Goodwill in World Affairs

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Global Conflict and the Road to Right Relationship

Conflict is a natural consequence of interaction in our present evolutionary stage but when perpetuated, it impedes the potential for harmony. It is mainly caused by communication breakdowns and trust issues ensuing from the differing perceptions, understandings and desires held by individuals and groups. Learning to see and address the bias inherent in the mechanisms we employ to overcome the limitations imposed by these differences, is vital for improving our ability to practice conflict resolution.

Right relationship depends on the recognition of the universal interconnectedness lying at the centre of our existence. Thoughts and actions have a ripple effect. Participants in global disputes who recognise the essential unity of life, can transform the quality of all associated interactions, generate clarity of thought and allow the will-to-cooperation to take root – all needed to affirm humanity's single purpose and identify how to break down barriers.

This Newsletter hopes to engage your creative thought and inspire right action in a spirit of Goodwill. §

DISARMAMENT AND
THE WAY TOWARDS
PEACE

FROM CONFLICT TO
HARMONY: TOWARDS
A NEW PARADIGM OF
HUMAN RELATIONSHIP

GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH CONFLICT

GLOBAL CONFLICT AND THE ROAD TO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP



DISARMAMENT AND THE WAY TOWARDS PEACE MD

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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed" UNESCO Constitution

Disarmament as a vision

We live in a world where spiritual vision and aspirations are still behind reality, and disarmament is part of that dynamics.

The UN Charter holds the vision on this:

"Article 1 The Purposes of the United Nations are:

- 1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
- **2.** To develop friendly relations among nations [...]
- **3.** To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems [...]
- **4.** To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

More specifically, one of the most relevant documents of the disarmament

world is the final document of the (first) Special Session on Disarmament or SSOD-1 (1978). Despite the Cold War, countries agreed on specific disarmament goals that years later led to several treaties, such as those on chemical weapons, biological weapons, arms trade, nuclear non proliferation or tests, etc. There are new challenges today (i.e., firearms violence, artificial intelligence or a nuclear disarmament treaty), but much of what can be negotiated has already being identified and discussed years ago. The UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament is a more contemporary example of what can be done.

The current crisis

However, as it is well known, the UN system is facing a power crisis, as humanity is experiencing a crisis, and this conditions effective results on disarmament. With diplomacy still organized around nations, almost all diplomats attend the meetings with instructions from their capital, instructions which are part of a broader national strategy that does not change much along time. There is a lot of space for the mind and pre-structured statements, and little space for the heart. National interests come before a more global approach. Nations still consider they are in charge and problems must be solved at their dimension

The result is what we see today: there are at least 101 armed conflicts being waged in the world¹, practically one out of every two countries. Global

military expenditure is on the rise, with a record of \$2.13 trillion in 20212, mostly concentrated by a handful of countries whose weapons are enough to blow up the planet several times. The Conference on Disarmament has not been able to reach consensus on negotiations since 1997, and the war in Ukraine has expanded political differences and stagnation to almost all disarmament forums. Most recently, even human survivability has been put at stake, with the idea of a nuclear war being mentioned by government officials from nuclear weapons states. The motivations behind this reality can be understood: we are dealing with the survival fear of nations and the "defense" built to face it. At the root lies the illusion of separation, where mistrust gives space to a feeling of threat to which more military power looks like the most "reasonable" answer.

On the contrary, dialogue in bilateral meetings (both technical and political), regional or multilateral forums, high-level visits, confidence-building measures and disarmament negotiations seem to loose ground. The solutions are still there, but the energy to catalyze change is not. All this accounts for a crisis with no traditional solution within reach, something that disturbs all sensitive human hearts.

Towards Peace?

A spiritual perspective tells us that, in order to move out from this stagnation, we need to unveil a deeper perspective, with Love and Peace at the core of a radical impulse towards change and Peace.

