

Generating Goodwill between Esoteric Groups

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In celebrating the Festival of Goodwill, we are experiencing the culmination of energies generated and released in the Easter and Wesak Festivals. It is now up to us to transform that energy into an outpouring of goodwill. This Festival is also known as the Festival of Humanity, or World Invocation Day. It is *our* festival in the sense that its focus is on our channelling of divine energy for the good of all.

At this Festival of Goodwill, in keeping with our focus on “self-forgetfulness” in the Mantra of the New Group of World Servers, we have an opportunity to pause and reflect on what self-forgetfulness could mean in the context of humanity and the expression of goodwill. We are told that:

The main hierarchical need today (apart from its need for workers) is the forming everywhere of such groups ..., the relating of group with group within the range of influence of that super group, the Hierarchy. Such groups are forming now in their thousands and are to be found in every land, and they will eventually blend and fuse together into one great movement of goodwill, which is Spirit in actual expression. Aspirants everywhere ... must contact these groups, bringing them together on one point only, and that is *Goodwill*. Each group must necessarily be left free to proceed with its own destiny and mode of work.¹

If we reflect on present day esoteric activity, we might recognize that much of that activity focuses on individual expressions of goodwill, or input into initiatives that will stimulate goodwill (such as the Lucis Trust World Goodwill initiative or the *Lamdoma* model for a planetary synthesis of esoteric groups initiated in Italy by Istituto Uruvati). What seems to be missing is right relations among esoteric groups themselves, though this is gradually changing. For years, esoteric work was surrounded by an aura of secrecy, and collaboration among groups would not be expected. However, with the growth of interest in spirituality, coupled with the development of the internet and social media, established esoteric groups have become more public and a wide range of newer groups have emerged.

The establishment of autonomous and unrelated esoteric groups has been a necessary stage, but under the influence of the incoming Seventh Ray we have the potential to focus increasingly on inter-group collaboration based on *goodwill*. In anticipation of this development, Roberto Assagioli wrote in the 1970s:

All human individuals and groups of all kinds should be regarded as elements, cells or organs (that is, living parts) of a greater organism that includes the whole of humanity. Thus the principle of, and the trend to, synthesis carries us from group to group in ever wider circles to humanity as an integral whole. The essential unity of origin, of nature and of aims, and the unbreakable interdependence and solidarity between all human beings and groups are a spiritual, psychological and practical reality... In spite of all contrasts, all oppositions and all negative appearances, the principle of interdependence, of solidarity, of cooperation, of friendship – that is, of synthesis – is rapidly gaining recognition. An increasing number of men and women are animated by the will to implement it, and are actively working within different groups and in all fields, outwardly unorganized but inwardly closely connected by common dedication to the same purpose.²

The existing plethora of groups tends to function either independently of, or in competition with, each other although there is a slowly growing number of exceptions such as the International Network for the Distribution of the Great Invocation. So we have a situation in which individual awareness and cooperative functioning is a bit ahead of group functioning. Within esoteric groups, we all too often focus on our own internal mandate and miss the cleavages that are tolerated, or even created, between esoteric groups. Are we prepared

to forget or set aside our group self-focus, our pride in “being the best,” in order to stimulate goodwill among esoteric groups so as to enhance our ability to serve the Plan?

Recognizing Cleavages

If we are prepared to engage in self-forgetfulness in our relations with other esoteric groups, we have some hints from the Tibetan about what would be involved: “The first step is the wholesome recognition that cleavages exist; it is here that goodwill can do its most useful and necessary work.”³ Put another way, the first step is recognizing that, while there may be a number of esoteric groups with hierarchical links, there are few that have explicitly tried to collaborate with each other in support of hierarchical initiatives.

We do have a set of common practices within the esoteric community such as the celebration of the three major festivals, or full moon meditations. Those practices usually occur simultaneously; however, those practices are not necessarily coordinated with each other across groups. So we are jointly missing the additional outflow of spiritual energy and consequent ability to implement the Plan that comes with the synergy of coordination and collaboration. One has only to look at the results of the Global Coherence Initiative⁴ to see how a united energetic focus can facilitate a shift in global consciousness.

More fundamentally we may lack an articulated intention to collaborate. We may even have judgments about the validity or effectiveness of other esoteric groups. Perhaps this is understandable in light of the persecution suffered in earlier times by esoteric groups, which then fostered secrecy. Try this exercise: List ten esoteric groups, and then indicate their primary mission, their main strength, and their unique positioning within the esoteric community. If you had any difficulty with that exercise, we have collective work to do.

