



Many to Many

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“Many to Many” is a quarterly publication under the aegis of Peace Through Unity as a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

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Each of us can be an Eleanor Roosevelt: Perspectives on Human Rights

There is a United Nations call for human rights at #standuphumanrights ([click here](#)). It is important that we all know about current initiatives and take an action where we can. However, we hear this call for the defense of and care for human rights so often! Why is this? When will this call be completed? There are various perspectives that bring us to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the call for action on December 10, 2021, International Human Rights Day, and its theme: EQUALITY – Reducing inequities, advancing human rights.

Perspective I – “The devastation of World War II sparked an international desire for peace. It also encouraged the creation of a system of principles that could ensure the protection of basic human rights and dignity. Eleanor Roosevelt, the widow of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was one of the first American delegates to the United Nations. A longtime activist on behalf of minorities, women, workers, and refugees, Eleanor became the chairperson of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was a declaration of basic principles of human rights and freedoms, to be stamped with the approval of the UN General Assembly by formal vote of its members, and to serve as a common standard of achievement for all peoples of all nations.

At a time when there are so many issues on which we find it difficult to reach a common basis of agreement, it is a significant fact that fifty-eight states have found such a large measure of agreement in the complex field of human rights. This must be taken as testimony of our common aspiration first voiced in the Charter of the United Nations to lift men everywhere to a higher standard of life and to a greater enjoyment of freedom.

This Declaration is based upon the spiritual fact that man must have freedom in which to develop his full stature and through common effort to raise the level of human dignity. We have much to do to fully achieve and to assure the rights set forth in this Declaration. But having them put before us with the moral backing of fifty-eight nations will be a great step forward.

The United Nations approved the declaration, but the work of the commission was only partially done. The UDHR, in Eleanor Roosevelt’s words, “would say to the peoples of the world ‘this is what we hope human rights may mean to all people in the years to come.’”

(FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

The work to secure human rights around the world remains an ongoing struggle.

Why are human rights so difficult? What is our struggle with pursuing, acknowledging, and embracing Human Rights? Looking at the known history and humanity's evolution of Human Rights gives us different perspectives.

Perspective II – The Golden Rule is the fundamental bottom line as a guide for human rights. This basic principle of humanity is expressed in all major world religions and given by the most revered people of wisdom and love that we know of. For example:

Bahá'í Faith

Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself. *Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings*

Christianity

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. *Jesus, Matthew 7:12*

Judaism

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it. *Hillel, Talmud, Shabbath 31a*

Buddhism

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18

Islam

Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.
The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith

Sikhism

I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.
Guru Granth Sahib, p.1299

Confucianism

One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct loving-kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself. *Confucius, Analects 15.23*

Hinduism

This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.
Mahabharata 5:151

Native Spirituality

We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.
Chief Dan George

(The Golden Rule across the World's Religions Thirteen Sacred Texts)

These are clear, simple, and strong admonitions from what much of humanity considers as the highest sources. If these Golden Rules were honored and followed, we would not need a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But we do not.

Perspective III – With the Golden Rule not working, people initiated other agreements to help us get on track and not treat each other so badly. We have spent many years trying to get it right. A few well-known examples are:

539 BC The Cyrus Cylinder
1215 The Magna Carta
1628 The Petition of Right
1776 The United States Declaration of Independence
1787 The Constitution of the United States of America
1789 The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen
1791 The US Bill of Rights
1863 The Emancipation Proclamation
1864 The First Geneva Convention
1948 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1950 The European Convention of Human Rights
1954-1968 The Civil Rights Movement
1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
1966 The International Bill of Rights
1969 The American Convention on Human Rights
1979 The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
1981 The African Charter of Human Rights
1984 The Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
1989 The Convention on the Rights of the Child
1993 The World Conference on Human Rights
2000 The Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union
2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (HRET)

(A Brief History of Human Rights Documents Throughout Time)

<https://usidhr.org/a-brief-history-of-human-rights-documents-throughout-time/>

These have helped in many ways. However, we are still struggling with human rights. What is the fundamental reason?

Perspective IV – Human Rights is about our choices and a brief story says it all.

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he

is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.”

He continued, “The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”

The old Cherokee simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Perspective V – Given these different perspectives it does appear that Human Rights may always be a challenge in this 3-D world. At the same time many of us are still committed to walking this pathway of peacebuilding, Human Rights, and the Culture of Peace. We can be smart about it and have a unique perspective as Eleanor Roosevelt did.

“At the beginning of drafting the International Bill of Rights in February 1947, with members of the UN Human Rights Commission, Eleanor Roosevelt thought an informal atmosphere might help. She wisely invited a small group of them to her apartment for tea. The discussions over tea became an evening that helped further establish relationships that supported their very challenging path forward.”

Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - A Facing History and Ourselves Publication.

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Tribute to a Life-Long Champion of Peace!



Friends and colleagues around the world mourned the loss of a brilliant and dedicated Peace leader, Avon Mattison. Avon passed on October 13, 2021, and her legacy lives on in all of us, as we continue to pursue Peace in our lives and co-create the Culture of Peace.

Avon would want you to know that you are a pathway to peace, regardless of your chosen work. You can bring Peace to our world through living Peace in your life and in your relationships.

For five decades and up until the end of her life, Avon worked tirelessly for Peace. She kept a busy schedule of presenting, consulting, and mentoring. She will be remembered for her love, humility, wisdom, and selfless acts of compassion, and continually lifting the beauty, strengths, and talents of others. We will miss her bright light, her unconditional love, her passion, and her unwavering spirit. Through her work for Peace, Avon touched the lives of millions around the world. Avon is the recipient of four Lifetime Achievement Awards.

