

**„OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA**

**Faculty of Orthodox Theology**

**DOCTORAL THESIS**

**(SUMMARY)**

**THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT AND IT`S  
ORIGINIS IN THE ESOTERIC AND EASTEREN  
RELIGIONS**

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## **General introduction**

**The main objectives of thesis** are the following:

- **Presentation of the New Age movement among religions which endanger the integrity of Christian spirituality.**
- **Exposing the main esoteric religions and which led to the emergence of the New Age movement (Theosophy, Buddhism, Hinduism)**
- **Missionary approach to the doctrines of these religions, such as immigration, differences between them and orthodoxy**

## **Structure of the Ph.D. thesis**

The doctoral thesis is structured into 5 distinct chapters each containing a number of subsections dedicated to special subject debated and analysed. The thesis summarizes a number of 884 pages 249 and citations. The contents of the thesis are structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1-** it is structured into seven subsections where there were presented information on the promoters and founders of Theosophy. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the way that Theosophy was founded through its founders: Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Annie Besant, Charles Leadbeater, Alice Bailey and Jiddu Krishnamurti having sketched the first attempts of the formation of a group of similar to the new age.
- **Chapter 2-** it is structured into six subchapters in which neopagan elements, modern concepts of the new age movement, narrow and general nuances of the new age movement, were exposed, showing the trend of the new age of adopting doctrinal elements of any religion and to adapt it to its needs.
- **Chapter 3-** it is structured into four subsections, where fundamental doctrines of Buddhism are presented in *senso lato*. Of course the doctrines which we analyse are just borrowed by the new age movement from Buddhist religion. In this chapter we notice

the trend of the new age movement to change any concept it takes over, concluding that the new age not only that borrows but also deforms.

- **Chapter 4-** it is structured into six subchapters. This section will analyse a wider range of concepts than in the previous chapter, because the tendency of the new age movement to adopt Hinduism doctrine proved to be more extensive than Buddhism. Here we discuss the various psychological and parapsychological concepts of new age that lead to apocalyptic thinking.
- **Chapter 5-** and the last one will make a missionary approach to the doctrines discussed in the preceding chapters. The purpose of this chapter will be presenting the Orthodox faith in contrast to neopagan nature of the new age movement and other religions from which they draw their origins.

The Ph.D. thesis is completed with the main conclusions of the research carried out, with the presentation of the original contributions and the future suggestions for research

**Note:** In drawing up the summary I have preserved the same notations for chapters and subchapters that are used in the text of the thesis.



# **CHAPTER I.**

## **A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE NEW-AGE RELIGION.**

### **FOUNDERS AND PROMOTERS**

In the first chapter of the thesis I glanced over the Theosophical movement. We talked about the Theosophical movement by presenting its founders and their activities for the promotion of Theosophical concepts.

The first chapter tells about Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, one of the most outstanding personality of the founder of Theosophy and the occult movement. I began by describing the life thereof and the reasons why she came to renounce Christianity in order to create a society with high pagan nuances. The discovery of masters, of various other demonic spirits caused the groundwork of Blavatsky's Theosophy in 1875. Another aspect that I considered for this subchapter was her visiting India, where she claimed to have known a master that had passed her on messages from the beyond. Blavatsky's writings have led many of the personalities of that era to adhere to Theosophy. Writings such as the *Secret Doctrine*, *Isis Unveiled* came to be regarded as basic in the world's works of Theosophy and those who followed the leadership of the Theosophical Society. Actually no you cannot speak of Theosophy, without referring to the writings of Blavatsky. Here we demonstrate the absurdity and the nullity of Blavatsky's writings, these writings being not only plagiarized works from other Hindu or Buddhist authors, finding nothing original by lecturing her writings.

The following section discusses the personality of Henry Steel Olcott, a close friend of Blavatsky and a successor of her work. We stopped to talk about his work mostly on the book *Buddhism or Science*, which is a catechism of the Theosophical Society and of course after several decades was adopted by the new age movement.

