

Forging a Vision in a Time of Transition

John Cobb

During this time of potent change, many people are fearful as to what might happen, and they tend to see in all the challenges besetting the world a retrograde movement. But looking at the world through the lens of fear reveals only the superficial happenings. The Tibetan had something to say about this in the late 1940s, and his words are just as applicable today as they were then.

See you not the beauty of the Plan and its synthesizing culminating usefulness? See you not how the present crisis only indicates the success of previous evolutionary cycles, cycles wherein humanity mastered certain lessons? All the post-war planning, the widespread reaction to ideals and the seeming turmoil reaching out throughout all levels of human consciousness, plus the inspiration of disaster and suffering are blasting open hitherto sealed areas in the minds of people, letting in illumination, sweeping away the bad old conditions. (“The Rays and the Initiations,” p. 237)

This encouraging counsel is timely also in that it carries the note of the Life Aspect, that of Will. For at the Wesak Festival the Will of God is the underlying keynote, which means, of course, the divine Purpose that embraces the whole planetary life. This energy is intensified at this time of the year, as aspirants, disciples, initiates, the Christ and the Buddha cooperate to bless humanity once again. The great energy of the Will-to-love will be poured forth over the planet, strengthening the hands of all those who are working to bridge cleavages and to unify. These blended energies of Shamballa and Hierarchy come to us as the Will-to-Good, described by the Tibetan as a complete expression of the love nature of Deity.

The Tibetan’s two questions above – or, rather, one question repeated (“See you not...?”) remind us that we are suffering from limited vision. Swami Beyondananda would probably urge us to go in for an “I” checkup. Instead, many people merely don their old lenses of fear. But as esotericists, our task is to sharpen our “inner vision” so that we can begin to perceive and work with the energies that lie behind the happenings in the world.

So, as spiritual students involved in group work, the question arises: What is our vision?

As members of the School for Esoteric Studies – active students, many of us – I think there should be something specific to the vision that is guiding our work; something that could and should qualify the School and every one of us as members of the group.

Because we are a group that is deeply concerned with humanity’s problems, the vision must surely be something that can be applied also to humanity as a whole, at least as a future ideal if not as an immediate possibility. It may be a distant vision for the masses of humanity, but if we are in earnest as aspirants and disciples, and if the School is a pioneering discipleship school, then the vision should be something that for us is immediate.

When we consider that the Will, the true Spiritual Will – the reflection of the Divine Will – is essentially concerned with the whole and not the separate and separative parts, and when we remember moreover that the love of the Soul, the great love that qualifies the Hierarchy, is the channel for that Will, we begin to see what the vision might be.

Surely it is that of *synthesis*. The Will is concerned with the whole. Love is that which relates; love and Will produce synthesis as the inevitable result.

This unifying, this blending, this trend toward synthesis can be seen everywhere in the world. Indeed, the will-to-unify is at work. On the one hand, in totalitarian groups it expresses more of the First or Will Aspect blended with the third, or intelligence aspect. On the other hand, in the democracies we have a greater admixture of the great Second Aspect of Love.

Without love, as St. Paul tells us, “we have nothing.” With love, we can gain everything. We can safely invoke the Will and infuse with glowing warmth the cold bones of the intellect. Before looking at this question of synthesis and our position in the School for Esoteric Studies, I would like us to think together about this basic need of love, for it is so essential to the success of any vision or any project.

We have seen, and still see, hundreds of plans and projects put forward as the solution for humanity’s troubles. Some continue onward successfully, and some come to naught. What is the difference? Plans that combine love and understanding have a much better chance than those based on coercion or manipulation, and which lack the love element. I think we will find that we can recognize the work of the New Group of World Servers by the balance of the three Aspects. The most prominent element would probably be the Love aspect; it would distinguish immediately the true servers from the mere businessperson. An example that comes to mind is the founder of Grameen Bank, Muhammad Yunus. Throughout his book “Creating a World Without Poverty,” Yunus’s passion for improving the lot of the poorest of the poor, and of eliminating poverty completely from the world, is palpable. The magnetic quality of the Love aspect leaps from the pages.

I think we need to remember that love, the true love as demonstrated by the Christ, is the basic overall vision for the future. If we take any one of the major problems that dominate the media every day, we know that, given love, those problems would never have arisen; or, if we really brought love into the equation, they could be resolved. And this essential factor of love makes possible the great planetary alignment at this annual Wesak Festival, for it is the Christ, the Prince of Peace, the Exponent of love, who cooperates with his great brother, the Buddha, in transmitting the Will of God, the Will to synthesis.

Drawing the individual parallel, in terms of our personal training and School work, it is the Soul-infused person that can tap into and safely carry the Will of the Spiritual Triad. Of course, most of us are only partly Soul infused, and our access to the Spiritual Will is intermittent and as yet not a continuous contact.

But where that is occurring, what does it mean to us, as individuals, and of course as a group?

As we develop a measure of Soul contact we begin to see the group as primary and the interests of the self as secondary. In the Soul’s vision that appears as common sense, since the interests of the self – the ones that matter – are included in the group. The next step is to see beyond one’s own group; that comes through the dual process of meditative, vertical reaching up to the Spiritual Triad, coupled with a horizontal relating, even if only in thought and understanding, with others who belong to other groups, other religions, other political parties, and so on.