H.E. Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative to the United Nations stated, "On 13 October, humanity lost a great soul dedicated to promoting the cause of Peace to all corners of our planet. We will miss Avon and her valiant spirit, inspiring us for so many years in so many ways. May her noble soul rest in eternal Peace!"

Avon traces her commitment to peacebuilding to her childhood years when at the age of four she had a vision of world peace. During World War II, she also heard her parents talk of war, and became utterly captured by the notion of spending her life promoting world peace.

Avon is Co-Founder and President of Pathways To Peace (PTP), an international Peacebuilding, educational, and consulting organization. PTP has Consultative

Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is an official Peace Messenger Organization of the United Nations (UN).

Avon co-led efforts to inaugurate the UN International Day of Peace (Peace Day) as established by a unanimous United Nations resolution in 1981. Peace Day provides a globally shared date for all humanity to commit to Peace above all differences and to contribute to building a Culture of Peace. Avon inspired civil society to embrace Peace Day, so it has grown from a single event of a few hundred people in San Francisco in 1984, into a global movement that reaches hundreds of millions of people worldwide and continues to grow.

Through Pathways To Peace, she co-created the Culture of Peace Initiative (CPI) in 1983/84 in collegueship with former UN Assistant Secretary-General Robert Muller at a time the term “peacebuilding” was generally unknown. This local/global Peacebuilding Initiative unites the strengths of over 4,000 international peacebuilders and organizations and focuses co-operative Peacebuilding along diverse pathways/sectors. Avon worked with innovative leaders, groups, and organizations on the “frontline,” building a diverse and regenerative Culture of Peace inter-generationally and multi-culturally for the Common Good and future generations.

A U.S. Foreign Service diplomat for three years serving the European Community, Avon was also former special advisor to the White House Conference on Small Business. She is a Summa Cum Laude graduate in political science and international communications, University of Maryland, and George Washington University. She’s listed in “Who’s Who in Business and Finance”, and Strathmore’s “Who’s Who Registry of Business Leaders.” She served on the Advisory Councils/Boards of several international organizations, including: the Center For Visionary Leadership, Foundation for the Healing Among Nations, Global Youth Action Network, Radio For Peace International, World Peace Prayer Society, the World Centers of Compassion for Children, and the World Fund for the Dignity of Children.

Through Pathways To Peace, Avon inaugurated an ongoing “Rights of the Child Caucus” within the UN system during the World Summit on Social Development.

All are invited to join a virtual “Celebration of Life Memorial Service” for Avon on December 8th, the anniversary of Pathways To Peace, at 5:00 pm PT, 7:00 pm CT, 8:00 pm ET via zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/6091308836>

From the Peace Through Unity Community



Avon in several UN settings

Human Rights and our Mother Earth

On 8 October 2021, the Human Rights Council recognized for the first time that having a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is indeed a human right, as confirmed in its resolution 48/13. The Council called on States to work together, and with other partners, to implement this newly recognized right.

The resolution on a healthy environment acknowledges the damage inflicted by climate change and environmental destruction on millions of people across the world. It also underlines that the most vulnerable segments of the population are more acutely impacted.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet described the triple planetary threats of climate change, pollution and nature loss as the single greatest human rights challenge of our era. Bachelet reinforces The Human Rights Council's decisive action is about protecting the natural systems which are basic preconditions to the lives and livelihoods of all people, wherever they live, and it clearly recognises environmental degradation and climate change as interconnected human rights crises.

Bachelet paid tribute to the efforts of a diverse array of civil society organisations, including youth groups, national human rights institutions, indigenous peoples' organizations, businesses and many others worldwide who have been advocating for full international recognition of this right. She stressed the importance to move beyond the false separation of environmental action and protection of human rights. It is all too clear that neither goal can be achieved without the other, and to that end a balanced, human rights-based approach to sustainable development must be ensured.

Human rights and the environment are intertwined; human rights cannot be enjoyed without a safe, clean and healthy environment; and sustainable environmental governance cannot exist without the establishment of and respect for human rights. The right to a healthy environment has gained constitutional recognition and protection in more than 100 States; the strongest form of legal protection available. About two thirds of the constitutional rights refer to a healthy environment; alternative formulations include rights to a clean, safe, favourable, wholesome or ecologically balanced environment. <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/advancing-environmental-rights/what>



Dark green: Countries with the constitutionally protected right to a healthy environment

Light green: Countries with constitutional provisions for a healthy environment

Source: Environmental Rule of Law Report, Figure 4.5

The world celebrates Human Rights Day on 10 December every year, the very day when, in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Declaration consists of a preamble and 30 articles that set out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all of us, everywhere around the world, are entitled. It guarantees our rights without distinction of nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status.

The Declaration was drafted by representatives of all regions and legal traditions. It has over time been accepted as a contract between Governments and their peoples. Virtually all States have accepted the Declaration.

This year's Human Rights Day theme relates to "Equality" and article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

For more information please go to

<https://standup4humanrights.org/HumanRightsDay2021/en/>



Eric Wong, Co-worker, PTU, eric@peacethroughunity.org.nz

The Sun is the Mother of Earth

As our hearts reach out to all those suffering during the great changes moving through our world, we might also hold in supportive thought the "front-line workers", those who alleviate suffering and bring food, medical care, shelter, and emergency services. A global army of generous hearts is marshalling into active service. From large international agencies to small community initiatives, all are participating in the opening of the human heart on a global scale. While news channels may tell us of the desperate need, there is a multitude working to address that need. The balance is gradually but inexorably shifting from individual concerns to concern for the good of all as more and more hearts open to serve others.

The beauty of local initiatives is that people are doing what they know best from their own experience and expanding it to include those most in need. One inspiring example describes its mission in these words: "The PlateitForward Group has assembled with a simple mission, 'To re-invent the definition of equal opportunity by providing food, education and employment opportunities to those most vulnerable in our local communities'." (<https://www.plateitforward.org.au/>) This is just one of millions of examples of love in action.