Charles Webster Leadbeater, follows in this chapter, because he was a controversial personality that I've not discussed in extenso, but I considered worthy to be mentioned his role in the development of Theosophy, especially due to the fact that he created for new agers a new cult keen borrowed from Christianity. Some remarkable similarity with Christianity that he has altered is worth mentioning: the Bible, Morality and Ethics, Liturgy (completely distorted), the Clerical Hierarchy, The Confession.

Annie Besant, can rightly be called the successor of Blavatsky. She was not only a member of the Theosophical Society, but ended up just to be its President. Being a secular, Socialist and feminist of the Victorian period, her influence was remarkable in those times and

has the merit of being the one who spread theosophy among the elites, as well as among ordinary people. An important aspect in this chapter, it is her contact with the *Secret Doctrine*, a book that will change the course of her life and change her forever.

If the other members of the Theosophical Society only have mapped out general terms and the structure of the new age movement, Alice Bailey founded it indisputably. Besides the fact that she was openly opposed to Christianity, among her most famous themes were: denial of the divinity of Christ, the number 666 and the benefits thereof, racism, the establishment of a publishing theosophical-new age house, bearing the name of the Lucis Trust, (i.e. just the name Devil-Lucifer), she distinguished himself primarily by a desire to achieve a new age religion, which should make its appearance to welcome the new Age of Aquarius. She is definitely the most influential personality of the new age movement today.

The last theosophical personality in this chapter that we will examine, is Jiddu Krishnamurti. His importance for this work derives from the fact that he was considered for several decades the expected Messiah of Theosophy and the new age movement, receiving the name of Alcyone from Annie Besant she being the one promote Jiddu, seeing in Krishnamurti, the new spiritual leader of the world.

The chapter ends with a few words from a misological point of view, in which the basic principles of these leaders are dismantled and presented in contrast with the true Christian doctrine.

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **BEYOND NEW-AGE**

In the second chapter of the present work entitled Beyond New-Age, we built a cumulative argument, not just about the nature of the New-Age, but also about the way in which the individual should address this topic. The contents of the chapter are structured methodologically as follows:

- in terms of detailed empirical description;
- from the point of view of the form in which these teachings are a form of continuous counter reaction in relation to existing cultural forms;
- reported to the questions why and how certain specific historical traditions have been reinterpreted in modern forms, to formulate such a counter reaction. We will then address the New-Age concepts in thematic order (nature of reality, human beings and

meta empirical, on matters relating to the mind, Death and survival, good and evil, visions of the past, the New-Age).

Following this, summarizing the results of the analysis, from the perspective of the five basic elements, which I find constituents are for New-Age Movement. They are:

- *Worldliness as the peculiarity of the weak variety*
- *Holism;*
- *Evolutionism;*
- *Psychologizing of religion and secularization of psychology;*
- *Expectations for the coming New Era;*

Although all New-Age religions are holistic, in one sense or another, a variety of holistic theories exist; though the New-agers share a theory of evolution, they have different ideas about this, how it works and where it goes. New-Age is by far homogeneous, "Weltanschauung" or ideology, and is composed of homogeneous elements. The question remains, however, that is the message through which she suggests that it is a movement with finite goals with higher aspirations.

This chapter will demonstrate that New-Age is not really a religion, as most critics interpreted, but rather a product of the Renaissance. Oriental outlooks have been assimilated almost without exception, the New-Age concepts adapted to the modern Western context. We will also discuss the problem of New-Age and its esoteric characteristic, reflected in a chapter entitled " Mirror of secular thought," new vision of causation of the world, the new approach has emerged, new religions and the new psychological theories. Noted that in this chapter we will show an outline of the historical period between 1950 and 1980, and in this context we will analyse the New-Age *stricto sensu* and the New-Age *sensu lato*. The finality of this chapter will be the exposure of the fact that despite the extreme variation of beliefs of the New-Age, however it is only one a single movement, not just on the basis of association by contiguity as well as on the basis of association by similarity (belief). New-Age beliefs are similar not because they have something positive as content, but because they are contrary to the same things, concepts, ideas.

