

Practical Goodwill and Group Service

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The motivating power of goodwill is an essential to right action.... The history of humanity has been that of the apprehension and the use of ideas as applied to human living and as expressing forward moving concepts; today the two ideas needed are light upon our way and practical goodwill. (EXT:169)

I cannot emphasize too strongly that you are to work as a group and not as individuals. (GWP:18)

During this propitious year of Shamballa impact we have great hopes for the working out of this divine stimulation in an increased expansion of goodwill and a greater circulation of the energy of will-to-good. We don't know exactly how it will manifest, because it depends entirely on our own sensitivity and ability to ground these energies in some practical way. Therefore, it seems especially important to temper any high-flying speculations about the nature of this impact with a dose of practicality. As mentally focused, upward striving aspirants, it is possible to lose ourselves in a complexity of theories, hypothetical situations and intellectual abstractions – not to mention glamor. So the Festival of Goodwill seems to be an appropriate opportunity to lay this foundation of practicality with its emphasis on practical goodwill and group work.

What forms the basis of the Tibetan's teaching if not practical application of spiritual values and group effort? Armed with the Tibetan's complete works on CD-ROM and with the help of a computer, we can investigate the Tibetan's emphasis on these aspects of the work in an interesting way. For instance, the word "group" is used 4,510 times throughout the multiple-volume set. Is that enough to get our attention and cause us to think about our own personal emphasis on group?

The word "goodwill" (not including "will-to-good") is used 555 times; "practical" is used 526 times. The combination "practical goodwill" is used only six times in that particular combination, but a close reading of all that is written on goodwill will quickly prove the point that the word "practical" is implied in every instance and that a spirit of goodwill is ineffectual unless accompanied by practical action.

For example, in relation to the important service of using the Great Invocation, on pp. 279-280 of *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* we read: "Unless ... those who use this Invocation parallel its voiced expression with some form of definite physical plane service, and so aid constructively the Forces of Light, their efforts will prove negligible." This means that lip service, even if accompanied by sincere desire and goodwill, will not promote the spread of light, love and power on Earth. The benevolent attitude of a detached onlooker will accomplish nothing useful. We must back up our words with action; we are asked to take sides and do active battle for what is right. Neutrality and good wishes are not options.

The need for practical goodwill is urgent. From our studies we know that it is *humanity alone* that can "precipitate the new incoming energies from the Lords of Liberation and make possible Their activity on Earth." The manifestation of these energies in outer expression is totally dependent upon "the potent, magnetic, *indrawing* power of humanity itself." If we really ponder these statements and understand the implications, we should be galvanized into immediate action by a tremendous sense of responsibility.

But it's not that easy, is it? Part of the difficulty, as implied earlier, is that humanity's mass intentions of goodwill are stuck on the astral and mental planes and focused through wishful thinking. Not enough of that goodwill gets put into usable form on the physical plane, because only practical activity will redirect these good intentions toward active expression and tangible deeds on the physical plane – deeds that are vehicles for expressing love and letting our lights shine. Those of us who have verified that there is a subjective inner world of causes responsible for the outer world of effects know how important it is for us to look for

practical opportunities to love and to shed light wherever we go. In this way we can emerge from the world of dreams, theories and words into the nitty gritty of daily and public life to bring the new world into being.

Another aspect of the inability to manifest goodwill in practical action lies in the obstacles we create for ourselves. Perhaps there are those among us who have not had recourse to the usual excuses of no time, no money, inexperience, bad health, too old, too young, jealous families, etc., but most of us are daily coping with overwork, stress and a sense of inadequacy; it's a situation we don't know how to manage. However, as the Tibetan perceptively noted:

One's limitations, physical or otherwise, look unduly large; one's faults are exaggerated in one's consciousness, though not so oft in expression; the extent of the service needed and demanded by the Soul appears so great that disciples at times refuse cooperation for fear of failure or from undue consciousness of themselves; excuses for non-service or for only partial service are easily found and appropriated; postponement of all-out help today, plus complete dedication to human need, is easily condoned on the basis of health, time, home limitations, fear of one kind or another, age, or a belief that this life is preparatory to full service in the next; alibis are easy to discover. (DINA2:43)