This love reaches beyond the personal to serve the common good especially those in most need. It is the love that radiates through the human soul. It conveys more than words and ideas, it conveys the "life more abundant" which is freely available when we realise it. Love is the language of the soul communicating the living purpose that

brings all into being within the One in Whom we live and move and have our being. Within this great Life, everyone and everything is a valued part to be sustained by life flowing through loving connections. The Tibetan Master tells us that:

“...love brings all earthly karma to an end. Love induces that radiation which invokes and evokes not only the heart of God but the heart of humanity also. Love is the cause of all creation and the sustaining factor in all living.” [*Discipleship in the New Age Vol II, page 541*]

All forms are born into the world through the agency of the feminine principle. Everything comes to birth through the substance and loving care of the Mother of the World. The beautiful qualities we associate with mothers are also the qualities of the soul. These soul qualities express in the relationship of a mother with her children as, throughout all of nature, the mother offers care, nurturance, and self-sacrifice in service to the life of her little ones.

As the feminine principle returns to its true place in the balancing of the worlds, the qualities of the human soul can begin to be seen in the world. The masculine principle will rejoice at the easing of long eons of labour that have exacted so much. The hard lines of separation and isolation are gradually softening and dissolving as we come to realise the perfect marriage of the two great principles creating a new civilisation of the Soul. The importance of this rebalancing was made clear in the *Letters of Helena Roerich I*:

“Could the terrors and crimes of today be possible if both Origins had been balanced? In the hands of woman lies the salvation of humanity and of our planet. Woman must realize her significance, the great mission of the Mother of the World; she should be prepared to take responsibility for the destiny of humanity. Mother, the life-giver, has every right to direct the destiny of her children. The voice of woman, the mother, should be heard amongst the leaders of humanity. The mother suggests the first conscious thoughts to her child. She gives direction and quality to all his aspirations and abilities.” [*1 March 1929*]

Higher laws of life are coming into play as new forces begin to register and move through human consciousness into the world. A polarisation is playing out between old and new. While the old remains entrenched in differences, separation and exclusivity, the new is finding the point of connection between all things and all souls. Through this point a new view of our world is perceived, one which sees the shared human needs and experiences behind outer apparent conflicts. This is the point of view of the soul which is at-one with all souls. The soul does not experience competition or any sense of exclusive right that creates separation and conflict. It is a radiant point of love, the connecting force which is the subtle linking stream through which our planetary life flows. Love, through all its manifestations, operates under the great Law of Magnetic Impulse – as the Tibetan Master explains:

This law governs... the relationships between souls, who, whilst in manifestation through form, are in rapport with each other. It is a law, therefore, which concerns the inter-relation of all souls within the periphery of what the Christians call "the Kingdom of God." Through a right understanding of this law, the man arrives at a knowledge of his subjective life; he can wield power subjectively, and thus work consciously in form and with form, yet holding his polarisation and his consciousness in another dimension, and functioning actively *behind the scenes*. ...This law is of major importance because of the fact that Deity itself is on the second ray [*of love/wisdom*]; because this is a second ray solar system, and therefore all rays and the varying states or groupings of consciousness, and all forms, in or out of physical manifestation, are coloured and dominated by this ray, and therefore again finally controlled by this law. ...This law governs also the relation of the soul of a group to the soul of other groups. It governs the interplay, vital but unrealised yet as a potency, between the soul of the fourth kingdom in nature, the human, and the soul of the three subhuman kingdoms, and likewise that of the three superhuman kingdoms. Owing to the major part which humanity has to play in the great scheme or Plan of God, this is the law which will be the determining law of the race. This will not, however, be the case until the majority of human beings understand something of what it means to function as a soul. Then, under obedience to this law, humanity will act as a transmitter of light, energy and spiritual potency to the subhuman kingdoms, and will constitute a channel of communication between 'that which is above and that which is below.' Such is the high destiny before the race." [*Esoteric Psychology Vol II*, page 110-112]

Our destiny calls to us urgently during this time of the shift between the ages, between old and new, the past and the future. And it is the connecting wisdom and power of love that enables us to respond. In this moment between times love can carry us into a greater Presence that transcends time and space, using them to bring revelation through to each atom of consciousness within it – a revelation of its vast oneness. And the Mother of the World brings the means of revelation through love, as Kahlil Gibran reminds us:

The most beautiful word on the lips of mankind is the word "Mother,"
and the most beautiful call is the call of "My mother."
It is a word full of hope and love,
a sweet and kind word coming from the depths of the heart.
The mother is everything –
she is our consolation in sorrow,
our hope in misery, and our strength in weakness.
She is the source of love, mercy, sympathy, and forgiveness....

Everything in nature bespeaks the mother.
The sun is the mother of earth and gives it its nourishment of heart;

it never leaves the universe at night until it has put the earth to sleep to the song of the sea and the hymn of birds and brooks.

And this earth is the mother of trees and flowers.

It produces them, nurses them, and weans them.

The trees and flowers become kind mothers of their great fruits and seeds.

And the mother, the prototype of all existence, is the eternal spirit, full of beauty and love.

