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**THE FALSE THAUMATURGY OF  
ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES IN RELATION  
TO THE ORTHODOX TEACHINGS. A  
MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVE**

**- PHD THESIS SUMMARY-**

**SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR:  
PROF. UNIV. DR. PR. GHEORGHE ISTODOR**

**PhD CANDIDATE:  
MIRCEA COSTEL**

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## Introduction

In every era, and especially in every society, health has always been one of man's main interests. This interest manifested in two ways: firstly, the desire to preserve the good health of the body and to overcome the disease, and secondly, the fundamental need of man to recognize a certain structure full of meanings, which would allow the understanding of the cause of the disease, suffering or disability, and which would facilitate the inclusion of these universal experiences of feebleness and vulnerability into a view of the man and the world in which he lives<sup>1</sup>.

The world we live in is affected by diseases, suffering and troubles, increasingly unbalancing the comfort that the post-modern society's people are accustomed to, placing them in a situation of recalibrating the relationship between sin and disease<sup>2</sup>. All this is amplified even more in the case of secular energy „therapies”, which see the disease only as an effect of internal imbalances or mistakes from previous lives.

In a society in which the main goals of people's choices are related to health and well-being, there are people who promise fast and efficient solutions for any kind of illness, talking about energies, prana, liquids, karmic healing or self-healing practices, all based on the belief that previous earthly lives exist.

It may seem strange that theology deals with examining alternative therapies and making evaluations in an area totally external to it. However, throughout this research we will show how often, through alternative therapies, a new vision of God, world and man, incompatible with the teachings of the Orthodox faith, is proposed. We are mainly referring to the idea of reincarnation which is presented from a completely different perspective compared to the classical Hindu and Buddhist perspective, and the belief that there is some kind of impersonal divine energy that could be used by people to heal themselves, but also others.

Nowadays, disease has become a trendy subject, in all the media there is talk of medicine, this topic even becoming an audience indexing for TV shows, but a completely secularized language is used, which denotes the lack of penetration of the meaning of the sacrament of the disease, suffering

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Clark KEE, *Medicina, miracolo e magia nei tempi del Nuovo Testamento*, Ed. Paideia, Brescia, 1993, p. 134, (*Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986);

<sup>2</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe ISTODOR, „Terapia ortodoxă cu privire la boală și suferință. Evaluare misionară”, în vol. *Condiția umană între suferință și iubirea lui Dumnezeu. Terapia bolilor și îngrijirile paleative*, 4-6 mai 2012, Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, p. 317;

and death<sup>3</sup>. Today, the ethical dilemma stems from the attitude that people adopt in the face of illness and the way they use the available medical resources in order to heal or even eradicate the disease, if possible<sup>4</sup>. Is there any talk today about the disease in association with the ancestral sin, that is, the disobedience of the first people and the loss of grace, which caused the emergence of disease and corruption?

The anthropological conception of the secular and „emancipated”<sup>5</sup> contemporary man rests on the idea that he is the measure of all things, but he is unable to face the imperfections and suffering of daily life, and even less those of transcendence<sup>6</sup>. Within this framework, of our secularized and non-religious Romanian society, energy pseudotherapies worked their way, claiming that they can cure, through different techniques and exercises, widely diverse diseases, substituting, through their pseudotherapists, both the role of the authentic doctor, and of the priest.

The techniques we will examine are based, mostly, on the gnostic vision of the man, according to which, the man has in himself a divine spark, which serves the body and the matter, and the ones who will be aware of this will be able to develop their own divine powers, and also have the possibility to return, through a series of reincarnations, to the original divine world, from which they fell. According to this idea, the healing of the body is the inevitable consequence of everything done to the spiritual bodies that might surround the person, like a halo or an aura.

## **CHAPTER I: A COMPARATIVE VIEW ON THE CONCEPT OF DISEASE IN VARIOUS CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS. MISSIONARY REFERENCE POINTS**

Chapter I summarizes the concept of disease and health found in the main cultural and religious traditions of the world. The history of the concept of disease is also presented, showing that people have sought answers and solutions to disease and suffering starting with the primitive civilizations, often coming to validate various superstitions, dressed in various forms of religiosity, different from one era to another, and from one culture to another. This chapter presents the thaumaturgical

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<sup>3</sup> Dominique BEAUFILS, „*Credința ta te-a mântuit*” – *O viziune ortodoxă asupra bolii și a morții*, traducere de pr. Adrian Lucian Dinu, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2010, pp. 12-13;

<sup>4</sup> John și Lyn BRECK, *Trepte pe calea vieții. O viziune ortodoxă asupra bioeticii*, traducere de Geanina Filimon, Ed. Sophia, București, 2006, p. 32;

<sup>5</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe PETRARU, *Teologie fundamentală și misionară. Ecumenism*, Ed. Performantica, Iași, 2006, p. 221;

<sup>6</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Mihai HIMCINSCHI, „Bolile și moartea în viziune epicureismului contemporan”, în *Sensul vieții, al suferinței și al morții*, Referatele simpozionului internațional „Sensul vieții, al suferinței și al morții”, 29 februarie - 2 martie 2008, Ed. Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2008, p. 232;



conceptions belonging to the Judaic, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Native American, Mesoamerican, African and Japanese cultures.

Thus, while the Jewish conception of the disease is exclusively monopolized by Yahweh<sup>7</sup>, the hadith literature states that the disease has important spiritual functions: a purifying purpose, since it may be a punishment for sins, and a merit purpose, since a reward may be received. In all these forms, or better said with all these meanings, the disease must be seen as a blessing<sup>8</sup>. In the old conceptions of the North American Indians, the diseases are the result of a rupture of the relation with the supernatural powers, although this etiology is not valid for common diseases, such as bone fractures, for which only a natural explanation is valid<sup>9</sup>.

In the cultural traditions of North America, both „health” and „disease” are considered to belong to a world that transcends the organism, as it is believed that well-being and disease depend on the relationships with cosmic beings, such as the primordial creator or the mythical heroes to whom the foundation of different cultures is attributed, monsters from previous worlds, the sun, the moon, the stars, the rain, the plants and the earth<sup>10</sup>. For the traditional African society, the etiology of the disease reflects natural and supernatural causes, considering that, in the human life, there is a dynamic presence of supernatural beings and forces, the disease designating an imbalance between the patient and his physical or social environment, or between the patient and the other persons, whether alive or dead<sup>11</sup>.