As more of us invoke this spiritual Will we will be increasingly concerned with the bigger picture, and the relationship of our group to other groups. Our Will-to-Good will not just flow within our group, but will radiate out, building bridges and aiding other groups as well as our own.

What does it mean if this note of synthesis is qualifying our lives? Does it not mean that in our individual contacts we are swift to find a point of agreement with the other person? If that is the case, perhaps we can then enlarge the lighted point of agreement, resolving first one point of conflict and then another, because we have established our point of synthesis, our unifying center that is our first-found point of agreement.

The founders of SES, back in the 1950s, had a dream – a dream that the School would become a synthesizing agent, a subjective unifying center within the whole esoteric field. They had a dream that every School member, as he or she goes about discipleship service, would also be an agent of synthesis in the home, the community and in the country. Thus the main thing that would qualify and mark an SES student would be the power-to-unify, to construct bridges between people, to attest always to the whole more than to the part.

The vision of synthesis for all of humanity may lie a long way ahead, but if we are true aspirants and true disciples it means that the distant vision is for us an *immediate* possibility, and even a necessity. And why do we speak of SES – our school – in a talk about the Wesak Festival? Because these possibilities that we can strive for and accomplish now are more effectively accomplished on behalf of the group than on behalf of the individual. On behalf of the group our efforts carry us further, and the beneficent effects are spread more widely. And, not least, group consciousness is developed.

As group consciousness is developed in group members, the group Antahkarana is constructed. As the group Antahkarana is constructed, of course the individual Antahkaranas are likewise growing. One of SES's synthesizing efforts – the growing body of talks Alice Bailey gave to students in the 1930s and 1940s, which are posted on the School's website – contains some pointed comments that Mrs. Bailey delivered to those predecessors of today's students. She warned them that they would only begin to make real progress when they stop thinking of themselves as individual esoteric students and instead think of themselves as a group disciple performing global service.

We are still moving toward that goal, but I believe the current generation of students – both aspirants and active disciples – is further along now; we have all benefited from the work of our predecessors and are reaping the fruits of spiritual evolution.

Looking again at the vision of the founders – SES as a synthesizing agent, a unifying center – we note that “synthesizing” carries a First Ray note and “unifying” a Second Ray quality. So the original vision for the School was a properly balanced one in terms of energy, and this may be one reason for the relative longevity of this group and its work.

Let's now take a brief look at how all this relates to the esoteric field as a whole – that serving group that draws its life from the great teaching Ashrams of the Hierarchy.

In the great planetary esoteric training group there must be many unifying centers, such as the Ashrams from which the various outer groups have sprung. These groups have sprung up directly through the action of some world disciple or initiate; or they have grown up indirectly when a world disciple has passed on the teaching to a lesser disciple, who in turn stepped it down for others. Or again, we have lesser aspirants and teachers who have taken one aspect of the teaching and formed a body of belief and a group around one particular aspect of truth.

Many such groups have no direct touch with the Ashrams. Using the individual as a metaphor, it is somewhat like the human soul being totally absorbed in personality interests, having lost touch with the overshadowing Soul, the Solar Angel. Just insofar as the aspirant aspires, meditates and struggles to purify the personality life, and make it one of service to others, so contact is reestablished with the Soul, and integration and fusion, leading to synthesis of the whole person on all planes, takes place.

This can be used as an analogy with each esoteric group. Just insofar as the members seek to rise above themselves and to render service in line with the Plan to their fellow prisoners of the planet, in that degree will lines of light be built back to the Hierarchy and to the Ashram. The nearer they draw to the Ashram, the more inclusive they will become, for the energy of synthesis will be touching them, and they

will take into their thinking the efforts of other groups as well as their own, seeing them as co-sharers in a great planetary endeavor.

The Tibetan's statement that the unselfish individual is very common but that the unselfish group is very rare is related directly to this vision of synthesis. In 1941, when Master DK presented the distant vision of One World, of the synthesis of all humanity, he said

It is a practical vision – long desired, much discussed and clearly outlined. The hindrances appear to be many, but they can all be summed up in the one word selfishness – national, racial, political, religious and individual selfishness.

The practical aspect of the mode of elimination of the hindrances can also be simply stated... The vision will appear as fact on Earth when individuals willingly submerge their personal interests in the good of the group; when the group or groups merge their interests in the national good, when nations give up their selfish purposes and aims for international good, and when this international right relation is based upon the total good of humanity itself.

Thus the individual can play a part in the bigger whole, and the help is needed, and thus the sense of individual futility is negated. To the most unimportant person in the most unimportant national unit there comes the call for sacrifice and service to the group of which that person is part. Eventually humanity itself is thus swung – again as an integral unit – into the service of the Planetary Life. (“The Externalisation of the Hierarchy,” p. 244)

As we participate in the great Wesak Festival, let us remember that the New Group of World Servers is the great synthesizing agent and unifying center for servers everywhere. Above all, let us experience true gratitude. Our responsibility is great, but our privilege and opportunity are greater.

The joy of cooperation with the unfolding Plan is a thing of limitless wonder.