



A regular bulletin highlighting the energy of goodwill in world affairs

ASPECTS OF FREEDOM

FREEDOM IS AN APPARENTLY SIMPLE CONCEPT, yet it has profound implications for all aspects of human life. In particular, it largely determines the social, economic and political structures of society. Over the last few months, the 'Arab Spring' has revealed that the desire for political freedoms that many in the West already take for granted is strong enough to topple long-established regimes. On the other hand, the riots in Britain have led at least some politicians to propose the curtailing of current freedoms. Both cases show, in different ways, that the level of freedom within a society can never be regarded as fixed, but should be seen as an evolving, dynamic process. With this in mind, World Goodwill will be exploring the theme of "Freedom and Spiritual Security" at our annual seminar in London, New York and Geneva on Saturday, October 29 (see notice for more details).

The articles in this issue all relate to the theme of freedom from different angles. In *Freedom and World Citizenship*, freedom is examined both in broad philosophical and spiritual terms, and also in relation to its very practical consequences for humanity. It is linked with the capacity for the individual to more fully express their indwelling soul. One of the main conclusions is that, for freedom to be fully enjoyed by any person, it must be available to everyone, and so all people of goodwill have the responsibility to seek to strengthen freedom wherever possible. And one of the ways in which this process of strengthening freedom may come about is through the practical sharing of planetary resources through international development aid, as discussed in *Goodwill: the Spirit of Sharing*. The connection between sharing through aid and expanding freedom is somewhat indirect, and not guaranteed – after all, corruption is an ever-present danger. But what is clear is that, without international sharing, the very pre-conditions for some economic freedoms, such as funding for health care or housing, may be seriously delayed.

Health care and adequate housing are sometimes described as entitlements, and are among the basic rights set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Different nation-states with different political systems have come up with widely varying interpretations of just how much the individual citizen is entitled to. *Entitlement* seeks to put this debate within the context of the famous Four Freedoms articulated by Franklin Roosevelt. And one area where many nation-states could improve is in the ways in which they deal with minorities whose culture differs from the culture of the majority. Historically, such minorities have tended to find that their rights and freedoms are more limited than those of the majority. The article on *Cultural Sensitives* proposes a new type of vocation which could help to ensure that minorities are fairly dealt with – particularly important in a time where cultures are intermingling more and more.

According to Alice Bailey, "The principle of freedom is a leavening energy which can permeate substance in a unique manner;... This principle of freedom is one of the attributes of Deity (like will, love and mind) of which humanity knows as yet little. The freedom for which men fight is one of the lowest aspects of this cosmic freedom, which is related to certain great evolutionary developments that enable the life or spirit aspect to free itself from the impact, the contact and the influence of substance." (Alice Bailey, *A Treatise on the Seven Rays* Vol.V p.416). It is perhaps because the principle of freedom is a largely uncharted mystery that we do not yet have a clear picture of a society within which each and every member is truly free. At our Seminar this year on "Freedom and Spiritual Security", we hope to explore this mystery together with our invited speakers, and you are warmly invited to join us.

Please note: the text of the articles is drawn from the latest "World View" articles that are, since the end of 2009, being posted monthly to the World Goodwill home page on our website (www.worldgoodwill.org) An archive of past World Views is also available. Another recent development is the addition of a blog focusing on examples of goodwill in the news.

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**Notice:
World Goodwill Seminar**

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Freedom and World Citizenship

The concept of freedom is currently at the forefront of thought in connection with the rising of the peoples in the Arab world in search of the freedoms that other nations enjoy. The resolve of the United Nations has once again been tested, and this time the response demonstrated a collective will to offer protection to those subject to the terrifying repercussions of persecution and slaughter. The secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon, played a crucial role in leading the Security Council to adopt its resolution on Libya in response to "clear-cut violations of all norms governing international behaviour and serious transgressions of international human rights and international law." It is a hopeful sign that the will of the United Nations is on the ascendant and that the future may see this representative body of the nations of the world empowered to vigorously uphold the right of all citizens to the essential freedoms that should dignify human life. The past 250 years of world history has been deeply affected by the idea of freedom as people struggled with the injustices and imposed poverty of a world order that preserves the wealth and safety of the few at the expense of the misery, destitution and slavery of the many. Unsurprisingly, moves to establish various freedoms – even the idea of freedom itself – have usually been suppressed by the state. An interesting example of this is Schiller's poem "Ode to Joy" which Beethoven used in his 9th Symphony. What most people do not realise is that the poem was originally an ode to 'freedom', but that the censors would never have allowed it to be published in this form. So Schiller used the word *freude* (joy) to replace *freiheit* (freedom). This makes quite a difference to the first line of the poem – *Joy, beautiful spark of the gods*, instead of *Freedom, beautiful spark of the gods*. Joy is spiritual and no threat to the established order: freedom is a call to action based on a vision of a better future.