Arguably, no disarmament negotiation alone can solve this. We are in need of an integral plan that deals with disarmament, justice, environment, global debt, hunger and others, topics that can be summed up in the Sustainable Development Goals. A plan that maybe could be agreed on is a UN Global Conference, of which the Paris Peace Forum is an interesting example at the national level³.

In any case, in order to reach that "energetic allowance", inner contact must kindle human hearts and spark goodwill. At the diplomatic level, we need to look for and support spaces of dialogue, where people can meet and changes happen.

If direct meetings cannot take place, we need to be open for third countries, organizations or mediators to facilitate confidence-building measures and transparency that can gradually dispel negativity and manifest the light of the soul.

The mental complexities and diplomatic stagnation around disarmament must not disappoint us. Possible solutions are there and those involved know them.



For those interested, inner support to such events is an important service. For those serving in the diplomatic field, intuition and love are as important as instructions and forms, and every event is an opportunity for energies to come in and dynamize the whole field, triggering unseen commitments and progress.

In the end, humanity is One, and longs

for Peace. Let us just allow for that to happen. §

- 1. The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, *Today's Armed Conflicts* >> http://bit.ly/3LYoOHs
- 2. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, World military expenditure passes \$2 trillion for first time >> http://bit.ly/3LZFGow
- 3. Paris Peace Forum >> https://bit.ly/3TRqEvA

From Conflict to Harmony: Towards a New Paradigm of Human Relationship

Human civilizations throughout history have been marked by cycles of war and violent conflict, each being eventually resolved only for another to emerge in due course. Research into the underlying causes of conflict, the nature of the human psyche, and the various structural and sociological correlates of war have brought the human mind to an understanding of the many mechanisms which produce and perpetuate violent conflict.

Today, humanity is in possession of the key that can resolve war and violence into the ordered harmony and beauty emblematic of its higher nature. This key, however, must be appropriated and turned, and this requires the application of a transformed human will, dedicated to the establishing of a new paradigm of living and thinking reflective of man's highest virtue and innate beneficence. This is still a work in progress. Humanity has achieved an intelligent apprehension of the problem of war, and action is being taken on a large scale to remedy its underlying causes. This is laying the foundation for a culture of goodwill and right

relationship in which humanity's creative potential, strong in its diversity and unbreakable in its unity, can flourish.

The principle of conflict is inherent in even the smallest atom of substance and reaches its fullest expression in the intelligent discrimination of the human mind. In the life of the individual and in humanity as a whole, this principle produces the various crises and tensions leading, often after intense struggle, to expansion and inclusion. Conflict inevitably produces right relationship and a universal spirit of goodwill, yet such an outcome is not automatic. Only when both desire and will are present to sufficient degree, can the crises which conflict produces be resolved into the "better angels" of human nature.

Such mastery requires knowledge and understanding of conflict at every level, and contemporary studies of violent conflict at the international level have produced an entire body of knowledge on the subject, insight into which can be seen in various definitions¹ which have been put forward. Most of these focus on divergence and incompatibility

of interests or objectives, based on perceptions and beliefs of the parties. A more complete understanding comes when these definitions are examined alongside two closely linked elements: violence and peace.

The World Health Organization defines violence² as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation." The absence of direct or personal violence (e.g., intentional/ overt physical harm) does not mean peace. There are many forms of indirect violence which are present in 'silent' conflicts, and if left unrecognized can give rise to violence in its more direct form. One of these, structural violence³, is found in the unequal distribution of power, resources and rights between groups (Johan Galtung's classic example: "if people are starving when this is objectively avoidable, then violence is committed"). Another, cultural violence⁴, occurs when values, language, ideology, religion, and overall worldview within a society enable or justify the existence of direct violence (e.g., apartheid in South Africa).

Peace⁵ is often conceptualized⁶ into negative and positive components. Negative peace is "the absence of violence or fear of violence" while

positive peace includes "the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies."

