

Sophia, Cosmic Consciousness of the Goddess

By: Olivia Robertson

1. Mystical Awakening of Pisces and Ceridwen

ORACLE OF THE GODDESS CERIDWEN

PRIESTESS: Goddess of Inspiration, Goddess of Creation, come to our aid, we entreat you! We are parched and bored, devoid of fantasy and prophecy, for we dwell in a waste land of machines that calculate and statistics that diminish our souls. Restore to us the days of our innocent childhood!

ORACLE: Far beyond the world of the cold mind and the stony heart, yet closer than the breath in a frosty dawn is Hy Brasil, the Many-Coloured Land of Heart's Desire! There is the Cauldron of Creation, guarded by three great stone circles, and beyond the circles is the sorrowful waste land of earth in which you dwell. There the lost soul, torn with doubt and fear, having turned away from the Mother, plays endless games of the mind. He adds one to one and two to two, yet never, calculate as he may, achieves infinity! For Infinity is beyond number and calculation and is as near the first as it is to the last. And the Voyager to the future in space and time ever returns, faery-bound, to his own starting point. Only when he calls to Deity for help can he be saved from his mind-formed prison.

Remove from My Cauldron of Creation the three magical drops of Inspiration, Originality and Imagination - and you are left with a poisonous residue of stale thought, soulless regulations and death-bringing orthodoxy. Return to the Matrix which is greater than the limited world about you! Travel far to achieve My Chalice, and endure with courage the ordeals which test your quality. Do not be led astray by false humility, which surrenders your birth-right of free choice to the commands of others. For even those travellers who have found the Grael are not able to share it with their fellows! For this is the Law, that each must achieve divine inspiration in solitude through service. Know that even I, Ceridwen, was not able to bestow the gifts of the Spirit upon My Divine Son. Rather did a mortal, such as yourselves, receive my gifts of the Spirit. And mark that the boy was given inspiration unexpectedly without seeking for it, during the course of his daily work! And he fled in terror, comprehending neither Me nor his great destiny.

In many lives, in many forms, the soul flees from My embrace, Who am the Universal Mother, She Who gives birth and death to all beings. In verity my Cauldron is both the womb and the tomb. For only through birth and death may the soul partake of My Grael and so receive the Elixir of Life.

Gain courage. Cherish humility. Be original: respect the originality of others. Use your imagination: yet know that all you visualise manifests in some sphere; so let your visions be true and noble. When you achieve My Grael you will find Hy Brasil all around you: in the room where you dream: in the bird-filled tree outside your open window: in the eyes of all who love you.

ON A SILVER DRAPED ALTAR LET THERE BE 6 WHITE CANDLES IN SILVER HOLDERS. A SILVER CUP OF SALT WATER, HERBS, BAG OF SEEDS, BURNING INCENSE: THE YIN-YANG MANDALA IN THE FORM OF 2 INTERTWINED FISH AND A STAR MAP OF PISCES. IN FRONT OF THE ALTAR LET THERE BE A CAULDRON FILLED WITH WATER, 3 PRIESTESSES WEAR SILVER CROWNS, SEA GREEN ROBES AND SILVER STOLES. 3 PRIESTS WEAR LIKewise BUT WITH POINTED SILVER HEADDRESSES. 6 COMRADES WEAR SILVER CIRCLET'S AND SEA-GREEN ROBES.

1st PRIEST: Comrades on the quest for Truth and Virtue, know that the constellation of Pisces now

contains the place of the Vernal Equinox, and the Fishes are called Leaders of the Celestial Host. The Magi saw them as two mighty forces held together by the Cord, the Yoga or Yoke of religion, which means 'to bind'. Thus those who dwell under this influence learn self-control, and through such discipline have authority over those under their aegis. Fishes were seen as emblems of chastity, and the monastery and convent represented a fishpond rather than the open sea.

2nd PRIEST: The restraint of the cord holds in equilibrium the union of opposites. May the two Fish Goddesses who saved the God Opo-Kuni-Nusi of Japan be invoked!

