



**UNDERSTANDING THE
ESOTERIC DHARMA OF
THE CAO DAI RELIGION**

**HOANG M LE
2025**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 01

Chapter 1 07

The Simple Esoteric Dharma Of Traditional Religions Are
No Longer Aligned With The Conscience And Rationality
Of Modern Humanity

Chapter 2 10

The Secular Dharma Is The Mechanism Of
Suffering Alleviation, The Esoteric Dharma
Is The Mechanism Of Liberation

Chapter 3 14

Living Belongs To Life And Pertains To Secular Dharma,
Spirit Belongs To Dao And Pertains To Esoteric Dharma

Chapter 4 18

The Secular Dharma Of The Secular Way Is The
Preservation Of Humanity's Existence

Chapter 5 21

The Esoteric Dharma Of The Secular Way
Is The Legacy Of Immortality

Chapter 6 24

The Spiritual Key To The Secular Dharma And The
Esoteric Dharma Of The Divine Way

Chapter 7 27

The Secular Dharma Of Cao Dai's Heavenly Way:
Deliverance From Suffering

Chapter 8 31

The Relationship Between The Secular Dharma And The
Esoteric Dharma: Serving All Creation To Attain Divine
Positions

Chapter 9 34

The Esoteric Dharma Of Cao Dai: Liberation

Chapter 10 37

What Is The Holy Body? Why Is The Three Treasures Used
To Form The Holy Body?

Chapter 11 41

The Contradiction Between The Way And Life

Chapter 12 44

The Eternal Movement Of The Esoteric Dharma In
Creating The Universe And Humanity

Chapter 13 47

The Esoteric Dharma Of The Hội Yến Diêu Trì Ceremony

Chapter 14 51

Why Did The Supreme Being Entrust The Esoteric Dharma
Solely To His Holiness Dharma Protector?

Chapter 15 55

Maintaining Righteous Balance Between Spiritual
Idealism And Materialism

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) of the Cao Dai religion is a journey into the profound depths of philosophy and spiritual values. These sacred principles are not merely the foundation of the faith but also a guiding compass that helps individuals overcome material and spiritual challenges, leading toward complete liberation. The Esoteric Dharma is not a simplistic framework, but a collection of mystical principles entrusted by The Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn), to humanity. It represents the unique essence of Cao Dai religion, linking the visible with the invisible, reconciling life and religion, and directing humankind toward an elevated moral and enlightened foundation.

Mastering the Esoteric Dharma not only enables every follower to realize their role in life but also establishes the basis for living harmoniously with all beings, serving and progressing according to the will of the Supreme Being. It serves as the bridge for humanity to reach the realm of Eternal Life, while simultaneously building a just, loving, and sustainable society.

This collection of fifteen sermons of His Holiness Dharma Protector Phạm Công Tắc delves deeply into the fundamental principles of the Esoteric Dharma, examining its significance from various perspectives. Each lesson provides profound insights into the connection between humanity, all beings, and the Supreme Being.

The first sermon addresses the limitations of ancient religious doctrines, which are no longer aligned with the conscience and intelligence of modern humanity. The Supreme Being introduces a new philosophy that harmonizes the Secular Dharma (Thế Pháp) with the Esoteric Dharma to meet the evolving needs of the era.

The following sermons elaborates on the two essential pillars: the Secular Dharma helps individuals navigate worldly suffering, while the Esoteric Dharma unlock spiritual enlightenment and liberation. Physical existence is defined by the Secular Dharma, while spiritual life is supported by the Esoteric Dharma, emphasizing that both are necessary for holistic evolution.

In the fourth sermon, the Secular Dharma is described as the foundation for protecting life, building society, and upholding justice, while the Esoteric Dharma lead humanity toward harmony and sustainability.

Subsequent sermons emphasize the Esoteric Dharma as a means of leaving a legacy not only through achievements but also through moral and spiritual values.

The sixth sermon presents the Esoteric Dharma as a spiritual key, guiding followers to serve the Supreme Being as a path to self-liberation, uncovering truths, and achieving self-perfection.

By the seventh lesson, the Secular Dharma is portrayed as a tool for alleviating suffering, enabling humanity to overcome the Four Sufferings (birth, aging, illness, and death), while the Esoteric Dharma provide a pathway to liberation.

The connection between the two is explored in the eighth sermon as a vital bridge for serving all beings, ultimately leading to the spiritual ranks of Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas.

In the ninth sermon, the Esoteric Dharma are presented as a means of liberation achieved through service and the offering of the Three Treasures: body, mind, and soul.

The tenth sermon elaborates on the Three Treasures as a way to repay debts owed to parents, society, and the Supreme Being.

The eleventh lesson analyzes the inherent conflict between worldly life and spiritual practice, highlighting how religion guides humanity toward purity while the material world is often governed by desires. The mission of religion, therefore, is to harmonize and lead humanity out of chaos.

The twelfth sermon views the movement of the Esoteric Dharma as a principle that underpins the functioning of the universe, where the Three Treasures reflect the harmony between matter and spirit.

The thirteenth lesson, on the Hội Yến Diêu Trì festival, symbolizes love and liberation. This sacred ritual, introduced by the Supreme Being, is a means to elevate all beings to salvation.

The fourteenth sermon explains why the Esoteric Dharma were entrusted solely to the Dharma Protector, as he is responsible for guiding and saving all beings.

Finally, the fifteenth lesson emphasizes the importance of justice and balance between Spiritual Idealism (Duy Tâm) and Materialism (Duy Vật). This is the mission of true practitioners, rejecting superstition and embracing genuine philosophy.

The Esoteric Dharma of Cao Dai religion are a beacon of enlightenment, helping humanity to understand its role and purpose. Through understanding and practicing these teachings, individuals not only find the path to

liberation but also contribute to building a harmonious and progressive society. It is hoped that these profound philosophies will inspire followers and humanity alike to move toward a brighter future.

NAM MÔ CAO ĐÀI TIÊN ÔNG ĐẠI BỒ TÁT MA HA TÁT

Sincerely yours,

Hoang Minh Le

2025

Chapter 1

THE SIMPLE ESOTERIC DHARMA OF TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS ARE NO LONGER ALIGNED WITH THE CONSCIENCE AND RATIONALITY OF MODERN HUMANITY

From tonight onward, His Holiness Dharma Protector will begin explaining the True Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp Chơn Truyền) of the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn), a profound and challenging philosophy.

