L608, Survey of Non-Traditional Beliefs

Agenda:

**1. Session I, September 22**

 **Introduction**

 **Sources**

 **Mystical Traditions**

 **What Is a Mystic**

 **Classical Elements**

2. Session II, September 29

 Karma

 Resolution of Karma

3. Session III, October 6

 Reincarnation

 Akashic Records

4. Session IV, October 13

 Free Will Choice

 Understanding Karma, Reincarnation and Free Will Choice

 Changing Your Energy

5. Session V, October 20

 Astrology

 Ley Lines

 Healing Systems

6. Session VI, October 27

Chakras

 Kundalini

Energy Layers in Body

 Mystery Schools

 Lesser Mysteries/Greater Mysteries

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NOTES:

Said I would give examples about how class information can be used

 well, Mercury is retrograde and will be for the first three classes

 will be a full explanation of all this when we talk about astrology in Session V

 why is this an issue

 Mercury is all things associated with communication and mental acuity

 retrograde means that looks like it is going backwards

 happens three times a year and lasts for about three weeks each time

 can be all kinds of problems:

 set up a meeting, need to reconfirm

 ask friends for dinner, reconfirm before you buy the food

 watch travel arrangements, confirm, allow extra time

 handle computer carefully

 watch words as out of mouth

 expect senior moments

 watch out for confusions

 and in the class we’re talking about really unusual things

 so ask your help

 be sure that things are clear and easily understood

 two of the three most important classes are during the retrograde

 if anything at all does not make sense, please ask

 used data from Internet after careful review, have numerous links

 if you have trouble using that kind of data, please let me know

 are ways to help

Lots of concern about how to present this material

 there is “original” or “core data” but have been a lot of changes

 many people or groups have adjusted or added changes or nuances

 sometimes changed the names to show the enhancements

 sometimes kept the old names but used the enhancements

 some of it I found very unusual, but that is MY reaction, my choice

 decided that it would be best to give a basic understanding

 not all the recent add ons

 not all the recent adjustments

 decided that for class would try to provide a solid base of core knowledge

 you can then go through any information you find

 see the changes

 some will fit for you, some will not fit for you, personal choice

 if I give you the “original” data, you will have a solid core understanding

 then can research intelligently from that base

 come to your own conclusions about what is right for you

Sources of Information

 story that various concepts held by various groups or religious sects

 started release began about 50's and 60's

 means lots of sources from mystical sects/traditions

 will share resources and give Internet links

Vocabulary

 often different religions have same names but a different meaning

 also definitions have changed over time

 for those religions that accept reincarnation, the definition has changed

 wanted to make the definition more palatable for those who do not accept

 reincarnation

 example: the meaning of “nirvana” (goal of reincarnation in Buddhism):

*Webster’s College Dictionary*, 2010

1. A state of ultimate wisdom and blessedness

2. A state of release from the cycle of reincarnation and absorption into the universal reality

*Macmillan Dictionary*

1. nirvana or Nirvana a state of complete spiritual happiness that Buddhists and Hindus try to achieve in which human existence no longer seems important

2. INFORMAL a feeling of complete happiness and peace

*Merriam Webster*

: the state of perfect happiness and peace in Buddhism where there is release from all forms of suffering

: a state or place of great happiness and peace

Full Definition of NIRVANA

1: the final beatitude that transcends suffering, karma, and samsara [aka reincarnation] and is sought especially in Buddhism through the extinction of desire and individual consciousness

2 a : a place or state of oblivion to care, pain, or external reality; also : bliss, heaven

 b : a goal hoped for but apparently unattainable : dream

clearly, if you are in conversation with someone

 be sure you are both talking about the same thing

 be sure you both mean the same thing for the words you are using

Historic Mystery Traditions

 Isis and Osiris (Egypt)

 Osiris was killed by his brother Seth and dismembered

 Seth hid the pieces in various places

 Iris, wife of Osiris, found all the pieces and put them back together again

 Pythagoras

 Plato and Socrates (Greece)