Negative peace focuses on the elimination of direct violence, while positive peace seeks to eradicate indirect (structural, cultural) violence as well. The utility of a positive peace paradigm is that it channels attention to other important elements of society such as economics, well-being, inclusiveness, and justice where the underlying causes of direct violence and war often lie. The link between peace and conflict can be further understood through Edward Azar's Protracted Social Conflict theory⁷ which illustrates how the deprivation of human needs underlies social conflicts.

The academic study of international relations has produced three major worldviews which seek to understand the behavior and policy decisions underlying a whole range of state actions—the most consequential being the decision to engage in armed conflict.

Realism⁸ is based on the concept of selfinterested states competing for power and security. It is critical of abstract moral discourse which interferes with political reality. Liberalism⁹ posits that the expansion of democracy, economic relations and multilateralism across the world are conducive to peace and that international institutions are a



means through which a whole range of international actors can cooperate. Constructivism¹º stresses how culture, ideas, collective values, and social identities shape international politics. Non-state actors including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), transnational activist networks, and individuals gain relevance as they promote new ideas and values.

No single worldview can fully account nor predict the dynamics between international actors. Realism does not account for improved international relations and increased cooperation, as it sees international relations as a constant state of anarchy and a relationship as a zero-sum game. Liberalism fails to recognize that many democratic governments survive only when they maintain military power and security, and that transitions to democracy can be violent. Constructivism does not clarify the social conditions and power structures that allow for changes in values.

What is needed is a perspective which is not bound by any one worldview but is able to bridge between them, which resolves these outwardly incongruent modes of thought, vision, and action into an ordered system of paradigms reflecting the multi-faceted and diverse nature of human thought. Such synthetic thinking is itself being precipitated by the conflict between these competing ideologies—by the recognition of the futility of any one of them to explain international relations in its fullness, and that together they better approximate the truth.

The principle of conflict underlies human evolution and becomes an asset when raised up into the light of the soul thus producing a union within the self and with others. When focused exclusively on the many differentiations of the outer form, conflict becomes the enemy of love and right relationship, rather than the force which produces growth, wisdom, knowledge, beauty and all the many qualities made possible through the sorrow and strife of the human experience.

The key to the transmutation of conflict into opportunity and achievement lies in the right application of goodwill. Goodwill is the conditioning factor in all human relations; it is love in expression. It is the foundation of true peace which can only be achieved through the right handling and management of conflict. Yet, the cessation of violent conflict is only the first step to producing the right conditions in which humanity's spiritual potential to create, to build, to love, and to radiate that "peace which passeth understanding" can go forward. When the pure and disinterested spirit of goodwill finds expression, it quickly spreads; all that prevents synthesis and hinders right understanding fades and is replaced by a harmony in which love, direct from the Heart of God, enters the hearts of all. §

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- 2. World Health Organization, World report on violence and health, November 2002
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- 3. The Open University, Questioning crime: social harms and global issues >> bit.ly/3FXNvQs
- 4. J. Galtung, "Cultural Violence", Journal of Peacce Research, Vol. 27, No. 3. (Aug., 1990) pp. 291-305. >> bit.ly/3norDXY
- 5. United Nations, Peace means dignity, wellbeing for all, not just absence of war - UN officials,

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GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH CONFLICT

In considering a road from conflict to right relationships, we need to ask ourselves if we want right relationships in the first place. For one thing, right relationships do mean that one's privileges will be reduced and that a self-centred egoïstic attitude will have to be left behind. They also require that one gradually lets go of the idea of profit. So we should ask again: do we want to go down that road? Considering the alternative and taking common sense into account, it seems fairly evident, but taking a clear stance on the topic is paramount.

The spiritual teachings of the Ageless Wisdom suggest that the choice has already been made for us; we live and move and have our being in the body of a Deity from Whom the law of compassion – expressed as right relationships, loving understanding or actively demonstrated love – derives, as an integral part of Their nature¹. Nevertheless, pondering on this topic from the point of view of desire is relevant because our emotions play a large role in our emergence out of conflict and into harmony.

