

## Spanning the Worlds of Causes and Effects

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The Festival of Goodwill is celebrated each year at the Full Moon in Gemini, in May or June. This year's festival falls on Thursday, June 13. The Festival, also known as the Festival of the Christ, Festival of Humanity, or World Invocation Day, builds upon the two earlier festivals of the Higher Interlude, the Easter and Wesak Festivals, celebrated, respectively, at the Full Moons in Aries and Taurus.

Christian esotericists often compare it with the feast of Pentecost, observed the previous Sunday. And just as the Festival of Goodwill builds upon the two earlier Full Moon festivals, Pentecost builds upon the resurrection of Christ and, in a way many Christians may not realize, on the enlightenment of the Buddha. It is interesting to note the close correspondence between the Higher Interlude and the fifty days of Easter in the Christian liturgical calendar.

Pentecost was already a long-established Jewish feast when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem. They had witnessed the resurrection and ascension of their Master, but they grieved that he was no longer with them and feared the Roman and Jewish leaders who put him to death. Yet, after the experience of Pentecost, they went out into the streets and openly preached Christ's message. They spoke with new clarity, literally *finding their voices*.<sup>1</sup> And when people in the crowd questioned their sobriety, Peter reminded them of the words of the prophet Joel:

I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my

handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath.<sup>2</sup>

That first Pentecost of the Christian dispensation was a new day, the beginning of a new era of discipleship. Paul, who had his private "pentecost" on the road to Damascus some years later, explained to the people of Corinth how the descent of the Holy Spirit expressed itself in different ways to different people:

To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.<sup>3</sup>

The Festival of Goodwill reminds us, year by year, that we too are entering a new era of discipleship, in which each person must find his or her voice and particular ability to serve. In place of Paul's list of charisms, we can turn for guidance to the Tibetan Master's "seed groups": "Telepathic Communicators," "Trained Observers," "Magnetic Healers," "Educators of the New Age," "Political Organizers," "The workers in the Field of Religion," "Scientific Servers," "Psychologists," "Financiers and Economists," and "Creative Workers."<sup>4</sup>

The Festival marks the increasing presence in the world of the Second Aspect of Deity: Love-Wisdom, working through humanity. The energy unleashed by the Hierarchy and the Christ at the Festival of Goodwill is focused on the New Group of World Servers, whose charge, like that of the disciples at

Pentecost, is nothing less than to change the world. Their charge came early in the Piscean Age; ours comes at the dawn of the Aquarian Age. Establishment of the New Group of World Servers was a first step toward the promised externalization of the Hierarchy. Eventually, we are told, the masters themselves will play leading roles in government, education, business, and so forth. Meanwhile, it is our privilege to serve as forerunners.

The Festival of Goodwill was first celebrated in 1952, three years after Alice Bailey's death. Yet we understand that it had long been observed on the inner planes:

On this festival, for two thousand years, the Christ has represented humanity and has stood before the Hierarchy and in the sight of Shamballa as the God-Man, the Leader of His people and "the Eldest in a great family of brothers" . . . . Each year at that time He has preached the last sermon of the Buddha before the assembled Hierarchy. This will therefore be a festival of deep invocation and appeal, of a basic aspiration towards fellowship, of human and spiritual unity, and will represent the effect in the human consciousness of the work of the Buddha and of the Christ.<sup>5</sup>

The Festival of Goodwill should, perhaps, be termed the Festival of the Will-to-Good. The Second-Ray energies of Love-Wisdom mediate, but also are propelled by, the First-Ray energies of Will and Power. The Christ draws closer to humanity, serving in his own capacity as head of the great Second Ray Ashram and Master of Masters, but he also serves as the ambassador of the Center where the Will of God is known. The announcement of, what was for humanity, a new Festival predicted

that it would "be the festival of the spirit of humanity—aspiring towards God, seeking conformity with the Will of God and dedicated to the expression of right human relations . . . . It will be a day whereon the spiritual and divine nature of mankind will be recognized."<sup>6</sup>

**The descent of divine power from above predictably triggers a response from below. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost raised the disciples' consciousness and prepared them for their evangelical mission. The approach of the Christ and the Masters, during the Festival of Goodwill, raises the consciousness of people in all walks of life and reminds us that we too are divine beings.**

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reminds us that humanity is the divine messenger to the world of form, capable of participating in Hierarchical work

The twofold process is repeated on all time scales and at all levels of reality. Importantly, the descent of divine power never diminishes what remains above; rather the process spans the worlds of causes and effects, the world of Will and the world of Activity. The Logos essence descended into manifestation, but the Logos remained on his own plane. As Sri Krishna pointed out in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Having pervaded this whole universe with a fragment of Myself, I remain." Christian teachers speak of the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God.