The Christian Orthodox conception of the sick and the disease, although influenced by the Jewish thought, is raised to another level, and even exceeded due to the redemption work of the Savior Jesus Christ, who completely changed the vision of the man, sin, disease and death, but also through His public activity, through which the sin-disease relationship becomes revalued, becoming paradoxical (In. 9, 3). This is proved logically by the fact that not all sinners have suffered from diseases, or all the saints have benefited continuously and fully from good health<sup>12</sup>, to which we can

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<sup>7</sup> Hans-Walter WOLFF, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, Ed. SCM Press, Londra, 2012, p. 217;

<sup>8</sup> Fazlur RAHMAN, „Islam and Health/Medicine: A Historical Perspective”, în *Healing and Restoring: Health and Medicine in the World's Religious Traditions*, (coordonator: E. L. Sullivan), Ed. McMillan Publishing Company, New York, 1989, pp. 149-172;

<sup>9</sup> Ake HULTKRANTZ, *The Religions of the american indians*, Ed. University of California Press, Berkeley (S.U.A.), 1992, pp. 84-86;

<sup>10</sup> Shirley SILVER, Wick R. MILLER, *American Indian Languages: Cultural and Social Contexts*, Ed. University of Arizona Press, Tucson (S.U.A.), 2000, p. 346;

<sup>11</sup> Meinrad HEBGA, „La guarigione in Africa”, în *Concilium: International Review of Theology*, nr. 2, Ed. Queriniana, Brescia, 1991, p. 87;

<sup>12</sup> Sfântul CHIRIL AL ALEXANDRIEI, *Glafire la Facere, Cartea a Cincea a Glafirelor la „Facere”*, în colecția *Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești* (în continuare P.S.B.), vol. 39, traducere, introducere și note de pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, EIBMBOR, București, 1992, p. 168; Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Despre mărginita putere a diavolului. Despre căință*.

also add the suffering, corruption and death among animals, where the problem of sin does not apply<sup>13</sup>. Although the majority opinion claims that health is given by a proper functioning of the organs alongside the integrity of the body, the Orthodox theology, based on the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition, teaches that the state of full health has a much deeper meaning, equivalent to the ascension of the man towards the recovery of the likeness to God, an ascending that begins in this life, continues throughout life and into the eternal one, as the Holy Fathers „assimilate the health of the people with the state of perfection to which they are ordained by their very nature”<sup>14</sup>.

## **CHAPTER II: NEW AGE HOLISTIC THAUMATURGY SPECIFIC TO ALTERNATIVE PSEUDOTHERAPIES. ORTHODOX APOLOGETIC ASPECTS**

New Age followers claim the entry into a new era, called the Age of Aquarius, which is intended to be a post-Christian era, in which the so-called transformation of the world's consciousness will take place, bringing forth a new way of thinking and perceiving reality<sup>15</sup>. The current New Age boasts that it has gained its communication with the world beyond through channeling<sup>16</sup>, and that it has a greater extension compared to classical spiritualism. The current success of the New Age phenomenon is largely due to the fact that it promotes and claims that it can free people from suffering, a suffering which Christianity brings to them<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, some authors of New Age literature talk about Aquarian therapeutic methods, explaining people's attitude regarding the disease and their relation with the doctors, medicines or even science in relation to the Age of Pisces or Aquarius, while also giving different prognoses regarding the concept of malady in the New Age<sup>18</sup>.

Father Gheorghe Istodor, Professor Ph.D., referring to the New Age spirituality, argues that it „develops a true soteriology which stipulates that every human individual must go through a renewal

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*Despre necazuri și biruirea tristeții*, traducere de pr. Dumitru Fecioru, EIBMBOR, București, 2002, p. 25; Idem, *Problemele vieții*, Ed. Egumenița & Cartea Ortodoxă, traducere de Cristian Spătărelu și Daniela Filioreanu Galați, 2007, pp. 268-269; Sfântul VARSANUFIE, *Scrisori duhovnicești*, 599, în *Filocalia*, vol. 11, traducere de pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2009, p. 497; Sfântul GRIGORIE CEL MARE, *Dialoguri despre moarte*, traducere de George Bogdan Țăra Ed. Amarcord, Timișoara, 1998, p. 52; PALADIE, *Istoria lausiacă*, traducere de pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, EIBMBOR, București, 1993, p. 61;

<sup>13</sup> Petre SEMEN, *Sensul vieții și al suferinței. Comentariu la Ecclesiast și Iov*, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2010, p. 112;

<sup>14</sup> Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Terapeutică bolilor spirituale*, traducere de Marinela Bojin Ed. Sophia, București, 2006, p. 15;

<sup>15</sup> Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicolae ACHIMESCU, „New Age și religiozitatea postmodernă”, în *Religie, modernitate și postmodernitate*, Ed. Trinitas, București, 2013, p. 313;

<sup>16</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. G. PETRARU, *Ortodoxie și prozelitism*, Ed. Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei, 2000, p. 307;

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Dumnezeu nu vrea suferința omului*, traducere de Marinela Bojin, Ed. Sophia, București, 2008, p. 9;

<sup>18</sup> Elsa M. GOVER, *The Aquarian Age*, Ed. Vantage Press, New York, 2013, pp. 55-56;

of consciousness, to expand their consciousness until identifying with the Cosmos”<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the New Age ideology has at its core the idea of Man-God, an idea envisioned by Dostoyevsky, not God-the Man, that is, Jesus Christ, but the man-god. Therefore, New Age proposes a process of human divination, including the one of his ontological limits, evil and sin, that is, a generalization of the finite. For New Age, God is only an impersonal energy that all forms of „religion” promote through their promoters who consider themselves to be of divine substance<sup>20</sup>.

In the conception of the New Age movement, alternative or holistic medicine resembles an amalgam of magical, meditative practices, and esoteric teachings, combined with different techniques and processes of therapy and diagnosis, whose main purpose is the healing of man, not only in body, but also in spirit and mind. The offers proposed by the holistic pseudotherapists, though vast, are contested and controversial in terms of the techniques, procedures and therapies used<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, different works have appeared that criticize the unjustified claims of the techniques used by holistic medicine<sup>22</sup>. The continuous appeal to the term energy, by the New Age, has nothing to do with physics, but it is also not a pseudo-scientific rhetoric; it is, however, a reference to the monistic perception<sup>23</sup>.

