

## **THE RELIGIONS OF THE FUTURE**

**Vicente Hao Chin, Jr.**

*(Summary of Public Lecture delivered on 1.1.2017)*

Religions have been very significant factors in charting the course of almost all the civilizations on earth. Ostensibly they are supposed to improve humanity and make us more moral. In some ways they have done so, but in many other ways, religions have become the source of superstitions, disharmony, violence, wars, and cruelty. Even political boundaries and military alliances have been drawn on account of religions. Religions have nurtured great works of art, but at the same time, have delayed the progress of science and education by centuries.

There are four major sources of conflicts and divisions:

1. The claimed infallibility of scriptures, particularly of the Abrahamic religions. Conflicts are inevitable because the scriptures contain many statements that contradict science and our moral intuitions.

2. The reliance on institutional or hierarchical authority as a source of truth or dogma, such as papal infallibility and the power to issue fatwas.

3. The claim that only members of

a particular religion will be “saved”.

4. Belief in an anthropomorphic god who gets angry, jealous, vindictive, punitive, or insecure.

These four qualities are not likely to disappear in the next thousand years based on past experience. But some day they will be seen as no longer tenable and will be widely rejected, giving rise to new religions that will be wholesome, non-divisive, and spiritual. Such religions will have the following characteristics:

1. Their scriptures will no longer be believed to be infallible. No matter how inspired parts of them may be, scriptures are still products of the human mind, and hence subject to its limitations. People will repudiate the unscientific, unethical parts that go against common sense and intuition.

2. The emphasis will be on moral uprightness based on intuition. Other doctrines will fade away.

3. The mystical elements of one’s own faith will be recognized as the core religious experience, and similarly the validity of the mystical insights

of other religions will be recognized.

4. They will be humanistic and spiritual, rather than theocentric and doctrinal. It will not be about the jealousy or anger of a god but rather the growth of human beings; less about worshipping a god than experiencing holiness; not punishment by any god but the reaping of what we sow. The concept of a divine being will no longer be human-like, but transcendent and impersonal.

5. No dogmas will be enforced on their adherents, as transcendent truths cannot be crystallized or limited.

With these religions, the future will have peace and harmony among faiths. Religious differences will be due to local culture or historical traditions. Religions will no longer be oppressive or tyrannical.

The emergence of such religions can be accelerated by emphasizing mys-

ticism and mystical insights as the true basis of religious unity, opposing the abuse of sectarian powers, promoting non-sectarian education, and teaching young people to be open-minded, and to discriminate between blind belief and the use of reason, science, and common sense.

Minds that have been made to open while young, are almost impossible to close when they have become adults. On the other hand, young minds which have been taught to be closed are very difficult to open in later life. The best way to teach young people is to ask deep and basic questions and allow them to explore, reason out, and discuss. Once they see by themselves what is sensible and reasonable, they cannot stop seeing them any longer. They will become free and more capable of finding out what truth is.



## DANCE PROGRAMME

### Bharatanatyam — Sringara Vivekam

On 1 January, the Bharatanatyam performance, “Shringara Vivekam”, was an endeavour through dance to explore, and perhaps glimpse, that primordial sentiment, love, that anchors and guides an aspirant on the path towards union. The poet-saint Jayadeva’s *Gita Govindam*, which lends itself to various interpretations, from the amorous/physical to the inspiring/metaphysical, was the chosen vehicle. Radha, the companion/playmate (*sakhi*) and Krishna are understood and interpreted as

spaces likely to be experienced on the path of love, the different states one may transit through, rather than as persons. Radha, is the aspirant who is on the threshold of blossoming, the inspired mind within each individual who knows the path and leads the aspirant on; and Krishna, that space of auspicious love, unto which all aspirants journey.

Every movement, gesture, and interpretation has been envisaged to hold within it the classical grammar

of the finite while attempting to hold a larger vision, emphasizing the beauty of wholeness over individual preferences, and more importantly, to respond to differences with love and affection — Brotherhood in theosophical terms.

Through art — here the dance — the heart responds to greatness and the mind focuses on the higher. Romantic

love (*shringaram*) is the primordial sentiment that anchors and guides the aspirant on the path towards union, through its myriad hues of wonder, jealousy, anger, lament, and bliss. The love that embraces all in oneness opens ourselves to an experience of something beyond — perhaps it is the grace of the spirit, perhaps the experience of universal love.



