy.
3. *As Life more abundantly*. This life can be known as light, love and power within and above the head of the disciple of the Christ. This abundant life enables him to cooperate, not only with humanity and with the spiritual Hierarchy, but also with Shamballa itself—the centre of life in its purest essence.

Now we should take note of the word *enables*, because it holds the key meaning. As we are told, “life is the livingness, which enables.” In other words, a more abundant inflow of the energy of life will enable humanity to express the living qualities of the Plan of God. It will provide the divine incentive, the divine power to express in a more refined way the qualities of divine Light and Love. We are told that Christ, when He returns, will also “draw upon the energies which are defined by the phrase “life more abundantly”, because they will set loose (in the Aquarian age) in a new and dynamic manner the new energies needed in order to bring about restoration and resurrection. This new energy is the “implementing force of universality”; it concerns the future. This inflow of Aquarian energy is one of the factors, which will enable the Christ to complete His task as world Savior and world Teacher.

As the center Shamballa is pouring out its energy directly upon humanity, let us realise our vital group responsibility to receive it and work with it to build in human consciousness the new ideals of the kingdom of soul. The key word for us today is *opportunity*; the opportunity to synchronise our response with that which is coming. It is our opportunity to pour out the water of life—the electrical Life force of Shamballa—to a world in need. It is our opportunity to work with the “implementing force of universality” and to help bring forth the power of the “livingness which enables.” May it enable us to do our part.

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