

Festival of Easter 2014

Merging Self with Group Work

Martin Vieweg

This year, as we celebrate the Festival of Easter, we stand at the midway point between the direct touch of humanity by Shamballa in the year 2000 and the centennial conclave of the Hierarchy to be held in 2025. We stand in the midst of a 25 year period that began with a direct impact of the “Shamballa Force” upon awakening humanity, inaugurating a time of tremendous change. This period will culminate with the centennial conference of the Masters to be held at the close of the first quarter of the new century. At this conference the present cycle of “The Stage of the Forerunner” will come to a close and, in all probability, the Masters meeting together in conclave will decide on the next steps to be taken in preparation for the externalization of the Hierarchy and the reappearance of the Christ.

The Tibetan tells us that each time Shamballic energy “strikes into the human consciousness some fuller aspect of the divine Plan appears.”¹ The divine Plan is given impetus, and that potent energy, “which holds all things together in life...[and] is, in reality, life itself”² (the energy issuing forth from the Circle of Life—the Council Chamber at Shamballa) touches the collective human psyche, propelling humanity forward on the Path. A touch of divinity such as this brings together the energy of divine will and the creative force of active intelligence, which we embody as a race. It produces, as the Tibetan phrases it, “certain radical and momentous changes in the consciousness of the race.”³ Its impact completely alters “people’s attitude to life and their grasp of the spiritual, esoteric and subjective essentials of living.”⁴

As we come together in this *Subjective Group Conference* at Easter, we gather in the wake of this tremendous spiritual impulse. As disciples, we are challenged to assimilate the meaning of DK’s words and to deepen our response to the

touch of Shamballa. We are exhorted to recognize the importance of the opportunity at hand. We stand at a unique moment in history and—as part of the awakening body of souls who seek to serve the divine Plan – we are being prepared to act as intermediaries between humanity and the approaching spiritual Hierarchy.

The Tibetan has suggested that we might expect dramatic change under the impact of Shamballic energies now released upon the world. Our very attitude towards life and our grasp of “the subjective essentials of living” will be completely altered. He refers to this elsewhere in different terms, hinting that the challenge at hand is a shift from individual to group work. He advises his disciples to learn “to think in terms of *the Ashram*—the Ashram of the Christ, representing Sanat Kumara.”⁵ He suggests that preoccupation with personal plans and goals must eventually give way to selfless service on a higher turn of the spiral.

Thinking in terms of the Ashram reflects the theme for this year’s conference: *Ashramic Work and Self-Forgetfulness*. It points towards a lofty goal: the “true self-forgetfulness” that participation in ashramic work ultimately requires. Complete self-forgetfulness is not easily attained and must be achieved in stages. It demands “forgetfulness of the Soul’s goal as well as of personality goals.”⁶ It requires relinquishing established attitudes and patterns on several levels, for—in the end—effective ashramic work goes forward in the light of the Spiritual Triad.

Each of us, of course, stands at a different place in this quest for spiritual fulfillment, and few of us are at the place of final achievement. Some are early on the Path—actively purifying and coordinating the personality. Others are building the first span of the rainbow bridge—

getting in touch with the Soul, learning to respond to Soul guidance and direction. Some are cultivating Soul-personality fusion; others are constructing the second span of the bridge, mastering the building techniques of intention, projection, and visualization. Each stands at his or her own appropriate place on the Path and it is entirely right that this is so. As the Tibetan reminds us:

The work ... requires a diversity of quality and of potencies in order to be effective in manifestation upon the outer plane... A group of disciples such as this is consequently a miniature hierarchy, and a *hierarchy exists in its various degrees in order to permit of a wide range of effective relationships.*⁷

Whatever our contribution may be, whether it is that of a senior disciple in touch with the inner Ashram—receiving impressions and transmitting ideas into the group mind—or that of a junior disciple “not so advanced upon the Path of Discipleship” working to establish “a close connection with ordinary humanity,”⁸ we are blessed to find ourselves a part of this miniature group of spiritual workers. It is our collective effort (our united group achievement) that invokes the resurrecting impulse available to us under the full moon of Aries. It is our combined energies that give momentum to the “forces of restoration” active in the Easter period following the spring equinox.