The Holy Body of the Supreme Being, composed of the Heavenly Appointed Dignitaries, recognizes that the failure of many contemporary religions to maintain their sacred traditions stems from the Esoteric Dharma becoming misaligned with human conscience and rationality.

Modern humanity has reached a high level of awareness, far surpassing the simple philosophies of ancient religions. The rudimentary philosophies and laws of the past are no longer capable of guiding human psychology within the framework of spiritual ethics.

Humanity has advanced significantly, rendering the old laws ineffective.

A New Revelation for Humanity

Now, the Supreme Being has come, bringing forth a new religion to realign humanity's moral and spiritual ethics through His mystical spiritual writing (cơ bút). With an unparalleled divine authority, He imparts the Esoteric Dharma of Creation to educate humanity.

Every structure in the universe operates under two types of laws:

- The Visible Law (Thể Pháp): Concrete, easily recognizable regulations.
- The Invisible Law (Bí Pháp): Mystical and elusive principles that require deeper understanding.

Religion, in all cases, must encompass both Secular Dharma and Esoteric Dharma to endure and flourish. Esoteric Dharma forms the core, enabling individuals to explore the principles of creation and attain the highest enlightenment.

Illustrations of Esoteric Dharma

Consider cooking rice: without sufficient water, the rice remains uncooked; with too much, it becomes mushy. The secret lies in achieving the perfect balance, symbolizing the Esoteric Dharma. Similarly, in baking sponge cake, the ingredients like flour, sugar, and eggs

represent Secular Dharma, while the techniques of whisking and baking to achieve the perfect rise exemplify Esoteric Dharma.

Likewise, the structure of creation operates through Secular Dharmas we can observe and invisible principles that can only be discerned through profound intellect. The longevity of any religion hinges on understanding and applying these Esoteric Dharma.

Final Words

From this point forward, His Holiness Dharma Protector will continue to illuminate the Secular Dharma to clarify the Esoteric Dharma. He emphasizes that understanding the Esoteric Dharma requires diligent study and the continuous cultivation of intellect and spirit. Profound and mystical truths can only be attained through earnest effort and reverence for truth.

His Holiness also advises that mastering and practicing the Esoteric Dharma not only leads to personal enlightenment but also serves as the foundation for establishing a strong moral framework within society. This is the sacred mission entrusted to humanity by The Supreme Being. With unwavering faith in the Esoteric Dharma and persistent pursuit of knowledge, humankind will discover the path to reconnect with its divine origin.

Chapter 2

THE SECULAR DHARMA IS THE MECHANISM OF SUFFERING ALLEVIATION, THE ESOTERIC DHARMA IS THE MECHANISM OF LIBERATION

In the previous sermons, His Holiness the Dharma Protector expounded on the significance of the Secular Dharma (Thế Pháp) and the Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) within the framework of the universal order of creation. Today, He continues by delving into the origin of the word "Đạo" (The Way) as it emerged from various philosophical doctrines.

The universal order of creation unfolds before us as a grand framework, defining the life of all beings in the cosmos. This life is comprised of two aspects: a manifest, easily perceived part known as "Life" (Đời) and a concealed, mysterious essence, incomprehensible to human reasoning, referred to as "The Way" (Đạo). Particularly, the concepts of life and spirit—two essential components of the creative process—serve as the driving force for humanity's quest for truth.

Ancient texts acknowledge the profound mystery of the Way, as stated in the phrase "Cường danh viết Đạo" (The most fitting name for it is 'The Way'). Life and spirit are explored through two main approaches:

1. Exploration of the Material World: This approach follows instinct, relying on physicality as its foundation, shaping societal norms and material existence.
2. Exploration of the Spiritual Realm: This approach focuses on morality and spirit, seeking the hidden mysteries within the universal order.

Thanks to their divine nature, humans perceive their superiority over other beings. Yet the inevitability of death leaves humanity pondering fundamental questions: Why do we live? Where will life and spirit go after death? From these inquiries, philosophical doctrines of The Way emerged, defining two primary frameworks:

- Secular Dharma: Guides material existence and focuses on the tangible aspects of life.
- Esoteric Dharma: Aims for liberation and enlightenment, addressing the intangible realm of the spirit.

When examined deeply, physical life is but a fleeting shadow, the source of suffering. However, the Divine order does not merely create physical beings to endure

suffering; rather, it propels humanity to seek the essence of life, identify their role, and understand their destiny in the cosmos. The future of life is intertwined with the future of The Way. The Supreme Being has bestowed upon humanity a divine essence, elevating them above all other creatures and establishing them as the rulers of all living beings.

His Holiness asserts that wherever there is Secular Dharma, there must also be Esoteric Dharma. All Religious Founders adhere to this universal principle. A true religion can only be considered complete when it incorporates both Secular Dharma, which alleviates worldly suffering, and Esoteric Dharma, which liberates the soul. The salvation of both the body and the spirit must go hand in hand to achieve holistic harmony.

A religion, no matter how advanced its Secular Dharma may appear, cannot claim legitimacy without Esoteric Dharma as its foundation. Without this essential balance, it risks being relegated to the realm of distorted teachings and misguided paths.

Final Words

Secular Dharma and Esoteric Dharma are indispensable pillars of any true religion. The Secular Dharma assists humanity in overcoming worldly hardships, while the Esoteric Dharma unveils the path to

spiritual liberation and enlightenment. His Holiness emphasizes that only by understanding and practicing both Dharmas can we truly comprehend the essence of The Way, leading a life illuminated by spiritual clarity and inner peace. This is the noble mission that The Way aspires to fulfill for humanity.

Chapter 3

LIVING BELONGS TO LIFE AND PERTAINS TO SECULAR DHARMA, SPIRIT BELONGS TO THE WAY AND PERTAINS TO ESOTERIC DHARMA

Before continuing the discourse on the Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) and Secular Dharma (Thế Pháp) of the Cao Dai religion, His Holiness the Dharma Protector (Đức Hộ Pháp) emphasized a significant point. Humanity, upon entering the grand framework of the cosmos (Cơ Tạo Đoan cần khôn vũ trụ), was endowed with a unique quality—wisdom surpassing that of all other beings. This wisdom enables humans to perceive the two fundamental elements of the cosmic mechanism: Life (Sống) and Spirit (Linh).

