

Festival of Easter 2016

Easter and the Silence of Right Speech

Ángela Barrera

Cycles, and how we handle them, always challenge us to develop a sense of right proportion. In the right handling of cycles, we move closer to harmony. Each cycle is characterized by different qualities of time and space—living qualities that are part of the universal Being. The sense of proportion is related to the equilibrium of rhythms or cycles, and it governs how each part relates to the other parts in harmonic proportion. Such harmonious relationships should be seen as a living organism with all the potential that lies in it, the germ or embryo of everything possible that might be.

As part of this cyclic movement, we now find ourselves again under the sign of Aries, the first zodiacal sign where “the great cycle of struggle towards expression starts.”¹ Aries begins

the process of the “most ancient initiation” that all the human family has already undergone and will undergo. The first great cosmic initiation (as far as humanity is concerned) is initiation into incarnation – the initiation of individualization. This process culminates eons later in the reversing of the wheel and the attaining of a definite goal in Capricorn.... Therefore, in its lowest manifestation, Aries is the creator of those activities, conditions and processes that lead to the manifestation of Soul through the medium of form, and later of those higher creative undertakings that lead in due time to the manifestation of Spirit through the Soul.²

The keynotes of the sign of Aries are *Creation, Being, Activity, Strife, and Synthesis*,³ which also seem to characterize the disciple determined to cooperate in the working out of the Plan. This Plan is an expression of the Purpose of that Great Being in Whom we live and move and have our being—the Plan that posits the psychological reconstruction and restora-

tion of humanity that the Spiritual Hierarchy carries forward. We might wonder what “psychological reconstruction and restoration of humanity” means? What should be “reconstructed and restored”? It could refer to balance, harmony with the universal rhythm that can only be achieved with a holistic perspective of the human being, a perspective that takes into account our triple nature and that recognizes the essential indwelling divinity of humanity. This wider perspective holds “the key to the Spiritual Hierarchy and Its reappearance on Earth ... the clue to the evolutionary process, and the eternal hope of all forms in all kingdoms in nature.”⁴ Such recognition would require humanity to set off on a journey from the periphery to the center, the source of Life, thus strengthening the will to live that is currently being drowned out by fear.

Overcoming Fear

In our information society, fears are constantly being fueled by the impact of global news. The advantage, but also the risk, is that it sensitizes people to world events but also to a sense of powerlessness in the face of all the violence. It is well known that terrorism, for example, uses fear to manipulate public opinion, suffocating the life of spirit, our essential freedom. When this happens, fears submerge us in helplessness and pessimism.

Psychoneuroimmunology, a scientific approach that studies the subtle interactions between the nervous, endocrine and immune systems, has shown that the immune system is a mirror of life; it responds to joy as well as anxiety. The consequences of fear are diverse, but it has been demonstrated that repeated exposure to fear will result in specific changes in our behavior, emotions and psychophysiological wellbeing. Fear, we could say, inhibits our vital forces.

The Tibetan warns us that “fear is the dominant astral energy at this time”⁵ and states that one of the “Four Freedoms,” contemplated in the Plan, is the end of fear worldwide.⁶ Fears build a dividing wall between the personality and the Soul or between life and people, thus obstructing the passage of Light.

Healing fear means opening a way through which the Fire of Universal Life can enter. And this is particularly important during the Easter Festival as the Spirit of Resurrection brings on its wings the will to heal, the will to achieve transfiguration, to express the Christ nature, and to restore the Law of Love. Fear makes us feel small or impotent; it creates divisions and distrust. Love, in contrast, is expansive, inclusive, opened to divine Providence—the loving care that is a fundamental aspect of the One Life.

Placing great importance on joy and on the development of a sense of good humor, the Tibetan suggests we avoid taking ourselves too seriously. Maybe here lies the key to opening the inner channel through which “life more abundant” can flow in, energizing our bodies and mind to serve better. Indeed, our essence is love, joy, and a peaceful mind based on spiritual comprehension. Joy and serenity are qualities of the Soul, spontaneously expressed when there is alignment and when the personality and all circumstances in the three worlds are under Soul direction.

