

Goodwill and Group Harmlessness

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The Festival of Goodwill that takes place every year during the full moon of Gemini represents a time of intense spiritual work. Gemini, the celestial twins, is a dual sign, and this duality is clearly expressed in the keynotes of this festival. On the one hand, this is the *Festival of Humanity*, a time when we recognize and celebrate the beauty, the good and the truth in human nature. We affirm our intention to foster right human relations and to evoke goodwill from those around us. On the other hand, this is the *Festival of the Christ*, the archetype of the divine in us, the Cosmic Seed that is rooted in our heart, impelling us to move ever forward on the Path. Thus we also celebrate humanity's impetus toward the full expression of our divine nature, aspiring to approach the divine, "seeking conformity to the divine will,"¹ and dedicating ourselves to the expression of goodwill in action.

This is, therefore, "a festival of deep invocation and appeal"; it expresses "a basic aspiration toward fellowship and for human and spiritual unity."² In addition, this is a festival of group service. There is a strong link between this festival and the work carried out by the New Group of World Servers as an intermediary between Humanity and the Hierarchy. The New Group of World Servers is responsible for presenting humanity's appeal to the Hierarchy, receiving the spiritual energies evoked as a result of such an appeal, harnessing them, and finally stepping them down in distribution to the human family and the other kingdoms of nature. As this year's Wesak Festival talk pointed out, learning to step down the impact of the Will energy on Earth is clearly a challenge and an ongoing task for us. It is also an essential effort worth carrying forward through the synthetic activity of all spiritual groups serving worldwide, which could have important consequences for the future of our planet as some of the recent happenings in the world seem to be indicating.

As time progresses, the impact of the Shamballa force will be more frequent because human beings will develop the power to stand and withstand it. Hitherto it has been too dangerous an energy to apply to humanity, for the results have worked out destructively.... Its work has, therefore, been confined almost entirely to the Spiritual Hierarchy Whose Members are equipped to handle it and to assimilate it correctly and also to use it for the benefit of humanity. Now the experiment is being attempted of permitting humanity to receive it and its impact, free from the mediation of the Spiritual Hierarchy.... Humanity is responding unexpectedly well. There has been much success along this line but the results do not appear with clarity to intelligent human beings because they refuse to see anything except the destructive aspect and the disappearance of the forms to which they have hitherto anchored their emotions, their desire, and their mental perceptions. They fail, as yet, to see the irrefutable evidence of constructive activity and of true creative work. The temple of humanity in the New Age is rising rapidly but its outlines cannot be seen because people are occupied entirely with their individual or national selfish point of view and with their personal or national instincts and impulses.³

The link between this Goodwill Festival and taking responsibility for world service is thus evident, particularly when we consider that the great Avatar known as the Christ is both the Leader of the New Group of World Servers⁴ and the Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy.

We also celebrate the full moon in Gemini as World Invocation Day, a name that signals the climax of the whole invocation-evocation process carried forward throughout the three Linked Festivals:

Three times a year – at the April, May and June Festivals – there is a united hierarchical meditation led by the Christ; these Festivals are invocative of Shamballa or of that which lies beyond the Nirmanakayas and can only be safely carried forward in united meditation, under

directed guidance and the highest possible inspiration. Each Ashram can approach the Nirmanakayas as a group at stated periods for which due preparation is made; only the entire group of Ashrams, the Hierarchy as a whole, can approach Shamballa. The New Group [of World Servers] is invocative to the Hierarchy for purposes of impression and can be impressed by any Ashram through its disciples in that group; thus the great chain of contact and the great channel for the inflow of spiritual energy reaches from Shamballa to humanity.... All this is accomplished through meditation, through invocation and evocation, carried forward in the spirit of worship, which is the fundamental method of spiritual recognition. Thus, creatively, the glory that is hidden in every form is evoked and slowly brought to exoteric manifestation⁵.

Seen in this context, the Aries, Taurus and Gemini full moons are woven into a continuum of great spiritual significance. Rather than being separate festivals, they are three main points of tension within an invocative and evocative planetary endeavor in which the whole spiritual community can engage. Through this arc of spiritual activity, Shamballa energy is contacted, stepped down, qualified, and applied in group service for the greater good. Our individual participation is part of the group approach, and our group work finds its place within the united effort of the One Group, the group of world servers that are learning how to constructively direct spiritual energy toward initiatives that expand and root the spirit of goodwill everywhere on Earth.

As part of the hierarchical network, spiritual groups that are made up of “disciples and initiates at all points of evolutionary development and of all grades and degrees”⁶ can utilize the Festival of Goodwill as an opportunity to work together toward the harmlessness that will bring about evolutionary planetary changes. Harmlessness is the foundation of goodwill, and “the practice of harmlessness can evoke goodwill from others.”⁷ The constant practice of harmlessness “involves harmlessness in speech and also in thought and consequently in action”; it is a positive harmlessness, “involving constant activity and watchfulness,”⁸ not a negative or indiscriminate tolerance.

