

# **World Goodwill** Symposium

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**Freedom and Spiritual Security**

**Opening Address:  
The Glamour of Freedom**

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## Opening Address – The Glamour of Freedom - Dale McKechnie

All life on this planet is urged on by a deep seated drive towards freedom. It's what drives evolution forward. Without this urge, life forms would not evolve. This urge to freedom is like a built-in device that gives spirit the incentive to "pull away" from all created forms when the right time comes. Freedom is such a basic urge; it permeates the very substance of our body and soul. In truth, it is a principle inherent in Deity Himself and is passed on to every human being and to every created form in all the kingdoms of nature. Freedom is a "leavening" force that urges the conscious unit within any form to rise up and pull away from any confining walls in which it is surrounded. It is a basic principle to which all life on earth reacts.

We see this pulling away, this urge toward liberation in all of nature. In the mineral kingdom, fire brings liberation to minerals deep within the earth through volcanic action. In the plant kingdoms plants of all kinds seek liberation from the seed and push up through the confining soil to seek sustenance from the energy of the sun. In the bird kingdom, chicks seek liberation from the shell of the egg and then later when grown, liberation from the nest. Likewise, animals seek liberation from the womb, as does a human child in the human kingdom.

But there is an important purpose for all these confining walls—the earth, the seed, the egg and the womb. They all have a necessary and valuable function: they protect the new life until the moment of its freedom and liberation, until it is ready to cope with its new worldly environment. This protective stage is very necessary for any new life form to grow into maturity. And in a human being it is necessary to protect the growth of a new stage of consciousness. What protects many human beings today is the confining walls of their own ignorance. Their narrowness of mind, whether they see it this way or not, protects them from other lines of thought that seem threatening, that goes against their accepted patterns of belief. They feel more protected by staying with their own kind. Their time for liberation may not be yet. There are many narrow lines of thought—left and right and in the center—all protected by limited ignorance. Fortunately we are on the verge of a new stage of consciousness now forming in the womb of time which will eventually liberate all stages of awareness in the coming new age.

Freedom, especially in the spiritual sense, is more a state of mind than a condition of being in a physical place. If one's conscious choices are focused on oneself and one's own well being ahead of the well being of others, then his sense of freedom is limited. His mind is not yet awakened sufficiently to be sensitive to any higher inspiration from the soul, his own higher self. Until his mind is more sensitive, he lacks the capacity to break free from his own ring-pass-not of ignorance. He is temporarily "happy" where he is; he feels a sense of security and assurance that his belief system is correct and that others who think differently are wrong. He may loudly demand his constitutional rights to do this and that, and that the government should get out of the way.

But this is when freedom becomes encrusted by glamour. The great spiritual ideal of freedom is so reduced and confined by his own particular sense of rights and wrongs that it actually becomes a prison, a protective prison, but a prison from which he cannot, as yet, escape. He is in this position through no fault of his own; it is simply where his lot has cast him in the long evolutionary process of the awakening of consciousness.

The attainment of true freedom is a very long process, over many lifetimes. It is a graded series of liberations, resulting in the attainment of increased freedom from that which lies behind in one's experience. Essentially it is a growing freedom from ignorance, leading eventually to a state of mind that is liberated and free from all confining and limited thought forms.

We in the United States tend to worship freedom; it is like the keynote of this country because our forefathers fought and died to establish a free republic. Many freedoms are written into our constitution; they have become sacred. But notwithstanding all the good that has been achieved, have we now become somewhat enamoured by its liberating power? Have we become imprisoned by our own self-centered view of freedom, like the freedom to exploit for personal gain? Has our interpretation of this great spiritual ideal of freedom become locked in a prison of materialism? Has the American consciousness become so materially tainted that it is blocking out inspiration from its loving national soul?

It is time that we ask these questions of ourselves, and many citizens are already asking, because, as we know, a new age with a universal keynote of loving service, is fast approaching. There are many people in this country who are sensing this new keynote and are responding to this higher spiritual will. They are expressing the liberating note of sharing and cooperation, even without knowing where that impulse comes from.

So many problems in this country, and also in Europe, are caught up in the glamour of money. Money is a necessary life-sustaining energy; we all need a certain amount at least for the basics of food, clothing and shelter. But many people also see money as a tool of power—the power to purchase, the power to acquire an excessive amount of material things, the power of access, political access to control legislative decisions that will give one the power to gain and hold on to one's money so that it won't be taxed away. Money by itself actually has no power; it is simply an energy. But it is the power that we give to it which determines how this energy is used. Like any other kind of energy, if used in a selfish way, then it can produce harmful effects. But where decisions are governed by the quality of a loving heart, then this energy of money can benefit all. Selfishness pulls money down deeper into materialism and therefore subject to the dense glamour of desire. And what is worse, when acquired for selfish purposes it doesn't always give one more freedom and security. There is instead a constant worry about holding on to it. Selfishness consumes an inordinate amount of energy. It is energy that is not free to flow unimpeded; in fact it is trapped and congested and simply inflates materialism like a runaway cancer. It tends to engender more fear than security; a fear of losing it all. Why would anyone want to live with this fear?

There is little consideration of the true spiritual power gained by becoming free from this burdensome use of money and material gain. But being "free from" is the next stage ahead for human consciousness in the coming new age. The impulse of freedom continues to do its work; it provides the capacity to let go and pull away from that which imprisons us.