According to J. A. English-Lueck, the recent history of holistic health can be summarized as follows: in the twentieth century, the three great traditions of naturopathic medicine met: the Chinese one, centered on the harmony of the energy flow of the body, the Indian one, with the yoga techniques and faith in reincarnation, therefore being a therapy focused on the karma of the person, and the European one, naturopathic and homeopathic, influenced by Hippocrates. These traditions came together due to the philosophies that derived from the esoteric tradition which came mainly from the United States, from the so-called metaphysical current of transcendentalism and natural mysticism that emphasized spiritual evolution<sup>24</sup>.

The divine self<sup>25</sup> is the central concept of New Age anthropology. The man, deep inside, at his spiritual center, which is commonly called „self”, in order to distinguish it from the ego, would be of a divine nature. This vision has different sources, including Aldous Huxley's conception, described in his

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<sup>19</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. G. ISTODOR, *Fenomenul sectar necreștin*, Ed. Do-minor SRL, București, 2009, p. 307;

<sup>20</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. G. PETRARU, *Ortodoxie și prozelitism...*, p. 307;

<sup>21</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Nicolae ACHIMESCU, „Medicina științifică și cea alternativă”, în *Religie, modernitate și postmodernitate*, Ed. Trinitas, București, 2013, p. 190;

<sup>22</sup> Irmgard OEPEN (ed.), *An den Grenzen der Schulmedizin*, Ed. Deutsche Ärzteverlag, Köln, 1985;

<sup>23</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. G. ISTODOR, „Hristoterapia” ortodoxă și psihoterapia laică, Ed. Do-Minor, București, 2009, p. 287;

<sup>24</sup> J. A. ENGLISH-LUECK, *Health in the New Age: A Study in California Holistic Practices*, Ed. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, 1990, pp. 16-17;

<sup>25</sup> Pr. Lect. Dr. R. P.MUREȘAN, *Alternative spirituale în România...*, p. 50;

book „The Perennial Philosophy” (The Perennial Philosophy -1949), which he proposes as a synthesis of the common principles of the Eastern and Western sapiential tradition<sup>26</sup>.

### **CHAPTER III: MISSIONARY PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE COMMON ELEMENTS AND CONCEPTS OF ALTERNATIVE PSEUDOTHERAPIES TERMINOLOGY AND DOCTRINE**

In the secularized West there is a revival of the old esoteric and occult gnostic movements, that is, a type of „parallel tradition” to the dominant Christian religious and cultural historical tradition, disseminating a monistic conception of the world, in which the leaders of these groups identify themselves with the divinity, through initiatory knowledge, seeking a merger with nature in a mystical note, by an important role given to the invisible entities and by manipulating the so-called occult legalities. The sources of neo-Gnosticism, esotericism and occultism are found in Mandaism, Hermeticism, Alchemy, Gnosticism, and less in the Holy Scripture, from which they borrow concepts in a syncretistic amalgam<sup>27</sup>.

In the so-called energy therapies, we will often encounter spiritism, considered to be a technique through which one enters into contact with the souls of those asleep, via a medium, the spiritists being less interested in the information pertaining to the actual life<sup>28</sup>. Alternative „therapies” base their doctrine on the reincarnation teachings, but the entire Christian tradition has rejected the reincarnation teachings or metempsychosis, as it is not compatible with common sense, or with the divine revelation<sup>29</sup>. Moreover, several authors and practitioners of alternative „therapies” and esotericism, suggest the theory of subtle bodies<sup>30</sup>. This conception is inspired by Hinduism which adopts a stratiform type of human vision. As for the aura or, in general, the subtle bodies, there are authors who consider them invisible to the human eye, while others claim that they can see them. Post-modern neo-religiosity borrows concepts from the great Asian religions, having a cosmocentric

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<sup>26</sup> Aldous HUXLEY, *The Perennial Philosophy*, Ed. Harper Perennial Modern Classic, S.U.A., 2010, p. 24;

<sup>27</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe PETRARU, *Secte neoprotestante și noi mișcări religioase în România*, Ed. Universitaria, Craiova, 2006, p. 239;

<sup>28</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Nicolae ACHIMESCU, „Ocultismul în lumea de azi”, în *Religie, modernitate și postmodernitate*, Ed. Trinitas, București, 2013, p. 516;

<sup>29</sup> † Mitropolit de Volokolamsk Ilarion ALFEYEV, *Taina Credinței. Introducere în teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, traducere de Felicia Dumas, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2014, p. 107;

<sup>30</sup> Florina ALECSÂNDRESCU, *Tratat de terapii energetice complementare*, vol. 1, București, 2018, pp. 254-259; Constantin GHEORGHIȚĂ, *Info Reiki*, Ed. Dao Psi, 2009, pp. 19-20; Reto VITAL, *Il grande libro della cristalloterapia*, Ed. Xenia, Milano, 2008, p. 37; Liviu BULUȘ, *Enciclopedia terapiilor complementare*, vol. 1, Ed. Mentor Macro, București, 2004, p. 113;

character, such as Taoism, Hinduism or Buddhism, in which various occult, divinatory and magical practices are found, with an alleged therapeutic character, on the esoteric knowledge that lies somewhere at the border between life and death<sup>31</sup>.

In the alternative „therapies” we will incessantly stumble upon the term chakras<sup>32</sup>, that is, those so-called energy points present on the human body. According to Hindu thought<sup>33</sup>, there are various places of these on the human body, reaching up to a few dozen that would individualize us, but the classical formulation is that there are 7 main and 5 secondary chakras<sup>34</sup>. Alternative pseudotherapies refer, directly or indirectly, to astrology, condemned by both the Holy Fathers<sup>35</sup> and the Holy Scripture (Dt. 4, 19; 17, 3-5), showing that planets and stars do not in any way influence the destiny of man (Genesis 1, 14). Also, alternative pseudotherapies borrow different concepts from Taoism and Buddhism, but we must specify that it is unacceptable to link Christianity to Buddhism or Taoism, because those two adopt a concept that relativizes the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, but also the experience of interpersonal love between man and God, in Christ through a kind of „deontologization and depersonalization”<sup>36</sup>. In addition, most energy „therapies”, in order to validate the authenticity of their doctrinal content, make indirect or direct references to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom they falsely assign the title of founder of the respective pseudotherapies.

