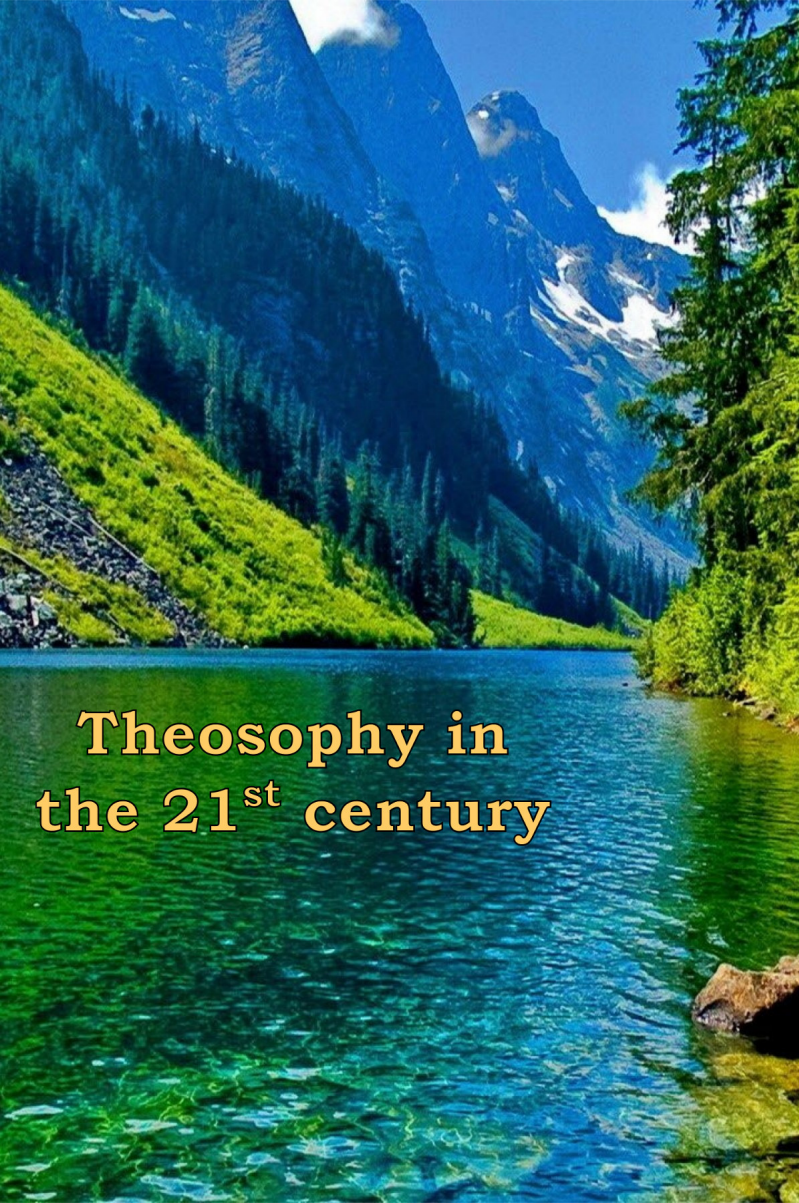


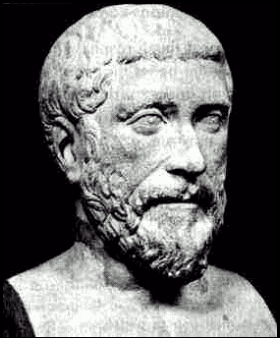


**Theosophy in  
the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

# ***10 Theosophy through the ages***

Course created by  
Carlos Pérez Menéndez  
SOCIEDAD TEOSÓFICA ESPAÑOLA

# *Theosophy through history*



Pythagoras



Plato



Leonardo  
Da Vinci



Paracelsus



Giordano Bruno



Isaac Newton

- The essence of Theosophy flourished in different times and places.
- It was taught to the world by thinkers of all times

And many more ...

