ENLIGHTENMENTS: Towards a Comparative Analysis of the Philosophies of Enlightenment in Buddhist, Eastern and Western Thought and the Search for a Holistic Enlightenment Suitable for the Contemporary World

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1. Enlightenments: why the plural ? Some introductory questions

A word first about the basic presuppositions underlying this paper. I wish to institute a semantic and linguistic reform into our discussion abut enlightenment both in the academic literature and in everyday speech. We are all used to talk of the nature of enlightenment; Buddhist and Hindu textbooks carry information on the nature of enlightenment, as do Western philosophical and historical texts, although here we more often talk of *The Enlightenment*, as a period of largely European originated intellectual history, running from approximately the 1680's to an indeterminate time, but usually September 1914 is taken as cut off time. This paper is proposing that we need to begin talking about Enlightenments instead, or The Enlightenments. This is a very important move which has huge philosophical implications. Rather than spending futile energy disputing about whether Eastern or Western enlightenment is better, whether Sufism, or Christianity or Buddhist, or Mahayana or Theravadin, or Zen – is the quickest way to enlightenment, or whether my meditation teacher is more enlightened that yours, or even whether I am more enlightened than you, or vice versa – we need a methodology that will enable us to remain true to all our separate and diverse enlightenments, and those of all the many seeks of wisdom who have come before us and who will come after us. We need a linguistic and a conceptual framework that will enable us to appreciate, compare, contrast, analyse, rigorously and exactly, but also empathetically, transpersonally, from within as well as from without – all the diverse claims to enlightenment, inner and outer, social and political and economic as well as personal and private, that have been made or are being made, in innumerable languages and contexts. We need a framework to study the comparative epistemology of enlightenments, across religious and secular boundaries, and across intellectual and academic disciplinary boundaries, and from practitioners of the spiritual disciplines and from theorists who study the spiritual disciplines both. We need to ask many questions of many subjects and many experts, if we are to get answers – of philosophers, of cognitive scientists, of psychologists, of psychoanalysts, of experts into the study of different religions, of historians of ideas, of social reformers, of educators, of economists, and natural scientists in general – for all have claims on the study and discourse about enlightenment. As a first move, then, we need to agree to talk of Enlightenments. Does this

formulation therefore imply there is an epistemological pluralism about the experience of enlightenment itself ? Is an advanced Buddhist meditator, achieving enlightenment, having a different kind of experience from a Jewish Kabbalist praying with intense devotion before an image of the sefiroth, or a Sufi praying, say, or a Christian ? We don't really know. It may be that they are all tapping into a substratum of collective transpersonal consciousness, which is indeed one, yet which appears many. It may be that this perception of unity is exactly one of the tell tale signs or hallmarks of genuine enlightenment. If so, this might be one of the reasons for the origin of the notion of monotheism – that people began having these kind of experiences, people like Abraham, like Moses, and on down to Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Jafar as Sadiq etc. Other questions we can ask are: if everyone has the same kind of experience, why are there so many different religions? And even within the same religion, so many schools ? We can also ask: what happens after enlightenment ? Is there an after-enlightenment, and in which traditions is this so more than others ? We can also ask: what are the blockages to enlightenment? Is there a fear of enlightenment in some societies ? For example in societies which focus their energies on materialism, on possession, on consumerism, on time-based activities ? (I think there is, and that it might as well be called phobosophy, the fear of wisdom). In short, what is the opposite of enlightenment and where did it come from ? Is there a gender issue to enlightenment: whilst Buddha was off seeking enlightenment his wife was busy raising their son – is this fair ? Has it always been thus ? Does women's enlightenment or a woman's enlightenment point to conceptual, experiential and perhaps political differences to those of men ? From an ecological perspective, we can also ask: is enlightenment something that only we human can do, and then only some of us ? What might enlightenment be like for a yew tree that's lived 900 years, or a fly that lives for a day ? If there is life on other planets, and sentient life, would enlightenment be the same for each different life form ? If enlightenment is a preserve of intelligent life, what kind of intelligence is a prerequisite for enlightenment ? How can we tell genuine enlightenment from false enlightenment ? What about premature claims to enlightenment sometimes made for reasonable enough reasons, usually out of some kind of ignorance ? Then we need to ask questions about education and political economy – is there a more or less useful political economy of enlightenment ? Do some kinds of economic systems enable more or less enlightened people to flourish than others ? Is the guarantee of basic living standards, health, welfare etc. a help or hindrance to enlightenment ? And how can we measure that ? And do some kinds of education systems, both at junior and senior levels, produce more enlightened students ? What are the variables here ? What kinds are best ? Then there are mathematical questions: how many people have ever lived on planet earth ? If reincarnation is true, as Buddhists and many others claim, are these the same people being recycled over and over, on a wheel of learning and forgetting, seeking for ultimate enlightenment and not yet quite making it, so trying again over and over ? Or are they different souls in transit so to speak ? And of all these sum total of human souls, what percentage, what proportion have actually attained enlightened – and in what ways ? What happens to them after they have so attained this enlightenment ? Where is Gautama Buddha for example, now, in 2005 AD – where is the consciousness or mind energy that used to form his being ? And the same question could be asked of other great religious founders whose followers have claimed states of enlightened awareness, such as Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad etc. And what of the notions in Mahayana thought, that some advanced souls choose to come back again and again to help further he collective enlightenment of non-souls from suffering ? Is collective enlightenment ever going to be possible on this earth ? What would it actually look like, feel like ? What differences would happen to our social and economic systems ? To our religious systems ? Is human nature as we know it actually capable of enlightenment or are we to programmed with survival needs, with Darwinian competitiveness and subtle or overt violence, fear and territoriality, that enlightenment as such is merely a dream of a dying minority of idealists who have not yet woken up to the "real world" / Or is the real world actually the world of enlightenment itself, and enlightenment consists in seeing through into this reality ? Or can both statements be partly true ? There are undoubtedly many other questions that can be asked about the nature of enlightenments – such as- once attainted, does it remain with the person for ever ? Or do we not sometimes glimpse a state of enlightenment and then

