

The Invocative Appeal of Humanity

Published in The Beacon (May/June issue, 2002).

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Tonight we celebrate the final of the three spiritual Festivals: the Festival of Goodwill, also known as the Festival of Unification. It's also called, quite simply, the Christ's Festival in the same way that the Wesak Festival is known as the full moon of the Buddha. And the close partnership, the mutual assistance to the Plan, of these "two Brothers", as they are called in the books of Alice Bailey, is an especially inspiring aspect of these three Festivals that mark the higher interlude of the spiritual year.

We are so accustomed to thinking of religions as "water-tight compartments", as if the ship that carries us to the other shore would sink if there were a free exchange of spiritual beliefs and practices. The point of view that disputes the practice of the "cafeteria-style" religion is a legitimate one, in its concern that picking this doctrine from one religion and that belief from another simply evades obedience to spiritual law whenever it gets a bit too rigorous. But the recognition that the seven-fold expression of Deity manifests in varying ways, according to history, culture and temperament, through the world's faiths as well as outside the borders of organized religion, is liberating in its goodwill and wise inclusiveness.

The Co-operation of the Buddha and the Christ

The co-operation of the Buddha and the Christ in the release of potent spiritual energies at the time of Wesak and the Festival of Goodwill—timed with the full moons of Taurus and Gemini—links four of the major world religions. The Buddha arose out of the Hindu tradition of India, where he was born and where he achieved his enlightenment and taught all who could understand how to achieve liberation. And the Christ anchored his teaching on the firm foundation of the Judaism of his time and place.

The Festival of Goodwill completes a release of energy which was initiated at Wesak when the Buddha makes his annual appearance, to those who have eyes to see, bringing the "touch of Shamballa" which the Christ as representative of the Hierarchy receives and holds in trust until the Festival of Goodwill when he releases it into humanity. In addition to the Christ and the Buddha, they are sustained and inspired, overshadowed by, the energies of great Beings called the Spirit of Peace and the Avatar of Synthesis. All of them, together with the united Hierarchy, constitute an alignment for a flow of

spiritual energy into humanity if the new group of world servers and men and women of goodwill can respond and take their place in the needed alignment. All have a place and a part to play; all are needed in an invocative appeal to Deity. This appeal is summed up in the Great Invocation, which is said to express the essence of the Plan for this cycle.

This channel that is established is the reason we call this opportunity an approach to divinity. When we think about these words—"channel" and "approach"—we realise their relevance to the flow of energy as directing and clarifying agents. Clarity and organisation of focus are needed for the inflow of spiritual energies. This the Christ focuses, on behalf of the Hierarchy, and releases into humanity because of humanity's *invocative appeal*.

It's said that "what people really want, that they can have". And this truth lies behind the opportunity offered at the full moon of Taurus and Gemini. Taurus stimulates the force of desire, while Gemini awakens the sense of duality revealing the pairs of opposites and the need to invoke the will. The essence of the message of the Buddha, who was born in the full moon of Taurus, achieved enlightenment on the Taurus full moon, and departed this earth on the full moon of Taurus, was the need and means to overcome desire through the awakened, illuminated mind and its capacity for discrimination between the real and lasting, and the unreal and impermanent. In his first sermon he preached the Noble Middle Way, which begins, he said, with right values. As it's said, "what people really want, they can have"; if we desire the wrong things, we suffer. And through suffering we learn to make better choices, for "men learn by means of evil that good is best." The Buddha understood this truth and its essential beneficence, for he knew what was possible for the human being. His first sermon preached the cause of suffering, and the first step to its elimination through right values. His last sermon preached that the means to overcome suffering exists within every human being and within the whole manifested world because every atom of substance has within it a point of light. Knowing this knowing that the thread that would lead us, like the mythical Theseus, out of our self-created labyrinth that is anchored within our own nature the Buddha commanded "Be a lamp unto your own feet. Look not to anyone outside yourselves for salvation."

The Buddha's Last Sermon

It is this last sermon of the Buddha that the Christ preaches each year at the full moon of Gemini, according to the Tibetan. Why should he repeat the Buddha's final sermon? Because the Christ knew through direct experience the truth that the map of our route of escape from sorrow and misery lies right within us. And he knew that this route of escape begins with the illumined, awakened mind, and that at some stage of the journey love takes over: the liberating power of pure love. For "love is the deliverance of mind",

as Helena Roerich wrote in *The Foundations of Buddhism*. "All methods for the earning of merit in this life are not worth one-sixteenth part of love, the deliverance of mind. Love, the deliverance of mind, takes them into itself, shining and glowing and beaming", according to the *Itivuttaka*, a Buddhist text.