This is a huge question facing the people of this and other countries in the world today. The forces of materialism are fighting desperately to hold on to their illusion of power. But the loving power of the human soul—the power of sharing and goodwill—is presenting a stronger counter-force. The question really comes down to a matter of control. What part of human nature—the selfish personal part or the selfless soul part—is going to finally control this material energy? Now it is important to point out here that it is not the existence of material things or money that is the problem. We all need some material things to survive while in this material existence. The real question is, do we let heavy material forces play upon human desire and take control of our decision-making ability, or can we gain a more detached freedom from this powerful glamour? Can we tap the spiritual power to pull away from this imprisoning force? If the human race is to ever move forward to the next stage of the unfolding of human consciousness, then we must recognize and cultivate the divine capacity which we have within us. It is the higher power of love and goodwill—the basic emerging qualities of the human soul—that will give us the power to move forward.

As I said at the beginning, all life on this planet is driven by a deep urge toward freedom; it is a principle we all cherish and are even willing to die for it. It is this deep spiritual impulse that we must find within

and realize that the quest for freedom doesn't stop at the material plane; in fact it continues on even after death. The freedom known by the human soul is such a supreme state of bliss that it's hard for us to even imagine, and yet it too, the soul, is not entirely free. The soul must put up with many human frailties. And yet this is the state of freedom that lies directly ahead for the human race—a freedom from the controlling forces of glamour and illusion. Why wouldn't we want this above all else? It is time to break out of the shell of our ignorance and glamour and fly free. It's where the human soul is leading us. We shouldn't waste time looking back to where we were and yearn for the good old days. We should extend our vision to what lies ahead. Let the revelation continue.



### **Freedom House - Vanessa Tucker**

I would like to thank World Goodwill for the invitation. It is a real honor. You don't always get to be a part of discussions like this where we get to break beyond the nuts and bolts approach. So it's a real honor to be part of this event. As Sarah mentioned, we look at freedom from a slightly more practical nuts and bolts perspective – freedom as it relates to government systems. I'm going to talk a little bit more about that perspective, as well as the work I do on the Middle East through the publication on democratic transitions. And then, we can talk more and have a Q&A at the end. I would love to hear your thoughts on how some of the elements we discuss earlier and the elements of spiritual security overlap with the work that I will talk about.

I'll start with a little bit background of Freedom House to give you an idea of what we do. We are like World Goodwill - we have been around for a while. Earlier this week, we celebrated our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The organization was founded by Eleanor Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie who was a former candidate for president in 1940. The organization was formed to help build support for American involvement in World War II. Since then, the organization has continued to support freedom worldwide while adapting to changing political realities. Following the end of the cold war, Freedom House sought to address the challenges of emerging democracies by focusing on programs to help stabilize institutions in newly free societies.

Since 2001, the organization has focused on expanding its global presence and its research. In order to meet the challenges of a constantly changing global environment, Freedom House has taken a three level approach to its work - through advocacy, direct action and research and analysis about different facets on governance and democracy. Today our advocacy teams, most of which are based in Washington D.C. and some throughout the world, support human rights and democracy at home, in the United States and abroad. They focus on freedom of expression, freedom of association and religious freedom, and they work with the United Nations Human Rights Council and other organizations.

The direct action programs are involved in supporting and promoting democratic change for a stronger civil society, more open government, and facilitating freedom of information programs throughout the world. Our analysis team of which I am part, and which is based in New York, continues to focus on producing high quality research, to call attention to trend in democratization and expose the realities of dictatorial regimes around the world. This work is done through five annual publications as well as special reports on pressing issues, which include women's rights in the Middle East and a China bulletin which looks at issues related to freedom of expression in China. Each of these elements enables Freedom House to work around the world and in the U.S. to adapt to global challenges to support the development of freedom.

I started working for Freedom House about two years ago as a research analyst with the Countries at the Crossroads publication which analyzes government performances in several strategically important countries around the world. Our country sites include states in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, and now a few in Europe as well. We assess government performance through the lens of four main categories – government accountability and public voice - this includes things like electoral systems, media, and freedom of expression; civil liberties which evaluates among other things the use of state violence, minority and gender rights, and freedom of belief; rule of law which examines civilian control of the military and military and police accountability and also judicial independence; and anti-corruption and transparency which evaluates the extend to what countries have established transparent and accountable systems. The publication is intended to provide international policymakers with information to identify reform progress as well as highlight areas of concern.

So you can imagine, for us at Freedom House the question of freedom is particularly relevant in the context of the Arab spring. It's funny how when I started at Freedom House as an analyst, they gave me a portfolio that they said would be small enough and basic enough that it wouldn't be overwhelming. They gave me two countries that don't change that much – Libya and Egypt – and they said I would be fine. After I got the hang of things I could add more countries because certainly it wouldn't be enough. As the headlines and news clips of the events of the Middle East and North Africa continued across the board - they've demonstrated how involved the magnitude and the nuance of political revolution was, and what was necessary in the phases after revolution. There's so much about that process which can be obscured particularly in a news culture where we have to have conclusions, discussions and answers relayed all the time. The headlines ultimately tell us that everything is going well or it's all gone wrong. They raise questions that speak to deep global anxieties about the future. What's going to happen? Are these revolutions good for the United States and its allies? Do they signify the rise of political Islam or popular democracy? Who are the good guys? Who should we support? And who should we worry about?

To be sure, there's no guarantee that the revolutionary breakthroughs achieved over the past months will result in democratic or representative government systems. In some countries like Tunisia, there appear to be some initial improvements and freedom of expression and association only because of the interim authorities are not as active in systematically repressing those rights as they were able to do before the revolution. For similar reasons, the first pre-revolutionary elections in some countries will likely be improved on the thorough rigged contest of the past. This was certainly the case in Tunisia. We'll talk about that more a little later.