1st PRIESTESS (*OFFERS INCENSE S.E.*): I offer incense to the Cockleshell Goddess Kisa-Gapi-Pime and to the Fish Goddess Umugi-Pime, who are still worshipped in the Pacific Islands. Know that when the God Opo-Kuni-Nusi was killed by the Eighty Deities: this was done that He might be put to many grievous tests. They killed him with a burning rock rolled down a mountain. But the Goddess Kisa-Gapi-Pime shaved Her cockle-shell, and the Goddess Umugi-Pime added water to the shavings, and rubbed this upon Him as mother's milk. So He was resurrected in the form of a beautiful young man! Then the Eighty Deities put Him to more trials. They cut down a large tree and put Him inside and so was He crushed to death! Then His Mother found Him, bent the tree and revived Him. She sent Him to the land of Ki. The eighty Deities gave Him His final ordeal. They were fixing their arrows, but He slipped through the fork of a tree and was saved. He then resumed His Godhead.

1st PRIEST: So are the Gods put to trial and are transformed into mortal men, that They may endure ordeal. But also are mortal men transformed into Gods, as was the case with Taliesin of the Shining Brow, who gained immortality through the Goddess Ceridwen. Let Ceridwen be invoked.

2nd PRIESTESS (*OFFERS INCENSE, N.*): I offer incense to the Goddess Ceridwen. Know that Ceridwen dwelt below the Lake Tegid with Her two children, the most beautiful God in the world, Crewdy, and the ugliest God in all the world, Avagddu! To compensate for Avagddu's hideous appearance, His Divine Mother resolved to make Him a Sage. So, according to the magical art of the books of Faery-lit, She boiled a cauldron of inspiration and science for Avagddu, that His reception might be honourable, because of His knowledge of the mysteries of the future. The Cauldron might not cease from boiling for a year and a day, and only in three drops of it were to be found the magical grace of the brew. The Cauldron was protected by three Mighty stone circles.

2nd PRIEST: Let us honour Taliesin of the shining brow and learn how he won his immortality! Ceridwen put a mortal boy, Gwion Bach, to stir the cauldron and a blind man, Morda, to keep the fire going. And She made magical incantations over the brew. But towards the end of the year, when she had gone forth to find more herbs, the brew spluttered and the three sacred drops flew out and lighted on the finger of Gwion. He put his finger in his mouth to cool it ... and forthwith he became gifted with supernatural insight!

3rd PRIEST: Companions, harken with your inner understanding to the mystery of the Transformations of Gwion. He knew with his suddenly attained insight that the potion, deprived of the three drops, was now poisonous. He feared the wrath of the Goddess when she should discover that a mere mortal had partaken of the elixir She had intended for Her Son! So Gwion transformed himself into a hare. She pursued him as a hound. He turned into a fish and swam away. Still She chased him as an otter. He flew into the air as a bird. She swooped after him as a hawk. He concealed himself as a grain of wheat. Ceridwen assumed the shape of a black hen, and She devoured the seed ... For nine months the Black Hen held Gwion within Her Body and finally She gave forth an egg. And behold, Gwion Bach came forth as a baby! Ceridwen admired his beauty, and so far from destroying him, she placed him in a leather bag and dropped him into Her lake. From thence, as it was destined, the bag was drawn forth by a Prince who rescued the child and made him his foster son.

1st PRIEST: The child grew into a wondrous Bard and had the gift of prophecy, for he was an Initiate of the Mysteries. Thus he told his tale in the Court of the King of Cymri:

"Know that for nine months I was in the womb of the Enchantress Ceridwen,
I who was originally Gwion Bach: and at length am I Taliesin.
Primary Chief Bard am I to Elphin:
Idno and Heinin called me Merddin.
I know the names of the stars from North to South.
I was in the court of Don before the birth of Gwydion.
I have been three periods in the Caer of Arianrhod.
I have been in Asia with Noah in the ark:
I have been in India when Roma was built.
I have now come to Cymri, in the remnant of Troy.
I have obtained the Muse from the Cauldron of Ceridwen.
I shall be until the Day of Doom on the face of the earth.
And it is not known whether my body is flesh or fish.
My original country is the region of the Summer Stars."