# *Theosophy through history*

■ There were some essential ideas about Life that appeared in different times and places:

- Egypt
- Mystery Schools
- Buddha
- Greek philosophers
- Neoplatonics
- Geniuses of the Renaissance
- Greats of Enlightenment
- Modern Theosophy
- Modern thinkers
- . . .



# *The initiatory tradition in Egypt*

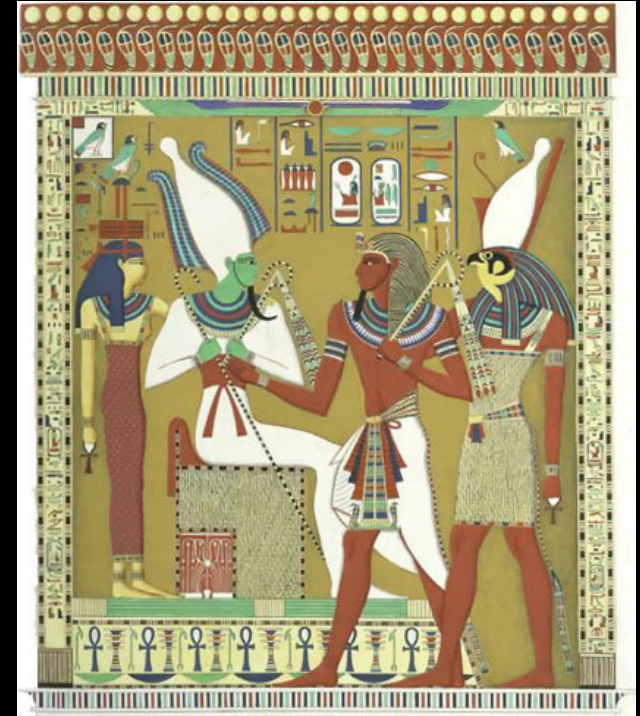
2500bce

## Myth of Osiris

**Osiris** is killed by his brother Seth, who cut him up and scattered his remains.

**Isis** recovered them, united them and had a son with him, **Horus**.

Osiris became the god of the dead.



390 ce



## Osiris

God of life and death,  
of the rebirth, of  
fertility.

Redeemer.

Judge of the dead.

## Isis

Goddess of matter,  
magic and  
regeneration.



# *Meanings of the myth*



Book of Emerging Forth into the Light (Book of the dead)

## **Exoteric**

The life after death.  
The reincarnation of the soul.  
Cycles throughout  
nature.

## **Esoteric**

The resurrection of the  
human soul.  
Regeneration and the start of  
a new life.

# *The tradition of the Mysteries*

- The Mysteries were initiatory systems of the ancient world.
- They spread from Egypt and Asia Minor to the Mediterranean.
- Its objective was to help awaken the candidate's inner conscience.
- His teachings were symbolic.  
Initiation: *new life*
- Minor Mysteries (exoteric)  
Major Mysteries (esoteric)
- Mystery Schools: Orphic, Eleusis, Mithra, Samothrace, ...



1500bce —

396 ce —

# *The schools of Mysteries*

- Common theme in the mysteries: cycles, rebirth, regeneration.
- The Orphic mysteries were the basis of a kind of religion. Eurydice, wife of Orpheus, dies and he goes to rescue her at Hades. With his lyre he convinces the gods to allow him to return to the world of the living.
- Everything was spoiled when they left and Orpheus looked back even though he had been forbidden.



Orpheus (Roman mosaic)

# *Hermetism*

- The hermetic tradition has its origin in the teachings of **Hermes Trismegistus** and is of Egyptian and Greek origin.
- The fundamental work of hermeticism is the **Corpus Hermeticum**, a set of 18 philosophical, mystical and moral treatises.
- Hermeticism is at the origin of esotericism in the West and has inspired innumerable seekers of truth.



