

# ***World Good Will Seminar***



A Day of Reflection on the Theme:

## **“FROM THE UNREAL TO THE REAL” & DISCERNING TRUTH IN THE INFORMATION AGE**



***Geneva***

**Saturday 18 November 2017**

**Cycle d'Orientation Cayla**

**Chemin William Lescaze 8, 1203 Geneva**

**World Good Will**

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# WORLD GOOD WILL SEMINAR

## *From the Unreal to the Real*



A day of talks, discussions and meditations – simultaneously in London, New York and Geneva – on the theme of From the Unreal to the Real. Man has to gradually learn to distinguish between the truth and the truths, between knowledge and wisdom, between reality and illusion. How to embrace what seems right and reject what seems wrong?

Through the development of the intuition an infallible instrument will be acquired with which to discriminate and to discern.

## **Discerning Truth in the Information Age**

Saturday 18 November 2017 --- 10:00-16:00

Cycle d'Orientation Cayla\*, Geneva - Chemin William Lescaze 8, 1203 Geneva

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### **Programme**

10:00 **Introduction**

**Mantram: "The New Group of World Servers"**

10:05 **Discerning Truth in the Information Age: Fostering Right Human Relations**

*Vincent Claessens*

10:30 **The Role of the Media in Discerning Truth: Media and Information Literacy as a tool for Right Human Relations**

*Gabriel Jaraba*

11:05 **Visualisation**

11:10 **"And the Truth Shall Set You Free": Finding Clarity in a Complex World**

*Alexandra Ratcliffe*

11:45 **Plenary Discussion**

12:00 **End of the Morning** --- Lunch ---

13:30 **Introduction**

**Mantram: "Affirmation of Love"**

13:35 **Right Human Relations in Environmental Issues** *Cécile Sorbier*

14:10 **Introduction Group Work – World Good Will game: Evoking the Soul of the Nations**

14:15 **Group Work – World Good Will game: Evoking the Soul of the Nations**

15:45 **Group Meditation**

16:00 **End of the day**

Entrance free

*This event is financed exclusively by donations.*

*Your contribution is warmly welcomed.*

\* Cycle d'Orientation Cayla is not responsible for the organization of this event

For more information, please write to:

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## GROUP MEDITATION: WORLD GOODWILL

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### STRENGTHENING THE HANDS OF THE GROUP OF WORLD SERVERS

#### I. GROUP FUSION

We recognise our place, as a group, within the heart centre of the group of world servers:

**I am one with my group brothers, and all that I have is theirs.  
May the love which is in my soul pour forth to them.  
May the strength which is in me lift and aid them.  
May the thoughts which my soul creates reach and encourage them.**

#### II. ALIGNMENT

Mentally extend a line of lighted energy towards the planetary heart centre – the spiritual Hierarchy; to the Christ, the “heart of love” within the spiritual Hierarchy; and towards the planetary head centre – the centre where the will of God is known.

#### III. HIGHER INTERLUDE

Hold the mind focused for a few moments on the planetary role of the group of world servers mediating between the spiritual Hierarchy and humanity, responding to spiritual impression and meditating the Plan of Light and Love into existence.

#### IV. MEDITATION Meditate on the seed thought:

***Let reality govern my every thought, and truth be the master of my life.***

#### V. PRECIPITATION

Visualise the precipitation of the will-to-good, essential love, from the centre where the will of God is known, through the spiritual Hierarchy and the Christ, the group of world servers, all people of goodwill everywhere in the world, and finally through the hearts and minds of the whole human family.

#### VI. LOWER INTERLUDE

**May the Power of the one Life pour through the group of all true servers  
May the Love of the one Soul characterise the lives of all who seek to aid the Great Ones  
May I fulfil my part in the one Work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech.**

Reflect on the seminar theme working out through applied goodwill in all walks of life by all peoples everywhere

## **VII. DISTRIBUTION**

As the Great Invocation is sounded, visualise the irradiation of human consciousness with light and love and power:

**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 Love within the Heart of God  
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.  
May Christ 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 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.**

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

**OM**

**OM**

**OM**

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### **Mantram of the New Group of World Servers**

**May the Power of the one Life  
pour through the group of all true servers.**

**May the Love of the one Soul  
characterise the lives of all who seek to aid the Great Ones.**

**May I fulfil my part in the one Work through  
self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech.**

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### **Affirmation of Love**

**In the centre of all Love I stand  
From that centre, I the soul, will outward move.  
From that centre, I the one who serves, will work.  
May the love of the divine Self be shed abroad,  
in my heart, through my group and throughout the world.**

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## Discerning Truth in the World of Today: Promoting Right Human Relations

Vincent Claessens

In today's world, technology allows us to transfer a considerable amount of information. Information is transmitted with astonishing rapidity which now exceeds the thinking capacity of the human mind, which has become slower than the computer. In this hyper-connected world, we have probably never had so much need for discrimination. Indeed, this monumental quantity of information does not reflect a corresponding quality. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the terms "information" and "knowledge" if we want to learn to discern the truth. Information is news, a documentation about something or someone, whereas knowledge implies some thinking or pondering on the information. The process of analysing requires an effort of discrimination to test the veracity of the information.

The word 'truth' is a term used in a large a variety of areas. There is, for example, *scientific truth*. This emerges from the collaboration of a group of scholars and specialised researchers. After experiment and verification, this group validates a theory, recognised as true... until another theory extends it or contradicts it.

We can also speak of *judicial truth*. This implies that there is, on the one hand, the truth of the facts and on the other there is the judgment of a court based on a subjective interpretation of the facts as perceived by the judge. These two truths are not always the same and judicial error is always possible. The symbol of justice, the balance with its two plates, invites us to a precise discrimination by learning to weigh the various expressed points of view so that eventually the truth emerges.

In psychoanalysis, one speaks of the *subject truth*; a truth that the individual discovers in the course of analysis, exploring the marks of the past on the strata of his unconscious. From then on, we may ask ourselves: What is the part of truthfulness in this progressive revelation and the part of mental construction of a personal history revisited a long time after the facts? This question is particularly legitimate since neuroscience and cognitive psychology demonstrate the level of reliability of memory. Memory is unreliable, changing, fluctuating, and partial. Not only is memory selective, but our brain continuously recreates its own subjective reality. That is not the brain's fault, which only registers impressions. In fact, it is the mind that constantly creates meaning out of inner and outer perceptions. Illusion occurs because of the limitation of the mind and because of the astral body that distorts the perceived impressions of the inner and outer worlds.

Hasn't it also been said that one remembers what one wants (or can) remember? The mechanism of repression operates to protect the individual from too painful or too shameful a reality. The myth of Oedipus offers us the example of an unbearable truth. When Oedipus learned that he was the murderer of his father and the lover of his mother, he pierced his eyes and became blind.

Are we able to face all truths?

Psychoanalysis does not pretend to reveal the exact truth, but simply to give meaning to a patient suffering from the assaults of his unconscious. Putting words on suffering is already a form of relief.

What is truth?

From antiquity to the present day this question has made many philosophers wonder. A first nuance occurred in both the West and the East. The thinkers perceived two levels of understanding by distinguishing *relative truth* from *absolute truth*. We know that everything is relative in the manifested world. A truth may be right at a certain level, but on a more global level it appears less 'legitimate' and loses its grandeur in the face of a higher truth.

The mind being subject to duality, because, according to its perception, there exists a subject-observer and an object-observed, it cannot extricate itself from errors of interpretation or illusions projected on the object. The concrete mind is anchored in the great illusion of separation. On its own it cannot reach complete truth because it isolates the object of study from its relationship to the Whole. Here we reach the limit of empirical science which was imposed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; logical empiricism excludes the synthetic approach. Moreover, the segmentation of knowledge always offers only a partial view of reality. The intellect is to a certain extent "the destroyer of the Real," while at the same time possessing an immense power of creativity. In short, if we want to discern the truth in the world of today, we must renounce the exclusive supremacy of the lower mind.

On the other hand, too much importance should not be given to the debates of intellectuals who embed their analysis through in excessive criticism of other visions than theirs. Critical thinking is important in forging our own opinions, but the spirit of criticism, made up of perpetual judgments and prejudices, leads to impasses.

From these debates no lasting and constructive solution results, only a pessimistic view of reality. The depth of view of the Higher Intelligence, the abstract mind, and the light of Pure Reason which shines from the Buddhist plane from which the true vision emerges is often lacking. Most of the time, it is a confrontation of opinions where each expert wants to be 'right' in contrast of the counter arguments of his interlocutor, rather than looking together for the start of a solution or a fragment of truth. Very often, intellectual pride darkens rather than reveals the truth.

In a completely different way, Buddhists use the verbal joust in an exercise where one monk "knocks down" another monk through metaphysical questions. This makes it possible to sharpen the mind of the latter, but also to push it into its last entrenchments and to open it up to a wider perception. In the same way, the use of the Koan in Zen practices aims to show the disciple that the mind is incapable of grasping the truth contained in this paradoxical thought form. And sometimes the mind drops all its resistance, the "manasic wall" cracks, allowing the light to illuminate the field of consciousness of the disciple.

In 1920 Alice Bailey wrote: "Lower mind, instead of being a means to an end ..., is in fair way of being a ruler and a tyrant, preventing the play of the intuition and shutting out the abstract mind."<sup>1</sup> Mental development involves some dangers in individuals with an unstable astral body.