Sydney Goodwill newsletter, No 410 September 2021

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Poverty As Violence

Every year, millions of people worldwide die from preventable causes like starvation and diseases that are treatable. The underlying cause? Poverty. Extreme poverty is one of the largest sources of human rights violations. Poverty is often an individual's greatest barrier between them and the access to their guaranteed rights, including the "right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and one's family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care". Poverty causes massive under-fulfillment of social and economic human rights" and can be understood as 'the failure of basic capabilities to reach certain minimally acceptable levels', where basic capabilities are understood as basic freedoms 'such as the freedoms to avoid hunger, disease, illiteracy, and so on. It is responsible for countless lives and immeasurable suffering. It is estimated that roughly 33% of all human deaths, 50,000 daily, are due to treatable poverty-related causes. While it is commonly thought to occur exclusively in developing nations, "developed" nations are hardly exempt. [Columbia University estimated that more than 874,000 people in the US die from poverty-related issues.](#)

It's hardly a revolutionary claim nor a particularly well-kept secret that millions suffer and die from poverty. Rather, the existence of extreme inequality is largely accepted as the status quo. These deaths and this suffering are seen as a horrible but inevitable and blameless tragedy and are often placed at the bottom of a long list of more pressing priorities. The concept of structural violence, introduced by Norwegian sociologist and scholar Johan Galtung, challenges this assumption and encourages us to conceptualize violence and human rights differently.

When we think of violence, we often understand it as direct, physical violence such as murder, the loss of life at the hands of another. Structural violence offers a wider interpretation of what can be considered violence. It is the idea that inequalities embedded into the system that deprive people of the essential resources needed to live and prevent them from achieving their full potential are also forms of violence. The violence lies in the "avoidable disparity between the potential ability to fulfill

basic needs and their actual fulfillment". It occurs whether it is a direct or indirect consequence of human agency, and when it is avoidable but not avoided.

The existence of starvation is a clear example of structural violence. The world produces enough food to eradicate global hunger. Yet, according to the international humanitarian relief NGO Mercy Corps, [approximately 25,000 people a day or 9 million people a year die of hunger and hunger-related diseases](#). Structural violence proponents would point at the structure of the global system, particularly the economic system, as the root of this disparity. The world currently operates on a global capitalist economy where resources, such as food, are distributed according to who can pay the most. The inherent wealth inequality in the world means that food is distributed unequally as well. Many are left to starve while [33% of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted](#). These deaths are the direct result of human agency. Although they could have been avoided through human intervention, they were the result of the inequalities embedded into the system. While nobody put a gun to anybody's head and pulled the trigger, nevertheless violence occurred, inherent in the structure itself.

The existence of poverty and the suffering that results from it is a consequence of the current system and is itself an example of structural violence. With all the recent technological innovations, such as global supply chains, vaccines and antibiotics, the suffering of severe poverty is no longer inescapable. For the first time in human history, international society has the capacity to exponentially ease this suffering and loss of life through the provision of simple solutions--clean water and sanitation, food security, vaccines and basic health interventions. While these issues are universally acknowledged, it is often stated that there just isn't enough money. However, these interventions can be surprisingly cost-effective. Diarrheal disease is the second leading cause of death in children, [affecting 1.7 billion children and killing around 525,000 children every year](#). Oral hydration salts, an intervention for diarrheal disease, have a price tag of a couple of cents. [409,000 deaths in 2019 resulted from malaria](#) while the most effective treatment of malaria are insecticide-treated bednets and run at \$2 per unit. [140,000 people died from measles in 2018](#). According to UNICEF, measles vaccines run at under \$1 a dose. [Approximately 1.5 billion people are infected with parasitic worms](#). The cost of deworming drugs per individual is under a dollar and in some countries like India are as little as \$0.46. Even accounting for criticism that the true cost of saving lives with these interventions is higher when accounting for the implementation and education necessary for making the solution effective, the main takeaway is still apparent. "It is quite feasible, economically, to wipe out hunger and preventable diseases worldwide without real inconvenience to anyone." The existence of extreme poverty and its suffering isn't the lack of funds. This current system is the result of deliberate human design and is a symptom of the deeper "pathologies of power"--the inequality inherent in the global distribution of power, wealth and resources.

Structural violence is not as easy to conceptualize or see compared to traditional forms of violence. Unlike physical violence, structural violence and the suffering it causes can be invisible and indirect; there is no single villain to point a finger at. The violence is present even if there is no direct link between the perpetrator and the victim. Since it's embedded in the system, this suffering and violence has been normalized and is understood as natural and normal. It is often unquestioned. Yet widening our understanding of violence to encompass structural violence is deeply valuable. Understanding structural violence as violence causes us to reconceptualize the deprivation of guaranteed human rights as not only a grave form of injustice but as a fundamental form of violence. It calls for poverty and human rights violations to receive the same urgency, anger and prioritization as traditional forms of violence.

Structural violence can also be...inspiring? Solving these huge global problems such as extreme poverty and hunger can feel overwhelming and deeply complicated, and often seem like an impossible task. However, a central feature of structural violence is that it has to be a result of human agency and it must be avoidable. Anything that is considered structural violence, humanity has the potential to eradicate. The concept challenges us to change what we have long assumed as given and encourages us to fully realize humanity's true power and the capacity humanity has to correct and progress. It further highlights the urgency to recognize our potential to achieve ideals such as implementation of human rights for all and the eradication of poverty and turn them into material situations worldwide.

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The “human right” to peace & infrastructures for peace

DECEMBER 10
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY



December 10th is United Nations “Human Rights Day” commemorating the date in 1948 when the evolutionary **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted by the General Assembly (GA) in response to the barbarous acts experienced by the peoples of the world during World War 2. For more information: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day> .

Surprisingly, PEACE was not listed among its original thirty human rights articles! In my early 2006 UN NGO work I learned about that stunning omission through an international civil society alliance seeking to correct this flaw at the UN. The Spanish Society for Advancement of Human Rights Law was promoting its LUARCA DECLARATION for civil society to declare Peace a Human Right. This was controversial at the UN as it might legally make waging war harder. Peace as a Human Right is important for it gives purpose to our UN NGO work building the Culture of Peace via Departments, Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace [I4P] worldwide.