Rebuilding basic institutions like the justice system, law enforcement agency, and regulatory framework for media and civil society all of which have been warped and corrupted by decades of authoritarian rule will require many more years of effort. The dramatic scenes that we saw early on – the enormous crowds in Tahrir Square in Cairo and the tears of joy as ruthless dictators and powers were rejected by the popular will - were certainly inspiring. And indeed, the protest in the Middle East and elsewhere has been a catalyst for the growing Occupy Wall Street movement here in New York and in other parts of the United States. There certainly seems to have been a demonstration effect as people in Syria, Libya, Bahrain, and Yemen and elsewhere in the region saw other neighbors rise up against their leaders and chose to do the same.

The emotional overtones of revolution and worries of the future can actually make it quite difficult to understand what has happened. Why it happens is to truly appreciate the magnitude of the task before these countries. The publication I work for – Countries at the Crossroads – looks primarily at institutions in an effort to understand and evaluate government performance and political change. I'd like to suggest as an approach a framework for overcoming some of the effects as I just mentioned. I should emphasize before I move on, however, that I take the convenient position of not having any answers to any of these questions. I certainly don't have one for the first question we are often asked by the media, which is what

is going to happen. Instead, what I hope to do right now is to sketch a brief outline of some of the institutional challenges to freedom, which are based in the Arab spring, in hopes of making some of this clear of the overwhelming complexity that is often lost in the fog.

Egypt and Tunisia have jettisoned their long ruling presidents thanks to the determination of unarmed protestors, and are now engaged with difficult and highly uncertain reform efforts. Libya has dramatically seen the end of Muammar Gaddafi's four decades of tyranny, but only after protest and the violent suppression which evolved into a full scale civil war. Syria appears to be on a similar path. The two remaining Middle Eastern states that our publication has analyzed this year – Algeria and Morocco – have so far avoided significant protest movements, but there are cautious pursuits of limited reforms that might prove insufficient given the rapidly changing expectations of the region.

Although the past year's revolutions seem to have emerged overnight; the circumstances that led them were actually the product of decades of institutional degradation. In some cases, the old regimes were successful in achieving macro economic growth and improving access to education, but they consistently blocked political liberalization that would allow every citizen to have a voice in the decisions that affect their daily lives. As a result, the deeply embedded crony-capitalistic society that developed in many of these countries: any new national wealth that was created was funneled into existing systems of elite corruption and patronage, which over time deepens the sense of grievances among ordinary citizens.

When a twenty-six year old street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in front of a government building in Tunisia, he was in part protesting the cruel marginalization that he and others in his community have been subjected to for decades. Tunisia and Egypt, which touched off the Arab spring by ousting the authoritarian presidents in January and February of 2011, had suffered acute institutional deterioration in the preceding years. In Egypt, the prospect of a dynastic transfer of power from the octogenarian president Hosni Mubarak who had held power almost three decades to his son Gamal, caused deep disillusionment among the Egyptian population and stimulated greater engagement by civil society and independent media, particularly among the online social media platforms. The regime responded with a severe crackdown on dissent. The combination of venality among the country's ruling elite, the lack of opportunity for ordinary Egyptians, and the harsh restrictions of expression and assembly ultimately proved to be highly combustible.

The 2010 parliamentary elections in which the regime for the first time seemed to completely give up the charade of a free and fair electoral contest saw unprecedented levels of state initiated violence and voter intimidation and complete marginalization of the opposition. Opposition parties who were for decades caught between working with the ruling party at the risk of being co-opted in order to participate in the system or boycotting the political system entirely are now faced with the opportunity to compete in an electoral system that is an entirely new horizon for the country. They must now function in a totally different environment in which success is ideally defined as campaigning on a meaningful electoral platform as oppose to the extent to which you can appease to ruling elites.

In Tunisia, the modernizing reputation cultivated by president Ben Ali was belied by the reality of rampant centralized corruption, especially surround by the president's family - harsh repression and civil society independent news media and brutal parasitic law enforcement agencies. As many of you know, Tunisians conducted elections for a constituent assembly on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Most reports indicate that most elections matched international standards for a free and fair contest. This is no small task. As they are trying to do in Egypt, Tunisian political parties learned in varying degrees how to campaign and dramatically change the environment.

The mix of religious and secular parties are now trying to work together to build a unity government. The elation of an initial success should not cloud the daunting reality however that Tunisia is just at the very

beginning of its transition. Indeed, the assembly just elected will now first be charged with drafting a constitution that will define the framework through which the new system is built. We are really talking about a process of incremental steps that will take place over years and years. To draw quick conclusions about such a complex and ongoing process simply obscures the reality that there are no real conclusions that fit into this quick timeline.

Moving on to two dramatic cases, Libya and Syria - both of which are caught now in severe civil violence: Libya, of course, with Muammar Gaddafi who was recently killed, finds itself now caught between highly armed groups and groups of varying loyalties – as well as an international community that is focusing on the possibility of war crime charges and calls for justice. These regimes are exceptionally repressive with their internal security policies and aggressive failure to deliver public goods to the citizens, which caused their response to the protests of 2011. May I also explain Libya's determination to continue their struggle in the face of ferocious violence. And Libya, to talk about institutions at all is to essentially say nothing. Gaddafi's bizarre system of direct democracy was in fact a complete sham. All political decisions and policy decisions happened exclusively among the ruler, his family and close friends. This is a country in which the biggest human rights development in the last 20 years was the government's recent permission that hundreds of prisoners killed at government hands over a decade ago were in fact dead. The result of course, no explanation and no compensation for the families that at that point had been visiting what they thought were their relatives in prison. They were never allowed to see anyone and were told 10 years later that that was because they had died.