In the context of the evolving consciousness that we are as individuals, groups or as the larger group-comprising-subgroups that we call humanity, we need to recognize that we do not always put right relations before our own self-interest – we know that from the experience of our own lives. In today's world ethics are challenged, if not blatantly mocked, and as a civilisation we may shamelessly orient our compass around tangible objectives rather than more subjective, eternal ones. Our civilisation is quite materialistic, the world thoughtform is quite materialistic, our values, it too often seems, are indexed on the stock market. Our civilisation is the result of the evolving human state of consciousness and grows out of its survival instinct, its appetites, its ambitions. We ask who in their right mind would sacrifice for the good of the whole? Who will put Spirit first? Can that much even be asked of the churches? In this climate, what should be expected of individuals, people of power, or nations? We have never removed greed and separativeness from the roots of our relationship to life, so how are we expected to find our way out of

conflict?

Yet, as Alice Bailey convincingly expresses, the energies of soul life progressively condition all our interactions upon the physical plane. It should thus be understandable that even people of pure motive and intention, and of high principle, can be impelled into antagonistic activities².

Reflecting on these views, conflict comes to be seen as a necessary consequence of evolution. A consequence of the broadening of consciousness according to the following pattern: expansion, contact, conflict, friction and mediation, bringing about harmony through conflict, in an expanded state of consciousness. This view depicts the human family flourishing as one. This is the big picture. A picture too easily forgotten when we allow ouselves to be mesmerized by conflict, and when we let our identity become crystallised on the gains we seek to levy or the losses we seek to avoid.

Therefore, while conflict is an undeniable fact of life and unfolds before our very eyes on planes of varied subtlety, we need to train ourselves to lift our gaze above and



beyond, into the world of meaning. There, with the right orientation and correct information, we can let meaning cloth itself into a wisely inspired understanding for the conflicts we experience. We can try to perceive the inner unity of all things and its workings in diversity. This process will orientate and inspire the sentiency of the little lives we ourselves are composed of. In other words, it will inform and direct the processes of our collective imagination to let us see and feel and touch the promise of right relations.

Likewise, it will help us to precipitate the idea of right relations into a lovable ideal, and seek to transmute the qualities in ourselves that are inimical to the process of harmonization through conflict by imagining how their beneficent expression would feel and how they might be expressed in our relationships.

This is a practical endeavour, and it is our responsibility. Although global conflict may arise from the greed and power of a few and from their leadership over numerous people, real power lies in the hands of the masses that have educated themselves. It is mind tainted by desires that rules the world and it is right desire and right perspective that will lead us from darkness to light, out of the present-day glamour into the light of Reality.

We are arguing that we don't really have a choice in walking the road to right relations, but we can definitely slow the process and suffer thereby, or pace our progress rightly. It is up to us. This is our

free will, our goodwill. Finally, as right relations rely on transmuting the consciousness of the individual self into the consciousness of the soul or the Ego, we understand how the idea of right relations goes hand in hand with the idea of group consciousness. Yes, our progress involves relinquishing our individual treasure troves and some loss of identity, but it bears the promise of the eternal prosperity of shared wealth in its many forms, consciousness being foremost. Is this not desirable enough?

Ultimately, we are encouraged to fan the fires of our hearts and to transmute love, from personal love, to love of mate and of family, to love of one's entire environment, and through patriotism to love of the entire humanity. Thus does the transmutation of our astral life lead through conflict. to an extended consciousness³. §

- 1. Adapted from Alice Bailey, The Externalisation of the Hierarchy 288 >> http://bit.ly/40lhBot
- 2. Alice Bailey, Esoteric Psychology II 86
- >> http://bit.ly/43wAFms
- 3. Alice Bailey, A Treatise on Cosmic Fire 954
- >> https://bit.ly/3CdkCyH