Thus, the diversity of concepts and definitions used in alternative „therapies” makes the dialogue between scientists, theologians and advocates of alternative pseudotherapies difficult, even impossible, often leading to misunderstandings. It is imperative to clarify the conceptions of the world and man used by alternative pseudotherapies, their scientific corroboration, as well as the amalgamation of these pseudotherapies with various magical, occult, and esoteric doctrines and practices<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Pr. Prof. Dr. Univ. Nicolae ACHIMESCU, „New Age și religiozitatea postmodernă”, în *Religie, modernitate și postmodernitate*, Ed. Trinitas, București, 2013, p. 314;

<sup>32</sup> Mircea ELIADE, *Yoga. Nemurire și libertate*, traducere de Walter Fotescu, Ed. Humanitas, București, 1993, p. 225;

<sup>33</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe PETRARU, *Ortodoxie și prozelitism...*, p. 273, p. 305;

<sup>34</sup> Pr. Lect. Dr. Radu Petre MUREȘAN, *Alternative spirituale în România...*, pp. 175-176;

<sup>35</sup> Sfântul VASILE CEL MARE, *Omilii la Hexaemeron*, VII, în *P.S.B.*, vol. 17, traducere, introducere, note și indici de Pr. D. Fecioru, EIBMBOR, București, 1986, p. 139;

<sup>36</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe PETRARU, *Ortodoxie și prozelitism...*, p. 161;

<sup>37</sup> Pr. Prof. Dr. Univ. Nicolae ACHIMESCU, „Medicina științifică și cea alternativă”, în *Religie, modernitate și postmodernitate*, Ed. Trinitas, București, 2013, p. 189;

## CHAPTER IV: THE PSEUDOTHERAPEUTIC HOLIST PANTEON

Alternative and complementary therapies designate all the therapies that use different methods, energies, substances and working materials, most of them not approved worldwide<sup>38</sup>. Their number is quite large and is constantly increasing, being difficult both to identify and to circumscribe them, because, apart from the fact that they no longer respect the classical Hindu or Buddhist doctrine, they borrow elements, notions or techniques from each other, creating confusion. Within this chapter, the following alternative „therapies” are briefly presented: Vibrational Waters, Therapeutic Touch, Aura-soma, Crystallotherapy, Chromotherapy, Healing Touch, Iridiology, Meta-medicine, Pyramidology, Pranothrapy, Pranic healing, Radiesthesia, Bach flower therapy, Australian flower therapy, Theta Healing and so-called karmic healing.

It can be said that alternative pseudotherapies have a common doctrinal core, consisting of the use of common concepts and terminology, specific to the New Age phenomenon. Thus, alternative „therapies” refer to concepts, such as: reincarnation, spiritual guides, subtle bodies, chakras, aura, divine Self, self-healing, astrology, classical spiritism or channeling, but also borrow concepts from Gnosticism, Esotericism and Occultism, all of which being contrary to the Orthodox Church faith teachings. Moreover, most alternative therapies call for a type of medical magic through the formulas and techniques they practice, using talismans, symbols and divination<sup>39</sup>.

Pseudo-medical techniques and practices, as well as alternative „therapies”, have risen due to certain factors, such as: the existence of medical unknown facts for the treatment of certain diseases, the lack of training, the credulousness of some patients, the unfavorable socio-economic conditions, the pseudotherapists’ charlatanism, as well as not mastering the doctrinal area of alternative medicine. The practices of alternative „therapies” are especially dangerous when they determine the patient to give up the services of the doctor, instigating him to stop the medical treatment, or to look suspiciously at the medical act itself, but also when the patients are induced to become dependent on the so-called healer<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Lucian Liviu POP, „Utilizarea tratamentelor alternative și religioase de către pacienții cu suferințe cronice: studiu retrospectiv”, în *Medicii și biserica. Medicină și spiritualitate în abordarea pacientului terminal*, vol. 10, coordonator: prof. dr. Mircea Gelu Buta, Ed. Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2012, p. 111;

<sup>39</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe ISTODOR, *Misiunea creștină ca activitate permanentă și practică a Bisericii*, Ed. Sigma, București, 2006, p. 207;

<sup>40</sup> †PS Vasile SOMEȘANUL, „Credința creștină și medicina. Falsa credință și pseudo-medicina”, în *Medicii și Biserica. Pentru o bioetică creștină. Aspecte speciale determinate de relația dintre teologie și medicină*, vol. 3, coordonator: prof. dr. Mircea Gelu Buta, Ed. Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 146;

## CHAPTER V: REIKI – WORLDWIDE „ENERGY” PANACEA

Reiki is, perhaps, the most well-known energy pseudotherapy, belonging to the large family of complementary therapies, mistakenly considered by its promoters as an „energy healing system”. The spirituality promoted by Reiki is a syncretistic one, in which all the world’s religions are considered valid, asserting that „Reiki is governed by the higher power, known as God, Universe, Supreme Being, All, Universal Mind, i.e., what Krishna means, Jahweh, the Great Spirit or Buddha”<sup>41</sup>. Reiki pseudotherapy, which has become widely known in the new age circles, borrowed the scriptural method of healing through „laying hands on people” (Mk. 16, 18)<sup>42</sup>.

The source of inspiration for Reiki was Chinese Taoism<sup>43</sup>, in which the term qi was used to refer to all the vital energies, and since Reiki can be translated as „soul force” or „spiritual power”, Reiki is considered to be „that type of vital energy in the material world considered as closest to the divine creative force, the source of life”<sup>44</sup>.

Although the masters of this pseudotherapy camouflage Reiki under the mask of natural healing so as to make it easier to use in their texts, they still define it as a „magic art” of channeling for the acquisition of powers, having the capacity to make available to the Reikist, according to Reiki master Diane Stein, a new pagan pantheon, made up of „deities and demons or Deva spirits” becoming masters of the follower<sup>45</sup>.

