

FESTIVAL OF PISCES
New York, March 10, 2009

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Good evening, everyone, and welcome to Festival of the full moon of Pisces. The keynote for the sign of Pisces is "I leave the Father's home and turning back, I save."

At the time of each full moon Festival, energy qualified by a particular constellation flows into the range of human awareness, establishing the divine attributes in the consciousness of humanity. This spiritual inflow can be channeled in meditation into the minds and hearts of all people. The technique of meditation governs all expansions of consciousness, all registration of Plan or Purpose and the entire process of evolutionary unfoldment.

The monthly full moon work is a united spiritual effort that will bring about a pooling of spiritual resources. Individuals involved in this invocation work will increasingly be able to act as mediating points, bringing in great spiritual energies and stepping them down for the benefit and stimulation of humanity and the three lower kingdoms.

So let us come together as a group, attuning ourselves with others around the world who are also working with the energy of the sign of Pisces, and say in unison the Gayatri, the most ancient pledge of the Path.

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.
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Tonight we are working with the spiritual energies of Pisces, the last astrological sign of esoteric zodiac, with its keynote: "I leave the Father's home and turning back, I save." Each sign of the zodiac has its particular significance with respect to humanity's evolution. Pisces' significance lies in helping humanity overcome the illusion of duality so that there is a realization of unity with all that lives -- our essential oneness with all life. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to address three lessons associated with Pisces:

1. Bondage
2. Detachment
3. Sacrifice

Right understanding of **bondage** -- the first lesson. This is represented by the symbol of two fish swimming in opposite directions yet held together by a band or string-like material often called the silver thread. The visualization of Pisces is represented by one fish with its head and body facing to the left. This fish symbolizes the soul, seeking its return to the Father's house but held captive by the personality until the third initiation. The second fish, with its head and body facing to the right, symbolizes the personality seeking experience in the physical world but not yet under the control of the soul. These fish illustrate the duality of Pisces. Yet, the band or silver thread that holds the two fish together conveys the unity that exists within the appearance of duality. The soul and the personality ultimately become one through the spiritual tie that binds them.

The keynote for Pisces, “I leave the Father’s home and turning back, I save,” brings to mind the parable of the Prodigal Son. You may have heard references to this story during other full moon talks. The reason this parable seems appropriate for the sign of Pisces is that it provides a lesson regarding **detachment**, which is Pisces’ second lesson. As the story goes, the son of a rich man leaves his father’s home to experience in the material world. The Bible says that the son engaged in “riotous” living after he left home, which means that he engaged in complete gratification of the physical senses. After using up his inheritance pursuing self-indulgence, the Prodigal Son had to find a job. (I guess having experience in “riotous living” did not qualify him for a high paying position.) So, he found a job tending pigs, one of the lowest level jobs available. In the Jewish community, pigs represent a state of uncleanness, of being defiled.

After he had been tending pigs for a while, the Prodigal Son became home sick. He began to remember how things were at his Father’s home and to yearn for those times. At some point, the Prodigal Son came to the realization that his father’s servants were living a better life than he was as a pig herder. He therefore decided to detach himself from the world in which he had been living and return to his Father’s House – to separate himself and stand apart from the self indulgent life. This kind of realization is often called an epiphany, which is defined as “a sudden intuitive leap of understanding, especially through an ordinary but striking occurrence.” In other words, through the events of everyday life, something happens to make us come to our senses and seek the Divine. Through life experience and suffering the Prodigal Son, the disciple, learned detachment -- to stand apart, to become unbiased, unemotional and indifferent to the material world. These are qualities of the soul.

Sacrifice is the third lesson to be learned from the sign of Pisces. In *Discipleship in the New Age Volume I*, Alice Bailey wrote that: “The lower herd instinct is motivated largely by the instinct of self-preservation; the higher (nature is motivated) by the recognition of the immortal nature of the soul, and by the instinct to serve even with the sacrifice of oneself.”...Recognition of the importance of service and group life are humanity’s immediate, evolutionary goals that will be addressed more fully during the Age of Aquarius. But before we enter the next Age, we might want to reflect on what humanity has learned during 2,000 years or so in the Age of Pisces.

In fact, we do not have to go back too far in history for our review. So much has happened over the past 6 months that it seems that we are living through a summarizing period of human history.

The sign of Pisces focuses on helping humanity overcome the illusion of duality through three lessons: bondage, detachment and sacrifice.