Like everything else, our understanding of concepts such as "freedom" has evolved over time through personal, societal and cultural experience. Centuries back, people saw liberty simply as freedom of personal action, in other words "to do as one pleases," but today an altogether deeper understanding allied to a growing sense of responsibility and respect for others has evolved. Great thinkers have seeded spiritual ideas concerning freedom and responsibility in human consciousness which have guided humanity forward to the point where they are now recognised by many as the essential cornerstones of a more just and happier world.

One such thinker was Aristotle, who posited that the main purpose of politics is not the imposition of law and order, the facilitation of economic transactions or the prevention of personal injustices, but more the cultivation of virtue and the unfolding of 'the good'. Aristotle argued that the cultivation of virtue is its own reward as it leads to true happiness and a happy person

Aid and the spirit of sharing

In the writings of Alice Bailey, it is said that the great spiritual achievement and evolutionary event of our age will be the communion and human relationships established among all peoples, enabling people everywhere to sit down together in

exhibits an appropriate balance between reason and desire, with moderation characterizing all. This path to happiness, he said, can only be attained through active participation in a society. For just as the playing of a musical instrument cannot be learned through study alone but requires practice, virtue can only be cultivated through the exercise of our human capacity for communication and the ability to deliberate between right and wrong, justice and injustice as they manifest themselves in political and social life. To the modern mind the "cultivation of virtue" may seem quaint but it's only in the demonstration of "the good" that we can ultimately see a true, spiritual freedom developing for all humanity.

While the democracies of the world may as yet be far from virtuous, the appetite for political and social debate is keen and dynamic – a discerning sense of ethics and values is constantly unfolding as the moral heart of important issues becomes ever clearer to the majority. Through passionate debate, wider perspectives are developing, greater inclusiveness and, paradoxically, the rudiments of that cool, detached observation so vital to treading the spiritual path. For growing numbers of people who enjoy a good measure of liberty and equality, the principle of freedom is flowering into the ideal of "world citizenship" and the "good of the whole". And they realise that this great vision will remain frustrated until each one of us is able to participate in this unfolding goodwill. Failed states, repressed minorities, the plight of refugees and victims of crime are deep concerns that stand between us all and full planetary citizenship.

Ultimately, the principle of freedom is an expansive force within the human condition that is driving the whole race towards world citizenship. It raises consciousness out of old and crystallized ways of thinking and behaving that hamper the fuller expression of the soul within which knows the essential unity of all things on the inner side of life. Evolving concepts of happiness, wealth and freedom reflect and support the soul's longing to express the unity of life as an inclusive state where the individual's sense of happiness, wealth and freedom is inseparable from that of others. Freedom is a leavening energy that raises consciousness steadily towards the light of the spiritual realms on a journey that has to be made in conjunction with all human souls and indeed, the other kingdoms of nature too. The first view of planet Earth from space drove this recognition right to the foreground of consciousness. A beautiful, jeweled sphere of turquoise blue and white, set against the blackness of space describes with geometric precision the extent of the boundary of what each human being should be able to call 'home'. And, by extension of this thought, all human beings who live here are truly one family.

the Presence of the Christ and *share* the bread and wine (symbols of nourishment). She notes that preparations for this symbolic shared feast are on their way, and those preparations are being made as people struggle and legislate for

the economic sustenance of their nations, and as the theme of food occupies the attention of legislators everywhere. The difficulty of this task should not be underestimated, as it is undeniable that the Earth's fertile croplands, as well as minerals, fresh water, and other resources that sustain human life, are far from equally distributed among the nations. Thus, arriving at right sharing requires the conquest of selfishness on the part of national governments. What are the governments of the world currently doing to meet this challenge?

In early May this year, the United Nations convened a conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Istanbul. The UN uses three main criteria to decide whether a country falls into this category: low average income; human resource weakness (based on indicators of nutrition, health, education, and adult literacy); and economic vulnerability. At the moment, 48 countries across the world are classified as LDCs.¹ Moving towards a more developed state is a complex process, involving many different factors, and this was recognised in the Programme of Action released by the Conference. Nevertheless, one significant component of development continues to be direct development aid from governments. Development aid is distinct from humanitarian aid, which is given in response to short-term disasters.

