

**Desiderio Valacco**

**From Zarathustra to**  
**Ken Wilber: Lives and Works of**  
**Prominent Mystical Philosophers**

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## **Introduction: Definition of the Mystical Philosophy and its First Beginnings**

Talking about definitions of the mystical philosophy, as well as the mysticism in general, one must emphasize that their unequivocal defining is impracticable, just as it goes for terms like consciousness, spirit, soul and similar. In wider sense, we could reckon for mystical each philosophy that brings into the focus faith and neglects the science and rationalistic way of thinking. Nevertheless, in the history of philosophy there have been many philosophers whose teaching included both. Furthermore, it is almost impossible to delimit the field of mysticism in philosophy and that one in religion, because of their total interlacement, in all religious systems. Likewise, it is hard to tell philosophic from the poetic mysticism, because many mystical philosophers have been at the same time writers and poets, especially those from Eastern philosophies and religions. For all that, mystical philosophy could be determined more specifically as one which anyway speaks about the union of man with the divinity, in a mystical trance or ecstasy.

As one religious experience *par excellence*, mysticism has been a subject of study of American psychologist and philosopher William James. In his opinion, personal religious experiences have their root, as well as their center, in mystical states of consciousness. In defining the term 'mysticism' James cites four basic distinctions which it must include – unutterableness, noetic quality, transience and passiveness. The first distinction relates to the fact that the quality of mystical experience must be experienced personally and in a direct way, and it cannot be communicated to others. James correctly perceives that mystical states are more sensitive ones, than intellectual. Yet, in spite of the emphasis on the senses, here is also the distinction of noetic quality, which enables a deep intuitive insight in these states, sometimes called enlightenment, revelation and the like. The third characteristic that James attributes to these states of consciousness, i.e. transience, does not seem to be universal, because by some mystics these states can last for a long period of time, and by some they can even turn into a continuous state, without returning into everyday, normal state of consciousness. The same goes for the fourth characteristic, passiveness. Namely, James alone notices that concentration exercises or physical exercises (he meant probably yoga) help entering into a mystical state of consciousness, so we can talk about the passiveness as essential characteristic just conditionally. The passiveness in fact originates only then, when one has already transcended the normal waking state of consciousness, and then the subject can experience the feeling of being taken by some 'higher force'.

It seems, however, that James omitted one very essential characteristic, cited before, and that is love and desire for the union with the absolute<sup>1</sup>, the striving «to reach the very origin of the being», as says French theologian Louis Gardet. However, he makes difference between oriental religions, where the path to the absolute leads through the immanence of the mystics of one's own self, and monotheistic religions, where this path leads through the union and access to depths of 'God of faith'. Oriental authorities in the field of mysticism, opposite to this, emphasize more the similarities, as well as interrelationship of mystical traditions on the deepest level. So Indian philosopher and mystic Ramakrishna thinks that, as everyone invokes the same God, it is not good to divide religions on true and false ones, but we have to consider religions only as different paths toward the absolute, and in that, different religions suit to different searchers, in different times and countries.

The first beginnings of mystical philosophy could be attached to the names of great philosophers and founders of religions Zarathustra, Hermes and Moses. Some sources (esoterical) place them approximately at the same period of time (13th century BC), but others put them into quite distant period of times, so estimations range from 23rd to 6th century BC, therefore there is an immense divergence of 17 centuries. There are somehow for the most part accordances and conformities in connection with dating the life of Moses, who is mostly placed in 13th century BC. But, there are different opinions here as well, for instance Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico in his chronological table put Moses in 16th century BC. With him agrees the chronology of 'Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society'. This chronology is based upon the facts from Bible exclusively; as the key date for dating Biblical events it is taken Cyrus' conquering of Babylon in 539 BC.

Much more disagreement appears in connection with other two, Zarathustra and Hermes Trismegistus. The first one is placed by Vico even in the 23rd century BC, while the most contemporary of the sources talk about 7th century as one in which lived Zarathustra, prophet of ancient Persia. However, in the handbook *The World's Religions* we come upon the view that «proves from the language he used turn many contemporary scientists to assume that he lived in period about 1500 BC», which would have the meaning of being just him the first great prophet of world's religions. In the Renaissance it was common to consider Zarathustra as the most ancient of sages before Moses; they spoke about him as 'Abraham's contemporary' (for example Francesco Patrizi). According to the chronology of 'Watch Tower Society', it would mean that he lived in 21/20 century BC. Sources of the antiquity place Persian prophet in much more remote history, but having in mind their vague conception about elapsing of time, it is hard to take these

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<sup>1</sup> William James points out that mystical experiences may happen to anyone, regardless of religious training or inclinations. According to him, such experiences can occur unbidden and without preparation at any time, and might not be understood as religious experiences at all. They may be interpreted, perhaps, as artistic, scientific, or other forms of inspiration, or even dismissed as psychological disturbances.

estimations into serious consideration. So, Greek historiographer Hermipus says that Zarathustra lived five thousand years before Trojan war, while Aristotle tells that he lived six thousand years before the death of Plato, which would mean that he lived in ancient 63rd century, what is quite improbable. Notwithstanding all the improbability of such estimations, however, it can be assumed that Zarathustra probably lived in some period of time more remote than today's historiography considers, therefore before 7th century BC, and possibly much earlier.

There are likewise controversies about the ancient sage Hermes Trismegistus, regarding his placing in time. One fact that is today considered more or less reliable is that of the origination of Hermetic scripts, and it is the period between the 1st and 3rd century AD. In recent times, neither is the very authorship ascribed to Egyptian named Hermes, but in the main to an unknown Christian author, or to a member of a mystical sect, of Greek or oriental origin. Today it is commonly accepted that in reality there has never existed a person named Hermes (or Thot). Yet, in Plato's time there have been some speculations whether Thot was god or just a divine man. Vico, in his chronology survey cites two Hermeses, calling them Mercury Trismegistus senior and Mercury Trismegistus junior. The former he places in 21st century, and the latter in the 15th century BC. This dichotomy is based upon Hermetic script *Asclepius*, in which Hermes Trismegistus mentions the grave of his grandfather, of the same name in Hermopolis, the town that was named after him. This story seems to have sense, having in mind that Egyptians were convinced that gods can be born and die, in continuous process of regeneration. One could assume that there was a man, historical Hermes (Thot), who founded the community and passed on his knowledge to his chosen successors, either in written (possibly lost in the course of time) or oral form. So it was preserved the legend of the famous *Book of Thot*, work that contained secret processes for the achievement of the spiritual revival of the mankind, by expansion of consciousness. Considering the fact that Thot was, among the rest, the god of scribes and writing, and that hieratic alphabet was invented by the end of the 3rd millennium BC, we could extract the assumption that the historical Thot-Hermes really lived in 21st century BC, just as Vico cites.

Besides all these controversies about dating the time in which three ancient sages lived, there exists also the basic controversy, i.e., are the first beginnings of mysticism in philosophy really connected with their names. Some authors, namely, consider as originators of mystical philosophy Pythagoras, Plato, or only Plotinus. At all events, it is the very chronological controversy, just described, that contributes to this. Besides, in spite of the fact that Moses most probably lived in 13th century BC, the real beginnings of mysticism in Judaic philosophy are of much newer date, the earliest from Philo Alexandrinus (1st century). As regards Hermes Trismegistus, although one can assume that he lived much earlier than 1st century (by the way, there exist written sources from the 3rd century BC, where is mentioned Thot, Thrice the Greatest), yet there are no credible historical material

evidence about that. There remains only Zarathustra, as predecessor, who was at least a bit anterior to Pythagoras.

## 1.1. ZOROASTRIAN RELIGION

### 1.1.1 Zarathustra – Mystical Prophet of the Ancient Persia

The name of Zarathustra is mentioned for the first time in Plato's work *Alcibiades*, where he calls him the son of Ormuz. As it was said before, historiographers and philosophers of the ancient Greece placed the Persian sage into very remote history. Renaissance philosophers, especially Francesco Patrizi, generally considered that the teachings of Plato and Platonists were under the direct influence of Zarathustra. This relates again especially to Plato's teaching about the ideas, as it can be seen in Proclus' commentary of *'Parmenides'*, where this philosopher cites place in Zarathustra's work, where are mentioned ideas. Besides this, Zarathustra is also the predecessor of monism in philosophy. The first principle of all things he called monad, and under this term he understood that, which in itself contains all, and which at the same time is not contained by anything. This monism is seemingly in contradiction with the duality of two supreme principles in Zarathustra's religion – the creator Ormuz and destructive spirit Ahriman. But, here, there is no real contradiction, because these contrasts find resolution and reconciliation in one highest unity. In Zoroastrism, Ahriman is not considered as born of God, not even as the 'fallen angel', because by that, God would become responsible for evil alone. Ahriman is considered as entirely independent evil spirit, who wants to destroy the perfection of God's creation. In spite of this seeming dualism, we could consider Zoroastrism as monotheistic religion, because Ormuz is the supreme divinity, the creator of heaven, earth and man, as well as of divine beings, that can be compared with archangels and angels. This god is the principle of truth and good, and beside him there are no other gods.

Prophet Zarathustra taught that this world is good in its essence, but the attacks of Ahriman do corrupt him. People have their personal responsibility to choose between good and evil, and according to their free will in choice they make, they will be judged on the other world. In Zoroastrism, there is the cosmic battle between good and evil, which will last for three thousand years, according to the prophecy; after that, the evil will be destroyed, and Ahriman disabled, and then will take place the renewal of the creation. The earth and heaven will be merged then, to create what is best in both worlds. That would be, in short, the teaching of Zoroastrism. Zarathustra's teaching, in fact, has its roots in the ancient religion of IndoIranians (or Aryans), people that settled in India and Persia, about 3000 BC. Of this religion we can get only the approximate picture, by comparison with Vedas. There are numerous conformities with Hindu religion, which still survived in Zoroastrism, but there are differences too. As just one example, we can take word 'do-eva', which in sacred script of Zoroastrism *'Avesta'* denotes evil

spirits, while in Hindu religion 'devas' have the meaning of divine spirits, spirits of light.

Zarathustra's religion passed from generation to generation, by oral tradition, while the first attempts of systematic collection of old tradition took place during the Parthian dynasty, which ruled over Persia from the 2nd century BC to 3rd century AD. So it was made up 'Avesta', the sacred book. In the most part of the book prophet Zarathustra is represented in a mythical manner, as a man endowed by supernatural powers. However, closer to the real figure is part of the book that includes his eulogies, *gatha*. They are most likely authentic Zarathustra's words, in distinction from the rest of 'Avesta', where the words are only ascribed to the prophet. In the eulogies *gatha*, Zarathustra points at divine mystical tradition and he yearns for acquirement of the divine knowledge. He teaches that achievement of wholeness and immortality leads to enlightenment, where one can get the knowledge of God alone. The relation between man and God is based upon love. To achieve the pure love of God, it is necessary to have in mind Zarathustra's words: «I yearn for your figure and union with you, come to me alone and grow inside me». From these quotes, of the sacred book of Zoroastrism, one can see the importance of mysticism for this religion. The purpose of man is, according to that, that he, by good thought, fairness and piety, through the perfection of his being unites himself with God.

## 1.2. GREEK AND HELLENIC PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANTIQUITY

### 1.2.1. Orpheus and Pythagoras – The First Mystical Philosophers on the European Soil

Although some consider Pythagoras the first mystical philosopher on European soil, he was preceded by the Orphics, though, mystical sect named after mythical chanter Orpheus. About 600 BC the Orphics spread secret religious teaching that promised eternal beatitude to ones who lived ascetically, and who cleansed themselves of sins by regular participations in mysteries. This mystical religious movement springs from Trachia, and it was ascending in the course of 6th century. The Orphics considered their movement to be established personally by Orpheus, son of the muse Calliope.

According to the Greek mythology, with his chanting he made wild animals tame, and also had the power of moving trees and stones. After he lost his beloved woman Euridice, he went to the underground, and touched the gods with his chant. They decided to give her back to him, but under one condition, that he does not turn to look at her, before they leave the underground. As he could not resist, Orpheus looked at her, so she remained in the underground forever. The myth says also that Orpheus found death in Trachia, and that he was torn asunder by Menades (companions of god Dionysius), because he opposed to the orgies of the god of intoxication and delight Dionysius. That would be all, concerning the myth. Nevertheless, Orpheus was in reality considered as the founder of new religious teaching about gods and religious mysteries. This teaching, except already mentioned asceticism, also included the doctrine of reincarnation. It can be assumed that Orpheus was, just like Hermes Trismegistus, a real historical personality, and that over the years supernatural attributes have been ascribed to him, by the way, just like it was the case with many other mythical heroes and demigods.

Renaissance philosopher Francesco Patrizi believes that Orpheus was the oldest of wise Greeks, and he considers him and other members of the Orphic movement the mediators between the inheritors of ancient Egyptian and Chaldean on one and Greek culture on the other hand. He also mentions Orphic priest Aglaophemus, as 'Pythagoras' teacher'. The historian Herodotus (who lived for some time on Samos, native island of Pythagoras) points out, in his writing about Pythagoreans, that they were obliged to wear flaxen clothes, in accordance with Orphic ceremonies, which are the same as Egyptian. There existed therefore a certain connection between those ancient cultures and for sure between their philosophical-religious systems too.

So, philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras founded a quite particular community, of scientific and religious-mystical character, in Kroton in southern Italy, in the second half of the 6th century BC. Owing to the lack of written works by Pythagoras, and also because of secret acting of his community, knowledge of facts about his life and work could not be taken with cent per cent certainty. Although there are his biographies penned up by ancient authors, who used important original works, yet to him were ascribed divine epithets, so finally it was hard to extract historical facts from the legend. In any case, his personality remained shrouded by veil of mystery until nowadays.

In his youth Pythagoras acquired an extraordinary knowledge. One of the most important teachers of him was Pherekydes of Syros, who was cosmographer and one of the first Greek prose writers. Here are also two philosophers from Miletus, Thales and Anaximander, who introduced young Pythagoras in philosophy and in mathematics, and cosmology as well. They gave him advice to travel to Egypt, to perfect and deepen his knowledge, by priests living there. Pythagoras obeyed this and about 535 BC went to Egypt. The ruler of Samos, Polycrates, in those times maintained some kind of alliance with Egypt and accordingly, because he was in intimate (or at least friendly) relations with excellency living there, he sent a letter of credence for Pythagoras. Although some reports tell that Pythagoras visited many temples and talked with many priests, according to Porphyry, the philosopher was allowed to enter just one temple, that one in Diospolis. There he was, as Porphyry says, initiated into a priest. Many later Pythagoras' believes and teachings, when he came to Italy, were under direct influence of knowledge and customs that he acquired during his stay in Egypt. Among the rest, here are for example rule of secrecy, refusal of consuming beans, and of the animals' meat as well, also prohibition of wearing clothes made of animals' leather, furthermore, aspiration toward purity, so in consummation of food and drinks, as in the moral sense. When in 525 Persia conquered Egypt, Pythagoras, happening to be there, was taken captive and carried away to Babylon. However, there Pythagoras in fact deepened his knowledge more still, because he familiarized with Persian priests-magis. He learned from them secret rituals, and also about the mystical obeisance to gods. He likewise perfected his knowledge of mathematics and music. After being released from the captivity, about 520 BC, Pythagoras did not stay for long on his native island Samos. It seems that rulers living there disliked his philosophical teachings, so he set out to Kroton, in southern Italy. There he founded a philosophical-religious school, with many followers.

Members of Pythagoras school followed the rule of secrecy, and owing to communitarian character of the sect, it is difficult to discern the works of Pythagoras himself from the works of his disciples. Members of community's narrow circle, so called *mathematikoi*, followed more severe rules than wider circle of followers. They lived all the time inside the community, they did not have personal belongings and they were vegetarians. Belief of Pythagoras included few basic principles, among others, for example, that the reality is

on its deepest level of mathematical nature; that philosophy is the mean of spiritual purification; that soul can ascend to the union with divinity (in what is reflected the mystical character of their philosophy); that certain symbols have mystical meaning, and that all members of brotherhood have to obey strictly the rules of loyalty and secrecy.

Pythagoras believed that all the relations in the universe can be reduced to relation between numbers. His famous saying is: «All things are numbers». According to Pythagoras, opposite to changeable things of experience, mathematical conceiving contents denote timeless, perennial, immovable, axiomatic characteristics. According to Alexander Polyhistorian, Greek erudite scholar from the 1st century BC, for Pythagoras, the principle of all things was monad, from which follows the dyad, and from it numbers. From the numbers followed points, lines, surfaces and bodies, that all consist of four essential elements: fire, water, earth and air. Pythagoras' philosophy of numbers gave mystical attributes to numerical relations, so for example number 10 denoted the comprehensive, general, ideal harmony. In music, Pythagoras discovered that on different instruments vibrating strings make harmonic tones, when the ratio between strings' length are whole numbers. Harmonic accordance presented the basic principle of Pythagoreans, and it found application not only in music, but in the entire creation. He considered the creation as unique, comprehensive and integral totality, the whole in which all things were interlaced and interconnected. According to Pythagorean teachings «universe and man, macrocosm and microcosm are based upon the same harmonic relations». In his philosophical teaching Pythagoras also stood up for opinion that the dynamic of the structure of the world is dependent on the interactions of contrarities; he observed the soul as immovable number that passes through the forms of metempsychosis, or series of reincarnations, in various kinds, to the final purification; Pythagoras also taught that all the existing things are in their essence made of form, and not material substance.

Concerning religion, Pythagoras also stood for some kind of reformer, because he forbade blood offerings to gods. He held that man must not entreat to gods, because it is obligation of every man to be worthy of faith. He likewise held that man must express his gratitude to gods by chanting hymns to them. Pythagoras viewed the Sun, the Moon, and the planets as deities, because in them predominates the heat. By man's participation, in this heat it is shown a relationship between man and gods. The heat is, according to Pythagoras, the manifestation of all living beings, while the soul is immortal; the most important thing in people's life is to oblige their soul to do what is good.

### 1.2.2. Pre-Socratics, Socrates and Plato

Heraclitus of Ephesus approached (with his teaching about fire as the first element) modern understanding of energy, that transforms herself into matter and vice versa. The philosopher was born about 535 BC in Ephesus,

town that was in immediate proximity of Pythagoras' native Samos. From preserved fragments of his only work *Of the Nature* it is obvious that he has not quite appreciated Pythagoras, as he calls him 'grandfather of deluders', and his omniscience he calls 'an evil mastership'. In all likelihood some of Pythagoras' disciples made a bad impression on him; with philosopher himself he did not meet, almost for certain, as Pythagoras has left his native island when Heraclitus was still a boy. Diogenes Laertius depicts Heraclitus as a self-conceited man, who observed his surroundings with contempt. He refused to participate in public life, withdraw himself to Artemis temple, and finally began to hate people; he eventually went to the mountains and there lived as a hermit, feeding himself with plants and herbs.

His work *On Nature*, only fragmentarily preserved, is written in such language, that it allows different interpretations. Diogenes Laertius says that philosopher took pains to write it as vague as possible, that it could be understood only by his true followers. So the work of Heraclitus the Dark (as he was called) left room for diametrically opposite interpretations; for example Lenin praises him, holding him for «a very good expositor of dialectic materialism». On the other hand, *The Encyclopedia of Mystics* speaks about the mystical and visionary temperament, which is reflected in the work, and says that Heraclitus expresses himself on the plane of religious and mysterious ecstasy and delight. Although the philosopher of Ephesus had a critical relation toward Pythagoras, it is obvious that there are converging points in their teaching, first of all it is the teaching of the unique whole of interconnected things, and also the teaching about one all-encompassing and ideal harmony. In Heraclitus' teaching, just what matters is the notion of the whole. («If you listen, not to myself, but Logos, it is wise to admit that all is one.») The whole changes into the fire, which is in all things, she is the one, in the multitude it is distinguished through pairs of opposites, and individual soul is reflection of the movement of the whole. Essential characteristic of Heraclitus' teaching is also a combination of religious viewpoint of the world with trying to describe scientifically the universal order, in which he was among the first.

So Heraclitus influenced many, among others also Empedocles, philosopher who originates from town Acragas on Sicily. He springs from an eminent family, which gave Olympic winners. Today, about his glory speaks the name of neighboring small town, called after him Porto Empedocle. The philosopher was born in 483 BC, in the town not far from Kroton, where Pythagoras had established his school. It is quite certain that he came into contact with Pythagoras' followers and that he had been under their influence, and also with Parmenides and Eleatic School. The essence of his teaching is the interaction between the four basic elements (earth, water, air and fire) under the influence of love and hate. Through love all the things unite themselves into the One and afterwards again they divide themselves, under the influence of hate. God is manifested, according to Empedocles, in multiform things, which are manifested through the four elements, while through love there comes again the union with the One, in which is reflected mystical character of Empedocles' philosophy.

Of Socrates, we do not possess any written work, because he considered that book cannot be a substitution for the live conversation. We can reach his thought in the indirect way, through the writings of Plato, Xenophon and Aristotle. Socrates' character is best depicted through Plato's early dialogues like *Apology* or *Crito*. Socrates was the opponent of sophists and their relativism of truth. In relation to philosophers of the nature, he brought into the focus man and ethics. Socrates' rationalistic ethics relies on divine mystical inner voice, *daimon*, a voice that rules over our lives' actions.

Socrates' theses were worked out by his most famous disciple Plato, according to many, the greatest of the philosophers of the classical period. He was born in 427 BC in Athens, and according to some, in Egina. His first teacher was Cratylus, but the turning point in his life was the encounter with Socrates in 407 BC; over the next eight years he was his most devoted disciple. For some reason Plato has all his thoughts ascribed, to wit, put in mouth of Socrates. Of the philosophers who had impact on Plato, worth mentioning are also Heraclitus and Pythagoras. His basic teaching refers to the world of ideas. He considers the visible world only as imperfect reflection of the world of ideas, which is over-phenomenal. His basic method is dialectics, or the art of dialogue. The aim of the platonic conversation is to come to the essence of things, to pure and non-contradictory term, by confrontation of beliefs and opinions, by disproving and verifying. The influence of Heraclitus can be seen in Plato's understanding of multitude as the unity, for example in *Timaeus*. Pythagoras' influence can be seen from Plato's evaluation of mathematical thinking, which is considered as the preparation for philosophy. Geometrical shapes and numbers he perceived as mediators between the sensitive world and the world of ideas. An example for this we see in *Timaeus*, where Plato explains the structure of the world's soul, through the medium of numerical relations therefore, through mathematics and geometry he tried to understand the laws that rule in man and universe, in microcosm and macrocosm.

Plato was in many aspects original thinker, although under the influence of the aforementioned philosophers. As Diogenes Laertius quotes, he was the first who exposed his teaching in a form of dialogic method, the first who explained the analytic method of the research, and he also used first expressions like 'antipodes', 'element', 'dialectics', 'quality', 'rectangular number'. Plato was the first in yet another matter. Namely, he was the first philosopher who tried to realize in practice the utopian vision of the ideal state, which principles he delineates theoretically in his work *Republic*. This tentative was in connection with Plato's journeys to Sicily and his stay in island's city-state Syracuse. For the first time he went there after the invitation from Dion, the nephew and collaborator of Syracusean tyrant Dionysus I, in the year 388 BC. Plato tried as his teacher, to win over his disciple for his idea of ruling the ideal state. Dionysus had suspected that they forge the conspiracy, so he deported the philosopher to Egina, where he became a slave. He was liberated from the slavery by an admirer named Anicirides, who happened to be there by chance, and who paid ransom for him.

When in the next year he returned to Athens, Plato established his famous Academy, and over the next twenty years he has been its head. During that time he composed the scripts of his late phase, like *Phaedo*, *Republic*, (II-X), *Phaedrus*, *Symposium*. In the year 367 BC, after the death of Syracusean tyrant, Dion again invited Plato to Sicily. This time he antagonized with tyrant's son Dionysus II, who captured him and kept in prison for a while, and then allowed him to return to Athens. Plato was attracted by the idea of realization of a perfect state just in Syracuse, because she represented in the first half of 4th century BC the leading town on Sicily, and also a great naval and land power. At the end of his life, disappointed because of the failure of his tentative in realizing his idea, but also knowing better human weaknesses and faults and objective social possibilities, he had to admit, that an ideal state is impracticable, under the conditions of that time. Work *The Laws* is a fruit of his late period, and in it emphasis is on the idea of justice. Plato went to Sicily once again, in 361 BC, where he spent four years; when Dion had fallen as a victim of conspiracy, in the conflict with democratic opposition, he definitely returned to Athens, where he devoted himself to teaching and conducting of the Academy, until his death.

As the *Encyclopédie des mystiques (The Encyclopedia of Mystics)* quotes, a mystical thread draws through the whole Plato's work, as a solution and final response to the central problem of man. Mystical elements are present in some works to a greater, and in some works to a lesser degree. Works especially characterized by their mysticism are *Parmenides*, *Phaedrus*, *Timaeus*, and probably most of all in *Symposium*. The work *Parmenides* has an essential importance for the later mystical philosophy, in the first place for the Neo-Platonism. The central problem is the One, universal cause of everything. Plato's *Parmenides*, when discussing beings, considers that they have their essence from the One. Beginning with Plotinus, all the later Neo-Platonists will upgrade this teaching in some way. In *Phaedrus*, immortal soul rule over that, which is deprived of soul, her main characteristic is movement. With her wings, soul towers up to the heights of divine, where there are no base possessive impulses, but where affirmed the identity. *Timaeus* tells us about the demiurge, who in his endless goodness made the visible world, and endow him with soul and mind, so he is accordingly a living being. God arranged proportionally four elements, creating from them a harmony. Plato calls the soul (having her share in the mind and harmony) the best of all the created things. Harmony of soul and body, as the unity of opposites, realizes itself by the uniting power of the higher principle. It is sometimes denoted as the Mind or Logos, and sometimes as Eros. In *Symposium* Plato says that Eros is not only in human souls, but he exists in different entities, in bodies of living beings, in plants and trees, in one word, in everything that lives. This perception comes from medicine, the science that in Plato's time «perceived how God is so exalted and marvelous, God that permeates the whole universe, including the nature of men and deities». Of all deities, Eros is the closest to man, he is really ally of the mankind. He identifies himself with the notion of good, because «apart from good, there is no other object of man's eros». Plato's mysticism does not comprehend the

union of man with the supreme god-Creator, but the whole relation between the deity and man, in actual existence or in dreams, happens through the semi-divine, to wit Eros. The god of love represents a bond between the mortal and immortal, whereas love in itself is the amalgamation of opposites.

### 1.2.3. Religious Mysticism of the Stoic Cleanthes

In the next, 3rd century BC, in the West (that is, in the ancient Greece) nothing of importance happened, as well in the centuries that followed, at least as regards mystical philosophy. In times that followed after Aristotle's death, by the end of the 4th and beginning of the 3rd century BC, Greek philosophy was split into whole range of fractions, although the process of atomization began earlier. For example, there were active so called 'Socratic schools' – Megaric, Cynic and Cirenaic, then Epicurus' school, which continued on the teachings of Democritus, and Stoic school, which continued on the teaching of Cynics. The founder of Stoic school was Zeno of Citium, and the teaching consisted of three main parts: logic, physics and ethics. Although the Stoic teaching was to a considerable extent rationalistic and materialistic, yet by Zeno's successor Cleanthes there is perceptible influence of mystical elements, and especially in his *Hymn to Zeus*.

Greek philosopher Cleanthes, born about 331 BC in Assus in Lydia, was a poet, and of poor origin. So Diogenes Laertius notes that he pumped the water to gardens from the well by night, and by day he practiced in scientific debates. After Zeno's death he took over the guidance of the Stoic school and wrote a range of works, of which only the mentioned *Hymn to Zeus* was preserved. Cleanthes considered the universe as living being and spoke that God is the soul of the universe, and Sun his heart. The founder of Stoic school Zeno in his book *On Man's Nature* set as the final aim «life in consonance with nature». After Stoics, our human natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe. It is necessary, accordingly, to abstain from every action not allowed by the reason, which permeates all the things, and is identical with Zeus alone. Stoic Chryssipus understood nature, with which our life must be in consonance, as the higher nature of man, while Cleanthes, in distinction from him, considered that only the nature of the universe is one we have to respect, and in accordance with which we must act. This respect toward the universe and God, as his soul, especially is expressed in lines of *Hymn to Zeus*: «The whole universe, spinning around the earth/ goes wherever you lead and it is willingly guided by you». Cleanthes also elevates the unity of all the created things, good as well as bad, in one eternal Logos, as the Law of the world and God's creative thought. Philosopher prays altruistically, for those who swerved, to rescue them from the painful ignorance, that they could pay him respect. Because, «there is no greater glory for men/ or for gods then to justly praise the universal Word of Reason».

### 1.2.4. Representative of the Stoic Monism Posidonius

During the 2nd and 1st century BC came on a period of decadence in Greek philosophy, after Greek towns-states lost their political independence, under Macedonian rule. The center of Greek philosophy is not Athens anymore, but the focus is moved to Alexandria, and also to Rome, capital of the great state in expansion. So, it is noted that the first Greek philosophers, who brought their teaching to Rome were Peripatetic Critolaus, Academician Carneades and Stoic Diogenes of Babylon. They came upon a hostile attitude of a consul Cato, and they were driven out of Rome, but since there were also some admirers of Greek culture among Romans, like Scipio Aemilianus, Stoic Panaetius was soon allowed to expose his teaching freely in empire's capital.

Panaetius' disciple Posidonius (b. 135 BC) although being representative of Stoic monism and materialism in his teaching had also a certain mystical trait. He compared the universe with a tree, which life source is in its roots. The world is, according to him, ruled by reason and providence, in so much reason penetrates into all of his parts, similarly to the soul which is in us. Like Chryssipus and Cleanthes, he teaches that the world is living being, that posses its intelligence.

#### 1.2.5. Miracle-worker Apollonius of Tyana

Platonist Celsus in his work *True Word* attacks harshly Christianity, and depicts Jesus as illegitimate child of a poor Jewish woman. According to this Pagan author, Jesus went as very young in Egypt, where he acquired certain magical powers; he was very proud of them, and when he returned home he heralded to all that he is god. Hebrew *Talmud* conveys the story of the prophet Jeshua the Nazarene, whom authorities did hang, on the eve of the celebration of Pasha, because he «pursued sorcery, seduced and divided Jews». According to the Kuran, Jesus was just a God's deputy; Jews did not kill him by crucifixion, but it “just appeared to them”, they just surmised about it, were in doubt, and did not know anything trustworthy about it. Some of the newer historians like Bruno Bauer, Arthur Drews or Karl Kautski disputed, that Jesus ever lived at all. All the aforementioned opinions, as we see, diametrically differ among them, so Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, is surely the most controversial personality in history of religion, and maybe as well in the entire history.

Equally controversial personality, although by far less known, is neo-pythagorean Apollonius of Tyana, prophet and miracle-worker, Jesus' contemporary born about the same time, a few years before the new era. In Apollonius' biography, written by Greek rhetorician Philostratus, some saw a tentative of constructing a Pagan rival to Jesus Christ. The others, on the contrary, think that he is in fact biblical Jesus, third identify him with Paul of Tarsus, and fourth with Apollo, mentioned in *Acts (18, 24-28)*. In Philostratus' work can be perceived many similarities, with the life of Jesus described in Gospels. For instance: Apollonius' birth was announced by an archangel; when he was twelve he went to Tarsus in Cilicia, for a schooling

(and Tarsus is Paul's birthplace); he went from one place to another preaching and healing people (he returned sight to blind, returned to life a young girl), and performed exorcism; he was exposed to attacks of his enemies, although he had always done good; he was accused for practicing sorcery and illegal art; he went voluntarily to emperor Domitian to Rome, who wanted to execute him, and finally, after his death he appeared in miraculous way to his disciples Damis and Demetrius. Philostratus cites several works that Apollonius of Tyana wrote, but which however, have not been preserved. They are *The Mystic Rites*, *The Oracles*, *The Life of Pythagoras*, *The Will of Apollonius* and *A Hymn to Memory*. Work *The Life of Pythagoras* is also cited by Greek philosopher Porphyry, while Iamblichus even quotes from it. The essence of Apollonius' teaching can be epitomized, after the words of R.W. Bernard: «His aim was to convert the thinking of priests and laymen from outer forms of religiosity, from rituals and sacrifices to inner meanings, and to change idolatry with mystical unity with God, who dwells inside».

#### 1.2.6. Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris*

Greek historian and philosopher Plutarch (born in 46 AD in Chaeronea) was at the same time a priest at Delphy temple. He considered that man elevates himself to God through love toward all the beings, and that is the first rung on a ladder, by which man ascends to deity. Plutarch's philosophy in its essence is Platonic, interweaved with Stoic, Pythagorean and Peripatetic elements.

After he ended his studies in mathematics and philosophy, this Greek philosopher started several times for Rome, where he held lectures in philosophy, and in all the likelihood he became acquainted with Roman emperors Trajan and Hadrian. Although he traveled a lot, his usual dwelling place was his hometown, Chaeronea, in Greek province Beotia. There he performed important public office, by city authorities, and at the same time conducted a school, in which education was comprehensive, with emphasis on philosophy, and especially on ethics. From the year 95 until his death he was a priest in Delphi, place not far from his hometown. He was a promoter of religious renewal and return to the tradition of Greek past. As a priest of Pythean Apollo he believed in eternal God's announcement, at the same time not recognizing the absolute religious authority. Accordingly, his religious view is universalistic, since gods that different nations respect under different names are in essence the same, with the same providence that rule over them.

Plutarch's literary legacy is really enormous, with total of 227 titles, and his most known work is *Parallel Lives*, in which he depicted biographies of one famous Greek and one Roman, as a comparison. This book had for its aim promoting of mutual respect between Greeks and Romans, and also, by emphasizing of their virtues and works, to serve as form pattern of exemplary behavior. Among Plutarch's literary patrimony, an important

place takes also a collection of around 60 essays, under the title *Moralia*. This collection includes popular educational treatises written predominantly in a form of dialogues and diatribes, of different fields: religion, philosophy, politics, natural science and literature. Essays which are most permeated with mysticism are related to history of religion. Among them are: one early essay, *Daemon of Socrates*, and also three later scripts, related to temple in Delphy – *On the Failure of the Oracles*, *On the 'E' at Delphi*, *On the Pythian Responses*.

Here it can be added the work which maybe mostly gives out the smell of mysticism, *On Isis and Osiris*. This book of Plutarch contains elements of Greek, Egyptian and Near East origin. Plutarch is the only one who exposes the myth about these Egyptian deities on the whole; Osiris is one of the most universal deities and Isis is goddess protectress of marriage, medicine, agriculture and navigation. *Pyramid Texts* and *Sarcophagus Texts* for the most part confirmed the authenticity of Plutarch's presentation, which is under the significant influence of ancient Greek thought. Plutarch accordingly considers these Egyptian deities as demigods, following Pythagoras and Plato. In demigods, says Plutarch, same as in men, there are different proportions of virtues and vices: he quotes Plato's thought about demigods as mediators between gods and men, who transmit divine messages in the form of oracles, some as gifts, and good things in general. Plutarch also cites Plato's cosmic fights between two supreme principles of good and evil, about which yet Heraclitus has spoken. The complexity of this world is caused by two opposite forces, which however are not of the same power, but there is preponderance by the better. The good ruler is Osiris and he brings the order in the universe. Opposed to him is impulsive and cruel Typhon, who brings disorder, disease and destruction. Goddess Isis represents the female principle of nature; it is related to all the forms of birth, breeding and education. She has an inborn love for the first principle, which is identical with the good, and in her there exists constant longing for him. When souls are free and when they come into the realm of the invisible, says Plutarch, this god becomes their leader and king, and they are connected with him in contemplation and desire for his beauty.

#### 1.2.7. Plotinus – The Greatest Pagan Hellenic Philosopher

If Origen was the greatest Christian philosopher of the Hellenistic period, among the Pagan philosophers the primacy for sure belongs to Plotinus, Greek philosopher whose name is connected with the renewal of Platonism. Some consider Plotinus as true and pure originator of the mystical philosophy, probably because his complete philosophical work posses the trait of mysticism, more than possessed any other of his predecessors. Plotinus' Neo-Platonism influenced the entire later European mysticism, including the Christian mysticism as well.

From the Plotinus' biography, written down by his disciple Porphyry, we learn that philosopher was born in 205 in Egypt, in a place not mentioned,

but it is supposed that it is Lykopolis. When he was approximately at age of 25, he set out to Alexandria, where he attended lectures of different philosophers, not finding any of them in accord with his taste, until he came upon the school of Ammonius Saccas. In this school Plotinus remained for the next ten years, and then in 243, following his desire to deepen the knowledge of eastern philosophies, joined the expedition of emperor Gordian III to Persia. However, the expedition never reached its destination, because in Mesopotamia the emperor was murdered. Two years later, Plotinus settled himself in Rome, where he opened his own philosophical school. In the next ten years the philosopher did not write anything, respecting the vow he made with his fellow disciples Origen and Herenius at Ammonius' school in Alexandria. Origen was therefore at the same time a conductor of his own catechetical school, but also only a pupil at Ammonius Saccas' school, since he self-critically estimated that he does not have sufficient education in Greek philosophy. Two philosophers, Christian Origen and Pagan Plotinus later developed their own peculiar philosophical views. It seems that Plotinus' main teaching, that one about the three hypostases (the One, the Intelligence, the Soul) was in fact the response to Origen's interpretation of the Holy Trinity, based upon the Platonic scheme.

First who persuaded Plotinus to write down his teaching was his disciple Amelius, and until the arrival of the second renowned disciple, Porphyry (263 AD) there were finished in total 21 treatises. Between 263 and 268 Plotinus wrote yet 24 treatises, and after Porphyry retreated to Sicily (268) Plotinus composed another nine treatises. After Plotinus' death in 270 the first one who edited the script was another disciple named Eustochius, however this edition is not preserved. To us reached Porphyry's edition, originated in the beginning of the 4th century and entitled *Enneades* since it is composed of six books, each consisting of nine treatises. Porphyry did not respect the original order of treatises, to make a more coherent structure. Also, in his trying to respect his own numerical plan, he divided some larger works into several shorter. Division of *Enneades* in groups is related to kindred subjects, i.e. ideological affinities. So, the first Ennead deals with ethical questions, second and third with natural and cosmological themes, the fourth with hypostasis of Soul, the fifth with hypostasis of the Intelligence, and sixth with the kinds of beings and the One.

Since the whole Plotinus' work is permeated with mysticism, so neither the ethics is an exception. In imitation of Plato he holds that the most sublime achievement of an individual soul is similarity with God, in the greatest possible degree. This similarity is accomplished by the contemplation of the higher soul, which presents the individual soul in its purified state. Plotinus considers the higher soul unchangeable and divine (let us remind that Origen identify it with kingdom of God), while lower soul he considers to be the abode of personality (therefore also of passions, as well as vices). In his ethical view, Plotinus equals the highest principle with Good, and also with fair, as soul becomes something good and fair when it becomes similar to God. Plotinus' vision of ethics is also holistic. He thinks that joyful and self-sufficient state belongs to gods, and people, because of the addition of what

is worse, have to seek the happiness of the remaining whole, and not only of some part of it. Holistic is also Plotinus' vision of aesthetics, since when fairness takes something that is unique, and what has similar parts, it gives the same to the whole.

Plotinus understands matter as eternally receptive object or receptacle of forms, by which all the existing things gain their shape. According to Plotinus, there are two kinds of matter – intelligible and sensible. First is conceivable only by intelligence, while the other can be perceived by the senses. Plotinus, in accord with the Platonic doctrine, holds that sensible things are in fact conceptions of their respective objects in the sphere of the intelligible, which are pure and eternal. Sensible matter is accordingly only the copy of the original intelligible matter. Since Plotinus thinks that matter is formed in relation to previously existing forms in the sphere of intelligible, we can say that he is in a way a predecessor of modern scientist Rupert Sheldrake and his theory of morphogenetic fields. Likewise we can say he in certain measure anticipated the possibility of the existence of subatomic particles, by his assertion that atoms do not have an order of matter, and that virtually last elements which are indivisible (a-tomos) do not exist, «because each body is entirely divisible.»

In Plotinus system, nature is a consequence of a collective experience of each individual soul. Since nature of the higher part of the soul is such, that she must remain in contemplative touch with the Intelligence, it is not possible for her to descend to the depths of differentiation on the level of matter. Soul must accordingly divide herself in one part which is contemplative, and the other, that is generative, and rules over acting. According to this, nature and essence of all the intelligible beings that come from the One is double - concerning the Intelligence, to her belongs the capability of knowledge or contemplation of the One; on the other hand the Soul posses the faculty of contemplating the Intelligence, as well as giving the active form to ideas that follow from the contemplation.

The fourth Ennead, in which Plotinus explains the hypostasis of the soul, speaks about the soul as form, productive faculty and energy taken out from the Intelligence. In sixth treatise of this Ennead Plotinus describes in concrete his own mystical state, which, according to Porphyry, he achieved only four times in the course of his life. In this description, very important for the world of holy and mysticism, Plotinus depicts expansion of consciousness outside his own body, and identification with the divine. He is «outside everything else», and at the same time «inside him alone», he see «admirably great beauty», believes to «posses a better destiny», and by reposing in divine he finds himself «above everything intelligible». These lines of the fourth Ennead, later will have influence, in various forms, upon the whole range of mystics – Pagan, Christian and Islamic. As quotes *Encyclopedia of Mystics*, phases of mystical ascent comprise: awakening, concentration inside oneself, watching, certainty, divine activity, quietude in divine, wonderment and sense of alienation before the physical and sensible world.

Cited Plotinus' description of the mystical vision implies a radical coincidence of oneself with the One. The One gives that, which he himself does not possess: multiplicity. While the subject of the contemplation implies multiplicity, his object implies unity. In sixth, last Ennead Plotinus says that the One, at the same time is not far from anything, but also far from all things. He is therefore at the same time present and absent, «except to those who can receive him and are prepared for that». In Plotinus' biography Porphyry notes down teacher's last words: «Strive to bring back the god in yourselves to God in all».

Plotinus' disciple Porphyry was born around 233 in town Tyr (today Lebanon). He first studied philosophy in Athens, and approximately in the 30th year of life arrived to Rome, to join Plotinus' philosophical school. He remained by his teacher for five years; in 268 he went to Sicily, to recover himself from the attack of suicidal depression, following Plotinus' advice. Porphyry wrote extensively on themes from different domains of philosophy, religion and science; however only a small part of his work remained preserved. The collection of teacher's books, which he entitled *Enneads*, he systematized and edited only by the end of his life, in 301, also adding as an introduction, a Plotinus' biography. A little of what is known about Porphyry's life, springs just from the biography of his famous teacher. Where Porphyry spent the second half of his life, remains unknown, but it is supposed that he could have continued to lead the Neo-Platonic school in Rome, after Plotinus' death.

Porphyry is considered mainly as an important continuator of Plotinus' work and promoter of Hellenistic Neo-Platonism, rather than as an original thinker. But yet this attitude we can accept only conditionally, since of the extensive philosopher's work came to us only the smaller part of his scripts, while to a number of his works an insufficient attention has been paid. Porphyry is probably best known after his work *Isagoge*, that is, how is in Boethius' translation entitled his commentary of Aristotle's *Categories*. This work had a significant impact on medieval scholasticism. Work *On Prosody* gives evidence of Porphyry's interest in music, and treatises *On the Harmonics* and *Introduction to the Astronomy of Ptolemy* about his interest in astrology and astronomy. Beside Plotinus', he wrote also Pythagoras' biography.

Porphyry's originality in relation to the famous teacher reflects in works concerning logic and philosophy of language, but also in fields inclined more to mysticism. For instance, in the work *Launching Points to the Realm of Mind* Porphyry makes difference between the Soul and incarnated, i-rational soul, calling her 'second nature'; in distinction from Plotinus, who considered that the higher soul and individual soul are one. Some suppose that the disciple came up to his own conclusions, owing to the fact that in his youth he studied Christianity. For example, St. Augustine calls him apostate from the faith; and historian Socrates directly quotes that earlier he was Christian. It is very probable that he has been taught to the Christian

doctrine in Caesarea, town not remotely from his native Tyr, where Origen conducted his school after the persecution from Alexandria. Later Porphyry wrote the work *Against the Christians*, which came to us only in fragments. It however has not been pointed against Christ and his teaching, but against his contemporaries, who were ignorant and deceivers, to whose doctrine he opposed on philosophical, as well as exegetic bases. Porphyry's view on salvation of the soul, in spite of that, was closer to Christianity, then to views of his teacher Plotinus; it consisted in short of practicing a virtue, which places the soul in a gradual course of progress toward the supreme God. In distinction from Plotinus, who rejected traditional Greek religion, as well as Christianity, Porphyry was in that respect conservative, trying to preserve ancient Pagan view on man's modest role in cosmic hierarchy. This position gave to Porphyry basis for the faith in astrology, therefore in doctrine, according to which stars and planets make influence on man and his life. Knowledge of the acting of heavenly bodies in man, according to him was necessary for gaining ever higher levels of virtue. Porphyry believed that soul receives certain powers from each planet that enable to gain knowledge of either terrestrial or heavenly things.

Astrology, in the context of Neo-Platonic philosophy represents a mixture of religious and mythological mysticism. The teaching about the influence of stars and planets on the entire life on Earth has in its foundations belief, that stars possess divine souls. This belief has been transmitted from Plato (*Laws, Book X*) on, and through Stoics it reached Hellenist Neo-Platonists. According to Plato, soul is one which rules over the heaven and earth, as well as over the entire universe. But, each single planet and star possess their own individual souls. As souls have in themselves contained excellence and perfections of all kinds, which are at the same time their causes, these souls are gods, deduced Plato.

#### 1.2.8. The Enigmatic Hermes Trismegistus

In Egypt of the 3rd century most probably lived (some suppose in the second half), in addition to those aforementioned Neo-Platonic philosophers, the editor of Hermetic philosophical texts, known as Hermes Trismegistus. On account of diversity of texts it is possible that this philosopher, whom we could also call Pseudo-Hermes (to discern him from the ancient sage), was author of just a part of these scripts. According to a manner in which were these Hermetic texts composed, and also regarding subject matter to which they are related, one of the greatest contemporary authorities on field of Hermetism, A.J. Festugiere, divide them into two groups. The first comprise old scripts, those which reason about astrology, magic, alchemy, and they preceded at least five or six centuries to (Pseudo) Hermes Trismegistos, who completed and edited the works, as it is supposed, in 3rd century AD. It seems that it is exaggerated to suppose a direct, uninterrupted connection with Hermes, who, again maybe lived in 14/15th century BC, although it is possible that some texts were transmitted for long time in oral form, also maybe supplemented, in centuries anterior to first mentioning of

Trismegistus (2nd century BC). The other Hermetic script, which are related to philosophy and theology, and which Festugiere calls later scripts date approximately from 2nd and 3rd century AD. From the first group of scripts, the most important is *Liber Hermetis Trismegisti*, text of astrological subject matter that comprises astrological doctrines typical for the time and place of origination (Ptolemaic Egypt, 3rd century BC). Among the scripts of the second group, the most important are: *Corpus Hermeticum*, a collection of 17 religious-philosophical treatises, then *Kore Kosmou*, script preserved thanks to Byzantine erudite John of Stobi, work *Asclepius*, a Latin translation from the original Greek entitled *A Perfect Discourse*, and *Discourse about Ogdoad and Ennead*, testifying about the declaration of Hermetic devoutness.

Hermetism is the first historically documented example of the touch between Greek tradition and Oriental wisdom. Syncretic character of Hermetic texts reflects itself in diversity and mutual permeating of fields like magic, astrology, alchemy, Platonism, Stoicism, mysteries, and also Judaism, as well as Gnosticism. The core of Hermetic Gnosis represents a nostalgia for the primordial unity with God, in which is mostly expressed its mystical character. In distinction from Gnosticism, where is in the foreground Persian dualism, in Hermetic doctrine accent is put on Neo-Platonic monism, as the main characteristic of faith the idea of God as Father and Creator moved Hermetism closer to Christianity, and the message of truth is in Hermetic writings close to message of love in the Gospels. Accordingly, this teaching was respected by numerous Christian theologians and philosophers of the antiquity and middle ages, and especially by Neo-Platonists of Humanism and Renaissance. Some of them considered 26th chapter of *Asclepius* as prophetic announcement of the end of Pagan era and triumph of Christianity; therefore Hermes Trismegistus was respected almost as a kind of 'Pagan saint'.

The assemblage of texts under the title *Corpus Hermeticum*, present a collection of treatises written in Greek language. These treatises are in fact teachings (teacher involved is almost all the time Hermes) in a form of a dialogue with his disciples (*Asclepius*, *Tat*). This work is sometimes called *Poimandres*, after the first and also most important treatise. In it, Hermes communicates in the first person the message of revelation, which he receives, from *Poimandres*, that is, the Intelligence of the supreme absolute. The aim of revelation is to give to chosen one the universal knowledge, from the creation up to the end of the world, about double – mortal and immortal nature of man, and about ascension of the soul of devout man through seven planetary spheres up to the eighth heaven, which then reveals the ninth, in which man, by contemplation, is eternally in God. This treatise has some similarities with Biblical books *Genesis* and *Gospel according to John*; in 10th, 11th and 12th treatise can be perceived resemblances with Plotinus' Neo-Platonism. Hermes accordingly says that division of the universe depends upon the nature of the One, that permeates through the Intelligence of the One and which can unite man with God. Like Plotinus, he emphasizes the need for resemblance to God, to get to know him. All the beings owe their immortality to the Intelligence, and man most of all, because he is capable of

receiving God and sharing his essence, says the 12th treatise, *Of Common Intelligence*. Asclepius is work in Latin, for some time it has been ascribed to Apuleius. It can be considered as the *Summa* of Hermetic teaching, and it was written in form of Hermes' dialogues with his three disciples: Asclepius, Tat and Ammon. Their meeting takes place in the holiest part of the temple, and through the mouth of Hermes speaks divine Eros.

The most important part of *Asclepius* relates to love toward God, good will and piety, and knowledge of God. Hymns of gratitude to God, in the end of the work, by their form remind of Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, but in distinction to 'rational' piety of Greek philosopher, Hermetic hymn is in its love toward God's knowledge closer to Christian mysticism. In the same way, close to Christianity, are composed two hymns in the work *Discourse about Ogdoad and Ennead*, «Invocation of Father-Teacher to Almighty God» and «Hymn of Gratitude of Son-disciple to the Mysterious God». The very work has similar main theme as in *Corpus Hermeticum*, that is passing through seven planetary spheres up to eighth and ninth; but it differs, as here son-disciple has already passed under father's guidance the first seven spheres, and now in Ogdoad, he has to reveal the ninth heaven, Ennead. *Kore Kosmou* continues on traditional Egyptian myths, theology and wisdom, but the text is typically Greek, in Hellenistic style. This work is a dialogue between Isis and Horus, about the secret teaching of Hermes and Osiris. In distinction from other works, here it is spoken of Hermes as of god, and he represents a mediator between the higher and lower world. Central themes are the narration of cosmogony myth and creation of primordial soul, and Hermetic Gnosés and aspiration toward the unity with God.

#### 1.2.9. Iamblichus' Theurgy and Julian's Apostacy

By the half of the 3rd century in Chalcis, Syria was born Iamblichus, one of the greatest philosophers of the late Antiquity. As relates historian of philosophy Eunapius, Iamblichus was of noble origin, from wealthy and succesful family. Firstly he was Anatolius' disciple (who received his knowledge from Porphyry), and later he became a disciple of the famous philosopher himself. After a while, making progress in philosophic teaching, he gained knowledge that was in no way lesser than Porphyry's, «except in harmonious structure and force of style». When teacher died in 304, Iamblichus succeeded him for a while as the head of Neo-Platonic school and toward the end of his life he opened his own school in Antioch, Syria. Syncretic teachings of this school amalgamated philosophy of Plato and Pythagoras with Hermetic doctrine and with elements of Oriental religion and magic, predominantly of Chaldean origin.

With his opus Iamblichus succeeded in transforming originally pure intellectual Neo-Platonism of Plotinus to a more spiritualized form of Greek-Roman religious philosophy, which embraces myths, rituals and magic formulas. Of Iamblichus' entire work, there were preserved five books, which refer to *Collection of Pythagorean Thinking*. From the works of mystical

character important are *Life of Pythagoras*, *Protrepticus*, *De anima* and especially *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*, philosopher's best known work. Of other works, that have been lost, of greatest importance is *Chaldean Theology*.

As Porphyry with his approach to a certain degree moved away from Plotinus' teaching, so Iamblichus also made a step forward, in relation to his teacher. By that, it was only affirmed the old rule that the most talented pupil, at the same time moves away in the greatest degree from his teacher' learning. Iamblichus' way toward divine is more hieratic than philosophical. So, he holds that not only the One, but all the gods and intermediary entities (angels, demons, heroes etc.) excel and transcend the individual soul, and one comes to salvation by invocation of superior beings. Ritual acts, by which this is achieved, Iamblichus calls theurgy. The concept of theurgy is in fact connected with the idea of high magic, i.e. Divine magic, by which are invoked heavenly powers. The concept comes from the Greek word *theos*, which means «god» and *ergon*, which denotes deed, work or action. Iamblichus considers theurgic acts as indispensable, because according to him, philosophy that is based upon human thoughts only, is not capable to come to that, which is beyond the borders of thought. Theurgy, accordingly, represents a way through which soul can experience the presence of divinity, instead of god's nature.

Porphyry, of course, subjected to critique such attitude of his most gifted disciple; Iamblichus used these critical questions entitled *Letters to Anebo* as the introduction to his *Egyptian Mysteries*, and in continuation gave detailed answers to them. Porphyry stood fast for the idea that divinity, whereas immaterial, can be conceived just by cognition, i.e. on the basis of rational and logical inference. Iamblichus, on the contrary, considered that human soul is not capable of contemplating god within the frame of her limited mind, so she has to change to penetrate up to the divine essence, and in his opinion it is achieved by rituals which transform particularized and fragmented soul into being that is 'pure and unchangeable'. On the path of human soul, i.e. ascent toward the Supreme Good, a help is offered by intermediary divinities; theurgic rituals have the task to serve as the medium by which can be achieved meaningful discourse with deity. The ascent through invocations liberate priests from passions (similarity with Indian and Stoic teachings) and conditions of the generated life, and accordingly it leads to unity with divine First Cause, Iamblichus concludes in his best known work *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*.

Iamblichus died in 330, and in the next year was born the second famous emperor-philosopher Julian II in Constantinople, town which got its name after even more famous Julian's uncle, emperor Constantine the Great. As legend says, the emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, after he had a vision of cross in the sky, during the battle by Milvius' bridge, and he understood it as god's sign. Christianity then became equal with Pagan faith, and during the next decades increased the number of Christians among Roman elite; however among common people there still prevailed Pagan faith. Two successors of Constantine the Great, Constantine II and Constantius II were also Christians. The latter killed in a battle for the

throne Julian's father, when boy was only twelve. Maybe this event had some impact on Julian's later inclination toward Pagan religion; on account of that, by Christians he will get a nickname 'Apostate'. In the beginning, though, the future emperor acquired Christian education. Later, emperor Constantius II sent him to Nicomedia, to keep him away from the centre of power and capital. Afterwards, Julian was sent to Cappadocia, and in Pergamum, where he gained knowledge in Neo-Platonic philosophy from Edesius (Iamblichus' disciple), and of Maximus, philosopher and Pagan priest. This latter initiated Julian in Mithra's cult (deity of Persian origin, but widely accepted in Roman troops). After Constantius executed Julian's half-brother Gallus as well, Julian himself was spared; some time later he was even promoted into a caesar, i.e. commander-in-chief of the western part of the empire. Julian found himself in wonderment, since he had no military education, but he learned fast from field officers, and made him a master of martial arts as well. So, Julian became, from the common figure that he had been before, a serious rival to emperor, excelling in battles with German tribes. The turning point occurred in 360, that is, when troops proclaimed Julian for a new emperor. Getting ready for imminent civil war, Julian set out onto Constantius' army, toward the capital. But, the expected battle did not take place, because in the meantime Constantius suddenly died.

Becoming the emperor in his 30th year, Julian tried, in imitation of Marcus Aurelius, to achieve the ideal of emperor-philosopher. He curtailed exaggerated expenses of the emperor's court and brought edicts about religious tolerance. He revoked some privileges to clergy, and allowed return to those priests who have been banished because of heresy. He instigated the work of Pagan theologians, which was novelty, because until that time there were only priests of the old, Pagan religion. Some historians think that he forbade completely the work to Christian teachers, but this, in fact, concerned only lectures in grammar, rhetoric and classical literature. However, Julian's efforts on rehabilitating the old Pagan religiosity yet did not yield lasting fruit because already in his second year of ruling (in 363) he had been killed on the battlefield, in the war with Persians.

Of Julian's religious-philosophical works there were preserved eight orations. Among them, the central place holds *Hymn to King Helios*, based upon the solar theology and connected with Mithra's cult. Although the early Christians hated Mithraism, it is interesting that just this veneration connects, we can say almost in symbolical way, Pagan and Christian faith. Namely, although Christians destroyed Mithraistic temples, they preserved the main holiday, on 25th of December, which was celebrated as the birthday of new sun. Christians began to celebrate it as Christ's birthday, while Roman emperors began gradually, in the course of the 3rd century, to venerate Sun's cult as supreme divinity, neglecting bit by bit the old main cult of Jupiter. Firstly, Septimius Sever took the title 'The Invincible', while the emperor Aurelianus enthroned the cult, calling himself 'Deus Sol Invictus', when he came to the throne in 270.

Julian the Apostate understood Sun in three different Ways: as transcendental, then as Helios-Mithras, and finally as the visible Sun. In his *Hymn to King Helios* he glorifies rapturously the sun deity: «The divine and wholly beautiful universe, from the highest vault of heaven to the lowest limit of the earth, is held together by the continuous providence of the god, he has existed from eternity, non-generated, he is imperishable for all the time to come, and he is guarded immediately by nothing else than the Fifth Substance whose culmination is in the beams of the sun. » Following Plato, Julian depicts the chain of beings, that emanate from the One, unique cause of everything. So, from the One results the Intelligible world, then comes Helios, the supreme god. Between Helios and man, like his Neo-Platonic predecessors, Julian puts intermediary entities (angels, demons, heroes and other beings). It is interesting the way in which Julian sees mankind, therefore in relation to the universe as whole, and especially in relation to Solar system. Our world he sees as an entire and live organism, permeated by soul and intelligence, which reminds a lot of views of modern holistic scientists. We can say that in a way Julian the Apostate was predecessor of today's holistic world view.

#### 1.2.10. Proclus 'the Successor' and the End of the Academy

In the year 411 in Constantinople was born Neo-Platonic philosopher and scientist Proclus, the most important philosopher of the 5th century. He springs from very reputable family, originating from Lykia. As his father had been a high functionary of Byzantine Empire, he has been expected to follow in his father's steps. Just because of that reason, he was sent to Alexandria, to study law. But, during his short visit to Byzantium, about the midst of his law studies, he became convinced that his life vocation must be of a philosopher, and not of a lawyer. When he returned to Alexandria, he accordingly went over to the study of philosophy, under teacher Olympiodorus; in the beginning he mainly studied Aristotle. But, side by side with philosophy, he also frequented lectures in mathematics. Not entirely satisfied with knowledge he received in Alexandria, he moved to Athens, where his teachers were Plutarch and Syrianus. After the studies he alone taught at the Academy. After Syrianus' death he became the head of the Academy, and got nickname Diadochus ('Successor'). He will remain at this station until his death, in 485.

Proclus dedicated his life completely to philosophy and science, and lived an ascetic life, not much different from Pythagoreans. He never got married; he was vegetarian and very pious man. He also made a trial of poetry, composing hymns to gods. Of course, a main Proclus' interest was dealing with philosophy, more precisely Neo-Platonic philosophy, in the wake of the founder of Neo-Platonism Plotinus, and also of Porphyry and Iamblichus. In addition to philosophy, Proclus also dealt with mathematics, geometry, astronomy and astrology.

The largest part of Proclus' opus comprised the commentaries of *Parmenides* and *Timaeus*, therefore commentaries of dialogues which reason about the principles of being and the nature of things. To Plato is also related work *Platonic Theology*, which comprises a range of commentaries. In his perceiving of Neo-Platonism Proclus is closer to Iamblichus, than to Plotinus. Similarity with former can be seen in his veneration of theurgy, so he says that it is «power greater than all human wisdom, which comprises the blessing of prophecy, the purifying power of initiation, in one word all the activities inspired by the divine». Just like Iamblichus, Proclus holds that «all the individual things are not united with the One neither by the act of revelation, nor by the acting suitable to their being, but by the mysterious acting of occult symbols that inhabit certain stones, herbs and animals».

Proclus' teaching about vertical series, in which differing qualities of certain god (henades) are reflected on different levels, accordingly he gives divine attributes to planets and stars<sup>2</sup>. By this astrological teaching he differs from Plotinus, and he is close to Porphyry and Iamblichus, who also consider that planets influence i-rational soul, as well as earthly bodies. Belief that stars have divine souls, of course do not originate from Neo-Platonists alone, but it has been transmitted for centuries, from Plato, through Stoics, up to Hellenistic philosophers.

Another important work of Proclus is *Elements of Theology*, exposition of his metaphysical system by a priori deductions. In it, speaking about the causal world, he reveals that each cause is at the same time everywhere and nowhere. According to the emanation of his power, he is everywhere, while because of his non-interference with subsisting beings, he is nowhere. By this assertion is resolved a Neo-Platonic antinomy of the coincident transcendence and immanence.

Proclus, just like other neo-Platonists, deems that from the One follows divine Intellect or reason. From it consequently follow forms. After Proclus, the Intellect is eternal, and in its eternity it has existence, power and acting. Soul, in which it is possible to have share, has eternal existence, but temporal acting. Soul that has its origin in the Intelligence has triple acting: as soul alone, as receiver of divine intelligence, and also as emanation of gods. In distinction from Plotinus, Proclus thinks that «each single soul, when descending into being, descends whole, and not in a way that one part remains above, and the other descends».

Proclus has focused his life work to deliverance of Pagan tradition and Platonic thought, from the growing fanaticism of the Christians. In this endeavor he will not succeed, as in a few decades after his death the doors of the Academy will be closed for good. But, by strange twist of fate his work

<sup>2</sup>2 Henades serve to protect the One (The First Principle, from whom stems all the beings) from any indication of multiplicity, but also as intermediary stage that serves as the bridge to the supreme God-Creator. They are identified with traditional Greek gods, like Helios, Hermes, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Zeus and Chronos (gods – rulers of planets).

yet had influence on medieval philosophic thought, thanks to unknown Christian author, who had, in imitation of Proclus, made works of exceptional importance for Christian theology and philosophy. About this mystical philosopher, who signed his works by the name of a character from *The Acts*, there will be a word or two just a little bit later.

Approximately in 470, in Syria was born Damascius, the last head of the Academy; he was born in Damascus, and was named thereby so. As very young man he set out to Alexandria, where he was educated in rhetoric, mathematics and philosophy. He went to Athens thereafter, where Platonic tradition was continued by philosophers Marinus and Zenodotus, Proclus' successors at the Academy, which fame was already declining. Damascius became their disciple, and later succeeded them on the head of the Academy. This philosopher was the last one who taught Platonic philosophy in the chair of Athens' Academy. In 527 the emperor Justinian mounted the throne, and two years later ordered the closure of the Academy. Together with Simplicius and five other philosophers Damascius went to Harran, town in Persian kingdom, under the rule of king Chosroes I. Later, it was allowed to Damascius to turn back to Byzantium, only, not to Athens, but to Alexandria, where he taught still for some time. School in Harran, founder of which is considered to be Simplicius, will incite later the founding of another school, in Bagdad. However, it is a story that belongs to the Middle Ages, and there will be a word or two about it in the second part of the book.

## 1.3. ROMAN PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANTIQUITY

### 1.3.1. Roman Stoics

Philo<sup>3</sup>'s younger contemporary, Roman Stoic Seneca (born approximately in 4 BC in Cordoba, Hispania) also inclined sometimes toward mysticism in his works. Although we cannot consider Stoicism in general to be a mystical philosophic branch, in relation to other schools of philosophy (Peripatetics, Epicureans, Sceptics, Cynics and others) it is, however, closer to mysticism. Same as Philo, Seneca (representative of the Stoic philosophy of the late period) had considerable impact on Christianity. The Roman Stoic put emphasis on ethics, and considered wisdom and virtue as the final cause of human acting.

Seneca had already in his childhood extraordinary education, since his first teacher was his father, Seneca the elder, from whom he inherited the magnificent style of expression. Of few main branches in philosophy, Seneca the younger has chosen Stoicism. Although he had as the member of the narrowest circle of Roman élite, an opportunity to enjoy wealth and respects, he preferred life in reserve and modesty. Stoicism of Seneca is not a religion, yet it contains some religious elements. Philosopher's attitude toward God manifests itself maybe in the best way in his work *On Benefits*: «What else is the nature but God and God's mind that permeates all the world and all its parts». Seneca says that under his benefits everything comes to existence, because he is the protector and warden. It can be said that he also deepens the meaning of God in relation to those Stoics, who only identified him with nature. For Seneca, «nature does not exist without God, neither does exist God without nature, but same is one and the other, differing only according to doing one's duty».

The connections between Seneca's Stoicism and early Christianity could be surmised on the basis of correspondence between the philosopher and St. Paul that comprises 14 letters. Beside the fact that historians and theologians still discuss the authenticity of the letters, it is sure that Seneca had great influence on Church fathers, like Jerome, Tertullian, Ambrose. There are also certain lines in Bible, indicating that contact between Seneca and St. Paul could have happened. So in *The Acts* we read that Annaeus Novatus Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, took sides of Paul, when he was accused by Jews in Corinth (*Acts 18,12-16*). On the other hand, we can see the influence of Stoic method of teaching, *diatribe*, in the *Epistle to the Romans* of Christian preacher Paul. It is possible, according to that, that there really were certain contacts between Seneca and St. Paul in Rome.

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<sup>3</sup> Philo of Alexandria, Jewish mystical philosopher of the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

As his predecessor Seneca, so the next great Stoic philosopher Epictetus intermittently inclined to mysticism in his teaching. In distinction from Seneca, who belonged to rich patrician stratum of society, Epictetus was a slave, brought from his native Hieropolis (b. 50 AD) in Asia Minor. His master, member of Nero's bodyguard, set him free, because of his distinctive sharpness. His teacher was Roman Stoic Musonius Rufus, and later he taught by himself. In 94 AD he was expelled from Rome, together with other Stoic philosophers, because of his criticism on the emperor's Domitian account. Although later he was allowed to return, when Nerva came to the throne, Epictetus decided to remain to the end in Nicopolis of Epirus, where he founded a philosophical school.

This important Stoic philosopher has not left written works after him, but his disciple Flavius Arian, according to the notes from lecture made up *Enchiridion*, the work that outlines the core of Epictetus' teaching. The accent is indeed on ethics, like by other Stoics, and it is rationalistic by Epictetus – life in accordance with nature, to wit mind, with avoiding passions, which he calls 'diseases of the soul'. The central concept is freedom, and she is composed of the inner, spiritual independence of man. Only the wise man is free and he does not seek good and evil in outer, but in himself, so to wise man it is all the same, were he in prison or at large. Equally with St. Paul, he compares the aspirant on a spiritual path with the athlete, who must be strong and brave in overcoming difficulties, on his way to the victory. According to Epictetus, man must strive after the accordance with God, and even to strive after the unity with the Deity. All the things are united with one, heavenly and earthly stand together in mutual relation and our souls are therefore in tight connection and touch with God as his part.

Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius was born in 121, in patrician family of Hispanic origin. Already in childhood he showed interest for philosophy and Greek culture in general. He was adopted by Roman emperor Antoninus Pius and acquired his education by the teacher in rhetoric Favorinus, and by Stoic Rusticus. Already in his 19th year he became a consul, and by the age 26 he became a tribune. At 40, he replaced his foster-father Antoninus Pius on the emperor's throne. However, as it was said before, for the need of defense of empire's borders, he used to go for war campaigns to distant eastern and northern regions. So he made war with Parhians (162-166), rejected and defeated the tribes of Marcomanni, Quadi and others in the north (167), then again from 177 until his death in 180 in Vindobona (today Vienna). Just during the warfare with German tribes he wrote in Greek language *Discourses with Self*, work translated in Latin as *Meditations*, in which predominate components concerning ethics, just like by other great Stoic philosophers. Besides this work, also is preserved an epistle of Marcus Aurelius to the Roman Senate, in which he informs the Senate about the brave attitude of the members of Christian religion in war, and testifies that they are not atheists, but respect God even more than other soldiers. He cites that Christians prayed not only for him, but for the whole army, to be saved from hunger and thirst, and accordingly he gives instructions to Senate, not to condemn Christians just because they belong to this faith.

This is yet another proof of emperor's great ethics. As it says one of the proverbs from his *Meditations*: «Consider yourself to be worthy of each deed and speech which are in accordance with nature». Marcus Aurelius contemplated about nature, i.e. world as a whole, he perceived the universe as one being, with one body and one soul, and meditated about the interrelationship of everything in the universe, and mutual relation of things, that follows from it. The world is one, says this last great Stoic philosopher; it is composed of all that exist; there is only one God in everything, one essence, one Law, one Logos common to all the rational beings, and only one truth. Emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius, just like his predecessors, will have an influence upon the forthcoming philosophers of Neo-Platonism and Christianity.

### 1.3.2. Apuleius' *Asinus Aureus*

In the course of the 2nd century yet another Roman writer, Apuleius, was distinguished by his mystical philosophic works. This Platonist, born about 125 in Madaurus in northern Africa (today Alger) is most known for his work *Metamorphoseon libri XI*, later called *Asinus Aureus (Golden Ass)*. In Carthage he got the rhetorical education, and in Athens of a philosopher, deepening his knowledge by his journeys through Greece and Eastern Roman Empire. He was especially interested in mystery cults, so in his teaching he was close to Plutarch. For some time Apuleius stayed at Rome, where he worked as a lawyer, and afterwards he returned to northern Africa (today Alger). In the town Eji he married a rich elderly widow, but after a while wife's relatives accused him for sorcery and seduction by prohibited means, so he had to defend himself from these accusations at the court. It is most probable that writer was set free from the charge, since he afterwards moved to Carthage. He spent the last part of his life far from the public life, performing the duty of the priest of emperor's cult, therefore just like Plutarch.

In the aforementioned work *Metamorphoses*, there are described the adventures of the main character Lucius, who, drifted by curiosity wanted to turn himself into a bird, by magic potion from the workshop of a sorceress. By taking the wrong vial, however, he turned himself into an ass. The first ten books present the description of Lucius' troubles, through which he passed in the shape of ass, and they have mainly distinctions of fantastic-satirical novel, with interposed fairy-tale about Cupid and Psyche. Only in 11th book we find certain mystical-philosophical traits, when the hero acquires again his human shape, by devouring a wreath of roses, during the procession in honor of the goddess Isis. Thenceforth Lucius gave all of himself to the service of the goddess; afterward he is initiated into hers and Osiris' mysteries, and then finally accepted to the supreme council of priests. The first ten books for that reason present the allegoric description of leaving oneself to base passions of which ass is a symbol, while 11th book denotes the salvation in Isis mystery religion, what is at the same time the point of this work.

Of other works, it could be brought out *Apology*, defense speech at his trial, in which he quotes, that he believe to Plato, who says that «there exist some divine forces, after their nature and position, in the middle between gods and men, then they rule over all the divinations and sorcerer's wonders». The work *On God of Socrates* speaks as well about *daimones*, as intermediary beings between the supreme God and mortals on the Earth. This daimones, says Apuleius, are carriers, on one hand of prayers, on the other of gifts, of earthlings and heavenly creatures; they are «between us and gods not only according to their position in space, but also in regard to their spiritual distinctions: with higher ones they have in common their immortality, and with lower suffering». Apuleius is the representative of so called mid mystical Platonism, and his teaching is eclectic, as by the most of his contemporaries, comprising the wide spectrum, from the postulates of the Academy, through the Peripatetic logic and natural-scientific interests up to neo-pythagorean mysticism.

## 1.4. CHRISTIANITY

### 1.4.1. The First Christian Philosopher Justin

In the beginning of the 2nd century, in Flavia Neapolis in Asia Minor was born Justin, one of the first Church fathers. Firstly, he was philosopher of the Platonic line, but converted to Christianity about the year 130 AD. Justin was an eclectic, and he drew the inspiration from different philosophical systems, but mainly from Stoicism and Platonism. By Stoics, this Christian philosopher appreciates especially their ethics, accepts their theory about the universal conflagration and accepts (somewhat reshaped) their concept of the creative Word. In his *Apologies* Justin endeavors to find points of intersection between the Hellenistic philosophy and Christianity. According to him, in one, as in the other, there is a share in Logos, partly implanted in men, and entirely manifested in the figure of Jesus Christ. Theory of the full share in God's Word (Logos) comes to expression only in stoicism. By Justin we also find the belief that Greek philosophy literally borrowed doctrines directly from Bible. Justin opposes Greek philosophy with transcendental character of Christianity, and he asserts that Christian doctrine is superior, since «the real word becomes Christ, who manifested himself for us, by his body, word and soul».

Although the Roman rulers of the second century showed considerable tolerance toward Christians, philosopher Justin ended his life by an execution, most probably in 165 AD. Since in that time on the throne was emperor-philosopher Marcus Aurelius, someone could draw the wrong conclusion that he was responsible for Justin's death of martyr. But the data at our disposition speak differently. As it is well known, during his almost twenty years long rule, emperor Marcus Aurelius was very often absent from the capital. He was military leader in true sense, putting himself at the head of Roman troops, defending eastern and northern borders of the empire. In the time of Justin's execution Marcus Aurelius was engaged in exhausting war with Parthians, on the territory of today's Iran. Christian philosopher was in fact condemned by prefect of Rome Rusticus and most probably through the mediation of Cynic philosopher Crescens, who plotted against him. The official reason for the condemnation was disrespect toward the rituals of sacrifice to Pagan gods, and disobedience toward the emperor, so Justin was executed, together with six of his fellow Christians.

### 1.4.2. Christian Catechetical School in Alexandria

By the end of the 2nd century Rome loses its primacy of the leading town in the Empire, and in that time are founded two philosophical schools in Alexandria. One is Christian, under the leadership of Pantenus, while the

other, Neo-Platonic, was founded by Ammonius Saccas. It is quite natural that, in that time new, Christian philosophy found her 'home' in Alexandria, the big centre of trade and culture of the eastern part of the Empire. In that time there had prevailed climate of tolerance, philosophers were mostly eclectics, and in their study of old philosophers, they paid most of their attention to Plato. In addition to Christians and Neo-Platonists, in Alexandria was also influential the sect of Gnostics. Its most prominent representatives were Basilides and Valentinus, their teaching presents a kind of theosophical eclecticism, which by the inner cognition of divine attributes endeavors to amalgamate different religions and to give them a deeper sense. Gnostic syncretism included a wide spectrum of teachings, from the Babylonian astral mythology, Jewish Kabbala, Egyption religion, Persian Zoroastric dualism to the Platonist Greek philosophy. For the Christian mystical philosophy Gnosticism is of importance, because Christian Church took over from it a large part of its mysticism, sacraments, and the thought about the salvation and redemption.

Influences of Gnostics especially are expressed in works of Clement of Alexandria, philosopher who replaced Pantenus on the head of the Christian catechetical school, about 190 AD. Clement considered Gnostics real and true admirers of God, that aspire toward the greatest achievable similarity with God and Christ. This philosopher, born in Athens by the half of 2nd century, was also under influence of Philo, especially regarding the allegoric interpretation of the *New Testament*, and also of Stoic and Platonism. Clement's most important philosophical work is trilogy that consists of three books under titles *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus* and *Stromata*. The first book is a call, persuasion to the faith, written in a sublime poetic manner. He compares Christ with the canticle that in people incites music, drifted by Holy Ghost, and put him in superior position, in relation with Pagan poets and philosophers. Clement also shows the transcendence of Christian religion, and emphasizes that man was born of God and Word is one, which calls man to him. The second book, *Paedagogicus*, is a practical treatise, which calls Christians to lead a disciplined way of life, so in this way man could become a real Christian.

The work *Stromata (Miscellanies)* presents, as the very name suggests, a collection of texts from different fields, without some distinct order or plan. Clement alone compares his work with a meadow, on which at random grow different kinds of flowers. It is possible that these are annotations from the lectures at the catechetical school that he conducted. But, in spite of all the divergences, this is also the philosopher's most comprehensive work. In it is depicted the importance of philosophy for the acquirement of Christian knowledge. Maybe this presents some kind of self-justification, in relation to more conservative teachers of Christianity, who entirely rejected Platonism and non-Christian religion in general. One of the important themes in *Miscellanies* is relation between faith and knowledge. Clement namely always gives priority to faith and says that the first cause of the universe is reached in no other way, but through the faith. Faith, founded in love, is something divine. Faith, joined with love actually makes people believers, and leads

them on path of doing what is good. However, it is not good to neglect philosophy. Religious teaching, therefore, according to Clement, has two sources, and perfect Christian, that according to the philosopher is identical with true Gnostic, must not neglect either of them. He quotes the thought of Plato; that we could get near to God, by being as similar to him as possible, which includes, beside faith, also a continuous thirst for knowledge. He, who had reached the heights of perfection, when man is not overcome with passions anymore, he is united with God, and in some mysterious way he becomes one with him.