lose it, only to remembers it and recontact it later on our spiritual journey, sometimes, in a new guise ? And are there not different kinds of enlightenments the same person will have throughout their life: a special kind of enlightenment, say , gained from listening to some amazing piece of music, say Bach, or a profound Indian raga, or Tibetan temple music, compared with the enlightenment experience that might come from a profound experience of deep lovemaking, or that might come from gazing at an exquisite picture which enthrals and entrances and holds the mind and imagination ? And might that not be different again from the enlightenment experience that might come from reading a dense piece of philosophical argumentation and suddenly getting it, realising what the author is trying to say, and thinking, yes, that's it ? Or the enlightenment experience that comes from writing such a thing ? In short, in all the innumerable forms of creativity – are there not enlightenments lurking ? One thing that is certain: enlightenment is paradoxical – there is the enlightenment that comes from saying no (say to personal relationships, to intoxications, to sexuality, for example) and there are the enlightenments that come from saying yes (as in Tantra and some western schools of thought) for example. Is it that we need to experience both kinds in the course of a lifetime, or many lifetimes, to get the real full savour of enlightenment – to become truly wise ? And what actually is the relationship between enlightenment and wisdom ? Are they the same ?

Enough has been said, hopefully, to explain why we need to use the term enlightenments. I have been trying to start a discourse here – and a linguistic revolution in the terminology of religious studies, as well as ordinary language.

I just want to explain, finally, in this introduction, why the question matters at all, and why this is not merely a clever linguistic move, but rather an epistemological revolution with profound implications, and which may hold part of the key of unlocking liberation. Liberation is of course, arguably, another name for enlightenment, or at least in the same part of the conceptual universe. For enlightenment is not morally neural; the will to enlightenment is the most profound commitment a spiritual seeker can make. The experience of enlightenment is the end game, so to speak, if there is one, of the spiritual journey (or is the start point of just a higher level of operation ?)

At this point let me call a halt to these questions, important thought they are: hopefully, enough has been said to indicate how the shift from the study of enlightenment to enlightenments can be useful. Let us then get down to the business of examining exactly what is meant by enlightenment in various different cultural and religious contexts, and see if we can establish a comparative epistemological framework for this work. Further questions (and hopefully a few answers) might arise as we proceed.

2. European Classical enlightenments:

Let us begin with the history of the idea of enlightenment in Western thought, in Greek philosophy to be exact. The fact of the existence of such a concept is actually kept quite quiet, but it exists. The term Lysis is the nearest ancient Greek equivalent to what we mean in modern parlance by enlightenment. It was first used in Pythagorean circles, so far as we know. It meant – a setting free, a loosening, and a solution. For the Pythagoreans, it seems to have meant something very similar to Buddhist or Hindu or Jain enlightenment. It meant the soul, the psyche, becoming free from entangling karma, and becoming freed from painful and difficult future rebirths (Pythagoreans of course believed in reincarnation). The Orphic traditions also used the term Lysis, and from there it got into the vocabulary of the mystery schools – Eleusis etc. – and referred to the experience which the mystagogue had there which brought salvation, liberation. Liberation from what ? From the belief that this world of the senses is all that there is. The realisation that there is a spiritual world in which our souls –

our psyches – have their true home. That there is an inner dimension to being, that this visible world is only the tip of the iceberg. To feel in touch with this, to know one's own soul, was to come home. To reach Lysis. It was the end game for the Greek Philosophers. It gave our contingent existence here an absolute bed rock of faith, a certainty – and it was this faith that enabled Parmenides for example to posit the existence of the eternal one – which vision arose from him out of Lysis; or gave Empedocles the faith to jump into Mount Etna, knowing his soul could not die; or which gave Socrates the ability to drink his hemlock without batting an eyelid.

