

Goodwill and the Law of Loving Understanding

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The Festival of Goodwill provides a time each year for us to reflect on the dynamic of goodwill, that latent characteristic of humanity that expresses as a loving determination to establish right relations. The Tibetan defines goodwill for us as “goodness of heart, kindness in action, consideration for others, and mass action to promote human welfare.”¹ The first three attributes are commonly accepted reflections of goodwill. It is the fourth attribute that is the focus of this talk.

The Tibetan instructs us that “*the will-to-good is the basic quality of divine purpose, involving planned activity and a definite goal to be achieved.*”² Goodwill is not simply a positive energetic state. It also involves specific action to ensure right relations. In fact, any change in world circumstances depends upon our actions.

Goodwill and the Great Heresy of Separativeness

We are told, “our race is controlled by the great heresy of separativeness. Through these cleavages (symbolically speaking) the fires of destruction may emerge and end our civilization...unless conscious individuals can build those bridges and develop that understanding that will offset this Law [of Cleavages], thus bringing into functioning activity the Law [of Loving Understanding] that governs the coming race.”³

As we know, “one interesting aspect of goodwill is that, as it develops in the human consciousness, it first of all brings a revelation of the existent *cleavages* that distinguish the political, the religious, the social, and the economic life of people everywhere.”⁴ Once we become aware of these cleavages, we usually try to bridge or heal them. So our first task is to identify the cleavages that reflect a sense of separativeness.

What are the cleavages that result in separativeness? Our legal systems have identified a number of these cleavages already as the roots of discrimination – e.g., racism, sexism, classism, ageism, religious bigotry, and homophobia. These attitudes and similar practices are all sources of hatred, harassment, and violence.

Further, we know esoterically that we are all part of the One Life, and quantum physics has provided us with evidence of our energetic interconnectedness.⁵ The heresy we face is the widely held belief that we are *not* connected but rather exist as separate individuals or groups. This belief allows, or even encourages, us to view the world in “us-them” terms and to stereotype and objectify the “them.”

Fortunately, goodwill aids in “drawing the attention of the masses – as far as may be – to *the problems of humanity*, and thus helps create the thoughtform of solution.”⁶ Goodwill invokes an attitude and atmosphere of cooperation and constructive problem solving among individuals and groups. It expresses as the non-partisan middle path, the environment in which discussion and compromise become possible.

Goodwill and Creating Right Relations

Once we have identified cleavages, we are called on to heal them – in ourselves and in our communities. This process involves not only an affirmation of a Second Ray sense of loving unification but also the use of First Ray energy “to destroy all that prevents integration and all that is hindering a needed synthesis...[We must] destroy the prejudices, the animosities, and the fixed ideas that have prevented synthesis, that have created cleavages and hindered right understanding.”⁷

In healing cleavages, our goal is the establishment of right relations. Let us be clear, though, that throughout much of the Ageless Wisdom literature, the emphasis is on right **human** relations. This in itself is a daunting task. But our responsibility is actually broader than relations within the human family. We know that fohat enlivens all of creation, and so we also have responsibility for right relations with *all* forms of life. We need to add *anthropocentrism*, or the illogical belief that humans are the central and most important entities in the universe, to the list of cleavages.

Right relations are “not simply goodwill, ...[but] a product or result of goodwill and the instigator of constructive changes between individuals, communities, and nations.”⁸ Such relationships are characterized by mutual respect, an accordance of dignity, and the assurance of certain basic fundamental rights and freedoms – life, liberty, freedom of expression, equality before the law, physical security, and basic education – as delineated in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁹

The Tibetan has challenged us to engage actively in overcoming separateness:

I call you to the experiment of right...relations, beginning with your own personal relations to your family and friends, and then to the task of educating those you contact so that they also start a similar work. It is the work of attaining right individual relations, right group relations, right inter-group relations, right national relations, and right international relations.... I call you to recognize that goodwill is a dynamic energy that can bring about world changes of a fundamental kind, and that its mode of expression is through the activity of the individual man and woman and through their massed intent. The massed power of goodwill, the dynamic effect of intelligent and active understanding, and the potency of a trained and alive public opinion that desires the greatest good of the greatest number, are beyond belief.... It can, today, save the world.¹⁰

The Tibetan has pointed out to us that “most [of our] goodwill, desire, prayer and invocation becomes ‘frozen’ [on the mental plane]” and that instead it needs to become “active in expression and *in tangible deed* upon the physical plane so that the work done through the means of invocation and prayer, **plus the needed fighting for the right**, is done by those who can truly coordinate and integrate on all three levels and thus function as a whole.”¹¹ The text we have bolded underscores our need to take specific action.

