Survey of Non-Traditional Beliefs

Agenda:

**1. Session I, September 20**

 **Introduction**

 **Sources**

 **Mystical Traditions**

 **What Is a Mystic**

2. Session II, September 27

 Karma

 Resolution of Karma

3. Session III, October 4

 Reincarnation

 Akashic Records

4. Session IV, October 11

 Free Will Choice

 Understanding Karma, Reincarnation and Free Will Choice

5. Session V, October 18

 Chakras

 Kundalini

6. Session VI, October 25

Astrology

 Healing Systems

Additional Discussion topics

 Classical Elements

 Aether, Prana, White Light

 Power of Thoughts

 How to Change Your Attitude

 Tools from the Kybalion

 Gender and Mental Gender

 Lesser Mysteries/Greater Mysteries

 Mystery Schools

 Ley Lines

 Locations with Strong Energy

NOTES: Linda Bender

  lindabender@starpower.net

 Phone: 703-451-0253

Handout

 look for the session date and content that are in **bold**

 the attached material relates to that session

 handout is exactly the same as the display you see on the screen

 too many experiences with PPT when my notes in class were not sufficient

 this is the kind of topic that may want to go back and review later

 handout will be posted on DocStore

 if you use the Word version, the links will work

 if you use the PDF version, the links will *not* work

 if you need help using DocStore, let me know

Resources

 at end of handout

 used data from Internet after careful review, have numerous links

 all tested and work

 fussy about the resources

 medical: NIH, Hopkins, Mayo, Duke, Cleveland Clinic, etc.

 associations

 research studies, university web sites and the like

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

Lots of concern about how to present this material

information that various concepts were held by various groups or religious sects

 this material was “hidden” from public view, read that as “kept sacred”

 example: the Jain held the chakra material

 some info was available but was presented in complicated language

 had to work to understand it

 examples:

 Rudolf Steiner, used very complex sentence structure

 ADK Luk, used synonyms but didn’t explain that the same as other word

 per ADK Luk decision to allow release of secret information in the early 30's

 started begin to hear about concepts during 50's and 60's

 no proof but all of a sudden people started talking about some of these concepts

for class means lots of sources are from mystical sects/traditions

 now:

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

 many people or groups have adjusted info or added 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

 as if: share basic concepts

 then let you get into new/more complex theory if you wish

 by giving you a good base of core concepts

 you will have a solid basic understanding

 then you can explore intelligently from that base

 see the changes

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

 can come to your own conclusions about what is right for you

Vocabulary

 often different religions use same words but have a different meaning

 also definitions have changed over time

 for those religions that accept reincarnation, the definition of the applicable

 vocabulary has adjusted

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

 reincarnation (cycle of lives)

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

Historical 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)

 devoted to Isis-Artemis (Diana)

 Dionysus (Greece and later Roman)

 Romans later turned lesser mysteries turned into Bacchanalia (a drinking fest)

 greater mysteries still strong

 Mithras (Persian god)

 Druids (especially in northern Gaul)

 Dark Ages

 Cathars

 Gnostic revival movement, southern France/northern Italy, 12-14th cent

 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 (Siddhārtha Gautama) |
| Buddhism | Zen | Dogen (1200 – 1253) |
| Islam | Sufi | Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmi (1207 – 1273) Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882 – 1927) |
| Christianity |  | Apostle JohnHildegard von Bingen (1098 – 1179)St. Francis of Assisi (1181/2– 1226)Meister Eckhardt (1260 – 1327/8)Richard Rolle (1290-1349)St. Teresa of Avila (1515 – 1582)St. John of the Cross (1542 – 1591)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 ©. 120 – c. 202) was mediator among factions

 became Bishop of Lyon

 he felt that the Gnostics were threat to Roman church

 Gnostics concepts and teachings:

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

 not idea of the single God of the Roman church

 members used own pathway to get to salvation

 personal growth and learning

 Jesus taught lesser mysteries to public, greater mysteries to disciples

 per Elaine Pagels

 Harvard professor

 studied 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

what is a 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 there

 does make a difference in your choices and how you act

 those who have had mystical experience, find it very hard to describe

 means that there are many descriptions, lots of symbolism

 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 have a mystical experience

 traditionally three pathways:

 service

 study

 mediation and contemplation

 I would add how you live and the choices you make

 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 emerged in peace

 generally a multi-year project

 lots of work and study ahead

 lots of fixing yourself and changing some habits

 lots of learning to be very honest with yourself about yourself

 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

 have no control over when the experience will happen

 it just does, when you are ready and the time is right

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. See home page in the bottom left for the search feature

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

 look under A-Z on menu bar to find a directory

<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 in spiritual and esoteric

 concepts and thought from a number of religions, clear and 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

 for awhile

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

ADK Luk books (Alice Schutz)

 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

 not clear what they mean by the term “mystic”

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

 erudite, good resource so may be helpful

search on how to obtain a mystical experience

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

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

<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 on her web site

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