Among the inadvertencies of the so-called Reiki therapy that contradict the Orthodox dogma, which are quite numerous and obvious, the direct invocation of spiritual entities, angels, gods and other „deities”, which in reality are demons, deceptive spirits, is the most grave, at the same time being more than incompatible, but also a violation of the first commandment in the Decalogue: „Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only” (Dt. 26:10; Mt. 4:10; Lk. 4, 8), that is, idolatry. Furthermore, apart from the incompatibility and violation of this commandment, there is also a great danger coming from the demonic spirits, which will not necessarily manifest in a violent way<sup>46</sup>, as we often see in horror films,

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<sup>41</sup> W. LÜBECK, F. A. PETTER, W. L. RAND, *Spiritul Reiki. Manual complet al Sistemului Reiki*, Ed. Meteor Press, 2009, p. 73;

<sup>42</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe ISTODOR, „Hristoterapia” ortodoxă..., p. 319;

<sup>43</sup> Constantin GHEORGHIȚĂ, *Info Reiki*, Ed. Dao Psi, 2009, pp.19-20;

<sup>44</sup> Walter LÜBECK, Frank Arjava PETTER, William Lee ROLAND, *op. cit.*, p. 26;

<sup>45</sup> D. STEIN, *Il libro del Reiki. I principi e le applicazioni pratiche dell'antico metodo di guarigione orientale*, Ed. Armenia, Milano, 2017, p. 143;

<sup>46</sup> Sfântul IOAN CASIAN, *Prima convorbire cu părintele Serenus*, VII, 23, în *P.S.B.*, vol. 57, traducere de prof. Vasile Cojocaru și prof. David Popescu, prefată, studiu introductiv și note de prof. Nicolae Chițescu, EIBMBOR, București, 1990, EIBMBOR, București, 1990, p. 427;

but by subtle induction of innovative spiritual ideas that will eventually lead to the loss of faith and abandonment of the Christian Orthodox community.

It is also important to mention that all forms of alternative or complementary medicine practiced in Romania today are followers of heretical teachings and concepts, which have been fought by the Church throughout time, in the Ecumenical Councils. Of these we mention: Pantheism, Panentheism, Animism, Gnosticism, reincarnation, karma, astral predestination, the impersonal God, the impersonal divine grace and the thaumaturgical anthropocentrism („I heal, I help others”)<sup>47</sup>.

## **CHAPTER VI: MISSIONARY METHODS AND MEANS FOR COMBATING ALTERNATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY PSEUDOTHERAPIES**

According to the Orthodox faith teachings, healing only finds meaning in the light of the Savior Jesus Christ. Thus, the ascending steps of a genuine therapeutic act contain the following elements: the sick person's desire to heal, the confidence that the Savior Jesus Christ can perform the healing and forgiveness of sins as a necessary condition for healing of the body and soul<sup>48</sup>.

Among the charismas are the gift of healing and performing miracles<sup>49</sup>, which the Holy Spirit can offer through a totally special action. Father Dumitru Stăniloae, Professor Ph.D., claims that gifts and grace are those indeterminate and colorless goods „contained in our nature deified in Christ, within ourselves, through the Holy Spirit”<sup>50</sup>, which are meant to heal what has been altered in our human nature, and which, when considerably increased, take the form of charismas. But the gifts of the Holy Spirit are offered for the service of the Church, not for themselves, but for the creation of the Body of the Church<sup>51</sup>. Thus, transmitting the charismas of the Holy Spirit to the believers does nothing but continue the thaumaturgical work of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He is the source and spring of the uncreated energies<sup>52</sup>, from which the charismas of all kinds including the thaumaturgical ones flow, resembling precious stones that adorn His Church.

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<sup>47</sup> Dumitru HRISTENCO, *Reiki tradițional*, Ed. Teora, București, 2007, pp. 154-155;

<sup>48</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe ISTODOR, „Terapia ortodoxă...”, în *vol. cit.*, p. 337;

<sup>49</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Gheorghe PETRARU, *Misiologie ortodoxă*, vol. 1, Ed. Panfilius, Iași, 2002, pp.110-111;

<sup>50</sup> Pr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, vol. 2, Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2010, p. 73;

<sup>51</sup> Nikolai AFANASIEV, *Biserica Duhului Sfânt*, vol. 1, traducere de Elena Derevici, Ed. Patmos, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 23;

<sup>52</sup> Pr. Ioannis ROMANIDIS, *Dogmatica empirică a Bisericii Ortodoxe Soborinicești*, vol. 2, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2017, p. 120;



Since most alternative therapies refer to the concept of energy, it is necessary to distinguish between the connotation of this term used in alternative „therapies” and the meaning of this term in the thinking of the Holy Fathers. The notion of „energy” would become very important in the struggle of the Holy Fathers against arianism, starting with Saint Athanasius the Great and Didymus the Blind. Saint Gregory Palamas, who has the merit for the clear formulation of the relation between the Hypostases and the divine energies, as well as for the clarification of the role and character of the divine works in relation to the creation, considers that the uncreated grace of God, when it penetrates into the depths of the soul, unites man with God and heals him<sup>53</sup>, while also showing that charismatic theology is based especially on uncreated energies, and not on human thought<sup>54</sup>.

The Holy Fathers<sup>55</sup> claim that man, in the paradisiacal state, did not know suffering, disease, feebleness, corruption or death, all of these being unknown to him<sup>56</sup>; this state of non-corruption was due exclusively to the divine grace. The relative state of perfection of the first man, sustained by the divine grace, spread to both body and soul, his body being healthy before the fall, full of power, not governed by disease, pain or suffering, being given as a gift by God<sup>57</sup>, since being penetrated by the divine grace, the body was actually „inundated by the divine energies”<sup>58</sup>. For the Holy Fathers, disease, suffering and death are related to the ancestral sin<sup>59</sup>, since the origin of the feebleness, diseases, degradation and death, together with all the other related evils that affect the nature of the human being to this day, are found in Adam’s freely consented act, who misused his free will in heaven. Therefore, God cannot be considered the author of suffering, disease and death<sup>60</sup>, because in the beginning creation was „very good” (Genesis 1, 31) although, according to His omniscience, he knew that Adam would fall out of grace, but from His unlimited love, God created him, assuming at the same time the risk of a free, but wrong choice, which will place Adam and his descendants between the eternal happiness of heaven, and the deaf pain of hell<sup>61</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> † Mitropolit de Nafpaktos HIEROTHEOS, *Sfântul Grigorie Palama Aghioritul*, traducere de prof. Paul Bălan, Ed. Buna Vestire, Bacău, 2000, p. 167;

<sup>54</sup> Sfântul GRIGORIE PALAMA, *Opere complete*, vol. 2, Ed. Gândul Aprins, București, 2013, pp. 12-13;

<sup>55</sup> NIL ASCETUL, *Cuvânt ascetic*, 50, în *Filocalia*, vol. 1, traducere de pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2017, p. 240;

