

Goodwill Toward All Life

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The Festival of Goodwill offers us a time each year to reflect on the power of goodwill, or the expression of the divine Will-to-Good on this planetary level. The overall focus of the Ageless Wisdom teachings regarding goodwill is on bringing about right *human* relations.

We have the opportunity and responsibility, though, to reflect beyond humanity. After all, the theory of hylozoism, which underlies all esoteric teachings, “posits a living substance, composed of a multiplicity of sentient lives that are continuously swept into expression by the ‘breath of the divine Life.’ This theory ... emphasizes the fact that all forms are built up of infinitesimal lives, which in their totality – great or small – constitute a Life, and that these composite lives, in their turn, are a corporate part of a still greater Life. Thus eventually we have that great scale of lives, manifesting in greater expression and reaching all the way from the tiny life called the atom (with which science deals) up to that vast atomic life that we call a solar system.”¹

We, the fourth kingdom, are all part of the One Life, along with the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms: “Humans, the brain of nature; the animals, the expression of the heart; the vegetable world, the expression of the creative force or of the throat center; these three kingdoms in nature forming, in a peculiar manner, correspondences to the three higher centers in human beings, as the three kingdoms on the involutory arc correspond to the three lower centers, and the mineral kingdom ... corresponding to the solar plexus, the great clearinghouse between that which is above and that which is below.”²

The Kingdoms of Earth

In the esoteric literature, we are told that the One Life is differentiated in relation to our planet into seven kingdoms, of which the following are the first five: mineral, vegetable, animal, human, Egoic or Soul. Esoteric teachings comment on our relationship with the other three kingdoms: “Humanity’s work for the animal kingdom is to stimulate instinct until individualization is possible. Work for the vegetable kingdom is to foster the perfume-producing faculty and to adapt plant life to the myriad uses of humans and of animals. Work with the mineral kingdom is to work alchemically and magically.”³

What we know from cosmology is that these kingdoms are all part of a single interconnected energy field and that the dynamic of interconnectivity and free circulation of energy is as important as each of the individual kingdoms. “The main factor preventing a completely unimpeded sequence of impression from Shamballa straight down into the mineral kingdom, via all the other kingdoms, is the factor of free will, resulting in karmic responsibility.”⁴

So we have a responsibility to deal effectively with the energetic “pollution” that comes primarily from human thoughts and emotions. Energy inflowing from Shamballa is “‘stepped down’ by humanity’s constant reaction to glamour, to emotional or astral conclusions, and to selfish interpretations. It must be remembered that the activity of all these ‘impressing agencies’ is felt in a wide and general sense throughout the entire planet and the planetary aura. No kingdom in nature escapes this impact.”⁵

While esoterically it is clear that each kingdom has its own place and function in the whole, we unconsciously operate in terms of Aristotle’s assertion of the *scala naturae* (the ladder of nature), which places humans at the top of the ranked order of life forms.

The Concept of Personhood

Historically, our practical relationship with members of the first, second, and third kingdoms has been that of ownership and exploitation. Animals, vegetables and minerals have been viewed as resources for our own use without regard to any moral rights that they might have. We may have been benevolently protective, especially in the context of the environmental movement, but we have not necessarily thought of “goodwill” in our interactions with them because we have not thought of them as entities in their own right – or as being “beyond use.”

While in esoteric circles, we may have maintained a paternalistic attitude towards members of these other kingdoms, some environmental and legal organizations have started to raise questions. These include the Center for Earth Jurisprudence,⁶ the Nonhuman Rights Project,⁷ and Wild Law UK,⁸ as well as community action groups such as the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature.⁹

Personhood is defined as having the following characteristics: self-awareness, with a rich inner life; being intelligent and able to think abstractly; being able to reflect on and choose one’s actions; being emotionally sophisticated and empathic; having complex social relationships; and being able to work cooperatively. Once personhood is acknowledged, there are certain moral or inherent rights that follow. If we reflect on the inherent rights of personhood, we can begin to see that, if entities in the other kingdoms are acknowledged as nonhuman persons, there would be definite changes needed not only in our attitudes and actions but also how we express goodwill to these nonhuman persons.

Goodwill Toward the Earth

In esoteric terms, we know that “the Planetary Logos, the One in Whom we live and move and have our being, is the informing, ensouling life of this planet, the Earth. It is Its life that integrates the planet as a whole, and Its life that pours through all forms – great or small – that, in their aggregate, constitute the planetary form.”¹⁰ Further, scientists have demonstrated that the planet Earth “behaves as a single, self-regulating system”¹¹ with the negative consequences of environmental degradation of the biosphere and loss of biodiversity becoming more obvious. In terms of expressing goodwill, it is important to remember that all parts of the biosphere that we call the Earth are inhabited by living organisms, and that both Earth itself and many of the entities living within it meet the criteria of personhood.

