

# Goodwill as an Agent of Change

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The Festival of Goodwill offers us a time each year to focus on what we can do at a practical level to bring about right human relations. Known also as World Invocation Day, it is the culmination of the cycle of the three great spring festivals with all of the associated inpouring energies. On this day, people from many spiritual traditions join together to invoke the energies of light and love from the Hierarchy and Shamballa (however they are named), often using the Great Invocation to do so. At no other time of the year do we have such direct access to the energy of the Will-to-Good (of which goodwill is a reflection). As we participate in this Subjective Group Conference, we are already focused on this great invocative process. So do we have any responsibility other than invocation? What does it mean that “the will to good is the basic quality of divine purpose, involving planned activity and a definite goal to be achieved?”<sup>1</sup>

### *How Do Right Human Relations Develop?*

Developing right human relations involves a change in how we feel, think, and act, which in turn means that we need to do more than meditate and say the Great Invocation. 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.”<sup>2</sup> It is easy to inadvertently slip into viewing our role as simply to serve as a kind of “scheduling prompt” for the Hierarchy – “remember to stop that war, console that widow, heal that child...” Language about the “coming of the Christ” or the “externalization of the Hierarchy” can make it seem like all we have to do is to figuratively keep dialing the “celestial 911” – especially at festival time when the “lines” are fully open – until the “real help” arrives.

But change on this planet is not the Hierarchy’s job – it is ours. We, Humanity, are the “world savior.”<sup>3</sup> Yes, energy flows through the Hierarchy from Shamballa and sources external to our universe – magnificent streams of energy, much more than we need to address our world’s problems. The universe is an abundant system. However, that energy can also overwhelm us if not properly stepped down and focused – which is precisely our job as members of the New Group of World Servers. It is we who have the responsibility to channel and direct that energy so that it makes a positive difference here on Earth. We are not simply passive conduits for impression. If we want to bring about right human relations, we must also take active initiative. It is our job to focus on active service, not remain preoccupied with the inner Hierarchy. We need to receive and relay the available energy with vision and courage, not delay or block the divine flow through inaction.

How we approach the stepping down and focusing of energy is critical. The Piscean model has been one of paternalism – doing to, or doing for, others. In this model, we would see a problem (e.g., hunger in Ethiopia) and then rush to fix it (e.g., ship food to Ethiopia) without examining and addressing the reasons for the problem (e.g., drought from overgrazing). Or we would mandate a ceasefire through the United Nations for a conflict that has deep and complex roots without ensuring a follow-up reconciliation process to engender lasting change. Does this type of paternalistic approach really change anything in the long run? Does it do anything to help ensure that such problems will not reoccur?

Goodwill, as the fixed intention to bring about right human relations, is the catalyst for lasting change if we understand it has the potential for a fundamental shift in how we relate to each other.

Goodwill is the will-to-good in daily service. Goodwill, when expressed as a way of life, promotes human welfare and results in kindness in action, goodness of heart, and consideration for others.

Our task in the years ahead is to help each other freely make the choices that express our sense of collaboration with others. In doing so, we need to shift from reacting out of fear and defensiveness to proactively choosing a “growth of the spirit of understanding and cooperation.” (EXT:366) Einstein once said, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking that we used when we created them.” Goodwill is an excellent example of the different kind of thinking needed.

### *Change Step #1: A Desire for Right Human Relations*

The Tibetan warns us of the dangers that occur if “disciples and world aspirants are ... evading issues or are thinking separatively or nationally or fanatically.” It is not possible for us to bring about change if we “fail to love all persons without exception in our longing to see our own loyalties emerge triumphant”; or we “work doubtingly, hoping for the best but believing in the worst”; or we “feel inwardly quite hopeless and uninspired”; or we “realize that a united front and a spirit of joyous certainty are psychological assets or well-nigh invincible potency, but ... feel unable to arouse within ourselves the slightest enthusiasm.”<sup>4</sup> Any change process begins with intention. We need to examine our own attitudes and beliefs: Do we believe that right human relations are possible? Are we willing to give people credit both for sincerity and for having something to learn, and to help them learn through love and trust?<sup>5</sup>

What is the role of goodwill in creating a desire for change? Goodwill is a basic human attribute<sup>6</sup> that is contagious once it manifests. Change occurs because the desire for change is stronger than the inertia of the status quo. Goodwill is the dynamic that brings with it a longing for harmony and cooperation, a wish to free ourselves from a spirit of hatred and revenge. People become tired of hatred and fighting – there is a kind of fatigue factor – and so they welcome goodwill as an alternative.

We can help evoke goodwill by our invocation of the will-to-good from the Hierarchy, which in turn evokes goodwill from humanity. It needs to be reinforced through positive initiatives. For example, there is an increasing shift from the negative anti-war focus of earlier eras to the more constructive focus of peace building through initiatives like Peacebuilders International<sup>7</sup> or the Peace is the Way Global Community<sup>8</sup> with its emphasis on becoming a critical mass of peace consciousness that can offer creative solutions to resolve conflicts and to address social injustice, ecological imbalance, and economic disparities.

