

Death and Continuity of Consciousness
Festival of Pisces, New York

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Good evening friends and welcome to this meeting for the full moon in Pisces. Every time we come together in group formation to orient ourselves to the Higher Way and to meet with the intention of providing world service, an energetic pulse is projected which, if the spiritual tension is vitalized, reaches the Hierarchy and serves to strengthen the interaction with our Elder Brothers, those who guide and guard. We might imagine that the realm of souls, the powerful kingdom of love with the Christ standing at the center, feels this reaching out from the souls imprisoned in form on Earth. They too were once in physical form and have passed through the tests and trials we all must undergo while in incarnation. They understand our struggles and stand patiently watching while each person wrestles with their own glimmers and illusions as they once did. Being out of incarnation enables the disembodied consciousness to see things clearly, to see the whole of the sequence of lives with a perspective we can't achieve while working through the density of form.

Pisces marks the end of the zodiacal cycle on the reversed wheel and offers the opportunity to the soul to reflect and absorb the experience gained on Earth through its long journey around the wheel before beginning again at a higher turn of the spiral. We know that an immediate objective of the Plan is "to raise the level of the human consciousness" ¹ and if we look at the Piscean Age as a whole, during this 2,000 year cycle there has been an incredible progression of human consciousness. The arts, sciences and all fields of human activity have produced great masterpieces of perfection and beauty. The amazing advances in science and technology have arisen through the sensitive response of individuals often working alone. The great religious and philosophical writings of the world, the sublime musical works, have all been the result of the inspiration of individuals deeply contemplating the divine. The process of initiation has been undergone one person at a time, slowly filling the ranks of the spiritual Hierarchy. We've learned the value of idealism and how one person's devotion to a humanitarian cause can spur large groups of people into action. We've seen and are still seeing the tremendous sacrifices individuals have made to improve conditions for others, often at great personal cost or death. Idealism and devotion, 6th Ray qualities, have pushed the boundaries of human actions, driving people to seek something higher, better and more fulfilling.

Now, through the agency of the New Group of World Servers, this consciousness raising is proceeding with even more rapidity and purpose. There are more people than ever before in all parts of the world and in every tradition involved in spiritual practices such as yoga, meditation and service. Through online seminars and meetings, people are joining together in real time to learn and grow together, to discuss the inner life and its meaning. The Covid pandemic has certainly changed the consciousness of many, causing people to look inward and reflect on the meaning of life. As the inner life is growing in importance, it is pushing away non essentials and weakening the impulse to materialism.

We are all swimming together in the great ocean of consciousness, sometimes merely being moved by the currents wherever they will and other times moving purposefully toward a goal. Pisces is represented by two fishes tied together swimming in opposite directions, or trying to. They represent the soul and the form bound together working out which will be the more dominant. Clearly a dual sign, Pisces depicts the nature of one aspect in bondage to the other and this relationship works both ways. In the early days of the soul's evolutionary journey, the soul is imprisoned in form unable to exert its influence because the form nature is so unresponsive. Then, after time and evolution have done their work, the powerful form nature begins to weaken signaling to the soul that the bonds of its captivity are being loosened. It then proceeds to seize control of the form making *it* captive to the soul's purpose.

We know from our studies that unity is found on the planes of the inner life, that all souls are part of the One Soul and it is only through the form nature that separation appears, the illusion of reality. The soul on its own plane is group conscious and knows no kind of separateness. It perceives all forms as merely a collection of energies that are seeking release and redemption through an advancing consciousness. The soul seeks to express itself and gain fullness of experience by contact with the physical plane; it seeks to condition its vehicles of form with the reality of its essential unity. It seeks full control of the personality, the outer life and the trends of thought. With these thoughts in mind, let us take a moment to reflect on our essential oneness and basic unity with the soul. The Mantram of Unification is a potent word of power which, when used with focused intent, helps bring the soul and personality into alignment and interplay.

The souls of all are one and I am one with them.
I seek to love, not hate;
I seek to serve and not exact due service;
I seek to heal, not hurt.

Let pain bring due reward of light and love.
Let the soul control the outer form, and life and all events,
And bring to light the love that underlies the happenings of the time.

Let vision come and insight.
Let the future stand revealed.
Let inner union demonstrate and outer cleavages be gone.
Let love prevail.
Let all people love.

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Through the esoteric rulership of Pluto, Pisces represents the principle and process of death, but also birth, these two being opposite aspects of the same reality for the two fish in captivity to one another, the soul and form. Pisces stands for imprisonment, bondage and eventual detachment and release. When the soul incarnates into form, this is a temporary death for the soul. It becomes imprisoned in a body with no way to express itself through

the infant which is completely dependent on others for all its needs for many years. Births are always celebrated, but on the plane of soul, the entry or birth into physical form is a drastic sacrifice and a type of death for the soul. But, keeping in mind that the nature of the soul is sacrifice, it is fulfilling its purpose to become imprisoned again and again until the final release.

All forms die, whether it be a human being, an animal, a plant, an insect, a building or an organization. Ultimate destruction is built into any form and this is a natural law. Rather than being a dire and dreaded phase of the life cycle, death, through the beneficent work of the 1st Ray Destroyer aspect, is an act of liberation allowing the indwelling life to be released to a wider field of service, eventually to return to another vehicle more suited to the demands of evolution. There is also the necessary death of wrong and separative ideas which impede the will of the soul, the death of desire for the materiality which negates the reality of the inner life and the death of certain thought habits and tendencies which are not permitted entry into the Ashram. These more abstract types of death are brought about by the effort of the personality that recognizes and is in touch with the soul. Deliberate destruction is aided by the potent energies of the 1st Ray in its Destroyer aspect and with each falling away of obstacles to the soul's expression, the aspirant is propelled into a wider field of service on Earth.