Syria similarly has had elections where the ruler President Al-Assad regularly wins by nearly one hundred percent. To talk about rebuilding these societies is to talk about rebuilding not from scratch but from deep institutional voids. High expectations for quick overthrow changes in the region could help drive the reform process forward but they could also lead to a great deal of disappointment. Given the stakes involved, setting the reasonable benchmarks for progress is critical. Taking into account the difficult plan that the reformers were dealt, what institutional changes should be expected from these countries in the near future and over the long term?

The most achievable near term opportunities for reform might be understood as those occurring in the phase of transitional development. More complicated challenges loom in the sphere of the rule of law including overhaul of the justice system and the reorganization of the police and security services to ensure they are subordinate to civil authorities and subject to meaningful checks on their power. The bitterness and division that was engendered by these countries will bring political reconstruction and essential compromises that are more difficult. At the same time, the extremely low levels of institutional performances of countries like Libya and Syria suggest they effectively have nowhere to go but up.

Across the region, the pent up desire for change after decades of political stagnation and repression has led to high expectations for reform. These are shared obviously by observers in the international community. However, countries recovering from the breakdown of authoritarian regimes must overcome major economic disruption associated with the ongoing instability, and they are typically burdened with the inheritance of deeply flawed government institutions. In this context, the potential disillusionment and the lost of movement is great. The liberal voices in the political arena will no doubt seek to blame democracy and the difficulties that inevitably force the removal of long standing regimes. Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya are not yet democracies. Instead, they operate to one degree or another in a post authoritarian limbo where the remains of the old system form a hostile institutional environment for democratic reform efforts.

One of the ways in which the policy communities benefit from organizations like World Goodwill and discussions that happen today from the kind of work that you do on spiritual security is to better understand the ways in which security affects and overlaps with the complex processes that I have been

talking about. My work is somewhat more focused on the nuts and bolts of political projects, but just as outsiders sometimes overlook those kinds of details in order to draw a quick conclusion, it also works the other way in which people disregard or gloss over the profound issues of spirituality and trust that affect the development of national identity and the relationship between individual communities and governments. It is for this reason that I am so happy to be here today and learn through your questions and discussion. I would be happy to discuss these questions, particularly how they relate to the role of the international community and the role of goodwill and the will-to-good, and what role that plays in this ongoing process. [The discussion period is available in audio on our website: [www.worldgoodwill.org](http://www.worldgoodwill.org) .]



### **Clinton Canady III**

Creativity is probably the necessary foundation for freedom to exist along with spiritual security. What of those of us on a daily basis who undertake judgments which often involve curtailment of an individual's personal freedom for the greater good of society? Doesn't one have to look at what already has occurred in their lives? Their experiences are subjected to the process of modification through life then tintured with concepts and ideas.

Those who come from poverty or lack parental guidance often end up before the court. What can the judge offer? Even if the judge can understand how one arrived at this juncture, what can be done? Incarceration, rehabilitation, cognitive behavioral therapy, educational support, job training, etc. Often the individual, due to a cloud of self-deception or illusion, will not be able to recognize that they "don't know that they don't know". How can this self-imposed barrier be penetrated?

What light can be shed onto an individual who appears before the court? Often one can clearly see how the person arrived at this point. On the surface, one has no choice as to where life begins. No choice of household, family makeup or economic circumstances. One "wakes up", so to speak, around the age of five – five years old and is immediately told who and what they are: gender, race, nationality, rich, poor, etc. If their household is one of bankers, military, laborers, thieves – this is what the youth knows and accepts as a standard of conduct.

It does an individual no good if they are exposed to new concepts but are unable to comprehend because they cannot relate the new information to their own personal everyday experiences. Thus, in order for the new information to be received and incorporated into the day-to-day curriculum, it must be delivered in words, symbols and analogies that the recipient can identify with based upon their own everyday experience. From these experiences one is often in a position to extrapolate and/or to create something new.

A judge never knows when one will recognize the necessity to change their course of conduct. An agonizing point is reached when the decision is made either by statute or past conduct to "pull the plug – to incarcerate." I suggest that what is needed is creativity. How does one communicate the necessity for individual autonomy and integrity? Something new, some alternative thought process, will hopefully be arrived at through creativity and used to assist those individuals in the criminal justice system. To merge a strand of spirituality with the need of the courts to act as a deterrence, to protect society and rehabilitate offenders.

The history of Alcoholics Anonymous illustrates my point here. AA is not just a matter of nature and nurture, genes versus environment, in its approach to alcoholism. AA added a spiritual dimension and left this duality for those who would argue one side or the other. Who could have imagined it? Countless

individuals have freedom from addiction, because the few enlightened ones saw the need for spirituality beyond issues of nature versus environment which can be debated forever without resolution. In recovery, they talk not in terms of overall freedom initially, but about freedom from alcohol and drugs.

In the AA book entitled the “12 Steps and the 12 Traditions”, in step 1, they describe alcoholism and here, one could extend that to those individuals who are trapped by any prevailing thought form to paraphrase. “The thought form becomes the rapacious creditor that bleeds one of all self-sufficiency and the will to resist its every urge”. Whether one talks about alcohol, poverty, repressive governments, materialism, addiction, economic superiority, environmental concerns, racial biases, gender biases and all forms of hatred, these create thought forms that will not allow an individual to discover freedom and will certainly not allow one to obtain spiritual security.