Canadian diplomat, Douglas Roche, who in 2003 wrote the seminal book **The Human Right to Peace**, was a leader in this alliance. He said: *“The right to peace is unique. It is the major precondition for all human rights, transcending all other rights, enabling their exercise and offering the innovation needed to lift up society and allow it to achieve its full potential in an interconnected world. Indeed, without basic security of person, other human rights are but an illusion.”* He further wrote that UN documents *“affirm the right of states to peace **through a “peace system”** with the primary goal being the preservation of peace and a respect for human rights as essential to the development of friendly relations among nations. A “peace system” such as a Department, Ministry or other national or international Infrastructure for Peace.*

According to *The Right to Peace Foundation*, **“the universal Right to Peace is the right of individuals and communities to live free from the intentional use of physical force or power (threatened or actual) that either results in (or has a likelihood of resulting) in psychological harm, mal-development, deprivation, injury or death. The nature of violent acts can be psychological, physical, sexual, involving deprivation or neglect.”** Given this definition and today’s ever-escalating culture of violence which thwarts development in larger freedom, humanity still has much more work to do to realize this basic right. Which is why the UN must lead efforts globally to establish Ministries, Departments and other I4P worldwide.

There was an evolutionary leap in consciousness at the UN in the last 30 years when the right to peace finally became recognized and proclaimed as being self-evident. In 1978 it began to take shape in a formal way when the General Assembly (GA) adopted the **Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace**. Then in 1984 they passed a more definitive **Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace** (resolution 39/11) solemnly proclaiming the peoples of our planet have a sacred right to peace. Its article 4 *“appeals to all states and international organizations to do their utmost to assist in implementing the rights of peoples to peace through the adoption of appropriate measures at both the national and international level.”* This was the first UN mandate that justifies and gives credence to the value of our Culture of Peace and I4P work.

Early in the new millennium, the international civil society Luarca Declaration alliance petitioning did much to raise this issue to prominence at the UN. In 2014 the UN chose RIGHT TO PEACE for the International Day of Peace theme. Then on 19 December 2016, the **Declaration on the Right to Peace** was ratified by the GA in a majority vote by its Member States. *This Declaration will be remembered in UN history for being the first peace Declaration adopted by the GA in this new millennium.* Article 1 states that *“Everyone has the right to enjoy peace such that all human rights are promoted and protected and development is fully realized.”*

This was a critical milestone but realizing its goals will require global transformation towards the Culture of Peace per implementation of the **UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace** (A/RES/53/243). To assist in this implementation, the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP) advocates for governmental Departments, Ministries and other Infrastructures for Peace to build the Culture of Peace -- **as a means to enable the Human Right to Peace. Hence, a next step in peace consciousness evolution at the UN lies in GA passage of a resolution urging all Member States to establish Departments, Ministries and other Infrastructures for Peace worldwide.** Now is the time to go from ratification to realization through Culture of Peace Programme of Action implementation. This calls for lawyers who actively specialize in the Human Right to Peace. For in a real Culture of Peace -- humanity would live safe, secure, civilized lives beyond war and the unenlightened resolution of conflict through violence. Throughout history humanity has mistakenly believed that *peace comes through strength*, no matter how many wars have been fought that prove otherwise. In fact, the opposite has proven true -- ***strength comes through peace -- the old Gandhi adage “there is no way to peace, peace is the way.”*** Humanity and planet earth now live in a volatile culture of violence at all levels that impedes civil society advancement into the Culture of Peace. *An evidence-based way to accelerate building the Culture of Peace – TO FULFILL HUMANITY’S RIGHT TO PEACE -- is thus to establish Governmental Departments, Ministries and other Infrastructures for Peace worldwide.*

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Introducing The Learning Environment

After many years working behind a computer screen, I’ve begun the journey of building a deeper relationship with the natural world. Learning to observe, to be silent, and to listen. Well, not only to the natural world, but with myself too. Right now I’m observing the pollinated fruits growing on the apple trees, and reflecting on my learnings over the dark winter months as we move into a sweet summer. The environment can be our greatest teacher if we take the time to listen. Its lessons can share more about our place within ourselves.

‘When you heal the land you heal yourself’. I have understood this theoretically, but now I am learning this in practice. With climate change, ecological degradation, declining mental health and social injustice, this feels more important than ever. This is the reason why I am part of The Learning Environment in Whanganui, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Based on 70ha of regenerating farmland, The Learning Environment offers an education facility and courses on environmental and human wellbeing. The land, named Pīwakawaka Farm, is a combination of regenerating forest, wetlands, market gardens, orchards, and a native plant nursery. Running through the property is Tauraroa Stream that flows directly into Te Awa Tupua aka the Whanganui River. Pīwakawaka Farm is buzzing with a diversity of life and ecosystems. As an education space, these ecosystems are our classrooms and our teachers. It’s a magnificent place to be.

Our connection to Pīwakawaka Farm came in late 2019 through the meeting of Melinda Hatherly and Murray Jones. Having [stewarded the land](#) for 15 years, they were seeking the next generation to continue to grow their vision of environmental landcare. A perfect match. Since our first meeting, we have been working together on the land and thanks to the [financial affirmation](#) of our extended community and philanthropic network we have begun the succession process. Now rooted in place, The Learning Environment vision has been brought to life.

Our learning pedagogy places holistic wellbeing at the centre of all our courses. Whether the work and courses are in horticulture, weed and pest control or growing food, there is an opportunity to reflect on your wellbeing and connection to each other as well. For example, upon pruning our orchards this past Winter Season, we were able to reflect on what obstacles in our life we need to prune out to bring more thriving life. This natural tendency to discuss difficult things easily and reflect while working alongside others is being designed into the various courses which we are developing, whether they are of a practical or introspective focus. Creating opportunities for reflection helps to ensure that our learners' total wellbeing is being nurtured as part of the programme. We are focused on teaching young people the skills and knowledge to develop personal wellbeing and resilience, while also gaining the skills to regenerate the environmental and social fabric of their communities.