A particularly moving example of goodwill in action was the unique rescue of over 100 horses stranded on a small hillock in the middle of flooded meadows in the Netherlands last November. The horses were finally able to overcome their fear of the deep swirling water and swim to dry land because four women rode out through the water so that their four horses could provide companionship and lead the rest of the horses to safety.<sup>9</sup>

### *Change Step #2: An Awareness of Options*

Change is not possible until we become aware of our current status and our alternatives. “The first step is the wholesome recognition that cleavages exist.... Each person, community and nation should begin with a diagnosis of their own attitude towards goodwill, and then set an example by eliminating cleavages.”<sup>10</sup> We need to remember that only when the lines of cleavage are very apparent so that the issues are clear are we able to heal and build bridges.<sup>11</sup> To help bring about this clarity, there is a group charged with “the task of defining the old truths so that the mind of the race will be clarified, that non-essentials and essentials will be recognized for what they are, and fundamental ideas so contrasted with the formulation of dogmas that that which is basic will be seen and the secondary and unimportant beliefs therefore rejected, for only the basic and causative will be of value in the coming age.”<sup>12</sup> In dealing with this group (who seem so misguided), we will need to strengthen our ability to forgive so that we express not magnanimity, but rather a recognition of common humanity.<sup>13</sup>

Another key element is understanding how to weigh and choose among alternatives, using the free will with which we have been gifted. We need to be able to act “as if” in order to try out different options and see if they will work for us. Our role is to raise questions rather than to dictate answers, to draw attention to problems and, in doing so, help create thoughtforms of solutions.<sup>14</sup> An excellent example of this approach of raising questions is the use of Appreciative Inquiry by the United Religions Initiative<sup>15</sup> in order to “promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.”

Goodwill serves to empower others as it encourages us to emphasize points of common endeavor. One of the approaches that we can use to help bridge differences is to describe different nations or religions as experiments in learning how best to use energy and what is undesirable.

### *Change Step #3: Skillful Practice*

The third and vital step in the changes necessary to bring about right human relations is that of putting goodwill into daily practice. We need an approach of experimentation – a willingness to try new options and learn from mistakes. This requires a willingness to focus on process – on how we are continually moving forward – rather than becoming fixated on achieving a static state of perfection. After all, we already *are* perfect as a part of the One Life. Our purpose here on Earth is to learn from the process of individuation within the Whole and be able to share what we have gained from that experience. As the quote from Celebrating Excellence says, “You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.” In that sense, we are the transcending will, “the Will that sees the entire process from the point of initiation, but which limits Itself to gradual expression on account of the limitations of those aspects of Itself whose consciousness is not that of the Whole.”<sup>16</sup>

As we look around us, we see many examples of the principles of sharing and cooperation and responsibility at work. The recent creation of the Ai-Ais Richtersveld Transfrontier Park, merging national parklands across the border between South Africa and Namibia, is providing an opportunity for local persons in both countries to become involved jointly in parkland management. On the Antarctic continent, scientists from over 50 countries (some whose governments are at war with each other in other parts of the world) share their research data freely, uploading it daily to a world database. Probably the most dramatic initiatives have been the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, a process that began in South Africa but has spread to a range of other countries (e.g., Argentina, Chile, East Timor, El Salvador, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Liberia, Morocco, Panama, Peru, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, and parts of the U.S.).

“The ‘door where evil dwells’ is kept open by humanity through its selfish desire, its hatreds and its separateness, by its greed and its racial and national barriers, its low personal ambitions and its love of power and cruelty.” As our expression of goodwill grows, this door closes through the “sheer weight of public opinion.”<sup>17</sup> We know when we are expressing goodwill because we experience joy.

We can launch our own one-person experiments in expressing goodwill. For example, for one month try finding one example each day of someone who has been helpful to you and tell them, “you have made my day.” This parallels the recognition by *TIME Magazine* of all of us as the 2006 Person of the Year, rather than focusing just on famous individuals. The point is to leverage goodwill in as many ways as possible in daily life.

### *The Dual Life of the Disciple*

As always we are called to a dual life once we are able to function as integrated personalities – our actions in the outer world need to be complemented by our actions on the subjective side. In our outer daily lives, we have the opportunity to model positive harmlessness and stimulate cooperation through the sharing of information and the posing of questions to stimulate informed choice,<sup>18</sup> to refuse to think unkindly of others and to maintain silence about our esoteric work.<sup>19</sup> One of the critical factors in stimulating goodwill and right human relations is being non-partisan and operating without separatist

ideas or attitudes.<sup>20</sup> This means, practically speaking, no political activity because it is divisive.<sup>21</sup> We also hold responsibility for clarifying and elucidating basis principles of right living to others.<sup>22</sup>

What about on the inner side? Here our responsibility can best be described in terms of how we work with the energies of which we are custodians. We need to be able to receive the inflow of energies and then be agents or distributors of that energy (enlightenment). We need to listen to the hopes and longings of humanity so that we can help readjust strategy embedded in the Plan in order to enable optimal timing of right action. Most importantly, we need to understand that the emanating point of right human relations is the group, not the self.<sup>23</sup>

So, as we join together in meditation on how best to cooperate with the Hierarchy in the working out of the Plan, let us keep in mind the words of Edmond Burke: “All that is necessary for the forces of evil to win is for good men to do nothing.” Let us pledge instead to “let there be goodwill on Earth and let it begin with me.”<sup>24</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 47.

<sup>2</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1957), 280.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 539.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>5</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 595.

<sup>6</sup> Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 46.

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.peacebuildersinternational.com/>.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.peaceisthewayglobalcommunity.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> See the video at <http://www.urth.tv/content/view/4137/>.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 751.

<sup>11</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 744.

<sup>12</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1934), 328.

<sup>13</sup> Bailey, *Externalisation*, 207.

<sup>14</sup> Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, 677.

<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.uri.org/>.

<sup>16</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 616-617.

<sup>17</sup> Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, 173-174.

<sup>18</sup> Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2*, 681.

<sup>19</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 1* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1944), 65.

<sup>20</sup> Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2*, 747.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 674.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 672-673.

<sup>23</sup> Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 1*, 377.

<sup>24</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1948), 171.