As the head of the Christian catechetical school Clement was replaced by Origen (born in 185 in Alexandria). Later, he will become surely the greatest Christian Hellenistic philosopher. His undoubted philosophic greatness was admired even by some of the prominent Hellenistic Pagan philosophers, like Porphyry. Origen took the leadership of the philosophic school when he was very young, by the beginning of the 3rd century, when Clement was forced to retire, after the persecution of Christians. In this persecution his father suffered, as he was thrown in jail. After his father's property has been confiscated, young man was compelled to take care of the whole family; mother and six younger brothers. He earned for living as teacher, and also by selling his manuscripts; he was also helped by some elderly woman, who admired his talent. Origen was soon accused that he took advantage of some women, who attended his school. To put an end to such accusations, he castrated himself on purpose, as reports Eusebius in his work *Historia ecclesiastica*. The same author cites his journeys abroad: to Rome, Arabia, Palestine, Antioch and Greece. In the year 232 Origen was banished from Alexandria, and he found refuge in Caesarea in Palestine. There he established his philosophical school. In time of emperor's Decius rule, in 250, he arrived in prison, where he has been tortured. Four years later he passed away, most probably his death was a consequence of torturing.

Origen was the first Christian thinker, who rejected Gnostic teaching as heresy, criticizing its dualism and mythological speculations. His significance in the history of philosophy is based upon mainly on his two most important works. One is systematic treatise *Contra Celsum*, which presents response to the work of Platonist Celsus, *True Word*. In *De Principiis* Origen expounds his doctrine, which includes Holy Trinity (based upon the Platonic emanation scheme), pre-existence and transmigration of souls; and finally restoration of all souls in a state of perfection, in a presence of God. The very work speaks as well of man and his free will, and about the inspiration and interpretation of the Holy Scripture.

Since in Origen's time there has not existed yet the definitive attitude of Church toward certain theological questions, Alexandrine philosopher had for the first to face some of them, trying to reduce them into the boundaries of orthodoxy. One such question was, for instance, about the subordination of divine persons of the Holy Trinity. Origen, although considering them inseparable, yet ascribed superiority, according to position, to Father as Creator, and Holy Ghost as dedicator. In distinction from Pagan

philosophers, who speak about non-created matter, Origen believes that everything that exists outside God, created he himself. God creates through all ages, because it is impossible to imagine the nature of God that would be inactive, or his goodness that would not be efficient at the same time, or his rule without subjects, as he says in *De Principiis*. Accordingly, Origen must accept also an endless succession of aeons that have preceded this world, as well as such identical succession, that will continue after the present one. In the beginning all the souls were created identical, and their present diversity is the exclusive consequence of their use of free will, Origen thinks. From here follow four categories of minds: angels, stars, men and demons. Their parts however can change once, just because of all existence of free will, since only divine persons of Holy Trinity possess the immutable goodness. One of the most important concepts of Origen's philosophy is the universal restoration of all souls (*apokatastasis*). This teaching was based upon Holy Scripture, as well as Hellenistic philosophy. The first traces can be perceived still by Heraclitus, who held that «beginning and the end are common». Origen has not pictured salvation only for the elected, who will rejoice in heaven, while others suffering in hell, but as reunion of all the created souls in God.

Of the lesser Origen's works, by its mystical importance is distinguished *The Prayer*. Philosopher says that there exists the prayer of the exhibitionist, and of the ignorant one, but the true prayer is by one who loves the prayer. For him, the Kingdom of God is inside the one who pray, so he says that «God is elevated by one who dedicates him abode inside himself». Under 'Kingdom of God' Origen understands a state of perfection of the higher part of the soul, citing Paul's thought from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, that «he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit». Prayer, therefore, presents the unity with God.

Origen is one of the most influential Church Fathers of antiquity, but in spite of it, he was never beatified. The reason for this, as it seems, is more in his youthful inclination toward corporeal pleasures, than his heretical teaching, about the existence of series of successive aeons, in which souls are purified (or virtually, the teaching of reincarnation). A part of Origen's teaching was anathematized as heretical on Church Council at Constantinople in 553. The Council was convoked by Byzantine emperor Justinian, and Pope Vigilius, although happened to be in town, refused to attend it. The conclusions of the Council he signed only additionally, seven months later, under the pressure from the emperor. A significant fact as well is that three next popes, Pelagius I, Pelagius II and Gregory the Great in their debates related to the Council do not mention, either Origen or his teaching. According to this, and since Origen's works are printed freely by Catholic publishing houses, one could draw a conclusion that this great philosopher has never been considered a heretic in a true sense of the word.

#### 1.4.3. Gregory's 'Mysticism of Light'

Christian theologian and philosopher Gregory of Nyssa was born approximately at the same time as the emperor Julian the Apostate, in Cappadocia, in Asia Minor. It is very likely that there were no contacts between two philosophers, although there is a little possibility that they met during Julian's stay in Cappadocia. Gregory was one of the three Church Fathers of Cappadocia, together with his brother Basil and his friend and namesake Gregory of Nazianzus. These three Fathers are reckoned among the greatest Church authorities and among most venerated saints of the East. But, Gregory of Nyssa, with his mysticism and largeness of views surpassed the other two. His teaching will become a source for knowledge for the latter Christian mystics.

Gregory of Nyssa springs from deeply religious family. His mother was daughter of Christian martyr, and two brothers, Basil and Peter, became bishops, just like himself. Elder brother Basil gave excellent instruction to Gregory, but wanted him to choose monasticism as the way of life, with which younger brother did not agree. In his youth Gregory received also a solid education in Pagan religion. As young man, he chose a secular career and got married, in spite of endeavors of the members of his family, to turn him toward the Church, to devote himself completely toward religious life. Gregory has been studying, and afterwards also teaching rhetoric. In philosophy, he was under the influence of Plato and Plotinus, Stoics; Philo and Alexandria school, especially Origen, who aroused in him a disposition toward the mystical thought of East and West.

Around the age of 40, Gregory after all became a bishop in Nyssa, a little town on the banks of the river Halys, on the way between Caesarea and Ancyra. This duty he accepted unwillingly, after persevering and repeated persuasions of his elder brother Basil. In those times, in 4th century, episcopal duty was coupled with many troubles and dangers, and accordingly many men simply refused it. It was not uncommon for potential candidate just to run away and afterwards to be brought back and to be consecrated on his duty. If it was so or not in Gregory's case as well, it is not known. However, later Basil did regret, from time to time, that he put brother on such high duty, because Gregory, with his naive and awkward moves interfered in his agenda of Caesarea bishop. For instance, one such move was convocation of the Synod in Ancyry in 372, and yet in 375 Gregory seemed incapable of conducting the Church, according to his elder brother.

Gregory had to face great difficulties in his diocese. There were those who had pretension toward his station, like one of the courtiers of the emperor Valens. Demosthenes, governor of Pontus, accused Gregory for wasting church property, as well as irregularities concerning his election for a bishop station; finally, after the Synod in Nyssa he was dismissed of his duty. After Valens' death in 378 he again became bishop of Nyssa; his real period of activity began after death of his brother Basil, in the next year.

What is most important in connection with the life's work of Gregory of Nyssa, of course is not concerned with his agenda of a bishop, but as

Church writer, theologian and philosopher. Many of his works deal with subject matter related to the Holy Scripture. He was, as it was mentioned, a great admirer of Origen, and in his exegetic interpretations he always took up allegories, and mystical meanings hidden beneath the literal meaning of texts. He taught that the soul must raise her above the feelings, and that real peace can be achieved only after one had despised all the worldly things. Of his exegetic works, great importance goes for his homilies. Homilies on *Canticle of Canticles* speak about the union of soul with his creator, while the characteristic *Homily on the Feast of Light*, i.e. about Jesus' baptism tells about water as symbolic mean of soul's cleansing, by which is achieved spiritual brightness.

That mysticism of light is characteristic for all the Cappadocian fathers, and especially for Gregory of Nyssa. Kingdom of God represents the light of contemplation; transcendence is the source of light, and mystic in his contemplation becomes one with that light, achieving union with the Creator. Gregory speaks about the mystical, spiritual marriage, which can be identified with celestial good, and he belongs to children of light, God's children. By mystical life it is opened the gate to secret of words, and when God inhabits the soul, it moves into God. Inspired by St. John's Gospel, Gregory often uses words 'light' and 'darkness', and he compares mystical life with 'darkness of the light', which has the meaning of transcendence of God's essence. In his work *De anima et resurrectione* Gregory says that «one who is in the dark seek for light; who loses oneself in brightness, with his joy replaces the desire». For Gregory of Nyssa, as well as for other mystical philosophers, spiritual path that leads to contemplation represents the topmost point of mystical life.

#### 1.4.4. Mysterious Figure of Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite

Aforementioned mystical philosopher who took name of Dionysius Areopagite (a convert of St. Paul from Athens) is one of the most mysterious personalities in the history of mystical philosophy. Not to be confused with original figure from *The Acts*, in literature he was named Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite. Even after 15 centuries, this philosopher, who is supposed to have lived on transition from 5th to 6th century, is shrouded by veil of mystery. We can only surmise of his birthplace and time of birth (although some think that he springs from Syria), about his education or job and duty that he performed. The only fact that can be established for a certainty in connection with the figure of Pseudo-Dionysius is that his written word and expression bear great similarity with works of Neo-Platonic philosophers Plotinus and Proclus. Furthermore, it is also certain that he was well versed in books of the Old and New Testament, as well as in the works of Church Fathers up to 5th century. In one of his letters Pseudo-Dionysius quotes that earlier he was Pagan, which seem to be quite probable, considering the peculiar character of his opus. Modern theologian R.F. Hathaway thinks that Pseudo-Dionysius was in fact a disciple of Damascius, named Heraskios. If this is really true, of course it is impossible to establish, but there is a great

possibility that this obscure philosopher was a contemporary of the last head of the Academy and his disciples.

The opus of Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite consists of four treatises and ten letters. The work *De divinis nominibus*, as the very title implies, deals with explanation of divine names. The author emphasizes that God's names can be learned only from the Holy Scripture, and that they give us only an imperfect knowledge about God. Among other subjects, Pseudo-Dionysius deals with God's goodness, being, life, wisdom, power and justice. *Caelestis hierarchia* does develop the doctrine about the celestial hierarchy, which comprises nine choirs of angels, divided into three groups. The first triad includes seraphs, cherubs and thrones, the second virtues, domination and powers and the third principalities, archangels and angels. Different choirs of angels, according to Pseudo-Dionysius, have lesser love and knowledge about God the more distant they are from him. Here is perceptible similarity with Proclus and his henades, whose position took over the angels supreme in hierarchy, while other orders replaced Proclus' nous and psyche. The work *Ecclesiastica hierarchia* explains the church hierarchy in the way how Pseudo-Dionysius does see it. So, on the top is Christ as the head of the Church, then «holy sacraments», «teaching church» and «learning church».

The fourth treatise has a symbolic title *Mystical Theology*; this is the first time that concept of mysticism (Greek *mistikos* – mysterious, sacramental) appears in a title of some philosopher's work. This short work has for its subject principles in connection with mystical union with God. *Theologia mystica* also for the first time mentions so called 'negative theology', the concept that will be taken over by Nicolas of Cues in 15th century. For Pseudo-Dionysius the universal cause is neither sensible nor intelligible thing, but it is above each affirmative attitude. Since it is also above each negation, it is as well beyond each deprivation. Direct contemplation of God is not possible; it is possible only to contemplate the place where he is. In mystical darkness of ignorance, each cognitional perception is extinguished and one enters in the state of transcendence and unity with universal cause. Just because one does not cognize anything, he cognizes above the Intelligence, says Pseudo-Dionysius, and his mysticism bears irresistible similarity to the teaching of emptiness of Buddhist Nagarjuna, as well as to the 'dark teaching' of Taoist Wang Pi.

## 1.5. HEBREW RELIGION

### 1.5.1. Allegoric Interpretation of the Holy Scriptures by Philo of Alexandria

In the 1st century a real revival of mystical philosophy occurred, as in that time acted many mystically oriented philosophers and/or philosophers that at least partly inclined toward mysticism. One of such was Philo of Alexandria, born about 25 BC, in town after he was later named. He was born in a clerical family, one of the most eminent among the numerous Jewish families in Alexandria. Therefore, this town was at that time a peculiar melting pot that brought about amalgamation of different cultures and world-views, so from Egypt, as from Greek and Jewish tradition. Philo received, along with traditional Jewish education also the knowledge in Greek philosophy, so in his works is seen the influence of Stoic theories, Plato's dialogues, neo-pythagorean works, as well as works from Cynic school.

As young man, Philo showed propensity toward ascetic, retired, contemplative life, but because of high public office that he performed, it was not possible to him, to lead such a life. His works, especially *De vita contemplativa*, show great sympathies for Therapeuts and Essenes, two kindred Jewish ascetic sects. Therapeuts, as well as Essenes sought for peace outside towns, where they could be completely fulfilled with religious veneration, study of the scripts and deep contemplation. Philo took over from them a method allegoric interpretation of the holy scripts. As he quotes in *The vita contemplativa*, Therapeuts with their mystical interpretation of the Law differ literal interpretation as body, and allegoric and symbolic meaning, that presents soul, and it is reached by contemplation. By that, as he says is brought to the light the secret meaning to those, who are able to perceive that, which is hidden behind the visible. The importance of Philo's teaching is in the fact that he, with his syncretic understanding of Jewish religion and Hellenistic philosophy trod down the road to latter Church fathers, as Origen and Clement. With his theory of logos (which he describes as God's word that acts upon souls and calms the passions), he gave a new meaning to this term, in relation to the teaching of Heraclitus and Stoics. Therefore, his originality is reflected in moral interpretation of God's acting upon the world, in distinction with the earlier interpretation of acting of the cosmic powers.

## 1.6. HINDUISM

### 1.6.1. Patanjali's *Yoga-Sutras*

Indian philosopher Patanjali lived most probably in 2nd century BC, although about his life, same as about his time of birth and birthplace cannot be said anything reliable. Some scholars identify him with grammarian Patanjali, while others assert that they are two different persons. The reason for these indecisions is non-existence of any historiography in India, for the period that corresponds to European antiquity. What can be said with certainty is that this Indian philosopher is the author of the greatest text of Yoga-school of Indian philosophy, *Yoga-sutras*. However, he is not, as quotes Mircea Eliade in his work *Yoga*, the creator of the very philosophy of yoga, neither the inventor of yoga techniques; he just exposed in a written form the teaching that has been passed on orally, from generation to generation. The word 'yoga' appears for the first time, in all likelihood already in *Katha Upanishad*, where it is simply said that yoga is the state of calmed senses, and «the knowledge of inner unity».

Yoga is not only the practical system of exercises, breathing and meditation, but also the separate system of philosophy, one of the six scholastic systems of Indian philosophy called darshana (viewpoints). Yoga philosophy is in narrow connection with *samkhya* philosophy, because they are two similar systems. It is considered that the creator of *samkhya* philosophy is Kapila, philosopher who lived in 8th century BC, and this is also, according to the tradition, the oldest philosophical system. The main difference between *samkhya* and yoga is that former is atheistic, and in it the path toward salvation leads through the metaphysical cognition. Yoga, on the contrary, postulates the existence of one God; the final cause is reached through the techniques of meditation (*dhyana*). Of the greatest importance in this system is the technique by which yogi controls himself, his passions and desires, and that is concentration (*dharana*).

But, the whole system includes also the rules of inner and outer discipline, proper physical exercises *asanas*, regulated breathing (*pranayama*), control of feelings – *pratyahara*, which together with aforementioned techniques of concentration and meditation brings to a higher level of consciousness, which is *samadhi*, state that can be identified with Buddhist *nirvana*. In *samadhi*, yogi becomes one with the universe and in that way he brings his own consciousness in the state of eternal peace, freedom and harmony. As *Yoga Sutras* cite, «The union of the self with the Supreme is the outcome of the restrain of the thought current from the mind of ego, control of cognition and annihilation of ego». For the achievement of the mystical unity with God it is necessary to achieve freedom from desires and passions. In this we can

perceive the similarity with the Stoic school. Zeno namely considered that passions are irrational and unnatural movements of the soul and wise man must get rid of them.

## 1.7. BUDDHISM (INDIAN)

### 1.7.1. The Enlightened One – Gauthama Buddha

Buddhist religion was, opposite to Confucianism, already from the beginning oriented toward the mysticism. Buddhist mysticism, as Andrew Harvey cites, begins with the moment of enlightenment of his founder, religious reformer Gauthama Buddha. It took place about 528 BC, in the north of India, in the place named Bodhi Gaya. Siddharta Gauthama (under that name he was born) started, in fact, to search after the knowledge in traditional Hindu way, and joined different spiritual teachers, who asserted that they know the way to freedom. Through continuous practice of yoga, Buddha aspired to the union of the self (*atman*) with the absolute (*Brahman*).

Although the descriptions of Buddha's life are in measure interweaved with the legend, yet some facts can be established with sufficient certainty. Buddha therefore springs from noble family, from Shakya tribe. His father was the head, that is, co-ruler of this small republic, which was placed on today borderland between India and Nepal. Soon after the birth, father Siddhodana had son's horoscope be made, by one sage (rishi). Since it was prophesied that Siddharta will become either a great warrior, or a great spiritual teacher, father has done his best to assure the realization of the former, and not the latter. He had three cottages be made, in which his son has been taught of science, art and martial arts. In his cottages Siddharta spent his days isolated from outer influences. Later he got married, for a female relative of his, named Yashodara, and got a son, to whom he gave a name Rahula. He felt somehow fettered in all the luxury that surrounded him, so he gave to son the name which means «chains». Everything fettered him, pleasure, power, the family, wife and child. Since the family life has not brought him joy anymore, he decided to leave his home and to become homeless. This way of life is still practiced in India, by those who research for spiritual truths (*sadhu*). According to the legend, this spiritual change, in this future great spiritual teacher occurred after so called «four visions of sights». Siddharta namely, as the story goes, on his three excursions to the outer world faced the life's reality, in the way that he was not used to, or maybe even knew before. He saw the suffering in its three forms; firstly, the feeble old man, afterwards the sick man in terrible pains, and in the end the mourning train, that carried a corpse of some man. After these three sights deeply shook him, on his fourth exit he met a happy and contented monk, who travelled about with his beggar's dish. This fourth exit into the outer world was decisive because thereafter Siddharta left home and his family he devoted himself entirely to the pursuit of spiritual knowledge.

Firstly, Siddharta Gautama joined a few brahman teachers, but he was not entirely satisfied, because he aspired to the pure, supreme spiritual

knowledge. He subjected himself to the strictest asceticism and he spent some time alone, until he acquired five followers, who followed him in the uttermost self-denial and extreme fasting. But, everything that he accomplished was, that he ruined his health. He realized, that he made a mistake, and that by this kind of life he has not come nearer to spiritual truth. When he abandoned strict fasting and started to take regular meals, his disciples, disappointed, have all fallen from him. Once again he remained alone, but still decisive to persevere on his way. He decided to direct all his energy to the achievement of holiness by the meditation. By sinking into contemplation under the fig tree he finally achieved the enlightenment and became Buddha. His enlightenment had three levels. On the first night of meditation he saw all his former lives passing before him. On the second night he comprehended the cycles of repeated births and realized the law after which they happen. On the third there were revealed to him the four sacred truths: the knowledge of suffering, the origin of suffering, the liberation from suffering and the way that leads to the liberation from suffering.

The enlightened Buddha was firstly indecisive about his newly acquired knowledge, and he was not sure whether the humanity was ready to accept his teaching. According to the legend, then appeared god Brahma Sahampati and persuaded him to pass the doctrine further, even though because of few. Soon Buddha gathered around him a group of followers and of them was made a community of monks, *sangha*. After this enlightenment Gautama traveled for 45 years across India, teaching and living as beggar monk. In his 80th year Buddha died in town Kushinagara, from the consequences of food poisoning. According to the Buddhist teaching, then he entered *parinirvana*, i.e. the state of total extinguishment, from which there are no more repeated births.

After Buddha's death, his disciples continued his teaching, passing it onto new generations, from one to another. The teaching has been passed over by oral tradition, so the first written notes appeared not earlier than 500 years after Buddha passed away. Those first notes date from the first century BC. The basic collection of notes is called *Pali Canon*, after the language in which it was written. This collection was the main source for the conservative Theravada Buddhists. More broad-minded Mahayana Buddhists acknowledge many more authoritative texts, as for example *Sukhavativyuha (The Description of Raja Sukhavati)*, *Sadharmapundarika (Lotus of the Good Law)*, *Lankavatara (Revelation of Teaching in Lanka)*, and above all *Prajnaparamita Sutra (Guide to the Perfect Wisdom)*. According to Mahayana Buddhists, salvation is not destined only to a few men of special moral perfection, but to all the mankind. From the lap of Mahayana Buddhism, afterwards singled themselves out Vajra-yana Buddhism in the 1st century AD, and Chan Buddhism, in 6th century AD; these lines were more mystically oriented; these lines were more mystically oriented, about them there will be more said later.

### 1.7.2. Vajra-Yana Buddhism

Renewal of mystical philosophy in 1st century has not caught only the territory of Roman Empire, but that happened also in India, in the form of *Vajra-yana* Buddhism. Buddhism divided itself very early, as it was said before, in two main movements, Mahayana and Theravada. In course of time in Buddhism appeared many subgroups, and the first bigger was Vajra-yana, or 'Diamond Way'. Vajra (Diamond) is related to brightness of the most precious jewel in nature, by which is denoted a spiritual way to perfection, in this kind of Buddhist teaching. Vajra-yana represented for Buddhists of the 1st century a new revelation in Buddha's doctrine. In the script *Kalacakra-tantra* it is recounted that king Sucandra went to Buddha and asked him for a kind of yoga that could save men from Kali-yuga (present age of disputes and decadence in human history). He was given an answer telling that cosmos exists in the very human body, he also got an explanation of the importance of sexuality and the way how to control the rhythm of time, by the discipline of breathing. The aim of Vajra-yana is transcendence through outer phenomena of things toward the state of emptiness where the individual is identified with the Absolute (Nirvana).

On the first sight this spiritual way has a distinctive anti-ascetic character, but this relates only to so called left hand way, in which different sexual practices are used, and also meat and narcotics are allowed, all of which is not approved by the right hand way. The right hand way, on the contrary, emphasizes meditative and spiritual discipline, and insists on high degree of purity in behavior and acting.

Vajra-yana Buddhism of the left hand way is regarded identical with Shakti tantrism of Hinduism. *Shakti* represents the goddess or cosmic female power, which is venerated in tantra. She is at the same time also a transformative power of the Divine Mother that acts in the background of all the big changes in the universe and brings human beings to the greatest transformation. In tantrism, body becomes the place of higher knowledge, and nirvana is achieved only in the state of complete liberation of thoughts and feelings. In texts of Shakti yoga it is interpreted under which condition and in what form, in the union of male and female yogi can produce a thought of liberation and achieve the unity of the self and phenomenal world, as quotes Hans Küng in his work *Christentum und Weltreligionen (Christianity and World Religions)*.

With right hand way are especially connected techniques, which serve as the mean for achieving the final cause of the union with the Absolute. *Mantra* presents sonorous form of the deity, it is an expression that is repeated unceasingly and it is believed that her power reaches to the farthest boundaries of the universe. There are used also other means, like meditation on some deity, same as *yantra* – geometrical design on which can be depicted various mantras, and *mandala* – extended yantra which contains meditative forms of deities, and other symbols.

Tantrism developed in the beginning in two bordering regions of India, on north-west (border with Afganistan) and in eastern part of Bengal, therefore in regions that hinduised themselves only partly. Later, this teaching in which are interlaced Hinduistic and Buddhist elements, spread to Nepal, Tibet, China and Japan. In Tibet Vajra-yana took root the most, but it must be said that most of Tibethan Buddhists accept the right hand way, that is, non-Shakti tantrism.

### 1.7.3. Teaching on Emptiness of the Philosopher Nagarjuna

At this same time (which was, on the territory of the Roman Empire marked by the beginnings of the Christian philosophy and Hellenistic philosophic syncretism), appeared in India one of the greatest Buddhist philosophers, Nagarjuna. He lived in 2nd century (after some sources in the first half and after others in second half, on transition to 3rd century) and arises from the south of India, region of Andhra. Nagarjuna is the founder of Madhyamika philosophical school. Members of this school have opposed to Hinayana school of Sarvastivada, which asserted that given things (*dharma*) exist, i.e. posses the entity. Madhyamika philosophers considered that given things cannot have their own entity, because they were caused and they as well yield to transience. In other words, they are empty (*Sunya*). Thus, in the centre of this philosophical system is the teaching about emptiness (*sunyata*).

Madhyamika philosophers have interpreted sunyata as a remedy for suffering. She teaches about th relativity of all things and about the independent appearance of certain entities. For the philosophers of this direction, particularistic views and conceptual systems are not extremes, but possibilities. Madhyamika alone is not emphasized as the absolute truth, exclusive in relation to other truths.

To Nagarjuna are ascribed many works, of which most important is *Madhyamika Karika (Middle Stanzas)*. As regards the other great work, *Mahaprajnaparamita sastra (The Great Treatise about the Perfect Wisdom)*, authorship is not certain, because the work is not preserved in its original form, but in its later Chinese translation. In Nagarjuna's concept of sunyata some Western interpretations have tried to find some kind of absolute, even though negative one. But, the question about the absolute, in the way Madhyamika philosophers see it, is wrongly posed, because it conditions agreeing with wrong perception, diverts from the path of liberation and leads into fallacy. For all that there exist certain parallels with the Western mysticism. First is the similarity with Pseudo-Dionysus Areopagite and his 'negative theology', and the other with yet another Christian mystic, Nicholas of Cues, who asserts that for the knowledge of God it is needed 'learned ignorance' (*docta ignorantia*). About these latter mystical philosophers there will be some words later.

### 1.7.4. Asanga – the Founder of Yogacara

A younger contemporary of Julian the Apostate and Gregory of Nyssa in India was a Buddhist mystical philosopher Asanga. He was born by the half of 4th century, in a place called Taxashila, not far from today's town Peshawar in Pakistan. Asanga was founder of *Yogacara* (Consciousness-only) school of Mahayana Buddhism. He springs from brahman's family, as the eldest of three brothers. All the three became *bhikshu*, i.e. ascetics; Asanga already in his youth became an abbot of the main monastic educational centre in Taxashila. Later, realizing that he lives in decadent times, when there is no proper understanding of Buddha's teaching, he went to mountains, to devote himself completely toward ascetic contemplation. He made a vow to himself, that he will purify himself spiritually, so he spent time in prayer to the future incarnation of Buddha, to Maitreya, a deity in which believed devout Hindu. They believed that Maitreya Buddha abodes in heaven Tushita, where he sits on his throne, in his royal palace, in the midst of gardens, with walkways, ponds, birds and flowers. According to Buddhist texts, this land (that corresponds to notion of Christians' heaven), there is absolute peace everywhere, it is clean, and trees are without thorns. In this land rice grows without being sown, just as it was on Earth in Golden age.

Mystic Asanga practiced prayer and contemplation during twelve long years, in a cave very remote from settled places, in the strictest conditions of the ascetic life. Finally, after these twelve years of ardent endeavors, something snapped inside him. In his mind occurred alternatively two strong suspicions. At one moment he thought that the story of Buddha Maitreya was only a pious myth, and at next again, he thought that he was too sinful, so Maitreya despised him and refused to appear. In any case, present life seemed to him vain and useless, so he considered that any continuation in this direction was only a waste of time. Overcome with self-pitilessness, he thought that he would be more useful by doing some humble service, even sweeping the monastery's floor, to enable in such way the realization of loftier aspirations, in some future life. Climbing down the mountain, where he thought he wasted long years in vain, he wandered for some time, until he eventually came to outskirts of some town. There he saw a wounded dog, had pity on him, and helped him. Suddenly, on the place where dog was, he saw a blazing vision of future Maitreya, with a halo of rainbow's colors. He first stood stunned for some time, and then fell on his knees before him, reciting praises. When he collected himself a bit, he applied to Maitreya, and asked him why has had it been so long for him to appear. Maitreya answered that he was with him all the time, but Asanga could not have see him. «Without compassion, one could not see love», he explained to the mystic.

As legend says, Asanga went with Maitreya to heaven Tushita, where it was explained to him the doctrine of emptiness of Mahayana school, and there have been dictated to him five books of Buddha's teaching. Afterwards, Asanga often went to heaven Tushita, using supernatural power, and gaining new knowledge of *Mahayana Sutras*; when he returned to Jambudvipa, he transmitted his knowledge to others. Maitreya taught Asanga also of *Samadhi at Sunlight*, and after he entered this state, the mystic gained

complete understanding of *Mahayana Sutras*. Because in this teaching the emphasis was on non-dualism, and predominant role of the intelligence, from this springs the name of the school Yoga-Cara («Consciousness-Only»).

#### 1.7.5. Bodhidharma – the Founder of Chan Buddhism

Buddhism arrived to China already in the 1st century AD, however it came upon impetuous resistance of the traditional Confucianism, and later, in the course of centuries, its influence gradually decreased. Buddhist teacher from southern India Prajnatarā decided by the beginning of 6th century, to send his most gifted disciple Bodhidharma to China, to revive Chinese Buddhism and give it a new impulse. Prajnatarā, considered as 27th patriarch of Indian Buddhism proclaimed his disciple for a successor, and Bodhidharma will become later the first patriarch of Chan Buddhism.

Bodhidharma was born in 482 in a royal family, as the third son of a king, in a family that belonged to Brahmin caste. Firstly, his education was steered toward inheritance of father's throne, but later coming into contact with Buddha's teaching, he renounced the high station and inheritance, to dedicate himself entirely to teachings of Buddha. In the year 526, Bodhidharma set out for southern China with a mission to transmit the *dharma* teaching to sarvastivada Buddhists there.

Bodhidharma was welcomed in China with respects, and in the next year (527) he was even received in audience by Chinese emperor Wu Ti, from Liang dynasty. Emperor was sympathizer of Buddhism and vegetarian, and he often dressed Buddhist clothes and practiced Buddhist prayer. Besides, after he came to the throne, he built many temples, helped in publishing manuscripts and generally supported many monks. But, all this did not impress much Bodhidharma, who considered that emperor has been too proud of his knowledge of Buddhism, and of his merits in respect of incitement of faith. Therefore, the emperor got shocking answer to his question concerning his merits, for all that he had done. The Indian wise man answered, that there is no merit in anything that he did. Wu Ti did not understand that his practicing *dharma* do not have a real value, because he did all his deeds with final goal to achieve merits for himself alone. On next question, concerning the essence of Buddhism, Bodhidharma gave another stunning reply: «Vast emptiness and no essence at all». When eventually emperor asked the wise man who he was, he received another surprising answer: «I do not know». Perplexed, emperor afterwards sent away the wise man from his court, not surmising that he talked to the man who will become the first patriarch of Chan Buddhism.

In the beginning, new teaching was not accepted widely. People frowned on Bodhidharma, because they considered him heretic. Only the sixth patriarch, Hui-neng, took a leading part in a flowering of Chan Buddhism. Chan considers that we are too much enslaved to words and logic, and as long as we are entangled in that way, we pass through unutterable suffering.

The goal of Chan discipline is to take new viewpoint, to observe the essence of things. This new viewpoint is called *wu* (in Japanese: satori) and it can be defined as the intuitive insight. Chan teachers use so called *koan* as the exercise and background of a meditation. Koan is some kind of riddle, incomprehensible dialogue or a statement, which purpose is to provoke a contradiction, and from which later in meditation a direct mystical insight is taken out.

## 1.8. TAOISM

### 1.8.1. The Founder of Taoism Lao-Tse

Taoism is philosophic teaching that also originated in the 6th century BC, like others aforementioned. «Tao is the hidden warden of all things, it enriches the good and rejects the evil», says *Tao-te-king*, book which was, according to the tradition, written by Lao-tzu, founder of this philosophic teaching. The knowledge of facts, about the life of this Chinese sage are unreliable, the same as in Pythagoras' case; concerning the year of birth, mostly is cited 604 BC. This year is, namely, mentioned by a Chinese historian Ssuma Tsien, whose biographical facts were later cited by other sources. According to him, Lao-tse was born in feudal state Chou (today Chinese province Hunan) and his real name was Peyang Li. («Lao-tse» is title and not a personal name; it can be translated about as «the Old Master».) The historian Tsien also cites that Lao-tzu was director of state Chou's archive. He lived and worked in capitol, town Lou (today Hohanfu). Of scarce information preserved, it is cited also that he retired, at the end of his life, wrote the work *Tao-te-king* in three days and afterwards rode off to Tibet, to the ravine Han ku, where he spent the rest of his life as hermit. As legend says, he left his work to his disciple Yin-shi. Modern researchers of Taoism consider that Lao-tse was the originator of the basic principles of this teaching, and also that his teaching was upgraded through several generations of his disciples until 4th century BC, when the work *Tao-te-king* got its final form.

The conception about the whole Taoist mystical philosophy revolves is the infinite mysterious Tao, says Andrew Harvey, in his work *The Essential Mystics*. The term «Tao» could be translated as the way or the principle of general happening. In the beginning it denoted the movement of celestial bodies around the Earth, and that regularity was understood as the cause and symbol of all the earthly happenings. «Tao» is, according to that, a kind of the absolute, but also some kind of energy, which emanates from that absolute, and of which all the matter generates. Physicist and philosopher Werner Heisenberg noticed the similarity between the concept of Heraclitus and modern physics, in regard to the likeness of the fire as the first principle and modern concept of energy. «If one substitutes the word 'fire' with 'energy', then Heraclitus' statements can be recognized word for word as the expression of our modern understanding», cites Heisenberg in his work «Physics and Philosophy». Another physicist, Fritjof Capra (*Tao of Physics*) perceived the connections between the concept of the ancient Greek philosopher and Taoism. Heraclitus' world order, in which «the eternally live fire burns and extinguishes with measure», Capra compared with Taoist idea of cyclic turns of yin and yang. These movements happen in natural and

spontaneous way, since for Taoists it is the principle of acting of the whole nature, and it should be also the characteristic of all the human activities.

One of the main aims of all schools and sects of Taoism was the search for freedom. The final cause of Taoists is the immortality. One of the ways for achieving it is release of passions. The continuators of Lao-tse's teachings developed a kind of Taoist religion, which in the course of time turned into the mystical tradition, according to their outer and inner characteristics, but they are all connected by the unalterable Chinese style and by the common characteristic of searching for the unity with Tao.

### 1.8.2. Transcendentalism of Chuang-Tzu

Chinese philosopher Chuang-Tzu surely contributed the most for the further development of Taoism, in 4th century BC; he is the younger contemporary of Plato, in the Far East. We have very little of reliable data about him, more precisely almost nothing, so it is considered that he lived in a certain period of time, between the years 399 and 295 BC. After him was named the book *Chuang-Tzu*, but only the first seven chapters are considered to be authentic. The other, 'outer' chapters were written by thinkers of kindred, yet different theoretical directions. The action of those chapters is often developed on the basis of themes from Inner Chapters.

The style of Chuang-Tzu's writing is at the same time transcendental, and on the other hand, permeated by everyday life. In him there are united the peace of a wise man and movement through the world of a layman. A thin thread of mysticism which draws through his work is interlaced with its rational component. Chuang-Tzu had developed further teachings of the founder of Taoism Lao-Tzu, taking a mystical aspiration of the teacher, and adding to them a transcendental dimension. While he did not believe in God creator in western sense, his faith relied on all-permeating *Tao*, the Way or the One, from which all the things follow, therefore by which are permeated all the created entities, from the lowest to the highest. By the linkage with the One it is realized the state *hsien*, that can be translated as immortality, but also as the total emptiness, in a Buddhist sense. In this state, man is freed from worries and selfish desires, and open to impressions, that transcend single material things.

Chuang-Tzu brought a new term to Chinese philosophy, that is, 'self-transformation', which will become the important principle of Taoism. In regard to this, in literature is often mentioned the dream of butterfly, in which Chuang-Tzu did not know whether is him dreaming of butterfly, or is it a butterfly dreaming of being Chuang-Tzu. This is an example of the transformation of things, and that could remind us of Heraclitus, who believed that life is dynamic, in constant change. Chinese philosopher believed in a possibility to transcend the duality of the existence. In Taoism, namely, dualities or pairs of oppositions are resolved in the fundamental unity.

### 1.8.3. The 'Dark Teaching' of Taoist Wang Pi

Chinese Neo-Taoist philosopher Wang Pi, born in 226, was contemporary of Origen, Plotinus and Porphyry. Already in his youth he manifested his genius, and in a lifetime shorter than 24 years, he succeeded in animating a new Taoist movement, known as *hsuan hsueh*, Dark Learning or Neo-Taoism. He appeared in a period of decadence, after the fall of Han dynasty, and in those tumultuous times the prevailing Confucian philosophy also experienced decay, up to mere practicing of rituals and superstition. In such historical context appeared philosopher Wang Pi, giving new incentive not to Taoist only, but as well to Confucian thought, since he had certain impact on future development of Neo-Confucianism.

Wang Pi felt repulsion toward the atmosphere on courts and toward the rituals that were performed in the name of Confucius. On the contrary, he was attracted by country life and philosophical debates with his colleagues, far from restrictive conditions of the court and government. In Wang's opinion, Confucius' teaching in that time were presented in superficial manner, so he, although having received lessons from Confucius' teaching, turned to Taoist classics Lao-Tse and Chuang-Tse, to achieve enlightenment. He tried to get insight into the basic meaning of their debates, searching at the same time for utter principles, which their teaching was based upon. His aspiration for the understanding teaching of ancient sages brought about his own teaching *hsuan hsueh* (word *hsuan* could be translated as dark or mysterious). The word *hsuan* Wang Pi took over from *Tao Te Ching*, and from it made a key for his own understanding of the text. He held that in the background of the acting of nature, behind words and concepts lies *hsuan*, therefore dark or mystery, which is in fact a root of everything that does exist. From this central idea followed 'Dark Learning', a syncretic combination of Taoist principles and Confucianist concepts. Although he considered Confucius the greatest sage in history, he looked at his teaching through the prism of Taoism. This fusion of two main directions in Chinese thought is best reflected in Wang Pi's commentary to *I Ching*, entitled *Chou Yi Lueh-li*.

Wang Pi' teaching has certain similarities with Plotinus and Neo-Platonists, which may seem peculiar, in consideration of geographical distance between Alexandria and China. So, in aforementioned work, Chinese philosopher says that multitude cannot rule over multitude, but there exists the supreme One, which rule over many. Wang Pi thinks that for many to be supported there is necessary for the ruler to preserve his oneness, in the greatest degree. As his philosophical views in many respects drew near to Buddhism (especially in theory about *wu*, non being), Buddhist philosophers found his concepts and terminology kindred to their teaching. «Non-being is inherent in One. But, when we search for it in multitude, he is like *Tao*, which we can search, but not find, listen but not hear, reach him, but not touch him», says Chinese philosopher Wang Pi.

## 1.9. CONFUCIANISM

### 1.9.1. Confucius – The Harmony of the Cosmic and Social Order

In distinction from Taoists, who searched for the harmony between the individual and Tao, the followers of Confucius aspired toward the harmony between the cosmic and social order. This, second of two famous Chinese philosophers, was born in 551 BC in small place called Chuehli. Confucius springs from a poor family, whose ancestors once belonged to the ruling house of Sung, and they occupied high stations. The philosopher himself has been employed in state service; in his fiftieth year of life he was called to prince's court, where he was the minister of jurisdiction, for few years. He carried through various social reforms, but about the year 497 BC resigned, because of disagreement with ruler's policy and his way of life. Confucius continued to live as a traveling teacher, and at the end of his life he devoted himself to collecting and editing of old scripts, and exposing his own teachings.

It is little preserved of original Confucius' scripts, because the followers of Confucius were persecuted, and writings destroyed, during the times of Chin state, from approximately 221 until 207 BC. Accordingly, today is not possible to extract Confucius' teachings in their primary form. However, to Confucius is ascribed the authorship of four works: *I Ching (Book of Changes)*, *Shih Ching (Poems)*, *Shu Ching (Ancient Scripts)* and *Chun Chiu (Spring Annals and Autumn Annals, i.e. Chronicle of Lu State)*. The Chinese sage has not concentrated his attention on philosophical-religious mysticism, but ethics, i.e. the term *yen* or humaneness. It is the general law that has to rule over the relations in family and in the state that is known in the form of «the Golden Rule» - «Do not do to the others, that you do not want others to do to you». However, in the primary Confucius' work the religious message is only implicitly contained. Only later followers, especially Neo-Confucianism, upgraded the work of their famous teacher, in a mystical direction.

### 1.9.2. The Continuers of Confucius' Work Mencius and Hsun-Tse

The other Chinese philosopher of the 4th century BC, Mencius (the continuer of Confucius' work), is better known for his teaching about ethics, government and social order, than for mysticism. For all that, as John Berthrong remarks in *World's Religions*, book named after him can be understood only in the light of mysticism. Mencius namely tried to show that the very essence of Heavenly Way, the divine power of the universe, became

the human nature. Religious message that was only implicitly contained in Confucius, by Mencius is manifested in a clear way, creating thus the image of the teacher of mysticism.

It is considered that Mencius (or originally Meng-Tse) was the disciple of Confucius' grandson Tse-Se. He lived mainly as counselor in politics and economy at smaller prince's courts, and also as the traveling teacher. When he had retired from the public life, Mencius, with a help from his disciple Wang Zhang wrote a work *Mencius*, which consists of seven books, and it is written in a form of dialogue. Mencius argued with views of his contemporaries, on questions concerning ethics and social teaching; his important is that a sound social order is achieved through the proper education and by thoughtful economic policy.

The next important continuator of the Confucian teaching was Hsun-Tse. He was born about 310 BC in state Zhao, and he went to study to state Qi, when he was 15. The work of Hsun-Tse was to some extent under the influence of Taoism. For him, there is nothing higher than the transformation of man in harmony with natural order. Probably under the influence of Lao-Tse, Hsun-Tse saw the role of heaven as the accomplishment without acting and realization without seeking. After the words of J. Berthrong, the meaning of heaven evolved from the supreme deity (by Confucius) through the oscillation between the supreme deity and moral power, to the meaning of the universe alone, by Hsun-Tse.

## **2. MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES**

### 2.1. CHRISTIANITY

#### 2.1.1. Maximus the Confessor

The beginning of The Middle Ages in Europe is characterized by the dominion of Byzantine Empire, after the greatest territorial enlargement, in times of the Emperor Justinian's rule, until 565. In a period shorter than 20 years after the emperor's death, the Empire lost considerable territories in northern Africa, and also in Italy and Spain. Somehow just at that time, around 580 in Constantinople (today Istanbul) was born the first important mystical philosopher and theologian of The Middle Ages by the name Maximus, nicknamed the Confessor. After Julian and Proclus he was the third significant mystical philosopher born in the capital of the Empire.

Maximus was of a noble Constantinople family, and owing to his education, he became a secretary of the Emperor Heraclios (who ruled from 610 to 641). The Emperor appreciated Maximus very much, but the philosopher decided rather to be a monk, and he withdrew himself to the monastery in Chrysopolis, place not far from the capital. There he stayed for several years and afterwards he went to northern Africa. The governor of Africa Gregory proclaimed himself as emperor and rebelled against central authorities in Constantinople. So Maximus as well fell into disgrace by the Emperor Constans, as he was accused for support of Gregory. Afterwards Maximus takes the road to Rome, where he is sustained by Pope Martin, on account of condemn of Monothelite teaching. This doctrine, that speaks about one only will of Christ (in distinction of Rome that considered he has two wills, divine and human) was the main reason for intrigues, inconveniences and disputes between Roman popes and Byzantine emperors and patriarchs, in the course of 7<sup>th</sup> century.

After his arrival to Constantinople in 655, Maximus will be condemned for his assenting with Roman popes. As the main statement of the accusation it is mentioned his alleged conspiracy with Gregory, in connection with the usurpation of the throne. The process took place only six years later, when Maximus was already 80-odd years old. He was not only anathematized, but also beaten up and mutilated, and then finally sentenced to lifelong banishment and imprisonment. Soon Maximus the Confessor died and later he was proclaimed for a saint, since he paid with life his pleading for orthodoxy and devotion to Rome.

Maximus the Confessor has always been considered one of the leading theological writers of the Eastern Church. His thought is inspired by the Platonism, but also by Origen, Gregory of Nyssa and Pseudo-Dionysius. This comes into expression in Maximus' main works *Scholia*, *Ambigua* and *Mystagogia*, where he explicates the teachings of his great predecessors. Two themes are of special importance in Maximus' works, that is, his cosmic vision and his theory of divinization. Philosopher's vision of the manifested and non-manifested cosmos could be epitomized in a sentence from the work *Ambigua*: "The whole world completely enters the whole God and becoming all that is God, except the identity of nature, he instead of himself receives the whole God." Maximus thinks that divinization is achieved through the asceticism and contemplation, by which is realized the transformation of the physical man into the heavenly man. Similarly to Plotinus, Maximus also holds that "God always wants to become a man in those, who are worthy of him."

Important grains of wisdom are also preserved in Maximus' collections of *sentential* (Lat. *sententia* – thought, opinion, proverb), so of those ethical, as ones of devotional nature, destined to his disciples-monks, for the usage inside the monastery. "In your theorizing about theological themes, do not endeavor to understand God in his essence", Maximus advised, "... but contemplate on his nature, that is eternal, infinite, inconceivable, honest and wise, as well as of his omnipotence, that rules over all and judges everyone." "That, which stands as an impediment on the spiritual path are passions, which begin with egoism, and end with vanity. Physical passions are caused by body, and spiritual, by outer circumstances. From physical passions we are set free through abstinence and from spiritual by love. Everyone who celebrates God in him through suffering, because of justice, and through contemplation – also is celebrated through God's true rays of enlightenment. Absolute love makes no difference between human beings, not even in one trait, but she comprises all equally." In these proverbs of Maximus the Confessor we cannot fail to see the striking similarity with Buddhist/Hindu learning, in relation with liberation of passions, cherishing of unconditional love and aspiration after enlightenment.

### 2.1.2. Eriugena, the Philosopher of the Carolingian Renaissance

In Europe, the beginning of 9<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the rule of Charlemagne, who had been crowned by Pope Leo III, on the Christmas of the year 800. Being conscious of the low intellectual and spiritual level of his Empire's subjects, he undertook decisive moves. So, to his court in Aachen he brought together some of the most learned men of those times. From England there was thus invited Alcuin, in that time the most important theologian and scientist. Just like Isidor of Sevilla or John of Damascus, so was Alcuin rather more encyclopedically and pedagogically disposed; he could hardly be called a thinker or a mystic. But, mainly to him goes the merit for founding the educational system of the medieval Europe. The first Alcuin's pupils were in fact the Emperor himself, as well as the members of

his family. Later their example was followed by other members of the nobility, until then mainly illiterate, too. However, educational reform had just limited scopes and it comprised yet only members of higher clergy, archbishops and bishops.

Charlemagne died in 814, and he left the immense empire to three of his sons, who will divide it among them, some thirty years later. Approximately in 815, in Ireland was born John Scottus Eriugena, the most important mystical philosopher not only of the European low Middle Ages, but also the most significant philosopher in general between 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century. He differed from most of the scholars of then Europe by his excellent knowledge of Greek language, that enabled him insight into works of Christian Greek theologians, like Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, and Maximus the Confessor. Drawing the knowledge from these Eastern authors, as well as Western (Augustine, Boetius) he developed to a great extent original cosmology, in which the supreme principle ‘unmovable self-identical One’ generates all things and afterwards returns them back to himself.

In historical sources Eriugena is for the first time mentioned around 850, in a letter written by bishop Pardulus of Laon, where he calls him “Irishman named John (Johannes), who is at the palace of the king”. The king in question is son of Charlemagne, ruler of the Western Frankish Empire Charles II, called the Bald. Already then a voice was spread abroad, of his extraordinary education, and so the librarian of the Roman Curia Anastasius admired how “this barbarian from a remote land knew Greek”. Bishop Pardulus and archbishop Hincmar gave order to Eriugena to disprove the treatise of a Saxon monk Gottschalk about double predestination. Hincmar was concerned for this heretical teaching not to spread out and consequently engaged the strongest among theologians, who stood at his disposal. Eriugena’s response was the treatise *De divina praedestinatione*, a powerful refutation of Gottschalk’s teaching. In it, Eriugena denies any Divine predestination in connection with evil, emphasizing on the contrary God’s unity, transcendence and goodness. He also points at the fact that God, being perfectly good, wants all the human beings to be saved, so he does not predestinate souls for damnation and hell. By irony of fate, this Eriugena’s treatise has been anathematized, only a few years later. As the reason for condemnation, it is stated his exaggerated emphasis on human free will in the process of salvation. Although philosopher’s script had been condemned, Eriugena himself continued to enjoy the patronage of the king Charles the Bald, who gave him around 860 the task of translating the works of Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite.

The revelation of Dionysius’ works had deep impact on the thought of John Scottus Eriugena. With rapturous feelings he accepted Areopagite’s main ideas, like a distinction between the affirmative and negative theology and analysis of Divine names, just in metaphorical and not literal sense. Later Eriugena also translated the works of Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus the Confessor, too.

Eriugena's central work, *Periphyseon* (also known under the title *De divisione naturae*) was written in 860's. In this work, written in the form of a dialogue, it is very obvious influence of Greek Christian authors. It really represents a Neo-Platonic 'summa', that is, synthesis of the complete knowledge. In this work, which talks about the nature, under 'nature' is understood that, which is real in the widest sense, that is, the totality of all things – of God and his entire creation. Eriugena's division of nature is fourfold; first, that which creates and is not created (i.e. God), that which creates and is created (Primary Causes or Ideas); that which is created and does not create (Temporal Effects, created things); that which is neither created, nor creates (non-beings, nothingness).

The first book of the work *Periphyseon* deals with the first division, with God understood as the transcendental One, that is the cause of the entire creation. In the wake of Pseudo-Dionysius, Eriugena sees God as one that transcends all and he represents 'the negation all things'. Therefore, God is virtually nothingness (this reminds of Buddhist mystical philosophers, but also of Christian Meister Eckhart), whose real essence is unknown to all the created beings, including angels. Following Maximus the Confessor, Eriugena says that God's nature is infinite and indescribable. The philosopher sees the act of creation as self-manifestation, where the transcendental God is manifested through divine effusion or theophanies. Focus of the second book is on the analysis of Primary causes, that is, form patterns of all the things located in God's mind, which act as timeless and unchangeable causes of all the created things. This is an eclectic combination of different earlier doctrines, including Platonic theory of forms, or ideas, Dionysius treatise on Divine names and Augustine's renewal of the Stoic concept of eternal reasons.

The third book discusses the nature of created acts and of the meaning of concept 'creation from nothing'. This would have the meaning not of creation of some principle outside God, but, the creation out of God's profuse nothingness, God that creates for himself alone, and all the creation remains inside him. Fourth and fifth book (originally planned as one) discuss the return of all the things back to God. Beside the general return of all things, Eriugena thinks that there exists the special return as well, where chosen ones achieve deification by the complete merging with God, as lights blend into one light, as voices blend in the choir, as a droplet of water merges with the stream. God shall be all in all, deduces John Scottus Eriugena.

### 2.1.3. Byzantine Polymath Michael Psellus

After the decadent 10<sup>th</sup> century and two centuries of philosophical remission in the Christian world, finally in 1018 saw the light future Byzantine philosopher and polymath Michael Psellus. It is not known precisely whether he was born in the very capitol or in nearby Nicomedia. However, it is for sure that he is the most significant phenomenon in Christian philosophy between John Scottus Eriugena and the range of philosophers who appeared

on the scene during the next 12<sup>th</sup> century. In one word, Psellus was the most powerful personality of the European cultural life of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Already as a child Michael Psellus showed a distinctive propensity toward the acquisition of knowledge, and especially toward the wisdom of the antiquity. Although he extremely appreciated wisdom of old, he always knew how to stay within the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy. After he had accomplished his elementary education, he studied law. He was only 17 when he employed himself as judge's assistant in Philadelphia. In his 23<sup>rd</sup> year he comes to the Emperor's court. Firstly he worked as an official, and afterwards he became a state secretary. Under the Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus he becomes a professor at the newly established Academy in Constantinople, but because of his preferences toward Plato, he comes into a conflict with orthodox theologians. In 1054, when occurs a conflict between the Roman Pope Leo IX and Constantinople's Patriarch Michael Cerularius (a conflict that ended in a great schism of the Western and Eastern Christianity) Psellus retires himself into a monastery. But, in monastery he did not stay for long, so he returns again to high public stations.

He remained in the office also during the rule of the next emperor, Isaac Comnenus, who came to power by military coup d'état, so one could assume that he was of rather adaptable nature. By an order of the Emperor, Psellus made up a charge against his namesake Cerularius, who was soon deposed, not becoming thus, according to his own idea, the pope of the East. When Constantine X Ducas mounted the throne, he put in Psellus as a tutor of his son, also named Michael, wishing to make an emperor-philosopher out of him, in imitation of Marcus Aurelius and Julian II. But, this education later turned out to be unavailing though, as the young emperor has been unsuccessful in defense of the Empire's borders, losing territories in Asia Minor and Italy, under the attack of Turks Seljuks and Normans. In this period Michael Psellus came to a height as a politician, performing the function of the prime minister, from 1071 to 1077.

Beside all of his statesmanlike duties, Psellus always found time for writing, so he left numerous works behind him. Among the works (of which many has not been printed yet) the most prominent are *Cronography*, which comprises Byzantine history from 978 until 1078; then, a work of encyclopedic character, *Manifold Teaching*, where are contained treatises of most different fields. A mystical character has treatise *On Demons*, written in a form of a Platonic dialogue. The work consists of two parts. In first he settles accounts with heretics, whom he calls by an anachronism, Euchites.<sup>4</sup> However, here he does not deal with Euchites, as a matter of fact, but with Bogumils, Christian sect whose teaching spread on the territory of Trachia in 10<sup>th</sup> century, and then through Balcans toward the West, where they became known as Cathars. These 'Euchites' were criticized by Psellus because of disrespect and abolishment of orthodox Christian dogmas, so he ascribes to

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<sup>4</sup> Euchites were a mystical sect from the 4<sup>th</sup> century, which Gregory of Nyssa criticized because they gave up themselves to idleness.

them a whole range of senseless charges, like pagans had ascribed to early Christians.

As regards demons, things are a bit more complicated, and by person not acquainted with subject, they can cause confusion.<sup>5</sup> Michael Psellus in his work brings an accurate classification of demons, so he divides them into: fiery, airy, phlegmatic, earthly, subterranean, and ‘those who avoid light’. In the end of this work we can find an interesting remark that can be classified into the medieval psychology. So Psellus says that “by man are not neither muscles nor nerves ones, that feel, but the inborn spirit”. So, it cannot happen, that the body in itself feels the pain, but only because it is participant of the spirit, he deduces. By all means, this reminds of modern age theosophists and their explanation of the functioning of ‘spirit’, i.e. astral body.

It is believed, that Hermetic and Chaldean scripts of Harran’s Sabians arrived to the West just by the mediation of Michael Psellus. Although his interest for the occult and oriental philosophy could be considered to be in contrast with his Christian orthodoxy, it seems that it was just him to be the first link in a chain of transmission of these scripts. Therefore, entire four centuries these works have been a patrimony of Byzantine philosophers, and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century they were carried over to Italy. As regards the work *On Demons*, in which is present a very strict attitude toward heretics, some authors think that the work has been written actually by some Pseudo-Psellus. But, on the other hand, there is also a possibility that Michael Psellus wanted by this work to drive away possible suspicion, about his own heresy.

Psellus’ homilies have a certain trait of mysticism, too. So he, considering Plato’s thought that man is, whereas of God’s origin, in fact a piece of God; in his homilies he quotes that we are really God’s sparks and that “as body lives and moves on, we possess icons and traits of God, through which we become God’s sparks”. Therefore, man as person has to live forever, says Michael Psellus, Byzantine philosopher of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 2.1.4. St. Victor – Center of European Mystical Philosophy

During the 12<sup>th</sup> century France became a center of European mystical philosophy, especially the Parisian monastery St. Victor. This monastery was founded by the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century by William of St. Thierry. This

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<sup>5</sup> Although the name ‘demon’ by medieval theologians and philosophers has totally negative connotation and it denotes an evil spirit, its original meaning is different. Thus in the antiquity demon often denoted a protective spirit or deity, and by Socrates for example, he represents a personification of conscience. But, after Christianity had become the official religion of Rome, the concept of angel pressed out demons in their meaning of good spirit, same as genii of ancient Rome. In other words, pagan good spirit became a Christian evil spirit. For example, John of Damascus in 8<sup>th</sup> century says about demons, that they cause wickedness and impure passions, and that for them a punishment of eternal fire in hell is prepared.

theologian and mystic had been born about 1085 in Liege and he stems from an eminent family. He educated himself, along with his brother Simon, at the Benedictine monastery in Reims. They both embraced spiritual life and became abbots. William became the abbot of the monastery St. Thierry (placed approximately on the half-way between Paris and Reims) in 1119. He had already met before Bernard of Clairvaux, who was the best known mystical philosopher of that time. Their friendship will last until the end of William's life, in 1148.

After 1135, thus at the age of 50 approximately, William had to withdraw himself from the duty of abbot, as he had been in weak health for a long time. He withdrew himself to Cistercian monastery in Signy. Here he devoted himself completely to prayer and study till the end of his life, defying to constant suffer that his illness caused him.

Beside the correspondence with Bernard, William wrote several important works of medieval mystical philosophy. Especially prominent, by their importance, are works *De deo contemplando* (On the Contemplation of God) and *De natura et dignitate amoris* (The Nature and Dignity of Divine Love). The work *On the Contemplation of God* consists of two parts. In the first philosopher describes his own desire for the contemplation of God and in second, the way through which God realizes that desire. According to William, love starts as mere ability of love. This ability, will, is distorted by sin and it must be remodeled. The process of remodeling begins with reminiscence of God's presence in soul. William thinks that form matters, because "when the substance of the inner man has been softened up by long practice of penance, it is impressed and informed anew."

The second work *De natura et dignitate amoris* brings William's classification of four degrees of love (will, love, mercy, wisdom). Will represents the first level, of form which moves itself and becomes love. And love is nothing but the intensive will toward good. Mercy and wisdom are two more sublime levels of love. William equals mercy with love toward that one, which man already posses, that is, toward God. William identifies wisdom with the old age and at this level man has a purified soul, released of its burden and in its perfection ready for the joy of meeting again with God. In physical death, says William, one dies completely for the world, but only to live in plenitude of God.

The best known disciple of William of Thierry, Abelard, had not followed teacher's footsteps; moreover later he came into a conflict with him. This most romantic philosopher of The Middle Ages (famed for his love toward Heloise) in his work *History of Calamities* states that "in the beginning he had been at his will, but later he became very unpleasant, when he started to rebut his thoughts, and took up debating against him". Abelard did not discuss only with William, but also with Bernard, who denounced him to the Pope. After this, Council in Soissons took place; Abelard's work had been condemned and he had to withdraw to monastery Cluny.

Bernard of Clairvaux was born in 1090 in a place near Dijon, in a Burgundi noble family. Parents educated him with special care, because one clairvoyant prophesied, yet before he was born, that he will become a great personality. So they offered to their child the best education, and afterwards, his successful studies left deep impression on his teachers. Bernard became very educated, but also very pious. He showed a special veneration toward the cult of God's Mother, so there had not been anyone who talked and wrote in more sublime manner about her. ("When wind of temptation starts to blow in you, when you get stranded on the rocks of suffer, take up your look toward this star, then invoke Mary. If the waves of pride or ambition or calumny or envy in you agitate, take up your look toward this star, then invoke Mary. Keep her in your mouth keep her in your heart. Follow the example of her life and you will conquer the mercy of her prayer.") After his mother had died, Bernard decided to go to the monastery and to dedicate himself completely to solitude and prayer.

In 1113, along with a group of young men from Burgundy, Bernard entered into the monastery Citeaux, joining the Cistercian Order. Only two years later Bernard was sent to parish of Langres, north of Dijon, to find a new monastery. He called him Clairvaux, and according to him was named himself, too. That is when he got blessing from William of St. Thierry, and thenceforth dates their friendship as well. The beginnings of Clairvaux were painful and full of temptation since in the monastery a very strict regime of life prevailed. However, these severities were soothed after a while owing to William's intervention by the head of the order. The monastery advanced rapidly and here did originate the first Bernard's works, *De gradibus superbiae et humilitatis* (On the Grades of Pride and Humbleness), and *De laudibus Mariae* (On Glory of Mary).

In 1128 it was convoked the Council in Troyes and Pope Honorius II appointed Bernard as Council's secretary. This Council discussed firstly certain controversies among Parisian bishops and problems in connection with French Church in general. However, this Council was also important because on it Bernard sketched rules of the knight order of Templar. The next year did originate work *De laudibus novae militiae* (On the Glory of New Militia), dedicated to Hugo de Payens, knight who founded Templar Order in 1119, in Jerusalem. This is the eulogy of Knights Templar and encouragement and counsel how to behave in their knights' stations and campaigns (A brief retrospection on mystical philosophy of knights' orders follows, in the next chapter.)

Immediately after this work, there originated Bernard's most important mystical work *De amore dei* (On Loving God). In it Bernard's message is, that the way in which God must be loved, is immense love; he also states different degrees of this love. Since we are led by our carnal desires, so it seems to be that our lust and love have their germs in corporeal. But, properly guided by God's mercy through the four stages, love will have her end and purpose in the spirit. Therefore, firstly we have to accept the picture

of earthly things, and afterwards we will be able to grasp the picture of heavenly things. On the first level man loves himself alone, and just because of himself alone. This first level is, accordingly, connected to the corporeal and it cannot have the notion of anything that goes beyond this level. On the next degree, in man occurs a perception that he cannot exist for himself alone; therefore he starts a search for God. However, on this level love toward God is selfish, on account of one's own benefit. In course of time, by deliberation about God, reading God's Word and by prayer and veneration of God's commandments, little by little, one comes at the cognition about what God is; then he is loved not only because he does good, but he is loved simply by an unconditional love. On the fourth level the feeling of love is purified still and on it one loves everything, just because of God alone.

In the next decade, beside the work on his theological and philosophical works, Bernard often has a share of smoothing out of disputes, either among ecclesiastic or lay leaders. An ungrateful role fell to him in 1145, after the fall of Edessa in hands of Turks Seljuks and consequently, immediate danger for Jerusalem and Antioch, conquered in the First Crusade. Namely, Pope Urban II commissioned Bernard for a preacher of a new crusade. After his call for a new war, in France he had come upon massive response. Bernard then decided to go to Germany too, where a huge army of 20 thousand men was brought together. In the course of their campaign toward the Near East, German crusaders committed massacre over Jews. Joined forces of the French king and German emperor returned in 1148, after their troops suffered heavy losses. Bernard had protested by the Emperor on account of the slaughter over Jews, but he alone was accused for the failure of the crusade that he had preached. These accusations had saddened Bernard, so in one of his later works, *Book of Considerations* (dedicated to the Pope Eugenius III), he explained that with crusaders, as with the Hebrew people, God was on their side as long as they respected his commandments; their sins therefore caused their misfortune and miseries in the campaign.

Monastery St. Victor was conducted by abbots Gilduin and Thomas, after parting of the founder William of St. Thierry. After Thomas' death in 1133, the head became Hugo a St. Victor, one of the most important and influential mystical philosophers of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. This philosopher too, like Bernard, comes of noble parents. He was born in 1096 in the family von Blankenburg. Hugo had acquired his education in monastery St. Pancras near Halberstadt. But, because of the turmoil in Saxony his uncle (former William's disciple, and now a bishop) decided to send him to the monastery St. Victor, where he arrived in 1145, approximately. At 37, as it was mentioned, he had become the head of the monastery St. Victor, and under his guidance the school gained a great reputation.

His own works cover a wide spectrum of philosophy and science, that was taught in those times. As a philosopher, he had a clear idea about the science, as purely rationalistic and different from theology. Under 'philosophy' he understood a whole range of knowledge, which can be

reached by natural intelligence. Hugo divided philosophy, in his work *Didascalion*, in this way: theoretical, practical, mechanical and logical. This division comprised the entire existing knowledge. Hugo's hugest work is *De sacramentis christiane fidei* (On Sacraments of Christian Faith). In it he discusses numerous subjects, like for example creation, angels, sacraments, faith, Church hierarchy, baptism, eucharist and others. But, works of the most relevance for the mystical philosophy are *De arca Noe morali et mystica*, *De vanitate mundi*, *De arha animae*, and *De contemplatione eius speciebus*. In the treatise about the Noah's ark, Hugo depicts ark as a symbol which must be interiorized. Afterwards, one comes to the participation in hierarchies, in such a way, that ark shows the history of salvation in our interior, i.e. heart. Through the internalization, one who contemplates ascends, through the levels of purification and enlightenment, to the perfection. According to Hugo, knowledge is not an aim in itself, but it must be just a rung of a ladder toward mystical life, through the thought, meditation and contemplation.

Hugo's mystical teaching was widened and deepened by his successor Richard a St. Victor, his disciple and substitute on the head of the school. About Richard, little of reliable data are known, at least concerning his biography. Thus, it is not known either the year or the place of his birth. It is supposed that he was born about 1110 in Scotland or Ireland. It is known that he came to monastery St. Victor when abbot was Gilduin, therefore possibly around 1130. The first really certain date in connection with Richard is 1159, because there exists a document (a letter) with his signature and title of sub-prior of the monastery. The last years Richard had to endure beside abbot Ervisio, who was adorned with some qualities, not very fitting for the duty he performed. Namely, he was too worldly-oriented, he suffered from the mania of grandeur; he used to spend pitilessly the means of the community and marginalized everyone who did not approve his moves. The discontent with abbot's self-will so reached even Pope Alexander III, who eventually dismissed him in 1172, only one year before Richard's death.

Richard's reputation of the excellent theologian spread far beyond the monastery walls, so also the other religious institutions heartily requested copies of his scripts. Of his works, probably the biggest importance has treatise *De Trinitate* (On Holy Trinity). Richard, as well as his predecessors, emphasizes the importance of contemplation and cognition. So, already in the prologue he brings out his scheme of spiritual ascent. Human spirit, according to Richard, first ascends to the first heaven and that means nothing but to return to one's self. By the ascent to second heaven human spirit gains the glory of immortality and in the third it is joined with very divinity. The first heaven one can reach immediately, to the second he can arrive by accomplishment of virtues and up to the third he is ascended by spiritual contemplation. According to Richard, the highest plenitude of love supposes the highest equality in perfection. In highest simplicity being and love coincide, because in each of the three persons, one's own person is identified with the own love, it is said in *De Trinitate*. Benjamin Minor and

*Benjamin Major* have also a certain value for the mystical philosophy. They deal with mystical contemplation and allegorical presentation of the tabernacle, the tent of Covenant. The tabernacle here symbolizes the state of perfection, i.e. it represents a soul that became the abode of God.

#### 2.1.5. Mysticism of the Knights Templar

The foundation of the Templar Order in 1119, although mostly associated with Crusades, originally had only the aim of protection of pilgrims, on their religious travel toward the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. It is considered that founder of the Order was a French nobleman Hugo de Payens, participant of the First Crusade. At the time of the foundation of the Order he was almost 50 years old. He founded the order along with eight other knights, as militia forces, with a task of protection of pilgrims from sudden attacks of robbers, frequent in those times.

The young Order in its beginnings faced some difficulties, since there were no regulations or sources of income; the official status of the Order was not regulated, either. Knights Templar then wore a lay costume, endowed by their followers; about their poverty tells the fact, that two of them rode one horse. They lived in tumbledown and undistinguished quarters. But, in course of time Templar advanced, they became larger in number and better organized. Bernard of Clairvaux is probably most meritorious for the organization of the Knights Templar. As it was said before, at the Council of Troyes Bernard presented regulations, by which was determined the comportment of the Order's members. The first rule consisted of 72 paragraphs. In times of Hugo's successor Robert de Craon it was extended. The rule consisted of seven parts: Hierarchic Statutes, Penance, Monastery Life, Performance of the Ceremonial Choir, More about Penance, Admission to the Order.

Knights' daily duties were strictly regulated, in imitation of Benedictines. In addition to military duties, those obligations included religious ones as well, like numerous daily prayers and presence at the mass. Bernard's work *De laudibus novae militiae* represents a sermon, which glorifies the Templar. This work was a spiritual inspiration for the knights and an incitement for their courageous enterprises. Bernard, along with his encouragement of knights in their fight for their honorable aims, also set off some ethical imperatives. So he says that Christian must be rewarded already by inclination of his heart, in his fight for the good and holy thing. The objective must not be a mere killing. "It is a sad victory of one, who destroyed a man, succumbing to wickedness and vain conceit..." Knights must strive toward the victory and not glory and they must not allow to wrath and haughtiness to take control over them.

The Templar Order was characterized, along with certain spiritual initiation, also by a hierarchical structure. On the top of the pyramid was a Grand Master, commander-in-chief of the Order, then there followed Major-domo,

Marshal, Commander of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Draper, regional commanders, commanders of the houses, then of course knights as the most important element of the order and sergeants, commissioned for the logistic support. In course of the time there was founded a stratum of joined members, whose duties were not so strict – they joined usually for a determined time, for example during the crusade. The connection of Templar with mysticism and mystical philosophy was not just through the personality of Bernard, but also through the medium of their specific structure of the Order. Namely, such a hierarchic structure will be adopted later by the secret societies like Rosicrucians, Freemasons or Ordo Templis Orientis, which are all organizations important for the modern history of the mystical philosophy. Some authors even consider that after the abolishment of the Order by the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Knights Templar founded a secret organization in Scotland, which was a direct predecessor of Freemasons.

#### 2.1.6. Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon – Pioneers of the Experimental Method

The end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century brought to Germany a rise of dynasty Hohenstaufen, but also a birth of the first really significant philosopher, Albertus Magnus. He was born in 1193 in Launingen, in southern province Swabia. About his childhood and elementary education there is no data, yet it is known that he was sent, as young man, to study at the university in Italian town Padua. After completing his studies, he taught theology in several German towns. Upon his arrival to Cologne he retreated into solitude and devoted himself to contemplative life of a scientist and writer. In 1245 he was transferred to Paris, where soon he will be entitled Doctor of Philosophy, at this oldest university in Europe (established about 1150). His lectures will be attended by a quiet and serious young man named Thomas Aquinas, who will later become one of the most important medieval philosophers. It is probable that just Albert, one of the greatest polyhistor of his time, served as inspiration for Thomas' comprehensive work *Summa theologiae*.

In 1248 Albert was sent back to Cologne, to establish the first general house of studies (Studium Generale) of the Dominican Order. Thomas had become second professor, but only for a while, as in 1252 he returned to Paris. Namely, then became apparent differences after some doctrinal questions between the teacher and his former disciple, as it has been a case many times before, throughout the history of philosophy. But in spite of all this theological discordances, two of them will remain in good terms, until Thomas's precocious death in 1274. Albertus Magnus had performed the duty of provincial of Dominican Order until 1257, and two years later he was appointed as bishop of Ratisbon (today Regensburg). However, in this station he will remain only for a short period, since he soon resigned to dedicate himself to the professorship at the Cologne's university, which he alone founded. In 1269 Pope Urban IV calls him, that as his legate preach another Crusade (The eighth, and in fact, the last one). Albertus traveled for a year

through Germany and Bohemia, ostensibly preaching the new Crusade. Realizing that everywhere he comes upon lukewarm response, he spends more time in studying flora and fauna, as well as geological characteristics of geographical area that he passed through. He returned to Cologne in 1270, and there he will spend the rest of his life.

Albertus' immense opus included, in addition to philosophy and theology, also mathematics, astronomy, physics, geology, botany, zoology, alchemy and magic. For those times he had really an astonishingly wide knowledge, so he was nicknamed 'Magnus', and he was also known as 'Doctor Universalis'. He possessed a great gift of perception and it is in fact obvious from his studies in zoology and botany. On account of his insisting of introduction of experiments in naturalistic researches, Albertus could be called the pioneer of the experimental method. In his work *De mineralium* he says: "The purpose of natural science is not simply to accept statements of others, but to investigate the causes at work in nature and in the work *De vegetabilibus and plantis* he unambiguously asserts that the experiment is the only certain guide in researches.

In the field of philosophy, Albertus Magnus was at those times the most important commentator of Aristotle, whose works he carefully studied. He accepted his principles as well applying them in his systematization of theology; it means that he exposed in the scientific way the apology of the Christian doctrine. He divided philosophy into contemplative, which besides metaphysics also comprised sciences of physics and mathematics and practical philosophy, which can be either individual or family and social. Although in his perception of nature he inclined to Aristotelian methods and experiments faith remained unswerving, so he held that spiritual life in its essence consists of ardent turning of soul towards the divine. Distinctive characteristics of mystical bear two of his works: *De adherendo Dei* (On Union with God) and his commentary of the work of Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite.

In the work *De adherendo Dei* he says that if the heart and soul raise themselves by desire and love from what is beneath them and if the soul recollects itself within the one, unchanging, all-sufficing good, then this soul will be more recollected and strong the more its desires and thoughts soar to God. In the same work he states that man must find his way to his own inner heart and enter himself by longing for the inner light of spiritual joy. Albertus' commentary of Pseudo-Dionysius reveals that philosopher attributes a great importance to negative theology of Dionysian type. To reach the more perfect cognition of ourselves and God, we must get rid of the earthly pictures. "God cannot be seen in his essence, face to face, but he will manifest himself in that way only in the heavenly fatherland." Enlightened and purified soul will perceive God's effects, and not God himself; by ascending above all the created, it will perceive what is supernatural and divine.

It seems that in course of time people began to ascribe to Albertus some supernatural qualities, so in that way originated tales and legends about him as magician and sorcerer. Some Albertus' biographers interpreted these stories simply by his artfulness in natural science, but the fact is, that he occupied himself (along with science and philosophy) also with magic and alchemy. From the work *De mirabilis mundi* can be seen the influence of Arabian philosopher Avicenna, concerning his opinion about magical binding of things. So he quotes Avicenna's thought about the force in human soul, which subjugates other forces to her, when carried by excessive affects. Albertus says that he revealed that the reason for this was sensitivity of the human soul and it is also quoted that astrological time has a certain importance for acting on soul. In the work *Libellus de alchimia* (Booklet about Alchemy) he warned about the secrecy in performing of alchemical procedures, because "insofar knowledge comes to a larger number of people, there could occur some mistakes and thereafter knowledge could be lost."

Catholic Church certainly concealed Albertus' magical and alchemical texts, but some of them came to us, though. It seems that just those works were an obstacle to the canonization of this great philosopher. Namely, Albertus was proclaimed for a saint only six and half centuries after his death, in 1931.

His younger contemporary Roger Bacon has never been proclaimed for a saint, on the contrary, when his was 64, he came into prison because of heresy, where he spent full 14 years. However, the life paths of Albertus Magnus and of English philosopher are in many ways conformable. Like a majority of medieval philosophers, Roger Bacon also springs from a wealthy family. He was born in 1214, in Ilchester in south of England. It seems that already as young man he showed the propensity toward philosophy and especially toward Aristotle. In 1234 he went to study in Paris, where he will graduate about 1240. Immediately thereafter he began to teach about the ideas and theories of Aristotle. In the year 1247 he returned to England, where he became a lecturer at the first English university in Oxford. As Albertus Magnus was also a lecturer in Paris at those times, they had probably known each other. Surely they were not very intimate friends, considering Bacon's too critically disposed mind. Namely, very often was the cutting edge of philosopher's critique pointed at his contemporaries, so theologians, as scientists. For example, on Albertus Magnus he writes that "he does not know anything of the science of perspective, which is necessary in order to know the whole, and therefore, he can know nothing of the wisdom of philosophy." Furthermore, about Albertus' knowledge of alchemy he says: "Indeed, hew who has composed so many and such great volumes on natural matters, is ignorant of these fundamentals of alchemy, and so his building cannot stand..." Indeed, such harsh statements procured to Roger Bacon very few friends among his colleagues, scientists and philosophers.

After his return to England in 1247, philosopher's interests have widened considerably. Until then, his interest has been focused on traditional

scholastic themes, therefore mainly what he had been lecturing in Paris. Bacon's interests changed when he had revealed the work *The Secrets of Secrets*. It is Pseudo-Aristotle's work, in Arabic. This book has for a guiding thought the interconnectedness of all things in nature and also the connection between different sciences and theology. From *The Secrets of Secrets* Bacon draws the inspiration for a kind of a philosophy, which we could call in our modern language holistic. So, philosopher's study gradually included also natural science, medicine, astrology, alchemy and magic, as well as studies in language – Greek, Hebrew and Arabic.

Over the next few years Roger Bacon wrote commentaries of *Secrets*. Philosopher emphasizes a value of the medicine and stresses the importance of the regime of life as prerequisite for the sanity and long life (he alone lived for 80 years, which is quite an old age for those times). In this work Bacon also emphasizes the importance of alchemy and astrology, because of the significance of the principle of correspondence between planets and stars, disposition and qualities, elements and metals. Philosopher considers these sciences very useful for the theology, too.