 Eleusis (Greece)

 Demeter, goddess of agriculture, spouse of Hades

 Persephone, daughter with Zeus

 abducted by Hades

 4 months in Hades, 8 months on Earth, hence the seasons

 Ephesus (Greece)

 based on worship of Artemis (Roman Diana)

 Dionysus (Greece and later Roman)

 Romans later turned lesser mysteries turned into Bacchanalia

 just a drinking fest and orgy

 greater mysteries still strong

 Mithras (Persian god)

 Druids (especially in northern Gaul)

 Dark Ages

 Cathars

 Knights Templar

 Freemasons

Chart of the Mystical Traditions/Sects

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| RELIGION | MYSTICAL TRADITION | EXAMPLES OF MYSTICS |
| Historic Figures |  | Pythagoras (580 BCE – 500 BCE)Plotinus (205 CE – 270 CE) |
| Judaism | Kabbalah | Moses Cordovero (1522 – 1570)Isaac Luria (1534 – 1572)Baal Shem Tov (1698 – 1760) |
| Hinduism |  | Kabir (d. 1518) Ramakrishana (1836 – 1886)Vivekananda (1863 – 1902) |
| Buddhism |  | Lord Buddha |
| Buddhism | Zen | Dogen (1200 – 1253) |
| Islam | Sufi | Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmi (1207 – 1273) Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882 – 1927) |
| Christianity |  | Apostle JohnSt. Francis of Assisi (1181/2– 1226)Hildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179)Meister Eckhardt (1260 – 1327/8)Richard Rolle (1290-1349)St. John of the Cross (1542 – 1591)St. Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582)Evelyn Underhill (1875 – 1941)Thomas Merton (1915 – 1968) |
| Confucianism (China) | Tao |  |

Note that there is no Christian mystical tradition but are many Christian mystics

 second century CE

 a lot of unrest in church, factions not always agree

 churches Asia Minor

 Roman church

 Gnostic activity

 Irenaeus (c. 120 – c. 202) was mediator

 became Bishop of Lyon

 he felt that the Gnostics were threat to Roman church, a heresy

 he said Gnostics taught:

 there was a duality of good vs evil, light vs dark, etc

 not idea of the single God of the Roman church

 Jesus taught lesser mysteries to public, greater mysteries to disciples

 reference actually in Mark 4:11

 members used own pathway to get to salvation

 per Elaine Pagels

 (Harvard professor, study of Gnosticism

 worked with translation of the Nag Hammadi documents,

 found in 1940s in Egypt)

 she felt that the Gnosticism was *political* threat to Roman church

 Irenaeus attacked the Gnostic beliefs as heresies, he said

 only one God

 what Jesus taught is written in the New Testament

 only one set of teachings

 population needs church to provide absolution of sins

 many of the Gnostic ideas were like the experiences of the mystics

 but Irenaeus put a stop to all Gnostic beliefs or anything like them

 hence

 no mysticism

 teachings of Jesus are only what is said in Bible

 no greater mysteries (includes karma, reincarnation, etc)

what is a mystic, precise definition of mystic

 Rabbi Amy Scheinerman:

Kabbalah (meaning “that which has been received”) is the intellectual and methodological approach to accessing the timeless truth of reality in the here and now. In other words, it is the process of acquiring and practicing esoteric knowledge and techniques for glimpsing the reality beyond our material world -- ultimately, for “glimpsing” the Ultimate Reality, God.

 Google: (same as the Oxford English Dictionary)

a person who seeks by contemplation and self-surrender to obtain unity with or absorption into the Deity or the absolute,

 [Note continuation]:

or who believes in the spiritual apprehension of truths that are beyond the intellect.