If we cannot rely solely on the concrete mind, then let us cease to reduce our identity to the mind itself by saying "I think, therefore I am" because we are much vaster than our thoughts and infinitely brighter than our minds. We ought to place the Cartesian attitude in its proper place: the concrete mind should deal with the facts of objective reality. To perceive the profound meaning of life and to approach the truth, that of abstract levels, let us instead be inspired by Saint Exupéry who tells us in all simplicity: "One sees well only with the heart. What is essential is invisible to the eye."<sup>11</sup>

We would be wrong to perceive here only a naive attitude with respect to reality. It would still be a reflex of the mind which, in its intrinsic complexity, rejects simplicity by judging it simplistic. An esoteric meaning emerges from this quotation if we agree on the symbolic meaning: the eyes represent duality (soul-personality, abstract mind - concrete mind ...) while the heart represents unity, intuition, achieved balance, right discrimination,... Discrimination is the first step in the process of clarification of a problem. Without discrimination, the response is confusing and ill-suited to real needs. It is an impulsive reaction, rather than a thoughtful action inspired by intuition. The essential condition for developing discrimination is mental calm. Our modern society with its frenetic activity animated by never satisfied desire is subject to mental confusion and exhaustion, sometimes even until burnout. Television zapping is a symptom thereof. On the Internet too, there is this tendency to go from one page to another, from one site to another, in search of information that never fully nourishes our true being. It is entertaining at most. Entertainment is defined as "an occupation that distracts man from thinking about the essential problems that should concern him."<sup>21</sup> Is this not the reverse of the path to unity?

The first step is to slow down, to refocus and to observe. In this, meditation is a "royal way." Alignment allows to bring calm to the activity of the mind of desire (kama-mana) and let emerge the light quality of consciousness, then things can be discriminated under the gaze of the detached observer. Detachment is important for the deepening of discrimination until the form of the personal ego is distinguished and is perceived as the mask of the spiritual Self. Only then can we establish a correct inner relationship by dethroning the lower ego that strives to maintain its power and leaving the central stage to the Self, since in reality it is our deepest identity. The truth of the Self is always characterised by authenticity, simplicity, harmlessness and right speech.

Truth is more correctly perceived by intuition, that is, by a direct and unobstructed relationship between the subject and the object, which from thereon are then one and the same. The illusion of separation vanishes into regained and consciously realised unity.

Concrete thought, however clear and precise, remains an obstacle to the complete realisation of the truth. It uses forms, words and numbers to develop and express itself, but words always contain a limitation. If the Idea is a star, the thought embodying the Idea is merely a ray emanating from this distant star, and the word is only the imprint of this ray on a sensitive film, i.e. a small point of light. Through this metaphor (itself limited by language) we perceive that the word is only a small reflection of the Idea. Words try to reveal meaning but

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<sup>1</sup> Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Le Petit Prince*, p.72

<sup>2</sup> dictionnaire Micro Robert

never fully succeed. Something escapes words, something subtle, elusive, eternally untouchable since it belongs to the Non-manifest. Words can at best indicate a direction, a clue, a partial meaning, but they are not the Truth. Having said that, we still need the concrete mind to 'dress' the ideas perceived by the abstract mind; for these ideas to take form in the world and orient humanity towards vision, they must assume an intelligible form, an ideal, which can direct right action. It is a work of continuing education. The main task of the New Group of World Servers, and all persons of good will, is "the development of right human relations, through the education of the masses. This means the paralleling development of an enlightened public opinion, ...iv"

Words have a semantic richness. If we fix our thinking on a single meaning, that can have serious consequences. Words can trigger wars. Certain words, interpreted as "absolute truth" by fanatical minds, provoke violence against those who think otherwise. The problems of religions are often rooted in false interpretations of texts. A word like 'Jihad' should not engender war against unbelievers. On the contrary, this word means 'abnegation,' 'effort,' 'struggle.' It invites us to resolve our inner conflict, that between the soul and the selfish personality, with the same courage as Arjuna, the disciple, under the guidance of Krishna, the spiritual Self. Again, conflicts manifest themselves through the projection of our own psychic shadow over others. This is the consequence of repression.

Would we not be closer to the truth if we learn to see in the other, our fellow man, a complementary part of ourselves?

Everything is a matter of perspective: The truth perceived by the personality divides; when it is perceived by the soul, it gathers, connects and unifies because it is tinged with the inclusive energy of love.

Promoting right human relations begins with the establishment of right inner relations. And if we do not succeed in ceasing all projections onto others, let us at least try to become aware of them by the detached observation of our psychic mechanism. By becoming aware that our personality is imperfect, we develop humility. The entrance to the ancient sacred temples was often made of a low door which forced the aspirant to bow and adopt a humble attitude. It takes humility to enter the temple of the heart where truth remains.

Even words of power must be considered with care and attention. Esoteric teachings can raise the veil that hides the truth. Words can reveal, but without the development of the intuitive sensibility of the heart, we remain unable to access the mysteries of wisdom. Besides, certain truths may prove to be as dangerous as fire. That is why they are veiled by symbols that protect the uninitiated.

Conversely, there are words that manipulate, or that put a layer of varnish on to reality. We can find a myriad of examples in political communication and in commercial advertising. These two seemingly remote environments use nevertheless the same communication techniques.

In our age characterised by communication of all kinds, the discrimination of truth implies a lucid, attentive and vigilant observation of glamour. In its etheric form (maya), astral (emotional glamour) and mental (illusion), glamour conditions our sensory perception, emotional sensitivity and our intellectual interpretation of the Real. Thus it influences political choices, judicial decisions, scientific conclusions, religious or ideological dogmas, and in a general way, our life philosophy, our behaviour and our conception of reality.

The glamour also influences actors in the media, even journalists who believe themselves to be 'neutral' and independent of any power or lobby. It begins with the choice of the information to be conveyed, the way to talk about it, the emphasis on these subjects rather than on others, the omission of one piece of information, the incessant repetition of another...

Noam Chomsky, a trained linguist and observer, highlighted the propaganda that exists in our so-called "free and democratic" societies by studying the functioning of the mainstream media and the presuppositions they convey. This 'propagandist' model of the media shows how information passes imperceptibly through the filter of money and power to present us a world view in line with that which the private interests and the dominant elite want to convey. There are five main filters whose cumulative effect is the manufacturing of a pre-established consent among those who draw their information there from:

- Major press and television companies owned by a few private companies.
- Advertising, the primary source of revenue for these major media.
- The blind confidence of these media with respect to official sources of information.
- Criticism of politicians towards the media in order to discipline these.

- The hostility of the mainstream media to any perspective that diverges from the mainstream, that general stream of thoughts that shapes public opinion and defines the norm. Thus, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, none of the American media opposed the war in Iraq or questioned the American government policy in the Middle East since 1980.

These filters promote the perpetuation of social inequalities and the culture of fear. According to Chomsky, they are so well integrated into the unconscious of journalists who work in the mainstream media that they sincerely believe that they objectively interpret the information that reaches them. The culture of fear is evident in dictatorships. In the democracies, it is maintained by more subtle means, especially by the media. Most of the time we do not realise that the truth is hidden, but the very fact that there are 'whistleblowers' in our democracies tells us that there are well-kept political and industrial secrets. In any case, total transparency does not exist.

To manipulate public opinion, an effective means used first in commercial advertising is to repeat again and again a piece of information, even if it is a lie. The words "weapons of mass destruction" skilfully repeated incited several countries to go to war. In the end, we end up believing that we are threatened, that the world is violent, the foreigner hostile... In reality, there is less violence, less war, less crime than there were 30 or 40 years ago. We are still immersed, however, in the glamour of fear, the *Guardian of the Threshold* of humanity. We believe we live freely in the "free world," but we will truly know freedom when we will be all relieved from fear. Only then, there will be no more violence, no more conflict, no more security excesses and ceaseless controls.

As long as there is fear, love cannot flourish. Dissipating the astral mist of fear with courage in developing loving and lucid understanding with the support of goodwill is a way of establishing right human relationships and moving from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light.

Another glamour, of a mental type, is the fixed idea (*idée fixe*) which is built on the basis of a limited perception of reality, that is to say, a partial truth, but which is taken for the whole truth. Polarized perception (a concept developed by Professor Gobie) is "the tendency to confuse a partial truth with the whole truth."<sup>3</sup> In reality, it is through the synthetic vision of the spiritual soul that we can best approach the truth. Synthesis is not a chaotic mixture of all minor truths to form a single and ultimate truth. It involves the consideration of all points of view and their transcendence following the fusion of opposites, while cultivating the vision of an order in which everything is in its place according to its intended expression.

In order to get out of this world glamour, a necessary step for spiritual purification consists first of all in making the lucid observation of our society and its perverse mechanisms, but also of cleaning up our own psychic world. Astral forces contaminate our individual etheric network. Collectively, the Internet represents and manifests a large part of the etheric network of humanity. While offering remarkable possibilities, it is also polluted. Like the human psyche, it has its part of the shadow, and this is not limited to the *Darknet*, the network hidden from the classical internet that allows one to remain anonymous and therefore to practice illegal activities with any impunity.

The Internet is somewhat out of line with the propaganda trend of mainstream media. And yet, it does not offer the solution. There is a colossal mass of information on the internet; we find everything and its opposite, to the point where the problem of over-information that contaminates our daily life, not to mention the glamour of the world conspiracy, or the *Fake News* that contribute to the manipulation of public opinion and disinformation.

So where is the truth? How to find it?

Once again, we must return to ourselves, through meditation, rather than seeking outside. In the quest for truth, we recognize the importance of discrimination, the faculty of the spiritual Self that acts as a sharp blade separating truth from falsehood, light from obscurity. This discrimination is only possible when the mind is aligned with the soul and submits itself to the light of the intuition through a humble heart and simplicity of mind. Without this, we will become like that rich man who asked Christ how to enter the Kingdom of God. And Christ answered: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter into the kingdom of God." (Matthew 19:24) 'Rich' here means the mass of accumulated knowledge, knowledge

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<sup>3</sup> For further explanations, see the text "World Goodwill Techniques" p. 11

<sup>iv</sup> Alice Bailey, *The Rays and The Initiations*, p.88



which, if not integrated, synthesised and applied in service, will never become pearls of wisdom. The mass of knowledge used by a personality not aligned with the soul will only nourish pride and the feeling of separation. We perceive the unlimited landscape of truth only through the window of the mind and our brain endeavours to draw its outlines in its framework of references. Yet, if the absolute truth were a picture, it would be a picture without a frame; a canvas that can be infinitely extended.