### **CHAPTER III.**

## **THE MOVEMENT OF "NEW-AGE" AND ITS ROOTS FOUND IN THE BUDDHIST RELIGION**

It is not difficult to realize that the New-Age Movement has in its doctrine of many Oriental origin elements, mostly Buddhist. As I mentioned, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott also produced a reform of Buddhism when they settled at Adyar, in particular Henry Steel Olcott. Blavatsky herself was in the eyes of Buddhists favoured as a more creative philosophical religion, nobler, higher than any other religion. It's hard to define what is New-Age, no less difficult to define Buddhism, but if we are not clear as in regard of the distinction between the two, we will be at the mercy of the endless trade-offs and obscurity. New-Age and Buddhism are preoccupied with the concept of Dharma and Truth, which coincides with enlightenment for them.

Buddhism is perceived as a form of mysticism and mysticism is perceived from the experimental point of view. This does not mean that Buddhism is not concerned about the religious experience of mysticism, but sees mysticism, even the mystical conceptions as a finality. When mysticism is transformed into philosophy, it becomes a belief, monism which emphasizes the unity of all phenomena of a metaphysical absolute, mysticism being such a personal experience of the absolute. Concern for the truth of Buddhism is associated with eclecticism and the New-Age Movement relativism, Buddhism must distinguish between teachings and traditions, that New-Age mix them with joy.

Buddhism cannot accept, for example, as New-Age that all religions are basically the same expression of reality. This attitude is analysed by the Buddhists with coercive pressure upon theological correctness, but Buddhism does not even consider it an expression of reality, as a New-Age defined it, and the rest of the religions from which they draw their roots. It believes his teachings and practices as a means of creating conditions that would lead to the perception of reality, and Buddhists will judge any other religion by the criterion mentioned above. For this reason, it is important to prove that Buddhism cannot be incorporated in a New-Age mix.

A phenomenon so elusive, it will never be able to defined properly, but the characterization that I suggested, can lead to the conclusion that New-Age is an independent

religion, socio-fantastic, eclectic and whose influence extends much farther than the organisation itself.

The question is how much did the New Age borrow from Buddhism, if affected somehow the Buddhist doctrine in what way has it tainted Buddhist concepts etc. New-Age is a religion in which people look for answers when they want an alternative to conventional society. Buddhism sees the New-Age, as a contemporary religious ethic, which can coexist with it. New Age is not a pagan religion in Buddhist concept, but rather, a modern, postmodern, perhaps even religious phenomenon. New-Age seeks to absorb the traditions of Buddhism, for personal experiences. Thus we come to the conclusion that it is possible in the current decade to talk about a Buddhist New-Age Movement.

## **CAPIOLUL IV.**

### **HINDUISM; PRECURSORY CONCEPTS TRUE NEW-AGE**

A subject that has aroused much attention in recent decades, New-Age, has become a topic of interest to those who are in the field of religious study. Many religions, religious movements and approaches have led to some refinement of contemporary New-Age Movement, especially the period in the late 1960s, when there was recorded an influx of Hindu philosophical and spiritual ideas.

Developed since the 19th century, by the founders listed in chapter I, the New-Age Movement began to develop in the modern sense in the early 60s. Although other trends have contributed significantly to its development, including Transpersonal Psychology and occultism, the new influx of Hindu concepts was responsible primarily for the general outline of the later New-Age. Due to the amendment of the immigration laws in 1965, later spiritual Asia (guru), came in this period is S.U.A. Many Hindu gurus, began to travel through America, supporting conferences, including Maharishu Mahes Yogi, Swami Bhaktievdanta, Swami Rama and Swami Satchidananda. Therefore, many Hindu religious traditions, have landed here, people being excited to know their doctrine. Among the religious observances we mention: Yoga, Vedanta, Tantra yoga, Vaishnavism and a number of Hindu teachings advaitice. All these teachings have contributed immensely to the development of the New-Age Movement thinking. When we say that Hinduism has contributed to the development of the New-Age, we refer to the philosophical and practical contributions.