Hermes Trismegistus

# *The axial era*

## China

**Lao-Tze** (-600?)  
**Confucius** (-551, -479)  
**Chuang Tzu** (-370, -287)

## India

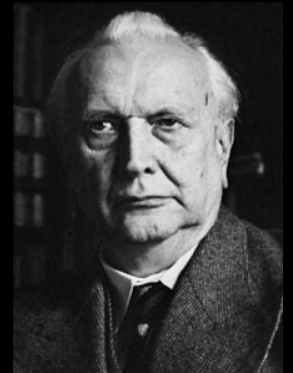
**Mahavira** (-599, -527)  
**Gautama Buddha**  
(-563, -483)

## West

**Zoroaster** (-650, -)

**Pythagoras** (-580, -490)  
**Heraclitus** (-535, -484)  
**Parmenides** (-530, -470)  
**Socrates** (-469, -399)  
**Plato** (-428, -348)

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), a German psychiatrist and philosopher, defined the period between 800 and 200 bce as the **Axial Era** during which the human being becomes aware of his existence and begins to search for himself. Great sages appear who define many aspects of the current culture.



# Lao-Tse

## Taoism

Lao Tse = Lao Tzu =  
Old master

Author of **Tao Te Ching**

The **Tao**: the One,  
the essence, the way

Ying-Yang:  
Female-Male

Basis of ancient philosophy  
of China



500bce  
?

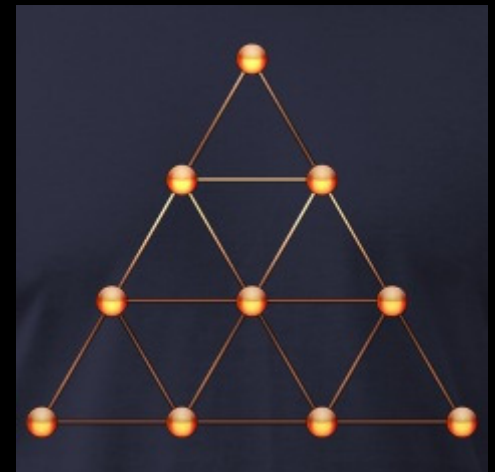
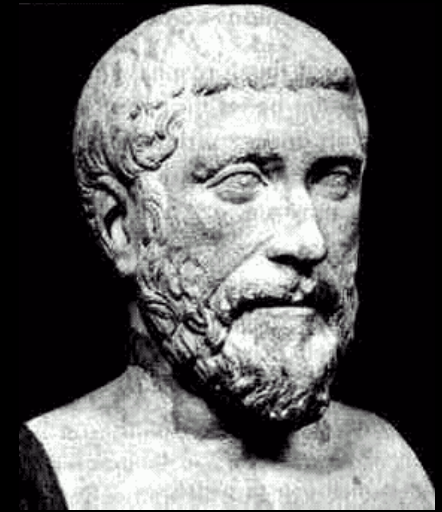
I would like to possess the wisdom to be able to march on  
the great road without fear of deviating.

The great road is flat but people love the trails.

*Lao Tze*

# Pythagoras

- Pythagoras was a Greek philosopher and mathematician.
- He studied in Egypt and defined himself as a lover of wisdom (philosopher).
- He founded his practical philosophical school in Crotona.
- The number is the abstract representation of the processes of manifestation, of the emanations of the Universe (Tetraktys).
- He was the most influential of the pre-Socratic philosophers.



Pythagorean Tetraktys

570 ac

475 ac

# Gautama Buddha

- Gautama Buddha was the great instructor of a spiritual reform movement in India.

- Buddhism is a philosophy rather than a religion.

- It focused on suffering, its causes and how to avoid it.

- The 4 **noble truths**:
  - The existence of suffering
  - Desire is the cause of suffering
  - The cessation of suffering
  - The noble eightfold path

- His influence reaches our days.



563 ac —

483 ac —

(aprox)

# *The Neoplatonists of Alexandria*

- Philosophical school of great prestige founded by Ammonio Sacas in Alexandria called "Eclectic Theosophical School"
- His ideas are known today as **Neoplatonism** and is the convergence of Eastern thought with that of Pythagoras and Plato.