It must, however, be taken into account that the approach to truth is a gradual initiatory process. "There are certain major frameworks (if I may continue to use this phrase) within which the initiate has to learn consciously to work, recognising them for what they are; once he has learnt to master that which lies within some particular framework, he finds that it is only a part, a small fraction, of a still greater whole, within which he must also learn to function and play his part."<sup>4</sup>

We can explain factual truth by words that describe objective reality. When one penetrates the subjective worlds, symbols seem more adequate to describe the truth of the soul. Expansions of consciousness succeed each other until that moment of Revelation, when symbolic language no longer suffices to translate truth, which is in essence spiritual. Before reaching this highest stage, let us cultivate silence and let it speak beyond the outer and inner noises because in the silence of the mind stabilised in the heart the truth reveals itself in us from which right relations are possible and realisable in the present moment ... The Present moment, our unique reality.

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## **The Role of Media in Discerning Truth: Media and Information Literacy as a Tool for Right Human Relations**

*Gabriel Jaraba*

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Our relationship with communication is ambivalent. We are aware of its importance and want it to have a liberating role. At the same time we fear the consequences of its misuse: instead of contributing to a more connected world towards an integrated humanity, it becomes a weapon of domination, separation and subjugation. One of our main challenges today is learning how to act responsibly with communication and to make the media, networks and the net contribute to the establishment of right human relations. UNESCO has among its main objectives MILID, Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue. This literacy is no longer just a question of young people learning to understand the news and to make a profitable use of communicational entertainment. The matter is to acquire the skills that allow all people to exercise a citizenship based on democratic cooperation. In the case of youngsters, the need of a media and information literacy is quite relevant: without it they will be set aside in the lower grades of the social scale. Furthermore, the need for such literacy is a real challenge for all: it is really simple, without a suitable media education we cannot have democracy.

We need, therefore, to have a correct understanding of this matter, an adequate choice of the values to which we wish to contribute and a relevant choice of the correct actions to carry out from the personal responsibility of each one of us.

At the beginning of the 21st century, communications are not the old mass communication of the 20th century, which was believed to be almost almighty. It is something different and much more complex. We are in the midst of an unprecedented communicative explosion, but most of all, in a disruptive process that reaches all known forms of social and media communication. It is not a communications revolution, it is a change of civilisation in all its aspects.

Until recently, this change was seen as a new wave of technology and a deep cultural change. But in fact is a true tsunami, which is gradually reaching all aspects of social life and also individual life. Let's take a look at the

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<sup>v</sup> Alice Bailey, *The Rays and The Initiations*, p.152-153

evolution of the modern era: every century seems to be organized around a discipline as a paradigm: the sixteenth century was the century of physics; the eighteenth century, focused on the natural sciences; the nineteenth century was the century of economics and sociology; the twentieth century, that of psychology, propaganda and journalistic persuasion. The 21st century is the age of total communication, which transcends the mere spreading and influence of the new media: we are in an "information society" or "communication society." In fact our society is a "communicational world" emerged from the "complex society" that turns out to be the "knowledge society."

The idea of communication as almighty does not help us to find our way today. In fact, there is no such thing: Donald Trump won the United States presidency having the most of the big American media against him. If that omnipotence were true, it would suffice for someone to control television to perpetuate him or herself into power; not even Berlusconi achieved such a big deal in Italy. Thus, in democratic countries there is television and there are alternative governments too. I think this vision of the media as all-powerful could in the past be the germ of a critical thinking about communications, but now it is not anymore; it does not help us to see how things can really change.

We need to understand not only how communications work but how can we act responsively in a communicational world. Because communication is not an agent external to the social body --we are immersed in communication in the midst of a process of change of civilisation in which communication is permeating and conditioning every facet of life.

When I am talking about a change of civilisation I am proposing not so much my personal vision as well as the result of the research in the Office of Communication and Education of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, where I belong, that is led by Professor José Manuel Pérez Tornero, who is one of the leading specialists in communication and education in Europe and adviser to the European Commission in matters of communication and education.

We are not in front of a phenomenon of communication but a change of civilisation. Let us examine what civilisation is. A civilisation is a concrete stage of technical development, corresponding to a precise evolution of the artificial environment in which humanity lives. This environment is based on a certain set of intellectual capacities that are knowledge, codes, languages and skills. This complete set of capacities is what we call culture.

In the civilisation of our time the following facts meet:

- A technological civilisation, based on the digitalization of communication.
- A media culture, organized around the media and their convergence.

This media culture is subject to a vertiginous process of civilisation al evolution that is in a constant acceleration.

The evolution of the civilisation process consists of the passage from one stage of civilisation to another, and this necessarily includes a dimension of cultural change. Thus we are in the midst of a change of civilisation with its corresponding change of culture.

This change has happened in the last decades based on the digitalization of information and the multiplication of the media: it started as a chain explosion with an unusual impact all over the planet. This explosion has profoundly altered our system of life. It is not only the explosion of information and communication, it is the explosion of interaction between people. The explosion has achieved an exponential growth, both in quantity and in complexity, and has been able to impact strongly on human structures, leading them to a deep and inexorable mutation.

This explosion has impacted on three essential dimensions of human life: communicative energy, time and space. The result of it is a communications system the features of which are lightness, instantaneity and globality. Lightness because it overcomes the limitations of the need for great energy for transportation and communications; instantaneous because it overcomes the constrictions of space and slowness; global because it overcomes all spatial limitations of a past social life lived in a limited local frame.

Having this in mind, right human relations appear in a very particular dimension. We do aspire to the establishment of right human relations, in accordance with the vision and mission of World Goodwill. And we need to ask to ourselves what are our tasks and responsibilities in such work in the midst of this civilisation change and inside the communications frame.

Our first reaction is prevention and fear. It is the fruit of considering communication as enormously powerful and inexorable. But the reality is that we are facing a great opportunity, like never before in the history, of walking towards a planetary consciousness, of advancing towards a synthesis of humanity, a moment in which it can appear -- as it foresaw the Tibetan in his instruction to Alice Bailey-- a new diffusion of the teachings of the Ageless Wisdom through "the radio." That "radio," in the language of the 30's, is already here, that "radio" is the World Wide Web --something much more powerful since it doesn't broadcast radially but in a network: a universal network never seen before.

That universal network is much more than just a communications system. Following the thinking of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the net is the support of a true "noosphere," a sphere of consciousness, an emergence of a global and shared mind and knowledge from the very core of humanity and the factual expression of its collective consciousness. This noosphere is wrapping the whole planet and is a part of it like the atmosphere or the biosphere are at their respective levels. We should think about this noosphere as a collective manifestation of the human mental plane, in a frame of relations between essence, appearance and form. For the very first time in history and in life, the planet has and shows the technological embodiment of the mental plane of humanity. That is something of such importance and scope that if you reflect well on it, you will be shivering. For the first time, when someone, from an esoteric point of view, speaks about the mental plane and communication and unity on that plane, one can see that we are not speaking anymore about an abstraction or something unreal, but a technological and factual realisation that can be materially observed and therefore, examined by materialistic science.

This is our responsibility: to preserve and nurture the correct growth of that noosphere resulting from the explosion of communication and make it useful as a vehicle for the manifestation of right human relations. That is what our task is all about, and this is what media literacy and intercultural dialogue are all about.

It is for that reason that we cannot rely on a structure where all the great powers of the internet are located in Silicon Valley and corporate power. When Tim Berners-Lee created the World Wide Web, he believed it was going to be a collaborative and transformative environment. But what we have now are 3 or 4 major platforms in the world that regulate every new media and their technological structure, and at the same time pulling out individual information and data from all of us. Berners-Lee and Vinton Cerf were visionaries of the real opportunity for a noosphere but the corporate redefinition of the Internet is a step backwards in that vision. The enthusiasm of blogging, which is proactive, collaborative, open to interconnection and interaction, has given way to the passivity of apps, which are nothing else than the adaptation of the unilinear logic of the old mass communication who provides previously formatted information without feedback fostering collective knowledge. This happens because of our passivity, because we have allowed the reception of information via the internet to play the role that television played years ago. The correct use of communication demands our active participation if we want to put it to the service of right human relations.

That is why media education in schools is not enough, even if it is essential. Media skills started as social competences for citizens in general. In fact, democracy itself depends on it being so. If there is no democratic citizenship without universal schooling and instruction, in the new civilisation in which we are just entering there is no democracy without media literacy and information. We can afford neither fear nor inaction; try saying: "this is not going with me, I'm going to live apart from communication." You simply cannot. Because others will decide for you or against you. And you cannot say "all the media lie or manipulate," without much thought, because the result of this mentality and attitude is already seen: his name is Donald Trump. Media education must be as dynamic as the technological landscape and must introduce contemporary needs: confronting a wild globalization, the growth of populism, the rise of fake news. Media education has to respond to the new conditions created by social networks: to phenomena such as cyber bullying or the addictions that certain misuse of technologies could bring. We are not only dealing with big corporations on television or the press but with a total and integrated system in which algorithms are the decision makers instead of citizens. This is the great challenge of media education today: to be able to bring to light the hidden power of the great platforms and demand them to face their responsibilities, which are informative, democratic, economic, and, of course, in terms of taxpaying. Digital corporations cannot say "we are a neutral platform" but should assume

responsibility for what they broadcast, as do the press, radio and TV (or should do). And pay due taxes for their corporate profit.