Recognizing these two elements, humanity has divided its focus into two directions: one that prioritizes life as the core, aligning with the materialistic framework of existence; and another that values spirit, emphasizing the intangible essence of existence and spiritual continuity. These two directions can be interpreted as follows:

- Life pertains to the physical, belonging to the Secular Dharma, representing the visible, material aspect of existence.
- Spirit pertains to the sacred, aligned with the Esoteric Dharma, symbolizing the spiritual and divine essence.

With intellectual and spiritual capacities, humanity has developed these two doctrines to address the dual aspects of existence: material and spiritual. The worldly approach relies on living mechanisms, grounded in law before seeking a guiding principle, whereas the spiritual path starts from the infinite and prioritizes principles (pháp) before establishing laws (luật).

Secular Dharma and Esoteric Dharma in Religious Doctrine

In religious teachings, the Secular Dharma governs visible existence, harmonizing humanity with the natural world, preserving wisdom, and maintaining intellectual faculties. Even though the spirit is intangible, it persists as an unbroken tradition passed down through generations. A newborn, blessed with a spirit inherited from its parents, grows to possess wisdom surpassing that of other creatures. This unyielding spiritual tradition propels humanity's continuous evolution, ensuring progress without regression.

The Spirit and Its Transcendental Power

Great spiritual leaders such as Shakyamuni Buddha, Lao Tzu, and Jesus Christ achieved extraordinary spiritual states through countless lifetimes of cultivation. Their transcendent spirits established their positions as the spiritual guides of humanity. His Holiness emphasizes that without the spiritual capacity to transcend and uplift the soul, a religion remains merely a misguided path or false doctrine.

Cao Dai and the Divine Esoteric Dharma

The Cao Dai religion, with its Esoteric Dharma directly governed by Đức Chí Tôn (The Supreme Being), embodies unparalleled power. This is not a Esoteric Dharma created by mortals or even a corporeal spiritual leader but rather a divine mechanism bestowed by the Creator of the universe to elevate humanity's soul. For this reason, His Holiness asserts that no religion in the world can compare to Cao Dai religion in this regard.

Final Words

Secular Dharma and Esoteric Dharma are foundational, inseparable pillars of any religion. The Secular Dharma safeguards tangible existence, while the Esoteric Dharma guides the soul toward liberation and enlightenment. Through the divine manifestation of The Supreme Being, Cao Dai Religion has established a path of perfection that balances these aspects, enabling

humanity to ascend to the highest spiritual realm. This harmonious integration of Secular Dharma and Esoteric Dharma is the key to understanding the true essence of Đạo (the Way) and achieving fulfillment in spiritual life. It is this profound mission that Cao Dai religion offers to the world.

Chapter 4

THE SECULAR DHARMA OF THE SECULAR WAY IS THE PRESERVATION OF HUMANITY'S EXISTENCE

This evening, His Holiness the Dharma Protector continues his discourse on the Secular Dharma (Thế Pháp) and Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) within the framework of the Secular Way (Thế Đạo). In previous lectures, His Holiness provided an overview of the Secular and Esoteric Dharmas as they relate to the Way (Đạo). Now, he delves into the intricacies of the Secular Way, clarifying how Secular Dharma safeguards human life.

The Dual Nature of Human Existence

Human beings exist in the cosmos with two essential elements:

- Life, symbolizing material existence.
- Spirit, representing morality and spirituality.

These two elements drive humanity in two directions: the pursuit of material life (the secular Way) and the aspiration toward the sacred (Divine Way). His Holiness asserts that the Secular Dharma of the secular Way forms

the foundation for protecting collective life but simultaneously serves as a source of conflict and hardship.

The Evolution of Secular Dharma Through History

In ancient times, humans lived under harsh conditions, surrounded by wild beasts, natural disasters, and scarcity. To survive, they invented tools, weapons, and methods of self-defense. Small communities began to form as people united to combat these threats, eventually evolving into societies and nations.

However, the preservation of life within these communities also brought conflict. Everyone sought to protect their own life, often disregarding the lives of others. This led to the emergence of laws and governing systems to establish order and protect collective existence.

The Challenges of Secular Dharma in Modern Society

In today's world, as humans grow increasingly intelligent, they also resist rules or powers that curtail their freedom. The evolution of society demands laws that align with human psychology and needs. A lasting society must have fair laws that respect human freedom and foster individual growth.

When power is abused to oppress, wars and conflicts arise, and peace becomes elusive. Legal systems that

contradict human nature lead to instability and are ultimately replaced.

The Interconnection Between Secular and Esoteric Dharmas

His Holiness emphasizes that the Secular Dharma of the secular Way and the Esoteric Dharma of the Divine Way (Đạo) are deeply interconnected. One cannot comprehend the Esoteric Dharma without first understanding the Secular Dharma. Both must harmonize with the evolutionary spirit of humanity. A robust foundation of Secular Dharma provides the basis for preserving and enhancing human life in happiness and peace.

Final Words

Secular Dharma serves as a tool to safeguard material existence, while Esoteric Dharma is the key to spiritual liberation. For a society to endure, its laws must harmonize with the psychology and aspirations of its people. His Holiness asserts that only when laws align with the spirit of humanity can true peace be achieved, allowing individuals to live joyfully and advance naturally. The true "Way of the Secular World" is a harmonious integration of Secular and Esoteric Dharmas, guiding humanity toward a brighter future where both physical and spiritual well-being are preserved.

Chapter 5

THE ESOTERIC DHARMA OF THE SECULAR WAY IS THE LEGACY OF IMMORTALITY

Tonight, His Holiness the Dharma Protector continues his lecture on the Esoteric Dharma of the Secular Way, following his previous discourse on its Secular Dharma. He wishes for all the children of The Supreme Being to discern the difference between truth and falsehood, recognizing that even the Secular Way possesses an Esoteric Dharma, though it may not be widely acknowledged.

Serving Humanity to Leave a Legacy

The Esoteric Dharma of the Secular Way is reflected in the great deeds of exceptional individuals who have left indelible marks on humanity. Their aspirations were guided by special principles and methods to build monumental achievements. These luminaries shared a common dream: to leave a lasting legacy before their passing, etching a positive chapter in history for future generations.