The Expression of Life During the Easter Festival

At this special time under the sign of Aries, the Forces of Restoration stream forth to humanity led by the Spirit of Resurrection and the Christ, whose note and life message is resurrection. This Festival offers an excellent opportunity to express life abundantly because these Forces of Restoration are more available for us during this Full Moon. We could visualize them as waves of life stimulating the human will to love, right idealism and goodwill. An energy so abundant, if rightly handled, can aid in eliminating fears and inertia. This energy can ignite in us the fire of Spirit, inspire us to formulate new goals and projects, help us guide humanity toward the light and build a new civ-

ilization based on the principles of sharing, cooperation and responsibility. Such is the great joyful and creative work ahead of us at this time. If we can achieve it, the true meaning of Pentecost will be realized, the emphasis laid upon the experience of the Christ nature:

During the coming century, the meaning of the resurrection will be unfolded... The first step will be the emergence of humanity from the death of its civilization, of its old ideas and modes of living, the relinquishing of its materialistic goals and its damning selfishness, and its moving into the clear light of the resurrection life... Then will follow those steps that will lead to a new and better life and that will indicate the expression of the Spirit of Resurrection.⁷

What would be the responsibility and goal for a group of servers interested in achieving this?

They will concern themselves with the reorientation of the human psyche and with the inevitable consequences of that reorientation – the acquiring of the vision that will bring about right human relations... Great Forces, under potent spiritual leadership, are standing ready to precipitate Themselves ... to focus and distribute Themselves... the New Group of World Servers are also “standing attentive to direction” in every country in the world, united in their idealism, in their humanitarian objectives, in their sensitivity to spiritual impression, in their united subjective purpose, in their love of others, and in their dedication to selfless service.⁸

During the time of the Three Linked Festivals the group is asked to hold a state of spiritual tension to invoke light. This, in turn, will evoke a response from the Spiritual Hierarchy and Shamballa. This group approach produces a high degree of *simplicity*—that condition of the mental plane that allows for greater synthesis. The mental plane is the middle point in consciousness where the highest and lowest ends meet, or the point where the center of the Spiritual Hierarchy and the center of humanity establish contact. Our group responsibility consists therefore in keeping the channel open, active and vital.

Simplicity, Right Speech and Silence

Achieving simplicity of the Soul might be one of the most effective ways to maintain the alignment that opens a channel between the Spiritual Hierarchy and us. The personality isn't interested in simplicity; it feels more at ease with the complexities and density of the lower mind. The simplicity of the Soul is very different. It has been described as "one-pointedness of outlook, free from glamour and the intricacies of the thought-form-making mind; simplicity is clarity of purpose and steadfastness in intention and in effort ... simplicity leads to simple loving, asking nothing in return; simplicity leads to silence—not silence as an escape mechanism, but as an 'occult retention of speech'."⁹ Thus, we should create in ourselves the silence, determination and mental simplicity necessary in order to be in tune with that same quality that is present in the realms of the divine Will. When we resonate with that higher vibration and quality, we help establish an unimpeded channel with the higher planes. As a group we invoke Soul guidance, for the Soul is group consciousness and holds a vision for the group. The group in its entirety must create the conditions for that simplicity in consciousness that translates into a united group mind and a clear group channel.

If we visualize the larger context or purpose of the synthetic Plan slowly unfolding and working out on Earth and we expand the group vision beyond the periphery of consciousness toward identification with the Life aspect of divinity, we begin to work with an energy that can integrate harmoniously all the diverse elements. From this higher perspective, we can contemplate everything in existence as a manifestation of the One Life. This larger context is ruled by simplicity.