But let us pause for a moment. That vision and use of the MILID is not enough, because it is a merely defensive strategy. In democracy, in an open society, defensive strategies are doomed to failure: the trade unions, the Social Democrats, the centre liberals are beginning to realise this –I wish the partisans of a united Europe were aware thereof. The defensive struggle is part of a culture of the nineteenth century that is not useful anymore in the twenty-first century. In our time and in our new civilisation, if we do not intend to shape a planetary civilisation, to make real at all levels and consequences the fact that “the souls of men are one,” then we will not only have no democracy; we will not have humanity and we will not even have a planet.

We should not forget this: the new and astonishing techno-informational civilisation is, after all, a human civilisation. As such, it is in front of a crossroads: one way leading to progress towards the synthesis of the human race, and the other is simply the way to perish –the end of civilisation and the end of humankind.

Media literacy has become a worldwide movement. And this movement is an example of applying the work for right human relations into a practical field in the midst of the present change of civilisation. Right human relations are not a benevolent desire or an unrealisable utopia but an ethical imperative that needs to be actualised. In all continents and in many countries it is possible to find groups and people working in the field of media literacy. Formal associations, groups and institutions become visible and interrelated. Some of them work in schools through curricular programs or activities; others do it in the form of non formal education, or social activism. There are also stable centres and institutions, scientific programs, conferences, magazines, publications, websites and much more. All this activity no longer responds to the old vision of communication, with omnipotent means and passive masses. Instead it is a feature of democracy in action, practice of right human relations and goodwill at a world-wide level. Media literacy is, in the end, goodwill in action.

What are the new values of media literacy? The most prominent is the defence of individual autonomy, based on critical thinking, free examination and the right to information; equality of access and equal distribution of skills and abilities. Secondly, the constructive value of open and participatory dialogue. The belief in the ability of crowds and organised collectives to generate quality information, critical evaluation and decision-making processes. The MILID movement argues that the knowledge generated by new technologies and new media must be shared by humanity for the benefit of all. The private and exclusive assets of science and knowledge are not acceptable, beyond the fair limits of intellectual authorship and its just retribution. Thirdly, the power of creativity, both personal and collective, and the power of imagination as inherent elements to a healthy communicative sphere. This points to the aspiration towards an active communicative democracy as a form of a political democracy. Without a democratisation of the possibilities of free speech and free trade of information, without a real equality of the possibilities of participation and opinion, democracy cannot exist. This implies a call to all of us for a vigilant, attentive and diligent attitude as citizens, in order to facilitate participation and informed decision-making in all political processes. Finally, new media literacy movements emphasize the value of understanding and respect for cultural diversity and dialogue between cultures. The new media literacy respects the autonomy of each culture and its singularity, because it builds bridges for the construction of a universal dialogue between them, for the construction of shared values.

All these values and the very concept of media literacy are concentrated in three main areas, whose description helps us to understand the practical scope of all of this:

- a) critical and creative skills;
- b) media education;
- c) active and participatory citizenship.

Critical and creative skills come first, through critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to create, communicate, and share information. Critical thinking provides valid concrete instruments such as concordance with reality, plausibility, precision and so forth. These are useful because they are meaningful and functional. Much of the informational process we can undertake is through communication and information technologies, so media literacy is essential --so much of the effort around media literacy must be directed towards stimulating and developing critical thinking.

Media literacy must provide concepts, rules and skills for a correct use of the information spread by the media. That is:

- knowing how to find and access the best information available using the most appropriate, diverse and reliable sources
- knowing how to evaluate it with precise and rigorous criteria
- contextualising and understanding information according its source
- awareness of ideological and cultural context from and in information has been promoted
- integrating all the previous into a set of information and prior knowledge and obtaining a meaningful result

It is the task of media literacy to ensure that the media and the processing of information and its use by individuals can contribute positively to problem solving.

Media can promote the emergence of aspirations and goals and, at the same time, can provide some tools to achieve such goals. They can also illuminate conflicts, point out contradictions and raise problems, and can also provide some tools for solving them. But just as they can be effective tools in problem solving, they can also create barriers, distances, tensions and deepen conflicts. The same can be said of all information technologies.

There are many fields in which methods of solving problems are linked to media practices. For instance, the treatment of intercultural or media conflicts, the fight against stereotypes and prejudices, the creation of communities and networks, political communication, citizen participation, preservation of cultural identity and the privacy and autonomy of individuals, control of the power of states, transparency in the market and consumerism, free speech, access to information and public debate facilitation.

As we can see, that the immediate consequence of media literacy is media awareness. This media awareness is now the prerequisite that allows participation in global decision making that affects the planet.

It is no longer a matter of promoting national patriotism through literacy and education, but promoting, through media literacy, the feeling of universal citizenship oriented to a cosmopolitan belonging. Media are today active builders of the vision that each human group has of itself and of the others. They are also a bridge of communication between communities and groups. They can therefore contribute to generate conflicts and differences or, instead, to foster dialogue and understanding. If the citizens improve their media competence they can contribute to bring out in front of the mass media the request of information oriented to peace and to harmonious international relations: right human relations.

So, now we can see that active citizenship through media literacy is a new citizenship that operates globally in the frame of a new consciousness. Communication puts in the hands of each individual the possibility of contributing to this global and integral noosphere we have mentioned, the possibility of creating for the first time in history a new planetary consciousness that realizes the principle of “the souls of men are one.” That is the task and these are the means to carry it out.

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## **Visualisation Problems of Humanity**

Please take a comfortable position and breathe calmly.

As a soul we share this creative visualisation in communication with the souls of all men and women of goodwill in the world.

Let us align ourselves with the soul and establish a conscious and well-defined polarisation as high as possible in the head and as high as possible on the mental plane.

Look out, in your imagination, over the world of humanity. See that world as one of light, with here and there intensifications of the light in certain localities or centres or areas.

- (a) Then imagine this web of light with its radiant centres of force as pulsating to the rhythm of the world aspiration.
- (b) Let us consider each one of us as an observer but also as a channel among the many other channels, for the spiritual energy focused in us and poured into the world.
- (c) Then meditate on the following seed thought:

With Love and with discernment I pass from light to light and progress towards Reality.

- (d) Imagine that the energy of love and discernment flows through the network of light, stimulating each of the many centers into more intense radiation.
- (e) Calmly return to the present moment.

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# “And the Truth Shall Set You Free”: Finding Clarity in a Complex World

Alexandra Ratcliffe

I would like to thank World Goodwill for organizing this event, and for giving me the opportunity to share some thoughts with you on the seminar theme: “From the Unreal to the Real: Discerning Truth in the Information Age” and on the subject of my talk: **“And the Truth Shall Set You Free”<sup>5</sup>: Finding Clarity in a Complex World**. Just as there are succeeding planes of body, mind and spirit, so too are there different levels and meanings of truth, ranging from concrete factual to subtle and Absolute Reality.

There’s that wonderful story about the events of over 2,000 years ago when Jesus the Christ came before his accusers. As he stood before them, he was mostly silent, except for this: He said: “For this cause came I into the world: to bear witness to the truth.”<sup>6</sup>

Pontius Pilate, upon hearing this, replied: “What is truth ?” and did not stay for an answer.<sup>7</sup> We know what happened after that.

What Pilate meant and intended by those words has been much debated. Did he say for example, angrily, demanding, “*What is truth?*” Or did he say, reflectively, as if moved to address his own soul: “*What is truth?*”. Or did he say it, as many suggest, in a dismissive, mocking way, with a shrug: “*What is truth?*”

This last possibility, dismissive, as if to suggest there is no such thing as truth, all truth is relative anyway, who knows what truth is? This would very much reflect an attitude in present times, where the confusion of truth, falsehood, facts and reality in our current public discourse has subsequently led to the introduction of a new term to define it and a culture which surrounds it. And that is: The ‘Post-Truth’ era. This word, ‘Post-Truth’, was selected as the Oxford Dictionary Word of the Year for 2016. It is defined as: “*Denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than that which appeals to emotion and personal belief*”. In other words, *feeling* and *emotion* are at the heart of the new Post-Truth culture, as opposed to rationality and fact. These terms also refer to the concept that in today’s world, truth is not just relative, but also quite personal, and not necessarily related to facts at all. And what are facts? They are also thought to be relative.

Another recent concept in our language is “alternative facts.” This term was famously used when the President of the United States, in January 2017, was sworn in on the steps of the Capitol, and it was claimed that there were more people at his inauguration than there actually *were*. The aerial photographs proving the *facts* were dismissed out of hand by his White House spokeswoman who, looking at the very same photographs, claimed she *also* had facts, but they were “*alternative facts*”. The White House went on to claim: “This was the largest audience ever to witness an inauguration, *period*.”<sup>8</sup> Which was, indeed, a very alternative fact.

We can see immediately the Pandora’s box of relative truth and alternative facts that this then opens and invites, and how complexity and confusion follows. What are the facts? What really happened, at anytime and anywhere? And how do we know?

In the study of history, we are taught that there are primary sources of information and secondary sources. A *primary source* is a first-hand account or evidence, like an actual document, an Egyptian vase in a museum, a recorded interview. An article or book written about these things, as in textbooks, are *secondary* sources. A *tertiary source* cobbles together from the first two, such as in encyclopaedias, travel guides, and Wikipedia!

An example is the recently published controversial book, “What Happened”, written by Hillary Clinton about the last presidential election.<sup>9</sup> The book itself, as her memoir, is a *primary* source. Interestingly, many people decided whether it was a worthy book or a bad one, before it was even published, based on all the commentary and personal opinions of others printed in the news, without reading the book themselves, of course!

