

The Cycle of Conferences – The Geneva Accord

The Battle of Wills

In the midst of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East an end to the spiral of violence seems farther away than ever, yet according to Ulrich Tilgner, Journalist and Middle East expert “the Geneva Accord is well worth a try...but a breakthrough will require a major act of will by all involved”. 1. In the Cycle of Conferences meditation, as we visualise and project, through the mind’s eye, a lighted seed of ‘will energy’, we are contributing our quota of energy to the emergence of an “act of will” by the creation of a lighted thoughtform mobilising and clarifying public opinion and radiating out to all those who stand in positions of influence. This is steady persistent work, which takes place behind the scenes. It is subjective work - an act of faith, without obvious results, faith that is based upon the will of the soul, recognition of divinity and knowledge that there is a Plan. It is work based upon the idea that, “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” 2. In other words, human conduct and behaviour is determined by the quality of our thoughts. If enough people of goodwill can think imaginatively the will-to-good will be anchored on earth and higher spiritual principles will be energised helping to bring about the necessary shift in human thinking that will lead the way to peace and security for the people of the Middle East. Without a radical and upward shift in thinking the conflict will continue to escalate.

The well known truism “where there’s a will there’s a way” illustrates the idea that the cultivation of the will brings the power of choice, and the disposition to act according to certain principles.³ According to Roberto Assagioli, in his book *The Act of Will*, “everyone can have, or has had, the existential experience of “willing” - but often without full realisation or a clear understanding” of how the will operates. He goes on to say that, the will operates “...at all levels of existence - from the personal to the transpersonal and reaching into the realm where the individual will merges with the universal will”. 4.

Observation of life and events may lead us to the conclusion that there are two opposing wills at work: the lesser will of the personality conditioned by our desires and the higher, sacrificial, will of the soul. Sometimes the lesser will is in total control, at other times the higher will makes its presence known, but very often there is a swinging back and forth between the two. The clash of wills, works out in our own lives, in family life, in communities and nations as well as in international relations bringing crisis after crisis, tension and strain. The resultant pain and suffering continues until a climax is reached whereupon there may be an inner cry for help from a higher source - the soul, the spirit within the form, higher reason, or God, or whatever name this higher source may be called in the diverse religious traditions and philosophies of the world. Then a breakthrough - an opportunity, may occur where reason penetrates the darkness; there is light at the end of the tunnel. This light of higher reason has appeared during the course of the Middle East conflict but has been extinguished, periodically, by the restricted vision of lesser human wills. Immense setbacks follow small steps of progress such as in the assassination, by extremists, of political leaders such as Anwar Sadat, and Yitzak Rabin, and in the collapse of the Oslo agreement due to the determination of extremists on both sides. Amidst such setbacks tremendous endurance and courage is required to keep, keeping on towards the path of peace and understanding - a path that is “razor-edged”.

In the volatile situation in the Middle East the battle of wills has intensified with inhuman and indiscriminate acts of violence. The voice of moderate opinion is not heard in the midst of turmoil and the clamour for revenge following suicide attacks by fanatics on Israeli civilians and the “eye for an eye” Israeli response. In the words of Professor Herman Schwartz at American University’s Washington College of Law and an authority on civil, human rights and constitutional law, “Despite the obvious differences between the two communities, and perhaps because of them, all of us have no choice but to work for a society in which people who see the world very differently can live together in peace and in justice. The heaviest responsibility falls on the Jewish community, for it is by far the dominant, though the burden of responsibility on Palestinians is not a light one either. There must be an acceptance of the other’s culture. There must be no discrimination against the minority - not in the law, not in political representation and not in social welfare legislation. At the same time, the Palestinian community must recognise the justifiable fears of its Jewish counterpart. No society hit with suicide bombing in restaurants, buses, shopping malls and other sites of ordinary, normal life where innocent adults and children congregate, can be expected to react coolly and with restraint, necessary as such attributes may be. Understanding the other’s fears and tragedies is incumbent on both communities”. 5

Whilst there can be no negotiation with fanatics on either side, for they see and hear no reason, the long term solution would seem to lie in mobilising the goodwill of the “silent” majority on both sides who yearn for peace and security. Peace and security can only come through changed attitudes and the isolation of extremism; otherwise, as has been said, “the doctrine of an eye for an eye will result in the world being blind”. 6.

As a meditating group, using the creative imagination, it is possible to visualise in the mind’s eye a bridge of understanding - a bridge of wills - where strands of light, love and goodwill, bring about a fusion of wills for the good of the whole and, in the case of the Palestinian and Israeli situation, bridging “...the gaps between the two sides on the most sensitive issues”. 7 “Bridging the gaps” requires two-way communication and dialogue and a meeting up of hearts and minds. When enough people are receptive to the needs of others, have empathy with them and recognise that all human beings have the same needs and desire for peace and security then an upsurge in the desire for a just compromise can draw down the higher will, which will bring down the light of understanding and reason so overcoming the limitations of the lesser will.

The principles of the Geneva Accord initiative are based on a spirit of compromise and the Accord seeks to mobilise the power of public opinion on both sides of the divide with the hope that public support will bring pressure and willingness to compromise on the political leadership of both Israelis and Palestinians. The initiative represents “the possibilities of a partnership based on equality and justice... The only thing missing is the lack of political will to transform it from an initiative into an agreement”. 8 At the present time, due to the escalation in the spiral of violence, the political will for compromise is lacking, but ultimately long term security for both Israelis and Palestinians can only be found through a consensus supported by all people of goodwill in the Middle East and in the international community, especially the United States. Informed and enlightened public opinion of all people of goodwill is a potent force for good and can help bring about the necessary climate where compromise can be discussed.

Throughout the ages, especially in humanity’s recent history, it seems significant that during times of crisis the higher will can evoke spiritual qualities such as persistence, endurance, courage and resoluteness in the face of the most adverse circumstances. Perhaps one of the most striking examples of this “spirit” of the will was in the leadership of Winston Churchill in the early part of the Second World War when Britain stood alone against the overwhelming forces of evil. In more recent times who can deny the iron will of Nelson Mandela to come through his 27 years in captivity, or the quiet wilful courage and endurance of Aung San Suu Kyi in the struggle for democracy in Myanmar (Burma). And it’s inspiring to consider that signs of the higher will in human activity are widespread with steadfastness of purpose, persistence and tenacity and endurance manifesting in all kinds of situations, such as, the patient will of the experimental scientist, the endurance of the Olympic athlete, the one pointed purpose of the mountain climber and the resolute will of the politician to bring change to society, to name but a few examples.

According to the Ageless Wisdom teachings, from an esoteric perspective, the will is much more than the previously mentioned qualities, or “a forceful expression of intention or fixed determination... It is fundamentally an expression of the Law of Sacrifice; under this law, there is recognition of the sense of responsibility, identification with the whole and everything is relinquished for the good of all; the will-to-good then dominates”. 9 Sacrifice is not a giving up, rather it is transmutation of the lower self and its desires into the higher will of the soul, so that the life intention is made holy or sacred. Then, the light of reason can shine through the dark clouds of unreason to reveal the potential divinity within the outer form.

Headquarters Group
Cycle of Conferences

1. Swiss Info news www.swissinfo.org 2.The Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO 3. Webster’s International Dictionary 4. The Act of Will, by Roberto Assagioli. page v.
5. New Israel Fund website www.newisraelfund.org <<http://www.newisraelfund.org>> 6. Observer newspaper 10/10/04 7. Forward Newspaper on line 7/10/04, article by Qaddoura Fares; ww.forward.com 8. Ibid.9. Adapted from Discipleship in The New Age 11, p. 269/270

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