So through many births and deaths Taliesin won knowledge of his immortality through Ceridwen's Cauldron of Creation.

2nd PRIEST: In ancient times the constellation of Pisces was seen as a mighty Goddess with the tail of a fish, worshipped as Atargatis in Syria, Parthia, Rome, the Danube lands and in England. May the Goddess Atargatis be invoked, and the fishtailed God Dagon of the Philistines.

3rd PRIESTESS (*OFFERS INCENSE, S.W.*): I offer incense to Atargatis, Dea Syria, Goddess of Generation, known as the All-Creative, Agne, Holy Goddess of the Chalice. Honoured as the Almighty. The Divine Atargatis had Her Temples in those lands who believed that all life springs from the sea. In Her Temple, ornamented with fishponds, love and joy prevailed, until license diminished the virtue of Her followers. Yet wherever innocent love and creativity abound and river and lake and sea cleanse the dry land, the creative life of Atargatis flows forth. For from Her we all proceed and to Her, as streams flow into the sea, do we all return to Her ocean of ever-renewing life.

3rd PRIESTESS (*OFFERS INCENSE, S.W.*): I invoke the God Dagon, the Ancient of Days. Over the Piscean Age rules the Fisher King, Lord of Cycles, Keeper of the Mysteries. And his secret so closely guarded is in the depths, within the Matrix of His Divine Mother. The hair of Dagon is as white as snow and His eyes are as pure and cold as the winter sky. The Corona Borealis is His mantle, forming His penumbra. His fish's tail coils about the Pole Star, which is within the Silver Caer of Arianrhod of the Silver Wheel. No mortal man may reach the siren beauty of the Goddess save through His Ordeals. Below the sea that consumed Atlantis He reigneth, seated upon the Rock of Ages. He bears the trident of past, present and future knowledge. Under His rule are all mitred prelates and monks and nuns who prepare to penetrate the silver lake which is the veil of Atargatis.

1st PRIEST: The invocation of these Deities brings dreamful trance. It is in the depths that we find our true selves. May we like Gwion taste of the divine inspiration of the Goddess, that so we may choose to be reborn of Her!

1st PRIESTESS: As a lake reflects the sky, so do solemn ceremonies show forth the concealed Truth, which is not comprehended by the questing mind, but rather by the dreaming soul! Let us form the circle of Pisces around the Cauldron of Ceridwen.

1st COM. (*N.*): I hail the Guardians of the double star Wae Ping, the Rolled Screen. Let the screen be rolled back that we may understand the Mysteries of Pisces!

2nd COM. (*N.E.*): I hail the Guardians of the double star Kullat Nunu, the dwelling of the Fish. May we find our true Home.

3rd COM. (S.E.): I hail the Guardians of the Star Torcular, the Thread. May we bind ourselves to obey the Divine Will.

4th COM. (S.): I hail the Guardians of Yun Yu, Cloud and Rain. Let poetic inspiration be bestowed.

5th COM. (S.W.): I hail the Guardians of Sol Centralis, known by the Magi as the Central Sun of the Universe.

6th COM. (N.W.): I hail the Guardians of Al Rescha, the pale green and blue double star, the Knot. Let us be joined through love.

1st PRIEST: The living circle is formed about the Cauldron of Creation. Let us receive according to our need.

MUSIC, DEBUSSY'S "LA MER" OR VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' "ANTARCTICA" SYMPHONY ARE SUITABLE.

1st PRIESTESS (*HOLDS CUP OF SALT WATER OVER CAULDRON, CIRCLING ROUND IT L. TO R. 3 TIMES*): All life springs from the sea. All life springs from the Goddess. Salt and water are within ourselves.

SHE CIRCLES CAULDRON R. TO L. 3 TIMES SPRINKLING WATER WITHIN IT AND STIRS 3 TIMES WITH A SPRIG OF HERB.