Harmlessness, Goodwill and Group Service

Learning to work with spiritual energy harmlessly is an essential component of esoteric service. Harmlessness, the Ageless Wisdom teaches, is a state of mind that in no way negates dynamic action and is concerned with the energies animating our resolutions. As we tread the Path, we learn to recognize the qualities and effects of different energies, some of which are of immense power. The most powerful of these energies is Will energy, abundantly available during the Three Linked Festivals. Regarding the three main expressions of the Will, the *Will-to-Be*, the *Will-to-Good* and the *Will-to-Know*,⁹ it is the *Will-to-Good* that we are learning to work with predominantly during this time.

The Will-to-Good is the basic quality of divine purpose, involving planned activity and a definite goal to be achieved. It necessitates the ability to think in terms of the whole, an appreciation of the next step that humanity must take in the imminent Great Approach (for this must be a reciprocal Approach), an understanding of the lessons of the past, and a vision based not on love or on Soul-sight but on a conviction as to the immediate purpose of Sanat Kumara, as It works it out through the Christ and the planetary Hierarchy. This conviction is based, as far as the Hierarchy is concerned, on pure reason; it is based, as far as humanity is concerned, through its disciples, on intuitive perception, implemented by love and expressed intelligently. Upon this I would ask you to ponder, and as you ponder, make the needed changes in your personal approach to the problem.¹⁰

This aspect of the Will expresses at the human level as goodwill, which flowers as loving understanding on Earth. “Esoterically speaking, the work of the Hierarchy is to focus the divine Will-to-Good as it affects humanity. The work of spiritually minded individuals is to evoke that Will-to-Good on Earth through as full an expression as possible of goodwill.”¹¹

We can learn to operate as a channel for the Will-to-Good which, stepped down to the world as goodwill, leads to right human relations. “It is absolutely essential that the Will-to-Good be unfolded by the disciples of the world,”¹² so that goodwill can be generated by humanity. “As the purpose of the divine Will (known and

understood in the Council Chamber of Shamballa) seeks to influence human will, it is [expressed] in hierarchical terms as the Will-to-Good and in human terms as *goodwill*, as *loving determination or as a fixed intention to bring about right human relations*.”¹³ There are three ways that we can begin to unfold the Will-to-Good, and ultimately right human relations, in our esoteric group service:

First, we can develop our ability to identify with the Observer or the One Self by monitoring the motives behind our thoughts, words and deeds. The ability to identify with the higher point of consciousness, the Self or Observer or Soul, is of paramount importance to avoid harm. Clearly, identification with the Higher Self or Soul is something to pursue both as individuals and as groups – i.e., identification with the Group Soul, Its purpose and service. The final injunction in the Mantra of the New Group of World Servers provides a clear indication of this: “May I fulfill my part in the One Work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech.” Our part is rightly fulfilled when the underlying motive of our inner and outer actions is that of loving understanding, not that of imposing our personal agenda. Taking into consideration that goodwill is the lowest aspect of the divine love¹⁴, no action that is based on goodwill, or love esoterically understood, can be harmful; however, any action founded on the desire for personal power or ambition ends up being separative and harmful, not only for our group but for the whole human family. Since esoteric work renders the human mind particularly sensitive to all three aspects of Will energy, we need to exercise extreme caution and impersonality, focusing our mind on the development and expression of goodwill. The practice of harmlessness is inseparable from the mastery of the lower self; it implies a positive attitude, a high point of integration, and the application of the loving will:

The practice of [harmlessness] must be inspired by the motive of intelligent love, which also means dedication to the acquisition and demonstration of truth. To express spiritual harmlessness in the most adverse circumstances requires the Soul strength and the absolute fearlessness that come only with great love and the spirit of wise self-sacrifice.... Unlike hatred, which attacks, destroys, and seeks death, love protects, creates, and seeks life. The [harmless] person carries out the deep-rooted *will* in everyone to live, to extend relationships; and expresses the love force by which this may be accomplished.¹⁵

Second, we can focus on understanding others. “What we do not understand we naturally depreciate and condemn, and from this critical and negative attitude prejudice, antagonism and even hate easily arise. This occurs among individuals, among nations, among races and even among those who, professing to be religious and spiritual ... should more than others exemplify love and brotherhood.”¹⁶ By contrast, harmlessness leads to the spiritual expression of the Soul in everyday life; it “springs from true understanding.... It emanates from a capacity to enter into the consciousness and to penetrate into the realization of [a person], and when this has been accomplished all is forgiven and all is lost sight of in the desire to aid and to help.”¹⁷ In group and inter-group work, this understanding implies the absence of criticism and the cultivation of serenity. Many times we make the mistake of forcing issues without due attention to the time needed for inner processes to unfold, or we come to incorrect conclusions based on the glamour of unfounded criticism. A healthy remedy is to observe with detachment and cultivate the art of silence that trusts and grants psychic space to others and to the happenings of the time, leaving our group companions free to serve as they feel is appropriate.