GLOBAL CONFLICT AND THE ROAD TO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

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The seeds of love as well as hatred do not grow in the soil of Mother Earth but in the hearts and minds of us human beings, her children, who are endowed with a consciousness that no other living species is blessed with. All divisions based on race, religion, creed and class are erected in the hearts and minds of people and not in the man-made bricks and concrete walls of the outer world. If we are to experience outer peace with the human, animal and plant world we need to transcend our ego-centric ways of thinking in terms of 'me', 'l', 'mine', 'my family', 'my religion', 'my race', 'my village' and 'my country' to an allembracing universal consciousness that honours and respects the wellbeing of all sentient beings. Those who wish to see a peaceful, sustainable, just

and happy world must exercise their intellectual and spiritual capacities on the solid foundation of universal consciousness. The process of awakening this universal consciousness needs to take place from conception in the mother's womb throughout life childhood, adolescence, maturity, old age to ultimate and inevitable death. Awakening this universal consciousness does not only apply to the individual. It applies equally to families, groups, schools, workplaces, communities – both urban and rural - nations and the human population in the world as a whole.

The Buddha made the radical discovery that we do not exist as separate beings. He saw that 'self' is a delusion which causes suffering and alienates us from freedom and the mystery of life. The doctrine of causality called 'paticca samuppada' or dependent co-arising, the most profound exposition of the



Buddha, succinctly elaborates the reality of life - the existence of self and world in terms of mutually conditioning and interdependent psycho-physical events that arise and pass away.

To quote:

... in dependence upon feeling there is craving; in dependence upon craving there is pursuit; in dependence upon pursuit there is gain; in dependence upon gain there is decision-making; in dependence upon decision-making there is desire and lust; in dependence upon desire and lust there is attachment: in dependence upon attachment there is possessiveness; in dependence upon possessiveness there is stinginess; in dependence upon stinginess there is safeguarding; and because of safeguarding, various evil unwholesome phenomena originate – the taking up of clubs and weapons, conflicts, quarrels, and disputes, insulting speech, slander, and falsehood.' Mahanidana Sutta DN 15

The proper response to global conflict is the road to right relationship. This needs to be forged by identifying the footprints which the generations before us, who have walked on this road, have left behind. Humanity may have survived on the planet earth even thus far amidst the most aggressive form of conflicts and wars across millennia, because the generations before us have established wholesome ideas and

the conditions that were conducive to human flourishing. At the same time there are also muddy footprints on the road left behind by some previous generations that had contributed to the disruption of the stability of our world. Building right relationship should begin in the hearts and minds of each and every one of the eight billion people now on our planet earth, or at least a critical mass of the population. Enduring outer peace that will end global conflict can only be attained when individuals achieve inner peace the cessation of conflict within themselves. Two and a half millennia ago the Buddha recognized the noble truth of cleansing the mind from evil and nurturing a pure mind:

'All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind. 'dukkha' (suffering or unsatisfactoriness) follows him just as the wheel follows the hoofprint of the ox that draws the cart.' Verse 1: Dhammapada

'All mental phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they have mind as their chief; they are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness (sukha) follows him like a shadow that never leaves him. 'Verse 2: Dhammapada

Our quest for creating a universal

consciousness that propagates the wellbeing of all - humans, flora and fauna, and even the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil we sow has been threatened in a way unprecedented in the history of humanity. The so-called ultra-capitalist economic policies and consumer-driven economic systems, undemocratic and highly dominating and authoritarian geopolitical ideologies, structures, toxic systems and centralized bureaucratic processes have consolidated political and economic power. Natural resources and monetary wealth are concentrated in the hands of a few who are rich and the powerful at the local, national, regional and international levels by marginalizing and ostracizing the poor and the powerless. The dependency mindset created by the so called 'financial aid' and the entrapment of 'debt restructuring' has put the lives of present and future generations in the developing world on the guillotine. This deadly trend is on the verge of destroying the age-old spiritual web of highly enriching and empowering faith traditions in the world – perhaps even beyond resurrection. Humanity is left with no time to waste. The road map towards right relationship must be discerned and put into action. The world is in desperate need of effecting a non-violent social transformation by empowering village and urban communities to address the root causes that precipitate conflicts at both micro and macro levels.