Right Relations Through Harmlessness

As we work to offset the separateness underlying the Law of Cleavages, what is the nature of the new law towards which we are working? The Law of Loving Understanding “can be summed up in the words: Let persons so live that their lives are harmless. Then no evil to the group can grow out of their thoughts, their actions, or their words. This is not negative harmlessness, but of a difficult and positive activity.”¹²

What does “not negative harmlessness” actually mean? Harmlessness “is a *state of mind* and one that in no way negates firm or even drastic action; it concerns motive and involves the determination

that the motive behind all activity is goodwill. That motive might lead to positive and sometimes disagreeable actions or speech.”¹³ In other words, it calls us to action.

The Tibetan provides us with a number of clues as to the focus and form of such actions. One of the clearest statements is the following:

“Practice harmlessness with zest and understanding, for it is (if truly carried out) the destroyer of all limitation. Harmfulness is based on selfishness and on an egocentric attitude. It is the demonstration of forces concentrated for self-enforcement, self-aggrandizement, and self-gratification. Harmlessness is the expression of the life of individuals who realize themselves to be everywhere, who live consciously as souls, whose nature is love, whose method is inclusiveness, and to whom all forms are alike in that they veil and hide the light, and are but externalizations of the one Infinite Being. This realization, let me remind you, will demonstrate in a true comprehension of another’s need, divorced from sentiment and expediency. It will lead to that silence of the tongue that grows out of non-reference to the separate self. It will produce that instantaneous response to true need that characterizes the Great Ones who (passing beneath the outer appearance) see the inner cause that produces the conditions noted in the outer life, and so, from that point of wisdom, true help and guidance can be given. Harmlessness brings about in the life caution in judgment, reticence in speech, ability to refrain from impulsive action, and the demonstration of a non-critical spirit.”¹⁴

Unfortunately, we do not yet have a clear awareness of all the ways in which we harm ourselves and others as we live so immersed in daily harmful activities. As we strive towards the Law of Loving Understanding, we will need to continue to find ways to display and advocate for harmlessness in thought, word, and action, including practicing peaceful ways to resolve conflict and destroying the structures and ways of relating that hold violence in place.¹⁵ One context for helpful reflection is the School for Esoteric Studies’ new Ageless Wisdom Discussion Forum, which we are each encouraged to participate in.¹⁶

Our Dual Responsibility

We know that, as disciples, we are called to a dual life – one of both outer active service and inner spiritual development. Our inner development is critical because it cleanses us from attachments to past outcomes and beliefs in how the world *should* operate. But our inner development needs to be in service to the Plan and the goal of right relations. One of our first lessons is “that difficult dual attitude that permits right personality activity and real interest in personality affairs and yet at the same time permits nothing personal to interfere with the subjective spiritual life.”¹⁷

When the contrast between the way of love and goodwill and the way of cruelty and hate is being clearly defined on Earth, disciples must exercise an unprejudiced attitude. To this group comes the difficult task of standing firmly on the physical plane against that which is destructive and hateful (in the true sense of the word), doing all that can be done to bring the destructive agencies to an end and to final powerlessness, and, at the same time, preserving an inner attitude of complete harmlessness and loving understanding. For...there are principles and ideals in the world at this time worth struggling for, but whilst the struggle is on it is necessary consciously to preserve and create that field of living, loving energy that will eventually bridge the gap between the two opposing factions and groups and so enable later contact to be made.... The dual life of active world participation in opposing that which is seeking to hold back and to destroy humanity and its highest ideals and – at the same time – to preserve a steady attitude of love, is not an easy one.... Such is human integration today that it is not possible for any person or groups of people to isolate

themselves away from human activities and human welfare. Nor is a negative attitude adequate to the solution of the present world crisis.¹⁸

As disciples, we have the joy and responsibility of expressing and invoking the goodwill that heals cleavages. Thus, we lay the foundation for harmlessness to become our reflexive method of behaving and for the Law of Loving Understanding to begin to function more consistently.



¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1953), 667.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Volume 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 47.

³ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Volume 1* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1936), 378.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 750.

⁵ See the research summarized in Dorothy I. Riddle, *Principles of Abundance for the Cosmic Citizen: Enough for Us All, Volume One* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2010).

⁶ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Volume 2*, 677.

⁷ Bailey, *Rays and Initiations*, 752.

⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 647.

⁹ See text at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, 210-211.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹² Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Volume 1*, 301.

¹³ Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 670.

¹⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1934), 102-103.

¹⁵ See further discussion in Dorothy I. Riddle, *Positive Harmlessness in Practice* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2010).

¹⁶ Click on "Discussion Forum" on the School for Esoteric Studies' website at <http://www.esotericstudies.net/>.

¹⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Volume 1* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1944), 99.

¹⁸ Bailey *Discipleship in the New Age, Volume 1*, 771-772.