This last consideration invites us to ponder on a third and last characteristic that can help unfold harmless group dynamics: We can acknowledge that groups work under specific mandates and that this uniqueness is a strength, not a weakness, of the whole network of group servers. Sociological research has established that many times we apply a double standard regarding love or goodwill. We may feel intensely loving in regard to the *in-group* (those we identify with), while feeling little love or even hatred toward anyone outside our own little universe. Clearly, the application of love, in these cases, is very limited.¹⁸ A harmless approach to group love or goodwill implies a universalistic mind that is open to the other, respecting and appreciating the contribution each group and member can make to the One Work. Openness is an important characteristic if we are interested in fostering inter-group engagement and right human relations. While inter-group dialogue and broaching sensitive matters might be perceived as a risk to the group project, there is enough empirical evidence to suggest that dialogue leads to harmony, deepens our sense of identity and purpose, and builds long-term alliances.¹⁹

The Results of Learning to Unfold the Will-to-Good

So far we have examined some dynamics characteristic of the process of invocation and group work that are preparatory to the right application of the Will-to-Good to evoke goodwill. Once the Three Linked Festivals have ended, our task is to maintain our focus on group world service so that the energy contacted during the Festivals is dispensed during the remainder of the spiritual year. As the last stanza of the Great Invocation suggests, once light and love (i.e., goodwill) have opened the Way, it is now *the center that we call the human race* that has the opportunity to facilitate the working out of the Plan of Love and Light. Our aim becomes that of directing this energy toward ends and initiatives that will evoke goodwill and the ongoing development of right relations among human beings and between humanity and the other kingdoms on Earth.

In pondering the derivative effects of the Will-to-Good, we need to keep in mind the importance of nurturing effective group collaborations among all the groups of world servers acting in the world, for the enterprise before us requires the synthesis of the strength, qualities and dedication of us all. It is this united, co-creative, collaborative inter-group endeavor that can contain and direct the energy that the Spiritual Hierarchy is ready to release. Such endeavor originates at Soul level – the Soul being Group Conscious – and it will spontaneously manifest outwardly as the inner union is cultivated, thanks to harmlessness.

At the time of the June Full Moon, the Spiritual Hierarchy, under the guidance of the Christ, will let loose this Will-to-Good upon humanity, producing seven great results...:

1. Power will be given to the disciples of the world and the initiates ... so that they can direct efficiently and wisely the coming process of rebuilding.
2. The will-to-love will stimulate the people of goodwill everywhere so that hatred will gradually be overcome and people will seek to live together cooperatively.
3. The will-to-action will lead intelligent people throughout the world to inaugurate those activities that will lay the foundation for a new, better and happier world.
4. The will-to-cooperate will steadily increase also. Humanity will desire and demand right human relations....
5. The will-to-know and to think correctly and creatively will become an outstanding characteristic of the masses. Knowledge is the first step toward wisdom.
6. The will-to-persist ... will become a human characteristic – a sublimation of the basic instinct of self-preservation. This will lead to a persistent belief in the ideals presented by the Hierarchy, and the demonstration of immortality.
7. The will-to-organize will further a building process that will be carried forward under the direct inspiration of the Spiritual Hierarchy. The medium will be the potency of the Will-to-Good of the New Group of World Servers and the responsive goodwill of humankind.”²⁰

Let us develop the ability to harness the spiritual energies and direct them purposefully and constructively toward a dedicated goal in a spirit of group love and comprehension.

So let it be and help us do our part.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Problems of Humanity* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1946), 164.

² *Ibid.*

³ Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1949), 18-19.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1948), 46.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1955), 217-218.

⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1960), 346.

⁷ Assagioli, R. et al. *The Principle of Goodwill*. In *Meditation Group for the New Age, Second Year, Set II* (Ojai, CA, Meditation Mount), 14.

⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1934), 490.

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- ⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1950), 182.
- ¹⁰ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, 47.
- ¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 396.
- ¹² Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 110.
- ¹³ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, 172-173.
- ¹⁴ Bailey, *Problems of Humanity*, 164.
- ¹⁵ Simon Roof, *Journeys on the Razor-Edged Path* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007), 123-125.
- ¹⁶ Roberto Assagioli, *Loving Understanding*. In *Il Loto*, VI, No. 1, 11-160 (Rome: Theosophical Publishing, July 1934).
- ¹⁷ Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 318.
- ¹⁸ Pitirim Sorokin, *The Ways and Power of Love* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation, 2002)
- ¹⁹ Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda, *Breaking Barriers, Crossing Borders, Building Bridges: Communication Processes in Intergroup Dialogues*. In *Journal of Social Issues*, 2006, 62 (3):553-576.
- ²⁰ Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 440-441.