The Tibetan admits that it takes courage to overcome these self-imposed limitations – mental, emotional and physical – but we are asked to have faith that when we take courageous steps to serve in some practical way, we will find that our “private affairs are taken care of, [our] capacities are increased and [our] limitations are forgotten.” How many of us find this hard to believe? Most of us, perhaps, yet we have to struggle to accept the mandate of divine will and be able to say with conviction, “Universe, not my will but Thine be done,” because Christ's mission depends on our action.

We do not live up to what we know, and we often fail to make practical application of what we know. But whenever we manage to live as the Souls we know we are and work with focused spiritual intent, we usually find we are more powerful than we think we are. This power is seen in the effects we have on our environment at those times that we succeed in living as Souls, expressing Soul energy and counteracting the lower personality forces in ourselves as well as in those around us.

An additional justification for inaction – as well as the danger of such inaction – is described in the following passage:

There are many people today who find an alibi for themselves in the present world situation, and a consequent release from definite action and responsibility, by saying that what is today happening is simply karma or the working out of cause and effect, and that there is nothing, therefore, that they can do about it; they take the position that it is not their affair, and that in due course of time the process will be worked out and everything will be all right again. ... In so doing they overlook the third aspect of this same law, to which we have given the name of free will. It is the right use of free will and its understanding expression that must eventually straighten out and adjust the working out of karma. ... Therefore, those who are looking on at the tragic sufferings of humanity and who refuse to be implicated, and thus succeed in evading responsibility as an integral part of the human family, are definitely storing up for themselves much evil karma. (EXT:252–253)

There's no way around it; we must learn how to participate in an active way to spread goodwill and establish right relations in the world. Only when we are actively participating in some way through the right use of free will can there be a divine intervention to help us in this task.

The basic focus of both our individual and group work as members of the New Group of World Servers is to translate the ideas we contact in our study and meditation into practical ideals for presentation to humanity, creating thoughtforms of solution to pressing problems. We recognize this dynamic as the vertical and horizontal life of the disciple. The horizontal life is motivated by goodwill as the will-to-good begins to influence the disciple through his or her vertical alignment and is based on knowledge acquired in the

practical application of theory as well as developed sensitivity to certain energies from Shamballa. It is a vertical *attitude* and horizontal *effectiveness*, to express it another way. We maintain a vertical focus while horizontally mobilizing world goodwill and distributing the message to the rest of humanity regarding the reappearance of the Christ, the preparation this entails and the vision of the new world that will be built as a result of right relations.

The demand today is for group work, group good, group knowledge, group contact with the divine, group salvation, group understanding and group relationship to the One Life and the Spiritual Hierarchy. (EXT:418)

In combination with our individual activities and practical participation in the spread of goodwill and right relations, we are asked to put the emphasis on *group* action, group relationships, group objectives and to offer *group service as a group to the world group*. The New Group of World Servers is the group's point of focus. As group-conscious disciples and aspirants we recognize the *group* as the emanating point of goodwill energy in contrast to the unaffiliated individual of goodwill who sees him or herself as the emanating point. Today we do not need personally ambitious individuals who desire to become the focal point of a group of disciples. Today everyone's responsibility is to discover the groups of aspirants and disciples who are already working selflessly at some great task and affiliate ourselves with them.

The incoming Seventh Ray is beginning to influence aspirants to help them understand the concept of group service and sacrifice and to discover their role. And it is increasing the sense of shared commonality for the rest of humanity, creating a mass desire for the truth, beauty and goodness. What are the qualities of goodness, after all, if not those energies that pertain to group relations? The Tibetan points out that the science of social relations, social responsibility, global economics and the increasing sense of internationalism are all indications of the energies of Soul life and group consciousness on the physical plane.