Around 1250 Bacon entered the Franciscan Order, what was the usual practice for scientists of those times. But, joining the Order also meant an obligatory review of the manuscript by the head of the Order before publishing, which narrowed to a certain degree the possibility of free acting.

Although Bacon had been appreciated by many, the general of the Franciscan Order Bonaventura had drawn him back from his position of lecturer at Oxford to Paris (1257), where he was temporarily compelled to abandon his scientific researches. In spite of this period of remission in his work (which lasted for almost one decade), his impact spread out. So, French Cardinal Guy de Foulques (future Pope Clement IV) became interested in Bacon's work, too. When Cardinal asked him to present his ideas in a work, the philosopher hesitated. On the second inquiry, now of Pope Clement IV, he answered that he is hindered by the prohibition of the head of the Order. Then the Pope ordered Bacon to send him his work, but secretly. Although he had to face problems in the completion of Pope's wish (beside the prohibition of the Order's elders, also with lack of money he needed for the parchment and payment of copying), he performed this task successfully.

In the beginning of 1267 Roger Bacon sent to Rome his disciple, John of Paris, with the work *Opus maius*, in which he had exposed in short his main ideas and principles. John also received instructions how to present a lens (his own invention) and some drawings in the field of physics. During the same year, the philosopher finished his *Opus minus*, the work which presents the recapitulation of the main thoughts from the first work, with an aim to facilitate the reading of the work to Pope. For the same purpose he composed the third book, entitled *Opus tertium*, sent shortly before Pope's death in 1268. Unfortunately, Bacon's friend Pope Clement IV died too early, without a possibility to realize the thoughts and advices he had gotten from Roger Bacon.

Roger Bacon had continued to write in Paris (although he wanted to return to Oxford); eventually in 1278 the General of Franciscan Order (later Pope Nicholas IV) Jerome of Ascoli imprisoned him. Philosopher's doctrine was condemned and rejected, since it 'contains many suspicious novelties'. In 1292 Bacon has been released from prison; the last two years of his life he spent at Oxford, remaining active in his researches until his death.

The life opus of Roger Bacon comprises about 80 works; the aforementioned three are the most important. In *Opus maius* philosopher has exposed his principles of the experimental science. He holds that there exist two fundamental ways of the acquirement of knowledge, i.e. inner and outer experience. This inner experience presents some kind of mystical illumination. It consists of seven degrees, and they are spiritual enlightenment, virtue, spiritual experience, beatitude, spiritual sensitivity, God's peace and the state of rapture. Outer experience, on the other hand includes experimentation, which serves for the verification of the facts. "It is only the fool that chooses reason over faith or faith over reason, for God is the giver of both."

Polyhistor Roger Bacon was way ahead of his time. Like Albertus he held that Earth has a shape of a sphere, and that it can be sailed. In his probably most interesting work *Epistola de secretis operibus* he offered his vision of what will happen in the course of about seven hundred years. So he foresaw that big ships will be moved by a single man and "with a greater velocity than if they were full of men". He also foresaw that cars will be moved by themselves, without horses or oxen, as well that they will be moved with an unbelievable rapidity. In his visions he also saw 'flying machines', i.e. airplanes. Just like Albertus Magnus, so English philosopher Roger Bacon outgrew into a legend. However, fanciful stories about scientist-sorcerer had not foundations in reality, but they reflected the notion of medieval people about omniscient wise men, like were these two philosophers of 13<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 2.1.7. Bonaventura's Itinerary of Path to God

Although in previous chapter mentioned as one who done away with Roger Bacon from his position of lecturer at Oxford, Bonaventura is also one of the greatest mystical philosophers of 13<sup>th</sup> century. Born in 1221 near Viterbo in central Italy, he is as well the first important medieval mystical philosopher from Apennines peninsula. As a child, he had caught a dangerous disease; he was cured and rescued from death through the mediation of St. Francis of Assisi, founder of the Franciscan Order. This event surely had an impact on Bonaventura's joining the Order, around 1240. Recognizing his exceptional talent, elders of the Order sent him to study at Paris University. Since around 1245 there lectured two other philosophers, Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon, it is certain that they mutually known each other. Bonaventura's teacher was Alexander of Hales, Franciscan and founder of

the Franciscan School, in that time already aged. Bonaventura had become his student around 1242. Six years later he graduated. Afterwards, he continued on the same university, as a lecturer, until 1256; then there occurred a kind of animosity toward lecturer-monks.

Bonaventura was appointed general of Franciscan Order in February, 1257, not yet 36 years old. In those times this duty was coupled with big difficulties, because of inner fractions. Ones called themselves 'spirituales', and others 'relaxati'. The former interceded for the absolute respect of the Order's rules, while the latter wanted to bring into some innovations. Bonaventura had succeeded in finding the compromise between two parties; the result was the act 'Constitutiones Narbones', in which are made some minor changes in the Order's rule, but still holding on the basic principles of the founder, St. Francis of Assisi. In the same year (1260) originated the work *Legend*, dedicated to the life and work of St. Francis.

A year before did originate one of the most important among Bonaventura's works, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (Itinerary of Mind in God). This mystical itinerary speaks about, as very title implies, about the stations on our way toward the Union with the Supreme End. Just like his great predecessors, so the Italian philosopher expounds a gradual advancement on the way that leads toward the meeting with God. The man, microcosm, according to Bonaventura, by the six degrees of increasing enlightenment is methodically guided to the peace of contemplation. On the first degree we transcend ourselves in the spirit, by the prayer. "Nobody can reach the beatitude if he does not transcend himself alone, not bodily, but in spirit", says the philosopher. Second degree represents the contemplation of God in all the living beings he created. "This world, called macrocosm penetrates our soul, called microcosm, through the door of five senses..." On the third degree, in our mind we create the vision of God, in which shines his reflection. On the fourth, we contemplate the first principle in our soul and on the fifth the perfections of God, related to the unity of essence. On the sixth, last degree by meditation we immerse into the perfect enlightenment of mind through ecstasy. Therefore, by mysticism we are carried to the sphere of over-mind rapture. Just like St. Francis on the mount Verna, so we meet God in our effusion of love and ecstatic experience.

In his second important work *De reductione Artium ad Theologiam* he again depicts the relation between finite and infinite, natural and supernatural and relation between science and art toward theology. In this work Bonaventura tries to prove, that theology as teaching about God absorbs all the other fields, just like different lights have their source in one God's light. Therefore, philosophy in itself does not exist outside theology, in Bonaventura's opinion.

In 1265 Pope Clement IV appointed Bonaventura Archbishop of York, but in accordance with Franciscan modesty, he refused this honor. It is interesting, that the next Pope was elected according to Bonaventura's advice. That was Teobaldo Visconti of Piacenza, who became Pope Gregory X. Bonaventura

remained on the head of the Franciscan Order until May, 1274; two months later he died. In his secretary's diary (which was discovered in 1905) it is written that he has been poisoned. He was buried at Franciscan church in Lyon, France. When Bonaventura's remnants have been transferred to the new-built Church of St. Francis, it was found that his head remained perfectly preserved and his tongue red as it was during his life. This event not only incited the citizens of Lyon to choose him for a protector, but also a wish for his canonization. However, he was proclaimed saint only half a century later, mostly because of disputes inside the Franciscan Order, after Bonaventura's death.

#### 2.1.8. 'Doctor Illuminatis' Ramon Lull

About the Spanish philosopher Ramon Lull, *Encyclopédie des mystiques* (The Encyclopedia of Mystics), says that "he was Bonaventura's disciple, because in his mystical ascent he follows Itinerarium of soul toward God". However, Ramon Lull was not a disciple of the Italian philosopher in literal sense, because he had not attended his lectures at Paris University. This philosopher was born about 1235 on Spanish island Mallorca, in the biggest town Palma (today renowned tourist resort). Lull's father, eminent citizen of Barcelona, also took part in the invasion of the island, together with Catalonian army of James I of Aragon. So, the philosopher springs from a wealthy family, close to King James; he has grown up in an atmosphere of multifarious and religious co-existence between three great faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In his youth Lull had gotten excellent education, yet he did not incline to religiosity. He became a courtier of King James I, who assigned him the role of tutor to his son James II, future ruler of Mallorca.

Ramon Lull often traveled with young prince through Catalonia, Aragon, Castille and France. In 1257 he had gotten married and soon he got two children. He had continued with travels and joy of hedonistic life until his 30<sup>th</sup> year, when he experienced a sudden conversion. One evening Lull had been engaged in composing a song (he was namely a troubadour), when he had all at once a vision of the crucified Christ. After the vision had repeated for yet three consecutive nights Lull surrendered himself and love toward the world exchanged with love toward God. He decided to become a missionary, who will spread out 'good news' throughout the world. He also decided to devote himself to writing books, which would present to all open-minded people the basic truths and values of the Christian faith.

Three months after the vision Lull joined a celebration of St. Francis feast, where the local preacher recounted in touching manner about his complete devotion to faith and renouncement of the entire property. In Ramon Lull there had been formed an aspiration toward the monkish kind of life and he immediately brought the decision. He left to his wife a sum of money enough to support her and children and set out for the world. He had spent a year visiting various sanctuaries and when he returned home, he dedicated himself to learning of Arabic and Latin. He began to wear a garment of a

rough fabric, which reminded of Franciscan dress and his former peers began to think that he was out of his mind. During the next nine years, as he studied Arabic, he contemporarily immersed himself into the spirituality of Islam, especially Sufi tradition. He also studied Kabbala, which was not exactly in accordance with wishes of the local Church authorities. When Ramon Lull finally felt ready for the service to God and humanity, he was already 40, but he was very well prepared for the missionary task, considering his mastery of languages and various religious traditions.

During his studies, as he sat in contemplation and prayer in a cave of the nearby mount Randa, he suddenly gotten the inspiration for the work *Art abreujada d' atrobar veritat* (The Art of Finding Truth). This book represents a combination of al-Ghazali's logic geometrical symbolism, Kabbala and Trinitarian perspectives of the Platonic Christianity. In the work, Lull developed a kind of algebraic and analogous method for expression of spiritual and philosophical truths. This method will be developed further in his later work *Ars Magna* or *Ars generalis ultima*. Ramon Lull considered that divine manifestation begins with nine dignities or attributes of God, which corresponds to sephirot of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and also to hadras (dignities of divine names) of Islam. These God's attributes according to Lull, are: goodness, magnificence, eternity, power, wisdom, will, virtue, truth and glory. Spanish philosopher wanted to prove that there exist universal doctrines and especially hypothesis that God manifests himself through creative triads, while he alone remains totally transcendental. His manifestations, accordingly, reach the people, awaking them and pointing to their spiritual possibilities.

Ramon Lull is also the author of the first big religious romance *Blanquerna*, which is as well the first European novel and first bigger work written in common language (Catalonian). In short, story goes on like this: the main character, Blanquerna, hermit who lives in wood, becomes firstly abbot, later a bishop and in the end pope. He permanently carries through reforms and as the pope, he thoroughly reforms the Church. But, in the end he renounces everything, in order to achieve enlightenment, by consequent accomplishment of ever higher levels of meditation.

Spiritual treatise *Book of the Lover and Beloved* is the amalgamation of the realistic story and allegory. In this mystical work Lover represents the faithful and devoted Christian and Beloved is God. The Lover wants to climb high; he ascends by his intelligence and soul. Through the contemplation Lull depicts the union by the mystical image of the cloud that became bright and splendid, like Moon and the Sun. A light, or more precisely the light of faith is the central notion of Lull's mysticism. Another book, entitled *The Book of Light* speaks about the enlightenment of the mind and incitement for the understanding of intelligible things and revealing of the secrets of natural beings. Doctrine of the truth's light is the most important to Lull, so it is evident why he was called 'Doctor Illuminatis'.

In the second half of his life Ramon Lull traveled as often as in the first. So he had been several times to Tunisia, where he tried to convert the

‘unbelievers’ to Christianity. He preached the unity of three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam, for the successful opposing to the invasion of Mongolians, which presented a growing threat for the Near East and Europe in 13<sup>th</sup> century. But, for this idea he had not succeed winning over, neither the rulers of leading European countries, nor the Pope. According to one legend Ramon Lull passed away after he had been stoned on his last journey to Tunisia. However, it seems that he returned from that last travel and died in his birthplace around 1316.

#### 2.1.9. Rhineland Mysticism of Eckhart and Tauler

The thinking of German mystical philosopher Meister Eckhart surprisingly bears quite resemblance to Japanese Zen Buddhist Nichiren. Namely, he points toward the depth of soul as the place of God’s birth in man – of God who otherwise is not God. Eckhart, one of the greatest mystics of the West was born about 1260, in eastern German province Thüringen, in the vicinity of town Gotha. Like other medieval mystical philosophers, so Eckhart comes from a noble family, too. But, similarly to Japanese mystic Eisai he perceived at an early age the gap between aristocratic ideals and practice. So, when he was approximately 16 years of age, he joined the Dominican Order. Because of his intellectual abilities, he was chosen for a study at the Köln’s university, established in 1248 by Albertus Magnus. Afterwards he was sent to additional studies at Paris University. On his return, he was appointed prior at Erfurt and later also vicar of Thüringen. Around 1300, already in his mature age, Eckart returns to Paris, this time in a role of lecturer. He leads debates with Franciscans, order with which there was already established a great rivalry. At university, he left such impression, that he was entitled with master’s degree. From that time on, he became known as Meister Eckhart. Three years later he returned to Germany, where he was elected for provincial of Saxony, while in 1307 he was elected for vicar general of the Dominican Order in Bohemia. Four years later he returned to the chair of the Parisian university; from 1314 he lectures in Strasbourg. On 1317 he becomes a prior in Frankfurt and then in 1320 he returns back to Köln’s university, where he remains until his death.

After Eckhart’s death in 1329 Pope John XXII brought a bull ‘In agro dominico’ by which he anathematized the work of German philosopher. In course of centuries, Eckhart’s works were virtually excommunicated from the Church, although his thought continued to live through the works of Tauler, Nicholas of Cues and other philosophers. Not many of Eckhart’s works have reached us. There are four treatises preserved: *On Noble Man*, *On Separation*, *Book of Divine Comfort* (written in imitation of Seneca) and *Spiritual Teachings*. There were preserved approximately 120 sermons.

Philosopher’s sermons represent not only the largest, but also the liveliest and most interesting part. Scripts in Latin have mainly scholastic character, because of their purpose and respect of the academic tradition. Sermons in German were intended to a less educated audience. They express in a clear

and lively manner the thought of the author, as well as his mystical experience. In Eckhart's sermon we can often come upon the citations of philosophers like Seneca or Avicenna, which give evidence about the largeness of his spiritual views. His speeches are more directed toward the intellect and they excel by depth of his mystical teaching. Themes in his sermons comprehend God's essence, relation between God and man, capability and acting of human soul and return of all created things to God.

Eckhart saw God in all things and accordingly, he was accused by his adversaries for pantheism. But, the philosopher as well pointed out that God is not anywhere so complete as in the soul and in angels, that is, in most intimate and highest part of the soul. Eckhart considered that soul must be out of time and space, if she wants to know God. "When man surmounts time and dwells in eternity, he works on one and same work with God." In imitation of Avicenna, he thought that soul has two faces: one higher, which always contemplates God and other lower, which look downwards, ruling the senses.

Eckhart had been attacked in his time mainly because of his statements about God as nothingness and liberation from God, which out of its context seem to be heretical thoughts. It seems that German philosopher was just at particular moments closer to Hindu or Buddhist tradition, then to his Christian predecessors. Although Eckhart's work has been neglected for centuries, it seems that he was entirely rehabilitated in 1985, when Pope John Paul II in one of his speeches mentioned Eckhart's thought about the need to 'go out of oneself', to let the room for God. Although by this it seems that man separates from his neighbors, it is just the contrary, because it is the only level where we can truly reach them, that is in God.

Eckhart's pupil Johannes Tauler, born in Strasbourg on river Rhine, is one of the greatest medieval mystics and preachers. He comes of an eminent, but at the same time very religious family, so his sister also dedicated her life to Church, becoming a nun. Tauler himself entered the Dominican Order when he was 15. He educated himself firstly in his hometown and later in Köln. It is possible that already in Strasbourg he listened to Eckhart's sermons and at Köln's university he had a chance to meet better with the teachings of Meister Eckhart. It is not known whether he studied as well in Paris or not, but it is most probable that he returned from Köln to his native town. Tauler did not travel widely; the only exception is his journey to Basel in 1339, because of Pope's interdict. Namely, Pope John XXII, after he had excommunicated Luis IV of Bavaria also forbode the service in all territories that evinced him loyalty. German emperor was excommunicated, firstly because of political dispute, but also because of giving shelter to English heretic, Franciscan monk William Occam.

In Basel, Dominican monk was a central figure in circle of the society 'Friends of God'. This society had a certain mystical character. The name they chose after St. John Gospel, 15,13 ("Greater love has no one than this,

that he lay down his life for his friends.”) Around 1347 Tauler returned to Strasbourg. In those time plague spread across the Europe and in some places it carried off a half, and by and large at least one third of the population. Tauler himself became the victim of the next epidemic of plague in 1361.

Of some works, attributed to Johannes Tauler, only for the collection of his sermons it was determined for sure that it is his work. These sermons in German have considerable literary and linguistic value; as well they represent a source of deep spiritual feeling. In distinction from Meister Eckhart, Tauler was not so speculative, but was in his expression clearer, more practical and more adaptable to common people. In the focus of Tauler’s mysticism is doctrine ‘visio essentiae Dei’, contemplation of God’s nature.

Tauler does not mention in his sermons Eckhart’s name, mainly because of condemnation of the Pope John XXII. However, the thread of teacher’s thought often draws through. Tauler is much more cautious in his expression of mystical experience; mainly he put emphasis on the inner way, which soul must pass in his love for God. According to Tauler, there are six ways through which man can follow the Lord – three in lower and three in higher powers. In lower there are faith, hope and love. Tauler also points out poverty as one of the necessary prerequisites: “If we ever are to attain and be completely united to God, all that is not absolutely necessary, either bodily or spiritually, must be cast off.” One of the very important things in his view is the universal love. In this, he is in a way predecessor of the modern age natural mysticism and of mystics belonging to ecological movement. So, Tauler says: “I have my natural sense in common with trees; and my being, which is still more to me, in common with all creatures. Heaven is more than all that is thereby; therefore it is also nobler. The nobler things are, the commoner they are. Love is noble, because it is universal.”

#### 2.1.10. Plethon – Restorer of Platonism in the West

The first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century brought a state of agony to Byzantium. Quondam great Eastern Roman Empire now was reduced to just three small enclaves, i.e. capital Constantinople, so called Empire of Trebizond in Asia Minor and Despotate of Morea on Peloponnesus. The final fall of Byzantium was postponed by Turks’ battles with Mongolians in the East. Trying to prevent the impending fall of the Empire, Byzantine emperor John VIII Paleologos decided to search for a help in the West. He was disposed even for a reconciliation of the Western and Eastern Church and with that aim on his mind he attended two councils, in Ferrara and in Florence (1438-39). But, in 1440 he returned to Byzantium without getting anything done.

The failure in trying to establish the military alliance of Christian countries in the war against Turks was followed by concomitant success of penetration of Byzantine-Greek culture to the West. Namely, in Emperor’s

companionship, on his journey to Italy, there were numerous philosophers, theologians and scientists, who brought with them a lot of scripts – Christian, but also pagan, from the antiquity. Among those latter the greatest interest aroused the works of Plato, who was until then feebly known in the West. Of Plato's works, the only accessible until then was *Timaeus*.

One of the most eminent scholars of the Emperor's suite was Georgios Gemistos, called Plethon. He was born in Constantinople, around the year 1360. Since he comes of prominent family, he was enabled excellent general and high education. In 1380 he had gone to study in Adrianopol and there met a mysterious Jew named Heliseus. He received from him an influence of Zoroastrism, also possibly Hermetism. He alone knew of before Platonism; he was so devoted to the antique philosopher that he was nicknamed Plethon, i.e. he gotten a name that sounds very alike.

Plethon spent the most of his life in Mistra, the biggest town of the Despotate of Morea. This town was situated in the vicinity of quondam Sparta, on the Peloponnesus. There the Byzantine philosopher achieved a long and prolific career, as teacher, judge, philosopher and writer. Eventually he became the most appreciated scholar in the Despotate. Plethon had a custom of reminding the Emperor, about how "their language and culture bear witness that they are Greeks". He also used to advise the Emperor about the necessity of protection of Peloponnesus and organization of the defensive system. He emphasized that from that place Hellenism started to spread all around the world and therefore Greek culture had to be spread anew. He was very critical toward the clergy and monks; he used to say for them that they do not contribute to society, but only take care of getting rich.

When he had been present at Florence Council, Plethon was already at an advanced age. But, his spirit was still firm, so he was virtually the most important cultural personality in the numerous suite of the Byzantine Emperor. However, his biggest contribute during the Council he gave in his free time. Namely, as he was a lay scientist, most of the time his presence at the very council was not needed. Therefore, he had improvised a kind of temporary school (or a course) for those Florentines, who wanted to be taught in Platonism. Then Plethon virtually 'introduced' Plato into the western world and simultaneously shook the prevailing Aristotelism. One of the Plethon's auditors was Cosimo de Medici, founder of the Florentine dynasty, which for centuries ruled over Florence and Tuscany. Very soon Cosimo came upon an idea about founding of Platonic academy. That idea was realized only after two decades after the conclusion of the Council; however, immediately thereafter Plethon's auditors began to carry his ideas over to new disciples.

Still during his stay in Florence Plethon wrote the work *De differentiis*, description of differences in Plato's and Aristotle's vision of God. In this work he for example defended Plato's statement that God is, as the supreme ruler, also the creator of the whole universe. He also defends the second Plato's

statement; that souls are made in course of time, as the necessary consequence of the causal creation. Thirdly, he criticized Aristotle's opinion about God as the direct mover of the events in spheres, what would place him, according to Plethon, on the same level with entities that depend on him. Plethon always emphasized that Plato's teaching is more in agreement with Christian doctrine, than Aristotle's.

During his long lifetime, Plethon wrote quite a number of works, from different fields. However, in his late period, he spent most of the time composing a voluminous work, in which he expounded his esoteric teaching. Work was discovered only after philosopher's death (he died in 1452, a year before the fall of Constantinople) and by its content shocked many. Plethon, who during his life declared himself as Christian, all the time had actually concealed his true beliefs. Only after *Book of Law* has been discovered, it became clear that Plethon was not only a convinced pagan, but also that he denied Christianity as well as Islam, as distortions of religious truth.

Manuscript of Plethon's *Book of Law* after his death came into hands of Constantinople's Patriarch Gennadios II, who destroyed it in 1460. Fortunately, a large number of Plethon's works came into possession of his former disciple, Cardinal Bessarion. After his death Cardinal granted his own library to the library of Venice. Among the other books there was as well a summary of *Book of Laws*, so we can get to know at least basically the content of this work. So, for Plethon the supreme God is Zeus, father and creator of other gods. And of other gods, the most important are Poseidon, Helios and Kronos. These deities Plethon considers as the gods of the second order and there are those of third, as well. Our soul, since being of the same kind as there are those gods, is immortal and remains in the universe forever. Good exists in us owing to our relations with gods, and this is just the purpose of life. Our luck is in our immortal body, placed there by gods, who unite our human kind. This would be the brief summary of *Book of Law*.

Georgios Gemistos Plethon pleaded for a kind of universal religion, based upon the pagan roots and Neo-Platonism. With his lectures in Florence he strived to sow a seed of such future religion, which would eventually substitute Christianity and Islam. In this aim he did not succeed; however, his impact on thought of 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century is such that he can be named the father of the Renaissance thought.

#### 2.1.11. 'Learned Ignorance' of Nicolas of Cues

The name of Nicholas of Cusa was mentioned several times in previous chapters. This continuator of Pseudo-Dionysius' and Eckhart's thought was born in 1401 in West German place called Cues (in Latin Cusa), in the vicinity of Trier. Nicholas comes of a wealthy family; his father was a ship-owner. There exists a legend, about how his father, angry because of son's bookish nature and inability to steer a boat, hit him with an oar and thrown

him over the board. Allegedly, after this event he went to Deventer, Netherlands, for schooling. The first reliable datum from Nicholas' biography is that he enrolled the University of Heidelberg. However, after only one year he moved to Padua's university, which attended earlier his great predecessor Albertus Magnus. Six years later he graduated, thus becoming the doctor in canon law.

In 1431 he begins his public career, by taking part at Council of Basel. This council had huge goals of reformation of the Church and reconciliation of the Western and Eastern Church, but it resulted in failure, because of the conflict between Pope Eugene IV and cardinals. Nicholas of Cusa gave a strong support to the unification of two churches, from the very beginning. He also pleaded for the reform of calendar, which will result in the work *De reparatione calendarii*. Later, when Council had moved to Florence, the Pope confided him an important mission in Constantinople, with a task to bring a Byzantine delegation to Italy. This task he had performed more than successfully, because to the Florence Council came not only Patriarch and archbishops, but also the Emperor John VIII Paleologos. In Constantinople then occurred the encounter of two great philosophers, Nicholas of Cusa and Gemistos Plethon. In Byzantine capital Nicholas provided himself with a large quantity of Greek scripts; among others he took with him the work *Theologia Platonica* by Proclus. At the Council, Nicholas fought so heartily that Pope Eugen IV proclaimed him for a cardinal secretly (*in petto*). The next pope confirmed this, so in 1448 Nicholas became officially a cardinal.

In jubilee year 1450 Nicholas was appointed Pope's legate to Northern Germany and Netherlands. He traveled a lot, reformed monks' orders and presided over chapters and synods. When his long-standing friend Ennea Silvio Piccolomini became pope, he was summoned to Rome. As *vicarious generalis*, he would substitute the Pope in case he left the town; this duty he performed very successfully. When he had gotten a presentiment that the end of his earthly life is near, in 1464, with his own sources he established a hospital in his native Cues, for the accommodation of elderly and weak persons.

With the same ardor that he performed Church duties, he also wrote philosophical works, permeated by mysticism. His scripts can be divided into four categories: legal, philosophical, theological and scientific. As regards his philosophical works, the best known and most important is *De docta ignorantia* (On Learned Ignorance), written during the Council in Florence. Whence comes this peculiar title of the book, we can get to know from the next citation: "Since that, what is divine in us surely is not vain, we should know that we are ignorant. If we realize this goal, we will achieve 'the learned ignorance'. Just like Socrates, Nicholas of Cusa also thinks that the wiser man becomes, the more aware he gets of his ignorance (in relation to the absolute knowledge).

The work *De docta ignorantia* is divided into three books. The first book concentrates on the concept of God as the maximal absolute. Nicholas of

Cusa speaks of God as of the unity of all the opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*). The absolute maximum for him is at the same time minimum too, because he is present in that, what is the smallest. God is one, the beginning of a number. Secondness, as a number, comes after a unity. The unity is therefore, according to its nature, before the secondness and since it is anterior after its nature, it is eternal. Nicholas gives a great importance to mathematical proportion. Through the proportion can be searched the truth – the absolute exactness never can be reached, but we can draw only near it, to a greater or lesser extent.

The second book presents the explanation and the definition of the universe, which is also one of the fundamental conceptions of Nicholas of Cusa. He considers that in each thing (and most perfectly in men) the universe, macrocosm is reflected. He sees the identity of the universe in its diversity, as actually is his unity in the plurality. He has a certain kind of vision that we call in modern language holographic universe: as God is in all things through the medium of universe, from this it follows that all things are in all and anything in each of them.

The third book speaks about Christ and Church. Nicholas of Cusa says that all the beings realize their unity in natures of Christ and in such unity Church alone achieves the greatest unity. We can conclude that the leading thought of the German philosopher in this work was – unity; since the book originated in the course of Council, at which two churches had to re-unite. It is most probable that this unity had Nicholas of Cusa on his mind.

As regards negative theology (concept that is often attached to Nicholas's teaching) by Nicholas it is not so explicit, as by his predecessor Eckhart. Namely, God means by Nicholas the 'negative infinite', where negative points at one positive concept. Therefore, as God is the universality of everything, there cannot be ascribed any name to him. According to Nicholas, God is like an infinite sphere, center of which is everywhere, and circumference in each place. Negative theology here simply means overcoming of the mind's rule, determined by logic. Overcoming is achieved through the mystical process, which transcends the negation and in which the One subsists contained in all.

#### 2.1.12. Florentine Academy

As it was aforementioned, Cosimo de Medici, immediately after the end of Florence Council began with the realization of his generous idea – foundation of Platonic academy. His plans did not realize so rapidly, because of many objective circumstances. After the year 1453 (fall of the Byzantine Empire) many scholars and clerics escaped to Italy and brought with them a multitude of manuscripts of great value. Virtually this historical event contributed to a flowering of Italian and generally western European culture. In the meantime, a young man (whom de Medici a long time ago designed the role of the conductor of the future academy) matured and gained an

excellent education. It was the son of the personal physician of the Medici family, Marsilio Ficino.

Italian mystical philosopher Marsilio Ficino was born in 1433 in small town Figline, south of Florence. He comes of a prominent physician's family. After the removal of the family to Florence, father came to the court of Medicis. At the time of Council, Marsilio was only six years old. As he had shown already in his early youth a strong thirst for knowledge, at the same time being humble and kind, he made a good impression on Cosimo de Medici. So, he enabled young man the sources to complete his education, including also the study of Greek language. Namely, Cosimo wanted to give him later a whole collection of Greek scripts (mostly Platonic), to translate them. Besides Platonic dialogues, young philosopher also translated Hermetic writings; in 1462 he was rewarded with a villa in Careggi, near Florence.

In this villa Ficino then founded his Academy, based upon Platonic principles. However, this institution had not gotten strictly philosophical character, as through it marched past many names of Italian and European culture, among them also architects, painters and poets. In this company Ficino was rather a kind of informal head-master, who had been introducing his pupils and guest scientists with programs of studies. In 1473 Marsilio joined the Church and became a canon of the Florentine church San Lorenzo. He did not consider his philosophy as an obstacle for the performance of church duty, because he thought that in Platonic tradition there were real roots and foundations of Christianity.

Although he has been of fragile health since his childhood, he transformed his ideas very energetically into works; so in 1469 originated a book of commentaries on Plato, entitled *Theologia Platonica*. Just like other Christian Platonists, so Ficino used Augustine as his model for the eclectic amalgamation of Plato and Christ. He held that "Platonic teaching is related to the divine law of both Moses and Christ as the Moon is to the Sun". The universe is for Marsilio one magnificent harmonic hierarchy that consists of five special substances. Looking from above downwards, every one of them of them is more specialized and particularized than its predecessor. On the top is God and angel and on the bottom body and quality. One thing that connects them is the soul in the middle. This 'third essence', how is called by Ficino, is a connection between things that are eternal and those temporal. According to is natural instinct, it ascends toward higher spheres then again it descends toward the lower ones. The path by which man should go is contempt toward the temporal things and simultaneous desire for the eternal, that is, for the communion with God.

Ficino's second important work (originated in 1489) is *The triplici vita* (Three Books on Life). The first two books are medical treatises and they mainly tell us about how to live long and healthy. The third book is most important, from the philosophical point of view and it is entitled *De vita coelitus comparanda* (On Obtaining Life from the Heavens). In it Ficino discuss themes in connection with theory and practice of astrological magic. Since

the word magic alone is ambiguous, the philosopher feels the need to point out about which kind of magic he speaks. Ficino says that this is the same magic that had been practiced by Magi, who came to make a bow to newborn Christ. If it is so, why would be Magus something awful and odious, asks Ficino and adds that Magus in Biblical terms just have the meaning of a wise man and a priest. His dealing with astrology he had justified in a letter to Florentine bishop, by these words: "... while earthly matters were indeed the concern of others, heavenly matters in truth were the sole concern of the priest; so that while human affairs might be left to human counsel, matters for supreme authority should be referred to the ruler of heaven."

All the nature is interconnected by affinities, says Ficino, what is most distinctively reflected in astrological correspondences. And that is exactly the task of Magus-healer, i.e. establishing the correspondence between the individual and the World Soul. This is achieved by the help of talisman, which behaves as a receiver, by its absorption of the spirit that is emanated from the World Soul. According to Ficino, the World Soul, by the medium of intermediary entities also create the forms of physical things, as reflections of ideas.

The short treatise *De Amore* (On Love) has as well mystical traits and it draws the inspiration from Plato's *Symposium*. Ficino develops a Platonic teaching on love, interpreting love as a means to coming to God, through the beauty. Love is a life principle, which delivers the universe from the state of primordial chaos. It is also the power which connects and unites the cosmos and harmonically joins all his levels. Love strives toward the abolition of lower forms for the benefit of higher, universal expressions. In this sense a man represents a picture of God. Marsilio Ficino, after all, is known as philosopher who invented the concept of 'Platonic love' and under it he understands a friendship as the human expression of divine love.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola was surely the most talented among numerous Ficino's pupils at Florentine academy. In distinction from the moderation of his teacher, Pico was distinguished by a trait of insolence, sometimes on a verge of imprudence. However, he did not receive to be on the head of the Academy, because he died young, already at 32. He was born in 1463 in Mirandola, town about 100 kilometers north of Florence. Although he stems from a wealthy family, he renounced the inheritance for the benefit of his brothers. When he was 14, he went to Bologna to study canon law and to prepare himself for a career in the wing of Church. But, after some time he was repelled by too rationalistic character of his study, so he went over to studies of philosophy and theology. The next seven years he spent studying at several universities in Italy and France. He managed to master five languages; besides Latin and Greek, also Hebrew, Aramaic and Arabian. The knowledge of languages enabled him studies in wide range of fields that he had been interested in: Zoroastrism, Hebrew Kabbala, Orpheus and Pythagoras, Islamic philosophy. Already before his twentieth year he finished the work *Heptaplus*, mystical-allegoric interpretation of Bible (literal,

allegoric and occult). Pico writes this work in the form of sevenfold understanding of the evolution and Nature, from the elementary kingdoms to heavenly worlds. The next work, *De ente et uno* (On Being and Unity) explains his statement about how can Platonic and Aristotelian system be harmonized; he quotes some passages in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which confirms this. Pico points out four distinctions, which adorn so God, as all the things that he created – being, truth, goodness, unity.

Pico's greatest and most courageous enterprise had to be a treatise on nine hundred philosophical questions (*Conclusiones philosophicae cabalisticæ et theologicae*). As the introduction to this treatise, in 1486 he wrote *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (Oration on Dignity of Man). In this work, written in the form of speech, the central thought is putting man in focus, then harmonizing of diverse philosophies, sciences and religions and revealing of secret wisdom, which is the essence of all religious-philosophical system. In *Oratio* Pico also introduced a new concept of freedom of choice.

The philosopher has never held this speech in public and the main treatise *Conclusiones* neither. He has gotten intention to hold it in Rome and to summon all the leading philosophers and theologians, from the whole Europe and even wider. The young and promising philosopher has gotten a good mind to defend his 900 theses in a public debate, what would have to be an introduction into a new religious-philosophical system, made of elements of Christianity, antique Greek philosophy, Hermetism, Kabbala, Zoroastrism and Islamic philosophy and religion. Pico had published his philosophical theses in Rome by the end of 1486, but soon papal commission denoted 13 theses as heretical, so debate was banned and work burnt at stake.

Pico della Mirandola sent a defense of his theses to Lorenzo Medici in Florence. Medici delivered up Pico's defense to Croatian philosopher Juraj Dragišić, who was at that time a lecturer at Florentine Academy. Then in his middle ages, Dragišić was already renowned for his oral and written debates. It is very likely that to him goes the merit that Pico was spared from a charge and freed of imputation. As Rome did not present an ideal ambient for acting, Pico returned to Florence, but precidingly he stayed for some time in France.

Last years of his life Pico spent in Florence, writing and spreading his teachings. In fact, they represented a kind of foundation, on which laid Renaissance philosophical thought. Close to the end of life he had intentions to relinquish his title and wealth and to become a wandering monk and a preacher. In 1493 he was completely exonerated from any guilt, by the new Pope Alexander VI. His wish of starting a wandering life, however, remained unfulfilled, because he suddenly died, after an attack of fever, in 1494. But, there always remained a suspicion, that he might have been poisoned.

As regards Florentine Academy, it continued to act for some time after Ficino's death in 1499. The teacher's work had been continued by his

faithful disciple Francesco Zanolli Cattani. Gradually getting farther from mystical philosophy (which was in focus in Ficino's time) academics began to get involved more and more into questions in connection with society and politics. So the Academy experienced its end in 1522, when a number of its members were accused for a conspiracy against the Florentine Archbishop Giulio de Medici, later Pope Clement VII.

### 2.1.13. German Mystical Philosophy of 16th Century

German humanist Johannes Reuchlin was born in 1455 in Pforzheimus, Baden-Württemberg. He gained elementary education there and afterwards studied Latin, by Dominican monastery in his hometown. Then he had enrolled university in Freiburg, where he also had been studying philosophy, grammar and rhetoric. But, soon he brought decision about the additional study of law. He completed this study in 1481. Next year he travels to Italy and at the Florence Academy he meets Pico della Mirandola, who leaves a deep impression upon him. Here he met as well some of the leading Italian philologists. In 1484 he was promoted into a doctor of law. For some time he worked as a counselor of the count Eberhard von Württemberg and later as a lecturer at the university of Heidelberg.

In 1490 he travels again to Italy. On his second journey he got more interested in study of Kabbala and of Hebrew language, too. Reuchlin will later become the first Christian author of a Hebrew grammar. This work will be released in 1506, under the title *De rudimentis hebricis*. But in the meantime he published (1494) his first mystical work, from the field of mystical Kabbala, *De verbo mirifico*. This book had been written in a form (common in those times) of a Platonic dialogue. The conversation is led by three characters: Epicurean Sidonius, Jew Baruch and Christian Capnion. All of them expose his view and Capnion, as the last one, concludes that all the divine names are united under the name of Jesus Christ.

He deepened his teaching on Christian Kabbala in his work entitled *de arte cabalistica* (1517). This much ambitious work was described as the first comprehensive treatise on Kabbala written by a non-Jew and it was also called 'Bible of the Christian Kabbalists'. In it, Reuchlin says that the name of Messiah does not consist of three letters (I,H,S) but of five (Y,H,S,W,H) so he deduces that only this form of pewntagrammaton is correct; for Reuchlin it in symbolical way represents the law of mercy.

This is also a time when Reuchlin disputed with Köln's Dominicans, headed by converted Jew Pfefferkorn. Namely, German philosopher opposed the destruction of Jewish books, firstly of *Talmud*, which Dominicans performed systematically. Again it was Croatian philosopher Juraj Dragišić the one who defended a humanist philosopher. The defense of Reuchlin, described in the work *Defensio praestantissimi viri Iohannes Reuchlin* (The Defence of the

Competent Man Johannes Reuchlin) pointed out the need of Jews to possess their own sacred books, as the expression of their religious identity. Reuchlin has been, as well as his defender Dragišić, close to the end of his life path in that time. Johannes Reuchlin spent the last years of his life as a lecturer at universities of Ingolstadt and Tübingen and died in 1522.

Reuchlin's contemporary and fellow-countryman, mystical philosopher Johann Trithemius was born in 1462, in village Trittenheim, Rheinland-Pfalz. He had gotten a hard childhood; until his 15<sup>th</sup> year he had not gotten a possibility of education, because his father had not allowed him to go to school. Then he mastered in a very short time the skill of reading and writing, as well as basics of Latin. Since he suffered maltreatment in his native house, he had decided to escape. After fatiguing he somehow reached Würzburg. Here taught renowned humanist Jakob Whimpeling, who enabled the education to the ambitious young man.

In 1482 he had graduated and decided to visit his native village. As it was mid winter, on his way there he found himself exposed to a snowstorm, so he sought a shelter in the nearby Benedictine monastery in Sponheim. There he was pleased with the atmosphere that prevailed; so he made a monkish vow and decided to remain. Although he had been the youngest member of the monkish community, he was soon elected abbot, in his 22<sup>nd</sup> year. His election was a real blessing for a small place like Sponheim. Trithemius began with a youthful ardor to organize the life in the monastery that had been previously neglected.

The young abbot spent a lot of time in the arrangement and renewal of the monastery and he built a library, in which had been over the years collected more than two thousand volumes. This unique library made Sponheim a widely renowned place, especially in scientific and philosophical circles. Among his numerous friends and admirers were for instance Johannes Reuchlin and Roman-German Emperor Maximilian I. But, as the time went on, so he gained more and more opponents; so in 1506, after 23 years at the head of the monastery, he was forced to withdraw. The Emperor Maximilian wanted to bring him at the court, and to give him a position of the historiographer of the Imperial house, but Trithemius longed for a quiet life, in reclusion. So he chose for his new refuge a monastery of St. Jacob in Würzburg. Here he came upon only three monks, so he had an opportunity to develop a whole range of activities, similar as he had done in Sponheim. Here Trithemius spent the last ten years of his life, during which he had written a number of works.

Among the accusations that befall to him while he was at Sponheim, was the one about dealing with demons. So, he was compelled to write a book in his defense, entitled *Antipatus maleficiorum* (1508), a fanatical work pointed against sorcery. Trithemius represents an excellent example of Renaissance amalgamation of Christianity, Hermetical philosophy, magic, astrology, alchemy and Kabbala. His magical system was based upon the principles of

sympathy and harmony between three worlds – material, heavenly and angelic. To those who looked with suspicion on his dealing with magic, he answered similarly to Ficino: “The word magic is the Persian term for what in Latin is called wisdom, on which account magicians are called wise men, just as were those three wise men who, according to the Gospel, journeyed from East to adore, in his crib, the infant who was the Son of God in flesh.”

The main Trithemius’ mystical works include *Steganographia*, written about 1499 and *De septem secundeis*, a work from 1508. The theme of *Steganographia* is firstly, sending of secret messages by angels, although it touches other things as well. Trithemius in this work poses the hierarchy of spirits and angels that rule over various territories of Earth, as well as over certain days and hours. The second book, *De septem secundeis* deals with the history of the world, based upon the astrology. In this work Trithemius quotes that this world is ruled by the so called Secondary Intelligencies, which are seven in number. Spirits that rule over planets are in fact archangels, taken over from the Hebrew astrology. So, Saturn’s ruler is planet Orifiel, Venus’ ruler is Anael, ruler of Jupiter is Zachariel, of Mercury is Raphael, of Mars is Samuel, of Moon is Gabriel and of Sun is Michael. Each one of them rules from the beginning of the world, changing after the period of 354 years and four months, after the stated order. As it has already happened with Albertus Magnus or Roger Bacon, so it was the case with Trithemius, too – legends associated with his name soon melted with elements of the legend about Dr. Faust.

Similar stories and legends had been made up about Trithemius’ pupil and successor Agrippa von Nettesheim. This mystical philosopher was born in 1486 in the vicinity of Köln. He comes of an impoverished aristocratic family, von Nettesheim, and he took over the name from Roman army leader and founder of Köln (Colonia Agrippina). He often used only the Latinized part of his long name, i.e. Cornelius Agrippa. In his youth he was known for the curious fact that he refused to speak any other language save Latin. In his native town he had enrolled a university, in 1499 and graduated three years later. As very young he joined the army of the Emperor Maximilian I. later, around 1507, he enrolled Parisian university. Somehow simultaneously, he met his teacher Trithemius. In distinction from him, he was very restless spirit and traveled a lot, often changing his place of residence.

In Paris Agrippa had founded one of the first secret societies, which members were students interested in dealing with alchemy and magic. In the course of the year 1508 Agrippa had traveled through France, Spain and Italy. The next year he became a lecturer at the university of Dôle (in the vicinity of Dijon). He lectured theology, soon becoming very popular, so his courses were attended even by Parliament counselors.

Agrippa was only 23 years old when he sent a manuscript of his work *De occulta philosophia* to his teacher and friend Johannes Trithemius. Agrippa has gotten the advice not to publish his work (“Communicate the common

secrets to common friends and secrets of higher order to great friends"). So, the work had been circulating as a manuscript for the next 24 years, gaining a great reputation among those who had gotten a chance to read it. Agrippa was soon compelled to withdraw from a position of lecturer at the university in Dôle, accused for preaching heresy. Since the Emperor Maximilian I was well-disposed toward him, he sent him as an ambassador to the court of King Henry VIII. Agrippa dwelt in England for in the house of Ficino's disciple John Colet, who was at the time lecturer at Oxford. But, he did not stay for long in England, as in 1511 he returns to Köln, where he becomes the lecturer at the university.

In 1512 Agrippa departs to Italy, where he is lecturer at Pavia's university. Here he stays for next three years as an officer and diplomat in Dukedom of Milan. In 1517 he became for a short time a court physician of Duke of Savoy, Charles III, but already next year he set out for Metz, where he works as town's advocate. In this station he was very successful, so he antagonized with many. For example, he had released some woman from accusation of witchcraft and immediately came into conflict with the Inquisitor of Metz. In 1524 he came to Lyon, where he became a court physician of Queen mother, Louise of Savoy. Here he composed as well one of his works, commentary on Lull's *Ars Brevis*.

After leaving France, Agrippa departs to Antwerpen, where he had gotten a position of a historiographer and counselor of the archive of the new King, Charles V. In 1529 there was an epidemic of plague in the town. However, Agrippa did not leave the town, but he remained and helped the sick, owing to his knowledge of medicine. But, physicians who had left the town after their return accused him for quackery, afraid that they might lose their wealthy patients. The next year Agrippa publishes the work *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum*, a critical retrospection of Kabbala. It is obvious that this work originated under the pressure, to release him from the accusations on his account. Therefore, this work reminds of works written by earlier mystical philosophers, which have gotten originated from the same reason – of Michael Psellus, Pico della Mirandola (against astrology), and of Agrippa's teacher Trithemius.

But, in spite of Agrippa's criticism toward the misuse of magic, when the next year appeared the first edition of *De occulta philosophia*, it came upon the fierce opposition of Dominican monks, scientists and even the Emperor himself. Agrippa moves again, first to Brussels and then to Bonn. In Germany, Agrippa is persecuted by Dominican inquisitors; therefore he escaped to France, in spite of bad relations with Francis I, whose mother he had treated before. Immediately upon his arrival to France, he had been put in prison, but soon he was released, owing to the intervention of some influential friends. He set out for Lyon, yet he has never reached it. The path of his life ended in Grenoble, where he died in poverty, in 1535.

The greatest Agrippa's achievement for sure is voluminous work *De occulta philosophia*. It represents a kind of encyclopedic survey and comprehensive

interpretation of the entire mystical philosophy, until then. This work is based upon the fundamental ideas of the Renaissance philosophy, i.e. that man is a miniature copy of God, that is, of the universe. In his opinion, everything that exists has soul, as the part of the universal World Soul. This is reflected in magical traits of herbs, metals, minerals, animals and other manifestations of the nature. The first is related to natural magic, the second to celestial and third to the ritual magic. In the book about natural magic, Agrippa speaks about the four elements, World's Soul, planets and astrological influences, magical binding, divination, formation of man and mystical union of man's mind with minds of stars.

The second book deals with themes in connection with the celestial magic: numbers, geometrical figures and bodies, musical harmony, celestial bodies and astrological divination. Agrippa emphasizes again the importance of astrology, as all the kinds of divination have their roots in her. The third book, on ritual magic, includes divine names, intelligences and spirits, their orders and seals of spirits. In this book Agrippa quotes the characteristics of a person, aspiring to spiritual growth. The abstinence, according to him, fortifies and protects against vices and malignant spirits and purifies man's mind helping man to unite with God. Persons who aspire toward pure spirit must avoid meat, and they must practice fasting. Vigor and purity of soul of those devoted to God make their mind an eternal God's temple. Solitude is also important, because releasing of earthly jobs and cares make the mind prepared for receiving of heavenly divinities' gifts. In our ascent toward the unity with all things, we must free ourselves from the individual sense of multiplicity and come onto the over-mind level, source of the universal good and truth.

When Agrippa was seven years old (1493), in small town Einsiedeln in Switzerland was born mystical philosopher and the greatest physician of the Renaissance, known as Paracelsus. He stems from the noble family von Hohenheim. Namely, his father was a son of an impoverished Swabian aristocrat, who had been compelled to sell a family castle. From the southern German province father Wilhelm moved to Einsiedeln, after he had graduated medicine. Here he had gotten married and got a son, whom he named after Aristotle's disciple, Theophrastus. To Einsiedeln rushed each year thousands of pilgrims, to worship the black Mother of God (one of the relatively rare ones in Europe). Pilgrims, usually exhausted of long journeys, often sought for a help of his father. So, young Hohenheim had learned from a very early age about the secrets of the art of medicine. When he was nine, his mother died, so he moved to Villach in Carinthia with his father.

Around 1509 young Hohenheim had enrolled a study of medicine in Basel, but four years later he interrupted his studies and began to wander, similarly to his contemporary Agrippa. Then he took a pseudonym Paracelsus, after the physician of ancient Rome Celsus; he added prefix para- (over, above) to point out, that he surmounts him. He continued his studies at Ferrara, where he graduated (1515) and got a doctor's title. Here Paracelsus came in closer contact with Platonic philosophy, which attracted

him from before. The next year he went to Sponheim, where Trithemius taught him of alchemy and magic. This meeting was very enlightening for the young physician, as from Trithemius, he learned about the nature of the spiritual beings, of inner meaning of nature's signs and of the relation between macro and microcosm.

The next eight years Paracelsus spent in traveling across the Europe. He first set out westward, visiting Montpellier university, then afterwards he also visited Sevilla, Paris and Sorbonna, England, Netherlands and Denmark, where he reorganized the pharmacy and set new standards in production of medicaments. Later he went to Sweden and to Russia, where he fell into Tartars' captivity, after the siege of Moscow. Tartars brought him to khan Babur, descendent of the famous Genghis-khan; in his service Paracelsus spent a certain period. The road took him even to India, where Babur had established his empire by the beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1521 he travels to Constantinople, in a diplomatic mission, in company of khan's son. Afterwards, Paracelsus continued to Alexandria and from there to Greece. From Greece he proceeded his way along the Dalmatian coast and finally reached Villach in 1524. During this incredible journey of many thousand miles Paracelsus had been examining and studying all the time. Now, he was ready for teaching, too.

After a brief period during which he had performed a medical practice in Salzburg, he was called to Basel, to heal a renowned printer Johannes Froben, a friend of Erasmus and German humanists. In 1526 City council of Basel appointed him a professor in natural history, medicine and surgery and he also got a position of a town's physician. His innovatory medical theories and strict control of medicaments prepared in pharmacies, incurred a rage of certain circles. His uncompromising actions, like public burning-up of the official textbook of medicine, Avicenna's *Canon*, had made this rage only stronger. When his adversaries had united themselves in plotting against him, under pressure he had to leave the town.

In 1529 the road led him to Nürnberg, where he continues his medical practice. Here he cured some allegedly incurable sick men. Most probably it was syphilis in question, a disease brought by sailors, on their return from western India. In this town Paracelsus did not linger for long, as he did not in any other, over the last twenty years of his life. Wandering from one place to another, mainly on the territory of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, Paracelsus barely supported himself, always on the verge of poverty. He carried over his teaching to his disciples often for free, and he also handed out medicaments to poor ones, without compensation. Paracelsus died in 1541. About his death there are several versions. According to one, he was attacked by robbers, hired by one of his rival in medical profession. According to another version (that was maybe invented by his enemies) he stumbled in a drunken state and fell, heavily injuring his head and soon died.

Although he had no works voluminous as Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia*, Paracelsus in the course of his life composed about 50 works: from practical and philosophical medicine, alchemy, natural science, philosophy and other fields. In distinction from his contemporary, who wrote in Latin, Paracelsus preferred writing in German, thus providing himself a wider public, i.e. one outside the academic and theologian circles. Paracelsus' 'philosophia sagax' comprehends diverse fields, like *magica* (magic and will power), *astrologia* (astrology and spiritual influences), *signatum* (teaching about signs and knowledge about the inner essence through the outer signs), *nigromantia* (about sorcery and apparitions), *necromantia* (divination by dead), *medicina adepta* (philosophy of adepts, wisdom of alchemy and contemplation), *mathematica adepta* (mathematics of adepts and knowledge of occult relations, geometry, cosmography, measures, weights and numbers). In his work *Philosophia occulta* Paracelsus says for magic that it is science about supernatural things, which comprises everything that eludes human understanding. He discerns magic as complex art that includes wisdom and the sorcery, which includes causing harm to others. He believed that astrological magic can be helpful in recovering from illness, so he dedicated in his work *Archidoxa magiae* several sections to astrological talismans for curing diseases. However, like most of others Renaissance philosophers, Paracelsus rejects absolute astrological determinism, so he asserts that philosopher must rule over stars and not vice versa - only to people on lower level are under compel to act after them. Paracelsus was a pious, although somewhat unorthodox Christian. He used to say that God's deed had been revealed to us through the wisdom and God rejoices when we become similar to him. In the work *De fundamento sapientiae* he says that all the wisdom belongs to God, so by trying to understand ourselves, we can come to divine truth that is given to men.

Paracelsus' medical philosophy points at new approach to man and science. His art of healing was based upon four pillars: natural philosophy or knowledge about nature, astrology, alchemy and medical ethics. His philosophy is love toward wisdom, in fundamental Platonic meaning of the word. True philosopher must find a Heaven in himself alone, he considered, so that things which are in us and those outside make one and unique being, differed only by its phenomenal forms. Since man contains in himself the entire macrocosm, it is necessary to know corresponding relation in the individual parts of the human body and on basis of the knowledge of this relation to prepare an appropriate medicine. It is necessary to conceive the Heaven and the whole Creation, in their all integrity, because the entire created nature corresponds to one truth. Philosophy of maintenance of health consists of living in accordance with the whole, in unity and synthesis.

Paracelsus' simple definition of alchemy says that this is a process of purification by fire. The art of alchemy consists of the separation of the useless from the useful, then bringing it to the state of the greatest perfection. Nature does not bring anything perfect by itself. Man's task is to terminate the process that nature initiated. We have to burn away all the

lower elements, so the only those truly fair and divine remain. Just the ones who had carried through this alchemical process in them can become one with their creator, the Lord.

#### 2.1.15. John Dee's Communication with Angels

In the course of The Middle Ages, England did not give many prominent mystical philosophers, so it had gotten to pass three centuries, from Roger Bacon until 1527, when eventually John Dee was born. The sphere of interest of this polymath comprised a wide domain of Hermetical and Kabbalist philosophy, mathematics, astrology, geography and navigation. Very early in life he gained a reputation of a competent mathematician and astronomer and leading expert in navigation. In the last third of his life he devoted himself almost entirely to the Christian angelic magic and Hermetic philosophy.

John Dee comes of a family of Welsh origin. He was born at Tower wards, county of London, as a child of court's official. After his elementary schooling, he graduated at St. John's College at Cambridge, but in meantime he also lectured Greek language at the newly established Trinity College and he studied navigation in Netherlands. After the graduation he traveled across the Europe, perfecting his knowledge at his studies in Belgium, while in Paris he lectured mathematics. In 1552 he met in England with Italian physician and polyhistor Jerome Cardan (car experts know him better as the inventor of so called Cardan's axis), who came on the Island, on the call of Scottish Archbishop Hamilton, to cure him. Cardan was then at the peak of his glory and he made a great impact on young Dee. Beside their mutual interest in mathematics, they both also shared their interest for mystical spheres. Cardan communicated to Dee his experience in clairvoyance and other forms of extrasensory perception, which encouraged English mystic and gave him incitement for his future endeavors in this field.

Until 1555 Dee was in service of Earl of Pembroke and Duke of Northumberland, in the meantime rejecting the position of a docent at Oxford. The professorship at English universities did not attract him, because of giving emphasis to rhetoric and grammar and disfavoring philosophy and science. So, Dee chose a vocation of astrologer and began to cast horoscopes, also for the royal family. In 1555 he was put into a prison for a while, under suspicion of plotting against the Queen Mary Stuart, with daughter of Henry VIII, Elisabeth. Allegedly, he saw in Mary's horoscope that her ruling will not last for long, which in reality came true; three years later Elisabeth I began her long lasting rule. Since he could not convince Mary of the necessity of establishing of a national library, he alone set himself to work on it and having collected a large number of books, he created his own private library in Mortlake. Dee collected, just like Trithemius did, thousands of volumes, so his library became the largest in England.

When Elisabeth took over the throne in 1558, Dee became her councilor on questions concerning science and astrology. He was also a councilor in connection with English naval expedition to far overseas countries. He

provided his help in navigation, but also a kind of ideological support for the British expansion. It was just him who first used the term 'British Empire'. Beside the navigation, of which he will later write a book, Dee was an expert in cartography, too. During his studies in Belgium, he got acquainted and associated with Gerard Mercator, the greatest cartographer and geographer of that time. Dee possessed a huge collection of naval maps and navigation instruments, as well.

From time to time Dee traveled across the Europe. In 1563 in Amsterdam he came upon the book of Trithemius, *Steganographia*; esoteric work about the secret alphabet and communication with angels. Inspired by this book, the next year he wrote a book *Monas hieroglyphica*, the Kabbalist interpretation of the pictography that he alone invented, wanting to express a mystical unity of the whole creation. This book will have also an influence on the last phase of Dee's life, in which he almost entirely devoted himself to studies of the esoteric philosophy. Mathematics has always held an important place in Dee's opus and this science Dee understood in a mystical way too, what will be disfavored already in the next, rationalistic 17<sup>th</sup> century. One of the Dee's practical contributions to mathematical science will be his preface to the English edition of Euclid. The work will be intended for the promotion of the study and application of mathematics for the persons without the academic education; as such, it came upon favorable reception by the growing stratum of technical intelligence.

Beside his passion for the cartography and navigation, there has always been his passion for the mystical fields, which never slackened. But, as time passed away, his focus of interest moved from the observation of stars to the interpretation of events on the basis of the contemplation of crystal (in other words, scrying). He considered that contemplating crystal can induce a state of trance, in which one can perceive the world of spiritual entities, as well as the outlines of future events. Dee's first attempts had not been satisfactory, but then in 1582 he met young man named Edward Kelley, who impressed him with his extrasensory abilities.

John Dee noted down their communication with angels very carefully, but in the course of his life he did not publish it. On the contrary, he has hidden these manuscripts, part of them in the secret drawer of a chest and another part he buried in the ground, at his estate. These manuscripts will be published more than half a century after Dee's death. The manuscripts that were buried will be published by the scholar Meric Casaubon, under a title *A True and Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Years between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*. The manuscripts from the chest were published by Elias Ashmole, as *Five Books of Mystical Exercises of Dr. John Dee*. These two books give a detailed description of the system of communication with angels of Dee and Kelley, during 1582 and 1583. So, we learn that they had in their séances visions of angels and archangels, like Michael, Uriel and Raphael. They revealed them the contents of various sacred books, among others also of the lost mysterious *Book of Enoch* and they taught them to angelic alphabet, on which they mutually communicate. They also conveyed to them

visions of future events, like the execution of the Queen Mary Stuart and the war with Spanish Armada. Before each séance Dee prayed for God's help, in acquiring the true knowledge and understanding divine law, so there is no doubt that in his acting he exclusively dealt with white or divine magic.

After his work on the reform of Julian calendar, Dee set out with Kelley for Europe. In France Dee met a Polish nobleman Adalbert Laski. The next year they traveled together to Prague, where Laski met Dee with Rudolph II. The German Emperor was inclined to Hermetism and magic, so the fellowship went by in mutual pleasure. On that occasion Dee also met with Tycho Brache, Rudolph's personal astrologer. In 1585 Dee had abode in Krakow, as the guest of Polish king, to return next year back to Rudolph's court. Here Dee had a chance to get acquainted with the huge Emperor's collection of esoteric works. But soon they found themselves exposed to the persecution of the Inquisition, so they had to leave the Emperor's court. They found refuge by Bohemian nobleman Rosenberg, in whose castle they spent two years.

In 1588 occurred a battle between the English and Spanish fleet, just as it had happened few years earlier in Dee's vision. The Spanish invasion was stopped. Soon Dee broke up his friendship with Kelley, and in 1589 he returned in England for good. The rest of his life he spent peacefully; since he still enjoyed the support of Queen Elisabeth, he was appointed head of Christ College in Manchester.

Dee is generally considered as the predecessor of the Rosicrucian Society, mystical brotherhood that will be established shortly after his death. Through the whole mystical work of Dee a certain thread draws through, which points at his faith in some kind of universal mystical revelation. In addition, two of Dee's helpers, Cook and Sanders were closely associated with society. Cook was also collaborator of one of the most important among Rosicrucians, Drebbel, while Sanders was the editor of Bacon's work *Epistola de secretis operibus artis et naturae* and dedicated it to the Brotherhood. Dee's work will be continued in 17<sup>th</sup> century by mystical philosopher Robert Fludd, who was one of the chief apologists of the Rosicrucian Society.

#### 2.1.16. Patrizi's Love Philosophy

Francesco Patrizi (also known as Frane Petrić) is by all means one of the most important mystical philosophers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This Renaissance philosopher was born in 1529, on island Cres, Croatia. His father was an eminent judge and his mother a close relative of the renowned Protestant theologian Mathias Flacius. Both Croats and Italians consider the philosopher 'theirs'. Although his origin is unquestionably Croatian, there remains a fact that he had spent two thirds of his life in Italy and that he wrote works, in addition to Latin, also in Italian. Giordano Bruno calls him 'Italian philosopher', in his work *On the Cause, Principle and Unity*. Maybe it

would be most correct to call him Italian philosopher of Croatian origin, although mystical philosophy should not be limited within national borders, anyway.

Patrizi acquired his elementary education on his native island Cres. Afterward he went to trade school in Venice, where he had also studied grammar. Some time he spent in Ingolstadt, Germany, where he studied Greek, as Flacius' protégé. He stayed there for a while, until the Emperor Charles V did not wage the war against Protestants. In 1547 he had enrolled medicine at Padua university, but soon he moved over to studies of philosophy and mathematics. He studied classical philosophy and literature, especially Plato and Aristotle. Here Patrizi came in contact with the ancient syncretic thought, like other Renaissance philosophers before him; with mystical Chaldean, Arabian, and Hebrew tradition; also with Hermetic scripts and Neo-Platonic philosophy. Among Neo-Platonic thinkers, his immediate predecessors, he especially studied Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola.

After father's in 1551 Patrizi traveled a lot, mostly through northern Italy, staying in some places for shorter and in others for longer period. In that time he occupied himself mainly with book and cotton trade, as well as publishing. Then he found a patron in Venice; it was count Contarini-Zeffo. Here he also publishes his first work, *La città felice* (Happy Town). This youthful work of Patrizi belongs to so called utopian literature. It originated in imitation of Plato's *Republic*, as well as of the Renaissance work, *Utopia* of Thomas More, after which this literary kind had gotten its name. In this work Patrizi gives advices about the construction of an ideal town, its location, climate, sea currents and winds, most favorable conditions for trade and about urban organization of life in general.

Francesco Patrizi wrote poetry, too. So, in 1558 he published a poem entitled *Eridano*, written in new, heroic verse of 13 syllables. He occupied himself also with studying history, so two years later he published a work *Della historia* (On History), in which he discuss the way of writing about history, the nature of historical knowledge and determination of her fundamental categories. The work *Della retorica* (On Rhetoric) in which Patrizi gives the historical review of the rhetoric, beginning with Greek sophists.

Patrizi then found a new patron. It is Archbishop Filippo Mocenigo, from renowned Venetian noble family. Afterwards he departs for Cyprus, as a manager Archbishop's estate. On that island Patrizi came into possession of very valuable manuscripts, which brought along to Cyprus scholars and philosophers that had escaped from the enslaved Byzantine Empire. A part of manuscripts Patrizi purchased as original editions and a part he had gotten copied. It was really an impressive collection, which included, among others, works of Plato, Porphyry, Proclus, Zoroaster, Michael Psellus and Gemistos Plethon.

In 1577 he is in town Modena and there he writes a work of mystical character entitled *L' amorosa filosofia* (A Love Philosophy). In it, the central figure is 'new Diotima' – Tarquinia Molza, who embodies an ideal woman, so fair by her body, as by her spirit. In addition to the dialogue on art, especially poetry, Patrizi dedicates a considerable part to the dialogue about beauty and love. Like in Plato's *Symposium* appears intermediary entity Eros, as a medium between man and God, here appear the planets of the solar system. To each planet Patrizi attaches certain astrological traits. So, Venus is symbolized by her love and beauty, Mars is characterized by its warlike spirit and brutality, Mercury is adorned with beauty of spirit and intelligence and Saturn by the plenitude of spirit and wisdom. Saturn is also a ruler of science and he assigned to each of his sons one of the three fields of science. The philosophy belonged to Jupiter and he divided her into physics, logic and ethics. To Phoebus (Sun) he gave mathematics, which is divided further into music, astrology and arithmetic; to third, Mercury, he assigned rhetoric, divided further into dialectic, poetry and rhetoric.

One of the important themes of *Love Philosophy* is the relation between selfish and altruistic love. All kinds of love originate from the love toward oneself, says Patrizi, because we bear God's love inside. God loves the things he created, not because of themselves alone, but because of goodness in them. Such is love of mercy, which originates from the love we bear in us and good that we desire. We are impure when we are fulfilled with evil and when we are fulfilled with good, then we are similar to God, concludes Patrizi. In the same year, 1577, Patrizi wrote *Delfino, overo del baccio* (Dolphin, or On Kiss); which brings into focus something seemingly banal, but also very human, like a kiss is. It is in the very core of love's contemplation and love philosophy too, as her practical expression. The next year Patrizi becomes a professor in Platonic philosophy at Ferrara university and in this position he will spend the next 14 years. Patrizi's most important philosophical work *Nova de universis philosophia* (New Philosophy of the Universe) originated in 1591, by the end of his abode in Ferrara. On the basics of rich ancient philosophical heritage, Patrizi made his own synthesis of natural philosophy; a peculiar presentation of his own emanative system. In it, the essence of the world is light. According to Patrizi, there are four forms of emanation: light, force, psychism and order. The whole universe is characterized just by these four forms – he is permeated by soul that moves and mediates in all events.

Patrizi dedicated each part of his *New Philosophy of the Universe* to some then prominent cardinal. One of them, cardinal Aldobrandini, the next year (1592) became Pope Clement VIII. Since he appreciated Patrizi from before, he called him to Rome to take the chair. In Rome Patrizi remained until his death in 1597. He is buried in Church Sant' Onofrio, next to famous poet Torquato Tasso.

#### 2.1.17. Della Porta and Bruno – Two Naples' Great Men

In the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Kingdom of Naples fell under the rule of Spain. In 1535, in small place Vico Equense near the capital Naples was born a philosopher, scientist and writer Gianbattista della Porta, one of the most powerful personalities of Italian Renaissance. His father entered in 1541 into the service of the Emperor Charles V. in that time, the immense Charles' Empire expanded throughout the Europe, from Spain to Germany, Austria and Kingdom of Naples. Della Porta was enabled with an extraordinary education, by his private tutors, so he did not have to attend regular schools. His family fortune enabled philosopher to dedicate himself completely to scientific researches.

His most renowned work *Magia naturalis* (Natural Magic) he published very early (1558), just like his famous predecessors Pico della Mirandola and Agrippa von Nettesheim. But this work will be later (in 1584) extended and supplemented. Della Porta has already in his youth established a society called 'Accademia dei segreti', with a main goal of leading debates and studying; the meetings were held regularly in della Porta's native house. This society was disbanded by the Inquisition in 1578, after philosopher has been summoned to Rome and interrogated in connection with their activity. His explanation that they had been dealing with discovering the secrets of nature and not with sorcery was accepted, so there was no more harassment.

In 1579 della Porta moved to Rome and entered the service of the Cardinal Luigi d' Este. He had also for some time lived and worked in Venice. For this Cardinal in those times worked as well some other renowned literary men, like a great poet Torquato Tasso, for example. But besides dealing with literature, della Porta also undertook a scientific work, making optical instruments for the Cardinal.

The philosopher studied refraction and the result of this work is *De refractione optices parte*, from 1593. He claimed that it was just him to invent the telescope, but it seems that he did not construct it before Galileo, though.

Other fields with which he had been dealing comprise: cryptography, mechanics, work on camera obscura (because of this he is called a father of the photography); in the work *De spiritali* he described a steam engine and he was the first to perceive the thermic effect of the rays of light. He also published an encyclopedic handbook in agriculture, entitled *Villae* and the work in the field of chemistry, *De distillatione*. He wrote as well of the physiognomy, i.e. science which reveals the temperament and character of a person on basis of person's facial lines. His work *De humana physiognomia* will have an impact on the Swiss scientist of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Johann Kaspar Lavater.

Of his numerous works from various fields the traits of mystical bears mostly his capital work *Magia naturalis*. But it must be stressed that this relates essentially just to this voluminous work of the encyclopedic character. The immense sphere of interest of *Magia naturalis* comprises

themes from the economy, alchemy and chemistry and physics. Of economical themes there are: agriculture, cattle-breeding, hunting and fishing. In connection with chemistry, there are presented: distillation, case-hardening of steel, cosmetics, manufacture of artificial jewels and pyrotechnics. The physics comprises various physical experiments, optics and magnetism. In the work *Magia naturalis* it is visible the influence of debates and experiments of della Porta's Accademia dei segreti, as well as deliberation on special interests, about themes that he had worked out in separate previously published books.

The first book bears the title *The Causes of Things Which Produce Wonderful Effects*, and mainly in this book we can actually read of the natural magic, although the entire work bears the title *Magia naturalis*. Giambattista della Porta considers that it is necessary (like his predecessor) to decline the controversies concerning the character of magic that he writes about. Therefore he makes a clear distinction between natural magic, with which many wise men dealt throughout the history, and sorcery, that they condemned and despised. As della Porta says, magician is one who studies and explains divine things, in other words, he is a wise man. He states that Egyptians considered the very nature to be a magician, as she has a power of attracting the similar things. He sees a magic as a review of the whole course of the nature-heaven, stars, elements; the ways of their movement and changing. The task of a magician is thereby to uncover the hidden secrets of living beings, herbs, metals and of their origination and decay.

Della Porta emphasis the importance of the experiment and in so much we can consider him the successor of Albertus Magnus and Roger Bacon. Either the knowledge without practice and work or the practice without theoretical knowledge has not a big value; they are so interconnected that one without the other are vain and purposeless. Accordingly, the secrets of nature are revealed only to those who are ready to take pains and work hard.

Although della Porta was a bit skeptical toward the astrology, in the first book of *Magia naturalis* he nevertheless quotes that between planets there exist relations of sympathy and antipathy, harmony and disharmony. Among planets in harmonic relation he reckons Jupiter and Venus, whilst Mars and Saturn he considers disharmonic; he quotes as well the discord in connection with unfavorable angles between planets. In distinction from Neo-Platonists, he thinks that shapes of things on Earth come directly, from God. It is interesting his quotation of Indian wise men's thought, that consider the whole universe to be interlaced and interconnected, as well as that it presents a living being; this is also one of the fundamental thoughts of the modern holistic science.

Modern natural science also owes a lot to the other great Renaissance great man born in Kingdom of Naples, to Giordano Bruno. This famous philosopher was born in 1548 in Nola near Naples. His father was a professional soldier, and from him Bruno probably inherited his sometimes

impetus character. He entered very early the Dominican Order, that is, a big monastery in Naples, where once had thought Thomas Aquinas. Soon he became skilful in the art of mnemonics so that he was even called to Rome, to demonstrate his art before the Pope. It is possible that in this early period he came under the influence of Giambattista della Porta, but also of other mystical sources, like Plato and Hermes Trismegistus. In 1572 he was ordained priest, but four years later, because of his inclination toward heterodoxy he turns the attention of the Inquisition. He escapes from the town, to save him from the prosecution at the court. The same happens in Rome; then he leaves the Dominican Order for good and begins his wanderings throughout the western and central Europe.

The next seven years Giordano Bruno spent in France. But he had first set out for Geneva, where he accepted a Calvinist faith and lectured philosophy, just for a brief period. Namely, he was soon excommunicated by the decision of Calvinist Council, because of the disrespect toward the heads of the Church. The road then leads him to Toulouse, where he got a title Magister atrium; there he lectures Aristotelian philosophy for about two years. As in that area intensified the disputes between Catholics and Huguenots and threatened to turn into a full scale war, Bruno decided to leave for Paris.

In 1581, on his arrival to Paris, he holds lectures and next year he publishes his first works *De umbris idearum* (The Shadows of Ideas) and *Ars memoriae* (Art of Mnemonics). He enjoys the support of mighty patrons, among others of the French King Henry III. In 1583 he went to England, with the recommendation of the King. In England originated books *Il spacio della bestia trionfante* (The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast) and *Cena delle ceneri* (The Ash Wednesday Supper). For some time, Bruno has held lectures at Oxford. He taught new Copernican cosmology, which in those times has not been accepted yet and he criticized the Aristotelian system. After the vehement public debate with colleagues-lecturers, he had been accused for the plagiarism of Marsilio Ficino, so he withdrew to the house of French ambassador Castelnau, by whom he received a refuge. Angry at Oxford professors, in his work *Cena delle ceneri* he sarcastically remarks that “they know more about beer, than about Greek philosophy.”

In 1585 Giordano Bruno returns to Paris. During the period of one year that he had spent in Paris, there were several tries of reconciliation with the Catholic Church. But, they all failed, because of Bruno’s refusal of the imposed condition to return to the Dominican Order. After the violent debate with Parisian professors-Aristotelians at the College de Combrai, he was compelled to leave France.

The next five years Bruno will spend mostly in Central Europe; in Germany, Bohemia and Switzerland. In these Protestant countries he wrote a number of books in Latin, in fields of philosophy, cosmology, physics, mathematics and mnemonics. In Germany he did not succeed to get a position of a lecturer in Marburg but afterwards he gets permission for lecturing in Wittemberg, where he taught Aristotelian philosophy for two years. In 1588

he arrives to Prague. He has a support of the Emperor Rudolph II, but he failed to get a professorship; however thereafter he managed to obtain it in Helmstadt. Yet, he was again excommunicated, this time by Lutherans, repeating the pattern, after which he is accepted by the lay rulers and then refused by the Church authorities.

In his European wanderings, he finally reached Frankfurt in 1591. During the Frankfurt Book Fair, he accepted the invitation of the Venetian nobleman Zuane Mocenigo, to come to Venice and teach him the art of mnemonics. But, Bruno wanted first to go to Padua as there had been vacant a chair of mathematics. For some time he lectured there, but then, however, he set out for Venice, where he will become a private tutor of Mocenigo. In the course of time, young man became frustrated, realizing that Bruno does not want to reveal anything more than mere art of mnemonics. When Bruno communicated his wish to return to Germany, Mocenigo denounced him to the Inquisition. In May of 1592 he was arrested by Venetian inquisitors. At the interrogation he defended himself by claiming that his works are of philosophical nature and not theological. He had seemed to be ready for repentance and renunciation of his heretical statements, but then Roman Inquisition interfered, demanding his extradition. In the end extradition however did occur and Bruno arrived to Roman prison in 1593. Until today, it remained unclear why he spent full six years in jail before he was brought to trial.

The chief inquisitor, Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino in 1559 had delivered Bruno a list of heretical theses, which he had to renounce. It seemed that Bruno will loosen; namely, he was ready to renounce some of his statements, under certain conditions. But, Inquisition was implacable in her claims that he has to renounce just all of his theses that she already denoted as heretical. By the end of the year philosopher is decisive in his attitude and thinks that he does not have a single thing to either repent of, or renounce. By the beginning of January, 1600 Bruno was condemned to death by burning up at the stake; on the February, 8<sup>th</sup> he was handed over to the lay authorities and the very punishment will be executed on February, 17<sup>th</sup> 1600, on the Roman square Campo dei fiori.

Although he went off from this world too early, and in spite of his numerous wandering through the towns of western and central Europe, Giordano Bruno left behind him a row of valuable philosophical works, and almost through all of them a mystical thread draws. In his work *De la causa, principio et uno* (On the Cause, Principle and Unity) he expounds his metaphysical system based upon the new conception of deity, arising from his cosmology. Bruno's pantheistic doctrine identifies God with nature and after him the Soul of the World permeates all things made of matter. Physical creator of the universe is the universal Mind; it is the first and main power of the Soul of the World. Cosmos comprises all the opposites in his being and one contrariety is the principle of another thing. Transformations are circular, because there do exist one substratum, one principle, one limit and one continuation and permeation of one and the other. Basically, at the

roots, love and hate, friendship and quarrel are one and same thing. The greatest good, that is wanted the most, the most perfect perfection and greatest blessing, they are in unity, which implies everything. The universe, according to Bruno is just the unity in which all the opposites coincide (*coincidentia oppositorum*).

In his work *La cena delle ceneri* Giordano Bruno exposed his support of the Copernican heliocentric system. But, while Copernicus limits his teaching to solar system, Bruno extends it to the whole universe, which he deem infinitely big. Bruno sees in all stars entities similar to our Sun, with their planetary systems and living beings dwelling there.