Focusing on the nature, biology and genetic aspects can lead to determinism and the idea that there is nothing we can do about conditions that prevent the individual from being free. The spirituality, that is the creative force of alcoholics anonymous, opens the way to greater freedom. This is an important example and model. Thus, freedom becomes a state of mind and allows a new foundation to be laid. No creed or doctrine is required. Society enjoys greater freedom, as well as enhanced security, with each individual who experiences recovery from alcoholism and addiction.

Henry David Thoreau was in jail when he received the inspiration for the spiritual principal of non-resistance to evil as the best means for opposing evil. He declared freedom of spirit even while in jail. A principal of his inspiration was the Bhagavad Gita. Thoreau opposed slavery and opposed the seizure of Texas from Mexico that was then under way. He went to jail for failure to pay property taxes. In his opinion, the government was unjust in national policy and thus, unjust at every level.

Mahatma Gandhi read the works of Henry David Thoreau and was influenced by Thoreau’s concept of non-resistance as the most effective means of opposing evil. Gandhi read Thoreau’s work while he was in prison for opposing the evil of apartheid in South Africa. Gandhi also returned to his Jainist roots and brought out two foundational spiritual principles: Ahimsa (non injury), and Satyagraha (the force of truth and love) to his work for freedom. We see Thoreau abandoned his studies at Harvard. Gandhi abandoned his career as a lawyer. Martin Luther King left behind a ministry in Atlanta. Each of these three men freed themselves from the expectation of their previous life paths. Each of these three men devoted their freedom and spirituality to the work of liberating both the individual and society. Spirituality contributes greatly or is at the very foundation of freedom at the national and international levels. However, it should not be controversial to note that requirements for particular forms of spiritual or religious practice can negatively affect freedom. Can a model where spirituality is a basis for freedom be applied to the individual who is caught up in the criminal justice system; to individuals who are not paragons of morality?

More than a few who have been imprisoned for criminal acts have found freedom from their pasts and left prison a free man or woman in more senses than one. Many have been imprisoned for crimes and left prison with a spiritual awakening. Not everyone who goes to prison attains to freedom and spirituality. But not everyone who does not go to prison attains to freedom and spirituality. There have been very few of the level of Thoreau, Gandhi or Reverend King. The goals of rehabilitation and deterrence are well served by programs in prison such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and programs operated with the help of the traditional religions. These are spiritual programs but it is vital that there be no overt pressure to participate based on creedal or doctrinal requirements. Those who demonstrate an interest in religion and spirituality are deemed more worthy of freedom.

If an individual has spiritual practices and principles upon release from confinement that individual is less likely to re-offend and less likely to relapse into drug or alcohol use. Thus, spirituality serves the freedom

of that individual as well as the near and wider communities. The programs of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and a variety of religious programs are spiritual programs that are greatly supported by corrections and judicial officials. Attendance may be ordered, however; participation in spiritual programs is more than a matter of physical presence. Often the hope is that, if the body is present, the spirit may arise. Even if it seems that participation is fake it may be a winning strategy to fake it till you make it. Voluntary participation is the ideal but many have succeeded who began with somewhat less than pure free will. Many of the spiritual and religious programs operate with considerable help of volunteers. Volunteering is an act of service and love, and by its very nature is done out of freedom and is a sharing of freedom.

We do not have to fight fire with fire. It is a duty of society to provide a system of consequences for wrongdoing that reaches specified levels of criminality. But crime can more than punishment and better than punishment in a just and effective system. It is said that Gandhi had his first close reading of the Bhagavad Gita while in prison. Mohandas Gandhi became Mahatma Gandhi, a “Great Soul”, by applying spiritual principles to the struggle for freedom in South Africa and later in India. Gandhi was from a wealthy, powerful family and he was a highly educated man and a practicing lawyer. There are many poor and poorly educated people who have had their first deep encounters with spirituality while in prison. This is a great irony. Irony is a sad and painful wonder. How far down does one have to go before one sees the light? But the fact is that far too few experience a spiritual awakening in prison. Many fail to see the light. Those in prison need a spiritual awakening much more than those who have never fallen afoul of the law. And how far into everyday strife and how far into national and international strife do we have to go before we see the light? We have so many riches and so much power but so little good orderly direction in national and international affairs. How far down do we have to go?

Thoreau and Gandhi demonstrated spirituality in the path to freedom even in conditions of confinement. Imprisonment is a shock to the system no matter the reason one ends up there. One may be morally blameless or praiseworthy but it still hurts to be jailed or imprisoned. Deprived of physical freedom, they found inner freedom through their spiritual principles. They had more love and service to offer to others than ever before. They gained strength with each imprisonment. It inspires a most fearful awe to contemplate the strength of Nelson Mandela and others who suffered similarly after 27 years of imprisonment on Robben Island.

Both Martin Luther King, who was imprisoned in Birmingham, AL, and at the time of his death, had taken his spiritual principles worldwide, as well as Cesar Chavez, provide examples of spirituality opening the way for freedom. The United Nations, advocating human rights worldwide through peaceful means though violence along the way has proven inevitable. The principles of equality, peace and freedom converge in a creative way through the United Nations. Can the courts assist those persons who come before it in discovering peace? What more spiritual value is there than peace? Perhaps when events and circumstances combine, there will be a fusion resulting in the spawning of a level of creativity that can be applied to the criminal justice system. We have an example of an evolutionary cycle, starting with Thoreau, that encompassed President Nelson Mandela, Reverend Allen Boesak and Bishop Desmond Tutu. That initial impulse of nonviolent creativity is seen today in the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Given the right views, freedom is none other than spiritual values. All spiritual values are aspects of one another like many facets of one diamond. When an individual or groups have studied, practiced and mastered spiritual principles of love, service, noninjury and truth; these principles can be placed in the service of justice, equality and peace on a national and international scale. This would extend to the criminal justice system.