## **TRANSFORMATION IN A TRANSITIONAL AGE**

**Carolyn Dorrance**

*(Summary of a Short Lecture delivered on 2.1.2017)*

*Ideas for me, are means of transformation — consequently they are phases or moments of change.*

Paul Valery

The transformation of both individuals and organizations is possible and necessary for the fulfillment of spiritual evolution as presented in Theosophical teaching. In particular, transformation enables us to go beyond illusions and to expand unity. The first question to ask is: “Can we go beyond illusion if everything that exists is inherently illusory because subject to change?” A meaningful dialogue about illusions must recognize their relativity to something we recognize as true and eternal, such as the bare subjectivity of consciousness. If an illusion reflects a false perception, then it impedes transformation and thereby evolutionary progress.

To attain perception of what is most

real and to escape the shackles of illusion, the individual must change significantly. Transformation requires going beyond the vestures, the assumptions and viewpoints that make up what we take to be ourselves. The personality created by the lower mind, and educated by worldly experience, is an accumulation of impermanent attitudes and tendencies. It is an active receptacle of illusions. With great effort it can be cleansed and transformed by the awakening and wise use of the higher Ego, illumined and suffused by the highest potencies in human nature: *atma* and *buddhi*. The lower self can be transformed into a vehicle of the spiritual mind that reflects both reasoning and intuition. Thus, the individual becomes an agent of the wisdom developed and disseminated by generations of wise beings whose knowledge reflects the framework of the universe

created by the *Dhyān Chohans* through emanation from the divine mind.

An analogous process of transformation can also be undergone by box-like organizations. However visionary their founders, organizations can also become embedded in illusions and stagnant. A creative spark is needed to review their purposes and expand their vision through open and constructive “self-examination”. The “higher triad” of an organization can be seen as the universality of its purposes, its dedication to universal good, and the quality of its declared aims and teachings. The review process will benefit from the self-transformation of the leaders who recognize the illusions embedded within the organization.

The greatest and most destructive illusion is the sin of separatism. Presumptions of superiority thrive within that illusion. A focus on unity is the best corrective to sectarian separatism. Developing unity within and beyond organizational boundaries is the “royal talisman”. Acceptance of ceaseless change in the definition of organiza-

tional goals and policies is possible without destroying clarity and loyalty to essential principles. Discovering what is shared with other organizations keeps open the learning process that serves transformation if apparent differences are seen to be shadows. The result of such exchange is more dynamic activity within and among organizations. This in turn stirs enthusiasm among members who see that their work is part of a universal effort to do good by the dissemination of theological teaching and encouragement of spiritual discovery.

Part of the challenge of going beyond illusions and developing unity is the reality that this is a transitional age. H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge speak of several transitional cycles wherein human capacities can be expanded to cope with changing social and environmental realities. Instabilities that can help or impede exist within individuals and organizations, and they must make the necessary transformations and transitions for spiritual, intellectual, and moral progress.



## **THE FUNDAMENTAL IDENTITY OF ALL SOULS WITH THE UNIVERSAL OVER-SOUL**

**Esteban R. Langlois**

*(Summary of a Short Lecture delivered on 2.1.2017)*

It is important to understand the origin and nature of the Soul, because it has direct implications for our everyday life. We act in accordance with our beliefs, so the way we see the world will guide

our conduct. On the other hand, our actions reveal our deep beliefs and convictions. To consider the whole of Nature as one with ourselves would make our world a better place.

The Third Fundamental Proposition in the Proem of *The Secret Doctrine* states:

The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former — through the Cycle of Incarnation (or 'Necessity') in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term.

This is a very rich sentence that contains many important concepts, such as the relationship between the souls and their Source, and also explains why the spiritual path is so hard for us. "Soul" is a translation of the Sanskrit word *Atman*, the spiritual principle or aspect of human beings and everything in Nature. From the theosophical point of view, there is nothing dead because there is nothing devoid of this spiritual principle. Despite appearances, souls are not individual souls, because they are not separated from one another and they are also one with their source. They may look as separate by our limited sight, but they are all the same principle in every human, animal, vegetable or mineral being. *Paramatman*, or the Universal Over-Soul, which means "beyond" *Atman*, or beyond the soul, is the source from where the souls come from, in the same way a flame is the source of a spark. However, as H. P. Blavatsky says, it is not the ultimate reality (*parabrahman* or the Absolute) but just an aspect of it, because The Unknown Root is not able

to emanate, or generate anything. In its absoluteness it remains immutable, unchanged.