To achieve this ideal, these individuals chose the path of service—service to their nation, their people, and humanity as a whole. This dedication was deeply intertwined with moral integrity and sincere intentions. Only with a pure heart could they align with the framework of the Way (Đạo) and contribute to the enduring values of society and humanity.

The Interdependence of Secular and Spiritual Realms

His Holiness emphasizes the inseparable bond between the secular and the spiritual, declaring, “Without the Way, the Secular lacks strength; without the Secular, the Way lacks authority.” (“Đạo không Đời không sức mà Đời không Đạo không quyền.”) History shows that efforts to sever the ties with religion—whether through movements opposing Christian values or materialist ideologies like Communism—have ultimately failed to eliminate the foundational role of moral and spiritual principles. Societies inevitably return to these ethical values as their cornerstone.

Esoteric Dharma in Legacy-Building

The Esoteric Dharma of the Secular Way is embodied in the monuments, artifacts, and memories left for posterity. Statues, village halls, and cultural relics not only symbolize the sacrifices and contributions of great figures but also serve as lasting reminders of their service.

However, the most profound form of Esoteric Dharma lies in the spoken word of the people. Even without formal records, oral traditions carry the weight of public memory and judgment. This enduring form of Esoteric Dharma transcends official recognition, rooted instead in the collective conscience of society.

His Holiness underscores that the Supreme Being bestows the highest form of Esoteric Dharma upon those who dedicate themselves selflessly to the Way and to humanity. These individuals, who act with sincerity and righteousness, inspire the spirit of the masses and contribute to the moral foundation of society.

Final Words

The Esoteric Dharma of the Secular Way is not merely about tangible monuments or historical accolades; it resides in the moral values and spiritual legacy left in the hearts of people. Those who serve with true sincerity and justice will be remembered by humanity, and their names will endure across generations. This timeless recognition is the highest reward from the Supreme Being for those who dedicate themselves to both the Way and Life. This Esoteric Dharma transcends all physical forms, becoming an everlasting imprint in the collective soul of humanity.

Chapter 6

THE SPIRITUAL KEY TO THE SECULAR DHARMA AND THE ESOTERIC DHARMA OF THE DIVINE WAY

From today onward, His Holiness the Dharma Protector continues to lecture on the Secular Dharma (Thế Pháp) and the Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) of the Divine Way (Thiên Đạo). Before delving into this profound philosophy, He encourages each individual to reflect inwardly: What circumstances are we living in? What is our role in relation to all beings and this world? A proper understanding of these questions is the key for each person to unlock the mystical gateway of the Secular and Esoteric Dharmas of the Divine Way while simultaneously discovering their own divine essence.

The Purpose of the Way and the Meaning of Service

His Holiness emphasizes that to understand and practice the Divine Way correctly, we must uncover the true value of serving the Supreme Being. Why do we pray, chant, and worship the Creator? What benefits does

serving Him bring? Without understanding these meanings, our practice would remain superficial and devoid of substance.

He shares his personal journey: Growing up in hardship, he followed Catholicism, studied Confucian teachings, and attended French schools, yet could not find answers to his deep questions about life and death. Witnessing humanity's suffering—where the strong oppressed the weak and lives were consumed by struggle—he recognized the need for a method of liberation not just for himself but for all humankind.

Choosing Cao Dai and Attaining Enlightenment

In his moments of despair, the Supreme Being came to him, bringing a sacred method referred to as the "invisible power." Initially, His Holiness did not fully comprehend its depth, but he trusted and embraced the path. Over time, he realized:

- In Life (Đời): The Cao Dai Way alleviated his sufferings and resolved his existential struggles.
- In the Way (Đạo): It fostered unity, love, and the profound purpose of serving humanity.

He highlights that serving The Supreme Being is not solely about serving the Creator but extends to serving His children—humanity as a whole. He firmly believes that in the realm of the Divine Eternal Life, he will reunite with

loved ones and like-minded souls, where joy and fulfillment reach their pinnacle.

Final Words

His Holiness shares, "I have used the spiritual key to unlock my own truth; now it is time for you to unlock the doors of your own understanding." He urges the children of The Supreme Being to reflect, to use wisdom and an open heart to comprehend the Secular and Esoteric Dharmas of Cao Dai religion. This is the pathway to liberation and true happiness.

With faith and service, not only can we liberate ourselves, but we also contribute to building a better world—a world where life is cherished, and love spreads throughout humanity. This is the profound meaning of the spiritual key within the Secular and Esoteric Dharmas of the Divine Way.

Chapter 7

THE SECULAR DHARMA OF CAO DAI'S HEAVENLY WAY: DELIVERANCE FROM SUFFERING

Tonight, His Holiness the Dharma Protector delivers a discourse on the Secular Dharma of Cao Dai's Heavenly Way, following a previous sermon about self-reflection on life's journey. His message urges everyone to understand their position in the grand scheme of the universe, to grasp the purpose of existence, and to reflect on three crucial points:

1. Repaying karmic debts: The Spirit (Chơn Linh) of each individual enters the world to repay karmic consequences created in past lives due to the inability to properly control their primordial spirit, leading to mistakes and suffering.
2. Learning and discovery: Humanity must learn to comprehend the root of existence and uncover the mysteries of the Creator's mechanism (Cơ Tạo Đao).
3. Spiritual elevation and evolution: Life is not confined to earthly existence but extends across the cosmos.

Individuals must contribute to the evolution of their spirit to reach the Realm of Eternal Life (Cảnh Thiêng Liêng Hằng Sống).

Relief from Suffering: The Core of Cao Dai's Heavenly Way

His Holiness emphasizes that suffering forms the foundation of all earthly existence. The Four Sufferings (birth, aging, illness, and death) are significant challenges that all individuals must endure. Legal systems and authentic spiritual teachings serve as tools to alleviate these sufferings. However, if humanity exploits Sentient Beings (Vạn Linh) instead of serving it, such approaches are deemed false doctrines (giả pháp).

He highlights that many contemporary religions fail to offer effective methods of relief from suffering. Their teachings often remain superficial and provide no true benefit to their followers. In contrast, Cao Dai's teachings, imparted by The Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn), address the Four Sufferings profoundly, starting with alleviating material hardships.

Manifesting the Secular Dharma through Service

Cao Dai actively relieves suffering through practical measures: establishing maternity homes to aid childbirth, elder care facilities to support the aging, and hospitals to treat illnesses. These are not mere

theoretical ideals but practical institutions that enhance human life.