*De umbris idearum* brings Bruno's presentation of the art of mnemonics based upon the magical foundations. He identifies the heavenly models, as causes of all sensitive things which human mind knows, with pictures of 36 heavenly decans (as rulers of 36 decades of Zodiacal circle). Bruno here applies the coincidence of opposites of Nicholas de Cusa onto Ficino's conceptions of the hierarchy of beings. This doctrine is a try of the definition of the roles of beings. This doctrine is a try of the definition of the roles of the rational soul, which is manifested as the universal world soul and individual world soul.

Certain importance also bears the work *De magia* (On Magic). In it Bruno brings forth his division of magic – divine, natural and mathematical. Divine magic is a synonym for theurgy, that is, invocation of gods and angels. Natural magic is one that depends on sympathies and antipathies, like medicine and alchemy. Third, mathematical is called such because of the analogy with relations of numbers in mathematics and geometry. Here belong for instance sorcery, illusionism, necromancy, prophesy.

According to Bruno, magic is good or bad in itself, but it depends on directing magical actions toward good (healing) or evil (bewitchment). In his explanation of the acting of the astrological magic Bruno brings forth his version of the Neo-Platonic scheme, according to which higher entities gradually influence lower ones. So, after him God influences the deities, deities – stars, stars – demons (in early antique meaning of forces that influence life and destiny), demons – elements, elements – senses, senses – spirit and finally spirit influences the spiritual being. In the work *De magia* we can also find the idea of attractors, characteristic for the modern chaos theory. "By straight line, similar aspire toward similar, and to that, with which is coherent. It is double attraction: one by consensus, when parts converge toward the whole... Other is without the consensus, when the contrariety is attracted by the overcoming contrariety and cannot eschew it." Just like modern holistic scientist Deepak Chopra holds, so Bruno deems too, that the all matter is permeated by spirit and intelligence. Neither spirit nor body ever lose themselves entirely; there exists only an eternal alternation of the state of condensation and dissipation.

Death of Giordano Bruno denoted the end of a bright epoch in the history of mankind, the Renaissance, an epoch that brought forth some really splendid minds. Bruno himself stands as the light at the end of the tunnel which led through The Middle Ages, Humanism and Renaissance. The fore at his stake is a symbol comparable to the fire that Prometheus brought to the people, not caring about the rage of the Olympian gods and therefore he had to be punished. Although he suffered the consequences for his try to overcome the division between the nature and deity, his sacrifice was not in vain. He left as an inheritance the lines of direction for a new philosophy and new ethics, which will be in accord both with human needs and the divine will.

## 2.2. ISLAM

### 2.2.1. Spreading of Islam, Sufism and Geber

The most important historical event in the course of the 7<sup>th</sup> century was undoubtedly the outer expansion of Arabia, after in 630 the founder of Islam Mohammad for the first time in history established the unity of the state. In just ten years Arabians conquered the huge territory, from Turkestan to Egypt, with not quite a huge army. The decisive factor was the religious enthusiasm of the warriors, who went into battles with the incredible courage, assured that if they die, they go directly into heaven. Islam has its origins in Arabian town Mecca, where was born the founder of the new religion Mohammad, about 570.

The facts about Mohammad's life are well known and historically founded, so there was not an opportunity to present him as a divinity, like it was presented the founder of Christianity. Mohammad was a merchant by occupation, happily married with 15 years older widow. When he was 40, he received the first announcement from God, in a cave, within a little of his hometown, and three years later announcement to preach God's message publicly. In the beginning he had been ridiculed and humiliated; afterwards his small group of about 70 people was driven out of town. In the year 622 Mohammed alone left his native Mecca and set out for 350 kilometers far town Jatrib, later renamed into Maddinah. Five years later, he and his fighters rejected the attack of Meccans, to eventually conquer Mecca in 629. In this town there has been a sanctuary called Kaba, yet from pre-Islamic times. According to the Arabian legend, in this town had stopped Abraham (Ibrahim), on his way to Kanaan, and he was the one who built the sanctuary. Conquering of Mecca intimated the spreading Islam to unimagined borders, and it denoted a beginning of Islamic civilization, which dominated over great parts of Asia, northern Africa and Spain, between 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Islam took over its main dogma, monotheism, from Jewish and Christian preaching. So, a considerable part of *Kuran* is fulfilled with figures from Jewish Tora and Christian gospels. Mohammad came into contact with the members of Jewish religion already in Mecca, and later, in Maddinah, whilst he could have met Christians on his journeys to Syria, and maybe also to Egypt and Mesopotamia. In all likelihood there has been some influence from Nestorian Christians. They were followers of Constantinople Patriarch Nestorius (born in Syria), whose teaching, that to St. Mary the name of Theotokos does not appertain, since she bore only a man, was condemned on Council of Ephesus, in 431. On that council Jesus' mother had been deified, virtually taking the place of Third person in the Trinity, although the Holy Ghost remained formally the third person. Therefore, *Kuran* has at least to a certain degree right in saying that Trinity consists of God-Father, God's Mother and Jesus, Son of God. Mohammad probably received, besides

Christian teaching, also some influences from Zoroastrism and Neo-Platonism. Certain similarity with Zoroastrism can be seen in existence of Sheytan, as fallen angel and we can compare him with Zoroastrian Ahriman; the second similarity is the existence of gins or evil spirits, comparable to devas of Zoroastrism. Neo-Platonism had more influence on Islamic mysticism – Sufism (there will be word or two about it later). As regards very *Kuran*, it is perceivable frequent use of the Neo-Platonic One, as the sign of the supreme God-creator. (For instance: “And your God – is one God”, “Say: He is Allah – The One etc.) In Islamic theology of The Middle Ages, Plotinus and Neo-Platonism will have a prominent position.

Sufism is Islamic mystical movement, of which main characteristics are asceticism, ecstatic desire and love toward God. Its first beginnings are in Persia, in town Basra where lived first Islamic mystics - al-Hasan and Rabia, in the course of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. However, it can be asserted that the founder of Islam, Mohammad, was at least partially a mystic, feeling God alternatively far and close, as transcendental and immanent, that reminds of Neo-Platonic vision of Plotinus and Proclus. God is understood, accordingly, as one who acts not only in heaven, but in the world also, as well as in the human soul. The affirmation of love between God and man is present in several places in *Kuran*, for instance “Say: if you love Allah, follow me and Allah will love you... (Sura 3,31). Although for all that, traditional Islam and Sufism stood in quite sharp contrariety. On one side stood supreme understanding of God and theologians attitude that one cannot reach the God outside the announcement; on the other stood the confession of God’s immanence and immersion of the individual being into God’s entity. Sufism always represented a kind of reaction against the process of justification and intellectualization, as well as against worldliness. The name *Sufi* springs from Arabian word ‘suf’ (i.e. flax), since the first ascetics dressed themselves in cloaks made of rough flaxen fabric.

In 8<sup>th</sup> century in Persia also has been active Jabir ibn Hayyam, better known as Geber, Arabian polymath, meritorious for the renascence of alchemy. With his work Geber actually founded Arabian alchemy<sup>6</sup>, and she will later influence European mystical philosophers, like Albertus Magnus and Ramon Lull. Geber acted, together with a circle of scholars, at the court of the famous caliph Harun al-Rachid in Bagdad. Their range of acting comprised a series of fields – beside alchemy and philosophy they also occupied themselves with mathematics, magic, astronomy, astrology, medicine and military science.

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<sup>6</sup> The first beginnings of alchemy could be traced back in ancient Egypt, and in the first few centuries of new era its elements merged with Neo-Platonic mysticism. Alchemy was essentially a symbolic process involving to make gold, regarded as the symbol of illumination and salvation. This is achieved through seven stages: calcinations, putrefaction, solution, distillation, conjunction, sublimation and philosophic congealment. The final stage meant binding together inseparably of the fixed and volatile principles in man. Alchemical evolution is epitomized in formula ‘Solve et Coagula’. It would mean analyzing all the elements in oneself, dissolving all the inferior, then, with the strength acquired from the preceding operation, to congeal.

He was born in Tus, in Persian region Khorasan, then under the rule of Ummayyad dynasty. It is considered that he was born around the year 722 AD. As pharmacist's son, he continued and followed the footsteps of his father in the domain of medicine, under the patronage of the Barmakid Vizir. It is known that at the age of 35 he was engaged in alchemy in town Kufa, where his family had emigrated from Yemen. Eventually, his connections with Barmakid contributed his falling into disgrace, together with that family; so, he spent the last period of his life in house arrest.

He is best known for his contribution to modern scientific discipline of chemistry, in the way that he distinctly recognized the importance of experimentation. Geber became alchemist at the court of famous caliph Harun al-Rachid, to whom he dedicated his book *Kitab al-Zuhra* (Knjiga o Veneri). In his other well known book, *Book of Stones*, he states that the purpose is to confuse and lead into erraneous thinking everyone except those ones, whom God loves and cares for. His works were therefore written in a kind of esoteric code, which made impossible the understanding to those not initiated in his school of alchemy.

Geber was deeply religious and he emphasized constantly that the craft of alchemy is possible just to those deeply dedicated to the will of God. He deemed that alchemist is literally the instrument of God on the Earth, as the manipulation of reality is possible just to him. Geber's alchemical researches were theoretically based upon the elaborated numerology of pythagorean and neoplatonic system. The nature and properties of elements were defined through numerical values ascribed to consonants of the Arabian alphabet, and number 17 was of the greatest importance.

In comparison with aristotelian physics, Geber added four properties (heat, coldness, dryness and humidity) to four elements (fire, earth, water, air). By the metals, two properties were inner, and two outer. Geber supposed that by the modification of properties of some metal, and based upon the content of sulphur and mercury, it would be possible to obtain new, different metal. This theory consequently led toward the alchemical pursuit of elixir (al-iksir), which would allow the transformation. In western alchemy this it has become known as philosophical stone.

This Arabian alchemist is often mistakenly identified with alchemist Jabir ibn Aflah from Sevilla. The latter namely lived in 14<sup>th</sup> century and he wrote also important works from mathematics and astronomy, however he is considered to be pseudo-Geber.

### 2.2.2. 'Mamun's Renaissance' and Thabit ibn Qurra

In imitation of Charlemagne, Bagdad khalif al-Mamun also decided to carry through a large educational reform in the Arabian Empire. His father, legendary khalif Harun al-Rachid (known for his somehow idealized character in *Arabian Nights*) namely, kept up a correspondence with

Frankish emperor, so it is possible that had an information from the first hand about the events in connection with Carolingian Renaissance. But, legend says that al-Mamun was persuaded by Aristotle, who appeared in his dreams, convincing that there is no contradiction between faith and reason. Anywise, al-Mamun, liberated of religious prejudices, decided to raise in Bagdad the House of Wisdom (that it how he named his educational center). He committed the main role (similar to one that had Alcuin by Charlemagne) to philosopher al-Kindi, who was in fact the first significant Arabian philosopher. At same time, al-Kindi was also the most learned Arab of his time, commanding over extensive encyclopedic knowledge – he was acquainted with logic, philosophy, geometry, mathematics, music and astronomy-astrology. In Bagdad's House of Wisdom were collected works of Greek, Persian and Indian writers, and they were translated to Arabian. Therefore, Islamic knowledge was added onto Greek foundations, that is, belief that behind the visible world chaos there exists underlying order, over which rule general laws, accessible to human reason. Thus, scientific endeavors were primarily pointed at philosophical aims, toward finding out the fundamental laws of the universe.

In the year 830 Bagdad khalif al-Mamun, in his war campaign against the army of Byzantine Empire passed through Harran, town in which (as it was mentioned in the first part of the book) Simplicius had founded his Neo-Platonic school three centuries ago. After they had come under the Islamic rule in 639, Harranians could still practiced their faith and philosophy freely, meeting with the tolerant attitude of local authorities. The first problem emerged just in 830, after they had been perceived by Bagdad khalif, on his travel through Harran. Namely, they were wearing specific costumes, by which they differed from local Muslims. Al-Mamun had asked them about their religious appurtenance, but he did not get satisfying answer, as Harranians hesitated to admit that they belong to pagan religion. Al-Mamun then put an ultimatum – they will either accept Islam, or another religion allowed by *Kuran*, otherwise he will have them execute, when he returns from the campaign. Then one local sheik decided to help them, and suggested them to tell khalif, that they are 'Sabians'. Namely, they were also, along with Muslims, Christians and Jews mentioned as orthodox in *Kuran* (sura 2,62).<sup>7</sup> So, this conversion saved lives of Harranians and Hermetism

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<sup>7</sup> 'Sabians' is controversial term because it could be identified with several ethnic and religious communities. The oldest of them was the Semitic ethnic group, which has been formed from 10th to 8th century BC on the territory of today Yemen. Just this community is mentioned in the Old Testament, i.e. their queen who pays a visit to King Solomon and pay obeisance to him and Jewish God Yehowah. The other ethnic-religious community are Mandeans and their first traces could be establish from the 4th century AD on, on the territory of today Iran and Iraq. Mandeism presents an amalgamation of Babilonian, Hebrew, Zarathustrian and Christian elements, orinated on basis of Gnosticism. Mandeans reject Christ as false prophet, and they call John the Baptist their prophet and teacher. Outside their community, that is, among the Muslims, they were known as 'Subba', and that is where the name 'Sabians' stems from. In *Kuran*, under 'Sabians' are recognized only the members of the latter community, that which called themselves 'Mandeans'. They are monotheists, although their teaching is in essence dualistic, like that of Zoroastrism.

practically became the official religion of ‘Sabians’ and it became also recognized and accepted by Islamic authorities.

About the year 872 there occurred a schism among Harranians, or Sabians, how they called themselves now, so one group decided to set out for Bagdad, to settle there permanently. The best known personality in this group was philosopher Thabit ibn Qurra, born in 835. After moving to Bagdad, as very educated person, he soon gained affection of khalif. Of course, the whole community of Sabians was recognized by the authorities, gaining as well status of independence, in relation to Islam. Therefore, this philosophical school that has been continuing tradition 350 years long, which leant on foundations that were put Neo-Platonists banished from Athens, Olimpiodorus and Simplicius. However, this school has not continued exclusively Neo-Platonic teaching, but in course of time there occurred interaction with Hermetism, so most probably came into their own influences from Alexandria, too. Neo-Platonic Sabians now recognized Hermetic teachings as sources of their philosophy.

The life of Sabians’ leader Thabit ibn Qurra in Bagdad was fulfilled with teaching, as well as with writing. Thabit’s opus comprised of a range of different fields, including mathematics, astronomy, logic, medicine, and of course philosophy. His mother language was Syrian, but he knew also Greek and Arabian. He wrote approximately 150 works, and also corrected earlier translations. His translations contributed considerably to the development of later Arabian philosophy. Among his most important works are, for instance: *Tractatus de solutione mysteriorum in Platonis Republica obviatorum*, *Liber de religione Sabiorum*, *Liber de legibus Hermetis*, *et de orationibus quibus utuntur ethnici*, *Liber de confirmatione religionis ethicorum*. From the last one Jewish author Barhebraeus quotes the citation in which Thabit ibn Qurra brings out his apology in defence of a pagan religion. So he quotes that pagans were those who civilized the world, built towns and harbors and taught secret wisdom. In addition, pagans “discovered the art of healing of soul and body and set the system of government”. Without paganism, world would be empty and miserable, deduced Thabit ibn Qurra.

By the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century leader of Sabians had died, but the sect alone continued to exist and act for another century and a half. During this time, still prevailed tolerance and freedom of thought and to non-Muslims were accessible even high stations at court. But, from the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century on, Sabians began to disappear, mainly because of the growing severity of ulemas (Islamic lawyers-theologians).

### 2.2.3. Al-Farabi, the Founder of Islamic Neo-Platonism

Philosopher al-Farabi (born about 870 in Turkestan) was not a Sufi mystic, however in Arabian world he is generally considered as the founder of Islamic Neo-Platonism and as the greatest representative of this branch of philosophy since Proclus (V century). His teaching has just partially

characteristics of mysticism, as it is an eclectic combination of Neo-Platonism and Aristotelian philosophy. Al-Farabi has not left any autobiography, so there are relatively little reliable data about his life. He wrote more than 100 works, but unfortunately only a smaller part has been preserved. The biggest part of his opus make treatises in logic and philosophy of language, as well as philosophy of politics, religion, metaphysics, psychology and natural philosophy. Among his best works are *Virtuous City* (often compared with Plato's *Republic*), *Treatise of the Mind*, *Book of Letters* and *Book of the Enumeration of Sciences*.

Al-Farabi's metaphysical thought is focused mainly on three main themes, and these are: First Being that is God; emanation and hierarchy of beings; and inner structure of being. On the summit of the hierarchy is Divine Being, whom al-Farabi denotes as 'The First'. From it emanates second being that is the First Intellect (that virtually represents the second being). Same as God, this being too consists of the immaterial substance. The First Intellect understands God and according to this comprehension produces the third being, i.e. the Second Intellect. The First Intellect also understands his own essence and the result of this understanding is the creation of body and soul of the first heaven. Each one of the next intellects that emanate are connected with the production of similar astral phenomena, including fixed stars, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and Moon. Of special importance is emanative hierarchy of the Tenth Intellect, because it bridges heavenly and terrestrial worlds. This Tenth Intellect (*nous poietikos*) is responsible for the actualization of the potential of thoughts in man's intellect, as well as of emanating forms of man and the sublunary world. Here active intellect practically takes over the role of Plotinus' Universal soul.

#### 2.2.4. 'Picatrix' or 'Aim of the Wise'

The influence that had the book *Sefer Yetzirah* on Jewish mysticism is comparable with influence of the work *Ghayat al-hakim* (Aim of the Sage) on Arabian medieval mysticism, so on philosophy, as on astrology, magic and alchemy.<sup>8</sup> In the West this work is known under the name *Picatrix*, because of the inaccurate translation of the name of Arabian writer whom is mistakenly attributed the authorship. It is attributed to Arabian mathematician from Andalusia, al-Majriti, who lived in 10<sup>th</sup> century. However, it is believed that *Picatrix* originated in Harran, as there Hermetism flourished; it was probably later carried over to Spain.

*Picatrix* virtually represents a manual (theoretical and practical) of astrological magic. Astrology has, in the course of its development in antiquity, experienced a great ascent in time of Alexandrian syncretism, and its summit in synthesis with Hermetic thought. To earthly phenomena it was attributed planetary influence, and astrology was considered as manifestation of the bond between macro and microcosmos. So, *Picatrix* also

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<sup>8</sup> These fields will permanently converge to each other and be mutually permeated, in several centuries to come.

asserts that all the things in the world submit themselves to heavenly forms that planets have power and influence over this world, and according to that, movement of the planets is in the very roots of magic.

The work *Picatrix* is divided into four books. Since the work has not been written systematically and methodically, so in each book appear jumbled together, themes from the various fields. The work deals with different themes from philosophy (author considers philosophic doctrines as foundations of the talismanic art), theory of magic, astronomy, astrology, natural sciences, and practical magic. In the introduction author emphasizes the reason for writing this book and that is the elucidation of the nature of magic – secret that has been carefully kept by ancient philosophers.

In the first book, it is emphasized the importance of philosophy, for the better understanding of divine things, natural and moral and also as presupposition for magic, which would be then her final element. Here, there can be found certain similarities with al-Farabi's *Book of the Enumeration of the Sciences*, as well as with Neo-Platonic doctrines. Here is presented a division of magic – on theoretical, that comprises the knowledge of heaven, and practical, which consists of exploitation of natural kingdom, animal, vegetable and mineral. In the end of the first book the author cites Neo-Platonic thought of the existence of chain of hypostases as the link between upper and lower worlds, which is the primary principle of magic. The third book brings quotations of the astrologer al-Tabari; they represent instructions for the veneration of planets, according to the customs of Sabians. Here are given directions for the invocation of a single planet, for a certain purpose, but here is also given an inducement for love toward God. The fourth book brings more philosophical themes, like theory of five substances, and concepts of substance, intellect and soul. In the last book author emphasizes that throughout the philosophy man aspires toward the similarity with God; in connection with this, he deals with the theory of love. The work ends with testifying of Socrates and admonishments of Pythagoras, as a conclusion. This work will have a considerable influence on Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino and on his astrological magic.

#### 2.2.4. Avicenna – Prince of Philosophers and Physicians

One of the most prominent philosophers of 11<sup>th</sup> century is by all means Arabian philosopher, natural scientist and physician Avicenna. He was born in 980 in a small place Kharmaytan, near Bukhara in eastern Persia (today Uzbekistan). When he was five years old, family moved to Bukhara, then capital and educational center of Samanids, dynasty that ruled over eastern Persia. Already in his tenth year Avicenna gained thorough knowledge in grammar, literature, *Kuran*, geometry and mathematics, as well as in philosophy.

In the beginning of his study, he paid more attention to metaphysics and medicine, and later he dedicated himself to philosophy and logic. In his 16<sup>th</sup>

year he was already a renowned physician; then he was allowed admittance to the royal library of Samanids in Bukhara, where he managed to read all the books there, in a period of two years. That gave him excellent foundations for his further spiritual development. Already before he was 21, he had begun with writing books – in mathematics, natural science, ethics. Although many of his works disappeared in wars and plunders, many of them reached to us as well. Owing to historical circumstances, that is, fights for supremacy among Persian dynasties, it was not destined for him, to stay for long in one place. So he traveled often from one court to another, usually leaving before the fall of a dynasty, to avoid bloody internecine battles.

In the town Hamadan, where he had treated rulers living there, it was granted to him a title of wazir. After ruler's death in 1021, Avicenna thanked for the offered title and duty and wanted to move to town Ispahan. But, his enemies took advantage of the new situation and imprisoned him in fortress Fardjan. Cut off from the world, in this prison he wrote several treatises, also a mystical allegory *Risalah Hayy ibn Yaqzan*, work that gives out smell of mysticism for the most in all of his opus. Suddenly, the ruler of Ispahan Ala al-Dawlah attacked Hamadan, setting free Avicenna. So, it was finally made possible for Avicenna to work permanently, without interruptions, because in Ispahan (big cultural and educational center) he could dedicate himself to his studies in peace.

It was just at the court of Ala al-Dawlah that Avicenna wrote *Al-Qanun*, medical canon, which will become a standard textbook in Europe until 17<sup>th</sup> century. Of other works, exceptional importance has *Kitab al-Shefa* (Book of Healing), book that represents an encyclopedia of the philosophical thought of his time (it is divided into logic, physics, mathematics and metaphysics). Although Avicenna's philosophical path began in Aristotelian logic, later espousal of Neo-Platonic theory of evolution gradually led philosopher to mysticism. His emanative scheme is entirely accordant with al-Farabi's. Like him, Avicenna thought that from God's contemplation emanates the First Intellect, and from it the Second. The process of emanation goes on up to the last, tenth, which is related to Moon, and rules over the sublunary world. This emanation is called the Active Intellect, and many Islamic philosophers identify it with the archangel Gabriel. In his most mystical work *Risalah Hayy ibn Yaqzan* Avicenna depicts the spiritual path, that an aspirant, *salik*, (traveler) must pass, after the meeting with teacher, Hayy ibn Yaqzan. The path begins in the realm of (spiritual) death, and it ends in the realm of real, pure life, that is indiscernible from the very Divinity. Salik must learn the teaching of the sublime ones, i.e. the real interpretation of things. Thereby he must pass through the realm of pure matter, material body, through four intellectual kingdoms, which include the imagination, the world of intelligible and finally the angelic world. He passes through four elements and nine heavenly spheres. Like a bird he elevates himself above the cosmic crypt in which he is and comes into the God's presence. Therefore, soul returns to her Divine force. Avicenna's mystical philosophy will have impact on whole range of medieval philosophers, among others on European mystical philosophers Albert Magnus and Roger Bacon.

### 2.2.5. Sufi Convert al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali (in Islamic world known as Abu Hamid) is one of the greatest Muslim theologians and mystical philosophers. He was born in 1058 in Tus, place in northern Iran. He received his education, except in his native place, also in Gurgan and Nishapur, nearby towns. Thus he gained a wide education in traditional Islamic religious science, philosophy and law. In 11<sup>th</sup> century Iran fell under the rule of Turks Seljuks. Al-Ghazali, because of his excellent education, gained favor of wazir Nizam al-Mulk, who appoints him on the head of the university in Bagdad, in 1091. Becoming thus the leader of the Islamic society, he at the same time gave lectures in Islamic law and fought against heretical teachings of various sects present on the religious scene of that time. But, already in 1095, al-Ghazali had experienced a strong spiritual crisis, and soon left Bagdad. In that time, he had already written two philosophical works, *Maqasid al falasifa* (The Intentions of the Philosophers) and *Tahafut al falasifa* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), in which he subjected the works of his predecessors al-Farabi and Avicenna to critical judgement.

After he had renounced the career at the university, but also the world in general, he spent two years wandering as Sufi through Syria and Palestine. After the pilgrimage to Mecca, he returned to his native Tus, entirely dedicating himself to the mystical life of Sufi philosophers and experienced a peculiar conversion. Namely, he suddenly gained insight, that there's no other way to certain knowledge and discovery of truth, except through Sufism. Soon there originated another important al-Ghazali's work, *Ihya ulum al-din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences). This mystical work he wrote in Arabic, but for the practical use he composed an abridged version in Persian, entitling it *Kimiya e sadat* (The Alchemy of Happiness). From this work one can perceive a new level of understanding of faith, from a traditional form related to *sharia*, to the direct union with God in the mystical Sufi experience. Al-Ghazali tried to revive religious sciences on foundations of Sufism, giving evidences, which will later contribute to its official recognition.

Philosopher's work *Ihya ulum al-din*, that is, the abridged edition *Alchemy of Happiness* represents a core of al-Ghazali's mystical work. His goal, as of practical mystic, is leading of man from the formal acquaintance with Islamic faith toward a real knowledge about God. The first four chapters of the *Alchemy of Happiness* are a commentary of well known line in *Hadis* (traditional sayings of Mohammad), "He, who knows himself, knows God". But, the point is in the last, eighth chapter, entitled 'Love toward God'. Al-Ghazali calls love toward God the highest of all themes, as an ultimate goal, toward which everyone should aspire. One, whose inner eye is open to perceiving of beauty and perfection of God, will despise all the outer perceiving, no matter how beautiful they are. According to the philosopher, there exist five causes that incite love. First is, that man loves himself and

perfection of his own nature; second, that man loves his benefactor, i.e. God; third, that man represents love incited by the contemplation of God's attributes, his power and wisdom; fourth cause is affection of a man toward God because he made him according to his own picture.

In his last work, autobiography entitled *Al-Munqidhmin al-dalal* (The Deliverer from Error), philosopher states that "science of Sufism strive toward the separation of heart from anything that is not God, and to allow, as the only occupation, the meditation about divine being". This 'meditation of heart' al-Ghazali describes in following way: "Let him reduce his heart to a state in which the existence of anything and its non-existence are the same to him. Then, as he sits in solitude let him not cease saying continuously with his tongue 'Allah, Allah', keeping his thought on it. At least he will reach a state when the motion of his tongue will cease, and it will seem as though the word flowed from it. Then, the form of the word, its letters and shape are removed from his heart, and there remains the idea alone, as though clinging to his heart. So far, all is dependant on his will and choice; but to bring the mercy of God does not stand in his will or choice. He has now laid himself bare to the breathings of that mercy, and nothing remains but to await what God will open to him, as God has done after this manner to prophets and saints."

#### 2.2.7. Assassins – the Counterpart to Templar's Order

The same value that the Knights Templar had for Christianity, on the side of Islam had the order of Ismaili Nizari, usually known under the name Assassins. This order was founded by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Persia by Hassan-i-Sabbah. Assassins acted in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria, where they had occasional conflicts with crusaders.

The teaching of Ismaili represented an eclectic mixture made of Islamic, Christian and Jewish mystical philosophy, interweaved with Gnostic, Zoroastrian, Neo-Platonic and Hindu elements. One of the models of teaching of the Ismaili wisdom was a system of gradual initiation, known as Nine Degrees of Wisdom.

The first leader of Assassins, Hassan-i-Sabah was born in 1055 in Persia, in the vicinity of Teheran. In his youth he traveled through Egypt, Syria, Irak and throughout Persia, spreading his Ismaili teaching. Since the part of Persia was already under the rule of Turks Seljuks, his missionary journeys were at the same time revolutionary, too. In 1090, with members of his sect he conquered the fortress Alamut, on the high mountain crag and there he made a center of resistance to Seljuks' rule. Hasan-i-Sabah dedicated his time to prayer, fast, making annotations concerning his teaching, developing strategy of his revolutionary campaign, ruling his small state and efforts directed toward spreading of Ismaili Nizari teaching. Hassan-i-Sabah was acquainted very well with mathematics, astronomy, magic and alchemy and he conducted very ascetic and pious life.

The mission of Hassan-i-Sabah among Syrian Ismaili is meritorious for the early European contacts with Assassins during the Crusades. The first documented encounter occurred in September, 1106. Prince of Antioch Tancred had attacked the Assassins' castle Apace and after his victory he imposed a tax to the sect. In the next long period until the 13<sup>th</sup> century there were several attempts of the mutual approach, as well as of forming alliance of Assassins and Crusaders (for example, against the common enemy, Turks Seljuks). Although Assassins (Nizari) disappeared in political sense in 13<sup>th</sup> century, after the defeat by Mongolians and Egyptian Mameluks, nevertheless, they continued to exist as minority religious group. A large part of Ismaili Nizari escaped to India, where they founded their community, still existing nowadays.

Ismaili Nizari had been innovators, who spread a model of hierarchic mystical secret society. The order of Assassins influenced the Knights Templar, who had been organized in the similar, hierarchic way. The system of nine degrees of initiation began with introduction to the esoteric meaning of the announcement of *Kuran*. Afterwards it continued with explanation of the truth as the teaching of Imam, then by teaching of Kabalistic mystery about the number seven, acceptance of prophets after Mohammad, teaching about twelve apostles and mystical meaning of number 12, by the philosophical teaching of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, mystical dualistic teaching of the first and second cause, by working out of this two principles and finally by studying of cosmological teachings about soul, heaven and heavenly intelligences.

#### 2.2.8. Ecumenical Mysticism of Ibn al-Arabi

In a transition from 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century in Spain lived poet and philosopher Muhydin ibn al-Arabi, one of the greatest Sufi mystics. He was born in 1165 in Murcia, in southern region of Andalusia, where in those times flourished Hispano-Arabian culture. In southern half of Spain prevailed, at least to a certain extent, a co-existence of three main religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These cultures, that developed one nearby the other, even mutually permeated themselves. In the south of Spain there prevailed a rich cultural life, architecture developed, the classics of Greek philosophy were translated and one by the other there were studied spiritual teachings of three Abrahamic religions.

Ibn al-Arabi had grown up in an intellectual atmosphere, being absorbed in studying the most important ideas in the fields of science, religion and philosophy. In his 20<sup>th</sup> year he was initiated into Sufism. Until the age of 20, he has not lived yet a complete spiritual life, but instead he studied a little, and little he enjoyed having parties with his friends. But, suddenly, in the middle of one such party in Sevilla, he heard a voice: "O, Muhammed, it was not for this that you were created." Then he withdrew himself into seclusion, and after several days experienced a triple vision. In it, he met prophets

Moses, Jesus and Mohammad, who gave him their spiritual instructions. This enlightenment compelled him to dedicate himself entirely to the spiritual path. Later, in the course of his life, Ibn al-Arabi will receive many similar spiritual messages.

About the year 1200, when he was approximately 35, Ibn al-Arabi decided to depart eastward. Already then he gained a reputation as Sufi writer and spiritual teacher, mastering over the extensive spiritual knowledge. In that time in Spain began Christian *reconquista*, and in a course of several decades Arabs will lose all the territories conquered in 8<sup>th</sup> century. He took his way to Cairo first and then to Jerusalem and Mecca, where he accomplished a pilgrimage in 1202. There Ibn al-Arabi spent about two years, in a company of the most influential and most learned families in town, studying and writing his works. Here originated his significant poem collection *The Interpreter of Desires*, mystical script which gives astonishing insight into all the depth and beauty of love on the spiritual path. As many had understood his poetic allegories too literally, philosopher was compelled to write a commentary on his own lines. Namely, this collection gave out too much smell of erotic and sensual notions.

Another important al-Arabi's work originated in Mecca and that is *Futuh al-Makkyah* (Meccan Openings). This comprehensive work, consisting of 560 chapters, represents a true encyclopedia of his mystical system. In introduction it says that he has not reached the content with his own reasoning, but it was 'poured' into him by his Angel of Inspiration, during his visit to the sanctuary Kaba. Ibn al-Arabi considered all the great prophets as interpreters of one general primordial religion. So he says in *Futuh al-Makkyah*: "There is no knowledge except that taken from God, for he alone is the Knower... the prophets, in spite of their great number and the long periods of time which separate them, had no disagreement in knowledge of God, since they took it from God. So, Ibn al-Arabi's emphasize is just on direct taking from God, in which there is concordance in different religious traditions.

In Ibn al-Arabi's view, God is not understood as Being, not even as the Supreme Being, that would exist outside or above the universe. Namely, he thinks that everything that exists is a part, but also the manifestation of the Oneness of God. Accordingly, human beings are also the parts of God, while the idea of the separated self results from ignorance. This teaching is called panentheism. Ibn al-Arabi believes, in imitation of Plotinus that God possesses so the transcendental as the immanent aspect, too.

The second important philosopher's work bears the title *Fusus al-hikam* (The Wisdom of the Prophets). Although relatively short, it is considered as a kind of a testament of this great spiritual teacher. In this work the philosopher dedicates one chapter to each of 27 prophets and deputies, from Adam, up to Mohammad. Connecting meditations about the meaning of great prophets, Ibn al-Arabi brings out his own theosophical teaching. In so far work *Futuh al-Makkyah* can be compared, by its voluminosity with an encyclopedia,

whilst *Fusus* can be perceived as the world's map of God's wisdom, in which is delineated each country that gave a prophet. This work is surely a valuable domain for the exploration, because in it, maybe for the first time, one thinker on the European soil pointed to the possibility of a wider understanding of ecumenism in the world of spirituality. The core of Ibn al-Arabi's mysticism is expressed in well known and often cited lines: "My heart has become capable of every form/ It is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks/ And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Kaaba/ and the tables of Torah and the book of Quran/ I follow the religion of love: whatever way Love's camel take, that is my religion and my faith.

### 2.2.9. Rumi – Founder of the Order of 'Spinning Dervishes'

When al-Arabi was already a middle aged man (1207), on the opposite end of ex-Arabian Empire, in eastern Persian province Khorazan, in place Balkh (today Afganistan) was born yet another great Sufi mystic, named Jalal al-Din Rumi. His hometown was one of the most prominent in Iran and his family enjoyed respect, since it gave a row of law and religious functionaries (ulemas). Rumi's father decided to go to Bagdad in 1212, because of the imminent danger of the Mongolian invasion. Three years later family goes for a pilgrimage to Mecca and afterwards to Asia Minor (a part under the rule of Turks Seljuks). On their way from Arabia family goes through Damascus and stops in Malatya, where in 1226 Rumi married a daughter of a father's friend. Then, family moved once again (1229) and arrived to the capital of western Turks Seljuks, Konya. Two years later, Rumi's father died and he inherited his high station of town's ulema.

Around 1232 arrived to Konya a former father's disciple from Balkh, who will teach young Rumi to the doctrine of Sufism. Several years later Rumi himself already became a Sufi authority. An important meeting occurred in 1244, when Rumi met a wandering dervish and Sufi devotee Shams al-Din of Tabriz. This spiritual teacher carried over to Rumi sacred secrets from scripts *Dzikh ad-Dourani*. The secret of this script comes from the Holy Breath, after the line from *Kuran* "Truly to God we belong and truly to him we shall return (sura 2,156). This secret of the Holy Breath is in connection with the technique, by which we return to our origins, by our complete surrender to the teacher, to become, step by step, "a complete Divine Inhalation and Exhalation in the Love Ocean of God Almighty". Rumi is considered the founder of the Order of Mavlawijah ('Whirling Dervishes'), who by their spinning in ecstatic dance come to the unity with God.

Beside being the Founder of Mavlawijah Order, Jalal al-Din Rumi is probably even more renowned after his poetry, so his collections are even nowadays, more than seven centuries after his death, bestsellers of the world poetry. The collection *Maithnavi* with its 47 thousand lines represents a masterpiece of the Persian literature. In this work, which abounds of symbols and allegories Rumi sings of the intoxication by God's love. It is the work that expounds Sufi teaching and justifies God's ways towards men. Namely, Sufis

perceive the universe as the projection and reflection of the image of God. In Sufi poetry there are frequent allusions on theories of Pythagoras and Plato, about how music wakes in the soul a remembrance of heavenly harmonies, which soul had listened to, before she was separated from God. So Rumi in *Maithnavi* says: “The song of the spheres in revolutions/ Is what men sing with lute and voice/As we are all members of Adam/We have heard these melodies in Paradise.”

Rumi’s mystical poetic visions are very often interweaved with a spirit of ecumenism just like by his famous predecessor Ibn al-Arabi. About this testify following lines: “What can be done, oh believers, as I don’t recognize myself?/ I’m neither a Christian nor Jew, Magian or a Moslem/I’m not of the East or West neither land nor sea/I’m not of Nature’s mine nor the stars in Heaven/I’m not of earth, water, air or fire/I’m not of Heaven, nor the dust of this carpet/I’m not of India, China, Bulgaria nor Saqsin/I’m not of the kingdom of Iraq or Khorasan/I’m not of this world, nor the next, Paradise nor Hell/I’m not of Adam, nor Eve, Eden nor Rizwan/My place is in the Placeless, my trace is in the Traceless/I’m neither body nor soul, as I belong to the soul of the Beloved.”

Since Rumi taught that “Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastians should be viewed with same eye”, it is no wonder that thousands of people from different nations and religions were present at his funeral. His mausoleum in town Konya today is a place of pilgrimage for many believers.

For his farewell from this world’s life Rumi sang of these lines: “On the day I die, while I’m being carried toward the grave, don’t weep/ Don’t say ‘He’s gone! He’s gone!’/ Death has nothing to do with going away/ The sun sets and moon sets, but they’re not gone/ Death is a coming together/ The tomb looks like a prison, but it’s really release into union.” We can see that for Rumi, as it was like for William of St. Thierry for instance, death represents a joy of the re-union with God.

## 2.3. HEBREW RELIGION

### 2.3.1. Interpretation of Sefer Jetzira by Saadia Ben Joseph

In the year 892 was born Jewish philosopher Saadia ben Joseph, near the town Fayum in Egypt. He was the first really significant Jewish philosopher after Philo of Alexandria. It is not known much about his childhood and education. But, in all likelihood he gained rather a broad education, according to his works. Already in his twentieth year he achieved his first big work, Jewish dictionary that he entitled *Agron*. At 23, he moved to Palestine, and at the age 36 he was put as the head (gaon) of Jewish academy in Sura, Babilonia. There, as he was a stranger, he did not come upon an acceptance, so in a competitive fight he had to abandon his position to Joseph ben Jacob and he spent next seven years in Bagdad, far from the Academy. He returned to the head of the Academy four years later and in that position remained until his death in 942.

Same as Philo, Saadia considered Egypt for his homeland. His predecessor had united Hellenist language and culture with Hebraic spirit; in the same way, through Saadia ben Joseph's works Arabian culture and language penetrated into the history of Jewish culture. Saadia was really universal philosopher and scientist, whose opus comprises, in addition to philosophy and theology, as well grammar, lexicography and translating activity. In his most important work *Al-amanat wal itikadat* (Of Faith and Knowledge), he presented systematically the philosophical foundations of the basic tenets of Jewish religion, and became the first creator of Jewish philosophy of religion. But, concerning the mystical philosophy, the most interesting work of Saadia ben Joseph is *Tafsir Kitab al-Mabad*, or commentary of the book *Sefer Yetzira*. This book, which will become one of the essential sources of medieval Jewish mystical philosophy actually originated yet in the late antiquity. The author is unknown, only it is supposed that it could be some Jewish Neo-Pythagorean, who lived approximately between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century. *The Book of Creation* depicts symbolically the beginning of the cosmos, by using 22 letters and 10 so-called sephirot. In this mystical book man is represented as microcosmos that accommodates to macrocosmos. This book presents a theoretical guide for understanding of the structure of creation, but from it, it is obvious also the connection of the linguistic theory, and of magical belief in the power of letters and words.

In his commentary on the *Book of Creation* Saadia ben Joseph endeavored to throw light upon the content of this mystical work, through the philosophy and other knowledge, especially by the system of Hebrew phonology, that he invented. In distinction from Pythagoreans, who consider that the first created things were numbers, Saadia attributes to the source of the God's creation, in addition to 10 numbers, as well 22 letters. All that is created has its name, for example, names of angels correspond to events that happen in connection with their task. The names of cosmic bodies vary, in relation to their different characteristics. Saadia explains that there exist ten categories

in which can be ordered all the created things. In later Jewish literature, the interpretation of Sefer Yetzirah will be worked out further and also supplemented, especially in Hasidic movement in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.3.2. Mystical Poet Solomon ibn Gabirol

Solomon ibn Gabirol, better known under his latinized name Avicbron, was a Jewish poet and philosopher. He was born in Malaga, Spain in 1021. He was one of the first teachers of Neo-Platonism in the medieval Europe. His work, translated in Latin as 'Fons vitae' was one of the main sources of Neo-Platonism, and it influenced also the European scholasticism.

Ibn Gabirol already as a child remained without father, and he moved with his mother to Zaragoza. There he acquired excellent cosmopolitan education. He made himself master in Arabic and biblical Hebrew; at the same time he assimilated Islamic Neo-Platonism and Aristotle's philosophy. From an early age he strived to join the rational way of thinking with sensation for sacral. It seems that already in his youth he had a feeling that he had grown old too early, so he complained in his 16<sup>th</sup> year that he has already a heart of an 80 year old man. In spite of his fragile body and health, he steered the whole energy that he had toward philosophy and religion. So, by the age of 16 he already wrote such high quality poetry, that she stands on the very top of Hebrew medieval literature. His poems could be compared with utmost reaches of Sufi poetry. Owing to his brilliant mind and creative imagination, he could always find patrons, who knew to appreciate his talent and who supported him.

A period of misfortune in his life began in 1039, after his patron Jekuthiel had come into conflict with authorities in Zaragoza, so he has fallen as a victim of court's intrigues. At the same time ibn Gabirol alone had fallen into disgrace by town's authorities, so soon he moved, first to Granada and afterwards to Valencia. In 1045 his mother died and he had experienced a kind of a turning point in his life, as from that time he devoted himself almost completely to philosophy. What ibn Gabirol constantly emphasized was aspiration toward gaining of spiritual knowledge, as a preparation for union with Source of Life, from which soul emanated.

Among ibn Gabirol's philosophical achievements, three works are especially singled out. First of them, a long philosophical poem *Kether Malkuth* (title related to the highest and lowest sephirot of Kabbalistic Tree of Life) depicts the structure of the universe and the attributes of the divinity, showing that those attributes in fact represent more the reflection of limited human mind, than the real nature of the Unknowable. While this work has been written in biblical Hebrew, ethical treatise *Kitab islah al-akhlak* (The Improvement of the Moral Qualities) is written in Arabic and it represents the first Jewish systematization of ethics. Ibn Gabirol's ethical thought as its foundation has ethical imperative, which he considers adapted to the nature of soul, and

accordingly he gives suggestions for 'polishing' the qualities of soul, which take out soul onto the path of liberating knowledge.

Ibn Gabirol's mystical philosophy reaches its culmination in the work *Yanbu al-hayah* (The Source of Life), translated in 12<sup>th</sup> century as 'Fons vitae', and published by his Latin name Avicbron. Since in this work he did not use references from *Bible*, *Talmud* and other Hebrew sacral literature, he has been considered as Muslim, or even as a Christian. Like Plotinus, Gabirol's mystical philosophy is rooted in the inner sense, that is, transcendental experience of the divine. This supreme divinity, First Being and Absolute, is outside of any possibility of characterizing or understanding. It is in fact expressed in us only in acting of divine will. Everything that exists outside the Absolute can be either spiritual or material. The first hypostasis which emanates is the Universal Intellect and second is Universal Soul. She is then manifested so in macrocosm (the entire universe) as in microcosm (man), in different forms. Universal Matter represents a substratum of the whole corporeality, while Universal form contains in itself all the existing forms. Universal Form and Matter represent, according to ibn Gabirol's teaching, a ladder up which man ascends in the search for ever higher knowledge about the Divine Will. For that reason, the knowledge about the Will, Form and Matter is something most sublime that man can achieve. It is in fact a knowledge that creates wisdom; it prevents the spiritual death of man, at the same time bringing him to the union with very source of life. This metaphysical wisdom virtually represents also the very purpose of creation of the human kind; it is the union of the human soul with the higher world, therefore a return to divine Source.

This book is important for medieval Platonism, but to this importance it can be added its significance for astrology, understood in a higher sense, i.e. as the science with convincing philosophical and metaphysical foundations. *Fons vitae* offers metaphysical justification of the astrology, by presenting the heavenly spheres as emanations of spiritual 'wheels' of intelligible substance that exists above them. Therefore, physical world is under the influence of intelligible movements that are transmitted through the soul into the sublunary world, causing changes in him. However, soul is not the source, but just a level in transmission of astrological powers, from the Creator through intermediary entities to the substance. *Fons vitae*, same as *Picatrix*, will have a great impact on later mystical philosophers of the Renaissance.

### 2.3.3. Moses de Leon and *Zohar*

From the Spain comes also the next great mystical philosopher, Moses de Leon. He was born by the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, in town according to which he gotten his name and which is at the same time the capital of the province of the same name (Leon) in the north of Spain. Although it is not known anything about Moses' parents and origin, on the basis of some details from his life one could assume that does not spring from a wealthy family. Spain of the 13<sup>th</sup> century was under the considerable influence of the

Islamic philosophy and mysticism, even Christian parts in the north, like Leon. Philosophers like al-Farabi or Avicenna made an impact not only on Christian, but also on Judaic thought. Moses de Leon was in his youthful days more under the influence of rationalists like Maimonides and later, just like al-Arabi, he strived towards the direct mystical insight.

Owing to the lack of historical facts, one can only surmise about the exact itinerary of the Moses' spiritual development. However, it could be assumed that he came into contact with some of the prominent Gnostics and Kabbalists of those times, most probably then already in the second half of his life. It seems that through the medium of some of the prominent Kabbalists, he came into possession of the collection *Zohar* (Book of Splendor), mystical commentary of *Tora*, the work considered to be the most important for the Jewish mysticism.

*Zohar* does not consist of one book only, but of a group of books. These books include the interpretation of Pentateuch, as well as the material in connection with theosophical theology, mythical cosmogony, mystical psychology and some kind of science that preceded today anthropology. Moses de Leon edited and supplemented the work, ascribing it to a Rabbi from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Simon ben Yohai. According to the legend, during the Roman persecution he spent 13 years in a cave studying *Tora*, and during that time, inspired by God wrote *Zohar*.

The mysterious connection between *Zohar* and Moses de Leon caused controversies short time after it had begun to circulate among the Kabbalists. Some of them thought that Moses had just edited old materials, part of which really had been written by Simon ben Yohai, while others considered Moses as creator of this work. But, all of them agreed about the fact, that it is an important Gnostic work, so this collection became infallible religious reading matter in Jewish communities, having barely lesser importance than *Tora* and *Talmud*. In the course of time, work has been subjected as well to rationalistic critique, so it was established for a certainty that Simon ben Yohai is not the true author of the work. For example, it was noticed that *Zohar* contains the names of rabbis who lived after Simon; it also describes some rituals that were established in later period, it mentions the battles with Muslims which occurred centuries later and else.

By the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish historian of religions Gershom Scholem asserts that Moses de Leon is the most probable author of the collection *Zohar*. He considers that Moses wrote the main part of *Zohar* in Aramaic language, in the form of miscellaneous collection of conversations and lectures of Simon ben Yohai and his disciples. Scholem says that to Kabbalists *Zohar* became a kind of *Bible*, enjoying for centuries an unquestionable position as a holy and authoritative text.

In *Zohar* Moses de Leon identifies *Tora* with Tree of Life. As the tree consists of many parts, which together are called 'tree', so *Tora* contains many inner and outer parts that make unique *Tora*. Similarly as in Tantrism or

Gnosticism for example, so in Kabbala there exists a story about successive emanations, which flow out from the Divinity. Kabbalistic doctrine in a way speaks about the nature of God, about sephirot or spheres of his divine emanations that form successive rows of invisible spheres and visible world, from gods and angels up to men and minerals. This emanative scheme is characteristic for all the Jewish Neo-Platonism.

The Tree of Life represents symbolically the model of the universe, with all the possible relations on different levels of macro and microcosm. It is in fact the very essence of the philosophy of Kabbala and it is actually a representation of the structure of universe in a symbolical form. Therefore, on the top is En Sof (Infinite), unknowable and transcendental deity. Its first manifestation is Keter (Crown) and it is depicted as 'nothing' from which all others sephirot emanate, but also as Divine will, original incitement of the entire creation. Hokmah (Wisdom) is the first cognizable manifestation of En Sof and it relates to the God's wisdom, the ideal thought of creation, which springs from the primordial original will. Binah (Intelligence) represents an expansion of Hokmah and it can be called 'The uterus of cosmos'; it contains all the phenomena in the latent of embryonic form. The next seven sephirot represent seven fundamental archetypes, which are in the background, overseeing the Creation. According to *Zohar*, from Binah flow out seven rivers, represented symbolically by seven remaining sephirot. They are seven primordial cosmic archetypes, related to seven days of creation.

#### 2.3.4. 'Divine Rabbi' Isaac Luria

The greatest Kabbalist of Renaissance was born in 1534 in Jerusalem. His father's family was of Ashkenazi Jews origin, emigrants from Germany and his mother's family were Sephards, probably banished from Spain in 1492 when there occurred huge exile of Jews. As the seven years old boy, he went with his mother to Egypt, after father's death. In Egypt he studied under the tutelage of his teachers Ibn Abi Zimra and Bezael Ashkenazi and gained a solid education in Jewish Law and Rabbinic literature.

Side by side with his gaining reputation of the orthodox member of the Jewish community, he studied the mysteries of Kabbala. Before he moved to Safed in Galilee, he had written a short treatise on the *Book of Concealment*, based upon the section from *Zohar*; nothing in that work indicated of his future revolutionary insights.

In 1570 Luria moved with his family to Safed where he had a reputation as a teacher of Kabbala, but also because of meditation practices. There he perfected his knowledge by the renowned Kabbalist Moses Cordovero, but just a short while – Cordovero died only a few months later, by the end of that year (1570). Although being just arrived to Safed, Isaac Luria immediately imposed himself as Cordovero's successor. Many earlier Cordovero's disciples now started to gather in the esoteric circle of Isaac Luria. And while his reputation for the knowledge of *halak* grew so in

Europe, as in Egypt, his Kabbalistic teaching remained hidden from a wide public. Luria and his group have built special living quarters for them and their families for the common work and personal meditation, supervised by Luria. Before Isaac Luria died in 1572 (less than three years after his arrival to Safed), he had already imprinted an indelible mark of his divine inspiration and that is why he had gotten a name 'Divine Rabbi'.

Luria, just like other true scholars of the eternal wisdom, did not seek for changes or supplements of Kabbala. He continued the tradition of *Zohar*, which served him as a guide for depth-meditation, while his insights and rational understanding were firmly established on life, based upon ethical principles. As every true scholar, so Luria brought as well a new perspective to holy themes he studied.

And although Aristotelian thought of creation from nothing ('*creatio ex nihilo*') was already influential by Jewish mystical philosopher, for Luria the chief question was: whence primordial matter? Luria taught that manifested existence have its first beginning in *zimzum*, in contraction, which would mean in a way entrance of God into him. In comparison with Eternity, the place of withdrawal is just a point, it is called *tehiru*, and it denotes the primordial universe. This withdrawal of God, however, leaves the imprint and it will become the receptive substratum for the creative power of emanation, which follows after the contraction.

Ain-Soph (in Luria's Kabbala expression for that, what is infinite and limitless) on one end and the utmost contraction *zimzum* on the other have as the medium the Sephirot, Tree of Life and it makes Adam Kadmon, the primordial man. From the head of Adam Kadmon lights radiate their complex patterns, the ancient language of the primordial Tora, which represents by itself a sphere of spiritual archetypes. Very important concept in Kabbala is of *tikkun*, renewal of order, which presents at the same time its redemption. Five forms of *tikkun* create again Adam Kadmon, as a partially renewed cosmos, which only mankind can lead to its fulfillment.

Lurian Gnosis is concentrated mainly on the interrelation between all the five forms (Arikh, Abba, Imma, Zeiranpin, Shekhinah), on their influence and reflection in everything that happens in the lower world, behind the sphere Shekhinah, the last level of the world of emanation. Mysticism of Lurian Kabbala reflects mostly in the custom of beaviling of Shekhinah. Shekhinah represents a female element in God, and by Kabbalists it is identified with ecclesia. Accordingly, ritual symbolically represents the mystical wedding of God and Israel. Ritual consists of two parts, 'ritual for Rachel' and 'ritual for Leah'. Rachel and Leah (two wives of Jacob, Abraham's grandson; Genesis 29,4-35) represent two aspects of Shekhinah; one represent her exile from God and beaviling and the other her reunion with Lord.

In spite of Luria's refusal of exposing his teaching in written form, he became known in all the centers of mystical teaching: in Egypt, Italy and the central

Europe. Luria's thought gave not only a new spiritual impetus to the popular Jewish religion, but also deeply influenced Renaissance thinkers.

## 2.4. HINDUISM

### 2.4.1. Shankara – Jesus of Hinduism?

The 8<sup>th</sup> century brought to India one of the greatest mystical philosophers in a history of Hindu thought, Shankara. Although there do exist various data about his birth, mostly is stated year 788. Shankara was born in a village Kaladi in southern Indian province Kerala. His father had died when he was at an early age, so he was brought up by his mother. He was a kind of prodigy, because already in his childhood he learned the four Vedas. At an early age he also left his native village, to become a wandering monk – sanyasin. Shankara took his way to the banks of the river Narmada, where he came upon a group of monks, who had stood around an old man, absorbed in meditation. It was spiritual teacher, Govinda Bhagavatpada. Shankara expressed his veneration toward the teacher with a bow, and from that moment on he began with his study of the foundations of Advaita teaching, wrote several hymns to Shiva, some philosophical treatises and commentary to *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*.

Later Shankara traveled along India extensively, teaching and writing. So, he wrote, along with commentaries of other Upanishads, also a commentary of *Brahma-Sutra* and *Bhagavad-Gita*. He engaged himself in numerous debates with Buddhist scholars, as well as with adherents of Mimhansa School and all that contributed to his spiritual ascent. In a short period of time Shankara became the leading authority in Vedanta philosophy, and he started to travel all along India, gaining more and more disciples. In place called Prayag, he met Mimhansa philosopher Kumarila, who had dedicated all his life to the fight against 'heretical' teachings of Jainism and Buddhism. This philosopher, who had contributed a lot to decrease the popularity of Buddhism in India, later committed suicide. Shankara, defeating renowned Mimhansa philosophers in his debates, at the same time won them over, to become his disciples. He traveled further along the country, founding monasteries (maths), by one in the north, east, west and south of India.

One of the best known events from Shankara's life is his encounter with a man from the caste of untouchables, in place called Kashi. Namely, during his visit to a local temple, this man with a dog blocked his way. At Shankara's request to move aside, the man asked him: "Do you want me to move my soul, atman and ever lasting, or this body made of clay?" Shankara recognized in this man Shiva who took on human shape, so he bowed before him. He later composed a poem in his honor, *Manisha Panchakam*. Another story of his life tells that he stood on the river bank, demanding of his pupil to go and fetch his clothes that were on the other bank. Nobody dared to do it, except a pupil named Sanandana, who began to walk on water and then accomplished teacher's order. This reminds of a scene from Gospels (Mt 14, 28-32), where Christ's disciple Peter also walks on water. The similarity with Jesus, beside aforementioned style of life of a wondering preacher, completes

Shankara's mysterious death, at the age of 32. According to one version he "climbed on the mountain Kailaga and disappeared", that may point at ascension; therefore, there's another similarity with Jesus.

The leading thought of Shankara's Vedanta philosophy can be found in *Chandogya Upanishad*, "ta tvam asi" (that is you). This means that an individual soul or self is in essence equal to universal self (atman) that is again identical with Absolute reality (Brahman). This physical world represents just the phenomenal form of Brahman. For Shankara, complete understanding of Brahman is the supreme good. Such understanding eliminates ignorance (*avidya*), root of all evil and germ of *samsara*, continued cosmic cycle of becoming, being and dissolving. Thus, monistic teaching of Vedanta, represented by Shankara, speaks about the absolute Brahman, as real self of an individual, whose individual soul is only an illusion, which arises from the ignorance. It is done away with knowledge about one's own self, as united with Brahman. Since there do exist only one Brahman, without the other, Shankara's system is called a-dvaita (non-dual) Vedanta.

#### 2.4.2. Moderate Monist Ramanuja

Contemporary of Psellus and ibn Gabirol in India, Hindu philosopher Ramanuja, was born in 1017 in place Perumbadur, near Madras. He was born in a family of Brahmans, of whom he received as a heritage a great knowledge in Vedas. Just like his contemporaries, already in his early age he expressed his magnificent talent. His intelligence and capability of understanding of highly abstract philosophical concepts were known far and wide. His first teacher was Yodavacharia, renowned representative of Advaita teaching, established by Shankara. Although his new guru had been impressed with his analytic skill, he was also worried by Ramanuja's great interest in *bhakti* (love or surrender to God). They had often conflicted about the certain questions and teacher sensed that his most talented pupil pulls down his authority, bit by bit. So, he began to think up, to find out a way how to get rid of him. But, he did not succeed to carry through his plan, since Ramanuja was warned by his cousin, named Govinda Bhatta.

When he had realized that his very existence has been threatened, Ramanuja set out to Srirangam, to meet there Yamunacharya, renowned Vishistadvaita philosopher of that time. Whereas the voice about Ramanuja had spread out, Yamunacharya had already heard about the young philosopher, moreover, he assigned to him the role of his successor. But, until Ramanuja arrived to Srirangam, Yamunacharia had already died, as he was then at an elderly age. However, before his death he left directions, which included three teacher's wishes. The first was that he should teach the doctrine of surrender to God (*prapati*) as the path toward the liberation. Second was a wish to write the work *Vishistadvaita Bhashya*, a commentary to *Brahmasutra*, which has been transmitted until then only by oral tradition. Third wish was related to celebration and eternizing of names of Parasara and Sadagopa, two Hindu saints. All the three tasks were

accomplished successfully by Ramanuja, so he fulfilled the last wish of the guru.

Ramanuja had settled in Srirangam, and continued to preach Vishistadvaita philosophy, as well as to write books. His philosophy is called 'Vishistadvaita', because it joins *advaita* (oneness of God) with *vishesa* (attributes). In this philosophy, similar as in Shankara's system, Brahman is the only thing which exists; all other is just the manifestation of Brahman. However, in distinction from Shankara, who considered that what we perceive is apparent and temporary and a result of illusion, Ramanuja ascribed that to God's attributes, which cannot exist alone for themselves. This God's attributes he called *prakaras* (modes), *sesha* (accessories) and *niyama* (controlled aspects). In Ramanuja's system of philosophy, which we can describe as moderate monism, God has two inseparable modes (*prakaras*); they are world and souls. They relate to him as the body to the soul and they do not exist separately from him. Ramanuja's most important works includes, beside aforementioned commentary of *Brahmasutra*, also *Vedantasangraha* (Summary of the Meaning of Vedas) and commentary of *Bhagavad Gita*.

#### 2.4.3. Madhva's Dualism

Indian philosopher Madhva is the main representative of Dvaita (dualistic) school of Hindu philosophy. About the year of birth of Madhva there are some controversies. Older sources cite the year 1197 and some newer the year 1238. The philosopher springs from the south of India, like Shankara and Ramanuja. He was born in the southwest province Karnataka, in the vicinity of today town Udupi. According to Narajana Bhatta (Madhva's biographer and son of one of his disciples) young Madhva expressed a wish to become a monk-ascetic already as eight year old boy. His parents naturally had disagreed with that, but when boy has grown up a little bit and was approximately 16 years old, he actually realized his intention and became sanyasin.

As a child, Madhva often ran from home, but he would have always been found in conversations with priests, in some of the nearby temples. This reminds very much of Jesus as a child, and of event described in *new Testament* (Luke 2,41-52). After gaining a basic education at native Udupi, Madhva set out for southeast province Tamil Nadu, to supplement his education. There he met with Advaita scholars and led conversations with them. Then dominated in Hindu education Shankara's monistic Advaita teaching, with which young madhva was not quite in accord. Already in the course of his education such attitude caused him acrimonious discussions with teachers, what would continue as well in his mature age. During his life Madhva entered discussions not only with representatives of Advaita teaching, but also with Jainists, Buddhists and followers of Nyaya teaching

This journey has been important for Madhva, because it enabled his meeting with followers of Ramanuja, who were also critically disposed toward Shankara's Advaita Vedanta. On the other hand, it gave him incitement to found his own school of Vedic thought. Madhva soon returned to Udupi, but his heart longed again for journeys. This time he decided to go north and to make a pilgrimage to the holy Vedic place Vyasa, in the northern part of Himalayas. It is not known much about how went on this Madhva's journey of 2 thousand kilometers. It is just reported that after he had reached place called Badari, he mysteriously disappeared one night. When he finally reappeared, he radiated with splendor and joy, after he had received the blessing of the Vyasa-saint.

On his return to Udupa, he immediately began with writing of his commentary to *Brahma-sutras*. With appearance of this important commentary Madhva had finally something positive and constructive, for his debates with opponents. He soon began with missionary work. As in his youth he had been engaged with sport, his physical fitness was on a high level and it of course helped him on his numerous journeys and preaching. In his teachings he was so convincing, that he soon converted not only his former teachers, but also many other learned men, to his new Dvaita school of Vedic thought. Soon he raised his own temple in native Udupa, dedicated to Krishna. This temple is still nowadays one of the most important Krishna's temples in India. Madhva's magnetic personality attracted many followers by its clearness of thought and broadness of education; it also provoked reactions on the side of his opponents, who disagreed with his religious and social reforms.

In the course of his life Madhva wrote many important commentaries. Beside those on *Brahma-sutras*, there are as well commentaries on *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad-gita*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad-puranas*. All in all, he wrote 37 works. Madhva developed his own theology, based upon the interpretation of *Upanishads*, final parts of *Vedas*. He emphasized pluralistic view of separated worlds of human soul and god Vishnu. Similar to Christians and Muslims, he stands for the teaching about incarnation, and existence of the eternal punishment in hell, which makes him a single phenomenon in the entire Hindu thought.

In distinction from Shankara, Madhva considers the world to be real – he is created, sustained, ruled and again destroyed by god Vishnu. Madhva set as his goal the arrival into God's proximity, and not yet becoming one with him. "I want to see and celebrate God and not to become God myself." In his relation toward Shankara's monism, we can perceive the parallel with al-Ghazali and his opposing to the identification with the Absolute.

Madhva also wrote, like his European contemporaries, treatises on alchemy. His *Sarva darshana samgraha*, which is dedicated to the science about mercury (*rasasvara darshana*) speaks about hoe this metal gives strength and prolong the life beside that, it is as well the mean of liberation. Rasa (mercury) according to Madhva represents the quintessence of god Shiva. In

similar way, European alchemists identified mercury with the process of transmutation of the matter and spirit from the inferior and transient, toward the superior and stable, that is, from the common human, toward divine. However, alchemists do not strive to become one with God, but toward the establishment of a pure relation with God.

#### 2.4.4. Caitanya, the Founder of Krishna Bhakti Movement

In 1486, in Mayapur, northern India was born another great mystic, named Caitanya. He is the founder of Hare Krishna movement. He stems from a poor family of Brahmin. However, father and mother enabled him a good education. His father was a pandit (learned Brahmin) so boy often studied his books. Until he was 10, Caitanya had already mastered Sanskrit grammar and in a couple of years he so perfected Nyaya philosophy, that he could oppose the most learned pandits. When he was 16, he set out for a holy place Gaya, where he has gotten an initiation by a wise man Iswara Puri. Iswara was a follower of Vishnu tradition, which Caitanya continued to preach, completely dedicating himself to his mission.

After some time Caitanya has lost his interest for philosophic debates. Realizing that for this period, Kali-yuga, is of greatest importance to celebrate Krishna's name, he started to spread a new teaching *Krishna bhakti*, which represents love and devotion toward God. In the beginning this celebrating of God's name had occurred in the narrow circle of followers, but then Caitanya ordered to his pupils, to spread the learning. Caitanya rejected the privileges of caste, just as of position in society, of the kind of philosophy that someone represents, same as yogi's asceticism. He simply emphasized the importance of devotional singing of God's name.

When Caitanya was 24, he became a wandering monk and he spent years on his journey through the south India. He also visited Varanasi and at Vrindavan he established a kind of university. There his disciples Rupa and Sanatana Goswami wrote a large number of books, in which they worked out Bhakti teaching of their teacher. Caitanya opposed the impersonal philosophy of Shankara and considered that the Supreme deity and individual soul are indiscernible and simultaneously one and different. This learning Caitanya identified with that of Kapila, the founder of Sankya philosophy, because this system recommends the meditation on Lord's transcendental form. Caitanya had thought that singing and celebrating of God's names is in fact a sonorous incarnation of the very deity. Namely, he held that since Lord is the absolute and truth, there is no difference between his holy name and his transcendental form. Caitanya spent the last period of his life in Jaginath Pur, in devotional service of Krishna. His teaching will be carried over to the West by spiritual teacher Swami Prabhupada in 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 2.5. TIBETAN BUDDHISM

### 2.5.1. Reformer of Tibetan Buddhism Tsong Kha-pa

In Tibet, Tsong Kha-pa is usually considered as the incarnation of Buddha and a principal teacher of the first Dalai Lama, Gendon Druba. Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism) appears already in 7<sup>th</sup> century. It was introduced by the King alone, who was at the same time founder of the Tibetan state, Song tsen Dampo. In the beginning Buddhism came upon the strong resistance of the followers of the traditional Bon religion, but by the end of the century Indian missionary Padmasambhava succeeded in creation of a syncretic mixture, just like Kukai had done in Japan. Over the next centuries Lamaism had grown stronger and it gradually became the prevailing religion. However, after 11<sup>th</sup> century Tibetan Buddhism slowly began to decay. Although the wealth and power of monasteries had grown, so that many feudalists came into clerical class, the spiritual component had gotten weaker. So, in clerical circles the celibacy law had been broken, the politics of power had been carried through and nepotism emerged as well. In such historical circumstances was born Tsong Kha-pa, in 1357, in Amdo, eastern Tibet.

Some details from the biography of Tibetan reformer remind of the portrait of Jesus in the *New Testament*, just like by Hindu philosophers Shankara and Madhva. So there exists a story about how Tsong Kha-pa parents dreamt a row of unusual dreams before the child's birth. For instance, his mother dreamt of Avalokiteshvara (Heavenly Buddha), and his father of deity Vajrapani, which announced, that boy would grow into an important religious figure. To even greater similarity with the *Bible*, there appeared in the sky an auspicious star, so his future teacher, recognizing the emanation of Manjusri (Buddhist god of wisdom) set out for boy's home, bringing him consecrated presents. This teacher had been to Tsong Kha-pa some kind of spiritual mentor, until his 16<sup>th</sup> year, when he went to the big temple in Lhasa, to make a vow to Bodhisattva, under the picture of Buddha.

Thereafter he traveled a lot, all across Tibet, always in a search for the best spiritual teacher. He wanted to perfect his spiritual knowledge to the greatest degree possible. In his 19<sup>th</sup> year he was already a renowned scholar. In place called Zhalu he met a monk named Rendawa Zhonnu Lodro and received from him the essence of Madhyamika learning. Here he also announced the method, which will become the foundation of his reform. His reputation had started to spread and soon he had gotten invitations from various monasteries, to teach older monks. On one occasion he was even invited to be a tutor to the future Chinese emperor, but he declined this offer.

He began writing his works at 32. His most important work is called *The Great Exposition of the Path of Secret Mantra*. In this work he presented the

main characteristics of all Buddhist Tantra systems and explained the differences between Sutras and Tantra, these two branches of Buddhist teaching. Tsong Kha-pa put meditation in the center of his *gelukpa* (Path of virtue) teaching. He considered that the growing of the whole being demands self-control in one's thoughts, feelings, words and deeds. In his advanced age he composed many valuable commentaries, at the same time continuing with his teachings. He has passed away in his 62<sup>nd</sup> year, simply taking a meditative Lotus posture and drawing his last breath. After his death he appeared several times to his disciples, what again points at the similarity with Jesus.

## 2.6. FAITH OF SIKH

### 2.6.1. Mysticism of Sikh Faith

Whilst in the West Ficino endeavored to make a philosophical amalgamation of Christianity and Neo-Platonism, at the same time in the East, in India, spiritual teacher and his contemporary named Kabir tried to realize a synthesis of Islam and Hinduism. This poet and philosopher, who had a great influence on the development of Sikh religion, was born about 1440 in northern India, in the vicinity of town Varanasi. He comes of a Muslim family; his mother and father were weavers and he alone in the course of his life performed this job, too. In his youth he became a disciple of Hindu ascetic Ramananda, who was the follower of moderate monistic teaching of Ramanuja. Although being Hindu, Kabir's teacher was a man of wide religious culture. As the considerable part of northern India's population received Islam faith from 11<sup>th</sup> century on, this territory was, as regards philosophy, under the significant influence of Sufism, chiefly of great Persian mystics like al-Attar and Rumi. Therefore Kabir, already as a young man had absorbed these diverse influences and little by little in him was born the idea to blend personal Mohammedan mysticism with the traditional theology of Brahmanism.

In 15<sup>th</sup> century, town Varanasi was a center of syncretic tendencies of Bhakti religion, so there often met Sufis and Brahmins in their philosophical debates. Both attended Ramananda's lectures and among them was Kabir, too. He expressed his respect toward the teacher in his philosophical poems, as Ramananda is the only teacher mentioned in them. It seems that Kabir had been Ramananda's disciple for many years. On the other hand, it seems as well that he never became a wandering ascetic, nor he ever lived a life of a hermit. He was married, head of a family and he often draw inspiration for his poems from everyday life.

From the standpoint of orthodoxy, either Hindu or Islamic, Kabir was obviously a heretic. He expressed a disagreement with the entire institutional religion, that is, with outer forms of veneration of God. Therefore he denoted the whole apparatus related to Hindu and Muslim piety (temple and mosque, idols and holy water, sacred scripts and clergy) as mere substitutes for the reality, as dead things that stay on in the way between the soul and her love of God. It is no surprise then, that he encountered a resistance and even persecution in Varanasi, the center of a clerical influence. As he was Muslim by his nativity, somehow they managed to classify him as Sufi, so he evaded the death penalty. But, around 1495, he was, however, driven away from Varanasi, so he continued his life carrying his knowledge on his disciples, in various places of northern India.

Kabir's philosophical poetry brings into the focus the concept of universe as Love, but also as a game in which are realized various manifestations of the Absolute, through the movement, rhythm, continuous change. This Kabir's concept is plainly illustrated in following lines: "Since the day when I met with my Lord/ There had been no end to the sport of our love/ Whether I rise or sit down, I can never forget Him/ For the rhythm of his music beats in my ears/ I am immersed in that one great bliss/ Which transcends all pleasure and pain." During his life Kabir wrote many poems, which deep spiritual truths. The Gurus of Sikh religion (of which he is a kind of spiritual originator) will include in their sacred scripts *Guru Granth Sahib* 740 Kabir's verses.

The founder of Sikh religion Guru Nanak was born in 1469 in Talwandi, Punjab (today Pakistan) in a simple Hindu family. His father was an employee, by local Muslim government. From his early youth Nanak socialized with children of both Hindu and Muslim origin. When he was six, parents sent him to a local teacher, for schooling. He was given teaching in Islamic literature and he also learned Persian and Arabic language. Everyone could see that he has been a very gifted boy, as he understood things quickly and put smart questions to his teachers. In his 13<sup>th</sup> year he had to be adorned by a holy thread, according to the traditional Hindu custom. But, to the astounding of his parents and others present at this solemn ceremony, he refused this symbol. Instead of this material sign, he wished for spiritual goods: mercy, modesty, truth.

As young man Guru Nanak spent a lot of time in meditation and spiritual conversations with holy men of Islam and Hindu religion, who dwelt in woods, in the vicinity of his native place. On the other hand, parents wanted that his son leads a common life, just like themselves, so they married him, already in his 16<sup>th</sup> year, for a daughter of some pious merchant. Guru Nanak did not oppose, because he considered that marriage is not an obstacle to one's spiritual endeavors. Then he had gotten a job of clerk, just like his father. But, he dedicated a lot of his free time, before and after his job, to meditation and singing of religious hymns.

Spiritual tuning point in his life occurred in 1499, when he was 30. After he disappeared for three days, he again appeared, but changed, resplendent of some strange light. After a silence that lasted for a while, he uttered these words: "There is no Hindu, no Muslim". Then he set out for a long journey, dedicated to spreading of Divine message. This message he communicated for weeks in the form of musical hymns, accompanied by his fellow Mardana, on instrument rabab. After the first journey that lasted 12 years, he returned home. He did not stay long, but again set out for a long journey, this time southward bound, in direction of Sri Lanka. On his third journey he reached Tibet and on his fourth he visited holy places of Islam – Mecca, Maddinah and Bagdad.

After he had spent nearly all of his life traveling, he returned to Punjab and settled in Karthapur. Many pilgrims paid him a visit, to listen to his hymns and sermons. And he preached a society without castes, without differing of people according to their birth, appurtenance to this or that religion, or gender. He introduced a public kitchen, where could come members of all castes, rich and poor. In 1532 he was approached by a disciple called Lehna. In him, Guru Nanak recognized his successor, and gave him a name Angad. According to a legend, when Guru Nanak died, there occurred a quarrel between Muslim and Hindu, because both of them wanted to bury him according to their own custom. When they discovered the sheet, instead of his body, they found just a heap of fresh flowers. So, instead of his body, they had buried each their half of flowers.

Sikh religion, established by Guru Nanak, posses a strong mystical and pious foundation. The style and content of the holy script *Guru Grantha* is poetical and metaphorical and it incites hearts of believers to love God. Mysticism in the religion of Sikh is very explicit. This can be seen from a characteristic excerpt: "God is ocean and disciple a small fish; when this is understood, the union becomes possible and this is like when metal is melted with metal and water mixed with water. That unity is achieved by the word of the true Guru."

## 2.7. CONFUCIANISM

### 2.7.1. Cosmic Hierarchy of Chang-Tsai

Coming of dynasty Sung into power in China in 10<sup>th</sup> century marked a new flourishing of culture and some consider this period (that lasted until the 13<sup>th</sup> century) denoted the greatest reaches of Chinese medieval culture. After several centuries of lull, in which philosophy had reduced herself to commentaries of traditional scripts and fruitless polemics of Confucians, Taoists and Buddhists, there sprang up a gifted generation of Neo-Confucians. Their work has an eclectic and syncretic character. Among them, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century most prominent was Chang-Tsai. This philosopher was born in town Chang-an (contemporary Xian) in 1020, therefore approximately at the same time as Psellus, ibn Gabirol and Ramanuja. He comes from an eminent family (his father was a town prefect) that enabled him a quality education. He studied the classics of Confucianism, but he as well paid attention to Taoist texts, which also had impact on his philosophical thought. He became a clerk in town's administration. In 1069, after he had turned off emperor's attention on himself, he was appointed for a director of his library. He left this position when the prime minister, Wang An-shih, began a series of radical economic reforms, expressing thus his disagreement with him.

Chang-Tsai bound up together cosmology, theory of human nature, history and ethical system. Neo-Confucianism of the Sung period is, generally speaking, permeated by interest for cosmological and metaphysical questions. They in a way opposed to Buddhist ethics, on the cosmological level. Philosopher Chang-Tsai believed in one, self-creating, self-renovating and self-sustaining cosmos. His teaching has certain similarities with his Hindu contemporary Ramanuja, as he considered that matter and emptiness can be separated, that is, that they are two general ways of existence, as the form and formlessness. Chang-Tsai sees nature as hierarchy: there exists, for instance, a chronological order in creation, what indeed makes the order of Heaven. This hierarchical order of heaven is also reflected on human society, to which are as well appropriate natural principles of order. Chang-Tsai thinks that human existence comes into this bodily form from the cosmic matter. Therefore, man's bodily form incorporates the cosmic principle of the infinite cycle of condensation and dispersion. By this Chinese philosopher also, like by some European and Islamic medieval philosophers, one of the fundamental thoughts is mutual permeation of micro and macrocosm. Accordingly, Chang-Tsai points out, that human beings are identical to the other entities in the universe; human nature is consequently identical with the nature of cosmos.