This year students from Whanganui high schools were part of our first educational course on the land. ‘[Careers in Conservation](#)’ is a student-led course for those looking for alternative pathways from the traditional education system. The course was developed in collaboration with a local land-based training provider, AGC Training for Industry. The students learnt about the practical aspects of conservation in New Zealand; from trapping for pest animals and reducing pest plant species to freshwater monitoring and care. Cameron Ryan, the coordinator of the course, took

care to pass on his reverence for the natural world, teaching that 'we are a part of nature' to foster a relationship with it. One student said: *"My wellbeing has improved through change in routine and experiencing the ngahere [forest] close up, as to learning about it in the classroom."* Our aim is to support young people towards fulfilling employment opportunities as well as providing internships and jobs at the Learning Environment itself.

We are still in the early stages of this multifaceted and exciting project. The Whanganui community has been very supportive which has helped us to take big steps this year. Managing a farm, orchard, nursery and gardens is a lot of work and we couldn't be where we are without many volunteer hands. We have also received local guidance and advice as we set up our organisation and business. I have loved building connections to the people here and sharing more about what we are doing.

Peace Through Unity is part of our support network that we are deeply grateful for. Te Rangi - Brooke House in Whanganui is now the place for our monthly Team Days. Having this venue available has allowed us to work through some important aspects of our organisation like strategy, planning and feedback. We'd like to extend a huge thank you to Kate and Sue for their loving support for us and of course to Anthony and Gita Brooke for the legacy that they have gifted the community.

We are seeking to serve society by providing opportunities for meaningful learning and connection with nature. In this way we believe that we can do our part for healing the land and healing ourselves.

The best way to follow what we are doing is through our bi-monthly newsletter and social media, which are all accessible through our website here:

www.learningenvironment.nz

Ness Radich





United Nations 2021 “High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace”

The 2021 UN High Level Forum (HLF) on the Culture of Peace marked its 10th anniversary milestone this September! Below is full text of the official UN Summary Report written by the (host) Office of the President of the General Assembly (GA) to memorialize that noteworthy day. There was a morning plenary with dignitaries and member states making inspiring remarks about the culture of peace. The afternoon segment featured panelists, discussants and representatives of civil society organizations including Peace Through Unity (PTU) in dialogue about the culture of peace. PTU (as a founding civil society organizational member of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace) has traditionally co-operated in planning these HLF’s, particularly the afternoon civil society piece. The day was significant because culture of peace voice was clearly and strongly heard within the General Assembly Hall as a prelude to the 75th GA session that followed. Because PTU has always been deeply aligned with the culture of peace, this full report is included in Many to Many to enable its civil society readers to join us amplifying culture of peace words in the universal energy field at this transitional post covid time.

(* Note ADDENDUM at end of this article)



**UNITED NATIONS HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON
THE CULTURE OF PEACE**

07 SEPTEMBER 2021, UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK

The President of the General Assembly (PGA) convened on 7 September 2021 the High-Level Forum on The Culture of Peace, as mandated by the GA resolution 75/25 of 2020. The

High-Level Forum, participated by the Member States and Observers to the United Nations as well as other stakeholders, renewed the call for full and effective implementation of the UN Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

The theme of High-Level Forum – **“Transformative Role of The Culture of Peace: Promoting Resilience and Inclusion in Post-Covid Recovery”** reflected the relevance of the **abiding values of the culture of peace in combating the Covid-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impacts, and underscored the importance of empowering all segments of the society towards a resilient recovery, including by ensuring vaccine equity, bridging digital divide, promoting equality and empowerment of women and harnessing the power of youth, among others.**

In his opening remarks, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, pointed out how humanity was brought together by the pandemic and stressed the need to **“build on this shared sense of grief and anxiety, and work together to not only tackle COVID-19 but all other challenges that stand in our path.”** Referring to the sufferings of the Rohingya and Afghanistan people, the President emphasized on elements such as conflict early warning, fact-finding missions, early deployment of peacekeepers when needed, and of course humanitarian assistance, to maintain and support a culture of peace. **“Peace is much, much more than the absence of conflict. Peace is a conscious effort by each of us, each moment, to talk, to listen, and to engage. It is a sustained effort to understand and overcome differences”** he added.

The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh H.E. DR A.K. Abdul Momen participated in the Opening Session with a pre-recorded statement. In his remarks, the Foreign Minister recalled Bangladesh’s pioneering role in the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution on The Culture of Peace since 1999 and organization of the High-Level Forum since 2012. Recognizing the need for creating an environment for peace for a resilient recovery from Covid-19, the Foreign Minister invited the international community to **mainstream culture of peace in all pandemic recovery efforts. He underscored the strong correlation between peace and development** and in this regard, called for ensuring timely implementation of the Agenda 2030.

Speaking on behalf of the UN Secretary-General, the Chef de Cabinet Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, highlighted the **foundational role of culture of peace for “building a better, fairer, more sustainable future for all— the future in which human rights are realized for every person.”** She called attention not only to the devastating consequences of climate change and the threatening effects of the pandemic on health and economics but also to the rising conflicts, gender-based violence, inequality and hate speech. The Chef de Cabinet stressed that **working to achieve peace not only covers traditional notions of security, but also challenges such as social injustice, the normalization of hate speech, terrorism, violence against women, and conflict.**

The High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC), H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos in his remarks stated that the culture of peace is becoming relevant every day in the context of multidimensional impacts of Covid-19 and urged all

stakeholders to **re-commit to taking result-oriented actions towards uprooting all forms of discrimination and eliminating inequalities through dialogue, tolerance, diversity and respect among state and non-state actors.** Speaking on behalf of Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Mr. Eliot Minchenberg, Director a.i., Office of UNESCO in New York, **underlined that the very notion of the Culture of Peace was born in UNESCO in 1992 and reaffirmed that the Organisation, together with its partners, stands ready to build peace and overcome the challenges of today.** He also pointed out that due to Covid-19 pandemic, education has been gravely affected, particularly among girls and young women.