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The same tendency toward synthesis that can be observed in nature is also inherently ours – the innate orientation to unification that operates upon consciousness and that is Life Itself, an instinct of the universe. This tendency to synthesis urges us to develop a simplified approach to life, to cultivate that simplicity that

frees the mind from the concerns and complexities of the external world. It is an approach that thinks in larger terms. A larger perspective bypasses the common separatist consciousness to penetrate into the larger sphere of perception that "recognizes no differences." In fact, we are told that the simplicity of the Soul opens the way to Shamballa and "sees no differences," which might mean fusion of the vertical way of life

with the horizontal way of service. This perspective of the simple life is imbued with meaning and transcends the pair of opposites. Being complete unification, it eliminates all separations between the inner and outer planes of life. Probably the most important esoteric challenge for the group at present is the channeling of the Life aspect of the Shamballa energy that simplifies and seeks synthesis. The challenge is thus to collaborate to create the new world with conscious determination.

By unifying us at the level of the heart, simplicity leads to silence and the poise necessary for the group to become sensitive to higher impressions. "Humanity, as a whole, needs silence at this time as never before; it needs time in which to reflect, and the opportunity to sense the universal rhythm."¹⁰ Students, aspirants and disciples need to develop the quality of inner silence, the quietness of the emotional and mental body. Esoterically, "silence ... is refraining from certain lines of thought, the elimination of reverie and the unwholesome use of the creative imagination."¹¹

Contemplation is the highest form of silence that exists. It is in the quietness and alignment of contemplation that we keep the channel open, reducing the intensity and quantity of noise in the three worlds. Thus we can hear the Sound and achieve its creative purpose. With self-forgetfulness and harmlessness, the New Group of World Servers will fuse the individual will into the spiritual Will, recognize its quality of quietness and silence, the “peaceful and silent Will” of Sanat Kumara. “Only as the multitude of spoken words is reduced, and silence in speech is cultivated, will it be possible for the Word to make its power felt on the physical plane.”¹²

And although silence and words might seem to be opposites, they are not. We can, and indeed should, establish a right relationship between the two to resolve the apparent conflict; we should find their most harmonious proportion, the reflection of universal balance, so that our words become proper expressions of Soul life. Using right speech means choosing symbols or forms that clothe and express right thoughts. Our aim is to create thoughtforms full of life and offer them in service as a contribution to human unity and synthesis.

As each of us strive to achieve this, we strengthen the group’s ability to better hold the Forces of Restoration in the chalice of contemplative silence. Right speech is creative vibration that resounds harmoniously with the Soul note. From that higher place we shall sound the right word, the creative vibration bearing in essence the peaceful and silent spiritual Will — the *life more abundant* that the Spirit of Resurrection brings on its wings during the Easter Full Moon Festival. Thus the heart of

humanity will be kindled with the fire of Spirit. In conclusion, and quoting Helena Roerich, let us “welcome the Eve of Easter—the Resurrection of the Spirit. Let us aspire in all our thoughts toward this near future, and many of the dull and difficult things of daily life will be eased because in our hearts we will accept the unavoidable blows and difficulties as a part of a great probationership and will live in the joy of the coming future.”¹³

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¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1951), 93.

² *Ibid.*, 94-95.

³ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1957), 591.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1934), 298.

⁶ Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 470.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 470.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 485.

⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1955), 518.

¹⁰ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1942), 44 .

¹¹ Bailey, *The Rays and The Initiations* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1960), 214.

¹² Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic*, 142.

¹³ Roerich Elena, *Letters of Helena Roerich, Book One* (New York, Agni Yoga Society, 1994), Letter of April 26, 1934.

Festival of Wesak

Channeling Wesak Energies for Cleansing Purposes

Dorothy I Riddle

We are now entering the annual highpoint of the inpouring of divine Will energy, channeled by the two great Avatars—the Buddha and the Christ. Our responsibility during this time is to receive, contain, and then distribute these spiritual energies. That distribution process is envisioned as encompassing the final two days of the five-day festival period when “the focus of our attention will be steadily turned away from ourselves but also from the inner subjective planes to the outer world, and our efforts will be to pass on, or to pass through, that measure of spiritual energy that may have been contacted.”¹

We are told that “during the interim between reception [of the Wesak energy] and distribution, it has been transformed into the energy of goodwill and into that light that will illumine human minds.”² We usually visualize that distribution process as general—i.e., without a specific focus. This year, in conjunction with our Subjective Group Conference topic of “Ashramic Work and Right Speech,” we want to explore two specific and much-needed tasks for which the potency of Wesak energy is well-suited: dissipating glamours and destroying negative thoughtforms.