These new and living restorative forces are under the direction and the control of One Whom we might call...the Spirit of Resurrection...[One] Who will restore livingness to people’s spiritual aims and *life* to their

planning...It is this resurrection life that will be poured into humanity at Easter time.⁹

This reference to the Spirit of Resurrection was made in the spring of 1945, the year in which

Again today—at this midpoint in the first quarter of the new millennium—the world is enveloped in war, challenged by economic strife, and faced with natural disasters on a planetary scale. Again (as in 1945) the energies of Shamballa must be mobilized to resolve the situation. Once more the energy of divine Will is needed to evoke “response from the members of the New Group of World Servers and from disciples everywhere.”

the Christ finalized his decision to return to Earth and walk again among us physically. It was the year in which the Great Invocation was given to humanity in its final form. The Tibetan advised his disciples that “the resurrecting life,” which could be invoked at that time, could “engender anew the vitality needed to implement the trends of the New Age and...guide humanity out of the dark cave of death, isolation and selfishness into the light of the new day.”¹⁰

A concentrated effort was being made by the Hierarchy to bring the World War to a close and to clear the way for the new cycle of restoration and enlightenment that could follow.

Towards this end the energies of Shamballa were invoked and the “chosen Emissary” of the Council Chamber at Shamballa—“the Spirit of Resurrection,” known as the “Sun of Righteousness”—was empowered to “carry this life-giving energy that counteracts death [and] gives incentive to life.”¹¹ This Spirit was the hope of the nations of the world.

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Remarkably, Shamballa has touched humanity twice since the close the Great War—the war to end all wars—pouring the energy of divine Will upon struggling humanity. Once in 1975, and again in the year 2000, the human family has experienced the direct impact of that “energy which brings about synthesis [and] holds all things within the circle of the divine love.”¹³ The spiritual power, which issues forth from Shamballa, is present with us.

So it is that we stand today, a miniature hierarchy in the making—disciples from around the world enrolled in a school for esoteric study. We are among those intended to become agents for the transmission of spiritual power and the resurrecting impulse that issues forth from “the center where the will of God is known.”

It is in the sign of Aries (in this season of Easter) that this great spiritual force streams forth most potently from the Center of Life. Aries is the primary conduit for the expression of this First Ray energy. It is “the initiator of impulses”—the zodiacal sign most closely in touch with the “major star of direction”—“the Pointer”—in the Great Bear from which “the will to unify” and the energy of synthesis flows. It is transmitted to the Earth via a triangle formed between the Earth and the planets Vulcan and Pluto. Vulcan and Pluto both convey First Ray energy of will and power. This blended stream of spiritual force pours down from the heavens upon the informing life of our planet, giving guidance and direction to the Lord of the World in Shamballa. It is this same potent force that produces in humanity “conscious evolution, direction and the founding of Shamballa upon the Earth.”¹⁴

It is this stream of energy that we must tap into when we enter into meditation, and it is the Purpose and Plan that this life stream embodies—the Ashramic intent engendered by its impact—which must occupy our attention—supplanting the concerns of the personality. It is to these high objectives that we shift our attention as we enter into group work. It is for this reason that we are asked to work intensely to achieve self-forgetfulness—to build a point of tension that takes the place of the many “ex-

tensions” and personal interests of the lower self.

To achieve self-forgetfulness we must first contact the greater Self and, as the Tibetan phrases it, “lose sight of the little self, its reactions, its desires, and intentions”¹⁵ through the power of the mind and will. As we do so we might keep the keyword for the soul in Aries in mind: “I come forth and from the plane of mind I rule.”

The Tibetan counseled self-forgetfulness again and again in his writings:

“Be...on the outer plane, what you are interiorly.”¹⁶

“Lose sight of the little self in the need and the opportunity of the moment.”¹⁷

“Lose sight of yourself in loving other people and feed not personality satisfaction.”¹⁸

At times he focused on the need of the group itself, as a unit, and the necessity to lose sight of everything except for the work to be done:

[Among the] group requirements that must be met and preserved by the group, as a group [is]:

Fusion. By this I mean the ability of the group to work as a unit. This is dependent upon the achieving of right individual attitudes and (when working) the attainment of the capacity *to lose sight of everything except the work to be done* and a deeply sensed love of your co-workers.¹⁹

Whatever the case, whether to hasten the development of the individual or to aid a group of disciples to build group integrity, fusion, and understanding, the cultivation of self-forgetfulness was part of the prescription—as were harmlessness and right speech. In one instance, the Tibetan combined all three behaviors in a single affirmation:

“May I fulfill my part in the One work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness and right speech.”²⁰

Notice that the reason for affirming these changes in personal behavior was to further the work to be done: “May I fulfill my part in the

One Work” through forgetting the little self, through doing no harm to others, through controlling the words that come out of my mouth.