 Sufi: direct personal experience of God

 mine: a oneness experience with the Godhead/Creator

 also: process of having the mystical experience changes how you choose to live your life go from *believing* there is a Central Deity to *knowing* there is some power out there

 [after mystical experience Gospel of John makes sense!!]

 not a conversion experience like Paul’s on the road to Damascus

 not a dream

 not a series of dreams that give unusual impact

 not a near death experience (NDE)

 not like a mystical image of fog above a lake in a forest

 not equivalent to a wizard

how to get to a mystical experience

 traditionally three pathways:

 service

 study

 mediation and contemplation

 I would add how you live and the choices you make

 need to do what you say you believe

 not something to take on lightly

 Jewish story of 4 rabbis who entered the “divine orchard” or paradise:

 one died immediately

 one went mad immediately

 one cut the plants (did he perhaps try to destroy the orchard?)

 one source felt he was a heretic, worked with Gnostics

 one emerged in peace

 generally a multiyear project

 lots of work and study

 lots of fixing your issues and changing some habits

 example: restrictions on learning the Kabbalah:

 be at least 40 years of age (changed to 20 years by Cordovero)

 high moral standards

 prior rabbinic learning

 married

 mental and emotional stability

 no control over when the experience will happen

 it just does

 happens when you are ready and the time is right

 usually no warning

 Classical elements

 air, earth, water, fire

 proposed by pre-Socratic philosophers

 Plato added regular convex polyhedron solids to each

 Aristotle dropped the shapes and added hot & cold/wet& dry

 used by Medieval alchemists

 gets into their very early scientific work

 also gets into the alchemists

 desire to turn lead into gold

 also used the humors in healing

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  Element | Humor | Shape (Plato)Hot/Cold/Wet/Dry  (Aristotle) | Proposed by(dates approximate ) |
| Earth | Melancholic: depressed, irascible, sad, unhappy | Cube 6 squarescold and dry | Xenophanes(540–537 BCE) |
| Water | Phlegmatic: slow, stolid, cool, impassive | Icosahedron 20 trianglescold and wet | Thales (624 – 546 BCE) |
| Fire | Choleric: zeal, enthusiasm, daring | Tetrahedron 4 triangleshot and dry | Heraclitus, around 500 BCE |
| Air | Sanguine: sturdy, confident, optimistic, cheerful, happy | Octahedron 8 triangleshot and wet | Anaximenes (flourished c. 545 BCE) |
| Aether |  | Dodecahedron 12 pentagons | first mentioned by Plato in *Timeas* |

 also used in astrology, each sign of the zodiac is air, water, fire or earth

 Aether

 historically 4 elements resulted from trying to understand the universe

 i.e., basically very early science

 added aether for name of the medium in which the stars existed

 also the “air” breathed by the gods on Mt. Olympus

 not the same as the air we breathe

 Medieval alchemists called it “quintessence”

 study to try to prove aether:

 Michelson-Morley experiment of 1887

 showed that aether was not present

Prana

 found one reference that says same as aether and White Light

 not accurate, are totally different

 life force or aliveness in the body, leaves with soul at death

 in Indian philosophy (Upanishads)

 one of body’s vital airs or energies (Encyclopedia Britannica)

 in Ayurvedic medicine

 life force, vitality; life sustaining energy centered in human brain

 life force governing inspiration and conscious intellect

 similar to qu (chi) in Chinese medicine

 similar to ki in Japanese

 Chopra Center:

 (part of article on chakras

 will discuss in detail later, Session VI, 10/27/15)

“To visualize a chakra in the body, imagine a swirling wheel of energy where matter and consciousness meet. This invisible energy, called Prana, is vital life force, which keeps us vibrant, healthy, and alive.”

 White Light

 a lot of trouble finding any good information with resources

 lunch with a Reiki healer so I asked her

 friend in Baltimore

 when her kids were first starting to drive

 she would just wrap the car in white cotton batting!!

 what little I found was the following:

 always positive, never dark

 if you think of it, it is there for you

 used for protection and healing

 definitely not aether or prana

Resources:

General:

<http://www.themystica.com/mystica/default.html>

Awarded from: Britannica.com; Criteria: Editors selected site as one of the best on the Internet for quality, accuracy of content, presentation and usability.