Why is this important? Humanity is at a point of crisis in terms of how we relate to each other. We have escalating terrorism, and we have a corresponding increase in despair about how to address it. We have an unprecedented volume of refugees fleeing violence and oppression, and we have increasing resistance to allowing foreigners across borders. We also have a dramatic increase in income disparity and accelerating conflicts over the exploitation of our Earth’s resources for profit versus living in harmony with the Earth.

We might be tempted to view these various patterns as unrelated, with different root causes; however, the Ageless Wisdom emphasizes that humanity is responsible for reinforcing the glamours and creating and sustaining the negative thoughtforms that make such patterns possible and hold them in place. We do so by consistently ignoring the basic truth that we are all energetic expressions and components of the One Life and thus all connected. Ultimately how we treat others will be how we ourselves are treated.

Dissipating Glamour

Glamours exist on the astral plane. While some School members may not be in a position to work with the Will energy necessary to destroy thoughtforms, all members can work with the Wesak light in meditation in order to “project light, consciously, on to the astral plane and thus dissipate glamour.”³

What is the relationship between glamour and the current events that distress us? Let’s reflect for a moment on some of the more common glamours that are playing out on the world stage:

1. *The glamour of destiny.* This is a glamour that indicates to those whom it controls that they have important work to do and that they must speak and work as destined. This feeds a pride that has no foundation in fact.
2. *The glamour of aspiration.* Those thus conditioned are completely satisfied and preoccupied with their aspiration towards the light and rest back upon the fact that they are aspirants. Such people need to move onward on to the Path of Discipleship and cease their preoccupation and sat-

isfaction with their spiritual ambitions and goals.

3. *The glamour of self-assurance* or of what might be called the astral principles of the disciple. This is the belief, in plain language, that disciples regard that their point of view is entirely right. This again feeds pride and tends to make the disciples believe themselves to be authorities and infallible. It is the background of the theologian.
4. *The glamour of duty*. This leads to an over-emphasis of the sense of responsibility, producing lost motion and the emphasis of the non-essential....
5. *The glamour of devotion*, leading to an undue stimulation of the astral body. The man or woman thus glamoured sees only one idea, one person, one authority and one aspect of truth. It feeds fanaticism and spiritual pride.⁴

So what can we do? We are told that ridding the astral plane of glamour is “a definite world service. Groups will eventually be formed of those who are working at the dissipation of glamour [that] will work unitedly on some major phase of world glamour by the power of their individual illumined minds.”⁵ We are also told that “*criticism, separateness or pride ... are definitely breeders of glamour.*”⁶ How we think and speak or remain silent is directly related to the viability of glammers.

Every bit of glamour dissipated ... “clears the way” for those who follow after, and makes easier the path of other disciples. This is par excellence, the Great Service....

One of the problems that confronts aspirants is the problem of duly recognizing glamour when it arises, and of being aware of the glammers that beset their paths.... The majority of people are unaware of their presence. Many good people today see this not; they deify their glammers....

The very recognition, in its turn however, carries with it its own problems, so unable are average disciples to free themselves from the glamour-making faculties developed in the past, and so hard do they find it

to preserve a due proportion and a proper sense of values in regard to the truths of the mental plane. A hard won truth and a principle of reality can be grasped, and then ... the glammers of an emotional nature can emerge and gather about the ideal, for that is as yet unclarified and is prone to attract to itself that which – emotionally and sensitively – it believes itself to be and have.⁷

Glammers have been around for a long time, being elaborated and reinforced when we refuse to take responsibility for “right speech.” However, disciples have a responsibility to “destroy the astral phenomena for which they are creatively responsible, [as well as to] destroy a certain proportion of astral substance for which they are not individually responsible but that is nevertheless related to the group or to the nation with which they are by birth or inclination affiliated.”⁸