People around the world are building these “right behavior patterns” into their lives rhythmically, silently, as they sound this dedication each day at 5:00 p.m.—linking up with the New Group of World Servers – strengthening their hands in the task of preparation for the new world to come. The Tibetan encouraged his disciples to sound these words inwardly each day—promising “magical” results:

This can be done in a few seconds of time wherever one may be and in whatever company, and *will not only aid in the magical work of the forces of light*, but will serve to stabilize individuals, to increase their group consciousness, and to teach them the process of carrying forward interior subjective activities in the face of and in spite of outer [happenings].²¹

The message is clear: “Lose sight of self in group endeavor. Forget the self in group activity.”²² We are intended to work together in this crucial time of bridging between the era now passing away and the new age to come. We are asked to do everything we can to lose sight of our own identities to make the work of the approaching Hierarchy possible.

In this type of group work, the feelings, reactions, wishes and successes of the individual most emphatically do not count. Only that is regarded as of importance that will further group effort and enrich the group consciousness.²³

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- 1 Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1960), 716.
 - 2 Ibid., 715.
 - 3 Alice A. Bailey, *The Destiny of the Nations* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1949), 13.
 - 4 Ibid., 13.
 - 5 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 374.
 - 6 Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1944), 123.
 - 7 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 213.
 - 8 Ibid., 213.
 - 9 Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1957), 457.
 - 10 Ibid., 457.
 - 11 Ibid., 458.
 - 12 Ibid., 459.
 - 13 Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 716.
 - 14 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1951), 483.
 - 15 Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1950), 78.
 - 16 Ibid., 603.
 - 17 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. II* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1955), 603.
 - 18 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I*, 236.
 - 19 Ibid., 60. Italics added.
 - 20 Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on White Magic* (New York, Lucis Publishing, 1934), 261.
 - 21 Ibid., 261. Italics added.
 - 22 Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, 413.
 - 23 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. I*, 43.

Festival of Wesak 2014

Becoming a Channel for Wesak Energies

Dorothy I. Riddle

The period of the Wesak Festival represents the high-tide of inpouring spiritual energy each year. At this time the divine Will energy becomes abundantly available through the joint efforts of the two great Avatars of the Second Aspect of Love-Wisdom: Buddha, the Principle of Light or Illumination and the divine intermediary between Shamballa and the Spiritual Hierarchy of our planet, and the Christ, the Principle of Love and the Head of the Spiritual Hierarchy. We are reminded that at the Taurus full moon, the Buddha will:

become the “absorbing Agent” of the First Ray force. He will use the magnetic power of the Second Ray to attract this force to Himself and will hold it steady, prior to redirecting it. The Christ will then —on behalf of the Hierarchy—become the “receiving Agent” of this potent energy, and the seven groups of Masters Who work with the human and sub-human kingdoms will (in response to His demand) become the “directing Agents” for the sevenfold expression of this force.¹

The possibilities for spiritual engagement during the Wesak Festival are so great that we are asked to consciously devote five days to this festival: “The two days of preparation are to be known as ‘days of renunciation and detachment.’ The day of the Festival is to be known as the ‘day of safe guarding’ while the two succeeding days are called the ‘days of distribution.’”² During the days of preparation, we are called on to renounce all that could prevent us from being clear channels of spiritual energy. On the day of the full moon, we are asked to become reservoirs for the boundless spiritual force streaming toward us from the “directing Agents” and to absorb and hold safe as much of that spiritual force as we can. Once the full moon and the inpouring of Will energy have passed, we have the responsibility to

transmit that spiritual energy on to all who are receptive.

Achieving Self-Forgetfulness

Wesak is truly a festival of self-forgetfulness, of immersing ourselves in our task of evoking goodwill and engendering right relations in the human family. The Tibetan has instructed us as follows:

As channels, we must be prepared to forget ourselves in the service of touching, containing and holding force for the rest of humanity. We must regard the Festival itself as a day of silence (I refer to an inner peace and silent solemnity that can be preserved unbroken though outwardly serving with speech and spoken interest), a day of service carried forward entirely on esoteric levels, and of complete self-forgetfulness in the remembrance of humanity and its need. During that period, two thoughts only will hold our constant attention —the need of others and the necessity of providing a group channel whereby the spiritual forces can be poured through the body of humanity under the expert guidance of the chosen members of the Hierarchy.³

How do we achieve the self-forgetfulness needed to serve as reservoirs for the incoming energy? Is it by blotting out who we are, our individual identity? One of the critical stages in our personal growth is individuation, so how could our individual self-expression be wrong? Alice Bailey offered this clarification in her autobiography:

