



# I W C Newsletter

Concord House, 1407 Chapala St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
www.worldculture.org



***“All is contained in the Divine Breath,  
As is light in the darkness before dawn.  
Knowledge transmitted by proof  
Is like the dawn to one half drowsing.  
He perceives what we speak of as in a  
dream,  
But that gives him a clue to the Breath.”***

***— Ibn Al-‘Arabi***

## The Need for Global Vision in an Era of Modernity

*The following passage from cultural historian and Islamic scholar, Marshall G. S. Hodgson, offers insight into the contemporary challenges of modern life and the vulnerability of tradition including traditional religious values. By Great Transmutation, Professor Hodgson means the deep and comprehensive change from a traditional society based on ancestral customs to a rational society based on the intellectual competence and social power of individuals. The passage is offered as food for thought. Is such a transmutation necessary for the development of human potential? Should we retain loyalty to the values preserved by tradition and expressed in religious language? Will the Great Transmutation encourage the development of world citizens and the emergence of world culture? Some editing has been made for clarity and brevity.*

Perhaps ...a pervasive Modern problem is the unsettling of moral allegiances which modern technicalism tends to bring. The pressure on natural resources and the disruption of cultural traditions lead not only to strains in the political and social spheres but also strains within the individual.

The strains are twofold. Negatively, as everyone has heard, we face a steady erosion of old norms and loyalties. In some lands even a sense of family solidarity has been undermined by the repeated contrasts between the generations and by the increasing sphere of personal life, which is regulated or fulfilled, even in youth, outside the home. All kinds of traditional notions, including those most specifically of religion, are constantly threatened by the penetration of cosmopolitan science and scholarship through the schools and the mass media of communication. The old ideas of the universe and the nation, of morality and propriety, may

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Theme for 2009: Expressions of Spiritual Striving

Aim 5: To deepen awareness of man's spiritual striving and its rich variety of expression in the religions, philosophies and literatures of humanity. —Declaration of Interdependence

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### The Cult of Knowledge in Islam

**Seminar: Saturday, October 3**  
2:00 - 5:00 pm

**Concord House, 1407 Chapala St.**  
Santa Barbara

**Presenter: Racha El Omari**

This scholar of Islamic thought and history will address the various definitions, perceptions and practices that convey the meaning of "knowledge" in Islam. The discussion will give special attention to the formative and classical periods of Islamic culture, with reference to later periods of Islamic history as well.



### Annual Membership Meeting

**Saturday, October 10**  
7:30 - 9:00 pm

**Concord House, 1407 Chapala St.**  
Santa Barbara

Members of the Institute will convene to hear reports on the Institute's activities and to help brainstorm the 2010 program.

### Diversity of Practice in the Sufi Way

**Forum: Saturday, October 24**  
4:00 - 6:00 pm

**Concord House, 1407 Chapala St.**  
Santa Barbara

**Discussion Leader:**  
Patrick O'Donnell

What are the various means of seeking spiritual experience and religious discipline within Sufism? What do Sufi seekers hold in common? The IWC website will post appropriate readings.

***Looking Ahead***  
**Neuroplasticity and the Possibilities of Brain/Mind Transformation**  
**Nov. 7th Forum 4:00 - 6:00 pm**  
**Forum Leader: Jonathan Colbert**

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not be explicitly replaced, if they were the object of explicit loyalty, but they tend to be attenuated and made innocuous..... But even when a family solidarity can be maintained and a religious outlook reinterpreted to be less vulnerable to facts, a positive moral outlook is called for... This new moral outlook absorbs more and more of an individual's attention and time.

Ideally the modern individual should be a paragon of 'democratic' virtues which were never called for before; he must not only adapt to the clock and to precision tooling and be ready to retrain as his old skills are superceded; he must develop a whole new psychology of egalitarian co-operativeness. He must be able to work as a member of a "team". He must renounce dominating over his wife (who may get an independent job, and can divorce him) and can less and less pre-ordain his children's careers... On the job, he must adjust himself to committee work or joint projects where command and obedience is replaced by something like "collective leadership", and an ad hoc company loyalty. To the educator, the physician and the

psychiatrist falls the duty of eliminating everything that may block his full and open responsiveness and prevent him from becoming the intelligent and responsible citizen required; and he must be prepared to follow their technically expert guidance at every step, from the clinic for pre-natal care to the centre for maintaining an active old age. ...