Destroying Negative Thoughtforms

Shifting our attention from the astral plane to the mental plane, we are constantly creating thoughtforms. In esoteric studies, we tend to nurture that creation process and give little, if any attention, to their destruction when they no longer serve a good purpose. If we reflect for a moment on the cycle of change that underlies all of life, we recognize that anything that is created eventually outlives its usefulness. On a physical level, if we only ingest food and never eliminate the roughage or waste, our digestive system will become toxic and we will die. On a societal level, beliefs that seem like truths will, in a dynamic society, eventually be challenged and become unthinkable. We have many examples down through history, human slavery and public smoking being only two. “Evil ... might be defined simply as adherence to that which we should have outgrown, the grasping of that which we should have left behind.”⁹

It is important to remember that

a thoughtform can ... act as a poisoning agent, and poison all the springs of life. It may not be potent enough to swing out of its creator’s aura (very few thoughtforms are), and find its goal in another aura there to gather strength and so return from

whence it came, but it may have a vitality of its own that can devastate the life of the aspirant. A violent dislike, a gnawing worry, a jealousy, a constant anxiety and a longing for something or someone may act so potently as an irritant or poison that the entire life is spoiled, and service is rendered futile. The entire life is embittered and devitalized by the embodied worry, hatred or desire. All relationships with other people are rendered equally futile or even definitely harmful, for worried or suspicious aspirants spoil the home circle or their group of friends by an inner poisonous attitude, governed by an idea. Their relation to their own Soul and the strength of the contact with the world of spiritual ideas is at a standstill, for they cannot progress onward and are held back by the poison in their mental system. Their vision becomes distorted, their nature corroded, and all their relationships impeded by the wearing, nagging thoughts that they have themselves embodied in form and that have a life so powerful as to poison them.¹⁰

The lack of attention to destroying thought-forms may stem from the challenges that any destruction presents. The task, at first, may seem overwhelming. We are told:

One of the greatest impediments upon the Path of Return, and one for which humanity is distinctly responsible within occult limits, are those animated forms that humanity has produced ever since the middle of the Atlantean root race when the mind factor began slowly to assume increasing im-

portance. The selfishness, the sordid motives, the prompt response to evil impulses for which the human race has been distinguished has brought about a condition of affairs unparalleled in the system. A gigantic thoughtform hovers over the entire human family, built by people everywhere during the ages, energized by the insane desires and evil inclinations of all that is worst in human nature, and kept alive by the promptings of humanity's lower desires. This thoughtform has to be broken up and dissipated by humanity itself.... Under the Law of Karma, it has to be dissipated by those who have created it.¹¹

This gigantic thoughtform, the product of humanity's ignorance and selfishness, is kept alive and vitalized ... by the aggregate of the evil desires, wicked intentions, and selfish purposes of each individual. Every wrong thought, when embodied in speech or manifested in action on the physical plane, goes to swell the proportions of this evil entity.¹²

The School's Cleansing Initiative

Ending the ongoing cycle of violence that is fueled by our inattention to the damaging effects not only of our present thoughts and words but also the ever-intensifying thoughtform of ill will involves addressing the root causes of glammers and negative thoughtforms. We can think of a garden as an analogy to our current situation. We have some beautiful flowers but we also have some virulent weeds. In watering the flowers (by sending them positive energy), we also strengthen those weeds. Perhaps we recognize the presence of the weeds and cut them down. But until we uproot them entirely, they will simply spring back up, often stronger than ever.

The same is true of glammers and negative thoughtforms. Until we destroy them at their roots, they will continue to spread and infect our lives. We have noted that these damaging energies survive because we forget who we are and why we are here. But why does that matter? What are the practical consequences of that disregard?