### 2.7.2. Neo-Confucian Chu Hsi

The Sung dynasty period in China brought yet another famous philosopher of Neo-Confucianism. In 1130 was born Chu Hsi, a little more than a century after his great predecessor Chang Tsai. Chu Hsi also revived Confucian ideals, based upon ethical principles, which sustain a harmonious life of a community. This Chinese has grown up among the philosophers; very early, already in his 19<sup>th</sup> year, he gained an academic education. He worked in such position, which gave him a possibility of satisfaction of his philosophical interests. So, he was for three years an archivist by prefect's deputy. Afterwards, during the next 20 years he performed a range of less important duties, like for example the one of the head of the temple and others. During this time, Chu Hsi wrote several books, he developed a voluminous correspondence and took a part in oral debates, about diverse philosophical questions.

Since in the course of time his opinion has been ever increasingly appreciated, he was in his old age elected at a position of a city prefect. After Chu Hsi had accused some high public officials for immoral behavior and corruption, one emperor's relative took a campaign against the philosopher. Thus Chu Hsi and his school fell into disgrace; they were driven away from the public scene and marginalized. Only after philosopher's death his work experienced rehabilitation and respects. Moreover, Chu Hsi's educational and examination system had lived out until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that is, until 1905, when it was abolished by the decision of the empress Tzu Hsi.

For Chu Hsi, the main principles of human nature are love, justice, respect and wisdom. In fact, the essence of his teaching could be subsumed in just two phrases: "total substance and great functioning" and "wisdom as hidden and stored". Chu Hsi believed that if one does not make an effort to preserve his intelligence, it falls into the state of chaos and incomprehension. As the way to preserve one's intelligence, he recommended exercises through the process of examination of things, until one will comprehend the basic principles. Philosopher's scheme in a way reminds of William of St. Thierry, who also points out love and wisdom. Beside this, as French philosopher insists on remaking of soul, so Chu Hsi emphasize the importance of forming of the intelligence. Human nature for him is in its essence without a form, but it consists of the real principles. The intelligence stands for store-room, which contains and stores principles. By it, we are not only contemplating the outer objects, but we also reveal the principles of the universe. For Chu Hsi, love is the principle of affection; affection toward the people and other creature is the manifestation of this principle. Righteousness represents a principle of the obligation, the reverence of respectfulness and wisdom of moral discrimination.

### 2.7.3. The Great Learning of Wang Yang-ming

Chinese Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yang-ming was born in 1472, in a period of rule of dynasty Ming (14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century). In religion and philosophy this period is characterized by the endeavor of merging three religions, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism into one, under the slogan *Sankiao-Yikiao* (Three faiths – one faith). The learning of Wang yang-ming continues, to the great extent, to the teaching of his great predecessor Chu Hsi. In distinction from Chu Hsi, who put the emphasis on the process of examination of things, Wang Yang-ming brought into focus the question of intelligence and morality.

Wang yang-ming had graduated at 21 and worked in minor positions by the government in Nanking. He became a provincial judge when he was 30, but a year later resigned, to dedicate himself to studies of Taoism and Buddhism. When he was 33, he joined the army, where he stayed for two years. By his pleading for the release of two officers, he came into conflict with the authorities and he was consequently ostracized to province. There he was charged with care for horses, which served for urgent mail delivery.

In this primitive rural area, where he had no intellectual company, he dedicated himself to development of the concept on the individual responsibility for investigating his own mind. He came upon conclusion that it is necessary to develop intuitive abilities, but also sincerity, to bring the intelligence to the clear thinking. He also concluded that the knowledge implies acting, because without acting there can not exist a real knowledge. In the end, Chinese philosopher understood that there exists an all-permeating unity which comprehends heaven, earth and individual man.

He returned to Nanking in 1514, to take over a position of functionary in the government. His philosophic ideas already attracted public attention. But, after a while, he again became 'persona non grata' with his assertions that his work *Great Learning* is more suitable for learning than teaching that left Chu Hsi. Afterwards, Wang Yang-ming retreated from a public life to his native place and there attracted disciples and followers as well.

The essential principle of his *Great Learning* is the sincerity of purpose and it is achieved by the examination. The sincerity of purpose then results in the greatest perfection, which represents the original and fundamental nature of the intelligence. The maximal development of the intuitive ability brings us to understanding of basic principles of everything that exists. By that, man achieves simultaneously the perfect virtue. By it, one considers heaven, earth and all the existing things as one all-permeating unity.

## 2.8. CHAN BUDDHISM (CHINESE)

### 2.8.1. The Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism Hui Neng

In India of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the most prominent Buddhist philosopher is Dharmakirti, one of the greatest Buddhist philosophers after Nagarjuna. However, in distinction from Nagarjuna, he has not upgraded Buddhist teaching in a mystical way; he put emphasis on epistemology and logic. Approximately at the same time as the Indian philosopher, in 638 was born the future Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism Hui Neng, in a small Hsin Chou, in the south of China. For him, D.T. Suzuki (one of the leading world's authorities of Chan-Zen Buddhism) says that "he played the most important role in the history of Zen". Virtually, he was a founder of Zen in a true sense, which differed from other Buddhist sects. So, Hui Neng stems from poor village family; in addition, he was illiterate, and that did not give him some big chances in life. However, one day, after he had delivered firewood in a local workshop, he overheard a man reciting parts of *Diamond Sutra* - "Depending upon nothing, you must find your own mind."

In an instant, Hui Neng experienced enlightenment. The man, who recited sutra, encouraged young man to look for the Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen. To the monastery Tung Chian, in the northern province Chi Chou, led a way longer than a thousand kilometers, but young Hui Neng was decisive in his intention, and this distance he traveled on foot, in about a month. When he had eventually reached his destination, he addressed the Fifth Patriarch with these words: "I am a common man from Hsin Chou, Kwantung. I have traveled a long time to pay you a respect, and I ask of you nothing but enlightenment." Patriarch was struck with wonder, that an illiterate peasant from the barbarian south has such ambitions. But, he received a wise answer from Hui Neng: "Although there are northern men and southern men, north and south make no difference to their Buddha nature. A barbarian is different from Your Holiness physically, but there is no difference in our Buddha Nature." After these words, Hui Neng was immediately accepted as his disciple, but Hung Jen had to suppress this from other very educated monks from the north. So, he sent young man to the kitchen, to split firewood and pound rice.

In times of the Fifth Patriarch Chan Buddhism was still under the strong influence of Indian Buddhism that put the accent on studies and metaphysical debates. It was just Hui Neng who changed this, after he had become the Sixth Patriarch. It happened after the decision of Hung Jen, to choose for his successor that monk, who will in few verses express his wisdom in the best way. Shen Hsiu, who considered himself as the best educated monk, rhymed these lines: "The body is the wisdom-tree/ The

mind is a bright mirror in a stand/ Take care to wipe it all the time/ And allow no dust to cling.”

Hui Neng, as his response to these verses, rhymed these ones:

“Fundamentally no wisdom-tree exists/ Nor the stand of a mirror bright/  
Since all is empty from the beginning/ Where can dust alight.” Hung Jen (who died in 675) considered that the one who has to replace him was just Hui Neng, so he gave him a robe and a bowl, the insignia of a patriarch. This caused anger of his rival, who thought that the leadership of Chan Buddhism had to appertain to him. However, later was found a sort of agreement between the adherents of one and of the other, so two different schools singled themselves out. One school, named School of Sudden Awakening was headed by Hui Neng, while the other school (School of Gradual Enlightenment) led Shen Hsiu. Although some potential disciples were confused by this difference, Sixth Patriarch explicated that concerning Dharma (cosmic order, rule of behavior) there can be only one school, because Dharma is one. The only difference is in fact that some disciples come to enlightenment rapidly, while for others it takes a certain period of time to achieve it.

The Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism Hui Neng in his teaching emphasized no-duality and oneness of everything that exists. His disciples practiced so called Sitting Chan (Japanese: Zazen), which he described as observing one's own nature, without making any move. His school remained as the only important school of Chinese Buddhism, and Hui Neng's disciples transmitted Dharma all over Asia. After his death, his works were collected and denoted as the only Chinese Buddhist sutra, called *The Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sutra*. One of the central parts of this sutra is related to wisdom and it includes Hui Neng's proverbs. It is interesting that some proverbs are in their essence very similar to those of Byzantine philosopher Maximus the Confessor. For instance, Hui Neng says: “The essence of Mind is great because it embraces all things that are within our nature. If at all times and at all places we steadily keep our thought free from foolish desire, and act wisely on all occasions then we are practicing Prajna (Wisdom). Prajna does not vary with different persons; what makes the difference is whether one's mind is enlightened or deluded.

## 2.9. ZEN BUDDHISM (JAPANESE)

### 2.9.1. Japanese Mystical Philosopher Kukai

In 8<sup>th</sup> century (in which Buddhism in India started to decline) in Japan was born the first important philosopher - Buddhist teacher Kukai. This philosopher was born in 774, in province Sanuki, on southern island Shikoku. With his own Shingon teaching he tried to reconcile Buddhism with Shintoism, autochthonic Japanese animistic religion. His early spiritual path started with study of Confucian teaching, and afterwards of Taoism and Buddhism as well. His parents, members of the local aristocracy, enabled Kukai the best possible education in that time. In 804 Japanese Emperor Kammu sends Kukai as an envoy to China that then was under the rule of Tang dynasty. After his arrival to the capital Chang-an, Kukai dedicated himself to the studies of Sanskrit, as well as some kind of esoteric Buddhism, called Chen-yen. His teacher was firstly Indian Amogha Vajra, and afterwards Hui-kuo, one of the most important Buddhist teachers in then China.

Two years later Kukai had returned to Japan, where he began to perfect his Shingon teaching. Word Shingon in Japanese means 'True Words', and in fact it is translation of the Sanskrit word for mantra. According to Shingon School, there exist three kinds of mysteries, in connection with Buddhism: body, speech and mind. Mysteries of body relate to different postures of a body in meditation, mysteries of mind to comprehension of truth, while mysteries of speech relate to true words of Buddha. In Shingon Buddhism, these mysteries in a form of speech are transmitted from one disciple to another. Accordingly, there does not exist any other way of transmitting the teaching, hence the term 'esoteric Buddhism'. Dengyo Daishi, one of the best known followers of the rival Tendai Buddhism, was of opinion contrary to Kukai. He believed that Buddhism could be studied also through the learning of texts. Kukai considered that teachings demand serious deliberation, and also interaction of teacher and disciple, for complete understanding, as texts cannot be taken literally. On the other side, Dengyo Daishi does not accept the teachings of the traditional Japanese religion and he is faithful to the original Chinese teaching *tien-tai*. Kukai was, again, very disposed toward syncretic amalgamation with autochthonic Shintoism, satisfying thus the hunger of pupils for magical and mystical. His approach was more successful, as he gained more followers for his teaching, especially after death of Dengyo Daishi in 822.

Esoteric teaching of Shingon Buddhism that Kukai had brought attracted followers in Japan, as well as in China. His approach also caused echo in

Zen teachings, even by sects that criticized him at first. Posthumously Kukai became known also as Kobo Daishi and he has been celebrated in Japan as a great saint. Tendai and Shingon sects were soon supplemented by others that were partly incited by special currents in Chinese Buddhism, and partly originated in consequence of Japanese novelties.

### 2.9.2. 'Pure Land' of Honen and Rinzai of Eisai

Chu Hsi's contemporary in Japan was Honen, Buddhist philosopher born in 1333 in place Mimasaka, in the south of the biggest Japanese island Honshu (nearby today Okayama). The period of Japanese history between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century is called Kamakura, as the capital was in this town, near today Yokohama. Already at 11, Honen left his parents' home and set out for a center of Tendai Buddhism on the mountain Hiei, to become a monk. He studied under the supervision of his teacher Eiku. In that time, in the main there existed two schools of Buddhism, Shingon (to which belonged Kukai in 8<sup>th</sup> century) and Tendai Buddhism, to which belonged Honen in his youth, until his mature age. He experienced conversion after he read a work of Shan-tao, *Commentary on Meditation Sutras*. In it, he came upon a paragraph in which the author, Chinese philosopher Shan-tao points out the meaning of the repetition of the name Amida (one of the Buddha's name), in any moment, no matter if man stands, sits or lies. Honen then felt that he finally found an ideal path, which can be followed by ordinary people as well, without tiring oneself by fatiguing and learning of texts that interceded members of Tendai School.

This sect was called *Nembutsu*, after the manner in which has been pronounced the phrase 'Namu Amida Butsu' (I bow to Amida Buddha). Sect became renowned also after the name Jodo (Pure Land), since the pronouncing of mantra 'Nembutsu' allows the realization of the way leading toward Amida's Pure Land, which in other words means – toward Buddha's original nature. Japanese Nembutsu very reminds of Hindu reciting of the holy syllable 'Om'. So reciting of it makes possible identifying oneself with Brahma, as by pronunciation of 'Nembutsu' one realizes the unity with Amida Buddha. Second half of his life Honen dedicated to spreading of this teaching, Pure Land Buddhism. The teaching really spread across Japan, especially among the lower classes of the medieval Japan.

In 1201, then already 68 years old Honen had been approached by Shinran, young monk (born in 1173), who will later became his most gifted pupil, and who will separate the movement of Pure Land entirely from Tendai School. Shinran emphasized the supremacy of the absolute faith, which 'Nembutsu' enables, as well as the cosmic importance of Amida's original covenant for the salvation of all the sensitive beings, in distinction from the traditional practices for the achievement of enlightenment. His radical attitude, together with the rejection of ordination and celibacy, brought about his banishment. Shinran's relinquishment of monk-hood and his marriage denoted in fact a turning toward a kind of lay Buddhism. His teaching Jodo-Shinshu (Truly

Pure Land) became popular, especially among the rural population of the central part of the island Honshu, but he acquired his adherents from the warrior caste of samurai, too.

Samurais (who established themselves as a special military class, similar to European chivalry) accepted new Buddhist teaching Rinzai as well. It was founded by philosopher Eisai, who was born in 1141, in the surroundings of today Okayama, just like Honen. In the beginning, also like him, he belonged to Tendai School. In 1168, in his 28<sup>th</sup> year, he went to China, where he met with Chan (Zen) ideas. Then he had spent six months in China, but returned again in 1187; under the guidance of the teacher Xuan Huai-chang he became a teacher of Zen, too. When he returned to Japan, he brought with him green tea. He was as well the first to introduce the cultivation of tea, and ceremony of drinking tea. After his arrival he established a temple in Kyusho, on the island of the same name, the first Japanese Zen temple. Eisai had begun slowly to preach a new faith and started to gain respect, so from members of the traditional Tendai School, as from the Emperor's court, through a kind of deliberate diplomacy.

Eisai's school Rinzai comes from a minimalist southern style of Chinese Chan, the school of the sudden enlightenment, established by, as we remember, Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng. Eisai eliminated from the Japanese practice of Buddhism all the traditional elements, except the sitting contemplation and *mondo* contemplation (insight in the nature of satori). By introducing this minimalist form of Buddhism, Eisai strived toward the reform of the old Tendai School, to which he belonged in the beginning. Later, he moved into the capital Kamakura. Since the power of shoguns (commanders-in-chief) and their warrior-samurais had grown, and as they readily accepted the new teaching, accordingly, in a short period of time there shot forth a whole range of new Zen temples. Supported by the ruling caste, Zen Buddhism had (especially Eisai's Rinzai School) immense influence on Japanese thought in general, on culture and philosophy. Above all, Rinzai School is mostly associated with Japanese ceremony of tea drinking, ikebana and the art of archery.

### 2.9.3. Soto Teaching of Dogen and Lotus School of Nichiren

The most talented disciple of a Japanese philosopher Eisai was Dogen. He was born in 1200 in Kyoto, in a noble family. His father was a minister and his mother was a daughter of the imperial regent. Both of his parents were dead until he was eight years old. Yet as a boy he decided to become a monk. At 13, Dogen renounced honors and social position that belonged to him by inheritance. He set out to the center of the Tendai Buddhism on the mount Hiei. Already at such youthful age, he was very astute. So, he perceived that there exists a gap between theory and practice and that in this school it is put too much emphasis on everyday activities and too little time is spent on doctrinal studying and faith.

When he had realized that there he has not much to learn, he moved to Keninji Temple in Kyoto, founded by Eisai in 1214. This teacher left great impression on him, with his spirituality and ethics. But, after one year Eisai had died and new teacher, Myozen, was assigned to Dogen. Through the next six years he was his devoted disciple and then he made a decision to go to China, to perfect more spiritually. When he said this to Myozen, he not only came upon approval, but the teacher expressed his will to join his disciple, so they together set out on a journey to China.

So, in 1223 Dogen and Myozen reached the fatherland of Chan Buddhism. Dogen entered with great enthusiasm into Ching-te ssu Temple on the mount Tien tung, where years ago Eisai had been studying. At that time the Abbot of the monastery was Ju-ching, man of extraordinary wisdom and character. Although it was Lin-chi (Rinzai) center, he alone belonged to the older Tsao-tung (Soto) School, that of the gradual enlightenment. During the meditation, he gained the insight into the nature of duality, i.e. that she must not be denied, but has to be perceived in the light of transcendental non-duality, which represents the only truth (relative) of the dualistic world. In 1225 Dogen has become the first Japanese monk to inherit the line Tsao-tung; when he returned to Japan two years later, he became a founder of the gradual, Soto School.

On return to his old Keninji Temple, Dogen immediately began with writing texts and apreading of the new teaching what was perceived as radical separation of doctrine and praxis of those times. During next several years Dogen began to gain reputation as the most important teacher of the meditation. Around 1230 originated work *Shobogenzo*, collection of essays which comprehended all aspects of Buddhist thought and practice. Dogen was democratic in his teachings and allowed even the poorest ones to join him. He supported the effort of monks as well as of laymen; he held for an ideal the homeless lifestyle, which according to his opinion transcended the common lives of monks and laymen. His moto was “Studying of Buddhism is studying self”, because he personally felt that it is necessary always to grasp with one’s mind the present moment, in which all the six senses really work and never lose the conscience about the self in the present time.

The Kamakura period in medieval Japan, beside founders of sects Jodo, Rinzai and Soto of Zen Buddhism brought also the last great reformer, named Nichiren. This philosopher was born in 1222, in province Awa. Although later followers tried to ascribe him aristocratic origin, he alone had stated that his father was just a fisherman. In his youth he entered the monastery on mount Kiyosumi, where he studied Tendai School and especially the practice of ‘Nembutsu’. In 1239 he went to study, to the capital Kamakura. Nichiren, like his contemporary Dogen had thought that old teaching Jodo did not suit anymore the spirit of that time. Therefore, on return to his monastery on mount Kiyosumi he wrote a short treatise, which reflected his wish to reform Japanese Buddhism. He continued his studies at the monastery on mount Hiei, where Dogen had also spent a certain period of time. Here Nichiren studied different schools of Buddhist thought and met

the idea of *hongaku homon* – teaching of the original enlightenment, what will later tinge his own teaching.

Deciding to reform thoroughly Tendai Buddhism, he introduced to his teaching *Lotos-sutras*, which he considered ideal for *mappo* period, i.e. period of decadence, in which original teachings of Buddha get darkened and lost. In 1253, when died his contemporary Dogen, Nichiren decided to expound publicly his teaching. However, his harsh style brought him enemies, so on one occasion he barely escaped death. About 1260, when Japan was threatened by Mongolian invasion, Nichiren asserted that losing the support of gods was a result of spreading the 'Nembutsu' practice. Philosopher's statements were not welcomed by authorities, so he was banished to peninsula Izu; several years later to island Sado. Although there he acted under the pressure of authorities, he still taught his learning and gained a certain number of followers. In 1274 it was granted to Nichiren to return to Kamakura. There he founded his temple, systematized his own teachings, not interfering in politics anymore. His theory of original enlightenment explains how people must, in revealing their own enlightenment, turn themselves to their own nature. According to Nichiren, therefore, the absolute is the basis of each being, and not a goal that must be achieved.

### **3. MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHERS OF THE MODERN AGE**

#### 3.1. CHRISTIANITY

##### 3.1.1. Mystical Theology of Shoemaker Boehme

One of the very peculiar personalities of the mystical philosophy of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is Jakob Boehme. This self-educated mystical philosopher was born in place Alt Seidenberg in the vicinity of Goerlitz (today Zgorzelec in Poland) in then eastern Germany, in 1575. His first profession was that of shepherd, on the hill near his native place. The only education he received had been at local school in Seidenberg. This place is even nowadays well known for its shoemaker craft. So, it is no wonder that 14 year old Boehme became apprentice by a shoemaker, as his parents estimated him too weak for fatigue of the agriculture labor. In his 24<sup>th</sup> year Boehme is already a master-shoemaker in Goerlitz, married by a daughter of a local butcher. It seems that he had gotten six children.

The turning point in the life of Jakob Boehme occurred in year 1600. he then experienced a deep mystical state of enlightenment. The ecstatic experience of the enlightenment with vision of the all-permeating Divinity deeply influenced his entire later life path. After this one, he experienced another enlightenment, which cleared up what in precedent visions had been obscure or vague. But, from these experiences of enlightenment many years had passed, before Boehme decided to write down his first work.

Boehme's first treatise entitled *Aurora*, from 1612, expresses his theological insights in a deep, sometimes hardly comprehensible prophetic manner. The work experienced only a minor popularity, in narrow circle of Boehme's followers. But, it simultaneously experienced the strong opposition as well, from the Church authorities. So, local pastor even requested Boehme's banishment from the town. The city council had passed this demand, so the hapless philosopher really had to leave Goerlitz. Since Boehme had been, however deemed an exemplary citizen, inhabitants rebelled against this decision, so Boehme was soon enabled to return. The repeal of decision was conditioned though, by suspension of writing books. This decision Boehme respected in the course of the next five years. Afterwards, he continued to write, but exclusively for the private use, among friends.

In this second phase of his acting, between 1618 and 1624 (that is, until his death) Jakob Boehme had filed quite of number of books, so his opus amounted to 26 works. One of his most renowned is *De signatura rerum* (The Signature of all Things). After the words of the very author in the Introduction, it is "truly a mystical mirror of the highest wisdom". The true

knowledge, according to the philosopher, is the greatest treasure that man can collect; it relates also to the knowledge about himself alone, since man-microcosm is the great divine mystery and it is the reduced presentation of the whole universe. The fundamental thought of the work *De signature rerum* is that the whole visible world with all his beings is the signature, of a shape of the inner spiritual world. Boehme follows the negative theology of his predecessors, Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa: God created all things out of nothing and the same nothing is he alone.

After Boehme's emanative scheme, from nothingness – the underlying ground – firstly, a divinity is born and then one from another there flow out: eternal nature, spiritual world and finally visible nature. Boehme within his opus elaborated a rudimentary form of dialectics that consist of positive and negative polar principle. These principles flow out from the originally undifferentiated non-being of Deity that Boehme denotes as primordial Abyss or 'Ungrund'. Afterwards it develops through ordered levels of the manifestation toward the universal self-revealing.

One Boehme's conception says that Divine emanation from the pure Oneness into the differentiated actuality requires confrontation with separation and oppositions. Just from this creative encounter, he thinks, emanates the sensitive universe. In that sense inevitable are so the conflict, as the suffering. Boehme perceives these negative elements as motivating factors, which stimulate manifold manifestations of the nature.

The last ten years of his life Jakob Boehme spent as traveling salesman, selling woolen gloves in Prague and Dresden. Occasionally he dropped into Goerlitz. In 1624 there he published his work *Der Weg zu Christo* (The Way to Christ). Again he came upon the belligerent attitude of the clergy, so once again he was compelled to leave the town. By the end of that year Boehme had been taken ill in Dresden; he caught a fever and soon he died. His adversaries in Goerlitz were so relentless, that they wanted to deny him a burial service. Only after the intervention of a local aristocrat, count von Drohna, a priest was sent to perform an oration. But this priest began his oration with a declaration, that he would rather walk twenty miles, than say a word of praise about the defunct. However, Boehme has been glorified posthumously as the greatest German philosopher of 17<sup>th</sup> century. About his importance tells the fact, that he influenced later German thinkers like Baader, Schelling, Hegel and others.

Although Charles W. Leadbeater (in his work *Chakras*) speak of Johann Georg Gichtel as Boehme's pupil, this German mystic, however, did not receive his knowledge directly from him, as he was born 14 years after his death. Born in Ratisbon, Bavaria (1638), Gichtel studied theology and law and for some time he worked as a lawyer. He reached Boehme's teaching probably through someone belonging to the circle of first philosopher's disciples. As he was a strong personality, he soon began to gather his followers and founded a kind of mystical Christian movement. Because of his

criticism toward the low level of education of the Lutheran clergy, he drew on a hatred of the Church authorities, so in 1665 he was banished. Two years later, after a period of wanderings, he found a refuge in Zwolle, Netherlands, where he lived and acted until his death. By his acting he contributed a lot to spreading of Boehme's ideas in Netherlands; among the rest, he published his works in Amsterdam in 1682.

Johann G. Gichtel is important for the European mystical philosophy, because he published first a work on energy centres in man (Chakras) in 1696. Chakras are energy centers on the surface of the etheric body, through which energy flows from one man's body to the other – in Hinduism they are known from ancient times. Gichtel did not come to his knowledge about chakras through some Indian mystic, but, as he alone says, by 'inner revelation', that is, by clairvoyance. The work where these energy centers are described is called *Practical Theosophy*; in it he explains the principles of three worlds in man and centers of the inner man. He came to this knowledge "by divine contemplation, after what he sensed, experienced and found out".

According to Leadbeater, Gichtel developed his clairvoyance in all likelihood by living a true spiritual life, but in regard to chakras "probably he was not aware of their real character and use". First and second chakras (crown and brow) Gichtel presents without a comment, however he knows that they are connected with psychic processes. He calls solar plexus the area of anger. To heart chakra he attributes selfish love, to throat chakra malice and covetousness and to centers of the head – pride. He also ascribes certain planets to centers, so Moon rules over the throat chakra (at the bottom of the spine), Mercury over sacral chakra, Venus over solar plexus, Sun over heart chakra, Mars rules over throat chakra, Jupiter over brow chakra and Saturn over crown chakra. Gichtel considers heart chakra to be the central one, from which energy circulates in spiral mode: it first pass through sacral, then it climbs up to the throat, then it lower to the spleen, proceed to the eyebrow, then it lowers circularly to the root chakra and finally it rises up to the crown chakra. According to Gichtel, in inner organs there are centers of four elements.

In his handbook of practical theosophy, Gichtel says that inner Christ has his area in inner Earth. But, in four elements are also present restlessness and dispute, building and destruction. So, for example he says that individual fire believes for itself that it is God, although it is just a fire that burns so long, as there is matter. When that purpose is accomplished, one can understand that the fire was not divine. God wants from us compassion and that is the reason why he enlightens us with his light, says Johann Gichtel.

### 3.1.2. Cambridge Platonist Henry More

One of two great English mystical philosophers<sup>9</sup> of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Henry More, was born in 1614, in Grantham, Lincolnshire. He comes of moderately wealthy Calvinist family. Already at his early age he doubted the rectitude of the Calvinist doctrine about the predestination, at the same time more and more espousing Neo-Platonist philosophy. His first contact with Neo-Platonism had been through the medium of Edmund Spenser's poetry. He acquired his education first in his native Grantham, then at Eton College and in 1631 he went to Cambridge University. There he graduated in 1635, in 1639 took a master degree and stayed at Cambridge until his death (1687).

After the graduation, More began with serious studies of Neo-Platonist philosophers, especially Plotinus, also partly through works of Marsilio Ficino and he studied Plato alone, as well. According to his own words, he was the first at Cambridge to study Plotinus. At the same time he had been reading a work on German mystical theology, entitled *Theologia Germanica*; it made a certain impact on him, too. More was surely the first and most prominent representative of the Cambridge Neo-Platonic philosophy.

Henry More was a man of modest nature, who did not like honors. So he declined the offered position of the headmaster of Christ's College (in 1654); instead of him it had been appointed his colleague, Neo-Platonist Ralph Cudworth. In 1675, when he was already 61, he accepted to be a canon of Gloucester Cathedral, but soon he withdrew, to cede his position to Dr. Edward Fowler, later bishop of Gloucester. More was known in that time as the Angel of the Christ's College. He remained a faithful member of the Anglican Church, in spite of the danger that brought such devotion in the time of the Civil War and interregnum (in 40's and 50's of 17<sup>th</sup> century).

His first beginning of dealing with philosophy was actually denoted by writing of Platonic poetry. Although this poetry was not of greater literary importance, it reveals deep More's dedication to Neo-Platonic philosophy. However, this dedication was not entire, since it included strong connection with Christianity and partly also empiric method. A certain influence on More had also the materialistic philosophy of Thomas Hobbes and René Descartes, but he always emphasized that purely materialist approach to either nature or man, is simply intellectually inappropriate. His message was that only a philosophy which respects a presence of spirit can judge in a correct way about our experience. More's philosophy speaks about the active spreading of spirit that permeates the entire nature and which is manifested in us a spirit and in its infinite form as Divinity.

More represents a mystical and theosophical side of the Cambridge Platonic movement. At the same time, he is the most prolific author among the Cambridge Platonists. This spiritual genius and significant personality of British philosophy, known for his modesty, generosity and piety, wrote many works, among which most prominent are *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, *Divine*

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<sup>9</sup> The other is Robert Fludd.

*Dialogues, The Immortality of the Soul, Enchiridium Metaphysicum, Enchiridium Ethicum.*

The work *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (1653) presents a connection between the interpretation of 'Genesis', Neo-Platonic natural magic and ethical thought. The world is here presented in the form of threefold Kabbala: the first comprises paraphrase of the three first chapters of 'Genesis'; second is philosophical Kabbala and interpretation of the single concepts of Kabbala; in the third part, the moral Kabbala, it is described the soul of man, which contains four basic virtues: prudence, justice, power of the spirit and moderation.

*The Immortality of the Soul* (1659) is the first bigger work from the field of philosophical theology. Speaking of spirit, he says that penetrability and indivisibility are immediate distinctions of the spirit. The kinds of spirit, according to More, are embryonal forms, the souls of animals, human souls and souls of angels. The soul, as the active spirit has a formative power of acting upon body, so "there is a good reason to believe in its pre-existence, which is consistent with the goodness of God and supported by many authorities, including Hermes Trismegistus". More believes in the existence of the Natural Spirit, formative substance which permeates the entire nature. All the natural phenomena which cannot be explained by mere mechanical principles are caused by these formative powers, manifested in acting of gravitation and sympathetic magic.

*Divine Dialogues* (1668) is a treatise which epitomizes More's general views concerning philosophy and religion, whilst *Enchiridium Ethicum* (from the same year) represents his most important work from the field of ethics. More sees virtue as the intellectual soul power, by which are overcome animal traits and bodily passions. After him, soul always aspires toward what is absolute and best and 'right reason' is the copy of the eternal law, written in the divine mind.

The work *Enchiridium Metaphysicum* (1671) is the last important work of Henry More. In it, he critically re-surveys the Cartesian mechanism and brings forth a clear presentation of his vitalist theory. God's existence, after More, can be proved through the manifestations of nature. Phenomena like for example gravitation, magnetism and nature of light and colors are inexplicable without the supposition of vitalistic forces. Henry More deduces that space and God are one and both are absolute, immovable, eternal, self-existing, indestructible, ubiquitous, bodiless, and they permeate all things.

### 3.1.3. Converted Scientist Blaise Pascal

Blaise Pascal (born in 1623 in Clermont-Ferrand, Auvergne) is French mathematician, physicist and mystical philosopher. His father, member of the local gentry, was a judge of profession. As he was inclined toward science, in the first place toward mathematics, this inclination he had

carried over to his son, who would show his exceptional talents already in his childhood. In 1631 the family moved to Paris. Father took care for little Blaise and his two sisters, as mother had died when he was only three years old.

Father Etienne decided to dedicate all his care to son's education. So he had decided that Blaise should not learn yet mathematics, but that he must devote all of his time to studies of Latin and Greek. But, Blaise could not have respected father's decision, because he simply burned with desire for studying mathematics. So, Blaise drew secretly (without father's knowledge, but also without books, which father had made inaccessible), with a little piece of coal geometrical figures on the floor; moreover, he soon began to invent by himself different concepts and axioms. When father had entered unnoticed the son's room on one occasion and saw son's geometric dexterities, he was simply astonished. He realized that he had made a mistake by imposing his prohibition, so he at once brought his son a copy of Euclid's *Elements*.

In 1638, because of father's resistance toward the policy of Cardinal Richelieu, family was compelled to leave Paris. They went to live in Rouen, town about 100 kilometers from Paris. Father had changed his profession and became a tax collector. His son Blaise soon (1640) publishes his first work, mathematical treatise *Essai pour le coniques* (Essay on Conics), at only 17. Two years later he constructed a mechanical calculator, a prototype of the machine for addition and subtraction. Although this device did not accomplish commercial success, we can consider it as predecessor of today electronic calculator. Afterwards, there followed other works from the field of mathematics, for example *Traite de triangle arithmetique* (Treatise on Arithmetic Triangle), in which he described a scheme of binomial coefficients, later called Pascal's Triangle. In 1654, incited by request of his friend de Mère, to explain him some questions concerning hazard games (he was namely a passionate gambler), he established a mathematical theory of probability.

Side by side with mathematics, Blaise Pascal had been also dealing with physics, firstly by researching pressure of gases and liquids. In this field he had success too, discovering the law (later called Pascal Law) of hydrostatics, which says that pressure caused by acting of force in some point on the surface of the liquid, spreads through the liquid uniformly in all directions.

By the end of 1654, after he experienced a religious conversion, Pascal abandoned dealing with both mathematics and physics. After the powerful religious vision, which lasted for about two hours, Pascal had noted down his experience on a piece of paper and thenceforth he brought it always with him. Soon Pascal began writing works in defense of Jansenist Movement and of philosopher Antoine Arnauld. Jansenists denied the freedom of will and they were adherents of Augustine's teaching on predestination. In 1657 Pascal work *Lettres Provinciales* (Provincial Letters). This work comprises a collection of pamphlets originated in defense of Jansenist Arnauld; it is

critically pointed against Jesuits, who had gotten a considerable influence on French politics. After Pope's threat by excommunication, Pascal withdrew, but he however made a certain contribution to later (1773) abolishment of Jesuit Order.

Pascal's most important and most influential work in the field of the mystical theology is *Pensée* (Thoughts), published for the first time posthumously, in 1670. Namely, in 1659 Pascal was seriously taken ill and virtually ceased his literary work, as well as his classification of the collected material for the project originally entitled *Apologie de la religion Chretienne* (Apology of the Christian Religion). As the original Pascal's intention was to present a coherent treatise in defense of Christian faith, the work had to be renamed into *Pensée*. The attempts of editors to put in order diverse and dispersed notes were only partially fruitful. However, in spite of its incoherence and fragmentation, this book belongs to most important works of the modern Christian mystical philosophy.

Guiding thought that draws through the whole work *Pensée* is that acquirement of knowledge must be a religious experience, because intelligence in itself can not lead to certain conclusions, when the basic principles on which it is founded are questionable. Just by Divine revelation, we can gain security, emphasizes Pascal. Man can reach the consciousness about God with his heart. Maybe the best known Pascal's proverb is that "heart has its own reasons, unknown to his mind". Consequently, he perceives God intuitionally. Religion serves to show man that God exists, and that we are obliged to love him; accordingly, the true happiness is when we are in him and our only misfortune, when we are detached of him. Blaise Pascal too is one of the predecessors of the modern holistic view, when he says: "...the parts of the world are so interrelated and their connection with one another such that I believe that is impossible to know one without the other and without the whole."

#### 3.1.4. Occasionalists Geulincx and Malebranche

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, within the Cartesian philosophy, there occurred a branch under the name occasionalism. This mystical philosophical teaching speaks about occasional causes (*causae occasionales*); according to it single occasions are only chances or opportunities, because the real cause is always and only – God. Members of this branch, like Geulincx and Malebranche assert that between body and soul there is no direct causal-consequential link. For them, the connection between them is only apparent, since by each of our movement, one who really acts is in fact God. So, he intervenes by our each willing act, to incite in our bodies a movement which soul cannot communicate by herself.

Arnold Geulincx, one of two most important members of this branch, was born in 1624 in Antwerpen, Belgium. After the graduation he became a professor at Belgian university Louven, until 1658; that is the time when he

converted to Calvinism. Afterwards he moved to Netherlands, where he continued to teach at Leiden university. This town was then a refuge for new converts, persecuted in their countries. Here Geulincx died, too early, in his 45<sup>th</sup> year, not receiving to meet the publishing of his main works *Metaphysica* and *Ethica*.

His philosophy is characterized by an unusual combination of rationalism and mysticism. But, since it is the second half of 17<sup>th</sup> century, when rationalism of Descartes, Hobbes and F. Bacon already prevailed, this combination is not peculiar as it may seem. Rapid development of mechanical devices (and chiefly of watches and clocks – in 1657 Huygens constructed a clock with pendulum) considerably contributed to the growing acceptance of rationalist and mechanistic view. In that time common view about the universe was mechanistic; accordingly, cosmos had been perceived as a mechanism that God in the beginning had ‘wound up’ and then left it to move by itself. For example, in Descartes’ point of view, even plants and animals were mere mechanisms. And Arnold Geulincx held that “like two clocks, made by the same master, always show the same time, in the same way there correspond functions of spirit and body, in one world order determined by God.

In his work *Metaphysica*, published posthumously, Geulincx holds that our conscience possesses certain modalities that do not depend on ourselves alone. To arouse different modalities of consciousness in us, God needs an instrument by which we can act, and that instrument is our body. God, according to Geulincx, performs our movements, but however, man is still responsible, because he possesses will. In his second work *Ethica* philosopher speaks of one virtue, with which man should pay his respect to God, that is, of prayer. According to Geulincx, we have to pray to be able to perform our daily duties and we should not demand from God to fulfill our wishes. We live in God’s world and we have to respect that, what would happen according to his will. Real freedom and blessing expect us if we are capable to separate mind from impressions and accept God’s universe, in the way it is. Meditation on our own mind acting and reacting is the only way to cognition of ourselves and the only way to freedom, Geulincx concludes.

The second important representative of occasionalism is French philosopher Nicole Malebranche, born in Paris in 1638. When he was 22, he entered the Oratory Order, founded by St. Philip Neri. Four years later, after reading Descartes’ work *Traité de l’homme*, he decided to devote himself to studies of philosophy. Until his death he would aspire to elucidate the ideas of Descartes and to upgrade the Cartesian philosophy, in spite of the poor health, which constantly accompanied him through his life. This French philosopher, although being opponent of Arnould and Jansenists, was not an orthodox Catholic either, since Rome condemned his ideas – because of “distortion of the Catholic doctrine” (1687).

Nicole Malebranche had worked out Cartesian dualism in a spiritual-idealistic direction, getting closer to his contemporary Spinoza, but

simultaneously rejecting his pantheism. According to spiritualist view, the world in its essence consists of spiritual entities, whilst bodily manifestation is just an objectivation, a product of spiritual factors.

The principle message of Malebranche's works *De la recherché de la verité* (Search for the Truth) and *Entretiens sur la métaphisique et sur la religion* (Dialogs on Metaphysics and Religion) that our ideas do not bring either direct or certain knowledge about things, but we see "all the things in God". Malebranche begins his research directed toward the truth by examination of the causes of mistakes. The biggest source of mistakes is our over-confidence toward our senses and the reason is that our senses are given to us to serve to practical needs and not revealing nature of things. According to Malebranche there exists only one cause and one God. If created beings do not create themselves (and this is the basic premise of occasionalism) God is the only cause and then it is obvious that God is one who creates all our ideas, too.

### 3.1.5. Philosopher – Clairvoyant Emanuel Swedenborg

The first important mystical philosopher after Malebranche was born about half a century later, in 1688, in Stockholm, Sweden. Emanuel Swedenborg was born in time when it had ended the outer expansion of Sweden and when kingdom strived to integrate itself economically and politically into then Europe. Swedenborg was maybe the last mystical philosopher, whom we can define as polymath. He was a scientist with extraordinary knowledge in anatomy, mathematics, physics and chemistry; he dealt with psychology and studied theology; he was expert for metallurgy and mining; he spoke nine languages and knew seven kinds of trade.

This Swedish genius was born in a family of Jesper Swedberg, as third of nine children. As a little child he moved to Upsalla and in 1696 his mother died. Father worked in Upsalla as a professor in theology. After one year he married a wealthy widow, from a family of mine owners. Little Emanuel was from his earliest age occupied with thought about God, about salvation and human suffering. At the age of six he already discussed questions of faith with priests – father's colleagues. He lived with his father to the age of 11, until his father transfer to town Skara. Emanuel remained to live by his elder sister, until he graduated at the university Upsalla in 1709.

Swedenborg had been in his younger days under the strong influence of sister's husband, librarian, scientist, and later Bishop of Linköping. Taking his advice, Swedenborg set out in 1710 to England, to perfect himself in modern science.

In England Swedenborg had stayed for two years, studying mathematics and astronomy. Besides, he dwelt by some tradesmen, of different professions, wanting to try out in their crafts. So, for example he had learned the crafts of engraving, manufacture of mathematical instruments and later in Netherlands he learned also glass-grinding. Between 1712 and 1714 he had

stayed in Netherlands and France; afterwards he spent a year in Germany. On his journeys Swedenborg had passed his time very thoughtfully: he attended lectures, visited the best libraries, always sought bookshops to buy books that interested him; he read and studied, often leading conversations with academicians on different subjects, which he deemed important. Of all the sciences with which he had been occupied on his journey, in focus was mathematics. During his five years stay abroad he had thought out no less than 14 inventions; for some of them he made drawings and for all of them he made necessary mechanical and mathematical calculations.

On his return to Sweden, Swedenborg had initiated a scientific magazine, entitled *Daedalus Hyperboreus*. As it had been sold in too small number of copies and without adequate financial support, magazine ceased to release in 1718. Until 1720 he had been engaged in various projects, writing publications from different fields and thinking up different inventions. However, he had not been on permanent wage. His financial situation improved significantly after his stepmother had died, leaving him in inheritance a considerable possession. These resources will suffice Swedenborg to begin an independent scientific career. In addition, four years later he would get a job of assessor in the government, by the mining board. At this demanding job Swedenborg could fully express his intellect, since his function required administrative technical and judicial competence. This duty Swedenborg would perform in the course of the next twenty years.

During this first phase of Swedenborg's as philosopher and scientist, he had published three important books. The first one, entitled *Opera philosophica et mineralogica* is a proper presentation of his own vision of natural philosophy, in which he sees the entire nature as one huge organism. This work, which consists of three volumes, was published in 1734. In the same year he published a minor philosophical work, *Infinite and Final Cause of Creation*. The third work is *The Economy of Soul's Kingdom*, published in 1740.

In his first work (that is, in the first volume, 'Principia') Swedenborg has delineated his philosophical method, which comprised experience, geometry and power of the mind and he presents in it his cosmogony, as well. According to Swedenborg, "Since man resembles nature in his body and organs, or as to means, if he is undifferentiated from the rest of the nature as to ends as well, then the principles which explain 'the least of creation' would likewise explain man", so that make the further philosophical examination of nature unnecessary. The treatise *Infinite and Final Cause of Creation* shows the existence of Infinite, as also the unique role of man in the Order of Creation. Mankind is means by which God achieves his final purpose and medium which connects God and man is love. All man's abilities, sensitive, intellectual, his freedom and capacity to love – they serve for the realization of this final cause of creation. The third work *The Economy of Soul's Kingdom* reveals that causal world, by detailed examination of the consequential world, understanding the rules of government, by which soul acts in his kingdom, that is, in body. In the end,

Swedenborg had tried to understand the primeval cause by which microcosm acts, or to “explore the nature of human soul”.

Swedenborg had interrupted his scientific career (similar to Pascal) suddenly in 1745, falling into spiritual crisis. Thenceforth he began to research carefully *Bible*, and result would be the work *Arcana coelestia*, in which he offered his mystical interpretation of first books of the ‘Old Testament’. This works of his explains, same as next, *Apocalypse Revealed*, the inner sense of ‘Genesis’, part of ‘Exodus’ and ‘Apocalypse’ using the doctrine of correspondence. According to ancient doctrine, Swedenborg thinks, all that is visible in the material world corresponds to something in the invisible astral world. The entire natural world corresponds to spiritual world, not only general sense, but also in particulars. Therefore, all that exist in natural world, at the same time presents a certain idea.

Swedenborg’s religious teaching brings forth a new vision of God, new insight in nature of relations between the spiritual and natural world and universal and rational ethics that leads people to the purposeful life. After 1745, Swedenborg had also developed his extraordinary abilities, in the first place the power of prophecy and clairvoyance. The most famous of extrasensory visions relates to the conflagration in Stockholm, which he ‘saw’ from Göteborg, 385 kilometers distant town. Two days later, courier from Stockholm confirmed Swedenborg’s vision, up to details.

In his last published book, *True Christian Religion* (1771) Emanuel Swedenborg expounds his universal theology of the new church and he asserts: “With the advent of New Church, now it is allowed to enter the mysteries of the faith”. The essence of God is reflected in love and wisdom. The essence of God’s love consist of love for others, desire for the unity with them; and making them happy. Swedenborg sees love in her real nature as aspiration toward the unity. Therefore, angels and men are after the death happy in the unity with God.

### 3.1.6. Mystical Ideologist of Romanticism Franz von Baader

Goethe’s younger contemporary and his fellow-countryman Franz von Baader began to act by the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, when in art, firstly in literature there came into focus the new movement, Romanticism. This movement, in the beginning exclusively artistic had started to spread more and more, so Romanticism is also mentioned in fields of philosophy, politics and others. Accordingly, Franz von Baader is often mentioned in the context of the philosophy of the Romanticism; in his case, it meant the combination of the intuitive knowledge and experience.

Von Baader was born in the capital of Bavaria, Munich, in 1765. Since he was physician’s son, he alone studied medicine, too. At 16, he enrolled the university of Ingolstadt, at the age of 19 he already graduated. But, he continued to study for two more years in Vienna. Afterwards, he had

returned to his hometown, where he assisted for some time his father, court physician of the Bavarian Elector. However, it seems that soon he had gotten bored with the calling of physician, so he went to study mining in Freiberg. After the graduation, he acquired practical knowledge by traveling over mining areas of northern Germany. In 1792 he set out to England, where he would stay until 1796.

In England von Baader deals with questions concerning mining industry, but he also studies the work of mystic Jakob Boehme, as well as of English philosophers Hartley, Hume and Goduin. The latter ones were by far lesser in accord with his taste. Besides with Boehme, he was also attracted by mystical speculation of Meister Eckhart and Saint-Martin. In 1796 he returns to Germany and gets acquainted with Friedrich H. Jacobi. Schelling had also considered him a friend; von Baader had been under his perceivable influence, during this phase. This friendship would last until 1822, when Baader's critique of modern philosophy, in his letter to Russian Tzar Alexander I, entirely estranged Schelling from him.

Throughout all the time of dealing with philosophy, von Baader also performed his job of mining engineer. For his work in the field of mining he received acknowledgements, too. For example, he did receive an award of 12 thousand gulden for his innovatory method of using Glauber's salt instead of potash, in the production of glass. From 1817 to 1820 he had been a superintendent of Bavarian mines. For his merits, he was granted a nobiliary title. In 1820 von Baader retired and consequently he now got much more time for dealing with philosophy.

Soon von Baader published his work *Fragmenta Cognitionis*. Although some of his critics denoted this work as unsystematic, he never even tried to assert the contrary, because he perceived his work more in organic terms, like ferment or seed from which there has yet to originate something new. When Munich university had been opened in 1826, he was appointed professor of speculative theology. His philosophic-religious lectures (later published under the title *Speculative Dogmatik*) attracted a significant attention. However, in 1838 he was compelled to resign from the position of lecturer, after Church authorities had forbidden lectures in religious philosophy to laymen.

To outline the philosophy of von Baader in short is quite a hard task, because German philosopher liked to express himself in obscure aphorisms, or in mystical symbols and analogies. His doctrine is mainly exposed in short separated essays; some of them are, for example commentaries of Boehme's or Saint-Martin's works and some are collections of his correspondence or of short works published in various magazines.

One of the basic guiding thoughts through von Baader's work is that man's knowledge is just a participation in God's knowledge. Von Baader holds that all the religion and science are religious. He deemed that natural theology or ethics are impossible. After von Baader's opinion the entire context of religion must be reduced to exact knowledge. There does not exist closed

truth or virtue. The science follows from the faith, but faith is also developed and reshaped in science.

The law of love toward God and neighbor for von Baader is the uniting principle of existence, freedom, equality; the opposite principle of selfish love for him is the root of discord, slavery and despotism. The entire history of man and mankind von Baader sees as the history of redemptive love for God. In his brief essay *Sätze aus der erotischen Philosophie* (Sentences from the Erotic Philosophy) von Baader points out the reconciliation with God as the prerequisite for the unity with him. Then, two lovers can exalt themselves in their mutual supplementing and striving toward perfection, to the communion with Eros. Their different tones do achieve harmony in the very substantiality; thus beings standing in the mutual relation of love achieve communion of God, man and nature.

### 3.1.7. Two French Mystical Philosophers

French mystical philosopher Maine de Biran was born in 1766 near the town Bergerac, Périgord. He had been studying in the neighboring Périgeux. After the graduation he joined the army, but after few years he resigned and entered into politics. In 1797, after began the rule of Directory in France, Maine de Biran entered the Council of Five Hundred. But, soon he had to withdraw from this supreme legislative body, because of his royalist deviations. Returning to his native place, he dedicated himself entirely to philosophy.

Soon followed the first works. He began with essay *Sur l'habitude* (On the Habit) in 1802 and then continued with *Decomposition de la pensée* (Decomposition of the Thought) from 1805, *La perception immédiate* (Immediate Perception) from 1807 and work *Rapports du physique et morale de l'homme* (Relation of Physical and Moral by Man). With these works Maine de Biran profiled himself as the opponent of the rationalistic philosophy of 18<sup>th</sup> century.

After this philosophical 'break' Maine de Biran returns to French political scene and he is elected three times to the Parliament: in 1812, 1815 in 1820. In his later period his aspiration toward mysticism is ever more expressed. This would eventually lead him to practical dealing with Christianity, so he died as a faithful child of the Church in 1824.

The development of Maine de Biran's philosophy can be divided into three phases. The first lasted until 1804 and it was called 'the philosophy of world', as in that time he was follower of Condillac's sensualism<sup>10</sup>. He soon abandoned sensualism, to dedicate himself to the system based upon the analysis of inner deliberation. Second phase, the philosophy of will did last from 1804 to 1818. To avoid the traps of materialism, but also of fatalism, he adopted the doctrine of immediate perception, showing that man can cognize

<sup>10</sup> This branch of philosophy boils down all the cognition to senses, sensual impressions and experiences

not only his inner self, but the outside world as well. This can be achieved, according to Maine de Biran, by willing effort, through which we differentiate the inner perception from the outer experience, by discerning ego from non-ego.

The third phase – philosophy of religion – that began in 1818, denoted the representation of mystical intuitive philosophy. To two states of man, notion and will, he adds the third, that is love, or life in communion with God in which life of God's grace 'imbibes' notions and will. Maine de Biran's style is difficult, but Victor Cousin calls him the biggest French metaphysician yet from Malebranche.

The other philosopher-mystic, Josef Hoene-Wronski comes to France by the end of the century (he was born in Wolsztyn, Poland in 1778), and in 1800 he acquires French nationality. This eccentric philosopher and mathematician in 1803 joined the observatory in Marseille. There he develops his exceptionally complex theory about the structure and origin of the universe. During his work at the observatory he developed an extensive correspondence with nearly all important scientists, firstly mathematicians.

In 1810 he had set out to Paris, where he got married. In the same year he publishes his first work on basics of science and mathematics. His theories are distinctively Pythagorean. Hoene-Wronski holds that numbers are foundations of everything that exists in the universe. But, his amalgamation of philosophy and mathematics seemed somewhat nebulous to the most of his colleagues, mathematicians and scientists; some of them even dismissed it as ordinary junk. His previous correspondence however had enabled that even some renowned mathematicians, like Joseph Louis Lagrange paid attention to his works and wrote reviews about it.

Hoene-Wronski had been engaged also in innovatory work. So, he invented a vehicle which he deemed that it would become an alternative for the railway traffic. But, he did not find anyone willing to enter into production of such a vehicle. In 1819 Hoene-Wronski departed to England with an aim to actualize another patent, his device for measuring the longitude. The competent board in London did not find his project interesting for the realization, as it contained only a general description and lot of vague things. However, in spite of this failure, he remained in London, where he even published one work from the field of mathematics, which slightly improved his unenviable financial situation.

In 1822 Hoene-Wronski returns to France, again entering into fantastic projects in connection with mathematics. Besides the poverty, he faced the contempt of scientists. For example, he worked on the realization of perpetuum mobile, device which would move continually by itself and on another device, which he called prognometer, which task would have been the prognostication of future. Throughout all of his life misunderstood, only short before his death, in 1852, he found his soul mate, who could

understand him at least a little. It was Eliphas Levi, a man who would become the most important French mystical philosopher of the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Levi was one of the rare on whom Hoene-Wronski left deep impression and even made a certain impact. In the course of his life mostly ridiculed and underestimated, Josef Hoene-Wronski only posthumously experienced certain acknowledgements. So, scientists perceived his mathematical work in more favorable light, admitting that it contains some flashes of deep insight. As the most important part of his mathematical work it was estimated his work on series; so, according to him coefficients in these series – determinants were called Wronskians.

Besides the mysticism of numbers of Pythagorean provenance, Hoene-Wronski introduced into his mystical philosophy a kind of messianism. Although he emigrated to the West, it seems that his soul remained in the East, as he pleads in his work *Meatapolitique messianique* for Slavonic, i.e. Russian messianism. So, Hoene-Wronski prophesied a world war, in which would occur a conflict between Slavonic and German world (as it happened for real some half a century later). He deemed that new Messiah must have been born in Russia, who would have brought the kingdom of cognition by faith. As many other mystical philosophers from the past, he considered that the final cause of man is to become similar to God.

### 3.1.8. Mysticism of Writers Carlyle and Emerson

In 1833, shortly before the death of Ram Mohum Roy<sup>11</sup> in the south of England, in the opposite part of the Isle, in Scotland, occurred a historical meeting of British writer Thomas Carlyle and American essayist Ralph W. Emerson. A thread which connects these two writers is their common love toward mysticism and philosophy.

Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle was born in 1795 in place Ecclefechen, Dumfriesshire, as the eldest child in the family of mason James Carlyle. After finishing grammar school, young Carlyle set out for Edinburgh, in 1809. There he enrolled a university. After graduating literature and philosophy he enrolled theology, which he had been studying another five years, at the same time teaching at grammar school ad privately. Between 1816 and 1818 he had been teaching at Kirkcaldy and thereafter only privately. Then, he had returned to Edinburgh and studied law for some time. During this period there originated Carlyle's first work, *Life of Schiller*.

From 1824 onwards, Thomas Carlyle becomes a full time writer. He studies the German literature attentively, especially Goethe, whose *William Master* he translates into English. In 1826 Carlyle got married and became a collaborator of the literary magazine *Edinburgh Review*, whose editor had been wife's relative. Carlyle afterwards published several essays on Goethe and from 1827 began his correspondence with famous German writer, who

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<sup>11</sup> Hindu mystical philosopher

had been already an aged man. During the next few years he wrote an essay on Scottish poet Robert Burns and a whole row of historical essays.

In 1834 Carlyle moved to London, with his wife. There he published his mystical-philosophical novel, peculiarly entitled *Sartor Resartus*, it denotes his literary break-through, but simultaneously causes controversies among critics and readers. In this work the author with a certain dose of humor expounds his 'philosophy of clothes'. Behind it, as a matter of fact, is hidden Carlyle's spiritual autobiography. It is about a self-made philosopher, who believes that everything can be explained in terms concerning clothes. Owing to abundant use of neologisms and metaphors, language of *Sartor Resartus* is closed, self-referential; accordingly it is incomprehensible to the average reader. The net of metaphors concerning clothes is defined in relation to the net of notions, until they become a huge, self-defining net. Net, as a form related to weaving is one of the primary metaphors of this peculiar work. Even what refers to some other object outside this symbolic pattern, in the end tends toward being imbibed into it. This to some degree reminds of the concept of modern holistic scientist Fritjof Capra and his *Web of Life*. Carlyle's American friend Emerson, besides praises for *Sartor Resartus*, also added his remark that "its unfathomable diction seemed to indicate that the 'Prophet' despaired of finding a contemporary audience".

Carlyle's next important work is *The French Revolution* from 1837. It describes the revolutionary events from 1789 to the appearance of Napoleon; in it Carlyle brought out his version of history as a function of powerful and genius individuals. His thesis on heroes as incarnations of history he works out in several works that followed – *Heroes, Hero Worship and Heroic in History* (1840), *Life and Oliver Cromwell* and *History of Frederick the Great* (1851).

The work *Past and Present* from 1843 (similar to the previous one, *Chartism*) is of social-philosophical nature and it represents a critique of the idolatry of Mammon and irresponsibility of laissez-faire economy and concomitant atheism, which all make the existing social order unbearable. Atheism, discussed in the work *Past and Present* is not so theological question, but more a question of moral order. As the government acts in accord with hypothesis on the non-existence of God, it is not possible to realize the true justice in society. For the first time Carlyle introduces a narrator, who takes on a role of a prophet, who addresses himself to the readers with transcendental authority, using expressions like 'Nature', 'Universe', 'Eternal law of nature', 'Heaven' or 'The Supreme God'. The archaic speech of the work *Past and Present* sometimes reminds of the biblical (King James Version), it is more similar to the speech from a pulpit, than to the historical research. Having on mind that around 1844 a second coming of Messiah had been expected, it is easier to understand the character of this work and its prophetic overtones.

Carlyle's American friend Ralph Waldo Emerson also wrote socio-philosophical works. So, in 1856 had originated *English Traits*, work which Carlyle praised

as the “precise portrait of the English customs of the mid Victorian era”. These two writers developed in the course of their lives a comprehensive correspondence; it would be published posthumously, in 1833.

American essayist and poet Ralph W. Emerson was born in Boston Massachusetts in 1803, as fourth of eight children, in a family of a priest William Emerson. His father died when Ralph was only eight years old. Then family remained without a financial support, so mother was compelled to sell some property and to work as a maid; nevertheless, they barely managed to make ends meet. In his childhood and early adolescence Ralph had been under the influence of Mary Emerson, father’s sister. Although without a high formal education, she was very sharp and spiritual person. She was the first one to acquaint young Ralph with Hindu script and Neo-Platonism. Owing to her openness toward natural religion and philosophy, she has trodden down a way to his nephew that would later bring him to his transcendental positions.

Emerson enrolled Harvard when he was 14. After the graduation in 1821, for some time he taught at the school of his uncle Samuel Ripley in Waltham. Later, he had enrolled the Harvard Divinity School and in 1829 he became a priest. He began with preaching in Unitarian churches of Massachusetts and New England and in the same year he got married. However, this was not a long-lasting marriage, since his wife died of tuberculosis only year and a half later.

Although he was successful preacher who had been charming his auditorium for several years, in 1832 Emerson suddenly quit his vocation and never returned to the pulpit again. Already in 1833, after his return from Great Britain (where he met Carlyle, as it was mentioned) Emerson started his new career, of a lecturer. He moved to Concord, a town in which he would live until his death (1882). In 1835 he re-married and with his second wife he had gotten four children.

In Concord Emerson clung closely to his studies, so he had read hundreds of books in different languages, including recent scientific publications, new translations of the holy scripts of Eastern religions and also works from literature and history. He exerted a special interest for the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. In 1836 he published his first work, entitled *Nature*. Emerson, since he was a city boy, has not gotten a chance to observe nature too often in his youth. As a matter of fact, he became a true lover of nature only after he returned from Europe, where he had attended a botanical exhibition in Paris. His essay *Nature* accordingly considers nature as the divine example of the inspiration and source of immense possibilities for man’s fulfillment. Emerson for example asks himself, why his thought of multiplicity got lost, in his observing of some magnificent landscape and why it is lost in a quiet sense of unity. He stands on the bare soil and he merges with the nature, he is ‘nothing’, he sees ‘everything’, through him the currents of the universal God do circulate, he actually feels that he is the particle of God.

Emerson's lecture *An American Scholar* (1837) is the critique of the American dependence upon the European thought. Emerson pleads for the creation of the new literary heritage, so his speech had been called an intellectual Declaration of Independence. The next year, 1838, he holds a controversial speech at Harvard, by which he disputes the value of the historical Christianity and official churches. Emerson's appearance is the apology of his transcendental philosophy and impersonal vision of God. With a circle of followers he would start the magazine *Dial* and become a spiritual leader of Transcendental Movement.

Ralph W. Emerson maybe is best known after his collections of essays, published in 1841 and 1844. Among them especially prominent are essays *The Over-Soul* and *Self-Reliance*. Emerson takes over the idea of 'over-soul' from Plotinus. This is not a God in conventional Christian sense, but rather an ocean of light or depository of the spiritual power, accessible to everyone who opens himself up to its influence. Emerson perceives the unity of man and thus understands supreme deity in each action of the soul; so even the simplest individual who in his integrity celebrates God, becomes him. Emerson's transcendence is in connection with *via affirmativa* of mystics, since it points out positive qualities of God. In the essay *The Self-Reliance* Emerson emphasizes intuition as the source of man's spiritual perceptions, moreover this gift of nature he considers a basis of 'self-reliance'. This notion one should not consider in a sense of self-sufficiency, but as an ability of hearing the God's voice within us, as a capability to overcome passions, as the natural experience of the cognition of God's presence in the universal creation. Emerson thinks that we repose in the lap of an immense intelligence, which makes us responsive for her truth and to organs of her actions.

Together with Carlyle, American essayist nurtured an admiration, almost an obsession with powerful historical personalities. So, he holds that strongest impressions of faith come from great men who already with their first appearance attract our senses. Among one of these personalities, admired by Emerson, is Persian wise man Zarathustra. Already his very appearance, according to Emerson, represents an incarnation of the divine truth; such vision of Zarathustra later would serve to German philosopher Nietzsche, for his version of this historical figure.

Emerson's poetry is likewise permeated with mysticism and love toward God and nature. His poetry is ecumenical. For example, in the poem *Brahma* he depicted his understanding of Hinduism: "Far or forgot to me is near/  
Shadow and sunlight are the same/  
The vanquished gods to me appear/  
And one to me are shame and fame." And in the poem *Saadi* he paid his respect to Islam: "Behold, he watches at the door!/  
Behold his shadow on the floor!/  
Open innumerable doors/  
The heaven where unveiled Allah pours/  
The flood of truth and the flood of good/  
The seraph's and cherub's food/  
Those doors are men: the pariah hind/  
Admits the to the perfect Mind." Emerson had united in himself a soul of a prophet and inspiration of

a poet having great impact on modern writers and thinkers. By many he is considered to be the central personality of the American cultural life of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.1.9. Eliphas Levi – Continuator of the Teaching of Agrippa and Paracelsus

In the course of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century magic had been ever less a part of mystical philosophy, so there had to pass almost three hundred years until her return. After the exaggerated rationalism of the Age of Enlightenment, new conditions did enter by strengthening movement of Romanticism in the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, when again invigorates the interest for the exotics of The Middle Ages and Renaissance and thinkers like Agrippa and Paracelsus. French mystical philosophers Eliphas Levi is usually considered as the restorer of the Renaissance magic. Because of the growing gap between the academic philosophy and the continuators of the mystical tradition like Levi (he would be followed by the members of Theosophical movement) to the latter would be disputed even a very title of a philosopher. They would be called by various depreciating names like adventurers, strange fellows, fanciers and to their philosophy disputed any value, up to equalizing it with superstition. However, in these recent times we are witnesses of the gradual revaluation of the modern mystical philosophy.

Eliphas Levi (a.k.a. Alphons Louis Constant) was born in 1810 in Paris, in a modest family of a shoemaker. As Levi had been an extraordinary intelligent child and his father without sources to educate him in quality private schools he decided to send him to a seminary. So, Levi began his studies for a clergyman. After the graduation he worked for a while at the seminary St. Sulpice. But, he was excommunicated from the Church for his writings, in which he had expressed his leftist views. During the forties there have been massive riots of working class in bigger towns, including Paris. Levi, stemming from working class himself, expressed the solidarity with rebels. Later, working as a journalist, he came into a conflict with authorities, being also thrown in prison several times. It is not known whether he came into contact with Karl Marx, whilst latter dwelt in Paris. However, in all likelihood Levi was repelled with Marx's atheism, since he remained to his death a pious Catholic (in spite of his interest for the mystical and magic). His leftist ideas, therefore, were closer to Utopian socialists Saint-Simon and Fourier.

In one minor work of his, published in 1845, under the title *Le livre des larmes* (Book of Tears), he brought out for the first time his esoteric ideas. The next year he got married with 18 years old Marie-Noémi, with whom he would have gotten one child. After the child had died, couple divorced, in 1853. Levi had continued to work as a journalist and he also had a certain income of giving lessons in Kabbala. In 1854 he had gone to London, where he met a novel writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Since the writer was a Rosicrucian, they soon found many themes of common interest; after their conversation Levi had gotten an inspiration for his first voluminous work on magic.

The work was published in 1855, entitled *Dogme et rituel de la haute magic* (Dogma and Ritual of the High Magic). The book consists of two parts, theoretical and practical, as the very title implies. As regards philosophy, the first part is more important.<sup>12</sup> Levi sees the universe as balanced by two forces, attractive and repulsive. They exist so in science, as in philosophy and religion; in physics they cause balance, in philosophy criticism, while in religion they bring progressive revealing. There exist three intelligible worlds, which correspond one to the other by hierarchic analogies, they are natural, spiritual and divine worlds. The principle of harmony is unity, which is expressed through the odd numbers. The most perfect of all numbers is number three, which presents a trilogy of unity. The triad, according to Levi, represents a purpose and supreme expression of love.

The astral light is an important notion, which Eliphas Levi re-introduced to philosophy. This term is known, albeit under different names, yet from Hellenism. It has been carried through Neo-Platonic philosophy, but after the Renaissance almost fell into oblivion, up to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Levi talks about astral light as the realization of the form of spiritual light, which then presents a realization of the divine light. Astral light receives and preserves the impressions from all the visible things. By their attractive power stars reflect their signs in astral light and in that way it is reproduced the picture of the universe onto all the bodies which are formed in natural or physical world. Levi says that astral light has a direct influence on nerves that transmit signals to the brain. In the work *Dogme et rituel* Levi pays a respect to his predecessor Hoene-Wronski, for whom he says that in his books the key of the transcendent Kabbala has been applied skillfully to an absolute reform of all sciences.

In 1861 Eliphas Levi is again in London, with his friend Bulwer-Lytton and in his circle of friends he perfects his knowledge in clairvoyance, magic, astrology and mesmerism. In the same year it is published the work *Le clef des grandes mysteres* (The Key to the Great Mysteries). This work consists of several parts in which the author researches the religious, philosophical and natural mysteries. The goals of this work are, according to the author's words: harmonizing the categories of science and faith; revealing of the philosophical principles which reconcile all the antinomies; revealing of the universal equilibrium of natural forces. According to the question of religion, Levi moves closer to the universalistic view, after which faith in God is greater than all the religion. In a certain way, Levi thinks that different religions already do fight under the same banner. This time it is a fight of progressive forces against the obsolete understandings, in all the religious systems. What is common to all is faith; religious feeling is common to all the mankind. The act of faith starts with unity and it returns to it, as well.

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<sup>12</sup> According to Levi, there exists only one dogma in magic, that the visible is the manifestation of the invisible. All the religions are subsumed in the unity of one dogma, which is the confirmation of the being and equalization with it, which at the same time creates a mathematical value. There exist only one principle, one truth, one mind and one absolute and universal philosophy.

In the second part of the book *Le clef des grandes mysteres* Levi says that science searches after truth in all, while faith attributes all to the universal and absolute truth. While science examines the real world in all his details, faith explains them by the universal reality, about which science cannot testify. Only the faith can offer the solution for secret sciences, Levi thinks. He sees man as being in his essence unique, simultaneously mortal and immortal, threefold in its substance, which he calls 'plastic medium'. This third part is formed of the astral light and it reflects imagination and dreams; it also acts upon nervous system and movements of the body.

The third part of the book *Le clef* works out the subject matter in connection with notions of light and magnetism and it also describes the phenomena concerning various altered states of consciousness, like somnambulism, hallucinations or ecstasy.

In 1868 Eliphas Levi wrote another important work, *Le Grand Arcane (The Great Arcana)* which would be published only posthumously, in 1898. In this work too he emphasize the value of Kabbala, as the system of the spiritual perfection and he even pleads that future priests should study occult sciences and above all the great Jewish Kabbala, as the key to the universal symbolism. Levi again pleads for a universal religion, in which all the believers are united by their feelings of the true brotherhood and he foresees that such a religion would eventually defeat worldliness, by coming of the spiritual rule of Messiah. It is not known whether Levi had been acquainted with teaching of the Persian nobleman Bahauallah, but some of his statements are strikingly similar with those of his Eastern contemporary, who was also a religious reformer (about whom there will be more later). For example, Levi has foreseen that after the world meet great new universal religion, the wars will disappear and there will come a time in which there will exist one international law, because international duties and obligations will be universally proclaimed and recognized.

In distinction from Hoene-Wronski, Levi does not attribute messianism to any state or nation, but instead he says that symbolic Heaven, which various religions do promise to righteous, is not a country, but a state of soul. Levi equates God with light and says that we must let light into our souls, if we want to feel God in us.

### 3.1.10. Pioneer of the New Thought Prentice Mulford

American philosophical writer Prentice Mulford was a contemporary of the founders of Theosophical Society, with whom he bears certain common traits. His teaching, with the power of the positive thinking in its focus is based upon the mystical Christianity and Hinduism, although there are obvious other influences, like spiritism and evolutionism, for example. In his thinking he is very close to thought healing movement; William James thinks that his works are characterized mostly by sympathetic magic. Mulford has held that sympathy was the most important factor of each one's fate and

that thought, according to some inevitable law attracts from its surroundings what is similar.

Prentice Mulford was born in 1834 in place Sag Harbor on Long Island, in the vicinity of New York. As very young, in 1856, he moved to Jamestown, California. It had been the time of 'Gold Fever', so he tried his chance as a gold miner and afterwards as cook and teacher, but he achieved success only when he began to write articles, essays and books. He was well known in literary circles of San Francisco and he associated with renowned writers living there, like Mark Twain and others. He wrote, among the rest, short humorist stories, for local magazines and newspapers.

When he was 31, Mulford got interested in the phenomena concerning mind and spirit and he began to live on an old whaleboat. Upon his arrival on the East Coast he set out for the swampy area of Passaic, New Jersey, where he spent next 17 years. Just here did originate some of his best works, including *The White Cross Library*, with its main theme of thought currents and their use.

Essays which form this voluminous work embody the special philosophy and they also present a peculiar insight into the mysteries that surround man. His extraordinary insights are by its lesser part result of books which he read and by their greater part of his reflections upon the things which surround man and his direct contact with nature.

Prentice Mulford considered himself a researcher of the spiritual life and he never worried whether people would deem his works seriously, or not. As the most important thing in life he held a creation of the proper happiness.

In 1891 Prentice Mulford returned to native Sag Harbor with an intention to write a work about the Long Island after the Gold Rush, but he passed away on his boat, during the navigation. He was buried in the cemetery of Sag Harbor. On his tombstone there were carved words which marked his opus, and which drew through his essays as guiding thought – 'Thoughts are Things'.

His collected works were printed under the title *The White Cross Library*, but posthumously were published also the single collections of essays, like *Thoughts are Things*, *The God in You*, *Your Forces and How to Use Them*, *The Gift of Understanding* and the work of the autobiographical character *Life by the Land and Sea*.

The main characteristics of the entire Mulford's work are pantheism and panpsychism. He thinks that in universe there is no absolutely dead or non-living matter, but there exist only various nuances of life and animation. He considers natural things closer to God than ones that man has made in an artificial way. But, between the material and spiritual Mulford does not draw a sharp delimitation, but he considers both a unique substance which permeates mutually each other. Matter, according to him present only a

living form made of subtle spiritual element. His perceiving of the whole creation is holistic, because he holds that there exists an interconnection of all the forms of life, so human beings form limbs of one body.

Mulford considers the unity with Nature as something that is above the feelings; in fact he holds that it is the union with the Immense Being. He perceives love as real, just like air or water, as live, active power. God is for him the eternal life, joy and peace and the more of his traits are reflected in us, the more we will be closer to him, he deduces.

### 3.1.11. Psychology of Dreams of Carl du Prel

Carl du Prel is usually considered as the greatest German mystical philosopher of 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in 1839 in town Landshut, Bavaria. He stems from the noble family of French origin, du Prel; he alone had a title of baron. In Munich he finished the grammar school and attended university afterwards. But, after the graduation he did not chose an academic, but a military career. He has remained in the army until 1872. In the meantime, in 1868 he got a doctor degree, at the university of Tübingen. The title of his dissertation from the domain of psychology of dreams was *Oneirokritikon Der Traum vom Standpunkt des transcendentalen Idealismus*.

On his return from the army, where he acquired a captain's grade, Carl du Prel began to write his works. His most important work from the seventies was book entitled *Der Kampf urns Dasein am Himmel*. In it du Prel endeavored to apply Darwinist learning of organic evolution not only onto field of consciousness, but also wider, as the universal world principle.

In the eighties of 19<sup>th</sup> century did originate some significant du Prel's works, and among them especially prominent is *Die Philosophie der Mystik*, from 1885. In this first more voluminous work, after which he is best known, he deals with latent powers in man, like parapsychological phenomena, as well as dreams, trance and hypnotic state. Annie Besant in her essay *Modern Science and the Higher Self* calls this book 'famous' and one in which person can find many details related to experiments on consciousness in dreams.

"The dreams and not the waking state are doors of metaphysics", asserts du Prel in his *Philosophy of Mysticism*. According to him dreams do originate in solar plexus, located on the top of man's abdomen. This solar plexus is the biggest complex of nerves in the body, with its function of controlling the abdominal organs. This complex is connected with solar plexus charka of Hindu religious symbolism, which is identical with emotional center of the body. Du Prel asserts that when we get asleep, our brain reposes and its role is taken by solar plexus. In other words, it presents a physical basis of unconsciousness. Leadbeater in his work *Dreams* says that astral body during the sleep usually floats above the physical body and some new authors say that it is connected with physical body just in area of plexus chakra.

In 1889 Carl du Prel published his edition of Kant's lectures on psychology with introductory essay entitled *Kants mystische Weltanschauung*. In it he endeavored (on basis of lectures and Kant's book *Träume eines Geistersehers*) to connect the beliefs of spiritism and Kantian philosophy. As the Kant's theory on transcendental knowledge bears certain similarities with notion of unconscious, so du Prel evidently points at the delimitation of two ways in which consciousness functions – one based upon physical senses and other transcendental.

Carl du Prel was a philosopher and psychologist who lived in times when modern psychology only began to establish her as a proper science. To him goes the merit for the explicit presentation of the stratified structure of man's consciousness, showing that behind the conscious Self there exists a second, deeper, which is manifested in altered states of consciousness like trance, hypnosis or dream.

### 3.1.12. Two Russian Christian Philosophers

Although Russian philosophy began to grow only on transition from 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century, relatively soon it started to offer noteworthy results. As the Christian mystical philosophy had been already for centuries in a state of stalemate and even decadence, until the appearance of a Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, one of the most important among medieval mystical philosophers, Nicholas of Cusa, had sank into oblivion. Soloviev and his predecessor from 15<sup>th</sup> century were closely linked by the same ardent idea of the reunion of Eastern and Western Church.

Vladimir Soloviev was born in 1853 in the family of Russian historian Sergey Soloviev, who had been close to the court of Romanoffs. So, when Alexander III became apparent heir to the throne, his father was appointed as his tutor. In all the likelihood Vladimir gor within his home an excellent education, too. Already from his childhood he read books of renowned philosophers, especially Spinoza. In his teenage years he passed through a phase of a religious skepticism, being delighted with works of French philosopher Renan. Later, Soloviev's philosophical education has continued by his study of mystical literature, from various epochs. He seriously tackled with learning of Greek and Patristic tradition and also of German classical idealism.

After the graduation at Moscow university, he had remained there as a lecturer until 1881, when he had to withdraw, because of his pleading for the assassins of the Tsar Alexander III. When he had lost a chair he experienced a shock, but he did not lose his courage and he perseveringly continued to build and realize his beliefs. After abandoning the professorship, Soloviev only occasionally held public lectures and he completely dedicated himself to study of themes in connection with religion

and politics. The special emphasis in his acting he put onto the endeavor directed toward the reunion of the separated Christian churches.

In 1886 Soloviev is in Zagreb, Croatia (then part of Austro-Hungarian Empire) where he writes a work *History and Future of the Theocracy*. He prophesies appearance of the free theocracy, as the vanguard of the Divine Kingdom on Earth and the reconciliation of Eastern and Western Church. Heartily pleading for the practical realization of his utopian idea, Soloviev spent many years in his endeavor of drawing near and putting together representatives of Orthodox and Catholic faith. One of the bishops with whom he associated mostly was Croatian Josip Juraj Strossmayer. In 1888 Soloviev is again in Zagreb, where he writes another important work, *Russia and the Universal Church*. Christian Church, according to Soloviev, must reflect the perfect unity of Heavenly Kingdom and so it cannot be exclusive or limited on some nations and states only, but it must have an international center, from which it has to spread out, not only across the world, but throughout the whole universe. The real Church on Earth must be one and universal and it must unite all the nations in the world, deduces Soloviev. The plan of the reunion of two churches reached the Pope too and he said that it was a wonderful idea, but unfortunately hardly achievable.