There is often an unreasonable denial of death, especially in the West, where people try to avoid it at all costs and attempt to prolong a body that no longer serves and is no longer capable of functioning on its own. Add to this an almost blind fear of the death process and dread of an afterlife that holds only uncertainty, the whole topic becomes tinged with negative energies and confusing emotions. The friends and loved ones of the dying person are sad because of what is perceived to be an impending loss to them, so the atmosphere around the death bed is colored with grief and a sense of helplessness. People are uncomfortable talking about death and reluctant to admit it is happening. Discussing the process is largely avoided, so when death comes, and it always does, it's more difficult than need be.

D.K. makes the prediction that as time goes by, people will more widely accept the death process as a part of the life cycle and that the fear of death will diminish and disappear. This can be seen slowly happening now through service efforts such as the hospice movement and the recent growth of the death doula movement. As early as 1948, a British doctor named Dame Cicely Saunders began working with terminally ill patients and stressed palliative care rather than treatments to cure. Hospice work creates a compassionate and comfortable environment for the dying and is widely available through most hospitals. In 1969, Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross published her ground breaking book, "On Death and Dying" which contains over 500 interviews with dying persons and has helped change attitudes about death and the dying process.

In the book by Alice Bailey, "A Treatise on White Magic", D.K. makes the following prediction: "Is it impossible to vision the time when the hours spent on the death bed may be but a glorious prelude to a conscious exit? When the fact that the man is to discard the handicap of the physical sheath may be for him and those around him the long waited for

and joyous consummation? Can you not visualize the time when instead of tears and fear and the refusal to recognize the inevitable, the dying person and his friends would mutually agree on the hour and that nothing but happiness would characterize the passing? That in the minds of those left behind the thought of sorrow will not enter and death beds will be regarded as happier occasions than births and marriages? I tell you, that before so very long this will be deeply so for the intelligent of the race, and little by little for all.”²

This beautiful scenario is beginning to manifest through the dedicated and caring people who attend the dying. Through Hospice and more recently, the rapidly growing death doula movement, people are more able to choose the kind of environment they want around them at death. Death doulas go through a period of training and work directly with the family to help the dying person communicate what they want and what they don't want. One such individual who is a student of the Ageless Wisdom whom we can call Robert, said in a recent interview, “Through empathy, deep listening, and caring, doulas can walk alongside the dying and their families as a trusted companion, and help them create and hold a positive and loving space during their final weeks and days”. This goes beyond the traditional hospice volunteer role, which focuses on more general companionship and support to patients and family caregivers.

It's obvious that if the caregiver recognizes the living reality of the soul and its continuity after physical death, the experience of all involved will be deeper and more meaningful. But discussing this openly is not always appropriate or possible. The death doula's job is to adhere to the wishes of the dying person, not to voice his or her own opinions or beliefs into the situation. Robert mentioned that a few of his patients have been in a state of advanced dementia where they couldn't even articulate their wishes, so he felt his job was often to remain in silence while trying to connect with their soul and to visualize bringing light into the room to help them with the experience of moving toward the light.

Continuity of consciousness is one of the goals of the training for the New Age. Through occult meditation practice, students learn to “hold the mind steady in the light” and to keep a focus as high as possible in the head. Through the long process of building the Antahkarana, the bridge between the higher and lower aspects of the mind is constructed by an effort of the personality in cooperation with the soul. We are counseled to keep our consciousness alert and active during the aging process so that death can be as conscious as possible. In preparation for a smooth exit from the body, we are instructed to practice an exercise every night when going to sleep which acts as a rehearsal for the death process. The Tibetan encourages us to attempt to keep our consciousness intact while going to sleep, to relax and withdraw the consciousness steadily upwards into the head rather than allowing a drifting off, and to be aware of everything that is happening as much as possible.

Pluto governs the process of transformation; transformation through death, initiation and revelation. It has been in the sign of Capricorn for about 14 years now, and one of the results of this is that, because Capricorn is one of the most concrete of all the signs, it has helped to stimulate the trend toward materialism. It is now in a slow process of moving into Aquarius and will be fully there in late 2024, enhancing the power of the incoming 7th Ray and the transition into the new civilization; a civilization which will be characterized

by the values of brotherhood, universal spirituality and a recognition that death is simply a natural process leading to further freedom for the soul and freedom for the consciousness which never dies. The triumph of Pisces through the victory over death releases the consciousness into its true role as the world savior, which, having left the Father's home eons past, turns back to save the little ones and bring about transformation, redemption of matter and resurrection.

Students of the Ageless Wisdom are taught that the Christ, the World Teacher, will make his decision about when to incarnate into form during the centennial conclave of the Hierarchy in 2025, the end of the Age of the Forerunner. We are preparing for this momentous event with absolutely no knowledge of when Christ's reappearance will take place but with the sure conviction that it will. The world group both in and out of incarnation, is "toiling in Pisces", working together to help Humanity assume its role as the Planetary Light Bearer, the world disciple. Our co-workers active on the other side are better acquainted with the nature of light supernal and they can help us understand how the 7th Ray will facilitate the establishment of spiritual values into form; how the merging of spirit and matter will occur through the advancing consciousness and efforts of all true servers. The birth of the new civilization bathed in light supernal cannot be stopped.

Let us prepare for our group meditation.

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1. EPII 652
2. TWM 499-500