Let’s consider what humanity has learned about bondage, the first lesson that Pisces teaches. Through our response to human suffering such as natural disasters, genocide and global warming, we see the beginning of a worldwide concern for the human family. A recognition that we are one. Even the current financial crisis is teaching us that every country is tied to this crisis and together we must find a solution.

The economic situation is also educating us about Pisces’ lesson number two-- detachment. The economic down turn is forcing many people to view their money and finances in a more dispassionate way. Americans as well as others around the world have virtually stopped shopping. Large and small retailers are rapidly going out of business. The so called golden age of conspicuous consumption appears to have ended, at least for the time being. The exposure of risky business practices and illusionary business investments have affected almost everyone in this society in terms of the loss of jobs and money as well as the psychological effect that these events have caused. Humanity is starting to think about what is really important in their lives, which might lead to a certain level of detachment.

The Bernard Madoff scandal illustrates how illusion and lack of detachment caused investors to collectively lose at least \$50 billion dollars worldwide. People really wanted to believe that Mr. Madoff had a secret formula for generating gains on investments regardless of downturns in the economy. They bought into the illusion that Madoff could guarantee a steady stream of wealth. Last December, The New York Times ran an article by Robin Pogrebin that covered reactions from the Jewish community regarding this scandal. One rabbi tried to come to grips with the enormous damage done by Mr. Madoff by pondering on the 7th Commandment – “Thou shalt not steal.” However, this commandment seemed inadequate to deal with stealing on a global basis. Stealing from someone in the community is one thing. Stealing by deception (or illusion) from people all over the world is another matter. The rabbi seemed to be seeking something more potent, perhaps a cosmic law, to deal with the great damage done by Mr. Madoff.

Illusion exists with respect to the other issues we are facing in the world of finance. There is a phrase being repeated over and over again by the media: “Too big to fail...too big to fail.” Citicorp is “too big to fail.” AIG is “too big to fail.” It is almost a mantram. Corporations are legal entities. Although management personnel change over the years, the corporation lives on. It has a life of its own until death comes through bankruptcy or a change in ownership. Therefore, saying that these entities are “too big to fail” or die, puts them in the category of the immortals. Like Bernard Madoff, these corporations were held in great esteem and put on high pedestals by watch dog federal agencies that are supposed to provide a measure of protection to investors. Now, we find that these “too big to fail” Titans of the financial world have feet of clay. Their statues are shattering and falling down upon us, and people are suffering.

Like the Prodigal Son, we seem to be mired in the muck of these financial problems, but there is hope. In this morning’s New York Times, Bob Herbert wrote: “Now, with the economy in free fall and likely to get worse, Americans — despite their suffering — have an opportunity to reshape the society, and then to move it in a fairer, smarter and ultimately more productive direction. That is the only way to revive the dream, but it will take a long time and require great courage and sacrifice.” This is such an insightful quote. Let me read it to you again. “Now, with the economy in free fall and likely to get worse, Americans — despite their suffering — have an opportunity to reshape the society, and then to move it in a fairer, smarter and ultimately more productive direction. That is the only way to revive the dream, but it will take a long time and require great courage and sacrifice.”

The fact that someone in the media recognizes that this economic free fall requires sacrifice is a good thing because this is the third lesson of Pisces – sacrifice for the good of humanity. Sacrifice requires a degree of suffering, which most people are experiencing either directly through job and financial loss or indirectly through fear of what lies ahead. If we can believe the story of the Prodigal Son, this suffering, which is occurring on a worldwide basis, should lead to a major break-through, an epiphany. Remember ... an epiphany is “a sudden intuitive leap of understanding, especially through an ordinary but striking occurrence.” Given the scope of these problems and their impact, some great leap forward in consciousness might begin to happen. We just don’t know when.

Bondage...Detachment...Sacrifice. These are the lessons Humanity must master through the sign of Pisces. We have accomplished quite a bit over the past 2,000 years but there is more to be learned. Fully “turning back” to the Father’s home is ultimately required. Mr. Herbert of the New York Times seems to think that a turning back in the form of a change in consciousness, will come from the current situation. He thinks it will take us in “a fairer, smarter and ultimately more productive direction.” Just as we do not know when an epiphany will occur, we do not know what actions will result. However, the keynote for Pisces, *I leave the Father’s home and turning back, I save*, should provide encouragement and give us hope.

So, let us hold these thoughts in mind as we meditate on this keynote: *I leave the Father’s home and turning back, I save*.