But, why do the sparks leave the flame? Because at the end of a resting period, an impelling force drives them to submerge deep into the differentiated world, according to the Law of Karma. *Atman* is called the pilgrim because he has to travel through the worlds of matter in order to gain self-awareness. Once the deepest point is achieved, the force propels it to return to the Source, but this time it has to make a "self-induced" and "self-devised" effort.

However, becoming self-aware is not the ultimate goal, neither is the return to the Source. Nirvana and the different sorts of Pralaya are only temporary respites, because the original impulse never ceases and at the end of the resting period, the monads will be called again for a new pilgrimage in a new and different Universe. This new Universe will be the inheritor of the previous one, in the same way that a tree synthesizes itself in a seed to give rise to a new tree which is its heir. So at the end of a period of activity, the dissolution of the sparks in their Source is never complete, because, when a new manifestation begins, the emerging monads are the seeds for the development of the Universe and carry the Karma, so to say, of the previous Universe. This is a never-ending process where every goal is just intermediate, because the Cycle of Necessity is eternal and with no beginning and no end.

Finally, we can ask why we have to

work so hard to improve ourselves, to resign so many things to which we are so attached; why fight against our egoism in order to become better

people, more spiritual and less selfish. In fact, like it or not, the Law propels us from Unity to diversity and from diversity to Unity.



## The Liberal Catholic Church at Adyar

The Church of St Michael's and All Angels at Adyar had its foundation stone consecrated by The Rt. Rev. Charles W. Leadbeater in 1925 and the building was consecrated by The Rt. Rev. George S. Arundale in 1936. Since then services have been held there on a regular basis.

The LCC seeks to combine the deep mysticism of the Catholic tradition with the widest measure of intellectual

freedom. It maintains that the traditional Sacraments from the ancient times are indeed vessels of both grace and spiritual power, which radiate to the wider world as a shower of blessings and spiritual renewal. The Midnight service on Christmas eve was conducted by Subdeacon Julian Ochoa, from Sydney, and the Christmas Mass was conducted by the Church's Priest-in-charge, The Rev. P. J. John.



## THEOSOPHY AROUND THE WORLD

The **Costa Rican** Presidential Agency has 59 members in 5 Lodges. Their studies included several of H. P. Blavatsky's classics and others. An "Introductory Course of Theosophy" was offered to the public free of charge from January through July by Ligia Montiel Longhi.

In the **Uruguayan** Regional Association all of their 6 Lodges meet weekly, having added three members last year, for a total of 56. The Lodges studied Radha Burnier's *Human Regeneration*, among other books; articles from the Spanish Section magazine, *Sophia*, were also studied, and they showed

videos of a seminar given for Arjuna Lodge in Spain by Dr Isaac Jauli, and a video with Juan Viñas giving a lecture in Brasilia.

In **Colombia** there has been a change of Presidential Representative, from Nelly Medina to Antonio Martínez. They now have 52 members in 8 Lodges. They offer a basic course on "Approaching Theosophy". The TOS is active in Bogotá and in rural areas, and they also hold meditations for Peace. The Round Table ritual is performed by young people, and they have been receiving the *Theosophical Readers' Digest* published in the Philippines

continuously since 1952.

The TS in **Chile**, with 50 members, held its national Convention in April on “Discovering Ourselves”. They have 50 members and disseminate Theosophy by distributing pamphlets in subways, on electronic pages, in their magazine, and online radio to transmit lectures and classes. Information can also be obtained on their website. Their “Theosophical Electronic Brochure” and their magazine are sent monthly to different Spanish-speaking countries. They also have a team translating articles and books, and collaborating with the translation of *The Theosophist* into Spanish.