In recognition that what we call “nature” is in fact an interrelated series of living ecosystems, Ecuador amended its Constitution to assert the inalienable rights of ecosystems, giving people the right to petition on their behalf.¹² In 2010, Bolivia passed the Law of the Rights of Mother Earth, which includes the right of the Earth to not be polluted, to continue vital cycles unaltered, to be free of genetic alteration, and to be free of imbalance from mega-infrastructure and development projects.¹³ The United Nations is formally considering adopting a Universal Declaration of Rights for Mother Earth,¹⁴ modeled on the Bolivian law. In addition, it is considering the enshrining of ecocide (any large-scale destruction of the natural environment or over-consumption of critical non-renewable resources) as an international crime against peace.¹⁵ In September 2012, New Zealand declared the Whangangui River an “integrated, living entity” with legal personhood status.¹⁶

From the above initiatives we can see the beginning of a shift away from protection of the biosphere in order to ensure abundance for ourselves and toward respect for the environment and its components as living entities in their own right.

Goodwill Toward the Animal Kingdom

We are told that “[domesticated] animals are to their own kingdom what the New Group of World Servers is to humanity. The New Group of World Servers is the linking bridge and the mode of communication between the Hierarchy (the fifth kingdom) and Humanity (the fourth kingdom) under the present divine Plan; the domesticated animals fulfill, therefore, an analogous function between Humanity (the fourth kingdom) and the animal kingdom (the third).”¹⁷

The Great Ape Project, begun in 1994, was the first to address the issue of legal rights and legal standing or personhood for our closest genetic relatives, the Great Apes (chimpanzees, bonobos, gorillas, and orangutans). It launched the World Declaration on Great Primates that espouses the right to life, the right to individual freedom including protection from commercial exploitation or trading, and a prohibition of torture (including testing in research labs).¹⁸

In 1999, New Zealand granted basic rights to great apes, making their use in research, testing or teaching illegal. In 2007, the Balearic Islands granted legal personhood rights to all great apes. Meanwhile Switzerland had amended its constitution in 1992 to recognize animals as *beings* rather than as *things* and added a law on respectful treatment of animals.¹⁹ Germany followed in 2002 with a constitutional amendment guaranteeing rights to animals.

The next species to garner attention was the cetaceans (whales and dolphins). Based on scientific evidence that cetaceans are extremely intelligent, insightful and self-aware, capable of a wide range of emotions, compassionate and altruistic, creative with problem solving ability, and cooperative both within and between species, scientists issued a Declaration of Rights for Cetaceans in 2010.²⁰ Elephants are equally as intelligent as cetaceans and are insightful, self-aware, capable of a range of emotions, compassionate, altruistic, able to use tools and create art, and are organized in a closely knit matriarchal society; however, they have not yet received formal advocacy as nonhuman persons.

As scientists shift away from imposing human assumptions on animals and instead study how they interact amongst themselves in their own environment, we are realizing that we have grossly underestimated both the scope and the scale of animal intelligence.²¹

Goodwill Toward the Vegetable Kingdom

While we may have experience in thinking about mammals like whales or elephants as being intelligent and highly social, we are less likely to view the vegetable kingdom in that manner. In fact, we use the term “vegetative state” to denote a lack of awareness or consciousness. If we think beyond our own use of plant life, we can recognize that “the vegetable kingdom is the transmitter and the transformer of the vital pranic fluid to the other forms of life on our planet. That is its divine and unique function.”²² In esoteric terms, “the angels and devas are to the vegetable kingdom what the spiritual Hierarchy is to humanity.”²³

In the tabulation of kingdoms, “the vegetable kingdom is the expression of three rays, whereas the others are expressions of two. Through these three, the vegetable kingdom has been brought to its present condition of supreme beauty and its developed symbolism of color. The vegetable kingdom is the outstanding contribution of our Earth to the general solar plan. Each of the planets contributes a unique and specialized quota to the sum total of evolutionary products, and the unique production of our particular planetary system is the vegetable kingdom ... and this is possible because it is the only Kingdom in which three rays have finally succeeded in coalescing, fusing and blending. They are also the three rays along a major line of forces, 2-4-6.... Its success is demonstrated in the uniformity of its production of green in the realm of color, throughout the entire planet.”²⁴

Science is demonstrating through studies of plant neurobiology that many plants are autonomous, able to differentiate between self and non-self, capable of complex and adaptive behaviors, able to communicate and warn other plants of danger, and are able to enlist allies to aid them. Many forms of plant life, including trees and forests, are entitled to be treated with dignity because they are sensing, highly social organisms that communicate extensively, interact with their surroundings, learn from experience, are able to integrate diverse sources of information and act accordingly, and can distinguish between self and not-self and between kin and non-kin.²⁵