Christ took physical form, while his true being remained in the world from which he had come. His descent expressed compassion of a most perfect nature. His destination in the physical world was not one of the nicer places we could offer him. As his Palestinian mission drew to a climax, he descended "into

hell,” to experience the very depths of human depravity and suffering. Hell, of course, could not contain him; if it had, his mission would have failed. Even as he drank from the bitter cup of pain, rejection, and the cross, his consciousness remained on the higher plane. To demonstrate that in linear, concrete form—and we should hesitate before condemning the people of the time as incapable of seeing beyond externalities—he rose from the dead and ascended joyfully into heaven.

Our human path requires us to take a succession of physical forms to experience, suffer, learn, and grow in consciousness; and when our mission is completed we shall return to the realm of spirit and joy. Yet our true being never leaves the realm of spirit; the Monad remains on its own level. We remain poised between the realms, and if we are sufficiently aware—and our intent pure—we can draw upon monadic power and direct it to service endeavors.

Like Christ, we are called upon to reach down to the depths of human depravity and suffering. Discipleship presents us with the world as it is, rather than the way we might like it to be. While we are sent to work *in* the world, however, we are not to become *of* the world<sup>7</sup>—that is, our “world of effects.” We must develop the ability to move at will between it and our “world of causes,” the planes of the Spiritual Triad. Whether our particular gift lies in healing, education, government, business, the arts, or some other area of human activity, we draw down energy, impressions and inspiration from higher levels and put them to work.

In healing work, for example, we must be prepared to experience the suffering we seek to alleviate, sharing the pain, desolation and grief of those whom we seek to heal. But to stay mired in the physical, emotional and mental horrors would not only overwhelm us, it would make us ineffective. In order to facilitate healing, we must remain poised between “heaven” and “hell.” In that way, we both preserve our equilibrium and gain access to the energies needed to do the work at hand. Compassion is an identification with others’

suffering, but it is also the impulse by which we draw down divine Light, Love and Life to bathe their wounds. We do not try to prescribe what form healing may take; that is determined by intelligences higher than ours. But we trust and give joyful thanks that healings are taking place.

The Festival of Goodwill reminds us of the related Hierarchical initiative of the Triangles Movement. Groups of three people commit to daily recitation of the Great Invocation, while visualizing the links connecting them. Each “Triangle of Fire”—to use Torkom Saraydarian’s term<sup>8</sup>—is a form intentionally created in etheric matter, through which Light, Love and Power can flow to humanity and the planet. Even as we focus on the etheric subplanes we allow our consciousness to rise to invoke and transmit the energies flowing from above.

How can we acquire the ability to move between the worlds? Through integration of the personality and, more importantly, through personality–soul fusion. We may not be able, as Christ could, remain simultaneously aware on multiple levels; that capability will come after the fifth initiation. But even at our present stage on the path we can develop the ability to focus our awareness on any desired level, as we might move a flashlight up and down to illuminate different areas of an object. Let us never forget that, as we strive to raise our consciousness, the Solar Angel is reaching down, encouraging us and providing us with opportunities to extend the antahkarana to the causal level and beyond. Importantly, as we “move up” we also “move out,” shifting our concern from the separative self to the group.

All occult work involves a purposeful transfer of energy, and in “white magic”—the only permissible application of occultism—transfer is from above to below, mirroring the descent of divine power discussed earlier. The will must be trained to access, transmit and direct the energy to its intended target, but an important aid to success is visualization of the energy flow and the path it should take. The Agni Yoga teachings suggest visualization of the pathway in very physical terms:

One should not imagine it as something abstract, it exists just like a waterspout in which heaven and earth merge. The very formation of the silver thread is similar to a waterspout because of its spiral form. . . . Many have never seen waterspouts; hence what has been said will seem to them like an empty sound. But let them begin to ponder, starting with the coarsest apparent manifestations and then imagining Infinity, where everything is possible, where no rational trend of thought exhausts all Being.<sup>9</sup>

As we prepare for and celebrate the Festival of Goodwill, may we ponder the descent of power on all scales, from the divine to the human. May we devote ourselves to the training necessary to bridge the worlds of causes

and effects. And may we, with the abilities offered to us, become group conscious, useful embers of the New Group of World Servers, and agents of Hierarchical Purpose.

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- <sup>1</sup> *Acts* 2:4.
  - <sup>2</sup> *Acts* 2:16-18. Citations are from the KJV.
  - <sup>3</sup> *I Corinthians* 12:8-10.
  - <sup>4</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age I*, New York: Lucis Trust, 1944, 35-40.
  - <sup>5</sup> Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, New York: Lucis Trust, 1957, 421.
  - <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>7</sup> *John* 15:19, 17:14.
  - <sup>8</sup> Torkom Saraydarian, *Triangles of Fire*, 2/e, Cave Creek, AZ: TSG Publishing Foundation, 1988.
  - <sup>9</sup> *Heart*, New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1932, 250.