The simplicity of the term 'aid' masks the complexity of the political and economic factors which come into play when considering who gives what to whom. To take one recent example, Britain has been a long-term donor to India, partly because of its historical link as an ex-colony. But now, India's economic progress means that India has its own aid programme, and a small but growing space programme. Thus, the question of whether Britain should continue to give aid to India has received attention in both British and Indian media. A key fact which complicates the picture is that poverty is still a major factor in Indian society: as economist Andy Sumner observes, almost a billion people living in middle-income countries like India are poor.

So donors have not only to consider the LDCs, which have high *average* levels of poverty (implying also at the low end, terrible extremes of poverty), but also the poor within middle-income countries, who may require more sophisticated targeting. As we enter an era of high technology, the transfer of data (e.g. satellite imagery), knowledge (e.g. how to interpret this data), and expertise (e.g. how to translate these interpretations into positive policies) may become increasingly important to the governments of middle-income countries, relative to simple monetary transfers. And, as Sumner argues, middle-income countries may also "be more concerned with the designing of favorable and coherent development policies on remittances and migration, trade preferences, and climate negotiations and financing".

As a set of broad targets for the outcomes of aid, the UN Millennium Development Goals help to give a relatively simple

answer to the question, "what is aid intended to achieve?"² Nevertheless, because each 'developing' country will be at different stages of having reached each of the eight goals, it still means that donor countries have to consider how to help each recipient on a case-by-case basis. A basic UN target for the amount needed to achieve such goals, agreed in 1970, is that donor countries should give 0.7% of GDP, which a small number of developed countries now meet or exceed.³

Not everyone believes that aid is an unalloyed good. The Hungarian economist Peter Baur proposed that aid increases the power of governments and fosters corruption, and, echoing this argument, the African economist Dambisa Moyo, in her book *Dead Aid*, suggests that aid isn't a good idea, but that foreign investment is. She believes that, as it is right now, foreign aid only exacerbates Africa's problems, and that stopping it would actually spur economic growth. She says, "There is a consistent flow of evidence over the past 60 years that aid has not gone to support productive investments, and rather it's gone to support despotic and tyrannical leaders across the continent. But corruption's just one of the problems. I think the most fundamental problem is that aid disenfranchises Africans, and in that sense it means governments are not accountable to Africans. They spend their time courting international donors who basically pay their livelihoods." Also, the Center for Global Development (cgdev.org), a US think tank, publishes a Commitment to Development Index which encompasses not just aid, but also a number of other factors such as trade, investment, migration etc. It is intended to highlight the fact that aid is not just about quantity, but also quality, and that development policy is about more than just aid.

What the Commitment to Development Index helps to return us to once more is the great complexity of the issues involved when countries simply try to share with one other. What can't be denied is that the impulse to share is never wrong. The challenge lies in finding ways to intelligently channel this heart-centred impulse. There are many creative initiatives now led by civil society which are finding innovative ways to help disadvantaged groups in every land. If governments can find ways to create partnerships with civil society, this will surely help aid be deployed more effectively. Above all, if goodwill can intelligently motivate the governments of donor and recipient countries, and their citizens, then development aid would become in truth right sharing, a necessary prerequisite to right relationships among all the peoples of the Earth. When the resources of the Earth are so distributed that every individual, and thus every nation, can realise its full potential, then surely we shall see an era of creative global cooperation that will mark a great step forward in humanity's spiritual progress.

1. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Least_developed_country#Current_LDCs_for_a_list.

2. The UN Millennium Development Goals are discussed in more detail here: www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

3. See www.unmillenniumproject.org/press/07.htm

Entitlement

The question of entitlement is much in the public mind today. In principle, an entitlement is a guarantee of access to benefits because of inherent rights or by law. Entitlements are the benefits which a society guarantees to everyone who meets established conditions of need. They are intended to promote social equality and to protect those who would otherwise be vulnerable.

In a more casual sense, however, an entitlement is the expectation that an individual is deserving of some particular reward or benefit, simply because it exists. "A sense of entitlement" describes the prevailing condition of a society where individual wants override concern for the common good, leaping over the demarcation that distinguishes rights from personal privilege.

"I'm entitled" is the cry of the separated personality who nurses a sense of grievance and harbours a suspicion of unfair treatment. "I'm entitled" is also the expectation of the powerful, wealthy members of a society who regard their interests as pre-eminent. Because the nature of the unredeemed personality is to focus on self-interest, entitlements are often disguised through the creation of legal and bureaucratic structures to guard the interests of the powerful. This can create a situation in which entitlements, ideally intended to protect the poorer, more "deserving" members of the society, actually serve the interests of the more powerful and wealthy while, at the same time, casting the poorer and less powerful as lazy and irresponsible for needing special consideration.

