

THE MELODY OF THE WOODCUTTER AND THE KING

By

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Prologue

There is a story to tell, but I am the only one here to tell it, and the only one to listen. There is a picture to paint, but I am the only one here with canvas and oil, the only one who will see it. There is a symphony to play, yet there is only one here to draw the bow.

This One, the Alone One, is the only one here to listen. This is as it should be however, for it allows the picture to be painted, the symphony sounded, and the story told as it truly is.

Then, if there seems an angry word in the telling, my listening will never hear it. If there seems a distorted scene, the seeing I AM, will understand it. Because, One Alone is here to listen to the symphony on this page, this One, the Only One understands his melody.

The Meeting

Atop my holy mountain, I looked up and out, sceptre in hand I looked round about and beheld a magnificent land. A happy land, a finished land of harmony. Thought I, this land is my kingdom, and I am the king thereof. In it I reign, in it I command and it's done. In it I decree with absolute authority; and illusion yields itself to me, rendering reports of majesty and harmony, of tender beauty and simplicity.

Then I looked down, unseen. At the forests edge a woodcutter stood chopping with his axe. Stroke after stroke he fought the forest and his axe glistened in the sun. "Father, how long must I labour?" I heard him shout. "How long must I contend, how long before I see Thee face to face? Before I put aside this axe and take Thy sceptre in its place? How long before I see your abundance, free to feast forever?"

Then the woodman fell to his knees to rest. Clutching the axe he whispered, "Father, show me what to do, show me how to stop this struggle and still the fear within. Show me how to quench the 'come and go' that ebb and flow between serenity and sadness. Show me Love again and laughter, let discord cease, that I may feel peace. Father there is no worth in me, show me Thyself, show me Thee!"

Oh, those words of agony I'd heard before. The woodcutter's anguish had been my own song of yore. Yea, this man is my son; I've found the prince. Let me greet him, let me comfort him. Let me quench his thirst and take away his axe. Let me remind him of his dominion and show him the land of his heritage. "This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased. It's my joy to give him the kingdom."

From out the brightness of the morning sun I spoke to him, "I know thee who thou art. I am the One you asked for." And he knew me as I knew him, division was discarded. We were one again.

"Put away your axe," I told him. "Rest beneath the tree. Listen to the soft sound that only comes from me. Once I cut wood as you, dear son, my hands were callous too. Torn by tribulation and toil, insufficiency and strife. But that was long ago as time goes, long long ago. Now I see a universe too beautiful to hurt and much too lovely to labour. Now I see a land filled with Love and laughter. Now I see children smiling in the sunshine, laughing in the Light. Because, the kingdom I speak of is a land without hunger, without labour and without strife.

“It is a land where no one cries, where fear is merely foolish fantasy, and where the shadow of death is swept aside by the light of understanding. This land is my land. I AM the King thereof. In it ‘I’ reign and illusion’s reign is ended.

“Now that I have found you, dear heir to my throne, let me show you this kingdom which is your kingdom too. So you may reign as ‘I’. Come I persuaded, there is no cause to be weary and heavy-laden forever. The heaven I speak of is not far away, but close at hand. You merely perceive it not. The Way there is a sweet way without bramble or stumbling block. And there is no devil’s army to contend with along the way, nor a single night to dwell in the wilderness. Beloved, for only a little while shall we remember this measured moment that has a phantom felling oaks, knowing nothing of Identity.”

Slowly the woodman lifted himself from the earth, and we walked thenceforth together. Down a narrow pathway strewn with flowers we walked arm in arm. At length he asked me “what do you mean when you say that your story is my story too?”

Now listener, listen to the song I sing in answer. For soon, you will sound the same symphony to yourself. Even as now I sing this measure to myself alone.

The King’s Story

Once I cut wood with a borrowed axe and cleared my kindling from leased acres too. For me, just as you, each day was another sate to battle, another time to contend. Another wonder what good or evil would appear before the sunset. And just as you, my woodman, I could not comfort the weary, for echoing their agony. Oh, there were brief moments of respite, in meditation’s frightened fortress. But I could not see the joy that was round about and the warm tears that love shed, too often turned bitter.

In those moments of greatest agony, a wise man came from the darkest depths of the forest, to tell me things of comfort. He came with an ointment for my blisters, a sharpening stone for my axe. And while he was with me I put the blade aside to hear him tell of good and evil: of life and death; of the Messiah; mankind; and rest. Yes, we dreamt dreams together in the soft sweet shade of the oak. But when he left (when he left) I lifted the axe again. The borrowed blade had been lighter much too short a time.

Then another wise one came to me, just as he came to you. He taught that the world is an illusion, a dreamer’s dream of mortality. “You are sleeping,” said he, “dreaming all the agony.” “Then if this is a dream” I answered, “awaken me. My children must eat, dream or not! I know no other way to feed them, I can find no easier lot.” But he could not awaken me, and I felled another tree.

