

## Goodwill and the Resolution of Dualities

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At the Festival of Goodwill each year we are called to examine the quality of our interactive energy – how we relate to each other. A basic challenge in our universe is how to move from apparent dualities to perceiving and acting on underlying unity. “The mode or method of development for humanity is self-expression and self-realization. When this process is consummated, the self-expressed is the One Self or the Ray Life; and the realization achieved is the revelation of God as the quality of the manifested world and as the Life behind appearance and quality. The seven Ray Lives, or the seven Soul types, are seen as the expression of One Life, and diversity is lost in the vision of the One and in identification with the One.”<sup>1</sup>

Goodwill is fundamentally our demonstration of the will-to-good in daily service. Underlying goodwill is the ability to choose wisely because it is through our choices that change occurs. While we often talk about service as being how we demonstrate love, in actuality it is our arena for practice in making choices, experiencing their consequences, and evaluating whether or not to make the same choice in the future. As we reflect on how we are or are not evoking right human relations in our daily lives, there are three types of choices facing us: the choice to remember, the choice of compassion, and the choice of the broader perspective.

### *The Choice to Remember*

The illusion of duality stems from the belief that we are separate and distinct from one another. This belief allows us to operate from the “we-them” mentality that underlies the cleavages we need to heal. We reinforce this illusion every time we indulge in the simplicity of either/or thinking rather than accepting the complexity of a continuum of alternatives.

In reality we are all unique manifestations of the One Life or the cosmic energy field. We come into manifestation in order to learn how to be simultaneously particular and universal. Our uniqueness allows us to provide the One Life with experiences and perspectives not otherwise available. Our challenge is remembering that we are *already* divine. We are not here to learn to become Souls or to ascend to a divine state. We are here to learn to express our divinity and connectedness while in physical manifestation. That is the true meaning of integration – being able to hold the awareness of unity while experiencing differences in perspective.

The shift from seeing ourselves (and others) as flawed or sinful beings who need to become spiritual to remembering our divinity and that of others is critical to our ability to express and evoke goodwill. As Teilhard de Chardin pointed out: “We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.” As we learn to sustain this perspective, we can recognize in ourselves and others that we are all experimenting more or less successfully with what it means to be human.

Our choice to remember our interconnectedness means that we move from a focus on differences to a focus on commonalities. We move from being motivated by fear, or a lack of trust in the Plan, to living through joy, which is the basic energy of our universe.

We can practice this choice of remembering by imposing the discipline on ourselves of always finding a third (and fourth and fifth) alternative when we hear ourselves or others talk as though there were only two options.

### *The Choice of Compassion*

The Tibetan has warned us repeatedly against the criticism of others: “Relinquish or sacrifice the age-old tendency to criticize and adjust another’s work,... the sense of responsibility for the actions of others, and ... the pride of mind which sees its way and its interpretations to be correct and true, and others false and wrong. This is the way of separation.”<sup>2</sup>

For each of us, the Soul has chosen a particular form of limitation of expression to work within in this lifetime in order to achieve a particular purpose. We really have no idea what the Soul’s purpose is for another’s life and what they are dealing with. In any case, we have our hands full with our own lives! Instead, we are encouraged to reach out to each other with dispassionate compassion and to remember that we are all learning through trial and error. There is not a dualism of right/wrong but rather a context of experimentation. One approach that can help us achieve this awareness is to separate the action from the individual. An example is the focus of MADD – notice that this organization is Mothers Against Drunk Driving, not Mothers Against Drunk Drivers.

Being willing to set aside the simplicity of hate for the complexity of love and compassion is a true challenge, and it is vital to the resolution of duality and the expression of goodwill. “Hate causes separation, whereas love reveals the unity underlying all forms. Hate is the result of concentration upon form and of a forgetfulness of that which every form (in more or less degree) reveals.... Hate negates unity, causes barriers to be built, and produces those causes that lead to crystallization, destruction, and death. It is energy used to repudiate instead of to synthesize and therefore runs counter to the law of evolution.”<sup>3</sup> How we behave towards others is intimately related to how we treat ourselves. When we are reminded to “love our neighbor as ourselves,” the true challenge is whether we love ourselves as manifestations of the One Life.

The shift from criticism and hatred to compassion and an acceptance of underlying unity involves the ability to forgive. “The word ‘forgiveness’ is a curious and unusual one and signifies (according to the best derivative sources) simply ‘to give for.’ Forgiveness is *not*, therefore, a synonym for pardon, though the word has been distorted in theological circles to mean this, so little has the Church understood the basic motivating power behind divine expression in our solar system. Theologians ever think in terms of the human mind and not in terms of the divine mind. Forgiveness is sacrifice and is the *giving up* of one’s self, even of one’s very life, for the sake of others and for the good of the whole group.”<sup>4</sup> Again we are called to forgive both others and ourselves.

In remembering that we are all part of the One Life, we also need to remember that we are each unique. Unity does not imply that we become identical. We each have our own experiences, our own perspectives, our own contributions to make, and our own priorities. We need to be able to disagree with each other while maintaining a genuine curiosity about the other’s point of view, based on an ability not to personalize.

We can practice this choice of compassion by selecting others with whom we disagree and naming three positives about their position, or by selecting persons who we see as being quite different from ourselves and then identifying three ways in which we are similar.

### *The Choice of the Broader Perspective*

One of the ways that we stay mired in dualistic thinking of right/wrong, good/bad is to perceive situations only in the present or immediate future and only from our own personal perspective. When we focus too narrowly on current events, we can become discouraged and reinforce fearful, divisive energy. If we can step back and take a broader view, we can see that humanity is making progress. We have evolved during recorded history from assuming that slavery and the entitlement of the wealthy is a given to a commitment to respect the individual, from assuming that “might is right” to placing limits on aggression, from a revenge-and-punishment mentality toward a reconciliation focus, from viewing the non-human kingdoms as being provided for human exploitation to beginning to understand our

mutual interdependence. We have seen in the past ten years an enormous shift in openness to spiritual development.

The focus on a broader perspective applies also to life purpose. “All incarnations on the physical plane are not of equal importance, but some are of more moment than others; some, from the point of view of the Ego, are practically negligible, others count; some are to the evolving human Spirit of importance analogous to the incarnation of a Planetary Logos in a globe, or through a root-race, whilst others are as relatively unimportant as the manifestation of a branch-race is to a Planetary Logos.”<sup>5</sup>

This shift in perspective is key to finding super-ordinate constructs that help in the synthesis of apparent opposites. Some cultures facilitate this shift through an emphasis on the impact of decisions on seven human generations to come. We can also achieve a similar shift in perspective by recognizing that Earth is only a small part of our solar system, which in turn is one of over 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, which is only one of billions of galaxies in the observable universe.

We can practice this choice of the broader perspective by taking an event that upsets us and asking ourselves which of the various responses would make a difference in ten years.

So as we celebrate this Festival of Goodwill together, let us strengthen our ability to evoke goodwill here on Earth by choosing to remember that we are all unique parts of the One Life, to act from dispassionate compassion and release attachment to “being right,” and to understand our daily lives in a broader evolutionary perspective that allows us to move toward the unity of synthesis.



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<sup>1</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 1* (New York: Lucis, Publishing, 1936), 142-143.

<sup>2</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis, Publishing, 1942), 108.

<sup>3</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Light of the Soul* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1927), 136.

<sup>4</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 165.

<sup>5</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1925), 303.