During the plenary meeting, Member States stressed that the pandemic has highlighted the vulnerabilities and inequalities, increasing intolerance and tensions within communities, and between states. **They underlined the importance of fostering a culture of peace through education by revising the educational curricula to promote qualitative values, attitudes, and behaviours of a culture of peace, including peaceful conflict-resolution, dialogue, consensus-building and active non-violence.** The High-Level Forum also discussed **how the culture of peace is fostered by the promotion of sustainable economic and social development** and heard arguments towards the need to reduce inequalities and eradicate poverty if we are to alleviate grievances. The Member States also highlighted the importance of protection and promotion of human rights and ensuring gender equality in achieving the objectives of the declaration and the programme of action on culture of peace.

Following the plenary segment in the General Assembly Hall in the morning, a panel discussion was held virtually in the afternoon with the participation of invited panelists, discussants, and representatives of civil society organisations. **The Founder of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP), Former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury moderated the panel discussion.** A wide range of stakeholders - H.E. Ms Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN, H.E. Mr. Rodrigo A. Carazo, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN, H. E. Ms. Mathu Joyini, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN, Mr. Federico Mayor Zaragoza, President of Foundation for a Culture of Peace, former Director-General of UNESCO (1987-1999), Dr. Ada Juni Okika, Global Director of the Centre for Transformative Advancement of Development of Africa (CTADA), Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, UN, Mr. Francisco Rojas-Aravena, Rector of the University of Peace in Costa Rica participated in the panel discussion.

Hon. Mr Kazumi Matsui, Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan and President of “Mayors for Peace” and Ms Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary General’s Youth Envoy, presented pre-recorded video statements.

Chair and Moderator Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury in his opening remarks paid warm tribute to PGA-75 H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir under whose leadership the High-Level Forum on The Culture of Peace convened. He drew attention to the reality that **the Culture**

of Peace has yet to attain its worth and its due recognition at global as well as national levels. He called for renewed attention to the Declaration on Culture of Peace which, “after the UN Charter, is the only major document of the UNGA which focuses on peace in the most comprehensive manner.” He underscored the difference between peace and culture of peace and called for individual actions to advance culture of peace which aims at making peace and non-violence a part of our own self, our own personality - a part of our existence as a human being.

*Ms. Beatrice Fihn, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and the Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) presented the keynote speech. In her keynote speech, Ms. Beatrice Fihn highlighted the **enduring values of the culture of peace in addressing the both the contemporary and the longstanding challenges facing the humanity**. She emphasized on renewed commitment and stronger action to eliminate nuclear weapons that continue to threaten the very existence of the human society.*

*As a panelist, Ambassador Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York, underscored the **long-standing commitment of Bangladesh to the culture of peace at the UN and its continuing, proactive role in advancing the implementation of the UN resolutions on the culture of peace**. She stressed on eliminating digital divide and restructuring conventional education system in ensuring uninterrupted access to education by all children. Expressing her concern at the alarming rise in inequality within and among societies, she urged the global community to address inequality in a holistic manner. She also called for increased efforts including dialogue for elimination of hate speech, xenophobia and discrimination across the society for an inclusive recovery.*

All panelists recognized the renewed relevance of the culture of peace in combating COVID and stressed on the importance of utilizing transformative role of culture of peace in fostering inclusion and tolerance in the society through inclusive and non-discriminatory recovery efforts. They highlighted that the culture of peace needs to be strengthened within all peoples, especially women, to prevent conflicts and sustain peace. They also stressed respect for human rights as essential to peace, to further promoting the culture of peace in educational programmes. The culture of peace, it was stressed, cannot be built if hate speech continues to exist. Participants also noted that everyone must be a multi-stakeholder in this process, including educators, parents, governmental officials and civil society organizations, as highlighted in the UN declaration on the culture of peace.

***Civil society organizations actively participated in the High-Level Forum interactive session.** They stressed that peace should be embraced as a way of life. The culture of peace should be nurtured through strengthening mutual respect and protecting the dignity of all members of the society regardless of their race, religion, belief or gender.*

The High-Level Forum provided an opportunity for Member States, observers, UN entities, non-governmental organizations, academia, and other interested parties, to exchange ideas and make suggestions on how to utilize the values of culture of peace in post Covid recovery efforts, especially to ensure that the recovery from Covid-19 is durable, resilient and

inclusive. In this context, the High-Level Forum provided a meaningful contribution to the pivotal discussions and commitments expected at the General Assembly during the High-Level Week later in September 2021.

For event details of the entire day, including its concept note visit <https://www.un.org/pga/75/culture-of-peace/>.