Finally a third sage came trying to teach that God is one source of supply. “Throw away your axe,” said he, “just be, just be!” But my children were hungry when he left too, and I cut another tree.

Oh, weary son, so many came with so much to say, that I asked as you did too, “Lord, how do I know whom to listen to, and whom to follow? Which is the way to go, which way is the way to walk? First one comes, then another, a third and a fourth, and a fifth, arguing among themselves pointing out their own inaccuracies. Whom must I follow now, Father? Tell me directly, tell me in my Heart so I’ll understand.” But there was only silence.

And in anguish I cried, “Father, show me Thyself, that I might know myself and who I am. Reveal Thyself, such that I may see beyond this mist (this miserable mist) to touch Thee. You see, I seek to see the pure principle and perfect law that pervades this atmosphere of consciousness. Yet the seeking brings peace only with an ebb and flow, like seasons that blow through oaks still standing to be cut.”

Yea, my son, the countless systems of the sages merely lightens the load a moment. Every cordon of kindling collected cried the need for another, another and still another. Finally, just as you, this simplest prayer I cried, “It is Peace I ask for Father, Perfection I long to see. Yet, what I ask for must be the self-

same One that You Are in the action of being me. Could the distortion, the misery be a sharpening goad hastening the recognition of my honest-Identity? Oh, Holy Consciousness, come to me, but more tenderly. Lift the veil that hides Thee from me. It is my own veil, a vile veil I have woven myself.”

Then it was beloved (then it was) face to face my Father appeared to me, exactly as I to you. Lo, face to face the Comforter stood before me, just as I stand before you now. “Tell me” the woodman implored, “tell me of that time?”

I answered the woodman; “It was in the morning, in the Spring, in the month of planting, with birds awing. When the newness of everything is but an instant away. I had bent myself down, to drink from a pond, and there reflected in the water he was. In my own image and likeness he was. And nowhere could I see the old self at all, or needed to, or wanted to. From out the morning light the Messiah came to me. Softly, quietly with the tender touch of love. Oh, grand Light of Truth, that shone round about. Splendour beyond words, warmth, wonder, sweet sounds bathed and gossamer beings from an expanded heaven that included me and mine, and all things exactly as they are. The immaculately conceived, now effortlessly perceived. Incommunicable language of gentle words. Intimate symphony, without sound. Light of Love wherein no darkness dwells. Questions no longer, instead, instead a simple basking in the soft new sound of the Now that All Is. The ‘has been’ and ‘shall be’ were seen for what they are. Then, even as I to you, my Father said to me, *I AM He whom thou hath asked for, the one you long to see. Thy Father I AM is the I THAT I AM and I show myself to thee, face to face, eternally.* I knew him too, just as you knew me”.

“My son”, I said to the woodman, “there is a mountain in my kingdom from which the universe may be surveyed as it really is. I will take you there, as my Father has taken me before. From this high place the ‘Gates of the Heart’ are flung open, the scales drop from the eyes, the land is seen in its wholeness. And the questions that were asked before remain silent. Look, even now it is before you, this instant its here! Tell me what you see dear one, tell me what you hear.”

The woodman answered, “I see a high mountain with many plateaus and a great multitude walking up many paths that wind long distances toward the top. On each path a herald is proclaiming his way the only way; and on the many plateaus are many ministers shouting, *Rest here! View this vista, the most beautiful of them all.*

Yet, there is no happiness there. They curse each other on the different paths, and stand on every plateau in condemnation of those above or below. On the higher plateaus, I hear judgements of those whose vision is not as wide; and from the *highest* plateaus, come the sermons of those who decry duality and deny it - in the day they deny, but in the night as I, they still cut wood in their jungle; they still search the crevices for sustenance; they still stagger through their thickets and slash. Tell me Father, which path must I follow? On which plateau may I rest?”

“My son,” I answered the woodman, “to climb o’er the ground from plateau to plateau, is not the way to go. There is no path on the mountain that leads all the way to the top; nor a single place where a woodman may let go his axe; there is no plateau on any slope where one may stop contending with opposites. For to climb o’er the ground from goal to goal, creates the original two-ness – a climber and a goal.”

“Then how, councillor?” the woodsman asked, “how can I climb the mountain, how may I reach the throne?”

“Listen softly,” I said to the woodman, “listen gently with the Heart. THERE IS NO WAY THERE BUT TO BE THERE! This way soars above the ground, above the landmarks, above the plateaus. Swiftly, silently, immediately on wings of Love, this is how I shall take you there beloved, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, on the wings of the morning. Indeed the way there is to be there! Then need you not, at each plateau proclaimeth the goal for all, nor whisper longer those above or admonish the ones

below. You see, Love, Love is the key to the mystery. Love is the astrolabe of Light! Love alone sounds the melody heard at the immortal height. Love is the wing that lifts thee there, and there hands thee thy sceptre. Love has beckoned me, thy comforter, because you and I are One. You and I are Love. Immediately the measured moment ended, and we stood atop our timeless mountain.”