One way of understanding the issue, in keeping with our Subjective Group Conference theme, is to recognize that, in forgetting who we are, we fall prey to the great heresy of separateness that is rooted in the process of thinking dualistically—seeing ourselves as different and distinct from others in some way. Dualistic thinking is so much a part of our everyday lives that virtually all of us have some arena in which “us-them” thinking is our default. We can begin to understand this if we reflect on five ways in which this separateness is expressed:¹³

1. *Hostile bigotry* – expressing separateness overtly through physical or psychological abuse.
Since overt acts of aggression are increasingly condemned in western society, the brutality of terrorist acts can catch us off guard. If we think of them, though, as stemming from a sense of moral justification or feeling morally compelled, they may begin to seem less alien and more capable of destruction.
2. *Benevolent bigotry*, or paternalism – expressing separateness covertly through condescension.
Here we see others as less evolved or less spiritually mature as compared with ourselves. In societal life, this leads to viewing others as being in need of protection rather than being treated as equals.
3. *Stereotyping* – denying the individuality of the other.
In this case, we allow ourselves the luxury of lazy thinking. Instead of making the effort to know the other in all their uniqueness, we place them in a group and assume that they are the same as others in that group.

4. *Dismissiveness*, or invisibility – assuming that the other is not important enough to be accorded attention.

This form of separateness literally denies the existence of the other in any meaningful way. This is also a form of separateness that we may practice on ourselves in refusing to acknowledge our own needs or respect our own intuition.

5. *Objectification* – treating the other as an object to be used for our own gratification. While sexual objectification has received a lot of attention, there are other ways in which we assume that others should not have choices about their lives if those choices conflict with our own desires.

Addressing root causes is not accomplished quickly or easily. The Festival of Wesak, however, is the time when it is easiest to access the necessary spiritual energies and so the School for Esoteric Studies is launching this initiative during Wesak, with two objectives:

1. Dissipating the fog of fear and the glammers that hold humanity captive.
2. Destroying negative thoughtforms, both current and ancient.

All members of the spiritual community are welcome to join us in this special service initiative. We will provide special meditation outlines for dissipating glammers and for destroying negative thoughtforms, along with monthly seed thoughts for meditation.

If we wish to be of service in this initiative, “right speech” is absolutely critical, as is the ability to dissipate or destroy lovingly.

Let each of you gain that control of speech that has often been your goal but seldom your achievement, and remember that the most powerful factor in the control of speech is a loving heart. Wild and fearful talk, hateful gossip, cruel innuendo, suspicion, the ascribing of wrong and wicked motives to persons and peoples, and the divergences of attitude that have separated the many different nations in the world are rampant today and have brought the world to its present distressing situation. It is so

easy to drift into the same habits of speech and thought that we find around us and to discover ourselves participating in attack and the spirit of hate. Guard yourselves strenuously against this and say nothing that could inflame hate and suspicion in connection with any race, any person, any group or any leaders of groups and nations. You will have to guard yourselves with care, so that even in defense of that which you may personally or nationally approve you do not find yourselves full of hate and breaking the law of love – the only law that can truly save the world. Perhaps the key to your success along this line will be the silence of a loving heart.¹⁴

If you do so choose, please contact us at info@esotericstudies.net to request the special set of materials for the Cleansing Initiative.

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- ¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 688.
 - ² Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 643.
 - ³ Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1950), 264.
 - ⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 1* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1944), 26-27.
 - ⁵ Bailey, *Glamour*, 197.
 - ⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.
 - ⁷ *Ibid.*, 44-45.
 - ⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 378-379.
 - ⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *From Bethlehem to Calvary* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1937), 203.
 - ¹⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1934), 489.
 - ¹¹ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1925), 948.
 - ¹² *Ibid.*, 949.
 - ¹³ Dorothy I. Riddle, *Moving Beyond Duality* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2015).
 - ¹⁴ Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 82.