Over the last few years of his life Soloviev got into a deep crisis, disappointed with idea of theocracy. He loses his faith in planetary embodiment of God in the history and his soul is fulfilled with a premonition of the arrival of Antichrist and the world catastrophe. He died in 1900, not arriving to finish his work. However, his endeavors were not totally futile, as he gave a strong impulse to a movement in the next century, which had for its goal putting together of churches separated for centuries – the ecumenical movement.

The special and original contribution of Soloviev was his teaching about the World Soul, in which he continues the thought of Plato and Neo-Platonic philosophy. He calls the World Soul by the name of sacred Sophia, God's wisdom. She presents the highest and all-embracing form and live soul of the nature and universe eternally united in God. Sophia is for Soloviev the notion of God on the world and mankind; she is the figure of transformed world and divinized mankind.

Among those who have continued the mystical philosophical thought of Soloviev, surely the most important one is Nikolai Berdyaev. This Russian philosopher was born in 1874 in Kiev (today Ukraine's capital) in the aristocratic family. As his father and all the ancestors after father's lineage had been generals and knights, so there were similar expectations from young Nikolai, i.e. to accomplish a military career. Although he enrolled a military school, he could not accommodate himself to the strict discipline, so he left the school. Afterwards he enrolled a law study at Kiev university. For taking part in demonstrations, he was expelled from the university and banished to the north of Russia, to province Vologda.

After the banishment, Berdyaev had departed to Germany, where he studied (in Heidelberg) modern philosophy. In 1903 he returns to Kiev, then he abides for some time in S. Petersburg and from 1907 he began to act in Moscow. In all of these towns there were established religious-philosophical societies. In Moscow there was founded society 'In memory of V. Soloviev', with active participation, besides Berdyaev, of some other prominent Russian philosophers, like Sergey Bulgakov and Yevgeni Trubetskoi. In this period Berdyaev had entirely estranged himself from social-democratic ideas and he began to build a personal metaphysics, founded on Christianity. Now he advocated a freedom of the spirit and fought for the freedom of personal conscience.

Berdyaev had never accepted the traditional Orthodox faith and because of his liberal stances he came into conflict with Russian Orthodox Church. For his article 'Extinguishers of the Spirit', pointed at Holy Synod, he had been condemned to banishment again, but the sentence was not executed because of bursting-out of the First World War. During the war, in 1916, Berdyaev published his work *The Meaning of Creativity*, in which he sums up the most important of his ideas until then. The act of creation he identified with acting of a spirit. Creative act, according to Berdyaev, comes of a spirit and not of nature; by descending into the world spirit generates the new, it turns into a matter that was non-existent.

After the October Revolution of 1917 and Bolsheviks coming into power, Berdyaev begins to point the cutting edge of his critique toward the ideology of Marxism. So, over the next few years he had been several times arrested and imprisoned. During the year 1920 he was a professor at Moscow university, but only for a short while. In the same year he was arrested and two years later sentenced to a lifelong banishment from the Soviet Union.

Berdyaev then went to Berlin, where he took a part in work of Russian Scientific Institute and he was a founder of Russian Religious-Philosophical Academy. In 1923 he publishes two important books, *Philosophy of Inequality* and *Meaning of History*. In the former he deals with social philosophy and in a latter with the philosophy of history. In Berdyaev view, history presents a path that leads towards the other world. It is impossible to achieve the perfect state inside the historical process; it can be achieved only at the transcendental level by the appearance of the Divine order. During his stay there originates one more work, *The New Middle Ages* (1924). In it Berdyaev brings forth his vision of the new world order at which head would be a theocracy, as it had been already in The Middle Ages. In distinction from the old medieval theocracy, in the new there would be dedicated attention to the freedom of the spirit. Such, more perfect society could be achieved by the gradual accomplishment of ever higher spiritual level – by the enlightenment and transformation of man and matter. Berdyaev denotes himself as Christian socialist, pleading for the brotherhood and unity of the mankind in Christ.

In 1925 Berdyaev set out for Paris and along with him his Religious-Philosophical Academy that he had established, too. The next year he starts a new magazine named *Path*. He did establish connections with many renowned philosophers of that time, like J. Maritain, E. Gilson, G. Marcel, E. Mounir and also the author and editor of *Encyclopedie des mystiques* Marie-Madeleine Davy. Berdyaev deepens his philosophy of freedom in the work *Philosophy of Free Spirit* (1927/28). To earlier hypothesis that faith is supposition of knowledge and cognition, he adds the assertion that faith “open the way to gnosis”. He denotes faith as the free act of spirit and act of free choice and love. With the act of faith man freely renounces himself of his little rationalistic mind, to gain the great cosmic mind, ‘the mind of Christ’.

During the thirties Berdyaev wrote yet some more works, among which are prominent *Christianity and Class Struggle* and *Man and Machine*. In the first work, Berdyaev pleads for a society which would suppose spirituality to economy and politics. He also pleads for the abolishment of social classes and for a society based upon work and callings or profession. Such a society would bear working-aristocratic traits and in it all the people would be workers and aristocrats at the same time. In the social hierarchy higher positioned would be not ones who possessed greater material goods, but those who have more of spiritual virtues, like wisdom, sincerity, honesty, generosity. Such a society would be established and fastened in religion. In the short work *Man and Machine* Berdyaev says that man becomes ever more the slave of the organized society and technology and of machine, in which the very society has transformed; in it man is transformed, too. Berdyaev deems that there must not be allowed the autonomy of the technology, but she herself must be submitted to the spirit and spiritual values. The man’s spirit would manage in all that only if he is not alone, but leant on God and united with him.

During the German invasion Berdyaev had escaped from Paris, but after a short while he returned. Several times his house had been searched over by Gestapo. In 1942 he submitted himself to a difficult operation and in 1945 his wife died. After the war, in 1947, he received an honorable Doctor’s degree from Cambridge University. In March of next year he dies, at 75.

### 3.1.13. Sufi Convert Rene Guenon and his Followers

Just in the year (1928) when Regardie<sup>13</sup> had moved to Paris, French mystical philosopher René Guenon moved from that town for good, settling down in Egyptian capital Cairo. This philosopher is a peculiar figure of 20<sup>th</sup> century spirituality. His work is permeated by two main subjects, most represented in his works, i.e. the idea of primordial tradition and critique of the modern world. Guenon, working out the ancient symbolism and mythology of East and West, world’s religions and metaphysical doctrines, deems that their entirety virtually presents an expression of preservation and transmission of the primordial knowledge.

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<sup>13</sup> Israel Regardie, member of British secret society Golden Dawn.

René Guenon was born in 1886 in Blois (near Amboise, native place of Saint-Martin). He comes of a wealthy family – his father was an architect. He had gained a traditional Catholic education at primary and grammar school and in 1904 he went to Paris, where he enrolled study of mathematics. However, he soon gave up this study and began studying a range of alternative spiritual fields like occultism, Gnosticism and Shivaistic branch of Hinduism. It seems that very early he came into a contact with some member of Advaita Vedanta school and in all likelihood he was initiated. About this there are no details, because Guenon has not spoke at all about his early Hindu influences. However, from his works, especially *Introduction général à l'étude des doctrines hindoues* and *L'homme et son devenir selon le Vêdânta* one can see that that was a significant impact.

In 1912 René Guenon was admitted to the Great Mason Lodge of France, but thereafter he converted to Islam and became a member of Sufi Order. In 1916 he graduated philosophy, with his work on Leibniz and infinitesimal calculation. Thirty years later he would return to this subject matter, in his work on questions concerning the nature of limit and infinity, where would be represented, along with mathematical calculations, also the geometrical symbolism (*Les principes du calcul infinitesimal*).

Guenon began with writing of more voluminous work only after the First World War, in the twenties. He believed in universal and objective spiritual truth, which can be expressed by terms of world's religions, as of Christianity, so of Islam and Hinduism. Two aforementioned books on Hinduism presented an attempt to express this truth. Guenon considered that Hinduism comprises the most ancient and most comprehensive knowledge of traditional metaphysics, which in a way presents the key for every other traditional form. The work *L'homme et son devenir selon le Vêdânta* was called “the first reliable exposition of Hindu metaphysics in some western language”.

In his early works *Le théosophisme - Histoire d'une pseudo-religion* and *L'erreur spirite* Guenon makes a critical re-survey of theosophy and spiritism. According to him, theosophy is only a new sect without a historical foundation, with esoteric teaching which in its essence is alien to Eastern tradition. The objectivity of this judgment could be surely disputed, as well as his statement that spiritism is just a kind of transposed materialism.

The first phase of Guenon's work characterized also with two more works from the field of criticism of the modern world. Their titles are *Orient et Occident* and *Le crise du monde moderne*. In these works his critical cutting edge is pointed at materialistic western civilization. The more we are immersed in the material, there are ever more present and emphasized the factors of division and opposition, says Guenon. Because of his favoritism toward hierarchic system of ruling, in which elite steers the masses (whom he sometimes call ‘organism without a head’) he was reproached for the support of authoritarian and even totalitarian regime. But, by Guenon the

emphasis is on spiritual, so accordingly he considers (in wake of Berdyaev) that an ideal order could be achieved only by strictly established spiritual elite. In his *Crisis of the Modern World* he explicitly says that Catholic Church should be the one which would establish unity and overcome far-flung global disorder.

The work *Crisis of the Modern World* was published in 1927, but already the next year Guenon experiences a radical spiritual turn, after the death of his wife. Then he decides to leave Paris and West forever, so he departs for the Muslim country, Egypt. From 1930 onwards he lives in Cairo, where he is employed as a lecturer at the university. It seems that after his wife's death Guenon became very suspicious toward everyone, maybe even paranoid. So, he would not want to give his Cairo address to anyone, simply he wanted to be left in peace. He allegedly had gotten enemies in France and he suspected that they had tried to do him harm by the medium of black magic. In Cairo Guenon later established a family, received a title of sheik and got a Muslim name, Abd al-Wahid Yahya.

In the new environment Guenon has continued to write works predominantly leant onto the primordial tradition. He did not remain exclusively within the limits of Islam, but he continued in his strive toward connecting traditions of East and West. One such work is for example *Le symbolisme de la croix*. Guenon sees the cross not only as Christian, but as a universal symbol, since we do encounter it in various forms everywhere. This symbolism of course originates in the primordial tradition. Although there do exist various interpretations of the cross, they are not contradictory, but complementary ones and they represent the same truth, only from different point of view. The work *Les états multiples de l'Être* deals with pure metaphysics. Guenon emphasizes that the being is manifold and that it comprises many states, manifested as well as non-manifested. The aim of being is to liberate itself from them all and achieve the cognition of the Immense Possibility. In the work *Le règne de la quantité et les signes des temps* Guenon explains the nature of materialistic deviations of the modern world. He perceives the history as the descent from the form or quality toward the matter or quantity, but after the rule of quantity Guenon predicts the rule of 'reversed quality', as the evidence of the end of this era.

Until his death in January, 1951 René Guenon wrote 27 books and 350 articles. During three decades of writing he had been discovering the common essence of metaphysical doctrines from different religious traditions and ancient symbols. He always stressed that the primary task of the initiated is the preservation of the primordial knowledge and striving toward the renewal and rehabilitation of the original values. He had always on his mind this thought: "Spreading of light and gathering what is dispersed." With his work Guenon did influence the whole row of authors; among the renowned mystical philosophers he had greatest impact on Julius Evola and Béla Hamvas.

Guenon's follower, Italian mystical philosopher Julius Evola, in distinction from his teacher actively supported totalitarian regime and consequently he presents (like for example Crowley) one of those dark spots in otherwise brilliant history of mystical philosophy. The period between two wars is characterized by growing of extreme ideologies of Nazi-fascism and Bolshevik communism; accordingly, some philosophers living in those times were prone to accept either of these totalitarian ideologies. It is the time when mysticism had gotten distinctly negative overtone, for instance in the revival of the ancient German pagan mythology by Alfred Rosenberg or Rudolf von Sebottendorf. Its practical expression did this kind of mysticism get in massive adoration and divinization of the leader, in the sense of unity with him, which is deviation from the true mysticism, in which man feels to be one with God. In second half of the twenties and in course of the thirties Julius Evola had been a counterpart to those German ideologists. However, his entire opus is not characterized by the apology of the totalitarian ideology. On the contrary, it is peculiar the largeness of his spiritual views – Hinduism, Buddhism, Tantrism, Taoism; western Hermetism, alchemy and myth on Graal. Accordingly, Evola does not fit into a category of an extreme rightist as narrow-minded nationalist. In addition, in the post-war period Evola has shown in several of his works a critical stance toward fascism, although, again, from the rightist viewpoint.

Julius Evola was born in 1898 in Rome and he comes of a wealthy Sicilian family of noble origin. In his youth he has shown interest for philosophy, especially toward Nietzsche; in art his interest has been focused on painting (Futurism and Dadaism) and poetry (D'Annunzio). In 1917 he joined the army, as artillery officer, on mountain positions in the Dolomites. He did not take part in big battles. At the end of the war, the next year, he comes back home to Rome. In that time he began to move in art circles and to deal with painting and poetry; he did experiments with narcotic drugs, too. He has painted several paintings which critics evaluated as important for Italian Dadaism; he also started a correspondence with Tzara, originator of this art style. But, already had stopped painting and the next year he stopped writing poetry as well.

After 1922 there began a period in which he dedicates himself exclusively to philosophy. In the middle of twenties his interest for esoteric fields did get stronger. Evola did come into a contact with Roman spiritual circles, namely with followers of Kremmerz, antroposophists and theosophists. He collaborates in several magazines, where he publishes articles of esoteric and magical subject matter. From 1927, he is the member of so-called UR-group, a society which practices individual 'magical idealism'. In this time Evola publishes his first voluminous work, entitled *Teoria dell' Individuo Assoluto*. In it he amalgamate his interest for philosophy and magic, sacral and Gnostic. His aim is to try to overcome the duality of 'I' and 'non-I', by explaining the expanded perception of the subject, in which are expanded the limits of the very being, in relation to a common perception of the subject, in which are expanded the limits of the very being, in relation to a common perception in a waking state. In 1928 Evola writes *Imperialismo*

*pagano*. In this work he criticizes Catholic Christianity, which he considers deprived of pure spirituality and of sacral tradition. He pleads for return to polytheism of the pre-Christian era, in which had acted individualized forms of divine powers – heroes. But, already in mid-thirties he gave up the radical anti-Catholicism, moreover, he attacks Rosenberg and his adherents for “by neo-paganism they tried to convey politics into religion”.

In 1930, along with several fellows (among the rest Emilio Servadio, father of the Italian psychoanalysis) Evola started the magazine *Torre*. Yet, because of polemic articles that had been disliked by regime, the magazine was soon extinguished. In 1931 Evola publishes one of his most important works from the field of esoteric philosophy, under the title *Tradizione Ermetica*. The book deals with the heritage of western alchemical and magical tradition and of Hermetical symbolism. Evola sees alchemical work as change and transformation from one being into another, from one stuff into another, from weakness into a power, from bodily nature to the spiritual one. Alchemical eternal birth Evola identifies with re-integration and revealing of the philosophical stone.

The work *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* (1934) is considered as Evola’s *magnum opus*. It consists of two parts; in the first is about teaching related to categories of traditional spirit and second brings forth the interpretation of history based upon the tradition to the modern world. Evola’s revolt is pointed against the modern world established on criteria of useful and temporal, in distinction from the world of tradition, founded on values of sacral and eternal.

During the thirties Evola publishes two more works with subject matter related to esoteric philosophy. *Maschera e volto dello spiritualismo contemporaneo* is the work which speaks critically on pseudo-spiritual currents like spiritism, cult of Superman, Satanism and variety of other pseudo-mysticisms. *Il mistero del Graal* speaks about alchemy and search for the Holy Grail and of a secret religion of Ghibelins’ imperialism.

After the failure with magazine *Torre* Evola seeks a safer refuge and finds it in regime magazine *Regime fascista*; in it he is editor of a cultural rubric. On bursting-out of the Second World War, Evola registers himself as volunteer for the departure to Soviet frontline, but he is turned down, for not being a member of a Fascist Party. Namely, Evola had never formally joined any party. In 1943, in a full play of battles and war, he publishes the work on Buddhist religion, *La dottrina del risveglio*. In it Evola puts in the foreground the aristocratic character of Buddhism and its masculine character and fighting spirit, in the exposition of Buddhist doctrine.

After the capitulation of Italy, Evola set out first to Germany and thereafter to Vienna. Already toward the end of war, he works on the examination of the archive of Freemasons, for the needs of SS. In air raids of Allied Forces in April, 1945, he was badly injured; as his backbone was broken, he remained paralyzed. There had followed a long period at hospitals, first in Vienna and

later in Bologna, where he was transferred in 1948. Only in 1951 he did return to his home in Rome.

In the post-war period Evola publishes several works of political nature, but as well some from the field of spirituality. Of political works, prominent are *Gli uomini e le rovine* and *Cavalcare la tigre*. In the former Evola pleads for an organic state, which foundations consist of values like quality, righteous inequality and personality; of state in which everyone is entitled with rights in accord with his natural dignity. In the second part Evola evokes the stoical formula of *apoliteia*, as the separation from the political world and loyalty to an ideal state, based upon the strict individual ethics. Evola addresses the 'undifferentiated man', who in spite of the fact that he does not belong to this world, does not have an intention to be lenient, not in psychological way, nor existential. He pleads for such a man, who seeks freedom inside himself alone, who would gain control over himself and who would realize his autarchy.

Evola's interest in the human sexuality brought forth in 1958 work *Metafisica del sesso*. In this work too is present the critique of the modern world and its profanized attitude toward sexuality. Such profane sexualiuty, according to Evola, does not possess a transcendence nor unity. As historical examples, he states different kinds of transcendental sexuality, like those in Tantrism, Taoism, as well as in Kabbala and Eleusinian mysteries.

In the second half of the sixties Evola's health began to deteriorate continually. In 1968 he suffered a heart attack and once again two years later. He died in 1974 in Rome.

Julius Evola, stemming from an aristocratic family, remained throughout his whole life an elitist, loyal to Guenon's idea of the hierarchic system, headed by privileged stratum of the spiritual elite. After the Second World War he became aware that fascist state could not lead toward the achievement of such an idea. As main deviations, Evola has quoted totalitarianism, which he compares with Soviet etatism, system far from traditional that is based upon spiritual values. Traditional state is organic, but not totalitarian, Evola thinks. State pedagogism and pressure onto the personal life and morality is another fault of such a system, same as demographic campaign following the principle 'in number there is power'. The idea of the narrow-minded nationalism is corrupted too, the idea of nationalism based upon the mere sense of belonging to the homeland and nation, tied exclusively to the national history and not to the tradition in a higher sense. Other deviations are mediocre philistine conservatism, catholicized and conventionalist. Accordingly, Evola always returns to the idea of elite, as the head ruling over the body, i.e. organically drafted state.

The second important follower of Guenon, Hungarian mystical philosopher Béla Hamvas, throughout his life had not achieved fame, since he spent the last third of his life in anonymity, because of the imposed ban of publishing

works, imposed by Hungarian communist regime. He had been virtually unknown among his fellow-countrymen too, until the end of the eighties and democratic changes, when his books are printed again. During his life Béla Hamvas has published just two collections of essays, *Invisible History* (1943) and *Revolution in the Art* (1947). The true evaluation of his entire work in the West has yet to come, since many of his books are still waiting to be translated. His peculiar style in which there are entwined traditional mystical philosophical ideas with minute description of the nature, in a way remind of Emerson and Mulford, although he did not point out any of them as his role model.

Béla Hamvas was born in 1897 in town Prešov in Slovakia (then Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), in a family of an Evangelical pastor. Soon his family moved to Bratislava, where Hamvas would finish his primary and grammar schooling. Soon after he had finished grammar school, he passed the instruction of the cadet school and then he was sent to northern front, in Ukraine. He had been wounded twice and he also experienced a nervous breakdown. The troubles did not finish when the war was over, because soon his family was compelled to leave the country, because of father's refusal to swear allegiance to the new government. Hamvas family thereafter tries to settle down in Budapest. In that time prevailed unemployment and poverty; Béla had enrolled the university and he studied Hungarian and German language and literature.

During his study, Hamvas collaborates in newspapers and magazines. After the graduation in 1927, he would get employed as a librarian at Budapest Metropolitan Library. In the Second World War he goes to the frontline again. On the return from Russia, he saved a group of Jews and fearing consequences, he deserted the army. He received to meet the end of the war hiding as the military runaway. He had managed to save his life, but his apartment was destroyed in an air-raid, as well as the big library and trunk full of manuscripts.

In the post-war period Hamvas also deals with publishing activity: he edits the anthology of the world literature and publishes a row of pocket-edition books, from different fields – natural and social sciences and art. When the publishing activity came under the patronage of the state, in 1947, Hamvas became *persona non grata*. After the conflict with Party's mighty man György Lukács. He arrived to the B-list of the regime, which practically meant the ban of publishing books. Even worse, Hamvas lost his working place of librarian. Then he had retreated from the world; he went to live in a small house in the wood, where he wrote his novel *Carnival*. He was compelled to work as an agricultural laborer in order to survive; thereafter he worked as laborer at the power plant.

In such heavy conditions of life, in a period of 10-odd years Hamvas wrote some of his most important works, exclusively in his free time (either early in the morning or late in the evening). Although he was of a strong bodily constitution, such a fatiguing routine has totally exhausted him. In 1964 he

was finally retired. He returned to Budapest and in pension wrote another two novels and a collection of essays. He died in 1968 from brain hemorrhage, in total anonymity and poverty. Only some twenty years later he would experience a posthumous acknowledgement and deserved fame. Besides Berdyaev, he is probably the greatest east-European mystical philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Hamvas' *magnum opus*, work *Scientia sacra* has as well as Guenon's and Evola's works, the word 'tradition' as its guiding thought. Hamvas' wife, writer Katalin Kemény, has compared this work with symphony of everything that on primordial essence do offer Tibetan, Hindu, Persian, Chaldean, Egyptian, Sufi, South-American sources, as well as Alexandrian Gnosticism, arhythmology, alchemy. In this work Hamvas reveals that in foundations of different national, religious and language particularities there is only one credible community and that is – mankind. Single traditions are connected in space and time and they create unity; similarly between them comes a fact that in ancient times all the nations drew from the same source, the primordial spiritual manifestation. The second key word of *Scientia sacra* is watchfulness; Hamvas identifies that word with knowledge of the absolute order of the existence, of the law of life in the universe. He considers arousal and watchfulness as initiation, or new birth, which is the third key word of *Scientia sacra*. These three words – tradition, watchfulness and initiation at the same time characterize the second, post-war phase of Hamvas' creative work.

From the huge opus of Béla Hamvas there can be singled out some other works, like *Antologia humana: Five Thousand Years of Wisdom, Invisible Happening, Hungarian Hyperion, and Carnival*. Here are as well some important collections of essays, like *Silentium, Pathmos* and *Book of Laurel Grove*. Béla Hamvas said that mysticism is knowledge which sees the unity of all things. She is not opposed to knowledge, but she is the greatest degree of evolution.

## 3.2. ISLAM

### 3.2.1. Modern Sufis

Like Hasidism and other mystical branches, so Sufism too experienced a kind of renaissance in modern times. In distinction from medieval Sufis, who nearly always came from Islamic countries, the most important contemporary Sufis comes predominantly from India and some of them are born in the West. The modern thought and science of 20<sup>th</sup> century also did influence Sufism. Among the most meritorious for the breakthrough of Sufism in the West are Asian Indians Hazrat Inayat Khan, Idries Shah and Khawaya Shamsuddin Azeemi; and Bawa Muhaiyaddeen from Sri Lanka.

Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882) is founder of the universal Sufism and of Sufi Movement International. His message of love, harmony and beauty originated under the influence of Sufi tradition, but also upon the approach which strives toward harmonizing of Western and Eastern thought. In the end of his novitiate Inayat Khan along with his teacher Muhammed Abu Hashim set out for the West, to develop a new culture, which would represent the combination of Eastern wisdom and rationalistic view of the West.

During his longstanding abode in the West, Inayat Khan did establish the school for spiritual exercises in Paris, based upon the traditional teaching of Chishti order. The component part of this Neo-Sufi learning makes also his vision of unity of religious ideals and waking of the divinity inside man. Inayat Khan was among the first who presented Sufi teachings to westerners. His teaching bears a distinctive ecumenical trait, so for example among the main principles of the Universal Sufism we find thoughts on: existence of the only one and eternal God; one religion that advances toward the ideal of the fulfillment of the life purpose of each soul; one moral principle of Love, which comes of a heart devoted to the service of God and mankind. Inayat Khan considered that there is only one truth, a true knowledge about the being permeating us inside out, which presents the essence of wisdom.

Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (around 1900) is venerated Sufi saint from Sri Lanka. His spiritual knowledge and experience he shared with people of all races and religions all across the world. In his youth he lived in jungles of Sri Lanka. Already then he was renowned as saint and he attracted pilgrims who came from far-away places to admire the depth of his divine knowledge. From all Sri Lanka came believers of different religions and ethnic appurtenance and listened to his public speeches. Many men and women had gotten advices from him, in regard of overcoming everyday problems – rich, poor, famous and common people.

In the beginning of seventies Bawa Muhaiyadden comes to America and he establishes Muhaiyadden Fellowship in Philadelphia. In America he did attract as well people from different religions and social and ethnic background that came to listen to him. His teaching later did expand (branches of his Fellowship has spread to Canada, Great Britain and Australia). Wherever he went, he answered tirelessly to many personal and mystical questions that people put him during public performances. In a period of some 15 years Bawa Muhaiyadden published more than 20 books. In his teachings he emphasized the importance of performing duties, firstly concerning spirituality, prayer, charity and love that man could experience Divine grace. He also emphasized the importance of repairing one's own mistakes and of purification of heart. He deemed the most important thing in life the surrender of heart to God.

Idries Shah (1924) is also an important Sufi author of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Especially valuable is his contribution to the bridging the gap and accommodating of the classical spiritual thought to the needs of modern world. He spent his youth in England, where he acquired his education. He traveled a lot, across Europe and Middle East, developing his Sufi education. As by other Sufis, his life had been dedicated also to serving, so he helped many people of different walks of life.

Idries' written work in many ways surmounted the notions of westerners about Sufi teachings. He had a certain impact onto some Western intellectuals. He did not limit Sufism onto Islam, but he considered it even older than it, independent from *Kuran* and universal in regard of sources, goals and its traits. He considered that spiritual teachings have to be presented in a form and notions which are customary in some community. He founded the institute for cultural researches in London; subjects of public and seminars are connected predominantly with aspects of human nature. This foundation has more psychological than religious approach and it is based upon the traditional psychology, whilst to student's choice is left the individual freedom after the questions on faith and God.

Khawaya Shamsuddin Azeemi (1927) is the founder of Sufi order Azeemia. He is also of Indian origin. His teacher Qalandar Baba Auliya had carried over his spiritual knowledge during sixteen years. Before he died he obliged him to transmit the knowledge by missionary work. Khawaya Shamsuddin Azeemi did obey him and he tirelessly worked night and day on his mission of spreading the Sufism all over the world.

In the teachings of this Sufi mystic there is a prominent desire for awaking the feeling of love for God in human heart. He revealed the mysteries which had surrounded the spiritual knowledge and transmitted them from the level of unrealistic and imaginary traditional teaching onto learning more in accord with modern scientific thinking. As Khawaya Shamsuddin Azeemi spread his knowledge, so he opened more than 70 centers of his order, in different parts of the world. His goal was to promote and spread spiritual knowledge and serve to people, offering solutions related to their bodily,

mental, marital and social problems. On the spiritual plane his message to the people was that they should conceive the inner knowledge and understand their latent abilities, as they could get to know the Creator of the universe and so enjoy the blessed life on this and the other world.

### 3.3. HEBREW RELIGION

#### 3.3.1. Baal Shem Tov and Hasidism

In the first half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, side by side with spreading of the Freemasonry movement, in Jewish world there began to grow Hasidism, as the religious mystical movement. This movement emphasized the presence of God in everyday life and value of a prayer. The teaching of Hasidism is based upon two theoretical concepts; religious panentheism or God's omnipresence and the idea of *Devekut*, communion of God and man. That communion is achieved by the concentration of thoughts on God, no matter what we do in our everyday life; special form of communion is the ecstatic prayer, and also dancing and singing in a religious rapture.

The founder of Hasidism is Baal Shem Tov, also known as Israel ben Eliezer. (Gershom Sholem, one of the greatest modern authorities in the field of Jewish mysticism considers him "the most renowned Jewish mystic over the last few centuries".) He was born around 1700 in Akuf, place in south-eastern Poland, in a poor and pious family. In school, he had been distinguished among other children only by his frequent disappearances. Usually they would find him in some wood of surroundings, where he would have enjoyed in delightful rapture, in the magic charm of the nature. He had never been educated for a Rabbi; instead, he became already as a young man an assistant in a synagogue. He got married very early, at 18, but his wife soon died and Baal Shem Tov left his native place.

In the next period of his life he worked as the helper in small Jewish communities in Polish Galicia, until he finally settled down in a small place Flust. Because of his honesty and knowledge of human nature, local residents elected him for a judge mediator, for people who conducted suits against each other. However, he was deprived of this service, as Jews had already gotten their own civilian courts in Poland. But, in his arbitrage he left deep impression on a wealthy and learned Ephraim of Brody, so he promised him a hand of his daughter.

After the marriage, the couple lived modestly, because almost all the property had been inherited by the brother-in-law. They maintained themselves by supplying the surrounding villages with building material. Somewhat later Baal Shem Tov gotten a job of butcher in place Kshilowice, but soon he took over the guidance of the local tavern, bought by his brother-in-law. During his long stays in nature he associated with country herbalists and learned how to prepare herbal medicines. In his treatments he accomplished extraordinary results. His reputation as a healer spread also among the non-Jewish population, even among the nobility. Around the age 35, he began to manifest some of his prophetic abilities.

With his sincerity and simplicity soon he won over many adherents. He taught them how true religious practice does not consist only of scholastic theological knowledge, but also of love for God, in affectionate faith and prayer. Such kind of teaching had been welcomed not only by common people, but also by learned rabbis who were not contented with scholasticism and ascetical understanding of Kabbala.

Around 1740 Baal Shem Tov settled down in place Miedzybodz. Numerous pupils and followers started to gather around him. He did not teach them systematically, but through proverbs and parables. These proverbs later spread out by oral tradition. Later, adherents of Hasidism did write down and also developed the unbound thoughts of their founder into a religious system. Hasidic movement firstly developed in Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania; later, in 19<sup>th</sup> century it spread over to Western Europe and America.

As Baal Shem Tov did not left any written works, to get some insight into the original thought it is necessary to re-survey the older Hasidic authors. But, after his death (1760) the movement had divided into several sects and each one of them asserted to be the inheritor of the original thought of the founder. So, it is no easy task to esteem the authenticity of statements ascribed to Baal Shem Tov.

The panentheistic conception of God makes the essential thread of the original Hasidic teaching. The founder considered the entire universe, intelligence and matter as manifestation of the Divine Being. This manifestation is not identified with emanation from God, like in Kabbala's conception, since Hasidic learning holds that nothing can be separated from God; that all the things are in fact different forms in which God reveals himself. Panentheistic learning and metaphysical conception of God by the mediation of Baal Shem Tov had gotten also a practical expression. His religious tenets give out the smell of optimism. Since God is immanent in all things they must possess something good in them, he deemed. The second important point of his teaching is the negation of asceticism as practice that is pleasant to God. From the very beginnings Baal Shem Tov fought against the views that had expressed contempt toward worldly things, which under the earlier influence of Isaac Luria and Kabbala became almost a dogma. The founder of Hasidism put an accent on the prayer. It offers a feeling of unity with God, that is, when man temporarily loses his feelings of separation in his rapturous joy, which is necessary to pay respect to God in a true way.

### 3.3.2. New Hasidism of Martin Buber

Philosopher Martin Buber is one of the most prominent Jewish thinkers of 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Vienna in 1878. His family gave several brilliant scholars and his grandfather Solomon Buber wrote many critical editions of midrash literature. Remaining very early in life without his mother, he moved to his grandfather Solomon, who lived in Lvov, western Russia. There

he came into a contact, already as a boy, with Hasidism. When he was 18, he enrolled Vienna university. During his study he especially got interested in mystical philosophy, so he even defended a Doctor's dissertation from this field, entitling it *On Problem of the Individuation: Cusanus and Boehme*. In these early years Buber did engage himself in connection with Zionist movement, but as he was primarily interested in cultural-educational aspects and not political, he soon came into conflict with the leader of the movement Theodor Herzl and finally withdrew.

Yet in his twenties he began to write books on subject matter from Hasidism. So he had worked on the stories of renowned Hasid Rav Nehman of Bratislava. That already had brought him a certain reputation, which he later confirmed by his works on the history of the mystical movement, *Hasidism and Modern Man* and *Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*. Buber's romantic presentation of Hasidism did interested non-Jewish people too, for this spiritual experience and for understanding of Jewish love toward God.

In the description of the development of Buber's philosophical thought there can be distinguished three phases. The first is characterized by mystical preoccupations, second by existentialism and third by the development of the philosophy of dialog. But, there must be emphasized that neither in his late phases Buber did not reject mysticism entirely, but he just preserved a mystical thinking in somewhat altered form.

The great impact on Buber had gotten German mystical philosophers Meister Eckhart and Jakob Boehme. The former was called by Buber 'the greatest thinker of the western mysticism'. These German mystics presented a kind of a bridge toward the Jewish mysticism. Boehme's idea on the birth of soul of 'Urgrund' reminds of the Kabbalist and Hasidic idea about the union of God and his immanence in exile. These two concepts brought Buber onto the thought of realization of God through two men, later replaced by the idea of meeting between God and man.

Besides the working-out of Hasidic stories, Buber also dealt with other religious-philosophical traditions, so he edited the collection of Chuang-Tzu's parables, for which he wrote also an introduction. In it he says that tao (path) is the unity of change and transformation and perfect revealing of tao is man who connects the biggest change with truest unity. Tao, although considered as unity of everything, exists only potentially in things, until it becomes live and manifested, by its contact with conscious being of the united man.

In the period between two wars Buber's mysticism had been chiefly concentrated on the problem of the relation between the individual and the world. He opposes the division between 'I' and world of dualities inside the very man, the double nature of his mind and emotions. Such divisions are overcome only by mystical unity with everything. Buber does not perceive God as divided, but everywhere as a whole, "where he reveals himself, he is entirely present". The dualism comes into expression mostly in his best

known book *Ich und Du* (I and You) from 1923. The key concept in it is dialog - relation which includes the concrete circumstances of the participants and importance of God's presence. The final goal is not, according to Buber, just 'I-You' relation of man with the world, but between man and eternal source of the world, that is, God.

In 1938 Martin Buber immigrates to Palestine where he works as professor of social philosophy and general sociology, at the university of Jerusalem. He died in 1965.

### 3.4. HINDUISM

#### 3.4.1. The Pioneer of Neo-Hindu Movement Ram Mohum Roy

In the course of 18<sup>th</sup> century Indian philosophy has experienced some kind of stagnation. It is time of British colonial conquest of India and as its aftermath the introduction of English educational system. By very Indians occurred a divergence in relation to the acceptance of foreign influence; whilst ones strived at all costs to preserve the old forms of culture and institutions, others became skeptical toward Hindu tradition and they were prone to the acceptance of the Christian viewpoint.

As the consequence of such different impacts, on the Indian spiritual scene of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century appeared various movements. The first among those movements was Brahmo Samaj, with his founder and leader Ram Mohum Roy. His impact was so powerful that they sometimes called him a father of modern India. Founding his Brahmo Samaj movement in 1828, he contributed to the renaissance of Hindu culture of 19<sup>th</sup> century, but he simultaneously set on challenges to the traditional culture, fighting for educational, social and political reforms.

Ram Mohum Roy was born in 1772 in place Radhanagar, Bengal, in the vicinity of Calcutta. His father performed a public service and likewise he educated his son in that direction. So, Roy had gotten instruction in Bengali, Arabic and Persian language. While learning Arabic, he also began to read Kuran and so he discovered monotheism. After a while family had sent him to Benares, where he studied Sanskrit, Vedanta and Upanishads. His faith in monotheism was sustained by the teachings from Veda. When he returned home, he already gained a great spiritual knowledge and began to oppose the traditional values of father and rest of the family. After permanent conflicts in his native home, Roy decided to set out on a long journey.

Passing through several countries Ram Mohum Roy eventually reached Tibet. But, after a while he returned home, where he learned to manage the father's estate. He also mastered English language and in 1797 moved to Calcutta, where he got employed as a banker. In 1803 he became a revenue officer and later a private teacher of language to Englishman Thomas Woodforde, who was archivist at the court in Murshidabad.

The next year (1804) Roy published a work in Persian, entitled *Tuhvat ul muhwahhidin* (A Gift to Monotheist). In this work he criticizes the existing religions as irrational, deceptive, intolerant and as means of control of the society. This is at the same time his protest against the idolatry and a try to find a universal religion, based upon the idea of the unity of the Divine.

Soon Roy left Murshidabad and then he got employed as a clerk at East India Company, where he worked until 1815. During this time Roy gained a broad knowledge from western culture and did perfect his English. After he had returned to Calcutta, he founded a society Atmiya Sabha, whose aim was “spreading of religious truth and promotion of free discussion on theological themes”.

In 1815 Roy published a work *Vedantasara*, with paraphrases of chosen sutras from *Brahmasutrabhasya*. He also wrote commentaries on Upanishades, between 1816 and 1819. In 1820 he published works *A Defense of Hindu Theism* and *A Second Defense of Monotheistical System of the Vedas*. In spite of the fact that he tried to prove how modern Hinduism can successfully resist the challenge of Christianity, his Hindu opponents called him atheist, destroyer of the religion and sinful modernist. The enmity of his opponents grew to such extent, that it turned into the open threat by death, so that Roy was compelled to hire bodyguards.

In addition to books with Hindu subject matter, Roy writes a work on Christian religion, in which he emphasizes Christ’s morality and also his ethical proverbs. In this work, entitled *The Precepts of Jesus: The Guide to Peace and Happiness*, Roy omits all that could discredit Christianity in the eyes of Hindu, like purely theological sections and descriptions of Jesus’ wonders. This time he experienced a fierce critique from Christians, too; for example priest Marshman called him a falsifier of Gospels.

Nevertheless, there were not all on the Christian side so negatively disposed toward Roy’s vision of religion. He found his allies among British and American Christians – Unitarians. In 1821 in Calcutta there had been founded a branch of this church; among founders, besides Roy, there were some prominent Brahmans and a former Baptist priest William Adam.

Roy had a strong conviction that women should get involved into the educational system. He alone took steps concerning this question; he founded in 1822 an Anglo-Hindu school in English, with western educational program. In 1827 occurred Roy’s conflict with Adam and consequently he withdrew from this church. The next year he founded his own movement Brahma Samaj, dedicated to one God; it took as an authority Vedic scriptures. This movement enabled Hindu – members of higher castes to practice monotheism and universalism, inside their own culture.

Ram Mohun Roy was also a fierce adversary of Hindu custom sati (cremation of widow after husband’s death). His long-lasting battle finally bore fruit in 1829, when governor of India William Bentinck declared this custom illegal. Roy considered sati a ‘cruel murder under the cloak of religion’.

The last few years of his life Ram Mohun Roy spent in England. He came there to lobby by British government for certain social and economic reforms in his country. In England he had been received with all honors, as an

eminent guest; he was also received in audience by King William IV. In 1833 his health began to deteriorate and he breathed out, pronouncing the holy Hindu mantra 'Om'. Roy's works would be inspiration for many great men of spirit in the west, including writers Ralph W. Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau and others. But, the greatest heritage he left behind was his dream about the universal religion, based upon the Divine unity.

### 3.4.2. Ramakrishna's Ecumenism and Veneration of Divine Mother

Just like his great Hindu predecessor Ram Mohun Roy, Ramakrishna stems from Bengal; he also continues his universalistic teaching. He is at the same time adorer of goddess Kali, which he deems Divine mother; teacher of non-dualist advaita Vedanta (in which he is the continuator of Shankara's teaching) and advocate of the idea that different religions lead toward the same goal - as it was mentioned in Introduction of this book. Ramakrishna puts the spiritual side of religion above the mere practicing of rituals. It can be said that there is no doubt that chiefly to him goes the merit for the renaissance of Hinduism in 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This great man of modern Hindu thought was born in village Kamarpukur in the vicinity of Burdwan, West Bengal, in 1836. he comes of a poor family. His father was a very pious man and his mother an embodiment of simplicity and complaisance. After he had mastered skill of reading and writing in primary school, he did not continue his education, but he dedicated himself to serving the deity Raghuvira, at home. Regular school repelled him, as well as the endeavor for piling money. On the contrary, he adored nature and spent his time on meadows and in orchards outside the village, playing games with his contemporaries. But, he also liked to listen to monks in their debates, when they stopped in his village, on their passage through.

After his father had died Ramakrishna and his whole family came into an unenviable position, without enough means for life. The older brother Ramkumar became the head of the family. He conducted a school of Sanskrit and served as a priest at the temple in Dakhineswar. Young Ramakrishna had a duty of decorating the statue of goddess Kali, to which temple had been dedicated. After his brother Ramkumar had withdrawn, Ramakrishna became the clergyman of the temple.

By serving in the temple of goddess Kali, Ramakrishna became widely known after his piety and spirituality. He continuously prayed for widening of his religious experiences, especially for the teachings of other religions. By some wonder, there always came to him teachers of other religions and he easily adopted their teaching. In his 22<sup>nd</sup> year he married Sarada Devi, in that time still a child. She became his first disciple and their relation had been exclusively of spiritual nature. This divine relation, really unique in the history of religions, had lasted until Ramakrishna died (1886) and Sarada Devi later herself alone became a spiritual teacher. With her, there was a

devoted group of 16 young followers, led by another famous philosopher and rhetorician, Vivekananda.

Ramakrishna's mystical achievement *nirvikalpa Samadhi* (literally: continuous meditation) brought him to the cognition that gods of different religions are only different interpretations of the Absolute, but that the Ultimate Reality can never be expressed by human language. Ramakrishna had spent, in accord with his belief that there exist only one truth called by different names, certain phases of his life in deliberation and understanding of various religious traditions – Islam, Christianity, as well as other Yogic and Tantric sects inside Hinduism.

The achievement of *nirvikalpa Samadhi* had also led him to the understanding of two phenomenal forms of *maya*. He interpreted how *avidya maya* presents the dark forces of creation (sensual wishes, evil passions, greed, lust, and cruelty), which hold the world on lower level of consciousness. On the other hand *vidyamaya* presents higher forces of creation (spiritual virtues, qualities of enlightenment, complaisance, purity, love and piety) which elevate man to the higher levels of consciousness. The utter goal is to achieve the state of *mayatita*, i.e. release from *maya*, illusion or vision of this world.

The key concept of Ramakrishna's teaching are: oneness of existence, the divinity of human beings, unity of God and harmony of religions and considering lust and greed the main fitters of mind in life.

Although the greatest Indian philosopher of 19<sup>th</sup> century did not leave written works after, we can approach his teachings by the means of work *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Katamhita*, which is translated also as the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, author of which is one of his disciples, Mahendranath Gupta. Just like had done his advaita predecessor Shankara more than thousand years ago, so Ramakrishna revitalized Hinduism that enabled him to successfully cope with challenge of Islam and Christianity in modern age. What Ram Mohun Roy had achieved with his Brahmo Samaj movement, Ramakrishna would upgrade with his Ramakrishna Mission. His teachings would be continued and spread not only through India, but across the West as well, by his best known disciple Vivekananda.

### 3.4.3. Three Great Men of Neo-Hinduism from Calcutta

Speaking in general, one of the most important traits of the mystical philosophy of 20<sup>th</sup> century is the breakthrough of the Neo-Hindu philosophical thought to the West in Europe and America. Until then exclusively one way missionary direction (of Western Christians to the East) has been replaced by two-way communication, now also Hindu thinkers parting westward and spreading their teaching. First in a row of these charismatic Neo-Hindu was Ramakrishna's disciple Vivekananda. On founding the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897, he began to transmit Vedanta teaching and Indian culture, with an aim to bring together two civilizations.

Unfortunately, his precocious death (already in 1902) prevented the realization of his life's mission, the pioneer work on bridging the gap between East and West.

He was born as Narendranath Dutta in 1863 in Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal. Already as a child he expressed maturity in his thinking, and extraordinary memory, too. At an early age he began to practice meditation. At school, he excelled not only by his assiduity in learning, but also by his out-educational activities; he organized an amateur theater company and he occupied himself with various kinds of sports. As the young man, he began to question the meaning of different superstitious customs, as well as discrimination based upon the caste or religious appurtenance.

In 1880 Vivekananda enrolled the Scottish Church College in Calcutta and he began the study of philosophy. At the College he studied Western logic and philosophy and the history of European nations. At that time in young Vivekananda occur the first questions concerning God and his presence. Such religious deliberations brought him in touch with the movement Brahmo Samaj, founded by Ram Mohum Roy. But, the recitation of congregational prayers and singing of devotional songs did not satisfy Vivekananda; his basic aspiration was the cognition of God. Then he heard from one professor at the college of Ramakrishna, then clergyman of the temple in Dakshineswar.

Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna met for the first time in November, 1881. Young Vivekananda had asked on that occasion the teacher directly, if he saw God. Ramakrishna gave him an affirmative answer, adding that he had seen God clearer than he sees him now. Vivekananda was astonished, feeling that teacher's words give out smell of honesty and that they come from the depths of experience. From that time he began to pay visits to Ramakrishna frequently and from him he got lessons in Advaita Vedanta, philosophy of non-dualism. Besides, he had declined his doubts and offered Vivekananda a vision of God; within a few years he turned him into a wise man, worthy of inheriting him.

In time of Ramakrishna's death (1886), Vivekananda was already entirely prepared to deprive himself of everything worldly, with an aim to cognize God. Together with a group of Ramakrishna's disciples he made a vow that he would ordain himself as a monk. Then he continued to live with them in a house in Baranagore. Soon young monks began their life of wandering monks-ascetics. In 1890, Vivekananda set out for a long journey, in humble monastic clothes, with beggar's dish and without any private property. He cruised all along India, by feet. During this period of wanderings, he dwelt in very different abodes sometimes at raja's courts and sometimes in huts of the poor. As he had come into contact with cultures of various regions of India and with different classes, he had noticed that there prevailed inequity and tyranny of the higher castes over the lower ones.

In one of his speeches, that in Madras, Vivekananda spoke about his visions of the future India and Hinduism. Delighted auditorium proposed Vivekananda for the representative of Hindu religion at the forthcoming World Parliament of Religions. Vivekananda accepted this offer and supported by his friends from Madras, Raja of Ramnad and Maharaja of Mysore and Kshatri set out to America, to that important spiritual manifestation.

The World Parliament of Religions was held in September, 1893 in Chicago and it denoted the first formal gathering of the representatives of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions. Among the participants there were Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Christians, members of Hebrew and Islamic religion, Hindu and Buddhists, followers of Chinese religions and Zoroastrians. Also present among them was Annie Besant, as the representative of theosophy. Vivekananda has charmed with his appearance the participants, beginning his speech with famous words: "American brothers and sisters..." This appearance in United States at the same time denoted the beginning of the new wave of interest for the Hinduism as the religion and philosophy of vital importance for the West. Within several years from the Parliament, there already established Vedantic centers in New York and London; Hinduism also entered as the subject to universities.

In the next four-year period Vivekananda traveled constantly and held lectures in the West. He returned to India in 1897. On his return, he held a series of lectures, again coming upon delighted reception. Then he founded Ramakrishna Mission, with the goal of transmitting the teaching of the great teacher, for the benefit of the mankind; worldly and spiritual advancement and for the development of togetherness among the members of different religions.<sup>14</sup> Vivekananda's fervent preaching in the West, however, did not get by without accusations of the orthodox Hindu, who reproached him for compromising his original monastic vows. Torn between the aspirations for the missionary work in the West and simultaneously fulfilled spiritually by the devotion for the homeland, over the last few years of his life he had been exposed to constant tension. Stresses and fatiguing traveling contributed to the aggravation of his health condition, so along with diabetes, he also became ill of cancer. He was only 39 when he passed away in July, 1902 in Bellur Math near Calcutta.

There exists a story about how Vivekananda met with famous scientist Nikola Tesla. Their meeting probably occurred in 1896, after Vivekananda had held a public lecture in New York. Vedanta teachings did left deep impression on Tesla. On the return to India, Vivekananda in one of his lectures mentioned a scientist "who scarcely has time to eat his meal or to go out of his laboratory, but yet who would stand by the hour to attend my lecture on Vedanta". How that scientist (Tesla) expressed himself, Vedanta teachings "are so scientific, they so exactly harmonize with the aspirations of the age and with conclusions to which modern science is coming at the present time".

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<sup>14</sup> This institution today is one of the greatest monastic orders in India.

In spite of his too short lifetime, Vivekananda offered a lot to the spiritual thought of 20<sup>th</sup> century and his books (compiled from lectures that he had held worldwide) are still very influential and they present fundamental texts for each student of Hindu practice of Yoga. Four kinds of yoga – karma, bhakti, raja and jnana are presented through four books of the same names. Vivekananda explains that karma yoga means purification of the mind through the work. Because good deeds cause good karma and bad deeds bad one, soul is in its eternal state of binding, without the hope of the liberation. What we do, we must perform without the wish for gathering fruit. For a karma yogi it is divinity that is primary and wishes to sacrifice for others, without the hidden selfish motive. Bhakti yoga, that is, path of love is achieved by the longing for God and by that is also achieved the true devotion. To the perfect unity with God one comes gradually. In the beginning it is selfish love, but in the end it turns into a great flame, when our Self becomes one with the Infinite. One can reach raja yoga through pranayama, concentration and meditation. By practicing these methods there can be sometimes acquired so called supernatural powers: Vivekananda do not think that these powers are not natural, he considers them inborn to the human mind. Our mind is the part of the universal mind and connected with every other mind. And each mind, no matter where it is, it is in the real communication with the whole world. Jnana yoga tells us that Atma<sup>15</sup> is the only reality, whilst all the rest is relative (maya). Deliberation on this philosophical truth is the next step and third, the last one, is liberation (Moksha) through the sacrifice of desires of the senses and process of the control of the mind.

Many years after Vivekananda's death, famous Indian poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore said: "If you want to learn something about India, study Vivekananda. By him everything is positive and there is nothing negative." In his younger days Tagore had been more critically disposed toward Vivekananda, because of his veneration of idols. The common traits that adorned these two philosophers from Calcutta were their numerous teachings and traveling in the West and across Asia, as well as preaching peace and understanding among the people. Tagore was the first winner of Nobel Prize from Indian continent, in 1913, and his entire life work is of extraordinary importance for the modern Indian culture.

Rabindranath Tagore stems of a renowned family, which gave many eminent politicians and artists. His father Debendranath did take the leadership of the movement Brahmo Samaj, after the death of the founder Ram Mohun Roy; his followers called him *maharishi*, out of respect. Rabindranath was the 14<sup>th</sup> and the last child in this numerous family. He was born in 1861 in Calcutta. Two elder brothers had been already prominent in philosophy and music and his sister as writer of novels, so he got the inspiration for his life vocation already within the family. At an early age he adopted the elements of the old Indian and new European culture and art. He began to write poetry at eight. He received his primary education by private tutors. He

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<sup>15</sup> Soul or Self.

traveled a lot with his father throughout northern India – Kashmir and Himalaya; these journeys were also fulfilled with learning.

Tagore had continued his education at Bengal Academy and in 1877 he set out for a study to England, where he enrolled London's University College. After one year of studying law he left the university and returned to India. Tagore published his first collection when he was 17; as a matter of fact it was published by one of his friends, who wished to surprise him. In next several years he has already built a certain literary reputation with several works, among which excelled a collection of poetry *Sandhya Sangit*, published in 1882.

In 1883 Tagore got married and with his wife Mrinalini Devi he had five children; however, some of them died at very early age. The father committed to Rabindranath managing of the family property in region Shelidah, in the estuary of Ganges (today part of Bangladesh). Later did join him on the property his wife and children. Tagore often had to travel dozens of kilometers in his visits of the spacious property. He earned for living from the lease of the boat, for which tenants would pay a yearly rent. In the period up to the end of century Tagore also wrote a lot. He invented a new genre, until then unknown in Bengal – short story. The most success have had the stories *Cabuliwallah* (Fruit seller from Kabul), *Kshudita Pashan* (Hungry Stones) and *Atithi* (Runaway).

In 1901 Tagore moved to Shantiniketan, place near Balpur, about 150 kilometers north of Calcutta. On this property it was built an educational complex, which consisted of ashram, experimental school, library, as well as tree-lines and parks. Unfortunately, during this period died first his wife and then son and daughter. These sad family events left Tagore in deep grief. However, he somehow managed to collect the strength to carry on. He had a strong support from Bengali reading public, who had fallen for his works. From this period the most noteworthy are works *Naivedya* and *Khaya*. Tagore has also begun with translation of his works into English, firstly of poetry written in free verse. In 1912 he departed to England, bringing along the translations. There, on the public readings he caused an attention of some prominent Western poets like William B. Yeats and Ezra Pound. Yeats would tackle on writing introduction for Tagore's collection *Gitanjali*, for which he would receive a Nobel Prize the next year.

After his great success with collection *Gitanjali* Tagore became famous writer worldwide. In the period between two wars he traveled a lot and held lectures all around the world. In 1922 the school in Shantiniketan, which he had established by the beginning of the century, has outgrown into a university, named Visva-Bharati. The curriculum put the emphasis onto rural renewal, social reform and an international unity. Tagore was a great opponent of nationalism, as of Japanese and Western, so of the domestic, Indian nationalism. His pacifist and internationalist essay *Nationalism in India* aroused critiques and derision from Indian militarists, but also a praise from the renowned pacifist, French writer Romain Rolland. Besides with this

writer, Tagore also met with many brilliant thinkers – his contemporaries, including Henri Bergson, Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann, George Bernard Shaw, and H.G. Wells, as well with Mahatma Gandhi, with whom he shared views on non-violent path toward the independence.

Tagore continued with writing poetry in his old age, too. Just a few hours before he drew his last breath, on August 7, 1941, he had dictated his last poem. In the course of life he wrote about 50 dramas, 100 collections of poetry, 40 novels and short stories, books of essays and philosophy. His most important philosophical work *Sadhana* originated in 1913. It reflects the basic ideas presented in Hindu sacred scripts, like Vedas and Upanishads. In this work perception of things goes to the very core and expresses all the depth of Tagore's insight. *Sadhana* communicates the very essence of nature and her manifestations, similarly as essays of Emerson. "The man who has his spiritual eyes open knows that ultimate truth about earth and water lies in the apprehension of the eternal will which works in time and takes shape in the forces we realize under those aspects" says Tagore, concluding that it is a perception of the soul by soul.

Such cognition, in which God is in everyone and all, is the central thought of Tagore's philosophy. It also comes to the foreground in the most important work, the collection of the poetry in prose *Gitanjali*. Verses of this book are permeated with ideas of the universal love and mystical unity of man and universe, man and God. Love toward God in Tagore's verses is depicted by Yeats in Introduction like "a magic gulf wherein lovers may bathe their own bitter passion and renew their youth". Tagore reveals the soul and surrenders himself to its spontaneity. And Tagore sings like this: "Thou who art the King of kings hast decked thyself in beauty to captivate my heart. And for this thy love loses itself in the love of thy lover and there art thou seen in the perfect union of two." In last poem of the collection *Gitanjali* Tagore celebrates God in this way: "Let all my songs gather together their diverse strains into a single current and flow to a sea of silence in one salutation to thee." And really, it is as it was the whole current of Tagore's work had been directed toward the transcendence, toward the mystical unity with God.

In distinction from Tagore, whose mysticism had been predominantly of poetic nature, Sri Aurobindo's mystical philosophy was more directed toward scientific-philosophical deliberation, more precisely toward the individual and collective spiritual evolution. In the first period of his public activity, Aurobindo had been a prominent activist in fight for the independence of India and in his later phase he dedicated himself completely to the philosophical work. Already in his lifetime he became a charismatic personality, so his followers considered him an avatar, to wit, an incarnation of god Vishnu.

Sri Aurobindo is the third great man of Neo-Hinduism born in Calcutta (in 1872). He comes of a family of a physician educated in Great Britain, so it was in a way destined that Aurobindo gains European education, too. He

went to England already at seven, together with two elder brothers. He acquired a primary education by private tutors. When he arrived at St. Paul's School in London, his knowledge was already such, that he skipped one grade. He received awards for his works in literature and history. After the grammar school, he had enrolled Cambridge University, at which he graduated in 1893 and then returned to India.

On his return, Aurobindo got an employment in public service. He had worked for a while as a revenue officer and later he earned for life working as a teacher in English. In these years, toward the end of century Aurobindo had to face the fact that he, owing to study of many years in Britain, got anglicized. So, for instance he did not know his mother language, Bengali, as he began to study it only in his twenties. Besides Bengali, he learned Sanskrit too, to be able to study Upanishads, in their original form.

In the period of the turn of the centuries Sri Aurobindo gets more and more involved into Indian movement for the independence. It is the time of repressive rule of then Vice-Roy, Lord Curzon. In 1885 there was founded Indian National Congress, on British initiative, aimed at canalizing of the revolt of masses and preventing insurgencies on the larger scale. The Congress was split into two wings: one moderate, prone to support the policy of gradual reforms and dialog and other militant that considered that changes could not be achieved in a peaceful way. This militant wing was especially influent in Bengal, the most developed region, with highest percentage not only of industrial workers, but of intellectuals, too. Aurobindo did come into a contact with adherents of the militant wing, among the rest also for the reason that his brother Barinda had been directly involved onto revolutionary activities.

By the beginning of the century, Aurobindo did engage himself, under brother's influence, to the writing of revolutionary pamphlets. But the growing militancy of Bengali intellectuals had for its consequence the decision of British authorities to divide Bengal. Lord Curzon deemed that by partition of Hindu intellectuals, who then would not make majority in either of two newly-formed regions and in that way he would make blunt the cutting edge of the revolutionary resistance.

In the period between 1906 and 1908 Sri Aurobindo engaged himself vigorously into political activity. He started a new magazine *Bande Mataram*, in which it was incited national consciousness. The magazine advocated methods like boycott of British goods, program of national education and passive resistance. But Aurobindo did not exclude at that time the possibility of violent resistance either, as the means of achieving the independence. "The nature of repression is one that determines the nature of resistance", he wrote in that time. Then there were many young men with university education, who were unemployed; a part of them was engaged into activities of militant organizations. Those young ones were especially inspired by the Italian revolutionary movement of 19<sup>th</sup> century, headed by Giuseppe Mazzini.

As the revolutionary enthusiasm had grown stronger, consequently more and more leaders of militant movements were either executed or sentenced to long-standing imprisonment. So, the martyrs were created, in this way. Of the pure martyrdom also wrote Aurobindo in *Bande Mataram*. British authorities combined the attacks on militants with the attempt of certain constitutional reforms, enabling in that manner a certain number of Indians to participate in the government. Aurobindo called such tries 'reforms of comical opera', denoting them as burlesque and farcical. In 1908 he writes an apology of the aggressive methods of fight as the response to the repression of the authorities. "Aggression is unjust only when unprovoked; violence, unrighteous when used wantonly or for unrighteous ends." To ask masses of mankind to act as saints, to rise to the height of divine love and practice it in relation to their adversaries or oppressors is to ignore the human nature, deemed Aurobindo. Actually, it had not even been published in the magazine, since the manuscript was captured by police. However, it was exposed as *corpus delicti* at the court, in connection with trial for the conspiracy concerning the murder of a British judge. Aurobindo was charged, along with 30 other men. After the long-lasting trial, he was released. He remained in prison for more than a year, though.

This period spent in prison was for Aurobindo a time of deep deliberation and intensive meditation. Gradually he came upon cognition of the final truths of Hindu religion. His stay in prison denoted the turning point in personal evolution of Sri Aurobindo. Later he asserted that during the intensive meditation in his prison cell he had been visited by Swami Vivekananda, who did lead him through yoga to great heights and cognition of Vasudeva.<sup>16</sup>

On his release from the prison, Aurobindo started two new weekly magazines – *Karma yogin* (in English) and *Dharma* (in Bengali). Already the very titles of magazines indicate the new, non-violent and spiritual way, for the achievement so of personal freedom, as of the freedom of India, as well. Nonetheless, British authorities considered him, even in such a pacifist edition, potentially dangerous. So, in 1910 he was compelled to move to Pondicherry, town in the south of India, then under the French rule. In this town he started in 1914 the monthly magazine *Arya*. In the next period until 1920, it would publish series of essays, which would be later collected and published as books. Among the rest, here is also Aurobindo's *magnum opus* *Life Divine*, as well as *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *Essays on the Gita*, *The Secret of the Veda*, *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*, *The Upanishads*, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Future Poetry*.

After this exceptionally prolific period (save some poems and essays) the only grater work was epic poem *Savitri*. However, after the withdrawal from the public life in 1926, Aurobindo would continue his voluminous correspondence with his disciples. His letters, of which grater part has been written in thirties, would be published later, in the book entitled *Letters on Yoga*.

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<sup>16</sup> One of the forms of Vishnu.

During his activity in Pondichery, Aurobindo's closest collaborator would become Mirra Richard, a woman of Turkish-Egyptian origin. Aurobindo respected very much this extraordinary woman, also known as 'Mother'; for her organizational abilities he relinquished to her planning, building and thereafter also guiding the ashram. After Aurobindo's death in 1950, Mirra Richard became the leader of the community and followers did pay respect to her in the same way they had done to the philosopher of Calcutta.

One of the main Aurobindo's philosophical achievements was the introduction of the concept of evolution into the Vedanta thought. One more materialistically oriented concept existed already for centuries, in Samkya philosophy; but, Aurobindo rejected the materialistic tendencies so of Samkya, as of Darwinism and he set the new theory of the evolution of spirit.

The most important Aurobindo's work is surely *Life Divine*. In this voluminous work he describes the process of the creation of universe – from the real idea of the Absolute, up to the manifested universe. This process Aurobindo calls 'involution'. Thereafter he depicts the process by which the created universe evolves, after the forces of mind and spirit and that is process of 'evolution'. The final cause of the creation is the reunion of Consciousness and Power by bringing the Spiritual Being into the existence that consequently enables the Divine life on the Earth. This evolution goes on at four levels: individual, social, planetary and the level of the entire universe. The path toward the evolution of the collective soul leads through the growth of consciousness. By it, an individual can achieve the level of the superman. However, it is not an egoistical superman oriented toward domination (like by Nietzsche), but it is the self-actualized being, who would present the leap forward in the evolution of man. Aurobindo's ideas would be worked out several decades later by Ken Wilber, in his holistic conception of evolution.

#### 3.4.4. Father of Modern India Mahatma Gandhi

A few years after Aurobindo's withdrawal from politics' scene Indian movement for independence received to meet the man able to lead India to the goal, through his non-violent method of *ahimsa*. In 1915, namely, came to India the lawyer from South Africa, Mohandas Gandhi (later called Mahatma, the Great Teacher) and few years after he took the leadership of Indian national movement. Gandhi did promote *satyagraha* –resistance to the tyranny through the massive civil disobedience and refusal of any cooperation with the government. His way of struggling that brought India to independence, inspired many other movements for civil rights and freedom worldwide.

Mohandas Gandhi was born in 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat, as a son of high municipal functionary. His family belonged to the higher, mercantile caste vaishya. Growing up by his pious mother, in Jain surroundings, from the

earliest age he adopted principles of non-violence toward living beings, of vegetarianism, fasting and interreligious tolerance. Gandhi got married, according to an old Indian custom, at an early age. He was only 14 and so old was his spouse, named Kasturba, too. At school, Gandhi did not excel, he was just an average pupil. At school, Gandhi did not excel, he was just an average pupil. So, he barely passed the entrance examination at Bombay university in 1887.

The next year Gandhi had departed to England and there he enrolled London University College, where he studied law, like Tagore did some ten years before. During his study he adopted some western customs, like for example way of clothing or attending dancing lessons. But, at the same time he remained faithful to Hindu principles – of abstinence from meat, alcohol and promiscuity. He joined the Vegetarian Society and there he met some members of the Theosophical Society. Under their influence he started to study Bhagavad-Gita and also the scripts of Christianity, Buddhism and other religions. In his free time he studied philosophy, too. He was especially attracted by ideas and principles of the non-violence of American writer Henry Thoreau, from the work *Civil Disobedience* and by the ideas of English sociologist John Ruskin, about the country life in accord with nature.

Upon his return to India in 1891, Gandhi has tried to achieve the career of lawyer in Bombay, but he was not successful. In 1833 he decided to accept the job in British colony Natal in southern Africa, so he made a one-year contract with some Indian firm. In time of his arrival to South Africa Gandhi was still a modest man, of polite behavior and indifferent in regard to politics. But, as he had faced the discrimination toward blacks and Indians, he had to change. He became very resolute in his aim to oppose the policy of apartheid. So, this anti-racist activity in South Africa served as the perfect preparation for his later struggle in native India. Already in 1894 he founded the Indian Congress of Natal, for the agitation of his compatriots' rights. During the Boer War (1899-1902) he formed an ambulance unit, for serving the wounded black South Africans. From 1906 on he began his peaceful revolution, saying that he would rather go to prison than respect anti-Asian laws. Thousands of Indians did join the peaceful protests. As the main negotiator for the rights of Indians in the newly established state, called South African Union, he met several times with General Jan Ch. Smuts<sup>17</sup>, later Prime Minister. They settled an agreement only in 1914, shortly before the First World War and Gandhi's departure from South Africa.

By the beginning of 1915 Gandhi returned to India, after full 22 years of absence. His activism for Indians' rights up to then had already made him famous, so in his homeland he was received as a hero. Upon his arrival to India, he met with then leader of Indian National Congress Gopal Gokhale, whom he considered as the role model. For his philosophy of political struggle by non-violent methods he came into a conflict with the next leader of Congress, Lokmanya Tilak. Namely, the militant Tilak supported exclusively the violent struggle, against the British authorities. In 1920, after

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<sup>17</sup> J.Ch. Smuts is considered the inventor of the term 'holism'. He used it first in his book *Holsim and Evolution*.

Tilak's death, Gandhi came onto the head of the Indian National Congress. Then he started a campaign for the refusal of cooperation with British, inciting Indians to produce clothes on their own and to boycott British goods. After the general boycott in 1922 and bursting-out of big riots Gandhi was thrown in prison. Although he had been sentenced to six years of imprisonment, already in 1924 he was released.

Between 1925 and 1929 Gandhi withdrew from the active dealings with politics. At the sessions of the Indian National Congress in 1929 in Lahore the majority of participants demand the complete independence of India. There followed as new campaign of civil disobedience and demonstrative march. Gandhi did distil publicly sea salt, protesting in such way against the British monopoly on salt. Gandhi had ended in prison again, but soon he was released. In 1931 he went to London, to participate the Round Table Conference. This conference had for its goal solving the British-Indian dispute, but it solved only some unessential questions, while the problem of transmission of the rule remained intact. Moreover, the next governor of India, Lord Willingdon even reinforced the repression against the Indian fighters for the independence.

In 1934, after several unsuccessful attempts on him, Gandhi relinquished his position of the president of the Indian National Congress and he began a meditative life with his disciples in the country. But, after 1936 Gandhi is back to the politics and together with Nehru he leads the Congress. Gradually he became convinced that India would not gain a real freedom if she remains to be the part of the British Empire. From time he undertakes hunger-strikes, wishing to force government to carry through the reforms and to rectify the injustice. When the Second World War broke out, Gandhi in the beginning supported British, in their struggle against the forces of the Axis. But, as the war had advanced, he found himself exposed to the critique and consequently reinforced his demands for the independence of India; he began to speak in favor of the resolution popularly called 'Quit India'. On bursting-out of riots, in 1942, Gandhi was arrested one more time. During his two-year stay in prison he did experience a personal tragedy: his wife Kasturba died. He was released from prison earlier, because of the aggravation of his health condition and the indispensable operation.

Gandhi has continued his fight after the Second World War as well. He opposed decisively to British plans for the partition of India, because he deemed that Moslems, Hindu and others can live together peacefully in the common state. When India finally received to meet the independence in summer of 1947, there were, in spite of Gandhi's endeavors, formed two states (India and Pakistan). That was practically an introduction into the bloody civil war, in which did suffer hundreds of thousands and millions were banished from their hearths. Mahatma Gandhi drew on him the hatred of Hindu nationalists and by the beginning of 1948 he fell as the victim of the attempt.

In addition to the fact that he was the most prominent figure of Indian movement for the independence, Gandhi was also a devoted student of the Hindu philosophy. His opus includes works published during his life like *Ethical Religion*, *Ashram Observance*, *Sathyagraha in South Africa*; works published posthumously – *Key to Health*, *Medium of Instruction*, *My Non-Violence*, *My Socialism* and numerous collected works of articles, essays, speeches and interviews. One of the best compilations of Gandhi's thought is the encyclopedic edition *Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, edited by R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao. This voluminous work brings forth Gandhi's thoughts on many subjects, like truth, non-violence, courage, democracy, simplicity, tutorship, celibacy, self-reliance.

Gandhi's philosophical concept of Truth as the equivalent of God and love had in itself a proper mystical trait, which transcended the terms of world and time. For Gandhi, God is the source of light and life, but he is also above, or outside this. He sees him through the eyes of a humanist and pantheist: "I am endeavoring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one." In his autobiography Gandhi states that his final aim is self-cognition, through the vision of God and achievement of *moksha* (liberation). Toward this goal it was directed his entire work: speeches, written works and all the undertakings in the field of politics. His engagement in politics Gandhi saw in a holistic way. He deemed that it is not possible to lead an entirely religious way of life, without identifying oneself with the whole human race. This is possible, according to Gandhi, only through the engagement in politics. The wide span of man's activities Gandhi perceived as one indivisible whole. It is not possible to separate social, economical, political and purely religious work into impermeable departments, he deemed. Everyone should use his resources for the service of society and take for it only as much, as he deserved for that service. If such a system became a rule, excessive wealth and excessive poverty would disappear. All the religions should be considered as equally valuable. Then would disappear all the disputes in connection with religions and peace would prevail too.

#### 3.4.5. Society for the Consciousness of Krishna Srila Prabhupada

In the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the International society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) became one of the most familiar expressions of Hindu religion in the West. The most meritorious for this new breakthrough of Hinduism to the West is the founder of the Society A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Parbhupada, who brought Krishna-bhakti teaching in mid sixties to America. As we remember, this teaching had been taught originally by Sri Caitanya in 16<sup>th</sup> century and it was carried through later at schools in the north of India, the most renowned being in Vrindavan. Prabhupada had spread the teachings of Sri Caitanya through his mission not only across America, but also worldwide, traveling and holding lectures on six continents. His books have been translated into more than 50 languages.

Sri Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (or shorter Srila Prabhupada) is one more in a row of famous Hindu philosophers coming from Calcutta. He was born in 1896, as Abhay Charan De. Like Vivekananda, he also studied at Scottish Church College in Calcutta. Srila Prabhupada, before his dedication to religious life of sanyasin had been married with children and he did conduct a small pharmaceutical firm. He met for the first time his spiritual teacher Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura in 1922. The teacher has chosen just him because of his high education and perfect knowledge of English language, for spreading of Sri Caitanya's and Vedic knowledge in general. Srila Prabhupada had become his disciple, but he was formally initiated only in 1933.

In 1937 Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura died. Srila Prabhupada had not began immediately to preach Krishna-bhakti teaching, but he firstly wanted to study well all the sacred scripts like Vedas, Upanishads and others. In 1944 he started a fortnightly magazine in English *Back to Godhead*. In that time Srila Prabhupada also wrote his commentary on Bhagavad-Gita. For his merits, in 1947 he received honorary title 'Bhaktivedanta', from the Gaudya Vaisnava Society. In 1950 Srila Prabhupada had renounced his marital life and he began to live a retired life in medieval temple Radha-Damodara in the holy city Vrindavan. The next year he spent in intensive study and writing. In 1959 he began a life of sanyasin and he got down onto translating and writing the commentary of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Besides this voluminous work, consisting of three volumes he wrote also a book *Easy Journey to Other Planets*.

After publishing three volumes of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Srila Prabhupada felt that the time has come for the mission which he had been confided by teacher Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura. In 1965, although already at 69 years of age and with few rupees in his pocket, Prabhupada travels to New York. After one year, followed by considerable difficulties, he did found International Society for Krishna Consciousness – ISKCON. Until his death in 1977, the Society has grown into a world organization, which consists of more then hundred ashrams, schools, temples, institutes and farms.

Probably the greatest contribution of Srila to spirituality are his books (around 60 in all) on Vedanta philosophy, religion, literature, and culture. Besides the aforementioned books, among his prominent works are also: *Sri Caitanya-caritamrita*; *Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*; *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*; *Raja-Vidya: The King of Knowledge*; *Nectar of Devotion*; *The Science of Self-Realization*; *The Path of Perfection*; *Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers*; *Life Comes from Life* and others.

In his works Srila Prabhupada mainly follows the teaching of Sri Caitanya, for which he says that they are identical with teachings of the philosopher Kapila, the founder of Samkya-yoga. Prabhupada points out tat this system of yoga recommends the meditation on Lord's transcendental form. According to Prabhupada, Sri Caitanya is the personality who transcends the limited reach oh historical circumstances. In times when man in the

West had oriented his explorative spirit toward the study of the structure of the physical universe and discovery of new continents, Sri Caitanya in the East had led revolution oriented toward the inner man, toward the understanding of the spiritual nature of man, says Prabhupada.

One of the most important works of Srila Prabhupada, which speaks about man's understanding of his own spiritual nature, is *The Science of Self-Realization*. As the main goal of religion Prabhupada points out the cognition of God and love toward God. He sees all the living beings as particles of God so their relation toward him is the same as the relations of sons toward the father. Prabhupada also notices the similarity with Christians, who also consider God as the supreme father. Such an understanding one can find in *Bhagavad-Gita*.

The form of Lord by which he is present everywhere is called Paramatma (Over-soul). Atma (soul) is present then only in some place, while Paramatma is everywhere. As the personal soul is present by its consciousness in all the parts of the body, so is the Over-soul, Paramatma, with its over-consciousness present in the entire created world. Over-consciousness can be reached only if the individual achieve the connection of his consciousness with it. The process of achieving the connection is called surrender or consciousness of Krishna. One can reach the consciousness of Krishna through the process of meditation onto the transcendental sonorous vibration of so called maha-mantra (Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare). Srila Prabhupada in his work *The Science of Self-Realization* concludes that by simple singing of this mantra one reaches the cognition of God, which simultaneously includes the cognition of nature.

#### 3.4.6. Transcendental Meditation of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

In distinction from Srila Prabhupada, who had preached the personal God (Krishna), his contemporary Maharishi Mahesh Yogi brought to the West his teaching based upon Shankara's impersonal vision of the Absolute reality, i.e. Advaita Vedanta<sup>18</sup>. By the revival of Shankara's ancient teachings, Maharishi has brought to the West the technique of transcendental meditation (TM), as the practical expression of the new Hinduism. A certain similarity does exist with Hubbard's Dianetics as TM can be deemed as well as the modern science of the mental health. Maharishi prefers to speak of his philosophic-religious system rather as of the science of the creative intelligence, than as of new religion. However, similarly as in Buddhism, the final aim is achieving the higher states of consciousness and eventually the enlightenment.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (a.k.a. Mahesh Srivastava) was born in 1911 near Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. At the University of Allahabad he graduated in

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<sup>18</sup> According to Srila Prabhupada, Shankara's mission had been to re-establish the Vedic influence, after a period of Buddhist domination.

physics. In 1941 he became the disciple of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati (called Guru Dev), who taught him of meditation. Around 1940 Guru Dev had tackled with revival of Shankara's teaching. In that time the monastery which had been established in 9<sup>th</sup> century by Shankara was empty more than 150 years. Guru Dev had been already 70-odd years old when he began to teach. His knowledge he transmitted as on people who actively took a part in worldly life, as on hermits-ascetics. By that, there were reposed the foundations of the modern revival of the ancient practice of meditation.

Maharishi had appreciated very much his teacher, who presented an inspiration for his later mission. Guru Dev had passed away in 1953 and after his death Maharishi spent two years as a hermit in Uttar Kashi on Himalaya. After this two-year period spent in solitude and meditation, suddenly he felt an urge to depart to the town in the uttermost south of India, Nagercoil. There he had met a man who asked him if he came from Himalaya and if he held lectures. On the former question he answered positively, asking himself whence that man knew that he came from north. To his surprise, the same man next day told him that he had organized series of seven public lectures. Overtaken by surprise, Maharishi did improvise lectures on seven themes. It was not the end of story, since that man (in fact, the local librarian) offered him new series of lectures in the neighboring town. Thenceforth, Maharishi began to travel from town to town of southern and central India, holding lectures. After each series of lectures, Maharishi taught the technique of transcendental meditation to those who wished to learn it.