“My son” I said, “Look with me from this high place. With the same eye that beheld the axe, now view the kingdom. Look to the east, the sun is risen, look to the west where morning dew glistens. North, south, all you see here, is far as you envision here, is the kingdom I give you today. Now, lift up your eye and see the simple sparrow there. The soaring swallow, the sun, the stars, everything you see there, everything envisioned here, is your very own. Now, listen to the sounds, beloved, whispering wind, laughing children, distant notes proclaiming Now your standard. Sounds too, are my kingdom dear one, and I give you them all today! Next, with the inner eye, look at everything childlikeness allows. Envision the oceans, the sands, the multitudes, fair fields of fragrant flowers, oaks unsewn in future seasons. Distant mountains, higher yet than this, these too are yours my son. Yea, all you see here, is far as you envision here, is the kingdom you are this day. Listen, listen and hear, even now you are the only awareness that views this holy place. All you see, is the selfhood you be! You are this minute the holy witness of me.

You have naught left to do but ‘gird up thy loins’ and accept thy rightful Identity! Now, deck thyself with majesty and excellency. Array thyself with glory and beauty. Thine own right hand holding Truth’s sceptre, hath saved thee. From this moment forth, view all things from the standpoint of perfection, because, thou alone art the King! Dominion is given you this day! Yea, I say Be the Single Selfhood and Reign! Reign king of all creation!”

The woodman’s eyes had been opened before but now he’d opened his Heart. From out that place of knowing where is no sediment of stagnation, no darkness of reservation, no blindness of equivocation, came forth the honest sounds spoken only from the pinnacle of the mountain. “It is true! It is true! I AM the King. IAM.”

The very words I whispered as tinkling cymbals from the slopes, the same sounds I prattled in pious self-righteousness from the plateaus, and droned as far off dreams along the pathways of desire, are but spoken finally from the mountain that Childlikeness is. It is so! I AM the King! I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now it is the eye (I) that seeth Thee, O Mind being me. This is my kingdom, my kingdom is me. My very self I see, all perfect infinity. Why, I have never seen a sight nor heard a sound but my own. Yea, the people and things I see, are not separate nor apart from me. They appear dimly, as an impostor’s judgement of the king’s infinity. The plateaus and paths below, were my woodcutter interpretation of me. The woodcutter’s role is but the shadow of me. Oh, at last, at last I see the entire universe as its existence, as this awareness I be. Truly, it has been the Father’s pleasure to give the kingdom to me. How foolish I’ve been, writhing in the role of a woodcutter, unaware of Identity. I viewed the very Self I AM and judged it; and I named it, bought it, sold it, fought it; struggled to secure it, bowed down before it, and chopped it with an axe; measured it, weighed it, entombed it in time. Gave it the life and authority that all the time were mine. The borrowed axe was borrowed from myself. The acres leased were rented from myself. The wood was cut for me alone. Every tree in the forest is mine, and every forest in the land is Thine, One Awareness Being All I AM.

Now I look across the valley and see a tree, it’s me! Because when do I see it but in the Awareness I be. And how? - Seeing is being me! The tree is an attribute of loveliness Deity knows Itself to be. Yea, God-Awareness is my activity. Faithful witness of harmony, honest witness of simplicity. Eternal action of Deity. Indeed, this Now Awareness is Identity! The impostor’s judgement, had been the impostor’s agony.

Woodman, reigning new king, lifts his sceptre to speak:

“I have sought Truth all my life, But lo, that, that I seek IAM. No exterior law roots me evermore to an effete clay. No season binds me anymore to await the day when worms deprive me of living beauty. I

AM the King! I AM the law of my holy kingdom. As I decree so it shall be. Exterior law is annulled. No law exists but God-me. Outside is inside, inside outside. Above and below the same. Having been lifted up I see my images lifted likewise, and drawn to me. Understood, as I understand, God's-Self to be. The Millennium begins as I understand and acknowledge the perfection all ready round about. From this time forth, dear Father being me, I will reign with justice and dignity. I will speak to myself as the one authority. I will command without congresses or councils, without ministers, magistrates or armies. To see the world's tribulation cease, I live the Child's transcendent Peace. It is the counsel of alrightness I listen to, the finished kingdom I see. Revealing heaven right here, to this Awareness being me. Millennium Now! Is my final decree."

Epilogue

The story has been told now, listener. Yet, only one is listening. The picture has been painted, but one alone has seen it. The one, who plays this symphony, understands its harmony. The one, who listens to its melody, is the softness and the sound. Indeed, the one who reads this, is the one who has written it. For Deity, It's Self-Awareness, and all it perceives are One – Perfect Identity!

This is your melody, dear woodcutter who is king. Reign with Childlikeness! Lift up your Heart and sing!

The End

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