2nd PRIESTESS (*DOES LIKEWISE WITH SEEDS*): All life springs from plants. All life springs from the Goddess. Plants are within the Goddess. Plants are within ourselves. (*SPRINKLES HERBS.*)

1st PRIEST (*PUTS A FINGER IN CUP OF WATER AND TOUCHES HIS TONGUE WITH IT*): As a hare fleet of foot, I fled from the Goddess, but still Her love pursued me as a hound! As a Priest I now accept Her love and know Immortality.

2nd PRIEST (*PARTAKES LIKEWISE*): As a fish I swam away from the Goddess, but she followed close upon me as an otter. As a Priest I now accept Her Love and know Immortality.

3rd PRIEST (*PARTAKES LIKEWISE*): As a bird I flew from the Goddess but She straightaway swooped from the skies as a hawk! As a Priest I now accept Her Love and know Immortality.

COMPANIONS (*PARTAKE LIKEWISE SAYING IN TURN*): I hid from the Mother Goddess as a seed in the earth. May I be reborn of Her Love and know Immortality.

MUSIC.

1st PRIESTESS: Companions, let us perform the Maze Dance of Ceridwen about Her Cauldron, which is the Matrix of Life within the three spheres of creation: the circles of earth and planets and the zodiac.

DANCERS WEAVE IN AND OUT BENEATH UPHELD HANDS, USING 3 STEP RHYTHM, 2 STEPS FORWARD, 1 BACK. SPIRALS ARE FORMED FIRST MOVING INWARDS, THEN OUTWARDS. COLD POWER MAY BE FELT IN HEAD AND BACK AND SILVERY WHITE POWER SEEN WITH BLUE AND YELLOW LIGHTS LIKE REFLECTIONS IN WATER. A WARM TINGLING MAY BE EXPERIENCED IN FINGERS AND HEART.

1st PRIESTESS (*SHOWS STAR MAP OF PISCES. SOFT HARP OR STRING MUSIC*): Companions, let us contemplate the constellation of Pisces! We see the pale form of the fishes, the North-Western fish's tail

near Aries holding the place of the Spring Equinox. Above shines Andromeda and her Mother Cassiopeia. Flying near the Eastern fish is the glorious winged horse Pegasus! Below Pegasus, replenishing the sea of Heaven is Aquarius and below the fishes is Cetus the whale. When Dione with Her Son Cupid fled from Cetus, the Goddess was rescued by the Piscean fishes, who carried Her and Cupid to safety on their backs. For Venus is exalted in Pisces and none may harm Her who rules the starry sea! Behold the river Fluvius Eridanus flowing below Cetus, and to the East of the fishes rises the White Bull of the Sea, Taurus. Know that the constellation of Pisces brings dreams and fantasies and the sound of distant bells of forgotten lands below the sea. Let us surrender to the tideless sea and allow our souls to float at ease in contemplation of the Mystery of Pisces and Ceridwen.

CONTEMPLATION. VISIONS ARE SHARED. HEALING RAYS OF SERENITY ARE SENT FORTH.

1st PRIEST: Let us give thanks to Kisa-Gapi-Pime, Umugi-Pime: Ceridwen and Taliesin: Atargatis and Dagon.

End of Rite.

Sources: "Kojiki", trans. Phillippi, Princeton University Press. University of Tokyo Press. "Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race", Rolleston, Harrap, "Women in Myth and Legend", Patricia Monaghan, The Women's Press Book Club. "Pagan Celtic Britain", Anne Ross. Routledge and Kegan Paul. "The Transformations of Lucius", Apuleius. Trans. Graves. Penguin Books. (N.B. "Star Names, Their Lore and Meaning," Richard Hinckley Allen, Dover Publications, New York, 1899; "Juno Covella, Perpetual Calendar of The Fellowship of Isis", Lawrence Durdin-Robertson, Cesara Publications; and Philips "Planisphere" were used for each Rite.)

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