Suggested Ground Rules for Bridging Cleavages

Extrapolating from the Tibetan’s instructions on disciples working together within a group, we could consider the following as ground rules for beginning to work more effectively together across groups:

The inner relationships and cooperation must be established and developed, in spite of the outer divergences of opinion. When the inner link is held in love, and when disciples relinquish the sense of authority over each other and of responsibility for each other’s activities, and at the same time stand shoulder to shoulder in the One Work, then the differences, the divergences, and the points of disagreement will automatically be overcome. There are three rules that are important to disciples at this time.... Under the Law of Sacrifice these three rules might be interpreted thus:

1. Relinquish or sacrifice the age-old tendency to criticize and adjust another’s work, and thus preserve the inner group integrity. More plans for service have gone astray and more workers have been hindered by criticism than by any other major factor.
2. Relinquish or sacrifice the sense of responsibility for the actions of others, and particularly of disciples. See that your own activity measures up to theirs, and in the joy of struggle and on the way of service the differences will disappear and the general good will be achieved.
3. Relinquish the pride of mind that sees its way and its interpretations to be correct and true, and others false and wrong. This is the way of separation. Adhere to the way of integration that is of the Soul and not of the mind.⁵

While all three of these rules are important, it is the third one that is particularly relevant to our current topic of collaboration among esoteric groups. True collaboration in service to the Hierarchy and the Plan requires that we respect the fact that each group has its role to play though the outer form of service may differ from group to group.

Focusing on Commonalities

When we talk about stimulating goodwill and collaboration among esoteric groups, there are a number of questions that arise. For example, would we mean all groups that identify themselves as spiritual in some

manner? What might be the characteristics that would bring certain esoteric groups together? Here is a beginning list of possible commonalities:

- Understanding the group's mission as being in support of, or an externalization of, Hierarchical work and in service to the Plan
- Grounding the work of the group in the Ageless Wisdom teachings
- Advancing practices such as the use of the Great Invocation, the celebration of the three major festivals, and full moon meditations

There may be other commonalities that would emerge over time, but the above list could be a starting point.

The Practicalities of Bridging Cleavages

Each esoteric group relies heavily on volunteers, with staff time already more than fully committed. So how might we move forward in the face of scarce time resources? The first step is intention, a conscious and deliberation choice to work together and not simply on a single initiative. We know that energy follows thought and that setting an intention without reservations will precipitate the thoughtform. The intention does not need to be shared by all esoteric groups in order to anchor the thoughtform on the physical plane,. Two or more groups could begin the process by having their Boards of Directors adopt a policy of explicit collaboration with other esoteric groups, beginning with each other. Part of that step could be jointly developing a policy statement that each interested group would use. Here is an example of a policy statement that could be adopted:

[name of organization] intends to collaborate with any other esoteric group whose work is grounded in the Ageless Wisdom and whose purpose is to serve as an outpost of the Spiritual Hierarchy in implementing the Plan for Humanity. That collaboration will include, but is not limited to:

- *Understanding the mission, strategic priorities, and unique strengths of the other organization and communicating our own.*
- *Initiating cooperative activities that evoke and strengthen goodwill in areas in which our mandates are complementary.*
- *Encouraging the contributions of identified "bridge" members in forming joint initiatives, with the understanding that their main allegiance is to their primary esoteric group.*
- *Engaging in strategic discussions of common issues and challenges in activating goodwill and working to implement the Plan for Humanity.*
- *Respecting the proprietary materials and initiatives of the other organization and helping to ensure the successful contributions of both that organization and our own.*

Some esotericists are members of more than one esoteric group and could serve as "bridge" members once the group intention is set. At a minimum, they could identify themselves as "bridge" members and begin to share information about the mission, priorities, and unique strengths of each group with the other group. They could look for opportunities for the relevant groups to co-sponsor events, co-edit publications, and similar initiatives. Perhaps forums could be developed for discussing common issues and challenges such as addressing different types of glamour or helping youth, who are used to continuous multi-media stimulation, develop the focus and concentration needed for meditation.

What might more formal steps look like? Should one of the interested organizations serve as a central source of information about the other esoteric groups – more than simply contact and descriptive information? Would it be useful to have similar esoteric groups work together, for example those groups that provide discipleship training? Is there a role for esoteric groups to work together in triangles?

What is being suggested is that we model our working relationships among esoteric groups on the type of respectful and collaborative relationships that are expected within an esoteric group – and indeed within an ashram. Such collaboration can only strengthen our ability to serve Humanity. If you have thoughts or suggestions about what is being proposed in this talk, please forward them to info@esotericstudies.net.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 457.

² Roberto Assagioli, *Psychosynthesis: Individual and Social*. <http://synthesiscenter.org/articles/0116.pdf>.

³ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 751.

⁴ See <http://www.glcoherence.org/>.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 108.