Thank you so much for inviting me to this event. As Sarah was telling you, last week Guatemala got elected with 191 votes to be in the Security Council for the next two years. I wanted to say this not as a note of congratulations, but as a sense of responsibility because the non-permanent members of the Security Council are supposed to represent not only their interest nor their region, but are supposed to capture the sense of the house. That is what is written in the charter, and so it is with a great sense of responsibility that our mission is preparing to serve in the Security Council next year and in 2013. So this year, I've been preparing for the next two years.

When Sarah told me the theme will be freedom and spiritual security, I thought to speak about the opposite. Dale mentioned more of freedom and when thinking of the opposite of freedom and security, the life and story of this particular person came to mind: Rafael Limpking. Does anyone know who Rafael Limpking is? Rafael Limpking was a young Polish lawyer. In the 1930's he predicted what Hitler was going to do. But of course, no one listened to him. He managed to escape Poland and fled to the U.S. He said that he had to come to the U.S. because this is where solutions are made. He came here with the goal of trying to convince the U.S. to intervene in the Second World War.

During this time, Limpkin was inspired by Churchill's speech. The last phrase of the speech was about Europe dealing with a crime that had no name. The atrocities committed in Europe were so vast and so intense, humanity at that time didn't have a word for these crimes. Neither barbarity nor vandalism covered the impact or the effect of it. Being also a linguist, Limpking came up with a word. He drew his inspiration from George Eastman who invented Kodak. When he thought of the word Kodak, it was a word that had to be short and could not be mispronounced, and it could not be related to anything in the art world. Limpking had a greater challenge because he had to come up with a word that could describe atrocities, such as the holocaust or what happened in Armenia or in Guatemala where mass killings were made. He came up with the word genocide – meaning “geno”, a Greek derivative which means race or tribe, and “cide” meaning killing. He did not only coined the word, but he basically came to the new UN in 1946 and worked assiduously to form this new framework.

This framework would acknowledge genocide and would try to prevent this act from ever becoming a reality. So for me, the story of Limpking is particularly important in this talk because he raised the level of consciousness by helping us come to a description of something that should never happen. He burst through a wall of a blind world that we often live in. Dale referred to ignorance as a false sense of freedom. We do not know how to describe it as a law that prevents genocide; that's why Limpkin's work is so important. It allows us to penalize those crimes against humanity. When we insert the word spiritual before security, the soul strives for freedom – the soul is also the national soul at a higher level that strives for freedom. It is also in the collective that this inspiration grows. I think part of the contract that the U.S. has in terms of helping other nations find that freedom and find that security came with Limpkin. It also came with Senator William Proxmire. For 19 years he spoke in the U.S. Senate to try to pass the Convention on Genocide. This was a senator who for 19 years spoke every day to the senate committee in which he gave speeches on genocide. He spoke over three thousand times until that law passed in the U.S. in 1988. But it took 40 years for the U.S. to ratify this convention.

Nonetheless, many individuals have now embraced this larger definition of freedom that goes beyond oneself and beyond one's nation and really embraces the world. Such a person is Peter Galbraith. I will read a letter that he wrote to his son before he went to Kurdistan. “Dear Andrew, I hope you will never receive this note. If you do, there is something I want you to know. First, I traveled to Kurdistan because I believe in helping the victimized. The Kurds are in rebellion against an evil regime and the people need help including above all food and medicine. By going there I'd thought I could convince congress to provide the help.” And then he goes on about living a fine, good, caring life.

When the U.S. was involved in Iraq before we knew that Saddam Hussein was a bad guy, there was a very strong denial that Kurdistan was being massacred. Peter and many other people in the U.S. Congress were trying to convince the Bush administration that there was actually genocide going on in Iraq. What I'm trying to say is that freedom and security are not taken for granted, and it is something that we have to fight for. We really have to try to advocate for freedom and security. In advocating we find a powerful source which is service, and in that service we free ourselves from the basic wants and fears and grow to be what we would like to be, aspirants in the path helping Hierarchy and the light to grow and to really embrace this world. Thank you.



**Arthur Kubikian**

I would like to thank Mrs. McKechnie and World Goodwill for inviting me. I would also like to express my appreciation to the staff for their sacrificial service over the years, and for this fight for true freedom and security for all of humanity.

My aim today is to go over the evolution of my thoughts about freedom of security over the years based on my personal background and various experiences, which can be divided into three stages. I lived 13 years in Communist Romania, one and a half years in Lebanon, and for the past 50 years I've lived here. Now what is interesting about a totalitarian type of regime is a number of examples I will give you. For example, expression – as a child I was told I would never have to tell anything to anybody. If I'm asked anything about any subject I would say I don't know so that it could not be interpreted as a threat to the regime. There was no freedom of movement. We could not go to any other countries, even communist countries, on vacation. As far as commerce, there was no such thing as private business. You could own a one-person private business. For example, my father was a photographer. He could only take pictures, develop them, fix them and color them. He was not allow to buy film or cameras or sell film or cameras. The only way to survive was to have friends in the consignment stores or the flee markets or by under the table transactions. Prison time was for three years if the economic police would find out about it.

As for political freedom, there was only one political party. There were elections but there was only one slate. All elections were won by more than 96 percent of the vote. There was discouragement of religion. Anytime there was a major holiday there were free soccer tickets available for games specifically on the day of the holidays so that all young people would go to the soccer stadium rather than the religious institutions. Fraternal organizations were banned. The leaders of the Masonic organizations were imprisoned. The leaders of the theosophical organizations were also imprisoned.