To try to ‘know’ about something for ourselves we need to go to primary sources, and see what *we* make of it. But as these are rare and less readily accessible, we study secondary sources. But these come with a caveat! We all know the distortions that appear even in a history textbook. And how many articles in our weekend newspaper magazine have been written about an interview or an event, that someone else wrote based on someone else’s information! The tabloid newspapers use this kind of second and third hand reporting, and for a

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<sup>5</sup> John 8:32

<sup>6</sup> John 18:37

<sup>7</sup> Sir Francis Bacon, “*Of Truth*” (Kessinger Publisher. 2010)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/22/donald-trump-kellyanne-conway-inauguration-alternative-facts>

<sup>9</sup> Hillary Clinton, *What Happened* (Simon & Schuster, Sept. 2017)

reason. The print media are under pressure to survive due to online competition, and they must attract large audiences with minimal expense. Employing boots on the ground journalists to thoroughly research and verify sources and information is a costly business. Today, the *less true* the story is, the less it costs to produce. A dramatic, unresearched, headline, like “The Sky is Falling”, is also going to sell more papers and draw in the much-needed revenue for the newspaper to survive.<sup>10</sup> Et voilà! The untruth proliferates.

Since humanity is hard-wired with Active Intelligence, we tend to be Information-Gatherers. And because information is available at the touch of a fingertip, and can be shared around the world in seconds, everyone can gather all the information they choose and determine their own truths to suit their personal version of reality.

I am reminded of that mysterious passage in the gnostic gospels written by Thomas<sup>11</sup>: “On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you have become two, what will you do?”

The world of truth and untruths has become much more than two. It seems there are an infinite number of ways of perceiving any one thing, and of reporting and sharing that thing. The complex world of the information age has become like an endless game of Chinese Whispers also called The Telephone Game, and perhaps better named: The Game of Life! The first person in a group whispers a message to the ear of the next person in the line, and so on until the last person speaks out what is supposed to be the original message. If you’ve played the game you know that the original message almost never arrives in its original state to the last person in line, who then announces what he heard to the group. *Changes happen in the retellings*, so the final statement ends up being quite different from the original. Why is that?

Studying the history of the circulation of information, we can go back to Ancient Greece, orators in the market place; in Roman Times, the use of pamphlet literature accelerated. The building of roads and waterways facilitated the spreading of information. During the time of Cicero, official publications expanded into daily newspapers. Then the Church, the theatre, influenced public opinion. In 1631, *La Gazette de France* became significant for the dissemination of news, and a way to control the flow of information. During the Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau formulated the term, “*volonté générale*”, the general will of the people, or public opinion.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was widely recognized that public opinion could be modified in a desired direction.<sup>12</sup> Propaganda is defined as “information that is not objective but used to influence or further an agenda, or promote an emotional response”. Propaganda was used during the Reformation, the American and French Revolutions, and reached heights of organized implementation during the First and Second World Wars.

Today, insidious methods of persuasion and influence are present in the news, advertising, films, television, social media; mostly everything we see and hear daily affects thought and belief. Edward Bernays, referred to as the Father of Public Relations, recognized, as do many people in power who followed him in modern times, that “conscious and intelligent manipulation of the habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society.”<sup>13</sup> Now called, public relations, propaganda has a prominent role in most peacetime governments. Add to this what is known as ‘the Gaslight Effect’, a term based on a 1930’s film of the same name, which refers to the effect of hearing repeated untruths, contradictions and denials, until the listener or targeted individual or group, begins to actually doubt their own perception.<sup>14</sup>

Now, in the internet age, we have a virtual world of information and misinformation, side by side, ceaselessly whirling around the cybersphere. And technology has added a rapid fire, globally connected and unstoppable aspect to this sharing: One idea, fact, or opinion, or one untruth, travels a million miles in an instant.

As if this were not complex enough, there is *deliberately created misinformation*, ‘fake news’, people who make their livelihood, or get their ‘kicks’, out of creating websites, identities, sources, even whole newspapers online, that look ‘real’ but are actually, really, fake! There are whole fake news industries popping up around the globe that pay people to churn out completely false stories and information, and some gearing up for the 2020 presidential election.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> James Ball, *Post-Truth: How Bullshit Conquered the World* (Biteback Publishing, May 2017)

<sup>11</sup> A. Guillaumont, Henri-Charles Puech, *The Gospel According to Thomas* (Brill, 1959)

<sup>12</sup> Edward Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (Liveright Publishing, 1923)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Bonnie Greer, “Welcome to the Age of Gaslighting”, <http://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/bonnie-greer-age-gaslighting-1-521593>

<sup>15</sup> <http://money.cnn.com/interactive/media/the-macedonia-story/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZusqgWUNFG4>



### Are we feeling confused yet?

If honesty is the foundation of character, then truth is the essential base upon which democratic society is built. In a recent book called *"On Tyranny"* by Yale history professor, Timothy Snyder, he writes: "To abandon facts is to abandon freedom. And if nothing is true, then no one can criticize power because there is no basis upon which to do so".<sup>16</sup>

Which leads me to a further point: the British philosopher, A.C. Grayling, writing about democracy which he refers to as "the least bad of many bad systems", notes the urgent need for reliable information, a media with integrity and an *educated, informed electorate*,<sup>17</sup> to be able to sift through information, think clearly and decide wisely in order to uphold the institution of democracy and its values, so much under threat today. In *The Republic*, Plato presents the view that democracy can easily devolve into demagoguery, tyranny or mob rule, when the electorate are ill-informed, irrational, manipulated or led by emotion.

We know, especially in Switzerland where so many decisions are required of the electorate, of the difficulty of obtaining the unbiased facts so needed for making those decisions.

In the UK prior to the Brexit referendum of 2016, the people, the electorate, were crying out for clear and unbiased facts, in endless debates and town hall discussions across the country, to make an historical, nation-changing decision on Brexit in a matter of weeks. As is typical in the Post-Truth era, the debate was littered with untruths and emotive issues, with snippets of misinformation and sound bites, to deliberately influence the "feeling masses". Many say that in the end their votes, and the die, were cast as it were, as a result of their gut-feeling, not rational facts. How *could* it have been otherwise?

During this debate, a now famous line was spoken by a leading politician, Michael Gove, who supported the Leave campaign: "Britain", he announced, "has had enough of experts".<sup>18</sup> Thus in one fell swoop were dismissed facts, research, professional and academic knowledge and advice. This current trend towards the questioning of experts and their facts can be seen everywhere; there are deniers of all sorts of facts, scientific and historical. In America, scientific information, particularly about climate change, has been removed from government websites. In the protest March for Science in April 2017 that took place in Washington and numerous cities, a chant was repeated: "What do we want?" they cried. "Evidence-based research!" they answered. And yet we even find ourselves, at times, questioning some scientific evidence *and* the research!

Thus, everyone must try to become their own expert. And this we do. There is so much to discern. We try to sort through the conspiracy theories, the real truths behind the apparent ones, we try to understand who is really running the world, the multinationals, the militaries, the corporatocracies? For this we can read the American philosopher/scientist and social critic, Noam Chomsky.<sup>19</sup> But can we, *need* we, figure it all out? At what point do we stop and ask ourselves if we will ever get to the bottom of it? Will we ever, as a great sage once said, "straighten out the dog's curly tail"? We will, no doubt, *try*.

But now that we are two, what *will* we do, to re-integrate ourselves and a fractured world?

I heard the following insightful words in a political drama recently: "When everything around you seems to be lacking in integrity, what do you do? You find it in yourself; you change the world right from where you are standing".<sup>20</sup> Shakespeare wrote: "To thine own self be true, And it must follow as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man".<sup>21</sup> Thus, we begin right here with ourselves, to find that clarity through integrity of thought, speech and action and to thus uplift and educate ourselves, our friends, our children and our grandchildren.

To promote change, education is absolutely the key. Discernment and discrimination needs to be taught from an early age, and this also from home. It starts with a young child's first teacher, the physical world. And there is no greater teacher about physical reality than Nature; to come to appreciate the wonders of the world around them, the beauty of a flower, the grace of a creature, the magical world of the stars and the heavens, planet earth in all its abundance and glory. The information that comes through the five senses in the first ten

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<sup>16</sup> Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny* (Bodley Head, March 2017)

<sup>17</sup> A.C. Grayling, *Democracy and Its Crisis* ( Oneworld Publications, Sept. 2017)

<sup>18</sup> Michael Gove: <https://www.ft.com/content/3be49734-29cb-11e6-83e4-abc22d5d108c>

<sup>19</sup> Naom Chomsky, *Who Rules the World*, (Hamish Hamilton, May 2017)

<sup>20</sup> "Madam Secretary". S.1 Ep.22

<sup>21</sup> Hamlet. *Polonius*, Act I, Sc. III

years of a child's life grounds them in present moment reality. Montessori and Waldorf-Steiner teaching methods excel in this.

In the next ten years the mental faculties develop,<sup>22</sup> and there are ever more opportunities to discover that *real life* presents plentiful magic, drama and interest: science, history, geography, astronomy, stories of real people's lives, great lives, great achievements, past and present which are ever happening. As they mature, they can be taught to discern between what is fact, what is fiction, and what is pure fantasy? With films and television: how do images, and music affect the mind and their emotions? If we can ignite their interest in the diminishing art of reading books, this gives the mind time and space to absorb, to contemplate; the opposite of being bombarded with onscreen images and information. There is a vast store of allegorical literature, classical and contemporary, written for young people which teaches deep thinking and insights about the world. There are games and puzzles that sharpen mental faculties; the study of grammar, languages, mathematics; and creative activities that help develop the creative imagination and eventually, intuition. The intuition is the ultimate discerner of truth. From my experience, it is very difficult at secondary level of education, to help a child to learn to *think*, and to think for themselves, if they have not been given that opportunity in their early years.