<sup>56</sup> Jean-Claude LARCHET, *Creștinul în fața bolii, suferinței și morții*, traducere de Marinela Bojin, Ed. Sophia, București, 2015, p. 45;

<sup>57</sup> Pr. Dr. Liviu PETCU, *Hristos, prietenul nostru în suferința. Florilegiu Patristic*, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2012, p. 40;

<sup>58</sup> Jean-Claude LARCHET, „*Acesta este trupul Meu...*”, traducere de Marinela Bojin, Ed. Sophia, București, 2006, p. 43;

<sup>59</sup> Sfântul IOAN GURĂ DE AUR, *Omiliile la Matei, Oamenii care trăiesc în desfătări și cei cu putere nu se deosebesc întru nimic de morți*, în *P.S.B.*, vol. 23, p. 345; Sfântul GRIGORIE PALAMA, *Omiliile*, vol. 2, omilia XXXI, traducere de Paaraschiva Grigoriu, Ed. Anastasia, 2004, București, p. 13;

<sup>60</sup> Pr. I. ROMANIDIS, *Dogmatica empirică...*, vol. 2, p. 220;

<sup>61</sup> Pr. Ioan C. TEȘU, „*Simt boala ca iubire a lui Hristos*”, Ed. Doxologia, 2017, pp. 19-20;

The sin of Adam's disobedience had an impact not only on the human being, but also on the entire world<sup>62</sup>, and thus, Adam's „disease” extended through him to the entire cosmos<sup>63</sup>, all the creation<sup>64</sup>, and, implicitly, to the created energies, as he had been created as an emperor with a dignity superior to the sensitive cosmos<sup>65</sup>, as a priest and mediator between God and the world, having the purpose to rule over the other creatures, to bring them all together, and to offer them to God in an act that would sanctify creation, receiving the harmony, peace and order that his nature benefited at that time, due to the presence of grace and the collaboration with this grace, in union with God. Thus, it depended on Adam if he remained in this state of relative perfection. God created Adam as a microcosmos in a macrocosmos<sup>66</sup>, or, in other words, as a macro-anthropos, so that the world would become pan-human, that is, a humanized cosmos<sup>67</sup>, but also to be able to summarize in it all creatures<sup>68</sup>.

If Adam's fall caused the sickness of our entire human nature, through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ it was healed<sup>69</sup>, because by coming into the body of the new Adam, we feel our return to deification and enlightenment<sup>70</sup>. Thus, the reconstruction of the cosmos is accomplished by the incarnation of the Savior Jesus Christ<sup>71</sup>.

Patristic literature abounds in naming Christ the supreme healer of the human race, in the way St. Ignatius of Antioch does when addressing the Ephesians: „there is one Physician who is possessed

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<sup>62</sup> † Mitropolit de Volokolamsk Ilarion ALFEYEV, *Taina Credenței. Introducere în teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, traducere de Felicia Dumas, Ed. Doxologia, Iași, 2014, p. 121;

<sup>63</sup> Sfântul IOAN DAMASCHIN, *Dogmatica*, Cartea a doua, XII, traducere de pr. prof. Dumitru Fecioru, Ed. Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 2005, p. 83;

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, Cartea a doua, XXX, pp. 111-112;

<sup>65</sup> Pr. Prof. Dumitru STĂNILOAE, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, vol. 1, Ed. Institutului Biblic și de misiune ortodoxă, București, 2010, p. 412;

<sup>66</sup> Sfântul MAXIM MĂRTURISITORUL, *Mystagogia. Cosmosul și sufletul, chipuri ale Bisericii*, VII, introducere, traducere și note de pr. prof. dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, EIBMBOR, Române, București, 2000, p. 27; Sfântul IOAN DAMASCHIN, *Dogmatica...*, Cartea a doua, XII, p. 83;

<sup>67</sup> Pr. Prof. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă...*, vol. 1, p. 13;

<sup>68</sup> Sfântul GRIGORIE PALAMA, *Omilii*, vol. 3, omilia LIII, traducere de Parascheva Grigoriu, Ed. Anastasia, București, 2007, p. 281;

<sup>69</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Mihai HINCINSCHI, „Fundamentul hristologic al suferinței umane. O abordare teologică-misionară”, în *Suferință și terapie - perspective teologice*. Simpozion internațional 16-17 noiembrie 2012, coordnator: pr. dr. Florin Dobrei, Alba Iulia - Deva, 2013, Ed. Reîntregirea, p. 101;

<sup>70</sup> Pr. I. ROMANIDIS, *Dogmatica empirică...*, vol. 2, p. 232;

<sup>71</sup> Pr. Prof. Univ. Dr. Mihai HINCINSCHI, „Misiunea terapeutică a Bisericii în societatea contemporană”, în *Mehedinți, Istorie, Cultură și spiritualitate*, nr. 5, 5-8 iunie 2012, Comunicări susținute în cadrul simpozionului Mehedinți - Istorie, cultură și spiritualitate, prilejuit de „2012 - Anul omagial al Sfântului Maslu și al îngrijirii bolnavilor în Patriarhia Română, Ed. Universitaria și Didahia Severin, Drobeta Turnu Severin, 2012, p. 148;

both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God (...), Jesus Christ our Lord”<sup>72</sup>, a body that is holy, with power against „all sickness”<sup>73</sup>.

The main therapeutic paths available to the believers, both for the healing of the soul and the body diseases, ways that have the value of constituting both practical means of recovery and healing of the people who practiced these alternative pseudotherapies, as well as in means of recreating inside the Church of the Heavenly Doctor are: The Holy Sacrament – Holy Unction being the Sacrament of healing par excellence, dogmas and catechesis, prayer, fulfillment of commandments and obedience to the spiritual father, forgiveness and love of enemies, fasting, veneration of the holy relics and vestiges, iconic therapy, religious reading and singing, exorcisms, holy water and the sign of the Holy Cross.

## CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the history of medical sciences, disease has experienced different connotations and approaches, but it can be defined mainly as an imbalance of biochemical, morphological or physiological nature, which installs pain in the body, specific to each condition. Starting with the primitive civilizations, people have been troubled by questions about disease, and have come to believe, due to superstitions, in a certain vital principle or in a foreign presence, as is the case of ancient American, Indian, Tibetan and Greek cultures. Thus, different theories and conceptions about disease have crystallized, one by one, some of them also having a religious substratum, connotations which vary from one culture to another, from one historical era to another.