In 1957 Maharishi founded 'The Spiritual Regeneration Movement', the first of several organizations-predecessors of today TM movement. The next year he comes to Madras, to memorial celebration of the anniversary of Guru Dev's birthday. On that occasion Maharishi held a speech in which he glorified his teacher, announcing that he would spread transcendental meditation all around the world. Over the next few months Maharishi had traveled, held speeches in bigger and smaller Indian towns and initiated people into TM. But, in the beginning of 1959, he decided to expand the transcendental meditation outside the borders of India. He first departed to Burma and then to Malaysia and Hong Kong; in spring of 1959 he arrives to Hawaii. In April, 1959 Maharishi came to San Francisco and started his mission on the American soil.

TM movement had experienced a real boom in mid sixties, when there did occur a great wave of interest for Oriental philosophy and religion. In 1965 students of UCLA with accepted with enthusiasm TM courses and after Maharishi's lectures at Berkeley, Harvard and Yale, students' meditation societies were founded all across the USA. In summer of 1971 there was established Maharishi International University (MIU) with an aim to offer a holistic program. This university had in a way the pioneer role of the promoter of holistic education, since it incited the ability of the interdisciplinary linkage of knowledge from different fields.

In the first half of the seventies there were performed scientific researches as in the connection with improvement of the individual health and self-actualization, so those related to the influence of fields of group meditation (so called Maharishi effect). Namely, Maharishi has foreseen that group meditation would have a favorable effect onto decrease of the negative tendencies in the society.<sup>19</sup> The researches have proved that when 1 percent of the population is some town or community practice TM technique, there do occur decrease of criminal, hospital treatments, social riots, accidents and other negativities.

Transcendental meditation is a method by which we come to more quiet levels of thought and to the state of pure consciousness. This is the fourth state of consciousness, different from the deep sleep, dreaming and waking state. Maharishi speaks also of higher states of consciousness, cosmic and refined cosmic consciousness. The highest state is the state of unity, in which one comes to the cognition of the creative intelligence, as the foundation of our self. According to Maharishi, on that highest level it is bridged the gap between the one who recognize and the object of cognition; person practically does not discern himself from the objects of his experience.

In addition to the meditation, Maharishi has also developed an advanced, so called Siddhi-technique, based upon the ancient scripts of Rig Veda and Patanjali's *Yoga-sutras*. By this form of meditation there occur a short lasting effect of lifting above the ground, of levitation, with simultaneous subjective sense of flowing of energy up one's spine, sense of easiness, pleasure and fulfillment.<sup>20</sup> The process at the basis of all Sidhi-exercises is the appliance of so called Samyama, which comprises dharana, dhyana and Samadhi. By the group practice of this method it suffices the group of people corresponding to the square root of 1 percent of the population, for the creation of the improved quality of life.

Maharishi has set several important domains of human life and society as a whole, in apply of the science of creative intelligence. They are: creating of the ideal educational system of medical care, economy, defense and system of government. For that purpose there are established universities worldwide, where students are educated in accord with Vedic science. The special attention is paid to Ayurveda – science of health and life in general. In this domain did excel one of the most gifted Maharishi's pupils, endocrinologist and holistic scientist Deepak Chopra, on whom there will be a word or two in last chapter.

#### 3.4.7. Sathya Sai Baba – the Avatar of a New Age?

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<sup>19</sup> We remember that of the similar effect of group practicing of prayer and meditation spoke C.W. Leadbeater and Alice Bailey.

<sup>20</sup> Patanjali describes that method in the third chapter (Vibhuti pada) of his *Yoga-sutras*.

Of all the great men of modern Neo-Hinduism, Sathya Sai Baba is the only one who had never been in the West. Yet, he was the first one who attracted Westerners to make pilgrimage in a great number to India; to his ashram Prasanthi Nilayam in the southern part of the country. The factor that surely contributed was his miraculous power of healing. But, many pilgrims come of purely spiritual reasons: many of them consider Sai Baba the greatest spiritual personality of today and they also see him as avatar (incarnation of the divinity). Sai Baba movement is not a new religion, nor some particular form of Hinduism. Rather, it is a path that can be followed by believers of different religions. Sai Baba says that his aim is not to convert a man, but to make him steadfast in his own faith. His message is similar as one of Bahai religion: "Believe in God, for there is only one God for all mankind, though he may be called by many names.

Satya Sai Baba (a.k.a. Sathya Narajana Raju) was born in 1926 in Putaparthi near Bangalore in southern India. His parents were poor agricultural laborers. He had been distinguished among the rest of children only by his fair voice and talent for singing *bhajan*s, Indian spiritual songs. When he was 12 a scorpion bitten him. Then boy had fallen into a coma, from which he awoke occasionally. In those moments he recited verses from Veda, which he had never read nor listen to. After a while Sathya had recovered completely and in 1940 he abandoned his formal education at school. Then he announced his mission of spiritual renaissance, by preaching of the principles of truth, righteous behavior, peace and divine love. He declared that he was the incarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi, the saint who had passed away in 1918. since already then young Sathya showed miraculous ability of materialization of fruits, sweets, various religious relics, people trusted him.

Near the native place there had been built an ashram, by a help from his faithful admirers; Sai Baba opened it solemnly in 1950 and named it Prasanthi Nilayam (Abode of the Divine Peace). In the course of the fifties and sixties, as the number of followers and pilgrims had grown, originally modest ashram outgrown into a huge spiritual complex, occupying an area of 10 thousand square meters. In the late sixties this ashram became to attract ever bigger number of westerners, since then in America and Europe there an enormous growth did occur of interest for Oriental religions. In that time (more precisely in 1968) Sai Baba had left for the first time (and solely on that occasion) India; however, he did not visit America nor Europe, but Eastern Africa.

In the next period Sai Baba's organization got stronger still, expanding its activity onto education, medical care and different humanitarian projects. The foundation Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust was established in 1972; financial means are mainly collected from foreign sources. Such financial support enables free primary, medium and high education, as well as free medical care. Of educational foundations, three universities are especially prominent (Prashanti Nilayam, Whitefield and Anantapur) and of medical two big and modern hospitals, in the vicinity of Puttaparthi and in suburbs

of Bangalore. In addition, a huge humanitarian project did enable the supply with drinking water of the draught-stricken localities of region Andhra Pradesh, through the canal Kandalaru – Poondi.

Sai Baba abides in his main ashram in Puttaparthi and during the hot summer period he is usually in the other ashram in Whitefield. One of the most important daily routines is *darshan* (spiritual sight). During the darshan Sai Baba walks among his followers, listens to some of them, takes letters from them and he materializes and hands out the holy powder *vibhuti*. Sometimes he invites a group of people, or an individual, for a talk in the separate room of the ashram, what is considered a great privilege.

The focal point in Sai Baba's teaching is that man in his true essence is one with God. He sees man as *atma*, or divine spirit. Man finds God when he has found his hidden self. Man finds the final cause by following four signposts: prema, satya, dharma and shanti. Prema is divine love and she, after her nature only gives and does not demand anything in return. From the source in our own heart, the current of love flows toward the great ocean of love – God. Just because she is present in each man, divine love flows from the individual heart toward all the people. On Sai Baba's path this signpost (prema) is the most important one. Sathya is the path of knowledge, in our constant search for the true self. But, this knowledge must be permeated with love, to be expressed in the true manner. Dharma could be defined in a simple way as righteous acting and behavior, in accord with divine laws. Shanty is inner peace, of which Sai Baba says that it presents the true nature of man. He concludes that prema, together with spiritual knowledge brings the unity and the world peace to mankind.

### 3.5. BUDDHISM (INDIAN)

#### 3.5.1. Osho – Enlightenment by Love, Meditation and Laughter

Osho (also known as Bhagvan Sri Rajneesh) could not be categorized into Neo-Hinduism, but rather into Neo-Buddhism, as in his teaching he was somehow closest to Buddha and Bodhidharma. As almost all others modern Indian mystical philosophers, Osho also bears a perceivable trait of ecumenism. He appreciated all the great traditions: Christian mysticism, Sufism, wise men of Taoism and great gurus of yoga, Vedanta and tantrism. But, he had always pointed out that Buddha was above all the rest of teachers and the kind of meditation by which he had accomplished enlightenment (*vipassana*) is above all the meditations. He asserted that the greatest values in life are love, meditation and laughter<sup>21</sup> and that the only aim in life is to reach the spiritual enlightenment.

Osho stems from the province Madhya Pradesh (like Maharishi Mahesh Yogi) where he was born in 1931, in village Kuchwada. He was the eldest of 11 children, in the family of Jain clothes merchant. Upon his birth, an astrologer has predicted that the child might die before its seventh birthday. Therefore, his parents had sent him to maternal grandfather and grandmother, where he stayed until he was seven years old. Already in his youth Osho has shown the tendency toward the independence and religious nature, questioning social norms and religious-philosophical beliefs. In 1953, he graduated philosophy at Jain college in Jabalpur. According to his own words, in March of that year he expressed the spiritual enlightenment. Three years later, he achieved the Master's degree at university in Sagar.

In the period between 1957 and 1966 Osho worked as a professor, firstly at Sanskrit College in Raipur and later at Jabalpur university. During this period of professorship he traveled a lot across India, held public lectures and took part in debates with orthodox religious authorities. After nine years of teaching students at universities, Osho withdraws and dedicates himself completely to his mission of rising of human consciousness. From time to time he holds speeches in the open, sometimes in front an audience counting of tens of thousands. Four times a year he organizes intensive ten-day meditation courses.

In April, 1970 Osho introduces his revolutionary dynamic meditation. It begins with a period of free motions, which lead to catharsis, followed by period of silence and peace. In the course of time this technique began to enter into the practice of psychotherapists, physicians, teachers and others. In summer of 1970 Osho moves to Mumbai (ex Bombay). At this time he becomes known under the name Bhagvan Sri Rajneesh. He initiates his followers into meditation in one camp in the open; in addition to Indians, also do arrive first Westerners. Among them there are psychotherapists, who would later divulge Osho's technique all across America and Europe.

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<sup>21</sup> In his lectures he used to crack a joke very often, making his audience laugh.

In 1974 Osho's community (later called Osho International Commune) moves to Pune, town with much more pleasant climate, in distinction from hot and humid Mumbai. The ashram that was built in Pune even today presents the heart of the community. Over the next seven years Osho holds regular lectures, with insights into all the main spiritual branches, including yoga, Zen, Taoism, Tantrism and Sufism.

After the aggravation of his health conditions, in 1981 Osho departs to United States, to Oregon, where his followers has bought a large property in Wasco County. In the first half of eighties here has grown an agricultural community and small town Rajneeshpuram, with about five thousand inhabitants. Soon Rajneeshpuram became the biggest spiritual community in American history, as they soon outnumbered the local population and thence they could elect their own local government. This has caused disputes, firstly with domicile population and later also interfered state government, sending FBI agents. In September 1985 it was discovered that Osho's secretary and spokeswoman Ma Anand Sheila had been involved into some illegal activities like poisoning, arson, eavesdropping and attempted murder. Although in these activities took part only Sheila and few accomplices, authorities took the opportunity to completely get rid of the community. Osho had been compelled to pay the fine of 400 thousand dollars and then he was deported from the United States.

The next period until July, 1986 brings new troubles to Osho. Traveling across Europe and America there has been forbidden the entrance (or he had been deported immediately upon the arrival) in total of 21 state. Therefore he returned to Mumbai and in a couple of months to ashram in Pune. Then he begins to lead the group mediations, personally, after the evening speeches. During the next several years Osho's health started to deteriorate. He suspected that he had been poisoned during his stay in prison in USA. In January, 1990, Osho died, in his 59<sup>th</sup> year.

In the focus of Osho's teaching is the enlightenment. According to him, enlighten mind does not mean some definite kind of mind but it is simply the transcendence of the mind. Osho did not reject any religion, but he taught that religion of love is the source of all true traditions and accordingly to an enlightened man some specific religion is superfluous. He saw religion as a try to destroy the obstacles between man and the whole, after which man feels that the whole immerses into him and he into the whole. To be one with the whole, according to Osho means to be the saint.

Osho sees meditation as the state of non-mind, therefore entirely without the object, as state void of any content. He compares the consciousness in meditation with a totally calm ocean, without any surge or waves, the ocean which reflects the whole universe. Osho as well taught another method of achievement of higher state of consciousness, i.e. through the practice of Tantrism. The same goal as an meditation is experienced through the union of lovers; this is the source where one finds God in harmony, truth and unity of the whole life. Then one can feel the unity with the whole universe.

### 3.6. ZEN BUDDHISM (JAPANESE)

#### 3.6.1. Hakuin – Great Man of Modern Age Zen-Buddhism

Between 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Japanese Zen Buddhism had been in some kind of stagnation; philosophers mainly carried over the tradition, without some innovatory grasps. So it went up to the appearance of Hakuin, whom Daisetz T. Suzuki calls “the founder of modern Japanese Zen”. He is meritorious for the transformation of Rinzai School (teaching established in 12<sup>th</sup> century by Eisai). All the contemporary practitioners of Rinzai Zen use the practices directly arising from the teachings of Hakuin.

Hakuin was born in 1685 in village Hara, at the foot of the holy mountain Fuji. His mother was a devoted follower of Nichiren’s Buddhism, of Lotus-sutra. It is very likely that her piety had a decisive impact on his decision to become a Buddhist monk. When he was 15, his parents allowed him to leave home and join the local temple Daisho-ji. There he served his novitiate, which lasted three or four years. During this time he studied Buddhist texts, among the rest also *Lotus-sutra*, which was the most appreciated of all the *Sutras* by Nichiren’s sect. However, that *sutra* had a disappointing effect on Hakuin; he deemed it just a collection of simple stories of the cause and effect.

When he was 19, he had an unpleasant experience reading a story about the Chinese Zen teacher Yen-to, who had been brutally murdered by robbers. That story had moved him so much, that he dropped his original intention to become an enlightened monk. He decided then to travel and study literature and poetry, for some time. Whilst he had been studying literature in the company of his friend, monk Bao, he had such a positive experience, which turned him back to the path of monastic life. In the temple Eigan-ji where he had arrived afterwards, he experienced his first enlightenment. After he had left this temple, he met a teacher who had a biggest impact on him. It was Shoju.

Shoju was a very demanding teacher, who did not hesitate to insult and strike Hakuin, in his tries to bring him to the state of satori. D.T. Suzuki explains that such methods are applied in order to constrain the pupil to deprive himself of the covers of illusions and hypocrisy, which then make impossible the contact with inner Self. And consequently “to get in touch with this inner Self, through which the pupil gets a real knowledge of Zen, teacher often has to recourse to apparently inhuman methods”. Such acts have had obviously a good impact on Hakuin, as he experienced several states of enlightenment, under Shoju’s guidance. After eight months Hakuin left his teacher, but later always pointing out that it was just Shoju, who had been his original teacher.

After several years of traveling, in his 31<sup>st</sup> year Hakuin came back to Shoin-ji, temple in which he had been ordained as a monk. Soon they elected him for an abbot; this duty he would perform over the next half a century. At the age 41, he experienced the final and total enlightenment, reading just that

*Lotus-sutra* which he had dismissed in time of his novitiate. This experience meant the turning point in Hakuin's life. Now, when he experienced this highest level of enlightenment, he could devote the rest of his life helping others to achieve state *kensho* (initial experience of waking and perceiving someone's true nature). The next 40 years Hakuin would spend in writing and teaching. In the course of time the community of monks grew larger and larger; after a certain period, they became really numerous. From such a large number, of several hundred monks, Hakuin has chosen 80 of them, as future teachers, who would teach Hakuin-style Zen Buddhism. Hakuin died at the age 83 in village Hara, the same in which he was born. In the course of time his nature had turned into a center for Zen studies.

The most important part of Hakuin's teaching is related to the practice of koan. He profoundly believed that the best way to achieve enlightenment is the intensive meditation on koan. Hakuin's systematization of the koan practice brought about an important turning-point in teaching of Zen. In the system developed by Hakuin and his followers, teachers assign koans to their disciples and they meditate upon them. Once they passed the threshold of big suspicions, they are subjected to the test. When they pass it, they receive a new koan. Hakuin's role in the development of koan's system had manifested in choice and creation of this mysterious words, expressions and dialogs. He invented probably the most renowned koan in Zen Buddhism: "What is the sound of one hand clapping?", as a substitution for the traditional Mu koan. Hakuin sincerely believed that the path to enlightenment is open to anyone and that everyone who would approach koan with true ardor could come upon it.

### 3.6.2. D.T. Suzuki – Promoter of Zen Buddhism in the West

Encyclopedic handbook *World's Religion* states that Japanese philosopher and religiologist Daisetz T. Suzuki had played the most important part in spreading of Zen Buddhism in the West. Namely, just by the means of his books and essays (firstly, through his popular work *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*) many Westerners came for the first time in contact with Zen teachings. His pioneer role is beyond dispute, because from the chronological list of Zen literature in English<sup>22</sup>, it is evident that he was the first teacher of this subject outside Japan.

Daisetz T. Suzuki was born in Honda-machi near Kanazawa in 1870. He was the fourth child in a family of a physician. Although he stems from the ancient samurai branch, Suzuki remained early without the father and he grew up in poor circumstances. But, his elder brother, who in meantime became a lawyer, notwithstanding enabled him appropriate education. So he enrolled university Waseda in Tokyo. During the studies he also enrolled a spiritual study, in temple Engaku-ji in Kamakura. His teachers Kosen Roshi and Soyen Shaku deemed him very talented. Under the supervision of Soyen Shaku, his study of Zen for its most part consisted of inner, non-verbal

<sup>22</sup> As quotes the editor Ch. Humphreys in the aforementioned work, *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*

exercises, like sitting meditation (zazen). During the time spent at the temple Engaku-ji, Suzuki lived a monastery life.

In the nineties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Soyen Shaku invited Suzuki to the United States. In the beginning he had worked as a translator and later he began a career of a writer, in English. Yet in his youth Suzuki has mastered several foreign languages (Chinese, Sanskrit, Pali and some European languages). So, he got the task of translating the classical Chinese work *Tao-te-ching* into English. Besides living in United States, Suzuki had as well traveled all over Europe, before he came back to Japan and overtook the professorship.

In 1911 Suzuki married American woman, Beatrice Erskine Lane; she was a member of Theosophical Society. Dedicating himself to the teaching and spreading of Mahayana Buddhism, the couple lived in surroundings of the temple Engaku-ji, until 1919. Then they moved to Kyoto, where Suzuki worked as a professor at university Otani. In that time he founded the Eastern Buddhist Society. It was directed toward Mahayana Buddhism, enabling attending of lectures and seminars and publishing of magazine *The Eastern Buddhist*. Suzuki had kept all the time his contacts with West, so for example he had a noticeable appearance at the World Congress of Religions held in 1936 in London.

After the Second World War Suzuki also toured in the United States. So, he had performed a series of lectures at American universities in 1951 and between 1952 and 1957 he was a professor at Columbia University. He died in July, 1966.

The name Daisetz T. Suzuki is often connected with Kyoto school of philosophy, but he is not considered one of its official members. Along with Zen, he taught also other Japanese traditions, for example Shin Buddhism. He had been also interested in Christian mysticism, so he studied some renowned Western mystics.

In the West, Suzuki became very popular among the reading public and some important Western authors wrote commentaries on his works. Probably the best known example is *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, which contains the preface of famous psychologist Carl G. Jung. This author has stressed the importance of unconsciousness for the practice of Zen, as basis of metaphysical suppositions. He deemed that Zen disciple after long-lasting practice and destruction of rational understanding in the end get the response from the very Nature.

Daisetz T. Suzuki held that the East is synthetic in its method of reasoning (in distinction from the analytical West) and that it strives toward the universal and intuitive understanding of the whole. The goal of Zen Buddhism is, according to him, the insight into the real nature of man's mind or soul. The intellectual explanation for the mystical experience of Zen Suzuki has found in Kegon philosophy: "The One comprises All and All is

immersed in One. The One is All and All is One. The One permeates All and All is in One.”

## **4. NEW RELIGIONS**

### 4.1. BAHAI RELIGION

#### 4.1.1. Bahauallah – Fulfillment of Messianic Expectations?

In 1844 it was expected coming of Messiah not only in Christian world<sup>23</sup>, but also in Islamic (fulfillment of the prophecies from *Kuran* and traditional scripts). So, in that year appeared a Shii sect of Babi, founded by a 25 years old merchant from Shiraz Mirza Ali Mohammad, called Bab (Doors). One of the initiated would be Bahauallah, later founder of Bahai faith, which would later split from Islam and develop a universal pacifist doctrine.

Bahauallah was born in 1817 in Teheran, capital of Persia. He stems from a noble family, which originates from ancient Persian kings. As a child he had not been attending regular schools, but he acquired his education instead from private tutors. He was a pious Muslim, very intelligent as well and already at 14 he led debates on religious matter with leading ulemas. After father's death, when Bahauallah was 22, it had been offered to him a station of a minister in the government (he was entitled to it by right of inheritance), but he declined it. At 28 he had accepted a new faith of Babism, of which he became an ardent supporter. Founder of the new faith Bab died as a martyr in 1850, after six years of preaching and after antagonizing to the government. His death caused a revolt of Babi and one of them attempted to the life of Persian Shah, in 1852. There followed arrests of many members of the sect, among the rest it was thrown in jail Bahauallah, too. From then onwards began a 40 year long period of his continuous banishment and imprisonment.

He spent four months in Teheran's prison. After it had been proved that he did not take a part in the preparation of the attempt, he was banished along with his family and a small group of followers to Baghdad. When he there tried to reorganize the faithful and gather them again, he came upon the resistance and rejection by some of his opponents. So, he had to withdraw to the mountain region of Kurdistan, where he spent two years. There he has associated with prominent Sufists and soon among them gained reputation, because of his erudition and wisdom. When rumors of his reputation had reached Baghdad, he was called back to his community. The next seven years he spent in teaching and writing books. His best known works from this period are *Book of Certitude* and *Hidden Words*. As his popularity in town grew, so there occurred ever stronger resistance of Islamic clergy and Persian government, so he was banished once again, this time to Constantinople. On the eve of the departure to the capital of Turkey, in the garden Ridvan in the vicinity of Baghdad, Bahauallah declared his divine mission, which is at the same time considered as the foundation of Bahai faith. It was in April of 1863.

Bahauallah and his small community remained in Constantinople for only four months. On repeated insistence of the Persian ambassador they were

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<sup>23</sup> Then namely ended a period of prophesied 2300 years, according to the Book of Daniel

banished again, this time to Adrianople, town in the European part of Turkey. Here they would remain for the next four and the half years. From this town Bahauallah sent a whole row of epistles to European rulers and also to Pope Pius IX, to Persian Shah and Turkish Sultan. In 1868, as the Bahai community became increasingly influential, they had to go to exile once again, but this time their destination has been final. It was the city-fortress Akka, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, the city which during Crusades often changed the rulers and suffered heavily.

In city-fortress Akka Bahauallah and his community (which in that time numbered about 80 people) would remain over the next two years under very hard conditions. Akka was at that time a convict colony, notorious by its unbearable climate and devastating diseases. In addition, to local residents it had been forbidden contact with members of Bahai community, who were also depicted as enemies of order of the state and propagators of blasphemous and immoral ideas. However, later it was granted to the community to settle on a property outside the city walls. Here would Bahauallah spend the last period of his life and write a work *Kitab-i-Aqdas*, which is considered as a kind of 'Bible of Bahai faith'.

After Bahauallah died in 1892, the leadership of Bahai religion was taken over by his son Abdul Baha. He is the most meritorious for the spreading of faith all across Africa, Europe and North America. After the First World War, for his merits in offering of humanitarian aid, he was assigned with a title 'Sir' by British government, under which administration had been Palestine. The administrative center of Bahai faith would remain in the Holy Land, in Haifa, where would be built a temple, with a beautiful garden. Today, Bahai faith has around six million followers worldwide, in more than 100 thousand local seats, on all continents.

Because of its Islamic origin, Bahai faith is often considered as Islamic sect, but it seems to be incorrect. One substantial characteristic which distinguish this religion from Islam is the elimination of the principle of jihad, and accordingly, this religion posses a very distinctive pacifist trait. The second essential characteristic is the principle of equality of rights between men and women, in distinction from *Kuran*, which allows man to be a master of his wife. Of no less importance is the tolerance toward religions which are not strictly monotheistic, like Buddhism and Hinduism. To these aforementioned, there should be added important principles like abolition of prejudice, harmony between the science and religion, pleading for the unity of all God's religions and pleading for the world court of arbitration, parliament and government. Although Bahai faith started as an offshoot of Islam, to consider it only a sect of this religion would be as wrong as deeming Christianity a sect of Hebrew religion.

Some author hold that Bahai theology is under the considerable influence of the Islamic Neo-Platonism, which has, as it is well known, its roots in mystical theology of Plotinus and in Hellenistic philosophy. But, it would not be correct to see only influence of these traditions, but also of all the other

religious traditions, so it is a kind of meta-philosophical perennial philosophy, which transcends the borders, times, places, cultures and historical development. After Bahauallah, in each epoch divine commands change, in accord with demands of the certain epoch, with the exception of the Law of love which is eternal and immutable. His successor Abdul-Baha concludes that each religion that is not a cause of love and unity, cannot be called a religion.

## 4.2. SCIENTOLOGY

### 4.2.1. Scientology Church of L. Ron Hubbard

By the end of 1953 American writer Lafayette Ron Hubbard established a new religion and gave it name 'Scientology'. This is probably the most significant religion of ones that originated in 20<sup>th</sup> century. The followers point out that this is the fastest growing religion in the world, with some 10 million believers. Scientology is totally specific in relation to what we normally understand under the term 'religion'. It is, namely, more similar to some modern science of mental health, with an admixture of Buddhist-like teachings. The main postulates of this religion are: we are in fact immortal being (Thetan) which potentially possess unlimited powers; we evolve through a row of incarnations, toward ever greater perfection; one can reach the salvation through personal enlightenment, which is achieved by proper effort.

The founder of Scientology L. Ron Hubbard was born in 1911 in Tilden, Nebraska. His father was a navy officer and his mother teacher at high school. When Ron was two years old, family moved to Montana. At the age of 12 he moves again, this time to Seattle, Washington, where his father is stationed at naval base. In 1927 and 1928, as high school pupil he visited twice his father at U.S. navy base on island Guam in Pacific. During one of these voyages across the ocean, he paid a short visit to China, along with a group of other children of the officers stationed in Pacific. In 1929 Hubbard finished his high school education in the capital of United States and afterward the school for reserve navy officers.

In 1930 he enrolled the renowned George Washington University, where he studied nuclear physics. But, on the second year of study he gave up and from Washington D.C. he returned to the state Washington. In the next period Hubbard tackled to writing, publishing a number of SF stories in various magazines. Little by little, he became a renowned writer of science-fiction. The critics estimated as best among his SF works the novels *Final Blackout* and *Fear*. One unpublished work from 1938, entitled *Excalibur*, contains certain concepts and ideas, which he would later work out in his teaching of Scientology (for example, the concept of survival).

In the thirties Hubbard lived with his wife Margaret in Bremerton, near Seattle. On the bursting-out of the Second World War he joined the U.S. Navy, with a rank of sub-lieutenant. Firstly, he was sent to Australia, but after a while he returned to USA. In 1942 he was shortly a commander of a patrol boat designed to protect Boston harbor. Next year he was a commander of the subchaser in the West coast, with base in Oregon. When this boat, southward bound, arrived in proximity of San Diego, Lieutenant Hubbard ordered a fire upon the nearby island, thinking that it was uninhabited. However, the island not only was inhabited, but it belonged to Mexico. So, unintentionally causing a borderline incident, he was relieved of command and later assigned to a cargo ship, as navigation officer. By the end of 1945 Lieutenant Hubbard did leave the active military service.

In 1946 Hubbard met at Pasadena a professor of aeronautics Jack Parsons, who was as well a collaborator of Aleister Crowley. In that time Parsons was the head of the local O.T.O. organization. Hubbard had been very interested in O.T.O. teachings, so later he would build in some of their ideas in his own religious-philosophical system of Scientology. He also established some kind of business partnership with Parsons. Namely, he came upon the idea of the business with yachts and them two jointly invested money in it. Hubbard then went to Florida and bought three yachts, but soon the business experienced a failure. Parsons had sued Hubbard, who invested only a small part and squandered a lot of Parsons' money on high living in Florida. After the trial at court, Parsons managed to return just a half of the sum that he invested.

By the end of the forties Hubbard began to develop his theory of the mind, which he considered revolutionary. He started to perceive the human brain as system akin to a digital computer. He had believed that it was possible by man to achieve some kind of optimization, like by computer defragmentation, simply by erasing the space in the long-term memory of the person. By this procedure, he thought, there could be annihilated the affects of the negative memory, by the elimination of psychological and somatic experiences from the past. The new science Hubbard called 'Dianetics'. The technique was for the first time introduced on the pages of SF magazine *Astounding* in May, 1950 and few weeks later he published a book, entitled *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Helath*.

Together with the editor of magazine *Astounding* John Campbell and physician endocrinologist Dr. Joseph Winter, Hubbard founded Dianetic Research Foundation. The headquarters of this organization was in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Already in 1952 Hubbard found himself in an unenviable situation – both of his collaborators had left him, accusing him of authoritarian behavior and creation of cult; in addition, he was close to bankrupt. Moreover, there started a row of attacks by national associations of psychiatrists and psychologists and American Medical Association, too. Surprisingly, Hubbard managed to find a way out of this jumble. In the mid 1952 he comes upon an ingenious idea, to extend Dianetics onto some kind of religious system, which he called Scientology<sup>24</sup>. After he had proclaimed (by the end of the next year) Scientology a religion, there was founded the first Church of Scientology in Camden, New Jersey. Shortly afterwards, Hubbard moves to England. In the course of the fifties he ruled over the Scientology movement from his London office. In 1959 he had bought a manor-house Saint Hill in Sussex and it became the world headquarters of the Scientology Church.

In the mid sixties Scientology became a subject of numerous controversies all across the English-speaking area (Great Britain, New Zealand, South-African Republic, Australia and Canada). To escape an unwanted publicity,

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<sup>24</sup> In distinction from Dianetics, where we talk about the mind, in Scientology the emphasis is on the immortal spiritual being (Thetan).

Hubbard moved in 1966 to Rhodesia. As the Church of Scientology had then already been well-off, Hubbard offered to the government (under the stroke of U.N. sanctions) a help, wanting to invest a large sum into staggered Rhodesian economy. But, soon he was asked to leave the country. In 1967, as controversies around Scientology did not slacken, Hubbard decided to push himself off to the sea. He proclaimed himself commodore of a small fleet (with a crew consisting solely of members of the Church of Scientology), and he spent the next eight years cruising the Mediterranean Sea. On these voyages Hubbard had experienced all sorts of troubles, like for example, that they were spy ships, because of grades and uniforms they wore. This strange religious navy (Sea Org) became a part of Hubbard empire. He alone had gone ashore in the mid seventies and for some time lived on Florida.

In 1977 the offices of the Church became an object of F.B.I. investigation. Agents did collect evidence related to so-called operation Snowy White, i.e. on spy net that the Church had developed. Two years later Hubbard's wife Mary and several high ranking members of the Church were charged for conspiracy against the U.S. government. Hubbard, although not being indicted, had been called a collaborator in conspiracy and again found himself a target of media interest. Then he withdrew to the ranch in small place Creston, California. In the course of the eighties Hubbard returned to SF, so he published novels *Battlefield Earth* and *Mission Earth*. Over the last five years of his life he did not appear in the public at all. He died on his ranch in January, 1986, from a heart attack.

L. Ron Hubbard published a great number of works during his life. Besides aforementioned work *Dianetics* there are also for example *Hymn of Asia*, *History of Man*, *Scientology: The Fundamentals of Thought*, *Have you Lived Before This Life*, *Purification Rundown*, *The Way to Happiness* and many others. His philosophical stance he explained in the work *My Philosophy* from 1965. In it he says that the entire knowledge we have and use do repose on philosophy. As he is opponent of the academic psychiatry and psychology, so he is against academic philosophy too; he says that she has been up to now reserved only for a privileged minority, at the same time being inaccessible to a common man. According to Hubbard, wisdom is designed for anyone who aspires toward it. Philosophy must find its use in practice; accordingly, each philosophical knowledge worth as much as it functions. As a positive example, he points out the American philosopher Will Durant, author of the popular book *The Outline of Philosophy*.

According to Hubbard, the final goal is to achieve that soul (Thetan) return to the natural state of the complete freedom, gaining the control over matter, energy, space, time, thoughts, forms and life itself. This liberated state is called 'Operating Thetan' (OT). Although Hubbard reproaches the inaccessibility of the academic philosophy, his own Scientology teaching of the higher, OT level is inaccessible as well, as it is reserved only for the narrow circle of the initiated. Of all the recent religions, Scientology is for sure the most controversial. Hitherto, there were noted many conflicts with other religious communities, among the rest with the Anglican Church,

Russian Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church and others. Some of these communities consider Scientology agnostic and even satanic religion. However, these accusations are probably exaggerated. Already in the work *Science of Survival* Hubbard pointed out that “the progress towards survival on higher levels is a progress as well toward God.” The existence of God and spiritual manifestation he identifies with Theta universe.

## **5. SECRET SOCIETIES OF THE MODERN AGE**

### 5.1. ROSICRUCIAN SOCIETY

#### 5.1.1. Robert Fludd and Rosicrucian Brotherhood

It seems that the beginning of the Modern age in philosophical sense coincides with the beginning of acting of philosophers-rationalists and empiricists like Descartes or Hobbes. In the course of 17<sup>th</sup> century Rationalism and Empiricism would become prevailing philosophical doctrines; accordingly, Neo-Platonism and mysticism are pressed out of the foreground. In the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century one of the leading roles in European mystical philosophy plays Englishman Robert Fludd.

Fludd was born in 1574 in Bearsted, Kent, as the fifth child in the family. He was son of a knight who performed the duty of military treasurer in the army of Elisabeth I. Not wanting to follow his father's footsteps, he had enrolled medicine at Oxford, where he graduated first and then got his master's degree (1600). In course of his studies he had been facing problems, because of his rejection of the conventional medicine teaching, adhering instead to Paracelsus. After he had completed his studies, Fludd traveled across Europe; he visited France, Spain, Italy and Germany.

In France, Fludd stayed a little longer. He spent a certain time associating with members of the Jesuit Order in Avignon. There he came into troubles because of his affirmative attitude in connection with geomancy, but he got out of it, owing to the intervention of Legate's deputy. In Marseille Fludd taught Maltese knight Charles of Lorraine mathematics and Marquis de Orizon he taught music. In return, from one traveler from Fez, he got lessons in medicine, chemistry and alchemy. During the time of his European journeys, Fludd also stayed a bit longer in Germany, working as tutor in several aristocratic families.

In 1605, after he had returned to England, Fludd got his Ph.D. at Oxford. There occurred some difficulties in connection with gaining his doctor's degree, again for his Paracelsian views. Four years later he was accepted to the Royal College of Physicians. Until then, he had already a practice, with noticeable results. Besides some extraordinary healings of patients that he accomplished, he had also success with his medical theories, for example with his theory of celestial harmonies and circulation of the vibrating forces through the planets. His views aroused the interest of the personal physician of the King James I, William Paddy. Upon the bases of his ideas on circulation, Paddy suggested to his friend, anatomist William Harvey, the concept of circulation of blood in human organism. Harvey, whom is attributed the first description of the blood circulation, in his work *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus*, had gotten the help just from Robert Fludd, in publishing the manuscript.

There are some controversies concerning the fact, whether Fludd was the member of Rosicrucian Brotherhood or not. However, despite the fact that he had not been maybe officially a member of the Society, it is sure that his works from 1616 and 1617 presented an ardor apology of the Brotherhood and its teaching. The first work, *Apology*, has for its aim to “wash away the infamy from the Brotherhood name”, as its subtitle suggests. Again, like many of his predecessors from the past, Fludd is obliged to explain that ‘magic’ is the word which original meaning is a synonym for the wisdom. Natural magic in Fludd’s view is the knowledge about the secret attributes of nature. According to him, the divine is non-manifested, except in the development of cosmos, where light and fire are the cause of all the energies. The second apologetic script, known as *Tractatus*, was published the next year, 1617. In it, Fludd adds that in the original nature of man, his mind was a palace of light. In so far he fulfills the divine spirit with deliberation about fire, flame and light, man can restore his primeval state of consciousness, Fludd concludes.

In years preceding *Tractatus*, in Europe appeared three books on Rosicrucian Brotherhood. Publishing of the work *Fama Fraternalitatis* (The Story of the Brotherhood) in 1614 announced the existence of Brotherhood, which goals were: dedication to the spiritual life; reform and advancement of the spiritual teaching and dealing with magic, based upon the astrology and Kabbala. The author is unknown, as well as of that one published the next year, under the title *Confessio Fraternalitatis* (Confession of the Brotherhood). These two books, by their presentation of an imaginary journey, bring forth the knowledge from the various fields. This knowledge had been collected by the members of knight orders (chiefly of Knights Templar) during the time of Crusades. They contain a legendary story of German nobleman Christian Rosenkreutz, his journey to the Holy Land adoption of the secret knowledge from the fields of medicine, mathematics, astrology, Kabbala. According to this legend, Christian Rosenkreutz on his return to Germany had founded a brotherhood task of which had been to cherish this teaching, up to the ripening of conditions for some reform on the large scale. The story in its continuation says that 120 years after Rosenkreutz died, a member of the Brotherhood had discovered his crypt. Detailed description of this crypt would later become a model of arrangement and decoration of rooms of other secret societies (among the rest, Freemasons).

The third script dates from the year 1616 and it is entitled *Chymische Hochzeit* (Chemical Wedding). The author of this work is German theologian Johann Valentin Andreae. He published it under the pseudonym ‘Cristian Rosenkreutz’. It presents an allegory, of one of the most important themes in mystical philosophy, that is, the concept of the alchemical union of the opposites. This alchemical romance is divided into seven days, during which Cristian Rosenkreutz receives the invitation for the royal wedding, accepts it, travels to the royal palace, experiences various wonders and temptations; finally, however, he is present at wedding and then he returns. On the seventh, last day, Cristian Rosenkreutz and other guests are appointed Knights of the Golden Stone. Then, it is read to them the Rule of the Order.

It speaks about the Order that always searches its sources in God and Nature; about the rejection of all the vices and weaknesses; about helping the worthy and needy people; about not using the honors of the order for the achievement of the worldly profit; finally, about the readiness for the sacrifice, including death, when Providence requires it.

After Manly P. Hall, Rosicrucian Society had gotten three main goals: the abolition of all monarchic forms of ruling and their substitution by the ruling of the elected philosophers; a reform of science, philosophy and ethics; discovery of the universal medicine, or panacea, for all the kinds of diseases. The main symbols of the Rosicrucian Society were rose and cross, rose as female and cross as male; they both present universal sexual signs. Just because of phallus symbolism, to Rosicrucians were attributed sexual immorality and practicing of obscene rituals, in their secret ceremonies. (That is the reason why Robert Fludd felt obliged to write his apologies.) But, the real symbolic meaning relates to the re-birth. Namely, as the birth is the key of the material existence, it is natural that Brotherhood adopted these characteristic symbols, which represent the reproductive process. Explaining this symbolism, Manly P. Hall adds that rose and cross denote the redemption of man through the union of his lower temporary nature and his higher nature that is eternal.

As regards Robert Fludd, after his two apologies dedicated to Rosicrucians, he wrote his most important work, entitled *Utrisque cosmi historia* (History of Two Worlds). This work consists of two volumes 'Macrocosm' and 'Microcosm'. The immense, but also harmonic system of the universe in Fludd's view is presented as the interrelation between microcosm, which reflects macrocosm, with which is connected through astral correspondences. He merged the basic Hermetic and Kabbalist teachings of Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino with the astral medicine thought of Paracelsus and mathematical magic of John Dee.

Fludd sees the Soul of the World as the invisible fire, while visible nature is enlivening it, since the fire is the quintessential element of all things. The archetype world of pure ideas remains in Divine Mind, whilst Spirit, without a form or shape, represents a fiery love. He impresses and develops the structure essence of ideas in cosmos.

Fludd depicts the order of levels and classes of beings, stating life as fivefold principle: divine light, spiritual substance, rational mind, intellectual spirit and the part of the divine mind. Since the microcosm is movable image of the divinity, microcosm is temporary image of the macrocosm. The universe is like a musical instrument and his keyboard consists of intervals among the angelic spheres, fixed stars and elements. According to Fludd, the same harmonies which rule over spheres are also present in mind, as well as in the soul, which consist of three parts: sensitive, spiritual and intellectual. Fludd considers that since the whole universe turns around the central point, man can raise from this world to the communion with God.

Further courses of history were unfavorable for Robert Fludd and Rosicrucians. Reactionary forces led by Austria and Habsburg dynasty began the exhausting Thirty Years War. In the first phase of War, victories of Habsburg coalition brought also a negative spiritual influence. So, anti-Rosicrucian sentiment spread also to France and England. The pressure had been such that Fludd was compelled to stop using the term 'Rosicrucian', although he retained in his philosophical works their views. Members of Rosicrucian Brotherhood continued their work in still deeper anonymity, invisible to the public eye. But, their 'underground' influence yet reached intellectuals and political thought of future times, putting at same time foundations for the origination of Masonic organizations.

## 5.2. FREEMASONRY

### 5.2.1. Mystical Philosophy of Freemasonry

London, town in which mystical philosopher Swedenborg (18<sup>th</sup> century) stayed in his youth and also ended his life path, is as well in connection with spreading of Freemasonry movement. In 1717 in London there was established a Grand Lodge, originated by the fusion of four minor lodges. In the next approximately fifteen years Freemasonry movement will take an upper hand all across Europe and afterwards in America, too. The second lodge was formed in Paris (1725) and then others in Madrid (1729), Bordeaux and St. Petersburg (1732), Hamburg, Florence and Boston (1733).

Freemasonry as mystical and hierarchically organized movement occurred in times and conditions of liberal Age of Enlightenment of 18<sup>th</sup> century, but its roots reaches deep into the past. One of the sources of the modern speculative Masonry is the operative free-masonry. Scottish associations (gilds) of free masons were established already in 12<sup>th</sup> century. In the beginning they were exclusively of operative character; from the 14<sup>th</sup> century on they adopt more and more speculative traits, although in the beginning only symbolically. It is supposed that English and Scottish Knights Templar, having on their minds the fate of their French brethren, firstly went over to underground activity and afterwards they had gradually engaged themselves in the work of the operative freemasons gilds. In the beginning these 'accepted masons' formed the minority, but in the course of time they equalized in number; by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century they are already predominating majority. It is estimated that until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century 70 per cent of the membership were men from other profession.

Among freemasons there had been philosophers, too. As one of the most prominent masons with philosophical background, we can single out Johann G. Fichte, the German thinker. His opus, generally taken, does not bear the trait of mysticism, but nonetheless he left in heritage probably the best work concerning the basic principles and the very purpose of existence of Freemasonry – it is Fichte's *Philosophie der Maurerei* (Philosophy of Masonry). As in the course of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century had occurred a growing fragmentation of human knowledge, by striving for the specialization in education, Fichte pointed at necessity to overcome such one-sided approach, pleading for the general upbringing and universal education, of the entire man. Scientists, according to Fichte, should have a view, not only over their narrow specialty, but over the borderline branches of science.

As one of the basic principles, Fichte states the attitude about this terrestrial life as only the preparation and germ of higher existence, certitude of which can be grasped only intuitively. The whole humanity should constitute the unique, pure, moral and believing community and at the same time unique and entirely legal state. Intellectual being must rule over the non-intellectual nature totally; dead mechanism has to be submitted to the order of will, says

Fichte. He also steps out against one-sidedness of the religious education, especially in respect of the outer and nationalist form of religion. On the contrary it is necessary to respect religions and customs of other nations, since they have right just like any other. According to Fichte, Mason is not religious, but he acts and thinks in such way.

Besides acting on cultural plan, the members of Freemasonry movement also acted on political plan. So, for example, the philosophy of Freemasonry appeared to be in the background of creation of American nation and state in 18<sup>th</sup> century. Masonic movement, from thirties onwards, quickly spread in American colonies. Philosophical importance of Freemasonry for the American revolutionaries can be perceived through the symbols which their leader had chosen, for the presentation of new American nation. Those were the symbols of Masonic brotherhood. The proposition for the official seal of the new state had contained the symbol of the truncated pyramid and the 'All-Seeing Eye' inside the triangle. These symbols can be seen even today on the back side of the 1 dollar bill. This early proposal also included a figure of the bird phoenix, which will be later substituted by the figure of eagle. Besides the first American president George Washington, many others were Masons, too, and many members of the Senate, as well. Masonic lodges of the 18<sup>th</sup> century also played a main role in bursting out of French Revolution. There are some hypotheses that destruction of the monarchy was organized by Masons also as some kind of revenge for the extermination of their predecessors Knights Templar in 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### 5.2.2. 'Le nouvel homme' of Louis de Saint-Martin

As the Age of Enlightenment of 18<sup>th</sup> century had put its focus at reason and rationality, it did not abound with truly worthy and important mystical philosophers. As half a century had passed between Swedenborg and his predecessor, likewise it had to pass another 50 years between Swedenborg and his successor, mystical philosopher and Freemason. His name was Louis de Saint-Martin and he was born in Amboise, Touraine. His father was a member of local gentry. His mother died soon after she had given birth to Louis. Afterwards, father re-married; stepmother offered to Louis, besides love, also an instruction in Christianity, teaching him of love toward God and man. Saint-Martin acquired his education at the College Pont-Leroy, graduating in law. But, as young Saint-Martin was not so interested in legal career, he opted for military career, in his 22<sup>nd</sup> year.

In 1765, after father's intervention at the ministry, young Saint-Martin got a grade of sub-lieutenant and appointed to garrison of Bordeaux. In this town he would get into the contact with prominent Mason of Portuguese origin, Martinez de Pasqualis, who was also the founder of the Masonic lodge in Paris. Saint-Martin had been accepted to Masonic Order in 1768; three years later he left the army. He had been working for some time as a secretary of Pasqualis. Then in 1773 he had gone to Lyon, where he had a financial support of the wealthy Mason, Willermoz, also an eminent member of the

Order. In Lyon, Saint-Martin writes his first work *Des erreurs et de la vérité* (On Errors and the Truth). The book was immediately attacked by Voltaire and his partisans, but it also procured to Saint-Martin new friends and sympathizers.

From Lyon Saint-Martin had set out to Italy, where he spent about three years. In 1782 he arrives to Paris, where originates the work *Tableau naturel* (Natural Picture). Five years later, during his stay in London, there originates his third book, entitled *L'homme de desir* (Man of Desire). The next year (1788) Saint-Martin set out to Strasbourg, where he would stay for three years. Here he got acquainted for the first time with works of Jakob Boehme, but also with Swedenborg's, through the medium of the nephew of Swedish philosopher, who abode in Strasbourg at that time, too. In 1790, by the end of his stay at Strasbourg, there originates the work *Le nouvel homme* (A New Man). In the same year Saint-Martin resigned from the Interior Order and he required that his name had been obliterated from all the registers since 1795.

In 1792 he published a new book, *Ecce homo*; his activities during the nineties were basically concerned to Ecole Normale in Paris, the institution for the education of future teachers. By the end of his life Saint-Martin deals mainly with studying Boehme's works and he writes his last book, *Le ministere de l'homme esprit* (Ministry of the Man-Spirit). The book had been released in 1802 and the next year Saint-Martin died, at 61.

Throughout the entire opus of Louis de Saint-Martin, indeed, there draws a mystical thread. That is understandable, since he is one of the rare apologists of the mystical viewpoint in very rationalistic 18<sup>th</sup> century. Already in his first work he entered into a conflict with materialistic philosophers, however he avoided to align himself among the apologists of the Christianity. So, in his work *Bible* is not mentioned directly and he points at Jesus only in hidden manner, as the Active Cause, or as Great Chief and Guide and like. To this Guide, says Saint-Martin, is committed the order of the universe. From the primeval state of unity man singled himself out, but in the time of reunion, man and his property will be practically reunited, they will be forged by the Repairer. The way of division is the way of mistakes, while the way of truth is that of unity, concludes the philosopher.

Work *Natural Picture* reveals the God's paths to the man. In him, there is the entire universe, presented as one big temple. The Divine creation is not only his outer visible sign, but also a channel through which his thoughts are communicated to intelligent beings. But, for the fallen man the only way of communication is through signs and symbols. The aim of the book *A New Man* is to describe a process that leads to the renewal in New World. He is presented symbolically through three epochs. The first corresponds to the history of Israel, second to Christ's life and third to the Revelation. Christ's life in fact illustrates the story of a New Man, from his birth to the mystical death. His second coming brings new heaven and new earth, heralded inside

us, the tent of Covenant and Heavenly Jerusalem built in our spiritual beings.

The last work *Ministry of Man-Spirit* in a way presents Saint-Martin's last contemplation, in which he opens many sources of thoughts and he embraces by his view many paths of vision. In this work he combines thoughts that come of the school of his first teacher de Pasqually with learning of Boehme. Here Saint-Martin deals with deliberation on immortality, about the way that leads to renewal, spiritual life and its communication, about the Sabbath of the nature, soul and word, about the doctrine of the Eternal Word and her relation to the universe and man.

The Martinist Order continued to exist even after Saint-Martin's death. In the course of 19<sup>th</sup> century it occupied a very prominent position among the mystical brotherhoods. But, after the death of charismatic leader Papus in the First World War, the Order experienced a slow decline and today, divided into several fractions, is undistinguished among the spiritual societies of the modern age.

### 5.2.3. Literary-Scientific Mysticism of Goethe

Like his French contemporary Saint-Martin, so German literary great man Goethe was a Freemason, too. He was born in Frankfurt am Min in 1749. By his literary work he marked the end of 18<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although he is renowned after his literary opus, it is also significant his contribution to science and natural philosophy.

Goethe comes of a family of an imperial counselor. The first education he received just by his father and by several tutors. Already in his eighth year he could differ and use a bit of Greek, Latin, French and Italian language. In 1765, when he was 16, Goethe went to Leipzig University to study law, obeying thus father's wish. Five years later he would continue his studies in Strasbourg; since he was thirsty of knowledge, he attended additional lectures in anatomy, surgery and chemistry. In this town he became a close friend of philosopher and writer Johann G. Herder. Goethe had graduated in 1771 and then he returned to native Frankfurt, where he performed legal jobs. But, side by side he with literary work, which attracted him much more. During this period there originated the work that would become one of his most renowned – *The Sufferings of Young Werther*. In 1775 he accepts an invitation of Weimar Duke Karl Augustus, to become his counselor. Five years later he became a Freemason, a member of Weimar lodge 'Anna Amalia'. In Weimar Goethe would spend the most of his life.

In 1781 Goethe leads the mineralogical researches and he holds lectures in human anatomy. The next year a nobility title is granted to him. Four years later he travels to Italy, where he is impressed by Greek-Roman sculpture, architecture and literature. From that period arises his love toward young Christiana Vulpius, who would become mother of his children and whom he

would marry in 1806. In 1787 Goethe leads geological and botanical researches in Italy, in surroundings of Naples and on Sicily.

Goethe's aesthetic theory was under the strong influence of his friend Friedrich Schiller, with whom he develops an intensive collaboration. In 1808, at the congress of monarchs in Erfurt, he meets with Napoleon Bonaparte, who invites him to come to Paris. In the same year it is released the first part of his masterpiece *Faust*. Second part of the book would be finished only immediately before his death, in 1831. From 1816, when his wife dies, Goethe spends more and more time studying science, although the most important of his scientific works, *Zur Farbenlehre* (On Theory of Colors) he published yet in 1810. In this work Goethe presented the color in mystical way, as "a degree of darkness connected with a shadow", in distinction from Newton, who in his experiment with prism broke the white color into the visible spectrum of rainbow colors.

Among the numerous works of Goethe's huge opus, by its strength, depth and expressiveness especially prominent is *Faust*, the work which author had been writing throughout full 60 years. This drama represents a synthesis of Goethe's personal experience and his vision of the world as a stage on which is waged an eternal battle between good and evil. Goethe is fascinated by the relation of the human being and the universe, the relation of micro and macrocosm, in which man is just a part of an immense being and simultaneously he contains it in its entirety.

Doctor Faust was a real historical personality from 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was German physician, magician and healer named Georgius Sabellicus Faustus who had been often mistakenly identified with Trithemius and with his disciple Agrippa. The real Faust was not some important historical personality, but around his figure there had been weaved legends, spreading after his death over Germanic and Protestant countries.

The first who worked out this legend was English writer Christopher Marlowe. Just Marlowe's work, entitled *The Tragical History of Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* had gotten an influence on Goethe and incited him to dedicate himself (already around 1775) to writing of his own version of *Faust*. It was the work in which he introduced his life experiences, viewpoint, love and hatred, aspiration for the perfect knowledge, magic and spiritual in general. Goethe has created in *Faust* a figure which reminds very much of himself alone, of his intensive impulse toward knowledge, as the part of his artistic and scientific genius. In this work mythology came into powerful expression. In Goethe's conception it has a magical power. She is very important for a single individual, because it is based upon archetypal configuration that also shapes human acting and interpretations of reality. Important characteristic of Goethe's *Faust* is the reflection of crisis and breakdown of rationalism; it is as well insight that human reason cannot as a mere instrument come upon some transcendental, metaphysical truths. Accordingly, *Faust* is also partly a metaphorical presentation of western Germanic man on the transition from 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Goethe did believe into the divinity of man, especially artist, who shares the universe with God and rules over it together with him. Turning the historical Faust into the symbol of hope, this figure meant the incarnation of the soul for Germanic nations, comparable with Luther and Reformation. Goethe introduced to religion his particular conception of the new ideal of humanity, with the emphasis on subjective feeling and critique of dogma. Accordingly, his *Faust* has to be perceived as manifesto of the humanized philosophy, which brings back men to God's grace and love, at the same time rejecting dogma, credo and confessions.

## 5.3. THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

### 5.3.1. Theosophical Society

The idea of spiritual universalism, which became prominent in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, has brought forth the foundation of Theosophical Society, another important organization in the course of the development of modern mystical philosophy. The society was founded in New York by Helena P. Blavatsky, Henry S. Olcott and William Q. Judge on November, 17, 1875. In the beginning the goals of Theosophical Society had been directed rather narrowly, onto researching of parapsychological phenomena, but soon they outgrew into universal research and teaching of universal spirituality. So, in 1889, as the fundamental aims of the Society there were proclaimed: forming of a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity; promotion of the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science; research of the unexplained laws of nature and latent powers in man.

Helena P. Blavatsky, one of the three founding members of Theosophical Society was born in Ekaterinoslav (today Dnyepropetrovsk), Ukraine. She stems from a noble family of Russian-German origin. Her father was a field officer and her mother a writer. Her importance in the history of the mystical philosophy, among the rest, lies in fact that she was the first woman who broke centuries-long domination of exclusively members of male gender.

Already from her childhood, one could have gotten a presentiment that Helena would grow up into an extraordinary and powerful figure. Since her father, colonel von Hohn often had been transferred from one garrison to the other, so with him moved along the whole family. Helena came into contact with different people and cultures and already then expressed propensity toward legends and traditional wisdom. From time to time she went to her grandfather and grandmother, where she had access to their huge library, with many books from philosophy and esoteric sciences. When Helena was twelve, her mother died and she continued to live with mother's parents. In this period of adolescence, she begins to express traits of obstinacy, fiery temperament and disrespect of social norms. But deep inside, she feels the desire for study of the secrets of supernatural and numinous.

Helena von Hahn got married very young, in 1849, when she was only 17. From her husband, General Nikefor Blavatsky, to whom she had been married only for few months, she took over only her surname, so from thenceforward she would be Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. The next decade for her had been fulfilled with numerous journeys, all around the world. In 1851 she dwelt for some time in England; later she would discover that just there she had met her teacher, who appeared to her in dreams. Over the next seven years she had traveled across Northern and Southern America, India and Tibet. In America she has studied the traditional wisdom of American Indians and of ancient American civilizations. In 1856 she comes to India,

afterwards she set out for Tibet, accompanied by a Lutheran priest and Mongolian shaman and there she also met with Dalai-Lama.

On her return to Russia in 1858 Helena P. Blavatsky was taken seriously ill and even for a few days she was on the very edge of death. Later, around 1860, she had gotten a short lasting love affair with Estonian aristocrat Nicholas Meyendorff, after which she bore a child. When her son was five, he caught a grave disease. In her desire to help a child, she set out to Italy, to Bologna, but there was no more help for little Yuri and he died. Her then friend Agardi Metrovich agreed that child might be buried under his name. Later, H.P. Blavatsky would admit that on the day of death of her son, for her died the Russian Orthodox faith. Although she had never been completely devoted to Christianity, up to then there were moments when she deeply believed in the redemptive power of Church and Christ.

From Italy, H.P. Blavatsky departs again to India and then to Tibet, where she meets with teachers Morya and Mahatma Koot Hoomi. During this important life period she experienced a strong spiritual growth, learning and translating holy Tibetan texts in English. Among the rest of the books, here she found a *Book of Dzyan*, a book that later served as basis for later masterpiece *The Secret Doctrine*. When she left Tibet in 1870, she started to think of transmission of this ancient knowledge to the West. But, before that she experienced a horrible sea accident, on the boat to Egypt. In the terrible explosion of gunpowder and other highly inflammable stuff which boat has transported, there perished 400 people, among them also her friend, opera singer Agardi Metrovich; she was lucky to be among the handful of survivors.

H.P. Blavatsky then returns to her family in Russia; however she would not stay for long here, because soon she got bored by quarrels with her aunts. She decided to go to Paris, where she spends a certain period of time. Finally in 1873, after she heard about the big enthusiasm concerning the spiritist phenomena in the United States, she ventured away a voyage across the ocean. After her arrival to New York, she had been engaged in a couple of odd jobs and in her free time she impressed people surrounding her with her medium abilities. The turning point in her life occurred in 1874, when she met Colonel Henry S. Olcott, who in that time worked as a journalist. It seems that she immediately liked him, but she also considered him bit childish and credulous. On the other hand, Olcott was impressed by her intelligence and spirituality, but he did not find her sexually attractive, for her somewhat androgynous look.

The official duty of H.P. Blavatsky in Theosophical Society was that of corresponding secretary. The work concerning guidance of the Society had been entrusted to Olcott, while she focused the most of her energy to writing. Besides writing articles on esoteric sciences, during this period H.P. Blavatsky prepares her first bigger work, monumental *Isis Unveiled*. This voluminous work of about thousand pages was published in 1877 and it delineates the basic principles of the esoteric philosophy and ancient

universal wisdom. *Isis Unveiled* at the same time presents a settling of accounts with 'infallibility', i.e. dogmas of modern science and religion. So, she opposes to the positivism of French mathematician and philosopher Auguste Comte, as well as of others materialists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who deny the existence of the vital force in living organisms. In the second part of the book she holds a critical stance against Christianity - so Catholic, as Protestant, especially toward the practice of burning-up of witches from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century. Among the multitude of themes represented in the first part of the book, among the more important are: Kabbala, cyclic evolution of the mankind, magic, medium phenomena, astral light, mesmerism, natural forces, the influence of planets, stratified nature of man, reincarnation, Egyptian and Hindu wisdom. The second part brings, besides critique of Christianity, also the mysteries of Kabbala, esoteric teaching of Buddhism and comparison of Vedic scripts and *Bible*, as well as of Buddhism and Christianity.

By the end of 1878, H.P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott travel to India, to deepen the studies in Hindu religion and Buddhism. In India they both received the substantial support for their endeavors. Their main mission was the presentation of the ancient philosophy. The main goal of H.P. Blavatsky was to put emphasis on philosophical and ethical teaching aimed at their spreading; therefore she and Olcott traveled a lot, all across India and to Ceylon, too.

Continuous strain of travel and work in a tropic climate had gradually put in disorder the health of H.P. Blavatsky, so in 1882 she was taken ill of chronic inflammation of kidneys, followed by high pressure and edem. For some time she had endured, but in 1884 she was compelled to leave India and so she set out to France, to recover in a milder climate. By the end of the year H.P. Blavatsky would be back in India, but only for a while, because her heart troubles this time became so serious, that her very life was endangered. She had no choice, but to resign from her position of the corresponding secretary and return to Europe. Here she could in peace finish her second monumental work, yet more voluminous than the first, entitled *The Secret Doctrine*. The work on this book she began yet when she and Olcott came for the first time to India.

For some time H.P. Blavatsky lived in Würzburg and in 1886 she moved to Ostende, Belgium to be closer to the London lodge of Theosophical Society. Her ardent supporters soon persuaded her to come to London, where she in 1888 brought to the end her *Secret Doctrine*. This exceptionally voluminous work consists of two books. The first is entitled *Cosmogogenesis* and the second *Anthropogenesis*. The purpose of the whole work was to present the fundamental interconnection between all the religions, sciences and philosophy, as well as of micro and macrocosm, which are permeated by one and unique Divine principle. *Cosmogogenesis* consists of three parts. The first works out the idea of the cosmic evolution, second the evolution of symbolism and third brings forth the comparison between the science and the secret teaching. *Anthropogenesis* also consists of three parts. The first bears the same name – *Anthropogenesis*, the second *Archaic Symbolism of*

*the World's Religions* whilst third, like in the first volume compares science with secret doctrine. *The Secret Doctrine* delineated the scheme of evolution in relation to the universe and mankind and it is based upon three premises: The Last Reality as the omnipresent, transcendental principle out of the reach of thought; universal law of natural cycles; identity of all souls with the universal Over-Soul and their and their way through many degrees of intelligence by reincarnation, in accord with cyclic and karmic laws.

In her last two and half years of life H.P. Blavatsky did concentrate on the helping of young theosophists in turning them toward the common goal – helping of mankind. This she emphasized in her numerous letters and articles, but also in two more books, composed in 1889. *Key to Theosophy* presents the introduction into the theosophical thought and theology. In this work she corrects the wrong stances about the theosophy and theosophical Society, explaining that it is based upon the brotherhood of the mankind. The work from the same year *The Voice of Silence* is a mystical and poetical work in connection with the path of enlightenment. In this work H.P. Blavatsky expounds the ethical principles that disciples on their spiritual path followed from the ancient times. Two years later, H.P. Blavatsky dies; her work would be continued by an activist for women's rights, Annie Besant, whose home in London became a headquarter of the Theosophical Society.

The first president of the Theosophical Society, Colonel Henry S. Olcott was born in 1832 in Orange, New Jersey. After he finished college in New York, he moved to his uncles in Ohio, where he worked on their farm. This aroused in him the interest for the agriculture. As uncles also showed some interest toward paranormal phenomena and mesmerism, the influence was twofold. On his return to East Coast around 1853, he got the employment at the farm of scientific agriculture in Newark. Already at 23, he gained the international reputation for his work, and at 25 he wrote a work *Sorghum and Imphee*, which would become a textbook at agricultural schools. In 1857 he travels across the Europe, perfecting his knowledge in agriculture and the next year he becomes the editor of the agricultural rubric of *New York Tribune*.

After the bursting out of the American Civil War he joined the Northern Army. He fought on the territory of Northern Caroline, but after he had been taken ill of dysentery (1862) he was withdrawn to New York. When he had recovered of the disease, the Ministry of War appointed him a special commissioned with task of investigation of fraud and corruption by the Mustering and Disbursement Office. For his conscientious and efficient work he has been awarded with a grade of colonel; until the end of the war he performed the same duty by the Navy Department in Washington. He had gained such a confidence by Ministry, that he was appointed to a special commission for the investigation of Lincoln's murder in 1865.

After the war Colonel Olcott returns to New York, where he would finish his studies in law. In 1868 he was admitted to the New York Bar and specialized for cases related to insurance, customs and revenue. Over the next 10 years H.S. Olcott would perform his lawyer's practice, having such clients as big companies, banks, Stock Exchange, steel manufacturers or insurance companies. However, in the meantime, in 1874 Olcott simultaneously continued to work as a journalist, reporting on unusual spiritist phenomena at the farm of Eddys in Vermont. Olcott got interested in spiritism yet from his teenage days, as it was mentioned before. Just at this farm there occurred a meeting with charismatic Russian woman that would fatefully change his life.

After the establishment of Theosophical Society in 1875, Olcott continued with his lawyer's practice during the day and helping Blavatsky in her work *Isis Unveiled*, often late into the night. It was fatiguing life period, which demanded a great self-discipline, to satisfy all the obligations. In 1878 two founding members move to Bombay, India. Colonel Olcott because of his merits gets letter of recommendation from President Hayes and a diplomatic passport.

In India and on Ceylon both Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky steadily worked upon the revival of Buddhism and other eastern religions. H.S. Olcott was well known for his work with Buddhists, especially on Ceylon; this work somehow did mostly attach to his heart. In 1881 he finished his *Buddhist Catechism*, for the use at Buddhist schools; it is still in use nowadays. The next year headquarter of Theosophical Society moved to Adyar. Olcott began with his practice of magnetic healing; for a period of about a year he treated thousands of people and some of them cured in miraculous way.

By the half of the eighties there occurred a split with H.P. Blavatsky, after she went to Europe and resigned from her duty of corresponding secretary. Olcott has continued with his work in Asia, holding lectures, founding new branches of Theosophical Society and working on convergence of Buddhists and Hindu. In 1886 in Adyar there was established a huge library, at which for the first time gathered religious teachers of Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrism and Islam, to bless the common goal. According to Olcott, this goal would not be a promotion of a certain philosophy, but encouragement of people to research the existing spiritual traditions, as well as inside them alone.

In the course of the nineties there occurred an estrangement from headquarter in America, which had been continued to lead by the third founding member, William Q. Judge. The definitive split between two branches occurred in 1895 and few years later, after Judge's death, headquarter would move to California, where it is still nowadays (in Pasadena). After the breaking-up with Judge, Olcott has continued his theosophical work with Annie Besant, still traveling a lot, lecturing and founding new branches. He continued his activity until short time before his

death. On his voyage on the ship by the end of 1906 he gravely hurt his leg and after he returned to Adyar he died, because of heart failure.

Olcott was replaced on his position of the president of Theosophical Society by his collaborator in India since 1895, Annie Besant. This second famous female theosophist was born in London in 1847. Her childhood was not the happy one. When she was five, her father died; her mother, not having means for her support, confided Annie to the tutorship of her friend, Ellen Marryat. This woman, although being devoted Calvinist, endeavored to enable Anne a wider education.

Born as Annie Wood, by her marriage to the priest Frank Besant (1867), she took his surname. Until 1870 she had gotten with him two children. However, this marriage has not brought luck to Annie Besant, among the rest because her libertine spirit collided with traditional views of her husband. Annie then realized that her religion views disagree with Church dogma and they even incline to atheism. After she had divorced in 1874, she totally rejected Christianity and joined the secular Society. The agenda of this society included the fight for freedom of speech, women's rights, secularism, birth control, Fabianist socialism and workers' rights.

Annie soon became a close collaborator of Charles Bradlaugh, the editor of the radical magazine *National Reformer* and leader of the secular movement in Britain. Writing for this magazine in the next few years she published many articles on subjects as marriage and women's rights. In 1877 Besant and Bradlaugh published a book by Charles Knowlton *Fruits of Philosophy*, work which advocates birth control. Under the accusation that they published an immoral and obscene work, they were both condemned to six months imprisonment, but the Court of Appeal however passed sentence in their favor, i.e. released them from the guilt. Now Annie Besant wrote her own work on that subject, entitling it *The Laws of Population*.

In the eighties Annie Besant becomes a member of Social Democratic Federation (one of the predecessors of the later Labour Party). She started her own magazine *The Link* and continued her struggle for women's rights. She especially distinguished herself in 1888, writing about the slavish conditions in which work women in a match factory 'Bryant and May'. After three women who supplied her with information had been fired, Annie Besant helped to organize their own syndicate and also in connection with three-week strike. It yielded fruit, because the workers got considerable betterments in connection with work conditions and wages; those women were returned to their job, too.

The year 1889 was the turning point in life of Annie Besant, because after she had read *Secret Doctrine* and met with Helena P. Blavatsky, she decided to join the Theosophical Society. The Russian woman immediately perceived her proud spirit, probably seeing her one day on the head of the theosophical movement, that is, exactly as it would happen later. Already

then it was known that Annie Besant has excellent rhetoric skill and that she already achieved success as a writer. Soon after the death of Blavatsky, Annie Besant has published her first theosophical work, *The Seven Principles of Man and Reincarnation*. Until the end of her life she would publish more than 40 books and hundreds of articles, essays and pamphlets.

In 1893 Annie Besant had for the first time traveled to India; two years later she settled down permanently in Benares and began her spiritual, educational and social work in India. In the next period of her life, besides enormous energy that she had put into Theosophical Society, likewise she would put a considerable effort into the struggle for the independence and progress of India. One of her first successes in the domain of education would be the opening of Central Hindu College in 1898.

The period between 1895 and 1906 meant for Theosophical Society the period of constant advancement and certainly a lion's share in it had just Annie Besant. From this period there arise works like *Karma, The Ancient Wisdom, Avatars and Thought Forms* (in collaboration with C.W. Leadbeater). As she always pointed out in introductions of her works, their aim was to approach with theosophical teaching a wider reading public. Voluminous and sometimes hardly comprehensible materials from *Isis Unveiled* and *Secret Doctrine* now were presented in a more accessible and somewhat simplistic form. However the works of Annie Besant (as well as those of C.W. Leadbeater) do not present mere copying out or describing of the works by H.P. Blavatsky, but they were as well enriched by their own deliberation and discoveries, so they can be considered genuine. Somehow, the central place among all those books takes *Ancient wisdom*. In it, there are presented the similarities among the world's religions, as the introduction for the study of theosophy. In this book there are depicted various levels of existence, from the lowest physical up to the highest Buddhist and Nirvanic. The author here deals with reincarnation and karma and with man's ascent toward the higher spheres, that present his spiritual evolution, that is, the evolution of consciousness.

In 1907 Annie Besant becomes the president of the Theosophical Society; then there begins a new period of her life and work. Whilst in time of Olcott the focus had been on Theravada Buddhism and Ceylon, now Besant made a certain swerve into the direction of Hinduism and central India, as the domain of acting. In 1911 it was established a branch under the name 'Order of the Star in the East', dedicated to the new World Teacher, i.e. Krishnamurti, in whom Besant and Leadbeater recognized a new Messiah. This branch would provoke a reaction of the German section of Theosophical Society, headed by Rudolf Steiner, who would leave them to found their own organization, Anthroposophical Society.

This bit controversial period up to the First World War was also marked by worthy works by Annie Besant like *An Introduction to Yoga, Occult Chemistry* (in collaboration with Leadbeater), *Study in Consciousness, Esoteric*

*Christianity and Mysticism*. The work *Occult Chemistry* is interesting because it gives the insight into the structure of atoms and molecules by clairvoyance. *Study in Consciousness* presents a contribution to the science of psychology, because it deals with themes like consciousness, will, desire and emotions. *Esoteric Christianity* deals with the hidden side of the religion, especially Christianity; of Christ as historical, mythical and mystical; expiation, resurrection and ascension, Trinity, prayer, forgiving of sins, sacraments and Revelation. The knowledge of spiritual truth must be achieved from inside, from the Divine Spirit, of which we are in fact a temple. The Inner Spirit presents the mind of Christ and this inner light pours onto our lower mind. *Mysticism* speaks about the idea of God, Christ and Man. Besant perceives mysticism as direct knowledge like that one on which science is based upon; only, here it is not through outer perceiving, but through the inner cognition. Besant thinks that there can be found an identical answer to the idea of Christ, through all the epochs and religions; it is same, always and everywhere, no matter that he bears different names in different religions.

During the First World War Annie Besant has remained in India and joined the Indian movement for the independence and self-government. She played the prominent role in creation of the platform for Indian independence (Indian Home Rule) and she became, although just for a short while, a president of Indian National Congress. Namely, soon there occurred a parting with Gandhi. Since British government had estimated her acting subversive, during the war she had been several times interned. With this activity she would continue after the First World War. By the end of the twenties Annie Besant set out for United States with her protégé Krishnamurti, presenting him as new Messiah and incarnation of Buddha. But in 1929 Krishnamurti (about him there will be a word or two later) renounced such a role, dismissed 'The Order of the Star in the East' and broke his relations with Theosophical Society. Annie Besant returned to India, where she died in September, 1933. On the head of the Society she was replaced by Dr. George S. Arundale.

Annie Besant's collaborator of long standing and one of the most prolific authors of the Theosophical Society, Charles W. Leadbeater was born in 1854 in Stockport, Cheshire. His father was a bookkeeper, who died when Charles was eight years old. He had graduated in literature, but in spite of this he dedicated himself to the Church call, becoming in 1878 deacon of Anglican Church. Already the next year he becomes a clergyman; however he did not linger for a long time in the Church, since in 1883 he joins the Theosophical Society. The next year, upon the arrival of H.P. Blavatsky to London, he met her and decided to depart to India. There he becomes a close collaborator of Colonel Olcott, with whom he holds lectures in India and on Ceylon. Between 1886 and 1889 he lived and worked predominantly on Ceylon.

By the end of 1889, Leadbeater returns to England and the next year he meets Annie Besant. Their close collaboration, notwithstanding intermittent breaks, would last until Besant's death in 1933. Besides regular lectures in theosophy, nineties brought Leadbeater publishing of a whole row of books, like *The Astral Plane*, *The Devahanic Plane*, *Invisible Helpers*, *Dreams*, *Clairvoyance*. In these works he deals with the higher planes of being, astral and heavenly, with invisible helpers (angels) who act from these levels and also with dreams and clairvoyance. As Leadbeater says, in nature there exist different levels, of which each one possess its own matter of specific degree of density, which permeates the matter of the lower level. From higher planes, the ones who help man are angels, as well as adepts, highly developed spirits, capable of acting on the astral level. On this level we find ourselves in our dreams. During the dream astral body usually floats above the physical body, but because it posses a trait of movability, it can set out to a long distance, too. From there, it can bring different impressions, depending on places that it visited and people that it met. We can perceive man's astral body by means of our clairvoyance. According to Leadbeater, this ability is inborn in every man and it can be developed. To an advanced adept, it is possible to achieve the complete astral clairvoyance, in which there is no break in the continuity of the consciousness, not even during the sleep.

In 1900, Charles W. Leadbeater set out for a six-month tour across the United States, where he held series of lectures; afterwards he went to Europe and held there lectures, too. Between 1902 and 1905 he also held series of lectures and afterwards continued as well in Australia and New Zealand. From this period there originate works *Thought Forms* (in collaboration with Annie Besant), *An Outline of Theosophy*, *Man Visible and Invisible* and *Some Glimpses into Occultism*. In his work *Thought Forms* there are described effects in the etheric matter, that is, forms, made by vibrations caused by mental images. Here are depicted various characteristics of thought forms, as consequences of expressions of different emotions, as well as of states of mind.<sup>25</sup> *An Outline of Theosophy* sketches the main principles of theosophy and *Man Invisible and Visible* explicates his theory about different kinds of men, in relation to subtle bodies that they posses. Therefore, here are described subtle bodies (astral, mental and causal) of a savage, average man and spiritually developed man, as well as different colors in aura as effects of various emotions and disorders relating to their health. In voluminous work *Some Glimpses of Occultism* there are many themes presented, like relation of Theosophy toward Buddhism and Christianity, man and his subtle bodies, reincarnation, life after death, clairvoyance, telepathy, spiritism, dreams, mesmerism, vegetarianism, magic and mysteries of the antiquity.

In 1906 Leadbeater was accused that he taught his pupils masturbation, which was a big scandal for then morality of Victorian England, in that time masturbation had been considered as somethinf unnatural and self-abusive. He had not been legally persecuted, but he experienced a moral condemn by

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<sup>25</sup> For example, emotional changes are reflected in alteration of the color of aura, the wrapper which is wound around all the living beings.

some prominent members (like Katherine Tingley, Alfred Sinnet, George Mead and others) so he had to leave Theosophical Society. But, this banishment did not last for long as already in 1908 Leadbeater returns, on insistence of the new president Annie Besant. In collaboration with her later that year he would write the work *Occult Chemistry*.

Until the bursting-out of the First World War Leadbeater wrote yet several important works like *The Inner Life, A Textbook of Theosophy, The Life After Death, Man, Whence, How and Whither* and *The Hidden Side of Things*. In the first four works he deals with widening and supplement of themes represented in earlier works. The book *The Hidden Side of Things* brings forth the description of different hidden influences, as there are influences of planets and energies from man's surroundings; other themes concern influence of our mental states and customs on ourselves alone; finally the last ones deal with our influence on other people.

In 1914 the paths of Annie Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater temporarily separated. Leadbeater had gone to Australia, where in 1916 he became the bishop of Liberal Catholic Church. This Church was established by theosophist James I. Wedgewood. This church stems from the Old Catholic Church and in relation to Roman Catholic, it is characterized by intellectual freedom in the interpretation of *Bible* and respect of individual consciousness and conscience. Similarities are related to sacraments and rituals, which are very alike.