To develop an *educated and informed electorate*, from the ground up, secondary education today must include the teaching of critical thinking skills, how to evaluate information, and especially today, media literacy. To raise the standard of public discourse, a good curriculum must also include studies in Civics Education. In my Citizenship programmes, students role-played forming governments, democracies, even dictatorships, and they learned to evaluate what worked and what didn't and why; they engaged in acting as ministers for government, making critical decisions on current events. We based classroom activities on the well-known programme the Model United Nations,<sup>23</sup> which thousands of students participate in annually worldwide. A programme that I used called Living Values for a Better World<sup>24</sup> introduced the students to the concepts and vocabulary of peace, of empathy, of respect and tolerance. How valuable, also, would it be to introduce the study of Ethics, the moral principles upon which all good citizenship is based.

In our search for truth and clarity, of prime importance is a discussion on technology, too large a topic for this talk today. Suffice it to say the following: the wife of the billionaire founder of Microsoft, Melinda Gates, has said: "I spent my career in technology *but I wasn't prepared for its effect on my children*".

Like Melinda and Bill Gates, we now recognize that society has been reshaped by technology; all of life, work and home, and the developing minds of the young, are affected by this reshaping. Surveys show that people born in the internet age prefer texting to talking to each other. Families and couples believe their relationships would benefit from "device free time". There are now courses, organizations and websites that help parents and teachers help children develop skills to deal with a world dependent on technology, trying to find the balance between its usefulness and its tyranny.<sup>25</sup> Popular retreats offer detox weekends for those of us adults who realize they have lost all freedom to their digital devices.

With constant conversations and connectivity, who will teach our children about real relationships and real connection? An excellent lesson, when first introducing young people to the digital world, would be to ask them: "*What is the difference between a real person and a device?*"<sup>26</sup>

Education never ends for any of us, as increasing complexity calls for our ever-greater vigilance. There is a collection of bestselling books written by psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist, Daniel Levitin, to help people to "think straight" in today's complex world, to recognize distortion, false information, and bias. As a scientist, he convincingly illustrates how statistics are gathered and can be in error, how most information needs our own fact-checking; how graphs can be misleading and why opinion polls are inaccurate; and that claims and generalizations of all kinds can be deceptive. He asks us to ask ourselves: *Is this fact or information plausible? How do they know that? Is it even possible for someone to know that? And, could there be missing information here?* The examples he gives are eye-opening. And he warns: if we want to not add to the noise and confusion, think twice, maybe more, before pressing that button and sharing that interesting bit of information you just read.

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<sup>22</sup> Alice Bailey, *Education in the New Age*, p.8

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.una.org.uk/get-involved/learn-and-teach/model-un-portal>

<sup>24</sup> Diane Tillman, *Living Values: Activities for Children Aged 8-14* (Living Values: An Educational Programme) Paperback – 30 Jan 2000

<sup>25</sup> [www.commonssensemedia.org](http://www.commonssensemedia.org)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.everyday-mindfulness.org/everyday-mindfulness-are-you-connected/>

Furthermore, it's valuable to understand that not just what we share, but what we say and even what we think is adding to the general clarity or confusion of our times. Closely connected with thought, is intention. The words we choose to write or speak are enveloped in an energy field powered by the intention behind them. Indeed, intention is as powerful and as creative for good or bad as the words themselves. People respond, sometimes even unknowingly, to that energy and intention. The words of the great Masters are imbued with the power of the purity of their intention, and of their being.

There is a word in Sanskrit grammar that I have always remembered, and this because in Sanskrit, every sound, word and concept has some deeper meaning. It's a word for the *indirect object* in a sentence. "I threw the ball to Julian". "I" am the subject, "threw" is the action, the verb, and the object I threw is "the ball". "I threw the ball." But "Julian" is the *indirect object*, called in Sanskrit the "sampradaanam", which, from the sutras translates as "With whomsoever the mind intends to connect or associate the action". The ball is *intended* for Julian; he is the *recipient* of the action. When we speak or write or share, to whom, for whom and for what is this intended? What *does* my mind intend? Imagine how clear, pure intentions create clarity; how the opposite adds to the astral smog.

So, how to discern truth from untruth, in a complex, confusing, noisy and digital world?

A book referred to earlier, "On Tyranny", gives clues to recognizing and withstanding the forces of tyranny in government. But the advice can also be viewed as a pointer to first deal with the tyranny of forces within ourselves that oppose clarity. Do we often feel the effects of influences of all kinds? Does it lead to worry, confusion or despair? Are we giving attention to the good, the true and the beautiful, the clear and the simple, or to the darkness and confusion? Where the attention goes, energy flows. Every individual is a cell of humanity; so, where one mind goes today adds to the general confusion or clarity in the world.

Planet earth has always been a field of battle between the higher and the lower. But everyone can win that battle today, for himself, through understanding and control of our own faculties, our vehicles of knowledge and wisdom, which is our birth right.

We can shift the attention to the groundswell of goodwill in the world, of the hundreds of thousands of good and true people and organizations working for positive change across the globe, the likes of which has not been seen before.<sup>27</sup> We can read good books, share good company, and, yes, lift up our eyes to the hills. Easy, here in Switzerland. They do indeed give strength.<sup>28</sup>

I once wrote a Mindfulness article called: "When the World is Too Much with Us: Do Just One Thing".<sup>29</sup> Focusing on just One Thing, at a time, fully.... when do we do that? An image comes to mind of Mahatma Gandhi, sitting at his spinning wheel, whilst all hell broke loose around him. Can we have that kind of centred quiet? There is a great freedom, great clarity, in being fully present and doing just one thing.

And when we feel too pressured to do it for ourselves, can we do it for our children? If we seek clarity, the practice of some mindfulness at the very least and better still meditation, is, it would seem in today's world, not optional.

In the morning, before we check our phones, may we take time to consult the still, small voice within and remember some eternal truths:

That humanity is One and that all men resemble each other; we are all connected.<sup>30</sup>

That there is, in fact, more that unites us than divides us.

That we are endowed with the power to stand unmoving at the centre of any storm, in the midst of changing and challenging circumstances.

That we are endowed, too, with strength and stability; that we recognize the need to know when to act, when to speak, what to read, what to ignore, and when to withdraw or remain silent.

And this essential truth, writes Alice Bailey:

"Forget not that it is the *few* in every land who bring about world evil. But the will of the masses, *unless misled*, is towards good and understanding."<sup>31</sup> We can ponder this.

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Hawken. *Blessed Unrest*, (Penguin, 2008)

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 121

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.everyday-mindfulness.org/when-the-world-is-too-much-with-us-do-just-one-thing/>

<sup>30</sup> Alice Bailey. *Education in the New Age*. P.40

<sup>31</sup> Alice Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, p.668

“Stand steady” he says, “and permit no thoughts of hatred and fear to lodge in your mind. Stand firmly for good, look for it in all people and races. And thus, seek to swell the rising tide of those who aspire to right human relations”.<sup>32</sup>

Today, hundreds of people in your neighbourhood, and millions around the world if so fortunate, will get up, feed their families, and send them on their way with love. *This love is the warp and woof of humanity*. Until we hear this being broadcast in the news, we are simply not hearing the whole truth.

We began this talk by saying, there are different levels and meanings of truth, ranging from concrete factual to subtle and Absolute Reality.

In Buddhism it is said, we should not confuse the relative with the absolute. By seeing that all events in the relative world, all feelings of pleasure and pain, are not the whole of reality, we can become free of them.

And how does one come to see the absolute Truth? The Buddhist says, “One cannot see it as an object, or by piling one relative truth on top of another. The whole is always there, the absolute unity underlying all things; it is only because of the whole that the parts even exist. To see the absolute, one should, firstly, not hold fast to anything in the relative world.”<sup>33</sup>

It is only when we extract ourselves from the noise that we can begin to discover this clarity.

The famous poem, *Desiderata* begins: “Go placidly amidst the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence”. For understanding and insight, we need the practice and experience of silence “just as much as we need air.”<sup>34</sup> In deeply aligned silence, the mind is bathed in light, is lifted from darkness to light.

“The only light that dissipates the fogs of glamour and confusion is the light of the soul.”<sup>35</sup>

Orienting the lower mind to the higher, through concentration, meditation and contemplation, one finds oneself “able to enter into that silence which enables one to tap the divine mind, wrest God’s thought out of the divine consciousness, and to *know*”.<sup>36</sup> To know what?

To know, as it is taught in the Upanishads: that as we look out into the world of matter and complexity, we are ‘not this, not this’. That ultimately, who I am and what I am is not any of this confusion I see. We can know that beyond the world of sound and form, of noise and relative truth, is that which is unchanging and everlasting, and not relative to any *thing*.

The great Indian philosopher and teacher, Adi Shankara, taught that “discrimination between the Seer, the Onlooker, and that which is Seen, is the road leading to the realization of Truth. The Seer is homogeneous consciousness, unchangeable; all that we see is outside the Seer and is matter, the not- self”.<sup>37</sup>

Believing in and identification with all of ‘this’, the not-self, “leads to all the pain, dissatisfaction, and sorrow in the world”.<sup>38</sup>

Even a touch, a mere intellectual appreciation of this highest truth, brings perspective and removes us one step from the confusion. For as it is written in Corinthians: “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace”.<sup>39</sup>

Alice Bailey says: “Let Reality govern my every thought, and truth be the master of my life.”<sup>40</sup>

“Let each endeavour to touch the higher source from which pure truth flows... by achieving that focused attention and mental quiet where reality can be contacted, the true and the beautiful can be registered”.<sup>41</sup>

This, then, is that very truth, that shall indeed set us free.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Lama Chime Rinpoche, *Two Levels of Truth* (<https://buddhismnow.com/2015/06/17/two-levels-of-truth-by-lama-chime-rinpoche/>)

<sup>34</sup> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Silence: The Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise* (Harper One, Jan. 2016)

<sup>35</sup> Alice Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem*. P.139

<sup>36</sup> A.A.B., *Treatise on White Magic*, p.366

<sup>37</sup> Shankaracharya, *Self-Knowledge, (Sri Ramakrishna Math)*, p.46

<sup>38</sup> A.A.B., *Consciousness of the Atom*, p.109

<sup>39</sup> I Corinthians. XIV:33

<sup>40</sup> A.A.B., *Treatise on White Magic*, p.239

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p.177. p.527

# Right Human Relations in Environmental Issues

## Ecology and right human relations

Cécile Sorbier

Hello everyone, my name is Cécile Sorbier. It is an honour to be here among you and to share my experience within *Femmes Internationales Murs Brisés* for the past 20 years. I would like to thank World Good Will for the opportunity.