"Love takes them into itself": what the mind discriminates through its power to illumine is then resolved in synthesis—"shining and glowing and beaming"—through love. Love includes, expands and liberates. This is why inclusiveness is said to be the key to understanding consciousness, and why initiation is the result of expansions of consciousness. The Buddha and his brother the Christ, as World Teachers, enacted and thus demonstrated what every human being must ultimately do for himself. This demonstration of liberation through the power of the awakened mind and the all-inclusive heart is the essence of the festivals of Taurus and Gemini. Year after year, century after century, the Buddha and the Christ re-enact this demonstration of liberation, knowing, as the Buddha said, that "there will be some who will understand" and leaving no one outside their compassionate gaze, for as Christ said, "Other sheep have I; them also must I bring".

Now, through the power of the Christ principle, the soul, and our very own "Buddha nature", the illumined mind, every human being can become a more active cooperator in this demonstration of liberation. Our readiness for this was confirmed in the release of the Great Invocation at the end of the world war, and we see its confirmation also in the great demand for freedom now bellowing throughout the world. These are recent events, and they mark a significant achievement by humanity.

Some years ago the Tibetan wrote, "Two qualities are 'tincturing' the ideal of the coming civilization...Freedom and spiritual security." The demand for freedom now raging throughout humanity may be a sign that humanity recognizes its need to choose, freely and at first through suffering the consequences of its choices. To come of age spiritually, human beings must be able to discern between the pairs of opposites and, having discerned, to choose.

Yet, one of the paradoxes of the spiritual path is that ultimately it's not a matter of choosing the greater over the lesser but of choosing "the third thing"—that to which the opposites can only point and which, in some mysterious way (to the outwardly focused consciousness), unifies them. This is why the Buddha taught the Noble Middle way. As the Tibetan puts it, first the disciple must perceive, without passion, pain or suffering, the distinction which lies between such pairs of opposites as light and dark, good and evil, love and hate. Then, having discovered that which is neither of them, the disciple must choose that which the pairs of opposites reveal, but only point to; they don't encompass this "third thing" but they reveal it. It is this central, intermediate way that is revealed to the initiate, we're told.

These dualities must first be discovered, but then they must be resolved in synthesis, which occurs not on the level of the dualities but on a higher stage of the way. And why? For the reason that Deity is one, "without a second" as Hindu scriptures say. God simply is.

This has relevance to the release of spiritual energy discharged into humanity by the Christ at the Festival of Gemini. For Gemini is the major symbol of duality, we're told. It controls every one of the pairs of opposites by forming a third factor—a triangle. Several spiritual recognitions converge in this process: acquiescence, through the fusion of love and will, which was first achieved and demonstrated by the Christ at Gethsemane when he gave up his will to the still greater, but unknown, will of God. The disciple spends so much energy, so much struggle, honing and refining the personal will, for without it the path cannot be trod; only to find that, at a certain stage, that will is not enough. A new energy must take over and this is the reason for acquiescence. It's not the acquiescence of passivity, but an active balancing of dualities through equilibrium. Its highest expression is the Spirit of Peace, who is the Spirit of Equilibrium, a balancing of forces in comparison to which all human conflict and struggle are just the "training wheels" a child needs when learning to ride a bicycle.

The Tibetan tells us that "Through the Christ and the Buddha, humanity can establish a close relationship with Shamballa and then make its own contribution to the planetary life. Pervaded by light and controlled by the Spirit of Peace, the expression of humanity's will-to-good can emanate powerfully...and it can enter upon its destined task as the intelligent, loving intermediary between the super-human and subhuman kingdoms. Thus humanity will become eventually the planetary mediator". By charting its course, through right values and choices, along the Noble Middle Way, humanity will learn to navigate the rapids of duality; learn to identify the links that unite—on a higher level—that which seems opposed.

Do we not begin this by looking for common ground with those whose thinking seems (and often, only seems) opposed to ours? The increasing globalisation now occurring on an outer level demands it, and the recent impact of Shamballa force—the energy of synthesis, of the will-to-good—last year now reinforces every tendency within humanity to seek out common ground and those values and choices that serve the good of the whole. This impulse is now expressing as ecumenism in the field of religion, and in the United Nations and the European Union on the level of government, among other expressions. This impulse to find common ground is a divine tendency within humanity, but like all that is good, it is evoking an opposing reaction from the forces that would divide and separate human beings from each other.

This year is a cycle of Emergence/Impact on Public Consciousness in the three-year cycle that governs the new group of world servers. What could be more important to strengthen the hands of the servers of the world than the impulse to seek common

ground, shared values, with those whose lives—on an outer level might—be very different from ours?