## Fundamental ideas:

- The One
- Emanations
- The Soul of the World
- The intelligible world and the sensible world
- Theurgy

Ammonius Saccas

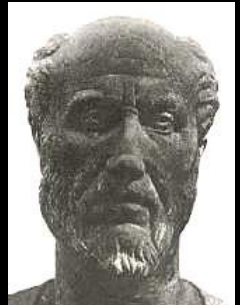
Plotinus

Porphyry

Iamblichus

Proclus

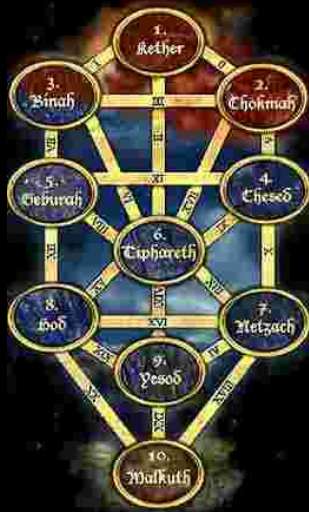
Hipatia



175bce —

485 ce —

# Middle Age



Kabbalistas



Alchemists

## Great thinkers

Symbolic systems:

- Hebrew Kabbalah
- Alchemy

They protected themselves from persecution of the church.

Various thinkers. E.g.:

- Dante Alighieri



Dante Alighieri  
(1265-1321)

900

1300

# Renaissance

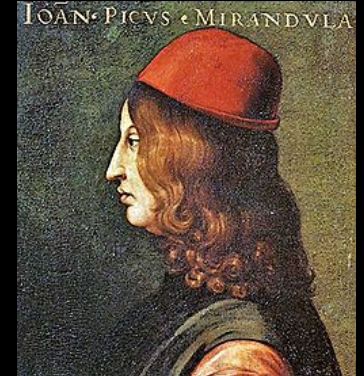
- Rediscovery of the ancient world.
- Revival of the philosophy independent of religion (natural philosophy, Neoplatonism)
- Persecution of the Church

Featured thinkers:

- Marsilio Ficino
- Pico della Mirandola
- Leonardo Da Vinci
- Cornelio Agripa
- Jacob Boehme
- ...



Marsilio Ficino  
1433 - 1499



Pico della Mirandola  
1463 - 1494



Leonardo Da Vinci  
1452 - 1519



Cornelio Agripa  
1486 - 1535

1400

1600

# Giordano Bruno

- Religious, philosopher, astronomer and Italian poet of the Renaissance.
- It was nourished by Platonism, Neoplatonism and Hermeticism.
- He had a relationship with other esotericists in the Church.
- Main ideas:
  - Unity of the Cosmos
  - Soul of the Universe
  - Implicit infinity vs explicit infinity
- Burnt at the stake because of the Inquisition accused of being a heretic.



Giordano Bruno  
1548 - 1600

1548

1600

# Spinoza

- Born in Amsterdam, of a Sephardic Jewish family.
- He read Giordano Bruno.
- Great philosopher of the 17th century. Stream of rationalism.
- Pantheism: *Deus sive Natura* (God or Nature)
- Monistic vision of Reality, like the esoteric tradition.



Baruch Spinoza  
1632 - 1677

1632 —  
1677 —

# *Modern Theosophy*

- In 1875 the Theosophical Society was founded in order to investigate and promote the Ageless Wisdom again in the world
- Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society rediscovered for the West the values of the Orient and its own classical tradition.
- HPB said that she did not make known something new but it was the knowledge accumulated during ages.



Helena P. Blavatsky  
and  
Henry S. Olcott

# Modern influences

- Scientists philosophizing:
  - Albert Einstein
  - David Bohm
  - Karl Pribram
  - Carl Gustav Jung
  - Fritjof Capra
  - ...
- Modern Theosophy allowed the popular (though distorting) *New Age* movement
- Modern Freethinkers:
  - J. Krishnamurti
  - Ken Wilber
  - Eckhart Tolle
  - ...



*To think*



Watch, think, investigate, inquire ...  
Make the following questions or thoughts suggestions  
But don't stay here, ask yourself and find out.