At one point in time even before the communist era it was decided that people could not own gold coins. Even during the communist era, if they were saving money they would buy gold coins – so at one point the government decided that you have to turn in all your gold coins for a minimal reimbursement. Many people did not, and if you were caught that was two - three years in prison.

We did have free medical care and hospitals. However, if you needed medical care you have to be helpful and make gratuitous donations to the physicians and to the hospital staff. The room would be found and the surgeon would appear, and the physicians would be there for you. There was free education. However, the academic grades had to be average within your social background's grades. There was a social hierarchy, so if you were a minor that was the highest level grade. Second, would be the blue collar workers. Third, were the white collar workers. Fourth, people who were the bourgeoisie –

for example, people who were involved in one-man business – you could not have any other type of business except a one-person business. If you were lucky that your property was not nationalized – you had a house or an apartment – then you were also called a big shot bourgeoisie. So you would have your grades averaged in and based on the level, that would be your admission to higher education. In my case, I never have had a choice as to higher education.

Incidentally, all typewriters had to be registered every year with the police department with a page of every letter on the typewriter typed out so that there was no chance there would be any manifest against the government. We were very fortunate that somehow we were able to leave Romania and that is another story. The only country that gave us a visa was Lebanon. Lebanon has a high Armenian population. Lebanon is typically a less capitalistic country. You can buy yourself to become a citizen or buy a visa. You could own all the gold you wanted to as long as you have the money. There were no such things as a safety net. There were no child labor laws. People much younger than me were working. There were no such thing as worker security, social security, insurance, or disability insurance, and if you had a medical problem you had to pay for it, or your family would have to pay for it or your extended family would have to pay for it or the religious group with which you were affiliated may have a charity – people that would make donations on your behalf.

One benefit in Lebanon was that there were no taxes whatsoever unless you had a business. Everyone owned guns and everyone was quite touchy, and there is this tendency towards vendettas and killings. Women were second class citizens – if you happen to hold your wife's hand while walking down the street people may stone you – it's not uncommon. Political parties were totally affiliated with religious affiliations. You had the Muslim, you had the Sunni Shia, the Alawite and the Druse. Those political parties were affiliated with those religions. The Christians had their own Catholic Orthodox, Syrian, Armenian and so on.

We were very fortunate to come to the third stage as far as my dealings with freedom and security. When we arrived in the United States, truly we were very happy. We came and after two years we received our green card. We found that public schools were free here, and we found that nobody stops you for your ID, and no one identifies according to your racial or religious background. I went to junior high one year and high school two years. I got admitted to UCLA with a scholarship so everything was free. I was very happy. My experience there was very freeing except that my parents were very worried about how I was going to make a living.

If there was a recurring thing concerning freedom and security it was that, in those four years I learned the value of academic freedom, the importance of cooperation and group work, the miracle of science, the planetization of mankind, and exposure to different ideas, philosophies and religions. Let me give you an example. For the first time when I was at UCLA, the Free Speech Movement started with Mario Savio in Berkeley. Of course, there was a forum and you had people that were members of the Socialist Labor Party, the Communist Party, the John Birch Society, and the Black Panthers. You name it, and they could say anything they wanted to. I always expected the police to come and arrest them, but nothing happened. So it was truly amazing.

During my time with the Vietnam war I had short hair because I was part of the ROTC. We got paid \$110 a month. The benefit of military science, the key thing that I would always remember, was that to win a war or any struggle you have to get through to intelligence, command and communication centers. So that stuck in my mind. When I got involved with the Bailey teachings I said, wow, that's exactly the same – I would like to always be in touch with the inner centers of the planet. I took all kinds of courses. One of them was philosophy and ethics and I learned that the definition of ethics is the greatest good for the greatest number in the long term – that everybody deserves to have clean water and oxygen and enough food and shelter and some education and health care.

I took a course in the philosophy of history, and we found out that historians were concerned in their interpretation with why are we here. What is the goal of life, and what happens when we die? Their beliefs on that determine the way they interpret history. I took a course on philosophy of science, and we said that wow, the human species is unique in the freedom of using energy outside of its physiology. That is why we build things outside of our bodies concretely, such as skyscrapers, computers and all kinds of technical things like abstract construction, which is art, literature, wisdom and spirituality. So right now we found that humans have freedom to be involved in abstract creativity.

I was amazed when I took biology – all of us are owners of 72 trillion cells; one of them undergoes ten thousand chemical reactions per second. There is cooperation, which is the key word. That is the true freedom apparently for our bodies – cells cooperate in forming tissues that cooperate to form organs. Anytime there is no cooperation we have cancer.

I took a course in astronomy. I found out that the key element there was inertia. Thank god, everything moves at the same speed all the time because we think we are here enjoying this but in the meantime we're moving a thousand kilometers around on the earth's axis. We are moving 20 miles per second around the sun. Our arm of the galaxy is moving to the center of the galaxy at the rate of 110 miles per second. It's going to take us 230 million years to go around the center of our galaxy. Isn't that cooperation – that is true freedom if you will find that out. I was a history major and so we got to know Will and Ariel Durant. They were husband and wife historians. In addition to their ten volumes, they wrote a little book called *Lessons of History*. One of the key statements that they stated was that for the future the most important and successful type of competition will be cooperation. And of course, I took some courses on the Second World War. We found out about the gospels of freedom – the Four Freedoms from President Roosevelt; freedom from ignorance; the convention on the punishment of genocide; the declaration on human rights; and the Atlantic Charter.