But the new moral outlook presents us with pervasive problems. It may make for human greatness or for the reverse. In itself, technological skill calls for a certain number of moral qualities in a population – openness to new ways, industriousness, a sense of precision, a certain level of public honesty and dependability: and at least at its creative centers, inventiveness and intellectual courage. In its origin, at least...., modern life calls for a general appreciativeness of diverse human potentialities, especially for knowledge and for a certain level of humanness, of respect for the inviolability of the individual and liberty, and even of egalitarian social consciousness. ... The greatest moral significance of the Great Transmutation is probably not what it requires but what it merely makes possible; that by clearing away old limitations it opens

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**In October**

**Anniversaries**

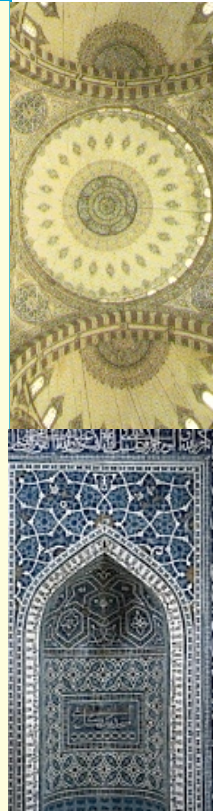
- 2nd Mohandas K. Gandhi, Indian political and spiritual leader b. 1869
- 3rd St. Francis of Assisi, Italian Catholic saint, founder of the Franciscan Order d. 1226
- 5th Ramalinga, Tamil poet, saint b. 1823
- 5th Denis Diderot, French enlightenment philosopher, writer b. 1713
- 6th Richard Dedekind, German mathematician b. 1831
- 6th Le Corbusier, Swiss-French architect, designer, urban planner b. 1887
- 7th Neils Bohr, Danish physicist, Nobel Prize laureate b. 1885
- 9th Camille Saint-Saens, French composer, conductor, musician b. 1835
- 9th John Lennon, British musician, singer-songwriter b. 1940
- 10th Henry Cavendish, British scientist b. 1731
- 11th Eleanor Roosevelt, American First Lady, wife of 32nd U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt b. 1884
- 14th William Penn, British Quaker community leader, founder of the Province of Pennsylvania b. 1644
- 15th Virgil, Roman classical poet b. 70 BCE
- 15th Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher b. 1844
- 15th Evangelista Torricelli, Italian physicist, mathematician b. 1608
- 16th Noah Webster, American lexicographer, author b. 1758
- 17th Frederic Chopin, Polish composer, pianist d. 1849
- 18th Henri Bergson, French philosopher, Nobel laureate, b. 1859

**In October****Anniversaries** (con't.)

- 19th Marsilio Ficino, Italian humanist philosopher, physician b. 1433  
 20th Sir Christopher Wren, English architect, urban planner b. 1632  
 21st Samuel Taylor Coleridge, English poet, philosopher b. 1772  
 24th Anton van Leeuwenhoek, Dutch scientist, tradesman b. 1632  
 25th Johann Strauss, Austrian musician, composer b. 1825  
 26th Alfred the Great, English king, reformer d. 899  
 27th Nicolo Paganini, Italian violinist, composer b. 1782  
 27/28th Desiderius Erasmus, Dutch theologian, humanist b. 1466/1469  
 30th Paul Valery, French poet, essayist, philosopher b. 1871  
 29th/31st John Keats, English Romantic poet b. 1795

**Observances**

- 1st Yosemite National Park formed in the U.S. in 1890 and later designated a World Heritage Site  
 3rd (2009) Sukkot, Jewish harvest festival, begins  
 4th Sputnik 1, first Earth-orbiting satellite, entered into orbit around the Earth in 1957  
 12th (2009) Columbus Day commemorates the first landing of Columbus in the "New World" in 1492  
 16th World Food Day first celebrated in 1981 to increase awareness and take action to alleviate worldwide hunger