Perhaps the most important pre-Christian view of the disease is the Jewish one because of the revelation and the monotheistic worship addressed to Yahweh, which in some ways brings this vision closer to the Christian one. Judaism sees the disease as a consequence of the sin of the first people and sees in the diseases a punishment sent by God, either for their own sins, or for those of their parents, or for reasons above human understanding. The Islamic view believes that God sends the disease for the straightening and improvement of the people, that is why it is seen as a blessing. Buddhism, in turn, emphasizes the saving value of the disease, based on the doctrine of karma and samsara, which promote the possibility of rebirth in other future lives. The Native American traditions call for the invocation of evil spirits and various rituals in order to restore the altered relationship between the man and the so-called supernatural powers, while the Mesoamerican resort to shamanic rituals, which

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<sup>72</sup> Sfântul IGNATIE AL ANTIOHIEI, *Către Efeseni*, VII, 2, în *P.S.B.*, vol. 1, traducere de pr. D. Fecioru, EIBMBOR, București, 1979, pp. 159-160;

<sup>73</sup> Pr. Prof. D. STĂNILOAE, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă...*, vol. 2, p. 64.

contain magical elements to remove the effects of the disease. The Japanese are not as interested in eradicating the disease, because, according to their thinking, a man who suffers from no disease, is almost devoid of intelligence. For the African population, the balance between soul and body has the significance of health, while their imbalance causes disease.

Many of the alternative „therapies” are influenced by the extra-European cultures, being born in the last centuries in the West from the links with certain alternative or marginal forms of spirituality, with Esotericism or with Gnosticism, and the roots of many energy „therapies” historically intermingle with those of the New Age phenomenon. According to certain commentators, the holistic thaumaturgical movement and the New Age phenomenon have become so intertwined during the 1970s that it is quite difficult to establish the precise line of demarcation between the two, especially because they share the same ideology, respectively, the view of the man, who must be seen as a whole system with physical, mental and spiritual components (the holistic vision). The mix of New Age ideas and the world of alternative therapies can be seen, according to some American researchers, starting from the 1970s, when America became the promoter of the holistic therapeutic movement.

The pseudothaumaturgical network of alternative therapies and techniques is one of the most fascinating aspects of the New Age, and given its mixed and unclear features, its spread is difficult to control and track. Thus, at this moment when man no longer seems to be anchored in any fundamentalist view, but he is immersed in a fragmented society, the spread of the so-called „sweet therapies” finds fertile ground. Beyond the deontological problems related to the medical profession and the enormous uncertainty from the scientific and empirical level that underlies most of these practices and many so-called „alternative” therapies, we have long had to ask ourselves seriously, why man, for more than a decade, at the European and national level, always seeks to find again the „divine” in this swamp of uncertainty?

During the last years, especially after the 1989 revolution, in Romania a plethora of New Age movements became increasingly present, especially those that include thaumaturgical elements, known as alternative, energy or complementary therapies, in which the general public has expressed an increasing interest. This phenomenon was also present in other countries of the East-European area, having as their basis the general state of religious emptiness (spiritual crisis) after 50 years of atheist ideology and education. Thus, the number of sects, currents and new religious movements (pseudo-religious) has today become an indisputable reality, in 2019 Romania reaching over 500 active religious foundations and associations, outside the consecrated churches and cults, according to the data provided by the State Secretariat for Cults.

In the proliferation of sects, the thaumaturgical dimension plays an increasingly important role. Thus, in the area of sects and new religious movements especially the thaumaturgical, millenarian and charismatic sects proliferate. Alternative therapies of thaumaturgic source have an effective impact on the receptivity of the contemporary man, especially in the increasingly secularized, non-religious, desacralized and religiously indifferent West, in whose thinking, religious confusion has as first cause the religious syncretism. Parts of this thaumaturgical holistic pantheon are: Reiki, Crystallotherapy, Chromotherapy, Therapeutic Touch, Vibrational Waters, Aura-soma, Healing Touch, Iridiology, Pyramidology, Radiesthesia, Pranothrapy, Bach flower therapy, and many others. The Savior Jesus Christ warned us that, throughout the history of the world, „false Christs and false prophets will arise and do signs and miracles, to lead astray, if possible, the chosen ones" (Mk. 13, 22), and the Holy Apostle Paul declared to us that already "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. 2, 7), words whose effect and truth we can easily observe in our country because of the expansion of the „therapeutic" holistic New Age phenomenon.

Although there is no precise classification of alternative therapies, we were able to identify some common elements. Thus, alternative therapies refer to concepts such as auras, chakras, subtle bodies, light bodies, astrology, spirit guides, reincarnation and spiritualism. All this terminology is foreign to the Orthodox Church and although at first glance they seem to be borrowed from Hinduism and Buddhism, in reality they no longer respect their classical version, the concepts being taken over distorted, mixed and reinvented with each exponent and leader promoting such energy therapies. Thus, we cannot identify a precise doctrine of all the alternative therapies, as they appear, modify, reinvent, restructure and multiply according to the mind and will of the founder of the respective alternative therapy.

The most famous therapy of today is Reiki, which intends to be an energy therapeutic system, claiming that it heals with Qi energy, which alternatively is called vital energy, and which would serve to balance the supposed energy points called chakras. In Romania, Reiki has gained many followers, the most well-known advocate being Ovidiu Dragoş Argeşeanu. Reiki calls for gnostic, esoteric, magical elements and promotes doctrines such as the evocation of the Deva spirits, karma, pantheism, monism, reincarnation, often using the names of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, and even that of the Lord Jesus Christ, during the meditation called „salvation". All Reiki masters do not shy away from boasting about the friendship they have with the so-called guide-spirits, who are nothing but unclean spirits. Within this pseudotherapy, apart from many other confusions and syncretistic elements, there is also a great deal of confusion that has generated contradictions even between the Reiki masters,

regarding the true Reiki symbols, and it has been concluded that at present there are only assumptions. The ultimate goal of this pseudotherapy is the awakening of the energy called Kundalini or Reiki.