The question of who is entitled, and to what, is of critical importance to any society where there is a substantial disparity in income, a phenomenon which has developed in many societies in recent decades. So long as there is freedom to pursue opportunity, together with the assurance that entitlements will be fairly administered, a certain margin of disparity can be tolerated. However, the growing sense of inequity in the distribution of wealth which has been brought into the limelight by the worldwide economic crisis is fuelling the fires of distrust in "the system".

Austerity measures imposed by governments have brought an abrupt end to the "good times" and many are finding it difficult to accept that they are not necessarily entitled to the comforts and pleasures they are accustomed to and have considered so necessary for everyday living. The fact that the rich are still getting richer heightens this discomfort and distrust in a "me first" culture and we can see a direct connection between a sense of entitlement and a lack of concern for the larger community.

And yet, it is only through the welfare of the whole community that anyone can receive their basic entitlements – the entitlement to peace, health and security. Research has proved that societies in which there is a significant imbalance in income distribution are actually less well balanced, less stable, and more prone to health and social problems

than societies with less margin of difference between the wealthier and poorer segments of the population. Research has also proved that, above a certain level, more wealth does not create greater happiness, health or longevity. The Equality Trust reports that social mobility is also lower and geographical segregation greater in more unequal societies. Societies with smaller income differences between the rich and poor are more cohesive: community life is stronger, levels of trust are higher, and there is less violence.

Addressing the urgent needs of the most vulnerable members of a society is an expression of compassion. But it is also the case that the evolutionary journey of the soul is one of inherited karma from a long-forgotten past. In this sense, personal responsibility for one's circumstances is unavoidable. Each soul has to address his or her own karma, but in a caring, compassionate society, governments can help by providing entitlements as stepping stones on the way.

Seeing entitlements in this way is more constructive than taking the attitude that "the world owes me something"; that if something bad happens to me, others should make it better. Perhaps this attitude stems from confusing entitlements with human rights, which are "the freedoms to which all humans are entitled". The evolution of the soul requires these freedoms in order to develop a progressive awareness of the interrelationships which sustain the web of life on our planet. Every human being lives within this network, helps to sustain it, and is sustained by it; and the four freedoms articulated by the late U.S. President Roosevelt describe the essential foundation required for every human being to fully participate in this web of life:

Freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

Freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

Freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants—everywhere in the world.

Freedom from fear—which, translated into world terms, means a worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour—anywhere in the world.

These freedoms are the prerequisites for a more secure world and every man, woman and child in the world is entitled to them. Specifically the third freedom, "freedom from want", secured by economic sharing, is that which can eventually lead to a reduction in the importance of entitlements in the social and economic fabric of society, leading to greater participation in the national and international life of the Human Race.

Cultural sensitives – a new vocation for a world of intermingling cultures

“Multiculturalism” is a term which has been in the news recently, as a number of politicians, including the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, have expressed doubts about its success within their countries. In a political context, it has been defined as “the advocacy of extending equitable status to distinct ethnic and religious groups without promoting any specific ethnic, religious, and/or cultural community values as central.” Another very similar term is “pluralism”, although pluralism seems to have a more positive sense of celebrating different cultures within a nation.

“Culture” itself is a term with a number of meanings. In ordinary discussion, it often refers to the arts. Yet, taken in its widest sense, it extends far beyond the arts to encompass a complex synthesis of social, religious and political values and expectations. It is therefore fundamentally subjective in nature. However, crucially, as we shall see later, it is expressed through objective institutions and practices. It is strongly connected with an individual’s sense of identity. It is also connected with national identity – a nation usually has a sense of a shared cultural heritage. Yet it is not confined to nations – for religions, political ideologies and other dimensions of culture cross national boundaries. This is one reason why the politics concerning culture is so difficult: because it means that national cultures and national identities cannot remain fixed and static, particularly if nations are open to immigration.

Another reason for the difficulty is that, especially in liberal democracies, the notion that the state can, or should, intervene in the practices of a specific group with their own cultural identity, may conflict with the obligations embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And there is also the fact that, because culture is so subjective, agreeing upon its exact nature is difficult. Thus, two co-religionists, even of the same sect, may differ in their interpretation of what its commandments requires of them. Two people of the same political party may disagree on the best policies for their nation. Two people of the same nationality may look to differing national symbols, myths, and heroes to support their own sense of what it means to be Egyptian or Nigerian or Dutch. This is why, in the arguments over multiculturalism, so much attention is paid to the physical symbols and practices that express the culture – a style of clothing, a type of building, and so on. Yet because those symbols and practices may *mean* different things, even to people within a cultural group, never mind to those outside the group, the opportunities for disagreement and contention are, sadly, many.