**Femmes Internationales Murs Brisés (FIMB)**, founded by Evelyne Mesquida in 1990, aims to protect life in all its aspects. The global network of mutual aid has a mission to unite all who work for a return to higher values. The Geneva Office of the Lucis Trust has been a partner in our movement for three years. Focusing on the rightful place of women and their specific roles, FIMB brings together people of goodwill without exclusion, and is based on 30 years of experience on all terrains; it is a matrix in service of peace in the world.

**Today, FIMB connects 350 million people in 105 countries, both partners and independents.**

Our unique approach establishes international connections, which weave together the fields of education, humanitarianism, the environment, inter-faith, business, health, art, culture and sport...

The idea of complementary action affords FIMB an unprecedented breadth and strength of action, in service of creating a better world for our children. A true global network, it lays the foundation for a new society.

### **1) First, a quick point on the ecology of the Greek “oikos,” house, and “logos,” science, knowledge.**

Ecology was defined for the first time as “the science of the relationship of organisms with the surrounding world, or broadly, the science of the conditions of existence.” It is a recent science that has given free rein to many forms of thought.

An ecologist is a specialist in ecology; he will try to rely solely on science. He studies “the environment” which is made up of living beings existing in the natural environment, and the elements labelled “non-living” which compose it, such as soil, water, atmosphere, and climate, the ensemble defining an ecosystem. On the scale of the Earth, we speak of the ecosphere.

An ecologist is an advocate of nature and biological balance; his thoughts and his actions will be more or less “coloured” by his own conception of the world and of political proceedings.

Ecology uses multiple scientific disciplines, such as geography, biology, chemistry, physics, climatology, and mathematics, as well as human and social sciences, such as economics, philosophy, sociology, and the sciences of education, etc.

### **2) From theory to practice, results of 30 years of study**

The study of this science begins for all of us as the natural curiosity of the child for that which is alive! The ecology in our early life is the observation of a snail, an ant, a flower, a bird... Who has not done that? We long to discover the environment around us!

As a result, we have all studied ecology without knowing it! Because we cannot be born on this planet without being in constant relationship with it and learning something from it. We start by looking at the difference between what is alive and what is not. At first, the notion of life for a child is all that enters into communication with him. Like the stones that children throw into the water for fun. They skip, they bounce! They are alive for him. **He does not ask the question of what is inert, lifeless.** Besides, is there anything non-living? A huge debate...

This notion only comes later, when the child discovers that the living can suffer and die. Take the example of a child playing with his cat. He pulls at her fur, and the cat hisses and scratches him. He understands, initially, that the cat has hurt him. Two possibilities are then open to him: the first, the child does not play with the cat anymore, as he is afraid of it. It's the end of the interaction between them. The child will not discover the “nature of the cat.” Indeed, some adults retain the fear of cats, and also a lot of other small animals who have a bad reputation. **There are many conscious or unconscious fears of “nature” and all that composes it.**

The 2nd possibility: by renewing the experience of playing with the cat, and with a little help from his parents, the child understands that the cat feels pain when he pulls its fur, and tries to protect itself by scratching. The child learns not to do it anymore and a relationship can be established. This is not necessarily the case with a dog, because many are so nice and well behaved, that they have learned to submit and suffer in silence. But perhaps you've been bitten by a dog and disagree?

**In fact, we interpret all that we experience and quickly veil the Truth to forge our own!** We hold in memory the feelings and emotions of our first encounters with nature, whether good or bad. These experiences will form the basis of our fears and our behaviours. Thought and mind are linked, in the interpretation of our experience, to our emotions. It is a first stage of understanding that will determine the interest and respect that we will be able to bring to the protection of Life. Without this link, there is no consideration of the “other”, that is to say, in the broadest sense, of all the components of life. And if this step is negative, based solely on fear, there can be no change in behaviour.

### **Here begins the actual learning, the “divisions” of life!**

As when learning to read, we start by becoming familiar with the A, the B, before really learning to write and to read. As we grow up, our environment expands, our interactions with others develop, as do our investigations. To become an ecologist, we do not study a science, but the results of a multitude of interactions between a multitude of sciences. From the infinitely small to the infinitely big: everything is linked! There are permanent interconnections, nothing is fixed, and everything is evolving on relative time scales. We discover that there are many “unknown” parameters, and that no matter how much we search, we will not necessarily find the answers. This is why we speak of ecology as a science, but we know already that it is limited to the sum of our knowledge and especially to our ability to interpret.

### **If we keep in mind:**

- that we are all ecologists, because we are all born on this earth,
- that we each hold a part of the truth, because we have acquired a unique vision that is indispensable to the whole of knowledge,
- and that none of us has access to the totality of this knowledge,

we can better understand the difficulty of discerning the truth about the issues of ecology today. For the obstacles of our global challenges are not the lack of technological, economic or material resources.

**They are derived from the need to establish right human relations.**

**Let us use my experience to better define this difficulty:** Like many children, I dreamed of a world in peace, without violence, where humanity evolves in harmony with all living beings. To keep, conserve, and protect nature so that men live happily, is the utopian idea of some. It is the engine of “research” and the commitment of these men and women of goodwill, who wish above all to restore balance. These “utopians,” you, me, and many others, are the “beating heart” of the protection of Life.

I met the first ones in nature protection associations. They are passionate volunteers, who have made a point, often over a lifetime, to make heard the true cause of the preservation of nature. Thanks to them, our heritage is of consequence! We have avoided the loss of what constitutes our treasures of nature today. Without them, there would be no more Bonelli's eagles in European forests, no more protected natural areas where wild flora and fauna can be discovered and studied, no possible awareness for the younger generations of the richness of biodiversity. This is the meaning of their work, their points of view are right! And yet, their message is inevitably in opposition to the understanding and practices of others... or the world would not be in this state, would it?

In the “reality on the ground”, each association, motivated by the purest intentions, does not get along with “other specialists”. In fact, they do not meet! My best example of this paradox occurred on a field study day, where I saw a group of eminent birdwatchers, their binoculars riveted on birds in migration, “trample” without knowing it, the last protected area where a very rare native orchid grew. It was a permanent and irreversible destruction of nature, in a few moments, by the lovers of nature themselves.

Imagine you have graduated and got a job. Your mission is to enforce the laws of nature conservation on the Mediterranean coast. If naturalists do not get along with each other, when they have “the love of nature” in common, what hope is there to have good relations between them and the users of the seaside? In our jargon, we have an expression that sums up this difficulty well: “how to marry carp and rabbit?”

We will have to come up with concrete solutions, adapted to this particular area, to allow everyone to live well, in harmony with others and the environment; to restore meaning, be a pedagogue, raise awareness, define a common ethic, establish the rules of living together, provide justice and fairness... It is urgent that we give priority to the building of human bonds, or we can forget about these plants and birds in such danger of disappearing.

I then managed “inhabited natural spaces” for regional authorities under construction, reinventing “common sense” in the management of our resources.

It must be acknowledged that political decisions are not made for the common good and the interest of the greatest number, in respect of life, but according to the re-election potential of ambitious elected representatives. Power and the ego are always the engines of human action.

**Once this is realised, how do we proceed? Endorsement? Shutting up? Joining the clan of the disillusioned?**

**3) “Breaking down walls, with the state of mind of non-violence, thinking of the world as a whole - Establishing right human relations in favour of ecology”**

Thanks to their commitment to environmental education, pioneers such as our sponsors **Pierre Rabhi, Philippe Desbrosse, Jean Marie Pelt**, and many others lesser known, work to embody and transmit in daily life the changes in which they deeply believe.

Connecting, admitting that only we can hold the solution, is to make ecology "just", without violence, without exclusion. It is also the acceptance of our fears and our limitations, and having the will to go beyond them to open ourselves to others. Such is the basis of knowing how to live together. These are our common values: respect, responsibility, mutual help. They generate: humility, simplicity, patience, service, etc.

So there are alternatives emerging in the world. These are the premises of a new way of living and thinking about the world. Here are some examples within the FIMB network: the actions are simple, the way of thinking about them and making them come alive, opens a perspective of continuity over time:

**In India:** Sanjeeta, our president of FIMB Gujarat, is an ecologist. She works for the maintenance of arable land in her region. Issues of food autonomy and the right to land are very important. Deforestation leaches the soil, destroys farmland and forests to allow new agricultural crops, and so on. With the inhabitants of the poorest villages, she has replanted forests and created basins for water retention.

This has involved years of investment, travel and especially discussion with the villagers to earn their goodwill and to be able to meet their real needs. The time required to exchange, transmit, integrate and allow the people concerned to act is invisible and fundamental. Because a project is really only successful when the population no longer needs external help.

Sanjeeta works to reduce the negative impact related to the poor management of wealth. The impact is generated by a single thought that is becoming more and more widespread: to acquire as quickly as possible the maximum economic profit. It is at once the result of the takeover by a few at the world level, and an emergency of survival becoming more and more intense, for all the others.