His Holiness insists that followers of the Supreme Being must become His Holy Body (Thánh Thể), dedicating their entire being—body, mind, and spirit—to the service of others. This service is not performed for personal gain but for The Supreme Being and humanity as a whole.

The Value of Life and Death in the Heavenly Way

His Holiness asserts that, within the Heavenly Way, death is not something to fear but an opportunity for liberation and progression to the Realm of Eternal Life. Spiritual practice is not about escaping the responsibilities of life but about dedicating one's existence to the Way and to others. In its sacred meaning, death becomes a moment of rest when the Supreme Being calls His children home after fulfilling their earthly mission.

Final Words

The Secular Dharma of Cao Dai's Heavenly Way seeks to relieve suffering, not only through tangible actions but also by dispelling the fear and pain caused by the Four Sufferings. His Holiness proclaims that when followers of the Supreme Being live in the spirit of serving Him, the

Four Noble Truths of Shakyamuni Buddha become irrelevant to them.

The Secular Dharma of Cao Dai religion serves as the foundation for resolving human suffering. Once physical suffering is alleviated, the Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) can be perfected, guiding humanity toward ultimate peace and enlightenment. This is the noble mission of Cao Dai's Heavenly Way: to deliver all beings from suffering and lead them to eternal joy.

Chapter 8

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SECULAR DHARMA AND THE ESOTERIC DHARMA: SERVING ALL CREATION TO ATTAIN DIVINE POSITIONS

Tonight, His Holiness the Dharma Protector expounds on the intrinsic connection between the Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) and the Secular Dharma (Thế Pháp), specifically focusing on the close alignment of Divine and Secular Dharmas. He elucidates how the Creator's mechanism of the universe, as established by the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn), operates to serve all beings (Vạn Linh).

The Law of Service in the Universe

The Creator's mechanism functions according to a natural law of service:

- The earth sacrifices itself to nourish plants.
- Plants sacrifice themselves to sustain animals.
- Animals sacrifice themselves to serve humanity.
- Human beings, positioned as the pinnacle of living creatures, are also obligated to sacrifice themselves to serve Heaven.

However, misinterpretations of the law of service have led to exploitation, such as the consumption of animals and even the use of humans as offerings in ancient rituals.

The Supreme Being does not demand such sacrifices, for He, as the Creator of all beings, serves all beings as its servant. His Holiness compares the law of service in humanity to examples in nature:

- The queen bee and termite queen devote their entire lives to serving their colonies.
- In society, kings and governments are established to serve the people.
- Similarly, when the Supreme Being established Cao Dai religion, He created the Holy Body (Thánh Thể)—represented by the Sacerdotal Council—to fulfill the mission of serving all creation. Titles such as Deity (Thần), Saint (Thánh), Immortal (Tiên), and Buddha (Phật) are conferred not as symbols of power but to ensure that the sacred mission of service is properly carried out.

Service as the Path to Attaining Divine Positions

The Supreme Being entered into a covenant with humanity, particularly with the Vietnamese people, declaring: Human beings, as His Holy Body, must serve all creation. In return, He promises divine positions as

Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas to those who fulfill this sacred mission. He assures that those who serve as part of His Holy Body (Thánh Thể) will have their contributions recognized, not only in the physical world but also in the Realm of Eternal Life (Cõi Thiêng Liêng Hằng Sống).

Final Words

The relationship between the Secular Dharma and the Esoteric Dharma lies in the unceasing service to all beings. Service is not merely a duty but a noble path leading to divine positions of Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas. In Cao Dai religion, every member of the Supreme Being's Holy Body is afforded the opportunity to fulfill this sacred mission.

Service forms the foundation of evolution and enlightenment. Through service, individuals not only perfect themselves but also contribute to building a just, loving, and sustainable world—fulfilling the Supreme Being's vision when establishing Cao Dai religion in this realm.

Chapter 9

THE ESOTERIC DHARMA OF CAO DAI RELIGION: LIBERATION

Tonight, His Holiness the Dharma Protector expounds on the Esoteric Dharma of Cao Dai, elucidating its close relationship with the Secular Law and the ultimate purpose of the religion: to serve all beings (Vạn Linh) and attain liberation. He emphasizes that service is not merely a responsibility but the only path to liberation from the Four Sufferings (Tứ Khổ): birth, aging, sickness, and death.

Service as the Core of Liberation

According to His Holiness, humanity is placed in this world for three purposes:

- Repaying karmic debts: To atone for the karma accrued in past lives.
- Learning and growth: To develop intellect and spirit, advancing on the path of eternal life (Thiên Liêng Hằng Sống).
- Ascending to higher positions: To secure a more elevated status in the divine realms.

All three objectives can only be achieved through serving all beings. Service not only alleviates karmic burdens but also guides individuals toward enlightenment and their rightful place in the spiritual hierarchy.

Offering the Three Treasures for Service

The Supreme Being teaches that to fulfill the mission of liberation, humans must offer their Three Treasures (Tam Bửu): body, mind, and soul. These are to be entrusted to Him as tools for serving all beings. Each day, through prayer and devotion, followers reaffirm their commitment:

"I offer my body, mind, and soul for the Supreme Being to use as instruments in serving all beings."

Once offered, all actions and karmic outcomes are under the Supreme Being's guidance. Practitioners cease generating new karma and relinquish their agency, allowing the Supreme Being to direct their lives. This gradually dissolves old karma, leading to complete liberation.

Liberation Through Service

Service is not merely external actions but an inner journey, a profound connection to the Supreme Being's mission. In this process:

- Karmic debts are resolved: By serving, individuals encounter the right people or circumstances to repay their debts.
- Wisdom is enlightened: Through service, practitioners gain insights into the profound mysteries of creation.
- Spiritual positions are attained: Service is the only path to achieving divine ranks such as Deity (Thần), Saint (Thánh), Immortal (Tiên), and Buddha (Phật).

Final Words

The Esoteric Dharma of Cao Dai religion is liberation, and liberation is achieved solely through service. Service is not a loss but a sacred offering, a transformative journey leading to eternal existence in the Realm of Eternal Life (Cõi Thiêng Liêng Hằng Sống).