**In October****Observances** (con't.)

- 17th (2009) Deepavali, Hindu, Jain and Sikh festival of lights, celebrated annually  
 21st Table of Atomic Weights first presented by John Dalton in 1803  
 22nd Electric light bulb successfully tested by Thomas Edison in 1879  
 31st Reformation Day observed, a religious holiday celebrated by some Protestant Christian traditions in remembrance of the work of Martin Luther in the 16th c. to reform the Roman Catholic Church  
 31st All Hallows Eve celebrated as an evening of revelry the night before All Saints' Day

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the way to a fuller unfolding of the diverse potentialities of the individual in all spheres of living .... But such an opportunity may or may not be fulfilled. And in fact precisely the technical specialization and disruption of tradition threatens to frustrate this. It is readily possible to imagine technology leading to the inane pursuit of meaningless comfort portrayed in Huxley's *Brave New World*, with any one individual impotent to change the vastly

complex social patterns in which he is reduced to helpless conformity along with billions of others all watching identical television sets round a world undifferentiatedly up-to-date in its technical efficiency.

We may suppose that the outcome can hinge on the quality of moral vision available to people. Thus, it has been pointed out that the widespread problem of juvenile delinquency and of youthful rebelliousness in general which troubles most ... lands, ... might be solved (Cont'd. on page 5)

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in two ways. It might be in the way of *Brave New World*, by teams of teachers and social workers and psychiatrists and city planners who learned how to persuade each youth to identify with the established order and find his greatest pleasure in conforming to it; or it might be solved by inspiring enough youths with a vision of something great to do with their lives that they would set new and creative fashions among their peers. But greatness of vision is problematic. The structure of modern society stresses identification with the national social body and encourages a viewpoint limited by specialist training, at the expense of breath or loyalty or the sort of transrational, non-utilitarian outlook which, as religion, was so formative of the great pre-Modern heritages. Yet the nations are incomplete units, incapable within their boundaries of providing fit horizons for youthful vision. ... Great vision must now be world-wide. Moreover, it is unclear how greatness of vision – unlike utilitarian practicality – can be rooted simply in that ever-changing pattern of expertise which goes to make up technical Modernity; our poets suggest that on that level life remains simply absurd. Vision must transcend mere technalistic goals. The deepest problem of

the Modern world is to find a vision both challenging and genuine.

Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, Volume 3, pp. 425-27

### Annual Fundraising Drive Begins

Planning a new program for 2010 must be matched with the annual fundraising effort to support the Institute and its programs. The Board of Trustees estimates that we need to raise \$15,000 by December 15<sup>th</sup> to balance the books for this year and support next year's program. The Institute is supported solely by **voluntary** contributions. We want to keep our programs free and open to the public, but we have real world costs to cover such as insurance, maintenance and repairs for our beautiful building. Our program costs include some honorariums and travel expenses for presenters. We also need funds to expand our print publications and cover the copyright fees of proposed digital postings. If you saw the film, *Dynamic Dimensions of Yellowstone*, for example, you know what a wonderful educational resource that would be for students across the globe if posted on the web.

Please consider a contribution. You can send your donation to the Treasurer, Institute of World Culture, 1407 Chapala Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. **All contributions and memberships received before December 15<sup>th</sup> will be tripled in value by a matching 2 to 1 grant offered by a friend of the Institute. In other words, for every dollar you give, the Institute will receive actually three dollars!** Acknowledgement of your tax deductible gift will be sent to you promptly. We appreciate the generous contributions that have been placed in the donation box recently.



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[www.worldculture.org/](http://www.worldculture.org/)

### PRISM ONLINE COMMUNITY CALENDAR

PRISM lists member-recommended community events of interest on the IWC website.

Please e-mail suggestions to [donna@worldculture.org](mailto:donna@worldculture.org).