Charles W. Leadbeater continued his prolific literary activity, after the First World War, when originated works *The Science of Sacraments, The Monad, The Masters of the Path, The Hidden Life in Freemasonry* and *Chakras*. Work *The Science of Sacraments* brings into the modern mystical thought one really new element, i.e. that religious rituals practiced by a group of believers do not affect only themselves alone, but also their surroundings. Similar hypothesis would be proposed several decades later by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (concerning the influence of a group meditation on the wider surroundings). The work of Leadbeater is mainly concentrated upon the sacrament of eucharisty. Leadbeater thinks that temple and church are not only places of religious veneration, but also a center of magnetic radiation, by which spiritual forces are poured upon the whole county.

In the work *The Monad* he speaks about the difficulties in relation to definition and description of the monad.<sup>26</sup> The main problem, after Leadbeater, is the multidimensionality of higher planes, which is hardly conceivable to common physical mind, which is used to think only in 3-dimensional terms. It is not possible for anyone to grasp the monad in its own abode, but only when it passes over to the lower plane and shrouds

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<sup>26</sup> According to Leibniz, monad is simple, indivisible substance, which permeates the complex matter.

itself with the matter.<sup>27</sup> The work *Monad* also deals with meditation and achievement of the higher states of consciousness.

The next work *Masters and the Path* speaks of great teachers – adepts, of spiritual way that each follower of the Path has to pass, of degrees of initiations and of the hierarchy of the initiated. *The Hidden Life in Freemasonry* reveals details from the history of Freemasonry, structure of Masonic lodges, rituals and ceremonies and initiations into lower and higher degrees. In his last important work *The Chakras* Leadbeater speaks of Chakras – centers of energy on the surface of etherical double of man and which serve for transmission of energy from one man's body to the other.

In 1930, already aged, bishop Leadbeater set out for his last tour in Europe and his lectures were everywhere received enthusiastically. When Annie Besant was taken ill in 1933, he came to India, to help her in last months of her life. Her faithful collaborator survived her for only six months, passing away in March, 1934. Charles W. Leadbeater, together with Annie Besant considerably contributed to the popularization of the theosophical thought, with his ability of expression in direct, convincing and simple style. Owing to him, many hidden and mysterious notions and concepts could come into the consciousness of greater number of people.

### 5.3.2. Offshoots of Theosophical Society – Antroposophical Society, Rosicrucian Fellowship, the Arcane School and Krishnamurti

As it was aforementioned, the establishment of the 'Order of the Star in the East' and attribution of a Messianic character to Krishnamurti, caused a vehement reaction of the German branch of Theosophical Society, headed by Rudolf Steiner. In 1913 the whole branch stepped out from the Theosophical Society and they continued their acting as an independent organization, under name of Antroposophical Society. This change of name had not gotten only formal character, but it reflected the fundamental difference in relation to the former headquarter in Adyar. The emphasis is not on God anymore, not on Christ or the idea of New Messiah, but the focus is on *antropos*, i.e. man. Steiner did not deem antroposophy as some form of a new religion, but simply as a way of acquiring new cognitions on the world and man.

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Antroposophical Society was born in 1861 in village Donji Kraljevec near Čakovec, in then Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. As his father was an employee of Austrian railway, family often had to move. In the time of Rudolf's birth it happened to be in a small Croatian village, near the border with Hungary. Rudolf has spent his childhood and youth in different Austrian towns and villages. In those places, Rudolf has acquired his education intermittently, so he had to receive also a certain additional education by his father, at home. The grammar school he attended in

<sup>27</sup> For instance, manifestation of the monad on the higher mental plane is ego. On the next plane., when it is manifested as the mind, it is only a particle of what mental aspect of monad really is. Accordingly, ego is not mere shrouded manifestation of the monad, but of its small part.

Wiener-Neustadt, from 1872 until 1879. He passed the final exam with an excellent grade.

After he finished the grammar school, Steiner enrolled the High Technical School in Vienna, where he studies mathematics and natural science. But, in addition to this study, he attends simultaneously lectures in philosophy at Vienna university. As he remarked in his autobiography, for the real relation toward the subjects he had been studying at the High Technical School, he needed a secure foundation in philosophy. During his studies he paid a special care to the study of Goethe's works. He was convinced that they can give a more accurate notion of the world than natural materialistic sciences and Darwinism.

In 1883, on the graduation at High Technical School, Steiner became one of the editors of the anthology edition *Deutschen Nationalliteratur*. He edited Goethe's works from the domain of natural science, for which he also wrote an introduction. Later (1925), this work would be published independently, under the title *Goethe's Naturwissenschaftliche Schrifte* (Goethe's Naturalistic Scripts). In 1890 he went to Weimar, where he works on settling of Goethe's archive. The next year he would be promoted into Ph.D., at Rostock university.

Steiner published his first important work in 1894, entitling it *Philosophy of Freedom*. The work advocated the idea of spiritual release of man, through conscious active thinking. So, he deems that observation and thinking are two consequential points for all the spiritual striving of man, if he is conscious of them. He resolves the antinomy between dualism and monism in the way that he observes the world as duality, which then cognition works out into unity. Steiner considers that the very life is unity. His vision of science is holistic, as he deduces that the more sciences strive to become absorbed into a specific field, the farther they get from the cognition of living whole of the world.

After he had finished his work at Goethe's archive, in 1896 he went to Nürnberg, where he settles Nietzsche's archive, upon the invitation of philosopher's sister Elisabeth. Mrs. Förster-Nietzsche wished that Steiner had remained in Nürnberg, as editor and commentator of her brother's work. But, Steiner just expressed gratitude for this honor and went to Berlin instead, at the position of the chief editor of literary magazine *Magazine für literatur*.

The turning point in life and career of Rudolf Steiner happened in 1899. Namely, then, after publishing the article *Goethe's Secret Revealing* in magazine that he had edited, he received an invitation, to hold a speech in front of members of the German section of Theosophical Society. He came upon very good reception, so after a series of lectures he eventually became a leader of German theosophists. In the same year he met Marie von Sievers, his future wife and steady collaborator. In a period between 1902 and 1912 he held public lectures regularly, in Berlin and all across Europe. He also

published some important works – *Theosophie* (Theosophy), *Wie erlangt man Erkenntniße der höheren Welten* (How are Acquired Cognitions of Higher Worlds), *Die Geheimwissenschaft im Umriss* (The Foundations of Secret Science) and *Die Geistige Führung des Menschen und der Menschheit* (Spiritual Guidance of Man and Mankind).

In 1912, after the breaking-up with Adyar headquarters, German Theosophical Society continues its work independently; from the next year under a new name – Antroposophical Society. Then there began the construction of the antroposophical cultural center named Goetheanum, in honor of famous writer and philosopher. Building would be finished only after the First World War, by persistent work of builders – volunteers. This cultural center enabled the happening of large span of activities in various fields, like mathematics, medicine, biodynamic agriculture, schools of painting, speech, drama and eurythmics<sup>28</sup>. Although the first Goetheanum experienced a tragic end (burned up on New Years Eve 1923), Steiner unhesitatingly initiated the construction of a new building. Unfortunately, he did not live to see its opening – he died in March, 1925.

Steiner's literary heritage is immense and it comprises 40 works, including also essays, drama, poetry and autobiography. But the collection of his lectures includes still further 300 works approximately, in which is covered so to say every single imaginable and possible theme. Taking into consideration only the narrower field of mystical philosophy - most represented themes there are initiation; dreams; life after death; consciousness and meditation; imaginative, intuitive and inspired cognition; spiritual evolution of man.

Steiner discerns the common, waking state of consciousness and higher consciousness, which is in connection with imagination, intuition and inspiration. Whilst the ordinary consciousness experiences only the present, imaginative consciousness can experience simultaneously past, present and future. In it there is no memory, as by common consciousness. One comes to imaginative cognition through meditation. Steiner interprets it as free creation of notions from one's inner self – the attention is directed toward the inner strength, which creates notions. By meditation, consciousness transcends from the physical level onto ethereal. The man that imagines, according to Steiner, realizes the independence of soul on physical body, because it acts now consciously. One can reach the higher states of consciousness in dreams as well. Steiner deems that inspiration leads to man's astral body; intuition, on the other hand, leads to man's Self, that is, to Ego. It seems that by this it can be explained inspiration for the artistic works, or intuitive insights of philosophers and scientists.

In his description of life after death Steiner differs from Leadbeater and other theosophists in so much that he states that etheric body, together with astral one and ego, leaves physical body in moment of death. Steiner holds

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<sup>28</sup> New artistic form, a combination of gymnastic exercises and dance rhythm, which Steiner developed with a help of his wife Marie

that man's spiritual development continues after his death, by his coming into contact with divine spiritual beings, first in Moon sphere, then in Solar sphere. Between the death and new birth man, according to Steiner, lives through a part of evolution of universe, under the guidance of higher spiritual beings (angels), by which also evolves the spiritual part of the future physical organism, in new earthly incarnation.

Rudolf Steiner asserted that true cosmology can originate only by enrichment of common cognition with inspiration. However, he adds that such a cosmology needs Christianity as well. But, as a matter of fact his vision of Christianity and Christ is somewhat specific. So, he says in his work *Philosophy Cosmology Religion* that Solar being had descended to Earth and became a human being in body of Jesus of Nazareth by fulfilling Golgotha mystery. By Christ's act, according to Steiner human soul purifies herself during her transition from the world of souls to land of spirits. Human evolution is deeply connected with Christ's being through the death; in true cosmology Christ presents a universal, cosmic power. That power acts after death as well, abducting the soul to Moon's sphere and taking a part in building a new future organism. By the entrance of Christianity into human evolution the religious consciousness changes and it becomes an echo of what man experiences in the spiritual world, between the death and new birth, Steiner deduces.

By the esoteric Christianity is permeated the teaching of yet another offshoot of Theosophical Society, i.e. The Rosicrucian Fellowship, under the guidance of an American of Danish origin, Max Heindel. Surely, this is not the only organization that continues Rosicrucian traditions, nor it is the most numerous one. However, its charismatic leader is the author of a row of mystical works, which classify him among the important mystical philosophers of the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. His capital work, *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* with its monumentality reminds of *Secret Doctrine* by H.P. Blavatsky.

Max Heindel was born in 1865 in Denmark. After the grammar school he left his home and his family and dedicated himself to the study of engineering. After the graduation, he worked as engineer on big passenger steamships, which navigated on lines between Europe and America. Between 1895 and 1901 he was employed at some New York firm, as consulting engineer.

In 1903 Heindel had moved to Los Angeles and by the end of that year he comes for the first time into the contact with theosophy. From mere curiosity he went to hear a lecture on reincarnation, held by Charles W. Leadbeater (at that time on his U.S. tour). It is interesting that on that occasion he also met his future wife, Augusta Foss. Immediately after that first lecture, Heindel had clung seriously onto study of theosophical literature and already in 1904 he became a vice-president of Los Angeles branch of Theosophical Society.

In his ardent desire for deepening his knowledge in theosophy, Heindel had in 1907 set out to Germany, to be present at cycle of lectures held by Rudolf Steiner. During his stay in Germany, Heindel had some kind of spiritual extrasensory experience, in which he received from a highly evolved spiritual being (Elder brother of Rosicrucian order) directions and instructions for the foundation of the new order.

Upon his return to America in 1908, Heindel immediately began to formulate the Rosicrucian teaching in a written form and the next year he published it as a work *Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*. This work of esoteric-Christian character presents a universal survey of the evolutionary processes in man and universe; it is a work which brings into mutual relation science and religion. The author explains man's path through involution, evolution and epigenesis; he introduces methods of development of latent forces in man and of direct acquisition of consciousness about inner worlds. This work also presents esoteric interpretation of Christ's mission and analysis of Biblical texts from the mystical point of view.

Rosicrucian philosophy of Max Heindel in its basis is Christian (although it contains elements of Oriental religions, as well) and its esoteric character is corroborated by citations from Bible. The most important are Matthew 13,11 ("Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them is not given") and Luke 8,10 ("...Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see and hearing they might not understand."). Max Heindel considered Western world the vanguard of a human race, however also that religious truth cannot be found inside the popular Christianity, but inside the esoteric one.

In the same year when the work *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* was published, it was founded The Rosicrucian Fellowship in town Oceanside, California. Over the last ten years of his life, from 1909 until 1919, Max Heindel had faced serious health problems and difficult material situation, but in spite of all he unhesitatingly continued his spiritual work. He published a large number of works; he held many lectures, established magazine *Rays from the Rose Cross* and the section for the spiritual healing. He presented his philosophy of spiritual healing in the work *Occult Principles of Health and Healing* and also in the work related to astro-medicine, *Astro-Diagnosis – A Guide to Healing*. He ascribed a significant importance to astrology, what can be deduced from the introductory note to the work *Message of the Stars*: "... the evolutionary career of mankind is indissolubly bound up with the divine hierarchies who rule the planets and the signs of the Zodiac and the passage of the Sun and the planets through the twelve signs of Zodiac, marks man's progress in time and space." Max Heindel did not consider his work as the eternal truth that is given forever, but as the work that will be changed and upgraded, in the eternal search for the truth.

Her own esoteric vision of Christianity had also theosophist Alice Bailey, woman who left Theosophical Society in 1923 and then established Arcane

School. This school is deeply international in its spiritual deliberation, with main ideas that all the spiritual paths leads to God and that consciousness of people must be permeated by aspiration toward the welfare of the entire human race. Although Alice Bailey's teaching is predominantly Christian, it contains also the elements of Oriental spirituality, like teaching about karma and reincarnation. As their senior contemporaries Steiner and Heindel, she wrote numerous works, too.

Alice Bailey was born in Manchester, Great Britain in 1880, in a family of an engineer. After she finished her primary schooling, she spent a certain period of time in monastery and later dedicated herself to a missionary work. She took the road to a land as far as India. In India she did not come into contact with theosophists yet, but she was busy with the evangelical work by British army. In 1907 there she had met a clergyman Walter Evans; they soon emigrated to United States. There Evans soon became a priest of the Episcopal Church. Although they had gotten three children, their marriage was short-lasting.

In 1915 Alice met two English women in town Pacific Grove in California and they soon introduced her into theosophy and works of Helena P. Blavatsky. The narrow, dogmatic Christianity, of which she had been a follower before she ceded a place to new, broad spiritual horizons, although Christ still remained a central figure of her spiritual deliberations. In 1917 Alice moved to Hollywood, to be closer to the headquarters of Theosophical Society, which was at the time in Krotona. There soon followed her marriage with Foster Bailey, the lawyer who expressed a distinctive propensity toward the spirituality.

Alice Bailey had similar experience of 'channeling'<sup>29</sup> as Max Heindel, in year 1919, with spiritual teacher Djwal Khul. He would be her spiritual guide till the end of her life, during full 30 years. The result of this 'collaboration' would be 19 works; further seven works Bailey wrote independently. For works that originated through channeling she asserted that they were dictated to her by an inner voice, whilst she faithfully noted it, word by word. Although she stated that her spiritual guide Djhwál Khul was Tibetan the works did not contain elements of Tibetan Buddhism, but they are mainly a combination of theosophy and Christianity.

Among the autonomous works of Alice Bailey, the most interesting are two works, *The Consciousness of the Atom* from 1922 and *From Intellect to Intuition* from 1932. In the first she sets a hypothesis about how the same basic laws rule over the evolution of atom and over the evolution of Solar system. Macrocosm is repeated in man-microcosm and he again is reflected in atoms, says Bailey. Atoms, according to her, possess quality, they show characteristics of mind and intelligence and they can also make a choice between more possibilities. Bailey discerns three kinds of consciousness. The absolute consciousness is that one, in which everything is contained, manifested and non-manifested. The universal consciousness is one that

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<sup>29</sup> Communication with spiritual being

includes time and space and which can be identified with group consciousness. Individual consciousness is a particle of the universal one, which can perceive by herself.

In the work *From Intellect to Intuition* mainly she deals with nature and meaning of the term meditation. Meditation differs from prayer because she is primarily the orientation of the mind that comes to recognition and understanding of the formulated knowledge. Alice Bailey emphasizes that meditation in different religious systems brings to the same goal, that is, to the unity with divinity. She also points out (similarly as Leadbeater) that meditation gains her true sense if it is practiced in larger groups, for the wellbeing of society and the planet as a whole.

The work *The Reappearance of the Christ* announces the second coming of Christ, who will not come only for the salvation of Christians, but the entire human race. She announces the Age of Aquarius, which will bring togetherness and more human relations between the nations. Accordingly, the aim of prayer should not be directed toward the personal salvation, but towards the creation of human relations in general, on the widest possible basis, says Alice Bailey.

In years that directly preceded the First World War did originate a new Messianic expectation, like in forties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This expectation did not pass by the leaders of Theosophical Society either, especially because the founder Helena P. Blavatsky in 1889 said that the task of theosophy was to prepare the humanity for the coming of Maitreya, the World teacher of the Age of Aquarius. Twenty years later, in Adyar, Leadbeater discovered in a figure of young man Krishnamurti the incarnation of a new World Teacher; by his clairvoyance he appraised that his aura is completely liberated of selfish feelings. Convincing Annie Besant into verity of his extrasensory appraisal, the couple began with spiritual preparation of Krishnamurti for his designated role. As a matter of fact, he had later denied his messianism, but, however, he afterwards became one of the greatest thinkers of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Jiddu Krishnamurti was born in 1895 in small town Madanapalle (about 200 km north of Madras). He comes of a Brahman's family; his father was also a member of Theosophical Society. He was the eighth child out of ten in all. In his childhood he did not distinguish himself especially from other children. He was of rather delicate health and at school he did not show any particular talent, not even assiduity in mastering school subject matter.

A new period in Krishnamurti's life begins in 1909, when his family moves to Adyar, where was the headquarters of Theosophical Society. His father, since he was an educated man, worked as revenue officer and in his free time he was also active in Theosophical Society. Several months had passed before Leadbeater recognized in Krishnamurti an incarnation of the World Teacher. Then the president of Theosophical Society decided to adopt a boy, to give him a better tutorship and spiritual education. The father had agreed in the

beginning, but later he regretted, because he could not almost see his son at all. After the dispute had ended at court, father eventually lost the lawsuit and Krishnamurti was sent (along with his younger brother Nytiananda, as well adopted) to England, to complete his education.

The period from 1912 until 1922, Krishnamurti and his younger brother would spend in England. Partially they acquired their education at private schools and partially by tutors. Originally, it had been planned for him to study at Cambridge, but because of 'messianic' fame that already started to follow him wherever he went, this idea was dropped. After he had graduated, in the beginning of the twenties, he began to hold lectures at theosophical meetings and to write in magazines. Krishnamurti in this period became more autonomous, he traveled a lot and got acquainted with intellectuals of the time, writers, composers and painters. His brother Nytiananda had caught tuberculosis, so they moved to California, hoping that climate there would have a curative effect. But, it seemed that nothing could help anymore, so brother died in 1925. This sad event had struck Krishnamurti gravely and brought him into serious spiritual crises.

As the year 1925 was the jubilee one, Annie Besant deemed that Krishnamurti should have announced his mission officially. This avowal happened on 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary's celebration of the foundation of Theosophical Society in Adyar. Besides, it has been decided that Society should buy grounds in different parts in the world, for massive gatherings and meetings in front of which Krishnamurti would have communicate his divine message. The next year Krishnamurti was announced everywhere as the new Messiah. But, it seems that he ever harder supported this burden, i.e. of the incarnation of the new World Teacher. After a long deliberation, in 1929 he finally brought decision of renouncement from the imposed role. Krishnamurti, then 34 years old, dismissed the Order of the Star in the East, a huge organization which numbered at the time no less than 60 thousand people. This decision demanded a lot of courage, as there were huge means invested, not to mention an immense effort of the members during 18 years of its existence. In his speech on the occasion of the dissolution of the Order, Krishnamurti emphasized that way to the truth is a pathless land and accordingly it cannot be approached by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. His main task became from now on "how to set man absolutely, unconditionally free".

In the thirties Krishnamurti has traveled worldwide, holding public lectures and leading conversations as with well known, so with common people. Among the most frequent themes of his speeches are nature of truth, suffering and freedom. He did not want to make a cult of his personality, nor he wanted numerous followers; he deemed that relation between guru and disciple is necessarily exploitative. In the time of the Second World War Krishnamurti abode in United States. Because of his open and radical pacifism he lives in solitude, in narrow circle of friends in California. He has been close to Aldous Huxley, who incited him to begin to write again. In 1954 there was published Krishnamurti's probably most influential book,

entitled *The First and Last Freedom*. He paid considerable attention to the education as well, about which testifies the work *Education and Significance of Life* from 1953. From the fifties, there is another important work, *Commentaries on Living*, comprising three volumes.

In the course of sixties, Krishnamurti gave the permission for recording his speeches, so it made his teaching accessible to even more numerous audiences, in the original form. From this period of his life there are some interesting debates with American and Indian pupils and students, published in books *Life Ahead* (1963), *Think on These Things* (1963) and *Talks with American Students* (1968). Although already aged and of delicate health, Krishnamurti supports well the fatigue of numerous lecturing tours. Of a good help are his daily routines – yoga, hiking and vegetarianism. By the end of the sixties there was published another important book, under the title *Freedom from the Known*.

Then began the last phase of Krishnamurti's acting, phase which was surprisingly the most prolific, when his spiritual influence reaches the topmost point. In the first half of the seventies there appear a string of new works – *The Urgency of Change*, *The Impossible Question*, *Beyond Violence*, *Tradition and Revolution* and *The Awakening of Intelligence*. In the second half of the seventies the special meaning have his meetings with philosopher and physicist David Bohm, with whom he leads long and sharp conversations. After Bohm's words, what aroused his interest were Krishnamurti's deep insights into the nature of the observer and the observed. That problem was not only his focus, but of other theoretical physicists (of quantum physics) as well.

By the very end of his life, in the eighties, Krishnamurti started to pay more attention to educational projects, more precisely to the construction of educational center in Brockwood Park in England. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to see the inauguration of this center, because in February, 1986 he died. So to say, till his last breath he had been active; his last public lecture he held in January, 1986, although at the end of his tether, in his 91<sup>st</sup> year. After the cremation of his relics, the ash has been divided into three parts; so one third was sent to his fatherland India, second to the country where he acquired his education – England and third remained in country where he spent the most of his life and where he finally died – in United States.

During his long and prolific life, Krishnamurti has held countless lectures, published more than 50 books, but the core of his teaching is contained still in the speech from 1929. In distinction from his theosophical teachers, Charles W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant, he did not pay much attention to subjects like karma and reincarnation, astral and devahanic plane, clairvoyance and parapsychological phenomena. The terms which Krishnamurti uses the most in his speeches and debates are: truth, freedom, thought, observer and observed, consciousness, meditation, love. He deemed that man must find the truth in reflection of relationships, in understanding of contents of his own mind, through the observation and not through

intellectual analysis or introspective discernment. He defined freedom as pure undirected observance, deprived from fear of punishment or reward. Krishnamurti considered the true relation as state of mind and heart in which all the constitution which made a notion is terminated, so there exist the complete harmony not only inside us, but also in our relation with others. The pure observation, according to Krishnamurti, originates when man becomes aware of the motion of his thoughts and when he discovers that separation between thinker and a thought, observer and observed is a delusion. Such an insight can be achieved when mind is calm and in a meditative state. Then man realizes that there exists only one, 'one that is' and nothing more. When the mind is in state of meditation, there exist and immense beatitude, says Krishnamurti and adds that from such silence of the meditative mind there follow love and beauty.

## 5.4. GOLDEN DAWN

### 5.4.1. Golden Dawn

In the nineties of 19<sup>th</sup> century another hermetical organization played important role in the world of mysticism and mystical philosophy. It was the hermetical society named Golden Dawn. It was established in London in 1888, by three Masons and Rosicrucians, William W. Westcott, S.L. MacGregor Mathers and William R. Woodman. The latter was elected for the first president. The main initiator of the establishment of Golden Dawn was physician William W. Westcott. As the most important goal of the Society, it was proclaimed philosophical, spiritual and psychical evolution of the mankind. In teachings of Golden Dawn there are intertwined many elements of Egyptian, Greek, Judeo-Christian, Gnostic tradition; the span of study comprised Kabbala, astrology, divination, alchemy and magic.

The originator of Golden Dawn William W. Westcott was born in 1848 in Leamington, in the vicinity of Birmingham, in a family of a physician, as youngest of six children. Until he was ten, both of his parents died and then he was adopted by his uncle, who was also a physician. He attended the grammar school in Kingston –upon-Thames and afterwards he enrolled London University. Like his father, he graduated in medicine and became a physician. Soon, in 1871, he became a partner in uncle's surgery in place Martock, Somerset. Then he got married and with his wife Elisabeth had five children.

In the same year when he began his practice of a physician, Westcott became a Freemason, by joining Parret and Axe lodge in place Crewkerne. In 1874 he becomes Master of the Lodge. His uncle died in 1879 and then Westcott withdraws to Hendon, where he dedicates himself to study of Kabbala, Hermetism and alchemy. He spent a lot of time studying works of Eliphas Levi. Somewhere around 1880 he joined the Rosicrucian Society (*Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*).

In 1881 Westcott returns to medicine, becoming first deputy coroner for Hoxton and ten years later Coroner for North-East of London, a position which he would hold until the retirement in 1918. His works in medicine predominantly worked on fields of alcoholism and suicide. Westcott's colleagues from the medical profession, as it seems, did not know of his interests in relation to esoteric philosophy.

In the course of the eighties Westcott's interest for Hermetism and acting in secret societies had been ever more growing. So in 1882 he became a secretary general of Rosicrucian Society. He also collaborated with Theosophical Society of H.P. Blavatsky.

In 1887 there occurred an event, which had decisive importance for the establishment of the organization Golden Dawn. One aged Mason, reverend Woodford, delivered William Westcott a *Cipher Manuscript*, text of about 60 pages. The priest allegedly found it in a cupboard where Kenneth Mackenzie (renowned Mason in that time) had stored it. Short time after he had given it to Westcott, he died. Fortunately, Westcott possessed the key for deciphering the manuscript (from the Trithemius' work *Poligraphie*) so it was found that it is description of the rituals of some mysterious order. *Cipher Manuscript* also contained the name and address of a mysterious German adept, Miss Sprangel from Nürnberg.

As Miss Sprangel had been a high devotee of German Rosicrucian Order, she approved the foundation of Golden Dawn and appointing of Westcott and another two Rosicrucians, William Woodman and Samauel Lydell MacGregor Mathers, as leaders of the new organization. Although all three of them are deemed founding members of Golden Dawn, to Westcott as the true creator it appertains the biggest merit. This secret society was officially founded on March 1, 1888.

In its early period from 1888 until 1891 Golden Dawn had been chiefly a theoretical school dealing with Kabbala, Hermetism, astrology and alchemy and very little with practical magic. By the end of 1891 Dr. Woodman, the first elected president died and nobody has taken his place. The next year MacGregor Mathers moved to Paris and Westcott became leader of the Order in England. Over the next few years the order the Order had grown, so several lodges were founded in America, too (in Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles).

In March, 1897 the first serious problems occurred for Westcott, but also for his organization. Some scripts with his name were found in a coach, so his ties with Golden Dawn reached the authorities. He had been admonished, that to a man of such a station does not suit practicing magic. So, Westcott had to resign. The role of leader he gave up to the actress Florence Farr. But, in some way he remained in connection with Golden Dawn, now as secret counselor behind the scenes.

After the schism in Golden Dawn that occurred in 1900, when the organization split into two independent branches, Stella Matutina and Alpha et Omega, Westcott showed inclination toward the latter, headed by Macgregor Mathers. After 1910 Westcott had completely abandoned active engagement with offshoots of Golden dawn, although he remained in friendly relation with some prominent members, staying thus still informed about what is going on. After his retirement in 1918 Westcott moved to South

Africa with his youngest daughter and her family. He died in 1925 in Durban.

As it was aforementioned, Westcott's work comprises so medical works, as esoteric, too. Westcott edited a whole series of Hermetic and Gnostic texts in connection with Golden Dawn and published as *Collectanea Hermetica*. His works related to Rosicrucian Order included *Numbers, Their Occult Power and Mystic Value, An Introduction to the Study of Kabbalah* and *Rosicrucians: Past and Present, At Home and Abroad*.

The second most important member of Golden Dawn, MacGregor Mathers was born as Samuel Liddell Mathers in 1854 in London. His father William died while Samuel Liddell was still a boy. He attended Bedford Grammar School. After he had finished the formal education, he dedicated himself to the life of a scholar in solitude; he never got some official employment.

Already as a very young man he came into contact with Freemasons, more precisely with Kenneth Mackenzie, the author of *Encyclopedia of Masonry*. He was initiated into Masonic order in 1877 and already the next year he becomes Master Mason. In 1882 he was admitted to Rosicrucian Order. In a few years he became the member of the High Council of this organization. In mid eighties he meets Helena P. Blavatsky, who invites him for collaboration in Theosophical Society. Although he admired this extraordinary woman, he has not accepted her invitation, because at the time he was close to Anna Kingsford and her ideas in connection with esoteric Christianity. He also supported her activities for the abolishment of vivisection. There is no doubt that Anna Kingsford influenced Mathers' stances related to emancipation of women and especially the idea that men and women have to collaborate in their spiritual researches, as had it already done members of Theosophical Society.

When in 1888 Golden Dawn had been established, the first initiate was Mina Bergson, sister of renowned French philosopher Henri Bergson. She had been Mather's lifelong partner. Four years later they would move to Paris. In 1894 Matherses founded in Paris the Ahathoor temple, member of which would become also French occultist Papus.

Already the next year, 1895, there occurred problems for MacGregor mathers, after his disputes with Annie Horniman, wealthy woman who supported him financially. This woman was a friend of his wife, still from school days, when they together attended the art school. Annie Horniman began to give objections to Mathers, in connection with his dabbling with politics and other things unrelated to the Order; in return he accused her for undermining his authority. In 1896 he sent a letter to London, in which he demands paying respect to him as the undisputed leader of the Order. He got support of all the members save Annie Horniman, who was consequently excommunicated from the Order.

Such a guidance of the Order 'from the distance' has not reflected favorably onto its cohesion, so in 1900 the Order split up. The actress Florence Farr, who replaced Westcott on the head of London branch, opposed the initiation of Aleister Crowley in 1900. This eccentric, in the Order only about a year, has tried at all costs to hasten his advancement, so he went to Mathers in Paris, to initiate him into the higher degree. Afterwards, Mathers sent back Crowley to London, to take over the offices and inventory of the Order. This attempt failed, owing to William B. Yeats and some other adepts, who ejected both Crowley and Mathers from the Order. Renowned poet Yeats took over the leadership and tried to consolidate Golden Dawn, but it resulted only in bigger confusion; definitive schism into several fractions occurred in 1903. Admirers of MacGregor Mathers continued their activity in the Order Alphy et Omega. Soon there occurred a dispute between Mathers and Crowley, who would found his own organization, *Argentum Astrum*. Mathers lived with his wife Mina in Paris until his death in 1918, most probably of Spanish fever. The offshoots of former Golden Dawn brought forth few important figures between two wars; among them most prominent were Dion Fortune and Israel Regardie.

Mathers' literary heritage included the translations of several important occult works, as *Key of Solomon*, book which was, according to tradition, composed by Jewish King Solomon; then work of Knorr von Rosenroth *Kabbala Denudata* and *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, for which it is supposed that it had been the work of Jakob ben Moses Moelin. In the introduction of this latter book MacGregor Mathers emphasizes that it is the white magic in question and he also states that this kind of magic is used in honor of God and the benefit of those near and the entire God's creation. Mathers also states author's wide religious views, since he insists that this system of sacred magic can achieve anyone, no matter if he is Jew, Christian, Muslim or heathen. Preface for the work *Kabbala Denudata* was written by Mina Mathers. Her words confirm the stance of her husband: "Verily there is a little difference between a single God and harmony of Supreme Forces, so absolutely linked that the effect would be that of an indivisible unit, a plurality whose action is unified, an unity whose action is pluralized".

#### 5.4.2. Offshoots of Golden Dawn – Ordo Templis Orientis, Society of the Inner Light and Israel Regardie

After the controversial Aleister Crowley had been expelled from Golden Dawn, for some time he acted independently and in 1907 he joined the organization Ordo Templis Orientis. This society was established by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century by German chemist Karl Kellner and just like Golden Dawn, it has Rosicrucian and Masonic roots. The Order of Eastern Templars soon started to be identified with Crowley's name and still nowadays he is for sure the most charismatic figure, since his successors did not succeed to excel him. At the same time, Aleister Crowley is most defamed personality of modern mystical philosophy. To some extent he alone contributed to his ill

fame by his eccentric behavior and statements. The members of Christian churches call him father of modern Satanism and black magician, but it seems that there is a dose of exaggeration in this attitude. Surely there are certain aspects in Crowley's lifestyle and behavior (sexual promiscuity, experiments with drugs, transgression of Christian taboos), which are unacceptable to Christians, but it is also certain that around Crowley's name there has been circulating myths and rumors which cannot be either confirmed, nor denied.

Aleister Crowley (a.k.a. Alexander Crowley) was born in a pious Christian family in 1875 in Leamington Spa, in the vicinity of Birmingham. As a child, Crowley adored his father, brewer and lay preacher. He often traveled with him through England and listened to his sermons. Father belonged to the fundamentalist Christian sect 'Plymouth Brethren'. Followers of this teaching did strictly and literally respect Bible and they lived in fear from the eternal damnation. In his younger days 'Alick' (as they called him) adopted and advocated the beliefs of his parents. As he would note down in his autobiography, in that time he was the most devoted follower of Jesus at the school. It was not allowed to him to read any other book save Bible. In that time he became fascinated with apocalyptic literature. He had attended a private Christian school in which he was distinguished among the other children by his knowledge; this early period was happy for Crowley.

In his twelfth year Crowley did experience a shock. His father, who was his idol and role model died, after a long illness. This tragedy struck heavily young Crowley. With his mother he moved to London, to her relatives. The role of father took over mother's brother, also himself a Christian fundamentalist, who would by his abuse decisively act upon Crowley's relation toward the religion. To make things worse, his bigoted and fanatical teachers at grammar school as well abused him; he faced often physical punishment and humiliations. He felt relief only after he enrolled Cambridge University in October, 1895.

After his three year study of chemistry at Cambridge, Crowley set foot on his life path of the researcher of esoteric fields. In 1898 he had departed to Switzerland, where he was engaged in mountaineering and read the book *Kabbalah Unveiled* by S.L. MacGregor Mathers. There he got acquainted with man named Julian Baker, who would meet him upon his return from London with members of Golden Dawn. In the beginning Crowley became intimate with experienced adept Allen Bennett. Since Bennett was in an unenviable financial situation, Crowley invited him to his apartment. Now he finally got opportunity to receive the teachings and rituals of Golden Dawn from first hand and from a man of great knowledge. Bennett was a mathematician and an expert in the field of electricity. He was a dedicated researcher of Hinduism and Buddhism as well. Close relationship with Bennett had a decisive impact on Crowley's later interest toward the Oriental mysticism.

As it was aforementioned, Crowley's ambition for rapid advancement in the hierarchy of the Order brought to conflict with leading members of the London lodge. In a period shorter than two years (between 1898 and 1900) Crowley's ambition and Mathers autocratic style of guidance of Order, as it seems, did decisively undermine the unity of Golden Dawn. Allen Bennett departed to Burma and Crowley to Mexico. In 1901 Crowley went to India and then to Burma, where he paid a visit to Bennett. From Burma, Crowley proceeds to Himalaya where he takes a part in mountaineering expedition. In 1902 he went to Scotland. There he would meet his future wife Rose, through his friend, Gerald Kelly.

Aleister and Rose in 1904 departed together to Ceylon (today Sri Lanka) and upon their return they stopped in Egypt. Here, in Cairo did occur another important event in Crowley's life. By the medium of Rose he noted down *The Book of Law*. In this script there are two key sentences for the new religion of Thelema that he established: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law" and "Love is the law, love under will". Besides these sayings, which bear certain similarity to "Love and do what thou wilt" by St. Augustine. The *Book of Law* also contains a considerable part of text that is confused, vague, contradictory or directly non-ethical, so it seems that the only thing that draws through the book as common woof is the way of expression in a style of ancient Egyptian prayers. For example, here we find Nietzschean attitude of rejecting the compassion for weak and feeble; revengeful and warlike god like that of Israel, permission for killing unbelievers (like in Kuran), pagan sacrifice of children and other nonsense, dismissed by contemporary members of O.T.O. organization.

By joining German Ordo Templis Orientis in 1907 Crowley, however, did preserve certain autonomy, because the same year he founded his own organization, Argentum Astrum, promoting the individual study of occultism, in imitation of Golden Dawn's teaching. In 1912 Aleister Crowley is on the head of British O.T.O. He became a founder of a unique society made up of three different, yet connected sections: O.T.O., Argentum Astrum and Gnostic Church. For the latter one he composed a text of Gnostic mass, similar to Catholic mass, in 1913. This had to be the central ceremony of the Order.

C Rowley spent the period of the First World War in United States. During this five years long abode he had been mainly engaged in work concerning magic. From the leader of the Order Reuss he obtained permission for changes and remakes of rituals, by which he created original O.T.O. rituals, different from those of Masons. In 1920 he went to Italy. In village Cefalu on Sicily he founded a community called Abby of Thelema. The next year he took the 10<sup>th</sup>, highest grade of the Order (Ipssisimus). Since he initiated himself alone into higher degrees from the 5<sup>th</sup> on, it is questionable whether he really reached the highest degree or not. After he had been banished by Mussolini's regime in 1923, Crowley went to Tunis. There he caught a chronic bronchitis and since in that time it was prescribed heroin as medicine, he became a drug-dependent, too.

The second half of the twenties Crowley spent mainly in Paris. In 1928 his secretary became Isrteael Regardie; he helped him to write the autobiography, which could improve his public image. But after 1930 the couple got ever more alienated from each other and eventually their paths separated.

The next year Crowley had also spent on journeys throughout Europe and Northern Africa and he sojourned for the most in Germany, during the Second World War the main part of European O.T.O. branches had been either destroyed or banished to underground activity.

By the end of the war the only active lodge was the one in California. Karl Germer, Crowley's representative in Germany, came to America after being released from the concentration camp. Already before, Crowley appointed him for his successor on the head of O.T.O. organization. The last couple of years Crowley has spent in England he died in December, 1947, in a boarding house in Hastings, from a respiratory infection.

In the focus of Crowley's literary heritage is work known under the name *Book Four*. In fact, it is a comprehensive handbook of Crowley's system of magic. It consists of four parts: *Mysticism* (1911), *Magick (Elementary Theory, 1912)*, *Magic in theory and practice* (1929) and *Thelema – The Law* (1936). For the mystical philosophy of greater importance is the first part, *Mysticism*. This work is a practical handbook of Raja Yoga, in that time one of the rare ones in the West. Crowley has written it in imitation of Vivekananda; in it he explains in a simple manner even the highest states of consciousness, like dhyana and Samadhi. In the preface Crowley explains that one can come to hidden sources of energy by following very definite rules; success of applied procedures is manifested by the union of subject and object. Crowley defines yoga just as a form of meditation which aim is the union of subject and object, microcosm and macrocosm, man and God. He says that by study of religious practices of great religions, he has found identity-in-diversity of them all. The main idea, he says, is that God as the Absolute is always present, but either veiled or masked by mind's thought. Just by one's practice of yoga one can reach him, that is, one can come to Samadhi, state in which each part of the universe becomes the whole, where there are no more contrarities between manifested and non-manifested.

Crowley's work would be continued by his disciple and secretary Israel Regardie and he would have impact on the founder of Scientology Church, Ron Hubbard, too. As regards O.T.O., it still exists nowadays. Among several factions disputing about the right to inheritance of original Crowley's Ordo Templis Orientis, American branch won – the followers of Grady McMurtry. Some Christians have accused members of O.T.O. to be Satanists (imputing the same accusations to Scientologists, too). The response of Crowley's followers is that the basic postulates of their religion are totally opposite of the postulates of Satanism; accordingly they include aspiration for the self-cognition, coming to the mystical experiences and knowledge of higher

truths, as well as the overcoming of Ego-personality and striving toward the union with universe.

Another important offshoot of Golden Dawn is Dion Fortune and her Society of the Inner Light, established in 1924. The main agenda of its members is the expansion of consciousness in psychic and spiritual domains. Such expanded consciousness is not an aim in itself, but it presents a path dedicated to the service of God and evolution of living forms. The primary orientation is Christian, in distinction from Crowley's, although the teaching of Society comprises also the pagan tradition of Egypt and Greece and Celtic mythology, as a part of the British cultural heritage.

Dion Fortune (a.k.a. Violet Firth) was born in the north of Wales, near the small town Llandudno, in 1890. Soon after her birth the family moved southward, to Weston-super-Mare. Father and mother had been helping to run a smaller hydrotherapeutic health-resort, in the vicinity of Bath. This area, in Bristol surroundings made a deep impression onto little Violet. The place of magnificent beauty (today natural reserve) did incite imagination, so she was only four years of age, when she had vision of Atlantis. This early indication later would manifest through the development of her extrasensory abilities, in her adolescence.

After the grammar school she had enrolled London University, department of psychology and psychoanalysis. After the graduation she worked for some time as a psychotherapist on Brunswick Square in London. Dion Fortune accepted Freud's thought that sexuality is foundation of the entire psychological wellbeing; moreover, she deemed that it is basis for the spiritual wellbeing, too. After the First World War she had widened her interest onto occult sciences and her first mentor was Irish occultist and Mason Theodore Moriarty. In 1919 she was initiated in the lodge (originated from Golden Dawn) Alpha and Omega, but soon she joined Stella Matutina, led by Mathers' widow Mina. Over the next few years she developed her medium abilities, at the same time pursuing her interest for occultism and parapsychology.

Dion Fortune was a free thinker and in course of time she developed her own views onto Kabbala, mystical cosmology and pagan mythology, religion and philosophy. Her tendency toward free deliberation with leaning on her personal channeling experience has brought her to disputes with Mina Mathers. So, in 1924 she decided to found her own organization, under the name of Society of the Inner Light. Soon she had drawn a group of followers and over the next several years worked out the teaching of the Society, which consisted of the wide span of metaphysical fields. From subject matter represented, among others there were male-female relationship, esoterical orders and their work, exercises and work of the initiate, Arthurian legends, principles of esoteric healing and else. As the final goal of the Society there is stated the development of the highest potentials, through the development of higher consciousness and balanced expression of the entire human being. In

practical exercises there is a special emphasis on knowledge of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and on practice of meditation.

Until 1930 Dion Fortune has published a row of books, among which prominent are *Esoteric Orders* and *Training and Work of an Initiate*. These works describe the system of acting of esoteric orders and training of the initiate in style of the ancient schools of initiation. In this period she also published two novels, *Secret of Dr. Taverner* and *Demon Lover*. In her novels Fortune has strived to depict metaphysical principles of the esoteric philosophy and their possible appliance in everyday life.

In the next phase, during the thirties, there originated important works like *Psychic Self Defence* and one of her most significant works, *The Mystical Qabalah* – introduction into the Hermetic Kabbala, system which makes the foundation of the Western esoteric tradition. This latter work, among the rest, considers also macrocosmic archetypes, like for example of father, mother, magician and wise woman. They, according to Fortune present binds of soul with certain 'lines of forces' in macrocosm – universe, that is, those archetypes bring human to the divine. In the period between 1935 and 1938 Fortune publish three more novels: *The Winged Bull*, *The Goat Foot God*, *The Sea Priestess*. These novels are as well practical explanation of the principles given in works of more theoretical nature. In the beginning of the forties, with bursting-out of the Second World War came a hard time for the Society of the Inner Light. During the war, Fortune has not published a single work, because of the rationalization of paper; communication with members had been accomplished through so called *Monthly Letters*. During the war, Dion Fortune wrote her last novel *Moon Magic*. Her scripts from the last phase would be edited and published posthumously by Gareth Knight. Soon after the end of the Second World War, by the beginning of 1946 Dion Fortune died of leukemia.

After their paths separated, Israel Regardie joined Stella Matutina, one of the few Golden Dawn branches. It was in 1933. His entry to Golden Dawn was followed by resentment of some eminent members, for his collaboration with notorious Crowley. But, the decisive support he got just from Dion Fortune, who had been delighted by his work *The Tree of Life*. During his 50-odd years career, Israel Regardie has built his reputation not only of Golden Dawn greatest adept, but also as one of the greatest adepts of 20<sup>th</sup> century in general.

Israel Regardie was born in a Jewish family in 1907 in London. He spent his childhood in poor East End. When he was 14, his family moved to United States and got established in Washington. Regardie educated himself at art schools in Washington and Philadelphia. Already in that period he manifested an extraordinary intuition in learning and soon he got in touch with theosophical literature – the works of H.P. Blavatsky, works from fields of yoga and Hinduism. He used to spend a lot of time in Congress Library, carrying through his own studies. Soon he found a teacher to teach him in

Hebrew language, so after a while he could study the Kabbalistic literature independently.

In February, 1926 Rehardie joined the Rosicrucian Society. During this year and in a course of next year he advanced to the degree of Zelator. In this time his interest for occultism got stronger. Crowley's books have been a true revealing for him; he got so delighted that he wished to meet him. Regardie had written a letter to Crowley and he got a response. After a brief correspondence, Crowley offered to Regardie a position of his secretary. So, in October, 1928 Regardie did travel to Paris. Over the next three years he had been waiting in vain for Crowley to teach him of secrets in magic and yoga. Regardie did not insist; so realizing that his employer does not have an intention of transmitting his knowledge to him, he tackled to study by himself, painstakingly examining each available book, magazine or manuscript in the field of magic.

The thirties were uncommonly prolific for Regardie, so from that period did originate his best works. In 1932 he published two books. *A Garden of Pomegranates* is the result of his own Kabbalistic studies; it is based upon as on his own examinations, so on collected knowledge from different sources. The second work *The Tree of Life* amalgamates material from different fields into a large and unique whole. So, this comprehensive work includes ancient mythology and magic of Egypt and Greece, Chaldeans, Israelites, yoga, Hinduism and modern theosophy.

Regardie did not linger for long in Stella Matutina. Realizing that the Order and its teaching would not last if someone do not publish them and promulgate, he left Stella Matutina by the end of 1934. Soon thereafter he published the work *The Art of True Healing*, in which he expounded in a concise manner his philosophy of the alternative medicine. Similarly to the modern holistic scientist Deepak Chopra, he considers as well that everything in the nature vibrates by pulsating life; he speaks of an unchangeable rhythm present everywhere in the cosmos. Regardie points out the importance of practicing exercises of rhythmical breathing and relaxation and recommends the exercise of the Middle Pillar, by which is enhanced the energy field of the organism.

In the second half of the thirties Regardie dedicates himself to the study of psychology and psychotherapy, firstly in London and then in New York. In 1937 he finished the work *The Philosopher's Stone*, book on the alchemy from the Jungian perspective. In the same year he published a voluminous work, consisting of four books, in which he exposed for the first time in public the rituals and teachings of Golden Dawn. This work, simply entitled *Golden Dawn* caused a tumultuous reaction and protest of members of the organization, which work until then had been shrouded by a veil of mystery. Regardie justified such a move by his wish to save the teachings of Golden Dawn from oblivion and to offer a possibility to a wider circle of men to get acquainted with them.

On his return to America, Regardie studied psychotherapy and the study included Freudian, Jungian and Reich's methods and techniques. In 1938 he published the work *The Middle Pillar*, in which there were exposed practical exercises of ceremonial magic of Golden Dawn, step by step. In the same book Regardie compares these magical techniques with methods and hypotheses of psychoanalysis. He practically tried to bridge the gap between magic and psychotherapy.

After the graduation in 1941 Regardie has been enrolled into U.S. army, where he stays until the end of the war. During this time he had been studying Christian mysticism; his ideas he would depict in the work *The Romance of Metaphysics*, published after the war, in 1946. In 1947 Regardie moves to California, where he got private practice, as chiropracticist and Reichian therapist. In this after-war period Regardie had also taught psychiatry on Los Angeles' Chiropractic College and wrote numerous articles in magazines; as well, he wrote a row of books.

Israel Regardie had retired in 1981 and then he withdrew himself to Sedona, Arizona, where he continued to write. His works from this late phase included titles like *Ceremonial Magic*, *The Lazy Man's Guide to Relaxation*, *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*. Even in retirement he continued to give advices from the domain of health and magic, until his death. He died from a hart attack in 1985, at dinner in one of his favorite restaurants.

## 5.5. PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

### 5.5.1. Manly P. Hall's Secret Teaching of all Ages

In the course of twenties and thirties when in Europe held prominent roles Guenon, Evola and others, in America appeared an important spiritual teacher named Manly Palmer Hall. This American of Canadian origin had imposed himself already as young man and later became the most prolific American author of the mystical philosophy in 20<sup>th</sup> century. During his long and successful career he wrote more than 150 books, hundreds of essays and countless articles in different magazines; already in his lifetime he has been considered the leading authority in fields of religion, mythology, mysticism and occultism.

Manly P. Hall was born in Peterborough, Ontario (nearby Toronto), in 1901. Since his parents divorced shortly after his birth, he had been nurtured by his maternal grandmother. While still a child, she brought him along to United States, more precisely to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where she moved. Grandmother, who had incited in him the thirst for knowledge, died when he was 16. Then he was adopted by an independent branch of Rosicrucian community in California, but after a while he left the community and joined liberal evangelist congregation called the Church of the People. Already in his teenage days Manly dedicated himself to the study of various traditions of ancient wisdom. Very early he came upon conclusion that wisdom cannot be reached by following just one spiritual path. Instead, he perceived wisdom as the supreme domain, where there are amalgamated and permeated philosophy, religion and science and where are no borders between them.

At 19, he moved to Los Angeles and already at that early age began his career. In autumn 1920 he held his first public lecture in Santa Monica, California. The theme of the lecture was reincarnation. The next year he was invited to hold a whole series of lectures in Los Angeles. Until the end of his six decades long career he would hold almost eight thousand lectures. At his numerous lectures he presented teachings of East and West in front of thousands of auditors; he had exposed the way in which ancient myths, mysteries and symbols denoted the wisdom of ancient tradition and the way they are used in everyday life. Only when education reaches its peak, it is time to put in the service for the neighbor. Hall deemed the sound

personality the foundation to start a career in the field of esoteric philosophy. How to achieve this, he explained in the book *Self Unfoldment by Disciplines of Realization*.

Already in his twenties Manly P. Hall as well began to publish his works. Among these earliest works prominent are *The Ways of the Lonely Ones* and *the Lost Keys of Freemasonry*. In this latter book Hall explains the way that candidate has to pass to reach the highest degree, that of Master Freemason. Masonry, although not being a religion, contains many religious elements. It is actually the lost knowledge, sought by many, throughout the centuries. Hall compares mason with an architect of the sublime mystery, who builds the temple in his own soul. He must be the copy of the Great Architect of the universe and he must try to build noble forms in this lower universe. A pursuit for the truth must be the aim of the master. Prerequisites for reaching the truth are devotion, regeneration of the body, purification of the soul and organization of the spirit. Mason should be adorned by responsibility in everyday work and life. Whether in a lodge or outside, the true mason must be a supreme result of the sincere aspiration, Hall concludes.

In this early period Manly P. Hall began with preparations for his *magnum opus*, which would be published in 1928, under the title *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*. In his pursuit for the ancient wisdom, on his long journeys in 1923 and 1924 he visited many cultural centers in Asia, Europe and Egypt. His favorite place for the research of old and rare texts was London's British Museum. Owing to his friendship with general Younghusband (leader of the British expedition to Tibet) it was allowed to him the access to the exclusive material of the Museum, to the originals of very rare and precious ancient manuscripts. On his journeys Hall did strengthen his conviction about the need of the comparative study of religion, aimed at man's spiritual evolution. On his return from the journey Hall started to write his demanding and voluminous work, which delineates the complete Western tradition – *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*.

Between his return and publishing of the work Manly P. Hall spent certain time in the Wall Street, where he worked as financial clerk. This brief period spent in the world of huge financial power capital caused him deep suspicions concerning the manner of leading the business. It seemed to him that human individual was lost in that system and that man in the pursuit for the material advantage often loses his soul, and sometimes his life, too. Namely, he had witnessed a tragic event, when one of his colleagues, despaired for the failure of his investments, committed a suicide.

The disappointment with a world of financial business only incited more his research of the problem of human race, origin of man and his fate. He spent a lot of time in New York Public Library studying spiritual currents of the ancient civilizations. He had come upon conclusion that modern authorities in the field of philosophy did not appreciate the old idealistic systems or deeper aspect of the comparative religion.

Seriously tackling the demanding work, Hall had collected in the course of twenties a considerable heap of texts of those forgotten ancient sages and finally in 1928 he published *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*. This work of encyclopedic character, as the very title implies, comprises a string of subjects concerning the mystical philosophy of antiquity, The Middle Ages and modern age: Atlantis, Egyptian religion, Hermes Trismegistus, antique mysteries, Pythagoras, astrology, symbolism, magic, alchemy, Kabbala, Tarot, Paracelsus, Rosicrucian Society, Masonry, mystical Christianity, Islam and mythology of American Indians. In the introduction of this work Hall presented in short the whole development of philosophy, starting with Thales and Anaximander, up to Nietzsche and Bergson. Hall deems that philosophy did originate from the religious mysteries of the antiquity, which preserved the universal transcendental knowledge. Mysteries had been kept in secret societies, which members were obliged to the vow of silence. The language of the mysteries is language of symbols; therefore every form of existence is a symbol of the divine activity. Accordingly, inside the various emblematic figures, allegories and ancient rituals there is hidden the secret teaching concerning mysteries of life, preserved for eons, carried through many centuries by members of small groups of initiates.

Work *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* was supplemented the next year by the work *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*. It originated as the commentary and enlargement of Hall's *magnum opus*. In it, special attention is paid to Neo-Platonism, early Christendom, as well as to some themes already presented in previous work.

In 1934 Manly P. Hall established Philosophical Research Society (PRS) with a simple goal of creating a universal brotherhood, which would gather all the lovers of wisdom. This society still exists nowadays. Its activity comprises a huge span – lectures, seminars, workshops and performances on philosophical subjects. In the complex of the society are also included library<sup>30</sup> and bookshop. The headquarters of the society is from the very beginning in Los Angeles. It is already for decades the place where are studied all the spiritual traditions. Programs of the Society emphasize the need of integration of philosophy, religion and science in a unique system of education.

In the multitude of books that Hall published during his lifetime especially prominent are series of books under collective name *The Adept Series PRS*. This collection of 12 volumes includes esoteric traditions of ancient Greece and Rome (works *The Initiates of Greece and Rome* and *Mystics and Mysteries of Alexandria*). Western tradition (*Orders of the Quest – The Holy Grail, Orders of the Great Work – Alchemy, Orders of Universal Reformation – Utopias, Masonic Orders of Fraternity, America's Assignment with Destiny*); Eastern tradition (*The Light of the Vedas, Arhats of Buddhism, The Sages of China,*

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<sup>30</sup> The library originated of the private collection of books of Manly P. Hall. The books of this collection were used by some renowned scientists and philosophers, among the rest Carl G. Jung, for the needs of the work *Psychology and Alchemy*

*The Mystics of Islam and Venerated Teachers of Jains, Sikhs and Parsis*). The great number of works by Manly P. Hall is of educational nature and includes various surveys – lives and works of different philosophers and different traditional philosophical systems. To such belong also works like *Pathway of Philosophy*, *Twelve World Teachers* or *Sages and Seers*. One of the books written in similar style as *Secret Teachings of All Ages* is the work *The Phoenix*, with subtitle *An Illustrated Review of Occultism & Philosophy*.

Because of his merits in promulgation of Masonic ideas, in 1973 Manly P. Hall was promoted into the highest, 33<sup>rd</sup> degree, in spite of the fact that in the course of his life he did not belong to any Masonic lodge. He got this acknowledgement for writing series of book concerning philosophical basis of Freemasonry. Many people respected this man, for many noble traits that had adorned him<sup>31</sup>. Although he disposed with an immense encyclopedic knowledge, he treated common people with respect, never imposing his philosophical principles. Of philosophers born around the turn of the centuries, he did leave this world as the last one, in 1990.

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<sup>31</sup> One of Hall's admirers and friends was the president of Rosicrucian Fellowship Max Heindel. For his book *Blavatsky and the Secret Doctrine* Hall did write an Introduction.

## **6. NEW SCIENCE AND MYSTICISM**

### 6.1. HOLISTIC SCIENCE

#### 6.1.1. Scientific-Mystical Philosophy of Holism

The last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized as well by the convergence of the academic science and mystical philosophy. This 'phenomena' did occur earlier only intermittently, since some of the mystical philosophers were also scientists, but only over the last decades this phenomenon did adopt traits of a constant trend. One of the reasons is surely that, that is immanent to new holistic and ecological viewpoint. But, it seems that the separation of science from religion and religious philosophy has been mainly characteristic of the West, so this was just expected consequence of the arrival of Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism to Europe and America. Among the numerous scientific-mystical authors, we will take a glimpse just on few most renowned.

Hungarian scientist and philosopher Ervin Laszlo (born in 1932 in Budapest) is generally considered as the founder of systems philosophy and general theory of evolution. As the child and adolescent, he showed an extraordinary musical talent - he was a real prodigy. So, already at seven he entered the Academy of Franz Liszt and at nine he began to perform with Budapest philharmonic orchestra. At 15 he was already an international star of classical music, winning prestige awards. But, on approaching his 20<sup>th</sup> year, he got ever more attracted by philosophy and fundamental questions like meaning of nature and life, and of fate and society. He continued to perform music in his twenties as well, but at the same time attending courses and seminars at Columbia University and New School for Society Research.

Laszlo did always bring along his voluminous notes from philosophy, wherever he went on concerts and tours. After one such concert in Hague at the dinner occurred conversation about his annotations. His interlocutor happened to be an editor of the philosophy library, of the local publishing house. After the editor had surveyed the manuscript, he showed great interest and a wish to publish them. They were published eventually in 1963, which meant also a turning point in his career, as the music remained for good a 'second rater' in his life. The main subject of interest now there

was philosophy, especially themes like origin of the universe, nature and direction of the evolution of life and consciousness, as well as the meaning of changes and transformations in modern culture and civilizations. Soon Laszlo gained a Ph.D. degree at Sorbonna, becoming thus formally academic scientist.

In the course of the sixties and seventies Ervin Laszlo held lectures in philosophy and systems science at Yale University and also at several others. During his professorship at Yale there originated his work *Introduction to Systems Philosophy*, fundamental work in the field of systems philosophy; it originated under the influence of Austrian biologist von Bertalanffy. In the period between 1978 and 1985 Laszlo worked to UN, on researches in connection with international new economic order and regional and interregional cooperation. In the second half of the eighties Laszlo begins to deal more intensively with questions of evolution, which results in works *Evolution: The Grand Synthesis*, from 1987 and three works from the nineties – *The Creative Cosmos* (1993), *The Interconnected Universe* (1995) and *The Whispering Pond* (1996). These works speak about the creative cosmos, which is interconnected and evolutionary. According to Laszlo as the foundation of everything, of matter and consciousness, there is zero point field, as the common cosmic source which generates them.

Although his earlier works had been to some extent permeated with mysticism, it seems that the most mystical traits bear the most recent work *Science and Akashic Field* (2004). In it he expounded his unique concept which presents a bind between the science and spirituality. In his integral theory Laszlo clarifies how modern science discovered Akasha field of perennial philosophy. This field namely had been presupposed by ancient mystics who thought that there had existed an interconnected cosmic field, where had been registered all the events that ever happened in the universe. This Akasha field (identified by Laszlo with zero point field) presents at the same time the source of all the things in space and time, as well as the continuous memory of the universe. Although Ervin Laszlo does not use the concept of god or the Creator it seems that it is implicitly contained in the term Akash field. Hindu philosophy identifies this concept with a kind of energy of the Supreme Being in its primordial and undifferentiated form.

Just like Laszlo, so American physicist Fritjof Capra perceives the universe as interconnected, more precisely as the dynamic net of non-separated energy patterns. Capra's first bigger work, *Tao of Physics* (1975) is important not only for the holistic science, but also for the philosophy, as he was the first among modern physicists to describe the similarities between the theories of quantum physics and ancient Oriental mysticism.

Fritjof Capra was born in 1939 in Vienna, Austria's capital. He had attended Vienna university, where one of the lecturers was renowned physicist Werner Heisenberg. He had taken a Doctor's degree in 1966 and afterwards he worked for two years in Paris, on researching projects in connection with high energy physics. In 1968 he had set out to USA, where he became a

lecturer at Santa Cruz University in California. In the first half of the seventies Capra continues the research at the Imperial College in London. In this period there originated *Tao of Physics*, pioneer work in the field of new scientific-mystical philosophy. After Capra's words, he got the first inspiration in 1969, on the beach in Santa Cruz, watching rolling of waves and listening to the rhythm of his own breathing. Before his departure to London, he put together a photo-montage of dancing Shiva<sup>32</sup> and traces of the collision of subatomic particles. By meditation over that picture later in London, he experienced a powerful intuitive insight in the reality of the existence of parallels between modern physics and Oriental mysticism.

In Capra's opinion, the most important trait of the Oriental world-view is the consciousness of the unity and interdependence of all the things and events; all the things are perceived as inseparable and mutually dependent parts of the greater cosmic whole, i.e. as different manifestations of the same ultimate reality. And also after the understanding of the modern quantum physics everything in the universe is connected with everything, so no part of it is fundamental. By Bell's theorem it is incontestably proved the interconnection of the universe at quantum level, i.e. instant non-local connection by measuring two very distant electrons. By this it was proved the interconnection, interdependence and inseparability at the quantum level of everything with everything else in the universe.

Fritjof Capra is probably one of the greatest modern promulgators of Taoism, in spite of the fact that *Tao of Physics* grants to this religion barely a dozen pages. As the most important achievement of Taoists Capra deems the understanding of change and transformation as essential traits in the nature. These changes are manifested as dynamic interaction of polar opposites of yin and yang. As it had been stated in the first part of the book, Capra in *Tao of Physics* perceived the similarities between Taoism and Heraclites' concept of world order in which eternally living fire burns and extinguishes itself with measure.

Capra also remarks the parallels with Hinduism. Namely, according to Hindu understanding of nature, all the forms are relative, fluid of eternally changeable maya. The world of maya is in eternal alternation, in one dynamic game, in which the active principle is karma and all the universe is in such activity where everything is dynamically connected with everything else. Hindu divinity Shiva, presented on the cover of *Tao of Physics* is symbolic cosmic dancer; he is the god of creation and destruction, who supports with his dance the endless rhythm of the universe. In the Buddhism too Capra notices the parallels with modern physics; they are most perceptible in work Avatamsaka-sutra, for which D.T. Suzuki says that it was the conclusion of Buddhist thought. The central theme of this work, as in other Oriental religions, is the unity and interconnection of all the things and events.

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<sup>32</sup> Hindu divinity.

After *Tao of Physics* Fritjof Capra wrote several important works, like *The Turning Point*, *The Web of Life* and *Hidden Connections*, but in them mysticism was not so explicit as in his first work. Today, Capra is director of his Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley, California and he is also a temporary lecturer at Schumacher College in England. His interests are for a long time directed towards holistic, deep deliberation of ecology, through his concept of net. This concept, according to Capra is the key of the development of scientific understanding not only of ecosystems, but also of the very nature of life. Thence in Capra's Center emphasis is put on the understanding of the most important principles of ecology, for example interdependence, recycling, partnership, diversity and sustainability.

In modern holistic science there are perceptible tendencies of scientists toward transcendence of borders imposed by still prevailing reductionism. So, for example analogously to nuclear physicist Capra, who shifted his interest from the study of physics of subatomic particles toward ecology and biology, British biologist Rupert Sheldrake passed the same way, but in reverse direction. Sheldrake thinks about the universe as an immense net of interactive particles in which each combination binds participating particles into a unique quantum system. His most mystical work *Physics of Angels* Sheldrake wrote in collaboration with American liberal theologian Matthew Fox. In it, through the Platonist dialog between biologist and theologian there are presented peculiar parallels between the works of antique and medieval mystics on angels and modern quantum physics.

Rupert Sheldrake was born in 1942 in Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire. From an early age he took interest in plants and animals. He inherited that interest from his father who had been an amateur naturalist. After he had finished the grammar school, he went to Cambridge to study biology and biochemistry. This study has frustrated him for exclusively materialistic approach to science of lecturers at the university. So, already as a student he used to read alternative literature, for example the scientific works of Goethe, whose approach he considered holistic, with the integral and direct insight. In addition to biology, Sheldrake has also studied philosophy and history for one year at Cambridge as well, where he got his Doctor's degree in 1967.

At Cambridge Sheldrake had been for a while a member of the group called 'Epiphany Philosophers'. This group of philosophers, physicists and mystics studied various fields like quantum theory, philosophy of science, parapsychology, alternative medicine and holistic philosophy of nature. At Cambridge Sheldrake did continue his professional career, working till 1973 as Director of studies in biochemistry and cell biology. He also dealt with research work on development of plants and examined the process of aging of cells. Between 1974 and 1978 he abode in Hyderabad, India, working as collaborator at an agricultural institute. On his return to Cambridge he continued his research work on development of plants. But he became more and more convinced that mechanistic approach is not satisfactory, in the study of living organisms.

Sheldrake then began to research the holistic tradition in biology and that had been the approach mostly ignored until then from official science. Gradually in him began to raise idea of morphic resonance, which he would work out in the book *New Science of Life* (1981). According to Sheldrake, similar natural structures harmonize their behavior by the help of resonance with the behavior of their predecessors. Resonance is transmitted from the morphogenetic fields, spaces that shape organisms, crystals and molecules. In these fields, Sheldrake thinks, is collected the entire experience and recollection of each single species of living beings, as well as so called non-living matter. We remember that in the first part of the book it was mentioned that similar idea in primordial form had existed yet by Plotinus, who considered that matter had been formed in relation to previously existing forms in sphere of the intelligible.

Sheldrake later upgraded his theory in works *The Presence of the Past* (1988) and *The Rebirth of Nature* (1990). In the mid nineties his collaboration with American theologian Matthew Fox yielded in two works, *Natural Grace* (1995) and *Physics of Angels* (1996). This latter book is interesting because angels had been over last few centuries mentioned unwillingly even by theologians, not to mention scientists. Instead of the ancient hierarchy of angels according to heavenly spheres, Sheldrake suggests the new one in which first order of angels deals with matters which belong to the highest level of the universe; the second organizes groups of galaxies and star systems; the third order deals with planets. Sheldrake states that in The Middle Ages and even earlier<sup>33</sup> existed the belief that universe presents an immense organism – living being. In recent times this belief was revitalized through astrology, which has preserved up to nowadays the tradition on the influence of planets, that is, of spirits or angels who rule over them. Sheldrake deems that heavenly bodies, as well as groups of bodies, possess the intelligence and consciousness. He sees the connection between angels and modern physics in that, that angels do not have mass or body and they can be perceived only when they act, just like quanta of light, photons; photons are localized just because of their activity, like angels. Fox says that angels are part of the nature, they follow her laws; they follow the same natural patterns of interconnection between the whole and its parts. Fox also thinks that modern religious practice should be in harmony with new scientific insights on the universe – it should be snatched from the books and returned to cosmology.

Sheldrake's interlocutor in the dialog on angels, American theologian Mathew Fox surely is one of the most controversial figures of modern Christianity. Leaning on mystical Christian tradition, this former Dominican offered the idea of spiritual creation, universal grace and celebration of God in each living being. In his work *Original Blessing* he opposes the idea of the original inborn sin and accordingly to the theology of Fall and Redemption. For his unorthodox stance, he was expelled from the Dominican Order; however numerous admirers consider him the greatest contemporary

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<sup>33</sup> As we have seen, by Stoics or Julian the Apostate.

Christian mystic. He revived the ancient mystical teachings in a modern holistic spirit. He speaks in favor of the interrelationship of all religions, social justice, dependence of the spirit on consciousness of the ecological surroundings, feminism and acceptance of homosexuality.

Matthew Fox was born in 1940 in Madison, Wisconsin. He comes of the intermarriage (in religious sense) so he has grown in ecumenical atmosphere, what would have impact on his later religious commitment. He had joined the Dominican Order in 1960 and he was ordained priest seven years later. He graduated philosophy and theology in 1967 and afterwards attended postgraduate study in Paris, France. He got his Doctor's degree in religious sciences in 1970. Seven years later he founded his Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality, to the Holy Names College in Oakland, California.

After publishing the work *Original Blessing* in 1983, Fox found himself exposed to blows of Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by then cardinal Josef Ratzinger (today Pope Benedict XVI). This revolutionary work speaks of the celebration of beauty, compassion, justice, about the way toward the positive knowledge and ecstatic unity with the whole Creation. The essential message of the work is celebration of life as blessing, the original blessing from which all other would follow. This model of the original blessing advocates panentheism, which perceives God (and divine goodness and love) in the created order, opening the possibility that all humans are originally good, because they were made according to the image of God.

Vatican, fearing Fox's growing popularity, tried to silence him for the first time in 1988. Over the next five years Vatican's congregation strived to prove the heresy that would eventually lead to his expulsion from the Catholic Church. Finally in 1993 he was expelled. However, he continued his educational work, not anymore under cover of Holy Names College, but in his own foundation called University of Creation Spirituality, also in Oakland, California. Now the foundation is called Wisdom University and Matthew Fox, besides being director emeritus, also still holds lectures. Students at this university can learn on subjects like primitive (indigenous) religions; Christianity, colonization and cultural imperialism; ecology; mythology; spirituality of creation; cosmology; mysticism and deep ecumenism.

While Matthew Fox is one of the greatest contemporary heretics in the field of religion, American endocrinologist Deepak Chopra is probably one of the greatest heretics in the field of medicine. This great promulgator of the holistic concept of health and Ayurveda (traditional Indian system of medicine) is often the target of the criticism of the medical establishment, because of many references in his work on connection between quantum physics and process of healing and because of 'exaggerated mystification of Hinduism and Ayurveda. This Maharishi's pupil can be deemed in a way (in relation to his influence on change of paradigm in philosophy of medicine)

the successor of Paracelsus, to wit, as contemporary version of the famous physician and philosopher. Chopra often emphasizes that Hinduism had significant influence on him, especially the teaching of Vedanta and Bhagavad-Gita.

Deepak Chopra was born in New Delhi, India's capital, in 1947. As young man he got fond of English literature and had a wish to become a journalist; however he did enroll medicine. After the graduation in 1970 at All India Institute of Medical Sciences in his native town, he moved to United States. Firstly he had interned at a New Jersey hospital and afterwards at University of Virginia hospital, where he specialized endocrinology. Afterwards, he worked for some time as endocrinologist, in his private office, at the same time being a lecturer at several medical schools. In 1985 he became chief of staff at New England Memorial Hospital.

Shortly after he had taken the new function at Boston's hospital, Chopra read a book on transcendental meditation. Getting delighted with ancient Hindu tradition of holistic healing (Ayurveda) and disappointed by the academic medicine (deeming that it depends too much on synthetic drugs) he got in touch with Maharishi and established the Ayurvedic health center in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Chopra's western medical education and the reputation he had acquired until then, helped him to gain many adherents, also among some celebrities.

Chopra's medical philosophy came into expression through several important works, among which are prominent for example *Creating Health* (1987) or *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* (1993). In these works he has spoken for the first time on mystical connections between medicine and quantum physics. So Chopra states that in our cells continually occur quantum events which elude the linear elapsing of time. Subatomic particles in our cells present sheaves of vibrant energy, which transmit the energy. According to Chopra, the emptiness inside each atom pulses by invisible intelligence and each mental impulse is automatically transformed into biological information; biochemical reactions in our body are incited by consciousness. Chopra thinks that each cell is entirely conscious of our feelings. He sees the quantum-mechanic body as consciousness in motion. In man, there is focused the infinite intelligence of the universe. Its current is called 'prana' and it can be manipulated in order to maintain our health. Such holistic approach has its roots in Ayurveda, the ancient script of Indian philosophy. This script speaks of mutual relation between food, behavior, biological rhythms, surroundings and thoughts; all of these values are examined from the viewpoint of the whole, which is conceived bigger than the mere sum of its parts.

After 1993 Chopra lives and works in La Jolla, California, where he is the executive director of Sharp Institute for Human Potential and Mind/Body Medicine. From that year Chopra act independently, in relation to Maharishi's TM movement. Two years later, Chopra opened his health center called Chopra Center for Well Being, also in La Jolla.

Of Chopra's newer works, by its mysticism is distinguished *How to Know God* (2000). Chopra understands God as subatomic process, process in which everyone can get involved, no matter what religion one does adhere to. Chopra describes God as sevenfold, as seven visions – Protector, Almighty, God of Peace, Redeemer, Creator, God of Miracles and True Being. Different individuals will perceive God in different ways. There are seven consecutive degrees; the one who reaches the topmost level is closest to God and he is mostly in harmony with him.

Ken Wilber, American holistic scientist and philosopher speaks as well of gradual evolution of human consciousness. Like Aurobindo, he speaks of an evolution on a larger scale, i.e. the evolution of the universe as the whole. The important place in Wilber's opus occupies the integral theory of consciousness, in which are permeated fields of mysticism, postmodernism, science and systems theory. Although he is considered the founder of transpersonal school of psychology, in the course of the nineties he distanced from this branch and called his approach 'integral psychology' and 'integral philosophy'.

Ken Wilber was born in 1949 in Oklahoma City, in a family of US air force officer. Because of father's constant transfers, family had to move often from one state to another. So they lived on Bermudas, in Texas, Idaho and Nebraska, where he finished high school. In 1968 he enrolled medicine at Duke University, but already on first year he had gotten disappointed in science and began the study on his own, of psychology and philosophy of East and West. Then he returns to Nebraska, where he enrolls the university and for some time he studies chemistry and biology. He did not graduate, because he continued simultaneously to study philosophy and psychology.

Already in 1973 Wilber finished the manuscript for his first work, *The Spectrum of Consciousness*. In this work he posed the foundations for his future spiritual development, through the synthesis of Western and Eastern religion, philosophy, physics and psychology. There had gotten to pass four years before Wilber found a publisher – theosophical publishing house Quest Books. Eventually, this book experienced an excellent reception by reading public; some even compared him with such great men as William James, Sigmund Freud or Albert Einstein.

In the beginning of the eighties, Wilber published two works in fields of the individual psycho-spiritual development (*The Atman Project*) and cultural and spiritual evolution of the mankind (*Up from Eden*). In the first work he connects the achievements of the developmental psychology: describing the primordial structures of consciousness of mystical traditions toward newer structures of consciousness. In that way he presented the advancement of the individual consciousness on a hierarchical scale. In the second work Wilber writes about the historical evolution of consciousness on the wider scale, through different historical epochs, from prehistoric times to modern age.

In the second half of the eighties Wilber abandoned writing for a while because of the grave disease of his wife. In 1987 he had moved to Boulder, Colorado, where he later founded his 'Integral Institute'. At this Wilber's holistic institute, the education of students is directed toward integral solutions of today's problems, so there are studied for example integral medicine, integral politics, integral economy, integral ecology and other subjects.

In 1995 Wilber published a voluminous work *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*<sup>34</sup>. In this work he puts the foundations of his integral philosophy. In this work Wilber endeavors to connect many pluralist contexts of science, moral aesthetics, Eastern and Western philosophy and world's spiritual traditions. His idea was not to insist on details, but on general level, at which world is perceived as the whole. In this work Wilber assume critical stance not only toward Western culture, but also toward movements like New Age, pointing out that these approaches do not possess the depth and minutely worked out nature of perennial philosophy, which presents the concept reposing in the background of all the great religious teachings.

*Integral Psychology*, Wilber's work from year 2000, is the all-comprehensive survey of the psychological science, with an emphasis on spirituality and on the structures and states of consciousness. The integration of self in Wilber's opinion is possible through the authentic spiritual practice, for example through contemplative prayer or intensive meditation. The final aim, according to Wilber, is the transformation of consciousness, by which we come into the contact with 'infinite love' and we penetrate the 'mysteries of eternity'.

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It seems that the key word of modern mystical philosophy of today, by the beginning of the 21st century is convergence, that is, accommodation and mutual approach and aspiration toward the same goal of religion, philosophy and science. Mysticism is not anymore something discarded *a priori* in academic circles. It is not necessarily identified with superstition as it was over the last several centuries. To this, more flexible viewpoint significantly contributed theories of modern physics, for example indeterminacy principle and chaos theory which both at least implicitly express traits of mysticism. So, there happened the unexpected - instead of total discard of mysticism, with growth of scientific knowledge, there occurred the 'marriage' between them. Consequently, man does not have to be a prophet to predict further convergence of science, religion and philosophy. However, in the end we have to leave certain dose skepticism, in relation to their total amalgamation in the near future. Nature did, namely, imposed some restriction concerning the penetration into very subtle levels of existence<sup>35</sup>. But, the magic charm of mysticism is just in that, that something still remains hidden. To reveal all

<sup>34</sup> This is only th first volume of the future *Kosmos Trilogy*.

the secrets of the universe, we should become equal to the Creator and that is of course impossible; there however remains the aspiration toward reaching its proximity. If we made just a small step forward in relation to antecedent generations, we have done already a lot.

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<sup>35</sup> For example, it is not possible simultaneous determination of the position and speed of a subatomic particle (indeterminacy principle).

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