

FESTIVAL OF PISCES
New York, March 18, 2011

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Good evening, friends, and welcome to the Festival of Pisces. The actual moment of the full moon occurs tomorrow at 2:11 p.m. This festival always has a note of finality about it. We are nearly at the vernal equinox which marks the beginning of spring and a whole new annual cycle. Just now we stand at a point of culmination, of completion, not only in the annual cycle but in the 2,500 year cycle of the Age of Pisces, and on an even vaster time scale, the completion of a “mega-cycle” which has lasted 25,000 years. No wonder there is such a profound sense of the significance of the present times. We don’t know, really, what it means, but there is a widespread recognition that the decisions and choices and values which humanity selects at this time will have lasting and pervasive repercussions for the future.

The pivotal nature of the present period is combined, for disciples, with the “razor’s edge” of the spiritual path. Values, priorities, become increasingly subtle and difficult to discern on the spiritual path, and this is touched on in the Affirmation of the Disciple which you have on your chairs. As we say it together, let us visualise our unity with all the groups large and small, meeting as we are throughout the world at this time, seeing this worldwide effort as one global group meditation —a global approach to the Hierarchy of Masters.

I am a point of light within a greater Light.
I am a strand of loving energy within the stream of Love divine.
I am a point of sacrificial Fire, focussed within the fiery Will of God.

And thus I stand

I am a way by which men may achieve.
I am a source of strength, enabling them to stand.
I am a beam of light, shining upon their way.

And thus I stand.

And standing thus, revolve
And tread this way the ways of men,
And know the ways of God.

And thus I stand.

To “tread this way, the ways of men, and know the Ways of God” is the task of the discipleship group. It requires a dual vision and a capacity to link, to fuse two streams of energy as one. It’s the power to mediate, to create a bridge from the kingdom of men, Humanity, to the Kingdom of Souls, the Hierarchy. We’re told that the highest aspect of Pisces which humanity can at this time in any way comprehend is that of Mediatorship, the energy of mediation, of right relationship. But this capacity begins with a sense of bondage, of captivity, for that is the experience of the soul coming into incarnation in the early stages of its evolution. The physical-etheric, emotional, and mental bodies are unresponsive; the lower elementals dominate, and the soul’s purpose is largely unregistered.

Gradually, however, bondage is transformed into renunciation or detachment, and renunciation is expressed in the keynote for Pisces which we’ll work with in our meditation: *I leave the Father’s home and turning back, I save.* “I save” may seem such a lofty declaration, yet it was the declaration of the soul – our soul – when it chose to take on a physical vehicle, to incarnate. We are reminded in the books of Alice Bailey that this decision wasn’t made for “a learning experience”, for the soul on its own level is already an initiate of a high degree. The decision to incarnate was made for the purpose of service, in order to salvage or redeem matter, beginning with the matter and substance of our own little lives, and extending on the part of the centre Humanity, of which each of us is a tiny part, to the redemption or salvaging of the planet.

Why should humanity be given this task? Because it's the middle or mediating kingdom in the evolutionary unfoldment of life on our planet, endowed with a peculiar and specific type of awareness which enables it to relate the higher and lower expressions of divinity. Or as Blavatsky put it, man is both an animal and a living god. This is what makes humanity a mediator. There is the well-known statement in the Ageless Wisdom that everything that lives on Earth has been, is, or will be human; that the keynote of the Lord of the World is Humanity, for it provides the central, unifying theme shared at some stage or another by every form of life on this planet.

What is so unique about the human experience that it makes it such a determining, pivotal stage in evolution? We're told that the outstanding characteristic of humanity is intelligent sensitivity to impression. The impression of ideas which originate on the buddhic level must make impact on human minds to have an effect on the life of our planet and to reach the lower kingdoms which are in humanity's care. That makes the issue of ecology and the well-being of the environment not only a matter of morality but of absolutely critical importance to the Plan. The evolution of our planet cannot happen without humanity's willing cooperation.

Life on Earth is composed of a chain of hierarchy, of gradations of consciousness, which depends on the interrelation of all units. The more potent and dynamic can impress the lesser and weaker units, and humanity's part in this is especially aided by the work of science. This is the field in which knowledge of substance and form is developed, making it possible for humanity to act as the major impressing agent in relation to the three subhuman kingdoms in nature – that's its major responsibility as a mediating kingdom. This recognition of humanity's awesome responsibility, and the role of science in it, must have dawned on the scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer, called "the father of the atomic bomb", for the awesome nature of the first test of the bomb made him remember the words of the Bhagavad Gita: "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

Ultimately, the goal of mediatorship is to form a triangle of the three great Centres Shamballa, Hierarchy and Humanity, so that they function in close relationship at all times in a unity of objective expressing through invocation and evocation. This lies behind the purpose of our group meditation which we do each month at these festivals. The united approach of the group to the spiritual Hierarchy by creating a channel in meditation for Light and Love to pour into human consciousness is our objective. It's a meditation done for humanity, not for personal enlightenment.

In trying to understand the statement that "The highest aspect of Pisces which humanity can at this time in any way comprehend is that of Mediatorship", and thinking about the keynote of Pisces, *I leave the Father's home and turning back, I save*, we come face to face with the theme of sacrifice. That is not a subject which some aspirants to discipleship readily seek out, perhaps because after 2000 years of the sixth Ray of Devotion and Idealism, the lingering remnants of that great divine ray are only the lowest expression: fanatical devotion to narrow, often separative ends. 2000 years of Christian teaching too often distorted the beauty of sacrifice into something imposed and demanded against one's will, and requiring pain for the purpose of martyrdom. This is a travesty of the Ageless Wisdom's view of sacrifice which equates it with bliss. You might wonder, how can sacrifice be blissful? Because sacrifice is the realisation of the will-to-good of the whole. It is the recognition that sacrifice is not loss but release into a larger life and freedom from the constraints of the personal self. If we can imagine this, and extend its implications to the highest level of consciousness our minds can reach, then we can understand why the great Law of Sacrifice is experienced on the highest levels of Being as pure bliss.