For me, it was a wonderful time. But I can tell you, the most interesting time was whenever we were taking courses at that time, there were always questions on philosophy, and the questions about China, Japan and India. What happened to them? So that made many of us focus on that area. I took a course on history of religions. That's where we find out about the importance of ultimate freedom – it is found in Hinduism, the Vedas, Lord Varuna, Lord Agni, the Bhagavad Gita.

At the same time, I found out about this Armenian priest. I'm of Armenian background. Armenians are Christians so here it is – his name is Torkom Saraydarian. I spoke to him about these things, and he was much more knowledgeable than my teachers. He even tells me that the Armenian church is divided into seven sections and states, and we are in a symbolic pathway. This symbolic pathway is related to the seven stages in the life of Christ. He turns around and he tells me that he's knowledgeable in Arabic and Turkish. He also knows Sanskrit. He gives me one of his books which was a translation by him of the Bhagavad Gita, and that was the ultimate book on freedom and security. I can tell you that has inspired me every day; whenever I have a problem I look into it. He said all of us are Arjuna. We are fighters, we should never give up our spiritual weapons until the infinity in us overcomes the finite in us. Number two, we are not our bodies. We are infinite beings. We will have to give up our bodies and get new bodies because this is a long term process. The type of bodies we receive can be high level, subtle, mid-level, or tamasic which is pretty bad. And finally, why be afraid of anything – Arjuna or us. There are millions of people being born and millions are dying. Finally, you and I and every human are miracles. You are the self, the diamond spark. You always were, you always are and you always will be. This book has inspired me. That is true freedom and security. Thank you very much.



## Closing Remarks - Sarah McKechnie

“Freedom can only be practiced in a group context”, AAB said, because the individual human being “treads the spiritual Path in unison with others. The rule of the soul is group rule and works under the law of the group”. Thus, inevitably, there are rules which govern the Path of spiritual evolution, and they cannot be avoided for they are timeless and universal in application. At the same time, the Path must be trodden by each soul in complete and perfect freedom. This is affirmed in one of the ancient Rules of the Road which govern the spiritual path of all sincere seekers. It says, “Upon that Road one wanders not alone. There is no rush, no hurry. And yet there is no time to lose. Each pilgrim, knowing this, presses his footsteps forward, and finds himself surrounded by his fellowmen. Some move ahead; he follows after. Some move behind; he sets the pace. He travels not alone.”

“Freedom can only be practiced in a group context”, so we cannot think of freedom without acknowledging responsibility. For in a free society, every individual is responsible to the whole. This is a realisation which is now dawning in human minds everywhere, and it’s both thrilling and awesome, as well as daunting. The old idea that freedom meant the right to live one’s life independent of outside influences or restrictions, is an ideal dear to Americans and enshrined in the frontier myth of the rugged individual confronting the terrors of the While West. But this ideal no longer stands in a rapidly integrating world. The planet is now too small to indulge such independent dreams. The quest for freedom remains and will always be an aspiration deeply anchored in the human soul, but its true significance – which humanity is awakening to now – is that freedom is a universal right with a global significance.

In this modern concept of freedom, the welfare of a society depends both on recognition of the individual citizen’s rights and liberties, and his responsibility to the common good, the well being of the larger whole. Both are seen as mutually interdependent. The spiritual basis of this is that “There is never any freedom from the Law of Service”, as Alice Bailey wrote. “To stand really free is to stand in the clear unimpeded light of the soul, which is basically and intrinsically group conscious”, she said.

Meditation is an important way to obey the Law of Service, with a potential outreach that knows no limits, for it distributes spiritual energies as far as the consciousness can envision. The seed thought of our meditation says: “Through the impression and expression of certain great ideas, humanity must be brought to the understanding of the fundamental ideals which will govern the new age. This is the major task of the new group of world servers.”

This raises the question, can the impressing of human minds with an understanding of such ideas as liberty, equality and brotherhood be done without violating the Law of Freedom – human free will? Yes, because through meditation, thoughtforms – ideas – are created and presented to receptive human minds, but without any use of the coercive will which seeks to override or dominate another mind. When they are left free, responsive, informed human minds will recognise the fundamental ideas which must govern the new age.

Human minds are the true abode of freedom, or put another way, true freedom is a state of mind. The Christ’s declaration, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,” sums this up. We in this society are so conditioned to believe that we are free, that freedom isn’t deeply examined or questioned very often. But in fact, our minds may not be as free as we assume they are, or as much as we would wish. This mental freedom is the basis of spiritual security, and this was the message of the Buddha. He exhorted his followers not to be “stupid sheep”, blindly following what they have been told. As He said, “we must not believe in a thing said merely because it is said; nor traditions because they have been handed down from antiquity; nor rumours, as such; nor writings by sages because sages wrote

them; ... nor because of what seems an analogical necessity; nor on the mere authority of our teachers or masters." "Brothers", he said, "I do not come to offer you any dogmas, and I do not ask you to believe in that which so many others believe. I only exhort you to independent enlightenment, to use your own mind, developing it instead of letting it become dull. I adjure you not to resemble beasts of prey, or stupid sheep. I implore you to be men with right views, men who toil untiringly for the acquisition of real knowledge which will prevail over suffering."

So as we prepare for our meditation, let us keep in mind the power of ideas to liberate human minds. And "One idea now making impact on human consciousness", Alice Bailey said, "is that separation is a thing of the past and that unity is the goal of the immediate future; that hatred is retroactive and undesirable and that goodwill is the touchstone which will transform the world." Let us work in meditation for the liberation of all human minds.



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