At this point we might well ask, what can be considered a "group"? Some of us may be under the mistaken notion that a group is composed of individuals who are all at the same level of conscious development and preparing for the same initiation. But the dangerous glamor of separatism lurks in this viewpoint. Actually, a group is composed of individuals who are at the *same point of evolution* – either consciously or unconsciously. This means that a group incarnates together at a confluence of time and space where there is a need for different levels of conscious development in order to commit to work together toward the manifestation of some aspect of the Plan that fits in with the work of one of the Ashrams. We do not have to wander the Earth in search of our time and place, because it is the time and place where we are right now, and the people we need to serve and work with are those that we find ourselves with right now; it is not where we imagine we ought to be or with the people we imagine we should be with. Only glamor lies that way.

A group can be of any size. In *Letters* on p. 115-116 we read that individuals enlarge their capacity to serve when they "increase the size and number of the groups they contact till ... the world itself is their sphere of service." And the requirements of becoming a member of a group are straightforward. In *Esoteric Psychology Vol. 2*, p. 146, we are told that disciples are accepted into Ashrams on the basis of, among other things, their "willingness to work in a group as an integral part of the group, and having no idea of personal ambition or any wish to be the leader." So any group work we do here and now where we find ourselves is a training ground to prepare ourselves for discipleship. Here we make greater efforts in the development of group consciousness.

When the Tibetan was actively incorporating the teachings into books for group instruction, the main hierarchical need at that time was the forming of groups and the interrelating of group with group under the range of influence of that all-encompassing group, the Spiritual Hierarchy. In fact, today we are witnessing the formation of many such groups. And with the help of the Internet and jet travel, these groups are networking with each other. They are linking with each other electronically through their websites as a physical manifestation of their subjective link. The Tibetan predicts that all these groups will "eventually

blend and fuse together into one great movement of goodwill.” And it is goodwill that will bring them together as a point of focus. Today we are witnessing this prediction become a reality.

This year’s Shamballa impact offers us an opportunity to utilize this potent energy for practical work that falls into certain defined areas of planned activity corresponding to the work of the Ashrams and with the seed groups that are in process of formation. The Subjective Group Conference for this year helps us prepare for this opportunity by sharing our impressions and ideas about the purpose of the opportunity and about how we can use these energies to inaugurate the new era of goodwill and right relations. We also prepare for this opportunity by watching our thoughts, being harmless and by attempting to find the meaning and ongoing synthetic trend behind current events. And we help to prepare others by offering love and understanding to those who are confused and blinded by materialism and separatism.

We have all heard the oft-repeated aphorism that “as we think in our hearts so are we.” This can also be stated: “as the group thinks in its Heart so is it.” The power of thought and vision is made many times more powerful and effective when focused through a group. When a vision becomes clear for the group, it becomes a fact for the individual, and the creative imagination is applied in such a way to thought substance that the vision must eventually materialize. It is an organized, scientific, practical activity.

The Tibetan’s invitation to participate in the three linked festivals as given in *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, p. 557, is appropriate to the theme of this talk:

I bring you the invitation of the Hierarchy to share in Their ancient work, and not – as in the past – to play the part of interested onlookers.... True participation may lead to the sudden conviction of the reality of that which I have told you; faith and belief and commonsense will then no longer be needed, and you will *know*.... I have chosen to speak to you of activities in which it is now possible for you to share.... This is an intensely practical message and calls for your renewed pledge to serve humanity and to find your way into an Ashram where that service may be directed. It calls for sacrifice until it hurts, and where it touches you the most; it calls for a joyous sense of unity with that station of power and light that we call the Hierarchy and that stands ready – as never before – to share with humanity that power and that light to the limit of human capacity to use it.

One final quote in closing:

Let humanity constitute your field of service, and may it be said of you that you knew the spiritual facts and were a dynamic part of these spiritual events; may it not be said of you that you knew these things and did nothing about them and failed to exert yourself. Let not time slip by as you work. (R&I:760)