We are only recently appreciating the complex social development of plants and have not yet had public discussions about the implications of practices we impose on this kingdom (e.g., forest clear cutting, genetic modification) in the context of viewing plants as “nonhuman persons.” So far Switzerland is the only country

that has created a Bill of Rights for Plants, which states that “living organisms should be considered morally for their own sake because they are alive.”²⁶

Goodwill Toward the Mineral Kingdom

In esoteric teachings, we are reminded that “the mineral kingdom is ... the most concrete expression of the dual unity of power and order. It constitutes the ‘foundation’ of the ordered physical structure or the universe of our planet.”²⁷ In understanding the spiritual development of the mineral kingdom, “there are three stages in the evolutionary processes [that] are the correspondences in the mineral kingdom to the stages of animal consciousness, of self-consciousness, and of the radiant group consciousness of the soul. There is a fourth stage of potency or of organized expressed power, but this lies ahead and is the analogy in this kingdom to the life of the Monad.”²⁸

Further, “fire, intense heat, and pressure ... have already succeeded in bringing about the divisions of the mineral kingdom into three parts: the baser metals, as they are called, the standard metals (such as silver and gold and platinum), and the semi-precious stones and crystals. The precious jewels are a synthesis of all three – one of the basic syntheses of evolution. In this connection, [there are] some correspondences between the mineral kingdom and the human evolutionary cycles.”²⁹

It is probably with the mineral kingdom that we, as humans, feel the least affinity, although we are increasingly appreciative of the energetic communication of crystals and other gem stones. We may not have thought through the implications of the fact that “the mineral kingdom and the kingdom of solar lives (the first and seventh kingdoms) are [both] the result of the activity of the first and the seventh rays.... These two kingdoms are at the point of the greatest tenuity and the greatest density, and are produced by the will and the organizing ability of the solar Deity. They embody the nebulous plan and the concretized plan.”³⁰

Bolivia has been the first nation to legally protect the inherent worth of minerals, calling them “blessings.” To date, we have little experience in appreciating the mineral kingdom for its own esoteric role and contribution rather than as resources for human use and exploitation. Ordinances on the rights of nature are now in place in over thirty U.S. municipalities, including Pittsburgh.³¹ However, the discussions about the negative impact of processes like fracking or tar sands oil extraction are being framed primarily in terms of impact on humans rather than on the mineral kingdom itself.

Broadening Our Focus of Goodwill

If we include the Earth and the other kingdoms in our loving determination to bring about right relations, then we have the responsibility to change our assumptions and how we act. We can start with a modification of the Tibetan’s definition of goodwill as being “goodness of heart, kindness in action, consideration for others, and mass action to promote [the] welfare of [all beings, human and nonhuman].”³²

One component of this change is to reflect on the implications of hylozoism and the fact that we are all equally important parts of the One Life. The animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms are not subordinate to us – they are not lesser beings aspiring to human status. Rather, they are entities profoundly affected by the choices we make. “When aspirants pray in the new Invocation: ‘Let Light descend on Earth’ they are invoking something that humanity will have to learn to handle.... All these planetary developments are attended by risks, and none more so than that of the absorption of light – on a world-wide scale – by humanity, with a subsequent reflex action on the three subhuman kingdoms. Nothing that affects humanity or that stimulates it to a forward-moving activity is without its inevitable effect upon the three lower kingdoms in nature. Forget not! Humanity is the macrocosm to this threefold lower microcosm.”³³

Another component is to remember the Tibetan’s admonition that goodwill needs to be “active in expression and *in tangible deed* upon the physical plane.”³⁴ How do we act on this shift in consciousness? Perhaps we could begin by reflecting on the implications of the following inalienable and fundamental rights of all beings, human and nonhuman:

1. To exist, persist, maintain, regenerate and flourish within their usual environment or community free from imposed disruptions.

2. To be treated with respect as distinct, self-regulating and interrelated beings.
3. To live free from torture, cruel treatment, or servitude.
4. To have clean water as a source of life, clean air, and an absence of contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste.

We, the New Group of World Servers, have the responsibility to channel and direct the energy of the Will-to-Good so that all living entities experience that sense of being appreciated and respected.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology I* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1936), 149.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1934), 360.

³ *Esoteric Psychology I*, 267.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1950), 80.

⁵ *Ibid*, 78.

⁶ See <http://earthjuris.org/about/>.

⁷ See <http://www.nonhumanrightsproject.org/>.

⁸ See <http://www.wildlawuk.org/index.html>.

⁹ See <http://therightsofnature.org/>.

¹⁰ *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*, 182-183.