Since 1952 the Festival of Gemini, the Christ's Festival, has also been celebrated as World Invocation Day. On this day each year all spiritual seekers have an opportunity to unite with other seekers on the common ground of love for humanity and in the invocation of Deity by whatever name the One is known. As Huston Smith, the author of *The World's Religions*, said, in writing about whether God or Deity is transcendent or immanent—or neither or both: "Hinduism has included superb champions of each view...but the conclusion that does most justice to Hinduism is that both [views] are equally correct. At first blush this may look like a glaring violation of the law of the excluded middle. God may be either personal or not, but not both. But is this so? What the disjunction forgets, India argues, is the distance our rational minds are from God in the first place. Intrinsically, God may not be capable of being two contradictory things—we say may not because logic itself may melt in the full blaze of the divine incandescence. But concepts of God contain so much alloy to begin with that two contradictory ones may be true, each from a different angle, as both wave and particles may be equally accurate in describing the nature of light."

Or, as the great mystic, St. John of the Cross, put it: "One of the greatest favours bestowed on the soul transiently in this life is to enable it to see so distinctly and to feel so profoundly that it cannot comprehend God at all. These souls are somewhat like the saints in heaven, where they who know Him most perfectly perceive most clearly that He is infinitely incomprehensible; for those who have the less clear vision do not perceive so clearly as do these others how greatly He transcends their vision."

If such minds as these two religious thinkers can find no justification for staking out a position on religious belief which excludes all others, then surely, a willingness to share in an act of invocation for Light and Love and Power should have broad appeal. And we have found an increasing responsiveness to World Invocation Day through publicizing it widely. People write in and say thank you, bless you, send me 50 Great Invocation cards or a hundred, and they in turn share the Invocation with others.

A Year of Decision

The Great Invocation is said to be a powerful technique for transformation and our supreme means of preparation for the reappearance of the Christ, the World Teacher. The transformation most needed would seem to be that of right values, leading to the power to discriminate and make right choices, right decisions. The Tibetan said that every 49 years the Masters who are ready for the Sixth Initiation meet in conclave to make their decision, and this is such a year. In such an exalted undertaking, we have no involvement, and no right to intrude with our inquiring, curious minds. But on our level,

we human beings have our own decision to make: whether to live in unity—which always must be created, freely chosen, whereas synthesis is. Unity must be created out of the free acquiescence of the human will. The impact of Shamballa has brought the energy of synthesis into earthly life more dynamically than ever. The goodwill of millions of human beings is waiting to be mobilised. The choices we must make—whether to serve selfish interests or the good of the whole—are becoming even more clarified for those who are willing to see. And this is a year of Emergence and Impact on Public Consciousness—a cycle in which the power of public opinion can and must be aroused and mobilised to assure that all right-thinking individuals will be strengthened in their commitment to sharing, to justice, to truth and right human relations.

Years ago the Tibetan wrote, "I call you from your dreams of vague beauty, impossible Utopias and wishful thinking to face life as it is today; and then to begin, in the place where you are, to make it better. I call you to the experiment of right human relations, beginning with your own personal relations to your family and friends, and then to the task of educating those you contact so that they also start a similar work. It is the work of attaining right individual relations, right group relations, right intergroup relations, right national relations and right international relations. I call you to the realisation that in this work no one is futile or useless, but that all have a place of practical value. I call you to recognise that goodwill is a dynamic energy which can bring about world changes of a fundamental kind, and that its mode of expression is through the activity of the individual man and woman and through their massed intent. The massed power of goodwill, the dynamic effect of intelligent and active understanding, and the potency of a trained and alive public opinion which desires the greatest good of the greatest number, are beyond belief. This dynamic power has never been employed. It can, today, save the world."

Yet, "it is humanity which determines its own fate", the Tibetan also said. This is why humanity is such a question mark—because we must freely choose, sometimes by means of evil, that good is best—the greatest good for the greatest number. Freedom is a universal aspiration and often it is selfishly oriented, but free will is our divinely ordained *right*. Sorrow as a result of wrong choices is our greatest teacher, and compassion is our inheritance when we learn to navigate between the pairs of opposites. As human beings, and in alignment with all who are meditating as we are, let us "stand with massed intent" as representatives for the whole of humanity in the invocation of light and love and the power of the will-to-good. Scientists now confirm that human beings share 99% of their DNA, so to my mind that affirms our right, our obligation, to stand on behalf of all humanity in an appeal to divinity. Let us work in meditation. A