In November, the **Dominican Republic** Presidential Agency, with 42 members, hosted 96 members from the three Americas and the Caribbean. They heard a well-attended public lecture by Dr Isaac Jauli. Then began the Seminar of the Caribbean Basin on “An Illumined Mind”, with 8 speakers from 6 countries. Two visiting speakers were hosted by the Presidential Representative, Fernando de Torrijos, who gave a lecture at a University, two public lectures, and a well-attended workshop; and Terry Hunt, who gave a public lecture and directed a three-day retreat on Raja Yoga. The Lodges studied the Mahatma Letters all year long in addition to many other theosophical subjects.

The TS in **Puerto Rico**, has 39 members in 3 Lodges. They offered a quarterly program of conferences and almost every Sunday gave public lectures on “What is Theosophy?” and “The Law of Cycles”, among other topics. In

November, Inter-American Federation president Isis Resende gave two public lectures.

The Presidential Agency in **Perú**, with 33 members in 2 Lodges, offered seventeen public talks on various topics. They freely offered an internet course on Theosophy, and HPB Lodge also offered a course in July on “The Basis of Esoteric Philosophy”.

The TS in **Venezuela**, with 16 members in 2 Lodges, celebrated Foundation Day and White Lotus Day. Both Lodges have joint meetings, studying I. K. Taimni’s *The Secret of Self-Realization*. Oscar José Hernandez holds regular retreats in the state of Bolivar to teach Theosophy to a group of aborigines.

The **Central American** Regional Association has 2 Lodges totaling 14 members. One Lodge has its own website: <[www.sociedadteosoficaelsalvador.org](http://www.sociedadteosoficaelsalvador.org)>. They held a total of eight public lectures and studied HPB’s *The Secret Doctrine*, J. Krishnamurti’s *At the Feet of the Master*, and Annie Besant’s *Esoteric Christianity*. They also gave four conferences sponsored by the Inter-American Federation.

The **Italian Section**, now the largest in Europe with 934 members in 29 Lodges and 20 study centers, carries out “members only” meetings and public conferences. Their website attracts around 4,000 visits per month with videos of theosophical conferences, now featuring a section on the TOS. They publish 1,300 copies of their monthly magazine, with over 1,000 subscriptions. Also, their monthly e-newsletter is sent to over 4,500

interested readers. The Section and nine other Lodges have launched their official Facebook page. New Facebook pages for their publishing house and the Italian TOS are also online. Their publishing house website offers theosophical books for the public, both in Italian and in English.

The **English Section** (TSE) is in a transition period, as in June they became an official charity. Their 35 Lodges met regularly. In September Headquarters hosted a successful International Conference on Theosophical History, attended by members from Israel, Canada, and the USA. The summer school was on “Divine Wisdom”, with Trân-Thi-Kim-Diêu, Chairman of the European Federation, as the guest speaker. She gave the Blavatsky Lecture on “The Wisdom of All Ages”. After a few years’ absence from the European Federation, the TSE was warmly welcomed back into the fold.

The Annual Convention of the **Finnish Section** was held at Helsinki Headquarters in April. In June their summer school took place at Kreivilä on “Compassion as a Way of Life”, and in Estonia the Lodges arranged a summer school on “The World in Us and Us in the World”. A new Finnish

translation of HPB’s *The Secret Doctrine* II was published in September, jointly by the TS and Kalevala and Minerva Lodges. They have 394 members in 22 Lodges. The TS in **France** held its National Convention at the Paris Headquarters on “Theosophical Teaching and J. Krishnamurti’s Message”. It included two symposium talks and a public lecture on the theme by Dr Chittaranjan Satapathy. At the Paris Headquarters, the work of the 4 Lodges went steadily with 329 members. In Africa, two out of the three Lodges became active and two study groups were formed. All of the Section’s programs were published on its website and in their magazine, *Le Lotus Bleu*.

The **Dutch Section** reports a membership of 325 in 10 Lodges. In March, they held Spring Day, when they presented a new book written by Dutch members on *Theosophy, Ageless Wisdom for Our Age*; in October a silent retreat was led by Trân-Thi-Kim Diêu on “The Siva Sutra” based on the book by I. K. Taimni; and in July a “Self-transformation and the Spiritual Life” seminar was led by Vic Hao Chin, Jr. In September they had a “European afternoon”, when I gave a lecture followed by discussion .



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Number of delegates registered as on Sunday, 1 January: 869

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