Festival of Goodwill

Distribution of Energy during the Festival of Goodwill

Miguel Malagrecá

The third Linked Festival is celebrated this year on May 21st, on the first of two Full Moons under the sign of Gemini. This great world spiritual celebration, known as the Festival of Goodwill, stands for the spirit of humanity that dynamically aspires to conform to divine Will, and that is dedicated to the construction of right human relations.¹ This year, in the context of intense planetary dynamics, humanity is clearly undergoing a point of crisis, which is reflected in tension from terrorist attacks, xenophobic political posturing, an unprecedented refugee crisis, reservations about humanitarian aid, and accelerating damage from climate change. The future of our planet will be determined in part by how humanity handles this point of crisis. The role we choose to play is important because much of the harm caused on this planet is the result of our actions and thought patterns.

We might think of goodwill as an expression of benevolence and kindness, but in esoteric studies the term has a more specific meaning. Fundamentally, the energy of goodwill is the lower expression of the Will-to-Good. We are told that “the function of the New Group of World Servers is dynamically to “force” the energy of the Will-to-Good into the world; the average man and woman, responding unconsciously, will express goodwill.”² Goodwill is the energy that will help us resolve existing cleavages and put an end to separativeness. Becoming effective agents of distribution of the Will-to-Good is challenging:

Goodwill is relatively simple of expression and all of you know much about it and express much of it. For that, no commendation is required, for it is a human attribute lying very near the surface of expression in all people. But the Will-to-Good is far more

difficult to express, for it involves the ability not only to use the spiritual Will, but to know somewhat the nature of the “good.”³

Three Festivals – One Approach

We know that the Three Linked Festivals are the esoteric doorways of the spiritual year that begins in Aries and ends in Pisces. Aries ushers in the High Interlude; it is the sign that initiates a year-round cycle of work leading to the full unfolding and expression of our spiritual capabilities. During the Festival of Easter, the energies of resurrection are contacted. A main focus here is thus contact and alignment with Life. Out of the past disintegration of who we *were*, we affirm our unified being, the spiritual reality of hope and joy so characteristic of Easter.

The Aries impulse into Life is received and nurtured during Wesak. Under the Full Moon of Taurus, the focus shifts to becoming receptive, harnessing and holding steady as much spiritual energy as possible. The energy of the Will, absorbed by the Buddha, is made available from our highest center, Shamballa, and then stewarded onto Earth by the Ashrams of the Spiritual Hierarchy, headed by the Christ. In echoing this work, at a lower turn of the spiral, all esoteric groups create a chalice for the containment of the Will energy, holding it in readiness. Taurus gives us the ability to hold it within an organic whole. The energy stored by a group not only multiplies its power, it also *qualifies* it so that it can be received safely by humanity at large.

In addition, the third Spiritual Festival, the Festival of Goodwill, represents the responsibility of servers to carefully open up this reserve of accumulated energy and distribute it to the world in support of the divine Plan. This

festival has been taking place for over two thousand years on the subjective plane, but it has been celebrated on the physical plane since 1952, after the dawn in human consciousness of the activity of the New Group of World Servers. As such, it represents a new stage in the development of Oneness in humanity. This celebration moves the focus away from self-realization, which is characteristic of the Piscean religions, into *group realization*, a characteristic of the Age of Aquarius. Thus it is *our* Festival, which is why it is also known as the Festival of Humanity.

The Distribution of Will Energy

It is the energy of the Will-to-Good, transformed into the energy of goodwill, that we have a particular responsibility to distribute at the Festival of Goodwill when it becomes more abundantly available. It is through goodwill that we become enlightened and sensitized to the needs of others so that we can work toward the good of the whole.

The final decisions in world affairs have to be made through humanity's deliberate choice; no compulsion is ever exerted by the Spiritual Hierarchy ... to force people to take some desirable action. Free will *must* be preserved. In a unique manner, people are today facing a period of the freeing of the human Soul, or a period of its imprisonment, indefinitely; the right decision will lead to the Kingdom of Souls, and the other to a retrogression that will deify the past and prolong past wrong action.