The path of serving all beings is also the path for each person to fulfill their divine mission in this world, preordained by the Supreme Being. When we serve with our whole heart and intellect, we not only achieve liberation for ourselves but also contribute to the evolution of all being. This is the ultimate and most noble value of the Esoteric Dharma in Cao Dai.

Chapter 10

WHAT IS THE HOLY BODY? WHY IS THE THREE TREASURES USED TO FORM THE HOLY BODY?

Tonight, His Holiness the Dharma Protector delivers a sermon on the relationship between the Secular Dharma (Thể Pháp) and the Esoteric Dharma (Bí Pháp) of the Cao Dai religion. He focuses on clarifying the meaning of the Holy Body (Thánh Thể) and the reason why the Three Treasures (Tam Bửu) within each person are used to form it.

The Meaning of the Holy Body and the Three Treasures

The Holy Body represents the unity of three key elements: the physical body, the mind, and the soul. These three constitute the Three Treasures within each person:

1. The physical body: The tangible form born of our parents, enabling us to exist in this world.
2. The Perispirit (Chơn thần): The intellect or spiritual essence, also known as the Dharma Body (pháp thân), created by the Holy Mother (Phật Mẫu).

3. The Soul (chơn linh): a sacred spark bestowed by the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn), reflecting the divine nature of Heaven.

The union of these three elements enables humans to exist and practice the Way (Đạo) in the world.

The Three Debts of Humanity

Every individual enters this world carrying three fundamental debts that must be repaid:

1. Debt to parents: Our parents gave us life, blood, and physical form. Repaying this debt involves not only caring for them but also fulfilling our filial duties, cultivating our character, and bringing honor to our family lineage.
2. Debt to society: We survive thanks to the support of society, from food and shelter to knowledge. Repaying this debt means serving humanity, contributing to the community, and engaging in charitable acts to create blessings.
3. Debt to the Supreme Being and the Holy Mother:
 - To the Holy Mother: As the creator of our Perispirit (Chơn thần), She nurtures and sustains us through countless lifetimes. Repaying this debt involves worshiping Her and dedicating our body and mind to serving the Way.

- To the Supreme Being: He bestows the Soul (Chơn linh), elevating us above all other creatures. We repay this debt by continuing His divine mission, learning from His sacrifices, and serving all living beings (Vạn Linh) as He does.

Becoming the Holy Body of the Supreme Being

Humans become the Holy Body of the Supreme Being when they dedicate their Three Treasures—body, mind, and soul—for His use in serving all living beings. Daily, we reaffirm this commitment through prayer:

"I offer my body, mind, and soul for the Supreme Being to use as instruments in serving all beings."

Once dedicated, our actions are no longer our own but are directed by the Supreme Being. This surrender dissolves karmic burdens because our physical form, now an instrument of service, no longer generates new karma.

Repaying Debts to Attain Liberation

When the three debts—to parents, society, and the Supreme Being and Holy Mother—are fully repaid, individuals achieve liberation:

- They are freed from the ties of worldly obligations.
- They are integrated into the Realm of Eternal Life.

- They reach Nirvana (Niết Bàn), a state where no one holds them back or harbors grievances against them.

Final Words

The Holy Body is the manifestation of human existence through the Three Treasures, and only through service can we repay our debts and attain liberation. Service is not merely a duty but the pathway to continuing the Supreme Being's work and immersing ourselves in His divine mission of serving all creation.

By understanding and fulfilling the meaning of the Holy Body, each individual embarks on a path of complete virtue, fulfilling their mission on Earth and progressing toward the Realm of Eternal Life with peace and completeness. This is the highest value of the Three Treasures and the Holy Body.

Chapter 11

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE WAY AND LIFE

Tonight, His Holiness Dharma Protector will guide us deeply into the sacred teachings of the Way, emphasizing the importance of understanding the contradiction between the Way (Đạo) and Life. This conflict is not merely superficial; it originates from the essence of life itself — the primal energy that serves as the foundation for all beings and entities. When this primal energy manifests within each individual, it becomes the root of every conflict between instinct and reason, between worldly nature and the pursuit of spiritual elevation.

Two Opposing Elements: Buddha (Phật) and Beast (Thú)

Humans are composed of two opposing elements: the Buddha (Phật) and the Beast (Thú). The Buddha symbolizes purity, wisdom, and liberation, while the Beast represents desires and instincts. These two elements are perpetually at odds within each individual, creating a struggle between the Way — a path leading to

self-perfection — and Life, dominated by desires that bring instability.

Life and the Way diverge in their fundamental directions. Life is governed by desires, pulling humanity toward base instincts. In contrast, the Way is a path of cultivation, service, and liberation, guiding individuals toward spiritual ascension. Although humans are capable of choosing between these two paths, the allure of worldly benefits and material power often leads them astray from the Way.

The Current State of Society: The Triumph of the Beast

Modern society witnesses the dominance of the Beast (Thú). Desires surge with intensity, resulting in chaos and moral decay. Ethical values are diminished, and the Way, despite its inherent virtue, pales against the ferocious pull of desires. Yet, amidst this disorder, the Way must assert its role, helping individuals recognize their intrinsic worth and seek the path of liberation.

The Mission of The Supreme Being

In such turbulent times, Đức Chí Tôn (the Supreme Being) comes to illuminate the righteous path. He does not arrive to claim power but to guide humanity, enabling them to recognize their true nature. The Supreme Being makes it clear that every individual has the freedom to choose: to live according to the Beast (Thú) or aspire

toward the Buddha (Phật). This choice not only shapes one's life but also influences the fabric of society as a whole.

The Path to Overcoming Contradictions

To rise above the struggle between the Way and Life, one must first understand their position and responsibilities. Each individual must recognize their identity, define their purpose, and live in alignment with the values instilled by the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn). Furthermore, they must act in accordance with the Way, basing their lives on compassion, wisdom, and purity, while serving all living beings to contribute to a better society.

Final Words

The contradiction between the Way and Life serves as a profound lesson for individuals to reflect upon and choose their path. By understanding their true value, embracing the spirit of the Way, and living with purpose, people can attain peace and contribute to societal harmony. This is the noble mission of Cao Dai religion — a radiant path that calls for courage and determination to follow.