The social, economic and political inequalities and injustices have caused suffering, frustration, unhappiness, and disharmony within so many communities. The transformation of consciousness of individuals and communities toward compassion and

peace represents an essential step toward building a just and peaceful world. While transforming the egoistic mind set to an all-embracing universal consciousness, we also need to work towards liberating the impoverished, underprivileged and marginalised people from the entrapment of powerlessness, helplessness and hopelessness, and help them to discover their own potential and strength to uplift their lives for the better. In rebuilding the lives of village and urban communities, first and foremost we need to ignite the collective community spirit in the hearts and minds of people.

In human society at all levels, four interrelated vicious processes operate; the Buddha named them as psychological alienation (chanda), aversion (dvesha), fear (bhaya) and delusion (moha). The Buddha's exposition on the Four Divine Abodes (Four Brahma Viharas) – Loving Kindness (Metta), Compassion (Karuna), Altruistic Joy (Muditha) and Equanimity (Upekkha) - offer an excellent prescription to heal our hearts and minds from ego-centric and self-centred ailments and expand our consciousness to embrace all sentient beings. This community spirit can also be awakened through the Buddhist concepts of sharing (dana), pleasant language (priya vachana), constructive activity (arthacharya) and equality (samanatmata).

Let us resolve to make a genuine commitment during our lifetime to put wholesome footprints on the road to right relationship that will change the destiny of present generations and the generations to come and make the planet 'earth' a liveable and peaceful abode for all life. §

Helping to build right human relations

World Goodwill is an international movement helping to mobilise the energy of goodwill and to build right human relations. It was established in 1932 as a service activity of the Lucis Trust. The Lucis Trust is a registered educational charity in the United Kindgom. In the USA it is a non-profit tax-exempt educational corporation, and in Switzerland it is registered as a non-profit association. World Goodwill is recognised by the United Nations as a Non-Governmental Organisation and is represented at

regular briefing sessions at UN Headquarters. The Lucis Trust is on the Roster of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The World Goodwill Newsletter is published three times a year. Unless otherwise indicated, all articles are prepared by the World Goodwill HQ group. Multiple copies for distribution are available on request. The newsletter is also available in: French, Greek, Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese (online), Russian, and Slovenian.

World Goodwill relies solely on donations to continue its work. The newsletter is distributed free of charge to be as widely available as possible, but donations are always needed for this service, and are much appreciated.

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World Invocation Day 3 June 2023

World Invocation Day is a day of prayer, of focused spiritual contact, when people of all faiths and paths join together to make an invocative appeal to Divinity. This appeal calls for light and love to flow into human consciousness. Join us in using the Great Invocation on this day.

worldinyocationday.org

The Great Invocation

Adapted Version

From the point of Light within the Mind of God Let light stream forth into the minds of men. Let Light descend on Earth. From the point of Light within the Mind of God Let light stream forth into human minds. Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God Let love stream forth into the hearts of men. May Christ* return to Earth. From the point of Love within the Heart of God Let love stream forth into human hearts. May the Coming One* return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known Let purpose guide the little wills of men – The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre where the Will of God is known Let purpose guide all little human wills – The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men Let the Plan of Love and Light work out And may it seal the door where evil dwells. From the centre which we call the human race Let the Plan of Love and Light work out And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth.

*Many religions believe in a World Teacher Who is to come in the future (hence 'Coming One'), knowing Him under such names as the Lord Maitreya, the Imam Mahdi, the Kalki avatar etc. These terms are sometimes used in versions of the Great Invocation for people of specific faiths.