A single well-known case helps illustrate this point: the recent banning of the niqab (a veil covering everything but the eyes) in France. One of the significant points of disagreement between those opposed to the ban, and those supporting it, is whether wearers of the niqab actually choose to do so, or are compelled by others within their cultural group. The answer turns in part on how the women wearing the niqab, others within their cultural group, and those within other

groups, interpret the meaning of wearing it. Is it a sign of religiously recommended modesty? Of patriarchal oppression? Of an attempt to conceal personal identity? Or is it a political statement?

How are conundrums like these to be resolved? Should nation-states encourage people from other lands to assimilate, blending into the national culture – the so-called “melting pot” approach? Should they allow them to retain as much of their cultural distinctiveness as possible – the multicultural or “cultural mosaic” response? Perhaps the answer may vary with the maturity and stability of each nation’s own cultural identity. Another way of thinking about culture, which comes from Alice Bailey’s writings, suggests one approach that could help.

Alice Bailey proposes that there are degrees to which a person may be cultured, and that to be cultured means to have the ability to correlate the world of meaning with the world of outer effects. Another way of saying this, which links with the earlier definition, is that, while most people are subconsciously conditioned by the ideas which motivate their own culture, and participate more or less unquestioningly in the institutions and practices that express that culture, a *cultural sensitive* is someone who can explicitly and consciously understand that culture. This heightened cultural sensitivity would also give them deeper insight into the culture of other groups, making them ideal candidates for helping to mediate between different cultures, forging contacts and suggesting paths of mutual agreement. A key prerequisite for such work is goodwill, for it is only within an atmosphere of goodwill that the subtle and demanding work of making cultural symbols intelligible to both sides can proceed.

Humanity has made a start in this area, through the creation of the field of cultural anthropology. The work done in this area would be very useful in helping the cultural sensitive to develop cross-cultural understanding. True success in this work would also require training in meditation, for the cultural sensitive must be able to free himself from the habitual reactions which his culture has instilled in him, and to achieve this level of detachment from the self requires the stern discipline of the mind and emotions which meditation can provide. We can imagine a future in which, if a potential cultural conflict emerges within a nation, trained cultural sensitives are delegated by that nation’s government to meet with all parties concerned within the nation, and also with delegated cultural sensitives from the nation(s) of origin of the minority cultural group. Their work together would then be transmitted to the government as recommendations for the best way to proceed. If this form of purposeful, intensified cultural contact can become the norm, then we can expect that the subjective spiritual unity which underlies the many outer differences that distinguish cultures will become more and more evident; and that humanity will move into a cycle where the many cultures become a choir whose diverse voices can blend into a symphony of joy.

NOTICE: UPCOMING WORLD GOODWILL SEMINAR

The World Goodwill Seminar on **FREEDOM AND SPIRITUAL SECURITY** will take place in London, Geneva and New York on **October 29th 2011**. The title is taken from the evocative suggestion by Alice Bailey that today two qualities are "tincturing" the ideal of the coming civilisation for which all servers are working: freedom and spiritual security.

For those who have not attended one of our seminars before, these annual meetings seek to subjectively support the work being done by the network of groups and individuals serving in the transformation of consciousness and working for unity, justice and peace. The intent is to stimulate recognition of the spiritual principles and values which these servers are helping to ground in human hearts and minds, and also to indicate that all who are working in any way to build a more caring human community form part of one group in consciousness. We invite guest speakers from many different fields to address the theme of the day.

The seminar is open to the public and there is no charge for admission, although donations are most welcome. The day incorporates plenty of time for discussion and there is a period for meditation. In general terms members of the audience at the seminar tend to share an inclusive spiritual view of life, a vision of the one world and the one humanity, and an involvement in the practical work of expressing goodwill and building a world of unity, justice and peace.

This year, we are encouraging people to help seed the thought-form of the seminar by submitting their thoughts on the theme to a discussion on our website at the following address: lucistrust.org/forums/discussion_on_freedom_and_spiritual_security. Please feel free to make your contribution.

Registration for the Seminar is also available at: lucistrust.org/meetings_and_events/world_goodwill_seminar; alternatively, you can register by email, phone, or by writing to us at the addresses given at the end of the newsletter. We hope to see as many of our readers as possible on October 29.

HELPING TO BUILD RIGHT HUMAN RELATIONS

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www.worldgoodwill.org is the address for World Goodwill on the Internet. The newsletter is available on this site.

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