Chapter 12

THE ETERNAL MOVEMENT OF THE ESOTERIC DHARMA IN CREATING THE UNIVERSE AND HUMANITY

The sacred teaching of the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn) carries infinite mysteries, shaping not only the cosmos but also humanity itself. Before delving into this teaching, we must first ask: “What is humanity? And what is its role in the grand mechanism of Supreme Being’s creation?”

The appearance of humans in the world — from physical form to perispirit and divine spirit — is a manifestation of the boundless creative power of the Supreme Being. Through this divine power, Supreme Being not only created all beings but also established the foundation for their ceaseless motion and evolution.

The Mechanism of the Universe’s Operation

The cosmos moves continuously through the circulation of the primordial energy (Thái Cực). In the beginning, the primordial energy exploded, creating a vast inferno that gave birth to millions of planets. The Earth we inhabit, known as Planet 68, is part of this grand

process. Nothing in the universe, including humanity, exists outside the movement of the primordial energy. The day this motion ceases, life as we know it will end.

The Three Treasures and the Role of the Holy Mother

Human beings are composed of three key elements: the physical body (Thi Hài), the Perispirit (Chơn Thần), and the Soul (Chơn Linh) — collectively referred to as the Three Treasures (Tam Bửu). The physical body belongs to the material realm, the Perispirit acts as an intermediary, and the Soul is sacred, bestowed by the Supreme Being.

The Holy Mother (Phật Mẫu) plays a pivotal role in the formation of the Perispirit, which is central to human evolution. From the moment a fetus begins to form, the Perispirit surrounds the mother, protecting and guiding the development of the physical body until the child is born. This process reflects the Holy Mother's nurturing service to humanity, guiding humans from the Lesser Cycle (Tiểu Hối) of material existence to the Greater Cycle (Đại Hối) of spiritual ascension.

The Primal Spirit and the Mission of the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn)

While the Holy Mother forms the Perispirit, the Supreme Being grants humanity the Primal Spirit (Ngươn Linh), the factor that distinguishes humans from animals. Although it emerges later in the evolutionary process, the Primal Spirit empowers humans to become the stewards

of all beings. Through the Primal Spirit, humans not only live but also possess the capacity for direction, self-control, and serving as intermediaries between the material and the Divine.

A Living Example: Humanity and the Sacred Teaching

Consider a plane: the body and tail are the physical body; the spinning propellers are the perispirit; and the pilot controlling the plane is the Primal Spirit. Without one of these three components, the plane cannot function. Similarly, humanity is a harmonious integration of the Three Treasures. The perispirit acts as a bridge, connecting the physical body and the Primal Spirit, while the Primal Spirit directs and guides life's journey.

Final Words

The sacred teaching of the Supreme Being is not mere theory but is embodied within humanity itself. By understanding the Three Treasures and their interconnection, we can gain a clearer perspective on our role in the universe. The soul is where this teaching is most vividly expressed — when aligned correctly, it represents true Dharma (chơn pháp); when misaligned, it becomes false Dharma (giả pháp).

Through this understanding, humanity can fulfill its divine purpose and contribute to the perpetual motion of creation ordained by the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn).

Chapter 13

THE ESOTERIC DHARMA OF THE HỘI YẾN DIÊU TRÌ CEREMONY

On the occasion of the commemoration of the Esoteric Dharma of Hội Yến Diêu Trì, His Holiness Dharma Protector delivered a sermon to help all children of the Supreme Being (Đức Chí Tôn) comprehend the profound mysteries and spiritual significance of this teaching, which deeply influences our journey to attain the Way in this world. This Esoteric Dharma is not only a symbol of the Supreme Being's boundless love for His children but also a testament to extraordinary faith — faith in the power and compassion of the Eternal and Self-Existent Being (Đấng Tự Hữu Hằng Hữu)

The Origin of Hội Yến Diêu Trì

In the year 1925 (Ất Sửu), the Supreme Being appeared as a companion to Thượng Phẩm and Hộ Pháp. Through spirit communication, He instructed them to worship at the Heavenly Altar to seek the Way — a surprising act that raised many questions. Đức Thượng Phẩm, Đức Hộ Pháp, and Đức Thượng Sanh

demonstrated steadfast faith by humbly kneeling in public in Saigon to pray for humanity.

Through this trial, the Supreme Being tested their perseverance, humility, and absolute faith in Him, requiring them to endure humiliation while remaining devoted.

The Ceremony and the Divine Banquet

After a period of teaching, the Supreme Being commanded the organization of a banquet to honor the Holy Mother (Phật Mẫu) and the Nine Female Immortals (Cửu Vị Tiên Nương). This banquet, known as Hội Yến Diêu Trì, was meticulously prepared by Female Principal Archbishop Hương Hiếu. Every detail, from bowls and chopsticks to the food, was arranged as though meant for tangible beings, even though only three mortals — Thượng Sanh, Thượng Phẩm, and Hộ Pháp — were present.

This divine banquet was not merely a ceremonial act of veneration but carried profound meaning, forging a connection between humanity and the Divine Beings.

After the banquet, the Divine Beings ascended, and the Supreme Being descended through spirit communication to continue His teachings. He revealed that He had been present throughout the ceremony, using His power of invisibility to host the Divine guests

unnoticed. This affirmed the importance of faith and spiritual practice in attaining the Way.

The Sacred Teaching of Liberation and the Significance of Hội Yến Diêu Trì

Hội Yến Diêu Trì is more than a ritual; it is a symbol of the Esoteric Dharma. Through the Hội Yến Diêu Trì, the Supreme Being created an opportunity for all beings to achieve salvation. By partaking in the Hội Yến Diêu Trì, humanity can receive Divine Grace, eat the Heavenly Peach, and drink Celestial Wine, thus entering the Realm of Eternal Life.

In the past, attaining such grace was exceedingly difficult, but through the presence and blessings of the Supreme Being and the Holy Mother, the path to liberation has been made more accessible for all.

Final Words

The Hội Yến Diêu Trì festival is not only a time to reflect on the boundless grace of the Supreme Being and the Holy Mother but also a reminder of each individual's duty to serve and practice the Way. This is a unique era in history when comprehensive salvation is offered. Therefore, let us seize this opportunity to live with profound gratitude and to diligently practice the teachings of the Way.

This Esoteric Dharma is not merely a personal spiritual journey but a testament to the love and guidance of the Supreme Being for all beings.

Chapter 14

WHY DID THE SUPREME BEING ENTRUST THE ESOTERIC DHARMA SOLELY TO HIS HOLINESS DHARMA PROTECTOR?