An esoteric school trains disciples in group work. They learn to relinquish personality plans in the interest of group purpose — ever directed to the service of humanity and the Hierarchy. They become merged in group activities and—losing one of their

individualized and particularized identity—they are dedicated contributors to the Plan, with no thought of the separated self conditioning their thinking.⁴

We can focus instead on expanding our circle of consciousness or awareness so that it encompasses more than ourselves, to become “personally so decentralized that automatically the sense of ‘others’ is far stronger in [us] than the sense of personality or of the lower self.”⁵ We have the opportunity to become decentralized on at least three levels. First, we experience becoming a Soul-infused personality, with our individualized identity becoming infused with Soul purpose and our personal plans superseded by the Plan. Second, we merge that Soul-infused personality with our group, through identification with the Group Soul of which our Soul is a part, to form a more potent vehicle for world service. Third, we visualize our group(s) as part of the larger New Group of World Servers, sharing a common dedication to the Plan.

Instead of experiencing individuation as separateness, then, we can practice the delicate balance of recognizing our own unique role to play while remembering that we are part of a whole, the One Life.

It is therefore literally and eternally true that the same energetic Life pours through the planetary centers, into and through the three periodical vehicles of the incarnated Monad, and finally into and through the three centers in the human etheric body that correspond to the three major centers of the Planetary Logos. There is, therefore, no-

where to be found any basis for separation or any possible point of separation or of essential division. Any sense of separateness is due simply to ignorance and to the fact that certain energies are as yet unable to make adequate impression upon the human consciousness, functioning in time and space. The essential synthesis exists and the end is sure and inevitable; unity is attainable because unity exists and the sense of separateness is simply the Great Illusion.⁶

Once decentralized, our initial role during the Festival of Wesak is to ensure that we contribute to, rather than interfere with, the downpouring of spiritual energy. This is a primary role of our meditation practice—to become proficient at being clear channels without distortion from astral energies: “The focused thinker is always aware emotionally of the descent of the higher impression... This must,

however, be recorded by a perfectly quiescent astral vehicle, and therefore you will see one of the main objectives of true meditation.”⁷

Forming the Wesak Chalice

We are told that “the Plan for humanity has three great goals: The revelation of love; the illumination of the mind; the evocation of the Will.”⁸ The “day of safe guarding” is indeed about the evocation of the Will, coming together as a group to form the chalice or reservoir that will contain the spiritual force that becomes available. To understand the importance of forming a chalice, picture the difference between a tap from which water runs out and a tap with a container under it that catches the water. Once that container is full, the water can be poured out in greater volume

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and impact than is true of the steady stream. The same is true of water that is contained within a physical reservoir behind a dam. By forming an energetic chalice or reservoir, we are able to store the available spiritual energy and then release it with intention and force.

Why is it important that we experience the inflow of Wesak energy in group formation rather than simply individually? First, together we are able to contain more spiritual energy than we can individually. So we are then in a position to release a larger volume of energy to greater purpose.

Second, each of us has our own particular vibrational pattern. If we think of a tapestry, a single thread may be beautiful, but it does not create a full picture by itself or have the breadth and depth of dimension to serve as a container. Instead it is the interweaving of the many colors and textures that results in a complete design, able to be fashioned into a strong container. So too with our group work. Functioning as a group produces a fabric that is richer and more encompassing than any single individual—and more capable of attracting and containing Wesak energy. All of us have a part to play because an effective group is comprised of servers at all levels of spiritual maturation.

Third, there is the matter of the protective role of the group. The Will energy downpouring from Shamballa is intense and we need to be shielded from its full impact, much as we need dark glasses to look safely at the sun. The Tibetans have indicated to us:

Individuals must be protected by the group from the terrific potencies that emanate from Shamballa. These must be stepped down for them by the process of distribution so that the impact is not focused in any one or all of their centers but is shared by all the group members. Here is the clue to the significance of group work. One of its major functions, esoterically speaking, is to absorb, share, circulate, and then distribute energy.

This process of protection and of distribution is one of the functions of the great

meeting of all the Hierarchy [at the Wesak Festival], under the aegis of the three Great Lords (the Manu, the Mahachohan and the Christ) in that high and sacred valley in the Himalayas where annually – after due preparation – the Hierarchy makes contact with Shamballa and a relationship is then set up between the ‘bright and living center’ and the ‘radiating and magnetic center,’ in order that the ‘acquiescent waiting center’ may be stimulated to move forward upon the ladder of evolution. Even the Hierarchy Itself needs the protection of Its full membership in order rightly to absorb the incoming energies and later wisely to distribute the forces of the divine Will in the three worlds where lies Their major responsibility. The focused divine Will, in its immediate implications and application, constitutes the point of tension from which Shamballa works in order to bring about the eventual fruition of the divine Purpose.⁹

Working with Wesak Energy

Our spiritual work does not stop with receiving the Wesak energy. We are then responsible for its appropriate distribution. Thus we reenact the combined work of the Buddha and the Christ on a smaller scale. When we evoke the Will energy, we are functioning “vertically” in relation to the downpouring of spiritual force. As we step down and distribute that energy, we are functioning “horizontally” in linking with the rest of humanity.