<http://www.crystalinks.com/>

<http://www.ancient-wisdom.com/>

<http://www.encyclopedianomadica.org/>

Carol E. Parrish-Harra, Ph.D., *New Dictionary of Spiritual Thought*, Sparrow Hawk Press, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, 2002

an excellent dictionary with entries on just about anything relating to spiritual and esoteric concepts and thought from a number of religions, clear, easy to understand

*Kybalion,* Three Initiates

 actual authorship uncertain, primary candidate is William Walker Atkinson

 not a book to sit down and read through

 better to read a chapter and then think about it awhile

 however, it is a book that one can go back to again and again

ADK Luk books

 To purchase:

 <http://www.alohapeace.com/lawoflife.aspx>

 not necessarily an easy read

 lots of very detailed information on the Masters of the White Brotherhood

 (mystical beings who are often mentioned in various discussions)

Mystical Traditions:

http://holybooks.lichtenbergpress.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/The-Origin-of-Western-Mysticism.pdf

 about Plotinus

 long but interesting, good definition and understanding

<https://westernmystics.wordpress.com/>

 read thoroughly, some things hidden in this I think

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mysticism/>

 check, good resource so may be helpful

<http://www.sawka.com/spiritwatch/cehsc/ipure.htm>

Bruce B Janz, Ph.D. Professor, University of Central Florida

[www.religiousworlds.com/mystic/whoswho.html](http://www.religiousworlds.com/mystic/whoswho.html)

 site temp closed for repair, was very good, worthwhile checking back on it

 lots of info, links and references, not always clear about who is/isn’t a mystic

<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/mysticism/>

 resources for Bruce Janz’s class on Western Mysticism,

 University of Central Florida

 lots of info, links and cross references

 under section on Academic Study of Western Mysticism, first subsection:

 click on Mysticism, PPT presentation

Evelyn Underhill

<http://www.evelynunderhill.org/>

Underhill, Evelyn, *Mysticism,* 12th EDITION, New York, Meridian Books, 1955

 Janz: “an old classic but later works fulfill this project better”

Underhill, Evelyn, *Practical Mysticism*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1915

 Janz: “good introduction, kind of a primer on mystical life”

Rabbi Amy Scheinerman

 <http://scheinerman.net/judaism/Ideas/index.html>

 click on Kabbalah in the list

Recommended reading:

Daniel C. Matt*, The Essential Kabbalah: The Heart of Jewish Mysticism*

Lawrence Kushner*, The Way Into Jewish Mystical Tradition*

Zev ben Shimon Halevi, *The Work of the Kabbalist*

Moshe Idel*, Kabbalah: New Perspectives*

per Rabbi Scheinerman, not recommended are:

 The Kabbalah Centre

 Michael or Yehuda Berg

Classical Elements:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/xenophanes/>

<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Thales-of-Miletus>

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heraclitus/>

<http://www.britannica.com/biography/Anaximenes-of-Miletus>

http://www.spiritual-knowledge.net/articles/fire-water-air-earth.php

 from Slovak web site [www.poznanie.sk](http://www.poznanie.sk)

<http://www.friesian.com/elements.htm>

<http://www.friesian.com/>

 some interesting concepts but rather unusual

 just the kind of thing that may challenge your ideas

 but also the kind of material that may just have a nugget of interest for you

Aether – Michelson-Morley Experiment (1887):

 http://galileoandeinstein.physics.virginia.edu/lectures/michelson.html

 see section: Detecting the Aether Wind

 http://scienceworld.wolfram.com/physics/Michelson-MorleyExperiment.html

Prana:

 http://www.chopra.com/ccl/what-is-a-chakra#sthash.KQtORR3o.dpuf

 quoted under section on Prana in class notes