* **ADDENDUM:** PTU was fortunate to have the opportunity to pose a “civil society organization” comment / question to the afternoon panelists. PTU chose to **ask a question about Departments, Ministries and other Infrastructures for Peace (I4P) to raise consciousness at the UN of I4P** and the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace (GAMIP). *We had hoped the term “I4P” would be referenced in the UN Summary Report and were disappointed it was not. Mention of I4P would have fit so well in that next-to- last paragraph (above) about “civil society organizations active participation.”* So let us mention it here now. Following is PTU’s I4P comment / question (heard around the world then by anyone who was listening):

“The added violence caused by the multi-dimensional impacts of Covid are intensifying the already existential planetary crisis of violence worldwide. In post Covid recovery, transformation from our global "culture of violence" to the "culture of peace" is essential in promoting resilient and inclusive societies. The United Nations Development Program Issue Brief on “Infrastructures for Peace” reports how infrastructures for peace have been proven to reduce violence, thereby promoting resilient nations. Article 5 of the Culture of Peace Programme of Action states that "governments have an essential role in strengthening the culture of peace." Thus, transformation can come about by establishing governmental departments, ministries and other “infrastructures for peace” that focus exclusively on violence prevention and reduction, applying the science of nonviolence to build the supporting architecture necessary to activate an enduring culture of peace. What actions could the UN -- in its role as the Congress of Humanity -- now take to speed up establishing governmental departments, ministries and other infrastructures for peace that would quicken implementation of the culture of peace for a nonviolent world.”

The significance of asking this question is that the concept of “I4P” is now contained in UN archives, a beginning step towards **the long-term goal of having the UN actively lead in promoting the establishment of I4P globally -- to accelerate implementation of the Culture of Peace Programme of Action.**

Anne Creter,

UN Rep Peace Through Unity; Global Movement for the Culture of Peace; Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace.

Please Hold in the Light

I love the idea of Festivals, especially where there is a sense of the sacred involved. And I can't help but think that in today's predominantly materialistic world a whole new cycle of festivals is emerging in which we are learning to celebrate the birthing of a new spirit in humanity and learning to see the work of the divine in this birthing. This is important because the more we see this sacred process moving on the waters of our world of apparently solid time and space, the more likely it is that we will become immersed in the Work of serving and being a part of that birthing.

We live in an age where recognition of the oneness and interdependence of life is breaking through into the collective mind and heart and becoming a source of inspiration for serving groups and individuals the world over. This is where the Divine is speaking in our time. Increasingly this oneness spirit is bursting through the psyche in the human sciences (economics, sociology, communications and media) and in the arts, healing, education and religion – indeed in every field of life. As it burns its way into our consciousness it disturbs and provokes, leaving us to find our own authentic ways to become warriors for the universal – breaking down sentimental, superficial, 'slogans' and provoking fresh creative thinking about what it is to live a meaningful life in these challenging times.

Events in which human unity is celebrated and meditated upon by different communities around the world are of deep significance in the birthing of the new era. After all, these are the times when there is an unusual concentration of mind and heart on the 'sacred task' of shaping an outer world that resonates with the beauty and harmony of the inner worlds.

Readers of Many to Many will likely be aware that the United Nations has a calendar of specially designated Days, Years and Decades. Most of us will be familiar with some of the International Years. Recent past years have included Years of Indigenous Languages (2019); Sustainable Tourism for Development (2017) and Soils (2015). And this year is being observed with several themes, including the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, the Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, and the Year of Fruits and Vegetables. These and other themes help us to realize the incredible diversity and focus of human initiatives to bring the spirit of wholeness and unity into the fabric of every area of life and of thought.

There are Years, Days and Decades covering the full range of the issues confronting the human family as we move into a global era and struggle to find the balance between local, national, global, and universal. Taken together, the themes for the Days, Years and Decades provide a wonderful way of focusing thought, and outer action, on all the altruistic and visionary work being done by people from every

walk of life to create a better world. The calendar is a living ritual highlighting the points of focus in the service life of humanity.

While there is obviously need for more outer work to be done on the issues highlighted by the UN calendar, there is equally need for additional work in meditation to inspire, uplift and nourish that outer effort. The UN Days & Years Meditation Initiative encourages groups and individuals who meditate and pray to become sensitive to this global rhythm of service. There are millions of people of goodwill around the world who regularly pray and meditate, and who have come to value the power of concentrated, sustained thought. Imagine if, in addition to all of their inner practices, even a small fraction of this global community of subjective workers began to hold 'in the light' the network of servers associated with particular Days or Years or Decades. And imagine if more and more of us who are used to inner work began to meditate on the principles and universal laws involved in any of the themes of the UN calendar.

Whether it be International Day of Peace, the Glasgow Climate Change COP26, or Festivals like the World Day for Water in March or World Bee Day in May or International Day of Yoga in June - meditators and meditation groups can make a difference by holding these events in the light. We can hold the global community of people involved in particular fields of service in the light. We can visualise political negotiations on such key issues as the availability of clean fresh water taking place within an inner environment of mind and heart overshadowed with energies of illumined will and higher purpose.

These events are global festivals that reflect the painful process of the birthing of a new humanity. The least we can do is give them some energy by holding them in the light of our meditations and prayers.

The UN Days & Years Meditation Initiative (a project of Intuition in Service) offers a free monthly email newsletter, 'Please Hold in the Light' identifying UN Days and major international conferences taking place in the month - inviting recipients to hold these events in the light of a higher wisdom. Copies can be seen at: <http://www.intuition-in-service.org/newsletterMain.cfm> . To subscribe to the monthly email send a message to snation@earthlink.net with 'Subscribe' in the subject line - and please make a note that you are a reader of Many to Many. A full calendar of UN observances can be seen at www.intuition-in-service.org/unCalendar.cfm

Steve Nation is a Peace Through Unity co-worker. He has been involved in service work inspired by the Ageless Wisdom for many years. He currently directs the New York office of World Goodwill and Lucis Trust. He is co-founder of Intuition in Service and the United Nations Days & Years Meditation Initiative and serves on the Council of the Spiritual Caucus at the United Nations.

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the Mind of God

Let light stream forth into human minds.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God

Let love stream forth into human hearts.

May the Coming One return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known

Let purpose guide all little human wills

The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the human race

Let the Plan of Love and Light work out

And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

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