At over 50 years old, and with the hindsight of experience, Sanjeeta has now chosen to devote most of her time to cycling! For two main reasons: the first is that in India, it is still considered bad for a woman to get about in this way. Traditionally, women are “obliged” to move on foot, though the bike remains a considerable asset, non-polluting and economical. Through this choice, she supports the economic and educational strength of all women, and permits a change of mentality. The second is that she “breaks down walls”: she raises awareness.

When she arrives in a village to spread her knowledge about recycling and composting, her originality is surprising. She has the status and the means to get around by car and yet she comes to meet them by bicycle. Her commitment to them is personal. She has thrown herself into it, so to speak, “with the sweat of her brow”, which is recognised by the inhabitants. She has made an effort to join them. Her message is all the more likely to be heard, to be recognised as valuable, and to be subsequently applied.

**In Africa:** I will not dwell on environmental issues in Africa. The needs are immense and very varied. Some inhabitants have developed the know-how and ways of thinking that make them “pure geniuses” of communication. Access to drinking water is a big problem that is common in the villages. This is the case in Omodara, Burkina Faso, where there is a well and a pump for water, but it is far from the villagers’ homes. Stocking up every day demands a lot of effort from the women and children. As “good technicians,” we think that we need to find financial means to put in pipes and bring the water closer to their homes. This is what most NGOs do with more or less success, as there will not necessarily be a maintenance person on site. The pipes get blocked or punctured during work and everything halts...

FIMB Omodara, since its foundation, is in contact with the CCID, centre of animation and education of the youth. Arouna, the founding president of this centre, is a storyteller, truly invested in the education of young people. The centre offers year-round theatre classes, music, and awareness campaigns of all kinds. He conducted a consultation at the village level on this water issue and they decided to set up an “African-style” solution: create a water delivery service. For this, they invested in the purchase of plastic containers and in the manufacture of small trolleys for transport on site. Results: it was not expensive, they did not have to depend on external financial assistance, it created two income-generating jobs, and a low-cost service to suit everyone. The young people and the women were happy with this choice, in which they were able to fully participate. At the management of FIMB, we had only to encourage and support Arouna in his approach. We then sent Arouna “oak water” free of charge to allow them to have a better vibratory quality of the water; it's easy to use once stored in cans, and we had very good results.

**In Europe:** we can say that we have everything, we represent the so-called developed countries. And yet, we have to deal with a loss of productive capacity of agricultural soils and several orders of food deficiencies. Although we have more modern means, we produce less per hectare than fifty years ago, even though the farmer spreads fertilizer in quantity.

The living soil has not been respected. Although the “earth” has the capacity to absorb “our mistakes” for many years, there comes a time when it is no longer possible. The part of the soil that is useful for plants, humus, where it still exists, dysfunctions. The plants have difficulty developing, and are not healthy. Our vegetables are less nutritious, as their nutrients, vitamins and trace elements are less well assimilated.

To restore the nourishing quality of our food, favourable to our health, it is possible to rebalance the functioning of soil micro-organisms. This is thanks to the research and the invention of Mr. Alexandre Homé, the **agricultural Ki**. We tested the Ki on a very wide variety of crops and farms. This powder, manufactured using a neutral vegetable carrier, is used at a homeopathic dose. Just 1 kilogram of agricultural Ki per hectare revives the entire natural production dynamics of the soil. This happens at the cellular level, where exchanges are reinforced, rebalanced, and freed from impediment. The associations follow once again the natural circuits of gas and water exchange, and spread from the soil to the plants. Its principle of action restores the original potential of the organism, which applies on the scale of a unicellular organism contained in the soil, as well as to all living beings. The results are very positive: increased production, fewer diseases and parasites, shorter growing periods, and more vigorous plants that are sometimes bigger, and with better flavour!

#### **4) In conclusion - Presentation of the Pledge**

By forming new interdisciplinary links, we raise awareness without imposition, creating new ways of understanding and responding to the challenges at hand. Bringing people together on the basis of goodwill covers all walks of humanity. New projects are emerging, and there is the possibility of changing the mindset of those engaged over the long term. That's it, to participate in building a better world.

FIMB has launched a major action to rally all of humanity for the protection of Life: **the Pledge of Mankind**. (Pledge shown in slide show <http://www.fimb-asso.org/fimb/action-du-20h>) Many personalities, from all walks of life, are a part of this dynamic. (Photos in slide show)

**The truth about the state of our planet is terrifying, worse than anything humanity has ever known.**

However, the strength of solidarity and the available aid, is in proportion to the need. Humanity will make a fabulous leap forward in its evolution.

We have no other choice but to participate, with all of our commitment, acceptance, and openness, in full awareness of our limitations and strengths, in order to serve the future.

I now quote an extract of the writings of Mr. Alexandre Homé, humanist, researcher and co-founder of FIMB:

**“Let us use the time we have left, without losing a minute, to advance as far as possible towards greater balance, equity, solidarity, and bonds between us, and to express the values and the duty of humanity.”**

Thank you for your attention.

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## **Group Work:**

### **Evoking the Soul of the Nations to go from the unreal to the Real**

In many situations of life we have to make an appeal to our *imagination* and capacity of *visualisation*. In this group work we propose for this afternoon, we will need imagination and visualisation too. Yesterday we were at the United Nations where we discussed the Sustainable Development Goals, or the “Agenda 2030” - a great challenge not only for the UN but also for humanity as a whole. The United Nations is the main actor in this process to ensure a future of prosperity and happiness for our children and generations to come. Because there is no “plan B”, whether we like it or not, it is time to act. In the group work of this afternoon, it is exactly this situation that is offered to you to imagine: for the time of the group work you will incarnate a country within the region represented by your group. As for human beings, for countries we can also distinguish a *personality*, and a *soul* specific of each country. The personality of a country is mostly focused on its own interests, without being too much bothered by the wellbeing of other countries. The soul of a country is more aware of the interests and needs of other countries in the world; it is linked to a global vision, fully aware of the characteristics of its own country.

Each group will represent a region of the world and as we are with many, several groups may represent the same region. The regions are: Africa, Asia, America, Europe and the Middle East.

Per group (that is to say per world region), you will discuss one of the sustainable development goals for around 50 minutes. And this, while keeping in mind to evoke the soul belonging to each nation. Thereafter and taking into account the limited time at our disposal, we will share ideas, suggestions and why not solutions, in a plenary session for about 30 minutes. Cooperation in the group work will stimulate the creativity of each to formulate thoughts for group solutions; exploring and opening the way for new ways of living for everyone, for the group, for humanity.

In creating thoughts for solutions, we grow in knowledge, love and the ability to serve the planet and the universe, while at the same time being rooted in the life of everyday.

#### **How does it work?**

We suggest to make groups of about 4 to 6 people who can exchange ideas in a common language.

We would like to ask you to choose one envelope per group corresponding with a *region* of the world (Africa, Asia, America, Europe and the Middle East). Before you open that envelope each of you is invited to individually select a number from 1 to 6. In the envelope there are papers and small cards. Each number which you have previously chosen corresponds with a country in your region. It is this country that you will represent during the group work.

The country sheets contain some geopolitical data specific to each country. It may also contain the intention of the personality and the soul. If it doesn't, then you are invited to select these intentions randomly from a pack of cards: *Intellect cards* for the personality and *Intuition cards* for the Soul. You may write these intentions on the sheet of your country.

A detail: the “Happiness index” is a number on a scale from 1 to 155 - 1 is the happiest country, 155 the least.

We also advise you to designate a reporter per group. He (she) will be the person who will present the group ideas and suggestions at the end of the afternoon.

Next, each group should draw randomly a card corresponding to one of the sustainable development goals which you will be discussing together as a group. We will supply these cards for you to draw. Once the card drawn, we will provide each group with a description for this particular SDG. To simplify things, these descriptions are provided in French and English only.

#### ***In summary***

- ❖ Each *group* represents a *region of the world* (there will be several groups representing the same region of the world).
- ❖ Choose individually a number between 1 and 6.
- ❖ Each *participant* represents a *country* in a region of the world, corresponding to the previously chosen number.

- ❖ Every *country* (apart from some geopolitical data you find on the country's record) has:
  - An intention of the soul
  - An intention of the personality
- ❖ If the intentions are not known, then we invite you to draw them at random from your cards and let you inspire by these intentions. The cards labeled “Intellect card” correspond with the intention of the personality. Cards labeled “Intuition card” correspond with the intention of the Soul.
- ❖ As the theme for discussion, the group draws a sustainable development goal.
- ❖ Before starting your discussions, take a few moments of silence.

Before starting the discussion we do together the following visualisation.

### **Visualisation**

See yourself sitting at the border of a lake together with all the people who are in this room and also with those who reflect today in London and New York, or anywhere in the world, on the theme “*From the unreal to the Real.*” Look at the place where you are, feel the tranquillity of this place.

The key-note being: theme “*From the unreal to the Real,*” let from the middle of the lake the image or symbol emerge that, for you represents the theme of the group work: “*To Evoke the Soul of the Nations.*” Let the picture or symbol fully emerge and allow it to become bright and clear; note its details, shape, colour, sound, smell, texture, or perhaps any motion.

Send your positive energy to this symbol, your blessing and your good wishes for the future of the union of humanity thanks to the soul of the nations. Fuse or blend the image or symbol with your positive thoughts.

Once you feel that you have finished, let the image of the lake and the symbol dissolve naturally and return your attention and your consciousness into the here and now, in the room where we are.

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Now it is up to you!

***In any case try to evoke the soul of the country  
seeking solutions to global problems  
(Sustainable Development Goals).***

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**Plenary Session sharing group thought from the group work.**

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***We heartfully thank our translators without whom  
this review would not have been possible.***