¹¹ See the 2001 Amsterdam Declaration on Global Change, signed by 1,500 scientists from over 100 countries (<http://www.essp.org/index.php?id=41>).

¹² Christina L. Madden, "Laws Gone Wild in Ecuador: Indigenous People and Ecosystems Gain Rights," *Policy Innovations*, 2 October 2008 (<http://www.policyinnovations.org/ideas/briefings/data/000077>).

¹³ Cecilia Jamasmie, "New Bolivian Law Poses Serious Challenges for Mining Companies," *Mining.com*, 29 October 2012 (<http://www.mining.com/new-bolivian-law-poses-serious-challenges-for-mining-companies-34199/>).

¹⁴ See the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth introduced at the United Nations in April 2010 (<http://climateandcapitalism.com/2010/04/27/universal-declaration-of-the-rights-of-mother-earth/>); Thalif Deen, "Global Campaign to Bestow Legal Rights on Mother Earth," 24 May 2011 (<https://www.commondreams.org/headline/2011/05/24-7>).

¹⁵ Juliette Jowit, "British Campaigner Urges UN to Accept 'Ecocide' as International Crime," *The Guardian*, 9 April 2010 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/apr/09/ecocide-crime-genocide-un-environmental-damage>); Polly Higgins, "Ecocide Was to Be the 5th Crime Against Peace," *Common Ground*, August 2011 (<http://commonground.ca/2012/08/ecocide-crime-against-peace/>).

¹⁶ "New Zealand's Whanganui River Gets Personhood Status," *Environmental News Service*, 13 September 2012 (<http://ens-newswire.com/2012/09/13/new-zealands-whanganui-river-gets-personhood-status/>).

¹⁷ *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*, 68.

¹⁸ See the World Declaration on Great Primates at <http://www.greatapeproject.org/en-US/oprojetogap/Declaracao/declaracao-mundial-dos-grandes-primatas>.

¹⁹ Swiss Federal Ethics Committee for Non-Human Biotechnology, *The Dignity of Animals*, February 2001 (http://www.ekah.admin.ch/fileadmin/ekah-dateien/dokumentation/publikationen/EKAH_Wuerde_des_Tieres_10.08_e_EV3.pdf). Leo Hickman, "The Lawyer Who Defends Animals," *The Guardian*, 05 March 2010 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/mar/05/lawyer-who-defends-animals>); "Life Looks Up for Swiss Animals," 23 April 2008, *Swissinfo.ch*, (http://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/Home/Archive/Life_looks_up_for_Swiss_animals.html?cid=6608378).

²⁰ See the Declaration of the Rights of Cetaceans: Whales and Dolphins, agreed in Helsinki on 22 May 2010 (<http://www.cetaceanrights.org>)

²¹ See Frans De Waal, "The Brains of the Animal Kingdom," *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 March 2013; Christine Dell'Amore, "Black Bears Can 'Count' as Well as Primates," *National Geographic Daily News*, 29 August 2012 (<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2012/08/120829-black-bears-cognition-animals-science/>).

²² *Esoteric Psychology I*, 241.

²³ *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*, 79.

²⁴ *Esoteric Psychology I*, 217.

²⁵ Swiss Federal Ethics Committee for Non-Human Biotechnology, *The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants: Moral Consideration of Plants for Their Own Sake*, April 2008.

(<http://www.ekah.admin.ch/en/documentation/publications/index.html>); Carol Kaesuk Yoon, "Loyal to Its Roots," *The New York Times*, 10 June 2008; research at the International Laboratory of Plant Neurobiology (LINV) in Italy; Nicole Martinelli, "Smarty Plants: Inside the World's Only Plant-Intelligence Lab," *The New Yorker*, 30 October 2007; Florian Koechlin, "The Dignity of Plants," *Plant Signaling & Behavior*, January 2009, 4(1):78-79; Jane Christmas, "Plants Recognize Their Siblings, Biologists Discover," *Daily News* (<http://dailynews.mcmasters.ca/article/plants-recognize-their-siblings-biologists-discover/>).

²⁶ Swiss Federal Ethics Committee for Non-Human Biotechnology, *The Dignity of Living Beings with Regard to Plants*.

²⁷ *Esoteric Psychology I*, 228.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 224.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 229-230.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 217-218.

³¹ Mari Margil and Ben Price, "Pittsburgh Bans Natural Gas Drilling," *Yes! Magazine*, 16 November 2010 (<http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/pittsburgh-bans-natural-gas-drilling>); Amy Goodman with Denis Moynihan, "Get the Frack Out of Our Water: Shale-Shocked Citizens Fight Back," *Democracy Now!* 20 September 2012 (http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2012/9/20/shale_shocked_citizens_fight_back).

³² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1953), 667.

³³ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, II* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 327.

³⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 280.