I mentioned the Law of Sacrifice, and it is indeed a compelling spiritual law – not just a nice idea that we might or might not choose to follow, but a law which governs evolution. Again, the great chain of hierarchy depends upon the sacrifice of the greater for the lesser in order for the impression of spiritual energy to redeem and salvage all levels, all planes of existence. The Law of Sacrifice is said to be the first spiritual law

to be grasped by the human mind, and we see its demonstration most widely shared in parenthood – not just by human beings but in the animal kingdom as well. The fact that animals sacrifice their well-being, even their very lives, for their offspring through the force of instinct doesn't make it any less significant or inspiring that they do so, and often more spontaneously than humans. Their instinctive sacrifice is the guarantee of humanity's ability to do so willingly, on this level, with full conscious awareness, with free will to choose, to weigh the pros and cons of their choices, and knowingly choose to give for the greater good.

If we think sacrifice is too much to ask of us, if we see it as an imposition on our cherished free will, we have only to think of the sacrifice of the solar Angels Who came, the Ageless Wisdom says, from the planet Venus to Earth eons ago, bringing the principle of Mind to what was then animal-man. Here we are, eons later, slowly waking up but still pretty dim bulbs in the firmament. We have the example of the sacrifice of the Christ, who said "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age" and who now prepares to return again – a decision which must have grave consequences for such an elevated World Saviour. And there is the sacrifice of our planetary Logos, the Lord of the World, the "divine prisoner of this planet, held here until the 'last weary pilgrim has found his way home.'"

This touches on a sacrifice of profound and mysterious spiritual significance, but we can say that the disciple in Pisces vows to share in this act of sacrifice in some tiny way when he declares "I leave the Father's home and turning back, I save." "The urge to sacrifice, to relinquish athis for that, to choose one way over another, is the underlying story of evolution", Alice Bailey said. It is the governing principle of life itself. It holds the clue to man's unfoldment and it's the predominant characteristic of Deity, she said.

That doesn't mean it's necessarily an altogether happy state of affairs, for she also said that the very stream of energy that manifests through the Earth is conditioned by a temperament, an attitude, that she calls the "Divine Rebel". It's only rebellion that produces pain and sorrow, but rebellion is inherent and innate in the Deity of our very planet, she said. This isn't universally true, for only three planets express this attitude of the Divine Rebel: Earth, Saturn and Mars. Nowhere else. This would perhaps help to explain the urge or longing for liberation, for struggle, for freedom from pain and limitation, the dread of suffering, that seem so embedded in the substance of our planetary life. The wish might be for ease and acceptance, for accommodation of "what is", but the innate driving force is that of rebellion against "what is". No wonder we struggle so to achieve and overcome – it's in our very DNA.

This same attitude of rebellion may be what makes love such a powerful force on our planet. "Love is the attractive, cohering, unifying force which holds the manifested universe together and is responsible for all relationships." Love binds us all together in shared struggle for liberation and love endows us with compassion for the experience we share with all lives in all kingdoms on this planet, for we are all "fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth", as one writer put it.

"Let *love* be the keynote in all relationships, for the power which must salvage the world is the precipitation of love, and how shall that find its way onto the physical plane save through a group whose ears are attuned to its imminent emergence, and through the lives of those in the group who are irradiated by love itself? It is here that there is lack—not intentionally or because of the existence of its opposing quality—but simply through world pressure and strain. In the unfoldment of goodwill in the world...let love be the active force...I would like to see more of it among all of you", Alice Bailey said.

That call to world salvage went out during the World War, and today disciples are assembling all over the world. It's not an assembling upon the physical plane but a profound subjective happening, aided by modern technologies. Being an assembling of humans, it isn't free from glamour or mixed motives, but there is responsiveness on the part of people seeking to help create a better world for all. They work on all lines and in all fields of endeavour, not just the overtly spiritual, and by noting them we can help to strengthen their hands.

Every act of relinquishing contributes to world salvage. We're all aware of the immense wrong doing that led up to the world economic crisis, and the karmic debt that those responsible for it have incurred. But if there is a positive aspect to the crisis, an element of redemption behind all the suffering, it lies in the opportunity to re-examine our values and priorities. To be able to share in the lessons of detachment from material values is a blessing, a sharing that the Tibetan hinted the United States might not have the opportunity to take part in. Let's hope he was wrong; let's hope that this affluent society, blessed with so much material abundance, won't escape the privilege of learning to value the spiritual, the timeless and the eternal over the comfortable and self-enhancing.

Disciples and initiates must share in the necessity for rebuilding human life on sounder values than the physical, and the help which those can give who have already undergone the first initiation, is great, we're told. "To this you are called, and upon your understanding response to the collective need will depend the rapidity with which you will be enabled to achieve the next expansion of consciousness or initiation which may be, for you as an individual, possible...It is the initiate in you, the Christ in you, which is now called to this collective service and the radiation today of the Christ spirit, actively present in the hearts of all disciples, is the one thing which can salvage mankind, enable humanity to move forward on to the Path of Discipleship and thus evoke that new spirit which can and will build the new world."

Let us work now in meditation with the keynote of Pisces, *I leave the Father's home and turning back, I save.*