This outpouring of spiritual energy [at the Festival of Goodwill] passes through the groups or (to use a technical word that is relatively unimportant) through the Ashrams of all the Masters of the Wisdom.... It

is then transformed or transmuted by them so as to meet adequately the needs of the different types of people who compose humanity and who are represented in the Ashrams by different Masters. Through all the Masters and through all disciples this energy passes, so that all – at their many different stages – may receive the needed stimulation.⁴

At the time of this Festival of Goodwill, we are called to work as a group, enabling spiritual energy to enter and circulate on Earth. It is by looking at what happens during this third festival that we may find ideas for tackling many of the current challenges we face, many of which are based on *unequal distribution*. Think for example of increased income distribution inequality, wrong distribution of living space

for the different kingdoms on Earth, or the unfair distribution of rights across nations, human groups, genders and borders. Through careful meditation and an openness to the needs of others, we can learn to distribute energy equitably and for practical purposes.

In fact, we are learning much about group relatedness and planned group activity. What the human group as a self-regulated system within the planet can do is still to be fully discovered, but much has been achieved already. Just as an example, international legislation passed since the year 1952 demonstrates that we are increasingly group beings thinking in group terms: there is now international consensus on areas such as the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), the Rights of the Child (1984), and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). What further reaches of Oneness and respect

We might think of goodwill as an expression of benevolence and kindness, but in esoteric studies the term has a more specific meaning. Fundamentally, the energy of goodwill is the lower expression of the Will-to-Good. We are told that “the function of the New Group of World Servers is dynamically to ‘force’ the energy of the Will-to-Good into the world; the average man and woman, responding unconsciously, will express goodwill.”

for Life are to be achieved is something only we, humanity, can determine and make possible.

Our Responsibility to Evoke Goodwill

Our actions during this Festival of Goodwill are particularly important in relation to the crisis that humanity is facing, fueled by the forces of evil. The words of the Tibetan at the time of World War II continue to be relevant today:

There is only one way in which this focused evil will that is responsive to the Shamballa force can be overcome, and that is by the opposition of an equally focused spiritual Will, displayed by responsive men and women of goodwill who can train themselves to be sensitive to this type of new incoming energy and can learn how to invoke and evoke it.

You can consequently see why there was more than the casual use of a current word in my mind when I talked to all of you in terms of goodwill and of the Will-to-Good. All the time I had in my thoughts not just kindness and good intention, but the focused Will-to-Good that can and must evoke the Shamballa energy, and use it for the arresting of the forces of evil.⁵

We have in our power the ability to activate humanity to address the issues at hand, aided by the Spiritual Hierarchy Itself. “The Spiritual Hierarchy stands ready to evoke the good latent behind the work of destruction that has been done, but this can be so only if the goodwill of humanity itself is employed with adequate invocative power. If this goodwill finds expression, two things can occur: first, certain potencies and forces can be released upon the Earth that will aid humanity's effort to attain right human relations, with its resultant effect—peace; second, the forces of evil will be so potently defeated that never again will they be able to wreak such universal destruction upon Earth.”⁶ Or we can choose to do nothing, to allow the current crisis to continue and worsen.

If we choose to act, we are reminded that “we must develop in ourselves and evoke in others *the spirit of goodwill*.... It is the major and potent factor that can enable otherwise futile individuals to become a focal point of constructive influence. They will then discover that, as a result of this, their sphere of constructive influence is continually enlarging.”⁷ We have the future of this world in our hands, a thought that can be exhilarating or daunting. We can choose to serve as evocative channels in two ways, both to attract the Will-to-Good to this plane and to inspire humanity to express goodwill. And we are not alone in this endeavor:

Esoterically speaking, the work of the Spiritual Hierarchy is to focus the divine Will-to-Good as it affects humanity. The work of spiritually minded men and women is to evoke that Will-to-Good on Earth through as full an expression as possible of goodwill. It is the goodwill of the masses, focused everywhere through the United Nations who are fighting for the liberation of humanity and through the New Group of World Servers, that is sufficient to invoke the Will-to-Good.⁸

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¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Reappearance of the Christ* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1948), 155-156.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 38.

³ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 643.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 347.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 453.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 382.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 396.