As promised, His Holiness Dharma Protector continues to deliver sermons on the Esoteric Dharma during the Sóc Vọng prayer sessions (1st and 15th day of Lunar month). The Esoteric Dharma serves as the foundation of the Supreme Being's Divine teachings. Today, His Holiness addresses a question that has caused much curiosity among the Dignitaries of the Heavenly Union Palace: why did the Supreme Being entrust the Esoteric Dharma only to His Holiness Dharma Protector, instead of using spirit communication to directly instruct all His children?

The Universal Examination of Souls: An Opportunity for Salvation

The Supreme Being established the Third Universal Salvation as an opportunity for all beings to attain liberation, likened to an examination where souls

compete for positions in the Realm of Eternal Life. In this examination of merit and virtue, every soul, from the lowest to the highest, must face trials to either ascend or fall.

His Holiness Dharma Protector and the Twelve Zodiacal Lords were sent to earth to guide and open the path to the Esoteric Dharma, creating conditions for all beings — from the simplest material souls (Vật Chất Hồn), plant souls (Thảo Mộc Hồn), and animal souls (Thú Cầm Hồn) to the highest ranks of Deities, Saints, Immortals, and Buddhas — to achieve their positions.

The Authority of His Holiness Dharma Protector and the Three Continents, Eight Classes of Souls

The Supreme Being entrusted His Holiness Dharma Protector with the governance of the Three Continents (Tam Châu) — East Continent (Đông Thắng Than Châu), West Continent (Tây Ngưu Hóa Châu), and South Continent (Nam Thiện Bộ Châu) — as well as the Eight Classes of souls (Bát Bộ). The exception is the North Continent (Bắc Cù Lưu Châu), reserved for spirits of the demonic ranks who undergo self-cultivation.

His Holiness Dharma Protector is tasked with guiding, educating, and uplifting all beings within the Three Continents, ensuring that each class of soul has the opportunity to evolve. His authority extends not only to

the earthly realm but also to the Realm of Eternal Life, emphasizing the scope and gravity of his mission.

The Divine Grace of the Supreme Being and the Responsibility of His Holiness Dharma Protector

By entrusting the Esoteric Dharma to His Holiness Dharma Protector, the Supreme Being empowered him to oversee the salvation of souls, enabling them to progress through the stages of evolution. His Holiness Dharma Protector holds responsibility not only in the physical realm but also in the invisible realm, ensuring fairness and order in the ascension of all beings.

This entrustment represents an immense grace from the Supreme Being, providing humanity with a unique opportunity to achieve spiritual ranks through dedication and practice.

The Three Treasures: Essence, Energy, Spirit, and the Act of Offering

The Supreme Being requires His children to offer the Three Treasures (Tam Buu) — Essence (Tinh), Energy (Kho), and Spirit (Thần) — as a symbol of devotion and surrender. Essence represents the physical body, Energy signifies the intellect, and Spirit embodies the soul. Offering these treasures demonstrates trust and total submission to the Supreme Being, allowing Him to use them for the salvation of all beings.

The Boundless Compassion of the Supreme Being

Though the Supreme Being requests the offering of the Three Treasures, He does not compel anyone to comply, granting humanity the freedom to choose their destiny. This freedom reflects His immense compassion and tolerance, enabling His children to realize the value and purpose of spiritual practice.

This gift of free will is the highest expression of His love and mercy for all humanity.

Chapter 15

MAINTAINING RIGHTEOUS BALANCE BETWEEN SPIRITUAL IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM

Today, His Holiness Dharma Protector discusses the unique circumstances in which we live, where the theories of Spiritual Idealism (Duy Tâm) and Materialism (Duy Vật) are in constant conflict. Whether we are Heavenly Appointed Dignitaries or followers, we are all members of the Holy Body of the Supreme Being. He created us with boundless love and entrusted us with a special mission: to represent His image in the world, using compassion and righteousness to harmonize the secular and the sacred, connecting all beings (Vạn Linh) to the Divine Spirit (Chí Linh).

Spiritual Idealism and Materialism: Two Parallel Paths

Spiritual Idealism represents the Way (Đạo), while Materialism reflects Life (Đời). In principle, we should lean toward Spiritual Idealism because our mission is to uphold Idealism in human life. However, to fulfill this mission, we cannot fully align with one side but must

maintain balance and harmony between these two philosophies.

Cao Dai religion does not rely on superstition to build faith but emphasizes truthful and just philosophy. Its goal is not to conquer through fear or reactionary methods but to lead with wisdom and compassion.

Living to Understand the Value of Life

Humans are born not merely to exist but to understand the meaning and value of life. Since ancient times, philosophers and thinkers have tirelessly sought the truth of existence. Socrates, the great Greek philosopher, was sentenced to drink poison for his progressive thoughts. Facing death, he calmly declared that he would reunite with wise sages in the invisible realm. This illustrates a life guided by Spiritual Idealism, unafraid of death because of his belief in a reality beyond the material world.

Laozi and Confucius, despite distancing themselves from officialdom and power, found joy in teaching morality and educating disciples. For them, happiness did not lie in power or material wealth but in understanding and practicing the Way.

Materialism: Struggles and Consequences

In contrast, historical figures like Qin Shi Huang (Tần Thủy Hoàng), Napoleon, and Louis XIV lived in pursuit of

power and material wealth. Qin Shi Huang, with his ambition for immortality, met a tragic end. Louis XIV, despite his immense wealth and authority, could not escape death, which devastated his entire dynasty. These lives, while materially grand, lacked inner peace and spiritual value.

Two Ways of Life: Spiritual Idealism and Materialism

The dichotomy between these two ways of life can be symbolized by the tiger and the whale. The tiger, though powerful and fierce, lives only for itself and is not revered. The whale, on the other hand, though less striking, lives to rescue others and is respected and venerated by humanity.

Final Words

The paths of Spiritual Idealism and Materialism are opposing extremes that coexist in human life. As children of the Supreme Being, we must understand our mission to harmonize these two extremes, upholding righteousness and avoiding deceit or superstition.

His Holiness hopes that each individual reflects deeply to choose a meaningful way of life, not only for themselves but also for the harmony and progress of humanity. To live to understand, to love, and to contribute — this is the ultimate purpose of our existence.



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