What we need to keep in mind is that the so-called healing energy does not operate (act) if it is not given praise, addressed to in prayers and requests or invoked, and in no case is it possible to manipulate in any way certain energies created, but it is an activity of invocation or evocation of demons, who actually perform these supposed „wonders” or „healing”, even from a distance. So, we could rather call Reiki a demonic spiritist system of „healing” and not an energy system. In the best case, if these false miracles or false healing are not directly produced by fallen angels, they are the fruit of self-suggestion, which can also occur through the work of the „father of falsehood”. But this information, which is fundamental to the patients’ spiritual and mental health is not disclosed to them from the first courses or sessions. But perhaps the worst thing is that sick people give up the treatment recommended by the doctor and practice the so-called energy exercises in order to heal. There were cases when people who stopped treatment and practiced such techniques lost their lives.

However, the most important thing that I have to mention is that these energy-alternative „therapies” try to respond at the same time to the spiritual needs of the future patients, adopting a holistic approach, that is to say about the individual as a whole - body and soul, even if these therapies are practiced by people who have no medical training, thus lacking the ability to understand how a disease is generated, and even less, the competence of establishing a correct diagnosis. Moreover, some energy therapists inoculate patients with the idea that the respective energy treatment will give much better results only if they adhere to certain spiritual beliefs, and there are situations when patients are not initially revealed occult, spiritist, esoteric or magic practices which the „therapist” uses, and other times these „details” are presented in the form of „harmless exercises” that do not have negative effects, which is totally untrue.

According to Orthodox faith’ teachings, the spiritual world exists, but access to this spiritual dimension can only be obtained according to the rules and teaching left by Jesus Christ, His Holy Apostles, and kept to this day unaltered by the Orthodox Church, through the Ecumenical Councils and the Holy Fathers. Therefore, we must remember the words of the Savior Jesus Christ: „He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad” (Mt. 12, 30); Similarly, Holy Apostle Paul says: „test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil” (1 Thess. 5: 21-22), and the Holy Apostle John, in the same spirit, says: „Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus

Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (1 Jn. 4, 1-2), urging us to develop spiritual discernment in all aspects of life, which we need especially in this holistic pantheon of alternative pseudotherapies.

To be truly misleading, promoters of alternative therapies have put together different theories and fairy tales about the supposed journeys of Jesus Christ to India and Egypt, which he undertook before starting His public activity. We are told that during these journeys, the Lord Jesus Christ learnt different healing techniques, including Reiki. In fact, they want to challenge the divine side of the Savior Jesus Christ, by which He performed all the healings, resurrections and miracles and to present Him as a simple man, a prophet at the most, who did nothing but put into practice certain secret techniques of energy manipulation for miracles and healing. The next step is to make us believe that each one of us can be a thaumaturge or a miracle worker, just as the Savior Jesus Christ was, if we put into practice the secret teachings that were rediscovered in the Age of Aquarius by these promoters of alternative „therapies”. Obviously, things are not so! Our Lord Jesus Christ healed, and performed miracles by His divine power, and not by practicing Hindu or Taoist techniques. But no matter how many false miracles or false healings occur in the sphere of alternative pseudotherapies, never, in any country or at any time, has an advocate of any religious or psycho-religious system risen from the dead, as The Heavenly Doctor did.

Even if it were really about the manipulation of the energies created, in the case of the supposed „healings” claimed by the pseudo - energy therapies, these created energies would not have the property to be healing or creative anyway, as long as they are altered and corrupted by the original sin, and in need of cooperation between God and man so as for them to be restored and sanctified. Everything that is created cannot bring about healing, which in itself is an act of creation, this status belonging exclusively to God. But there are certain pseudo-thaumaturges of alternative „therapies” who claim to heal with uncreated energies. This is actually a sham and a wrong use of this phrase, because they cannot access the uncreated energies outside of the Church - the only place where the uncreated energies from God to His believers occur, through saints and the Holy Sacrament and the other Orthodox therapeutic methods. If God were to allow His uncreated energies to be accessed by anyone, anywhere, anytime and anyway, this would produce a general chaos, at the same time canceling out any criterion of separating the good from evil, the world from the darkness, which would mean that God would work against His own Church, which He Himself founded, which cannot be the case!

The saints, when they heal, as they themselves are creatures, do not claim that healing belongs to them, but that He who healed is God, who by His uncreated energies poured into the saints, does the

healing. Therefore, the energies that are truly healing are only the uncreated ones, which spring from the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity, and dwell in the saints, in icons and in their holy relics, and from which people can benefit, according to God's will, through the Holy Sacrament and the other therapeutic ways available to the Church.

The teachings of the Holy Fathers regarding illness and healing are connected to the Old Adam, through whom the disease and death entered the world, and with the New Adam, who restored the creation and the human nature, restoring health to the former. That is why the Holy Fathers, when they refer to healing, do not use concepts such as karma, reincarnation, subtle bodies or guide-spirits, but always urge us to address the Heavenly Doctor, the One who created us, and the only one who can heal us, body and soul. Although for the Holy Fathers the healing of the soul is on the foreground, which aims at human deification – the true healing, the Holy Fathers point out the role of the doctor and the medicines in the healing process, claiming that God also works through doctors.

The church must make its believers become aware that when they are confronted with disease and they have exhausted all the therapeutic means available by the Church, such as the The Holy Sacrament of Repentance, the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Unction, the prayer and other healing means of the Church, and God does not provide healing, and medical science has no solution for them, it is for their salvation to accept the disease and suffering and to transfigure it with Christ in His Church, carrying their disease along the way of Golgotha, along with Christ, and further working with fear and shudder on the salvation of their souls (Flp. 2, 12), by no means accepting the deceptive „offer” of the so-called alternative therapies, which in any case will not be able to restore their physical health, but by refusing it, they will keep that of the soul.

What makes most Christians an easy prey for exponents of alternative therapies is primarily that they do not quite know their faith's teaching, and that they do not live daily the divine life of the Church in an authentic and plenary way, which creates a vacuum of the soul and a latent opening for any new spiritual offer, be it heretical. That is why today the Church must intensify its catechetical activity, especially among young people and intellectuals who, unfortunately, prefer to practice Reiki, rather than live authentically, day by day, with Christ in His Church. Moreover, the Orthodox Church must be careful and take seriously the increasing danger that comes from this holistic „therapeutic” phenomenon, which is backed by the New Age metanetwork, a phenomenon that has already wreaked havoc in the West and deviates speedily towards Romania, too.



Therefore, the Church, through its organs, clergy and believers, will have to arm itself with the weapons of light and fight both to keep its current believers and to recover those lost in the holistic „therapeutic” pantheon, but without constraining them.

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