Ancient Hindu concepts, contributed the first time, to formulate coherent these concepts into the minds of these native new-keen. Other approaches that have had support from the philosophical religion of India, include the belief in reincarnation, karma, the effectiveness and the necessity of ritual of compassion towards animals. And indeed, the new-age movement still respects much of Hindu tradition. However, the most important component of Hinduism, which was taken over by New-Age, is meditation. All religious traditions of India, teach a form of meditation or another. Forms of meditation practiced by the New-Age are: -yoga, karma yoga and visualization. As a consequence of the foregoing, this meditational techniques inflow, resulted in the New-Age Movement, meditation to be an integral part of their décor. From vegetarianism to meditation, New-Age finds its biggest source of inspiration and ideas from the religious tradition of Hinduism. For demonstrating the presence of Hinduism in New-Age thinking, we'll call one of its founders, Alice Bailey, a great admirer of Hindu concepts

Some issues discussed in this chapter:

- 1) Earth as an entity.
- 2) Eclectics'-many New-agers believe that every human being is God, the idea based on the Upanishads, Aham brahmasmi (I am Brahman), and That Twam Asi.
- 3) God as a female personality
- 4) Psychokinetic skills here we talk about telepathy, transmutation, so-called miracles, existing both in Hindu doctrine and New-Age doctrine.
- 5) Yoga-Union with God, the method used by New-Age.
- 6) Mediația
- 7) Astrology-here we discuss the problems of Hindu astrology, astrology not being an integral component of Hinduism, but in terms of New-Age-site we will look at this issue from the point of entry into the Constelation of Aquarius.
- 8) Vegetarianism- both Hindu and Buddhist belief.
- 9) Karma-or redemption in the New-Age and Hinduism.

## **CHAPTER V.**

### **MISSIONARY EVALUATION OF THEOSOPHY, BUDDHISM, HINDUISM AND THE NEW AGE**

The chapter demonstrates that new-age movement is a system of beliefs, in full rise in the world, recently in Europe, its doctrinally system encompassing hundreds of beliefs, from different organizations, creating a strange amalgam of both that sometimes contradict their basic concepts. Pantheist theology doctrine combined with the occult practices. The New-Age name itself refers to the Aquarian age, which is said to rise. It should bring peace and enlightenment to reunite man with God. Unlike other New-Age cults, this one is hard to define. There are no New-Age Churches, no New-Age religion, no official record of the New-Age, no founder, no official leader.

Also in this section we have mentioned the main points that separate the new age movement and other religions they have regard to the work: Buddhism, Hinduism, Theosophy from christianity .

- The belief that God is personal in the sense that God gave life, created the world and then they became Protector of the world. Belief in a threefold God by the presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- New-Age defines in gnostic sense man, separating it from historical reality. Christianity still calls man to build a fairer world updated to the present historical conditions.
- Faith based on rationality.

It can be seen in the latest period, from 2000 onwards, an attempt to integrate the elements of the New-Age Movement and Theosophy in Christian churches. Over the past 125 years, New-Age leaders, followed the false doctrine of Theosophy; the wisper now lies, in the ears of politicians, thirsting EU officials, even in the ears of some Anglican Bishops (so far has gotten the perversion of Anglicanism). So we can see how it evolves in the bosom of heresy.

Therefore, it should be spoken of the danger posed by the new religious movements, and especially to be found where they come from to be more easily detected and countered. We consider that the thesis shall achieve the purpose of its missionary characteristic, making a summary of some of the most dangerous doctrines that distorts the Orthodox truth.

### **Perspectives:**

- ✓ A more extensive evaluation of the concepts mentioned in this Ph.D. thesis, that deserves more attention.
- ✓ The presentation of some contents from this thesis at various symposiums or conferences with missionary characteristics.
- ✓ Publication of thesis and possibly drafting articles that could be distributed to the faithful for a better knowledge of the contrast between orthodoxy and other pagan religions.

### **Personal achievements under the theme:**

- ✓ The drafting of this thesis;
- ✓ Interpretation of some concepts and doctrines not accessible in Romanian language;
- ✓ The publication of two articles in the context of the Ph.D. thesis;

### **Articles published or under evaluation:**

- ❖ Drd. Bogdan Andrei, *Documentele BEM, cu privire la botez din perspectivă interconfesională. Abordare misionară*, în volumul *30 de ani de la lansarea documentului <Botez, Euharistie, Minister> la Lima (1982-2012)*, Editura Vasiliana, Iași, 2014, pp. 213-227.
- ❖ Drd. Bogdan Andrei, *Elemente hinduse în cadrul New Age-ului*, under publication.
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