Distributing energy effectively involves learning to work with Will energy. In her 1941 address to commentators, Alice Bailey pointed out that “esoteric schools do *not* exist to teach the rules of raja yoga and of good character. They exist for one main reason and that is to evoke the spiritual Will in their students, disciples and initiates and instruct them in its use.”

While we may think of spiritual teaching as a Ray Two function and of the School for Esoteric Studies as being a Ray Two school linked to Master DK, all esoteric schools are actually rooted in Shamballa with Master Morya as their Head. “The reason that a First Ray Master is thus the Head is because it is the Will aspect

that is developed within the Ashram. It is the service of the Plan that binds the seven Ashrams, with their subsidiary Ashrams, into the one great Ashram.... The magnetic, dynamic energy of the first aspect of divinity is found at the heart of each of the seven Ashrams, fed from a reservoir of Will energy that is found at the heart of the great Ashram Itself.”¹⁰

Our active group engagement with Will energy foreshadows the formal shift that will take place in how esoteric discipleship training occurs. In the future, the “average aspirant to discipleship will be expected to be as intuitive and motivated by pure reason as the aspirant today has to be mental. Technically speaking, that means that the buddhic plane will be the focus or place of growth, and those who train disciples will work from the plane of atma or pure spiritual Will, just as today they work from the plane of buddhi or of rational unity.”¹¹

So with what intention shall we transmit and distribute Will energy after the Taurus full moon has passed? Our central aim always is to evoke the expression of goodwill within humanity and strengthen right human relations. We also have a continuing responsibility to break the patterns of evil in our world that are fed by criticism, selfishness, and separateness. “There is only one way in which focused evil will, with its responsiveness 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 [Will] energy and can learn how to invoke and evoke it.”¹²

As members of the New Group of World Servers, this Wesak Festival of 2014 has special importance for us. It marks the beginning of both a new three-year cycle and a new nine-year cycle in our work together. The beginning of these cycles is known as the period of crisis and consolidation, a time of intense internal examination that lays the foundation for the next round of group work. This Wesak Festival introduces a time for us to clarify what we have learned so far and articulate our vision for what is to come. It provides us with a specific

opportunity to identify and eliminate any habits of criticism, selfishness, or separateness that are still active in ourselves or our groups.

As members of the School for Esoteric Studies, we form one of the groups within the New Group of World Servers that has responsibility for the distribution of Wesak energy. This unique time of Will energy transmittal can assist us in our role as synthesizing agents in the world, building bridges and reaching across the cleavages of separateness in service to humanity. It is a time for us to remember that our group is not simply a collection of persons with a common interest in esoteric studies. While providing esoteric discipleship training is our main field of service as an esoteric school, engagement with the School needs to be not only as students. Our School is not like a college from which one receives an education and then graduates, with the option of an alumnus relationship. Rather, we jointly undertake lifelong esoteric study, some of which is explicitly mentored through commentary, in order to be of service as part of the Group Soul’s dedication to the working out of the Plan.

As we enter the Wesak Festival period this year, let us be conscious of joining with our co-workers in the School (as well as with our co-workers in other groups of which we are a part) to form an immense chalice in which we can receive the abundant Will energy available and then to transmit that energy onward so that it activates the expression of goodwill and the healing of cleavages.

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1957), 440.

² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1942), 686-687.

³ *Ibid.*, 687.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Unfinished Autobiography* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 268.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1955), 297-298.

⁶ Alice A. Bailey, *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle* (New York: Lucis Publishing: 1950), 137-138.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 1* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1944), 411.

⁹ Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1960), 68-69.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 380.

¹¹ Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age, Vol. 2*, 669.

¹² Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis Publishing, 1951), 586.

Festival of Goodwill 2014

Generating Goodwill between Esoteric Groups

Dorothy I. Riddle and Miguel Malagreca

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 channeling 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. Therefore, we have a situation in which individual awareness and cooperative functioning are 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.

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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 deliberate 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 multimedia 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.

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- 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.