Socrates and his pupil Plato (it is sometimes hard to disentangle them) introduced a new dimension to Lysis. For Socrates it meant a puzzling out, a figuring out of a difficult problem – either logical, or ethical, usually both. First comes aporia, stuckness. The philosopher asks so many questions he gets stuck. He becomes unable to think it out. He gets into aporia. Stuck. Perplexed. Then he thinks it through. He talks to his friends. He /she reasons it out. He practices dialectic. Suddenly, eventually, he works it out. He sees the solution. Its light a light going on in the head. It's literally an enlightenment experience. At this point comes Lysis. The solution. There can be bigger and smaller moments of Lysis for the Greeks, then. But the main one, is the answer to the meaning of life. The riddle itself. The solution to the great conundrum for all philosophers. The why are we here question. For Plato, Lysis continues in this vein. He waxes lyrical about it. He invents the simile of the cave and the sun in the republic to explain it. The philosopher is someone who not only sees through the illusions (shadows) on the cave wall, but becomes free of his chains and leaves the cave and goes out into the bright sunlight (in Greece sunlight means business). This is Lysis: Enlightenment. All of Platonic thought – the idea of the forms, the role of philosopher guardians in society – is all premised on this Lysis experience. Plato also asks a fundamental question. What does a philosopher do once he / she has had this experience of Lysis ? Do they stay in the ideal world of archetypal forms and renounce the world, breathing a sigh of relief to have escaped the torments of anguish and emotional grief and suffering in the non-philosophical world" ? No, for Plato, the calling is equivalent to the Mahayana ideal of the Boddhisattva –t he philosopher returns back into the cave, back down to the market place – and shares, as much as possible, with those who will listen, the nature and possibility of Lysis – the existence of enlightenment. There is a touching passage in Plato which describes this duty of the philosopher. There is also a dark foreboding over this task, for having witnessed his own teacher, Socrates, a pretty enlightened person, destroyed by the mob of fickle rent a crowd demagogues (shall we say the media of the day "done him in" ?) he realised there is a price to pay. He also had the tragic example of Pythagoras, who was also put to death by an angry mob of ruffians jealous of his wisdom, seeking to storm his academy at Crotona by storm, and setting fire to it, in the flames of which he is erupted to have perished. Hanging over the business of Lysis, right from the start, is the shadow of phobosophy: fear of Lysis, jealousy of Lysis, anger at Lysis, Lysis as something you can steal / prevent / control. State fear of Lysis. You could go so far `as to say that Plato therefore politicised Lysis. His strategy was to put Lysis at the heart of the business of government. But it remained for him largely an aristocratic business. The mob, the slaves, couldn't really obtain Lysis.

Aristotle continued this thought, but was a little more distrustful of the mystical side of Lysis. For him, logic is the best, the surest way, to Lysis. Aristotle begins the tradition of Lysis as analysis – which is in fact a derivate term. By analysing something, you loosen its conceptual ingredients, you boil it right down to first principles. You ask: what kind of a thing is it., what type of what kind of a thing is it ? Then you can categorise it – indeed, by developing his logical systems of analysis, Aristotle breaks everything down into a phenomenon definable by reference to variables: *substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and passion.* And Aristotle applies his passion for analysis to everything, and in doing so he really invents science: zoology, botany, biology, political theory, economics, metaphysics, ethics, literary theory, linguistics, psychology. With his encyclopaedic mind Aristotle starts the Western mind out on a quest which has continued ever since, and inspired both the Hellenistic traditions of Alexandria and the later Mediaeval

University systems – with their faculties, and departments, and knowledge factories, churning out more and more details about infinitely divisible particles of knowledge. Not withstanding the so called Baconian rejection of Aristotelian method, in fact, scientific method only built on the work of early scholastic Aristotelian thought; the modern western scientific mind, and the institutions through which it expresses itself, namely the university and academic system, remains thoroughly Aristotelian. And the problem of course is that Lysis per se is almost chased out of that system. In the west, unlike in say a Buddhist university, or in Nalanda, you aren't expected to experientially cultivate the experience of Lysis as you complete your essays or dissertations. In fact, 99% of academic discourse seems founded on the premise that it doesn't exist, and to chase of it is folly, or madness. And yet, paradoxically, it does exist in Aristotle and in the Aristotelian thought world. In the metaphysics, Aristotle explains that there is a prime mover – there is a place in which all the disparate phenomena of reality converge and are integrated in the noetic experience of the knower. There is an inner knowingness in which the philosopher achieves Lysis, ultimately and finally. Perhaps, in the lost esoteric works (purely orally transmitted), Aristotle discoursed about this. In what we have remaining it is merely hinted at. But enough hints are there for us to appreciate what kind of an experience Aristotle meant by Lysis – and we cold characterise it as a kind of jnana yogic experience. It is the achieving of a vision of the metaphysical unity and purpose underlying all phenomena, a vision of the force which created and sustains the universe, Theos, which moves all things through the power of love. Enlightenment then, for Aristotle, is hiding in his metaphysics, which I exactly as we might expect, for as he says: "*For the science which it would be most meet for God to have is a divine science, and so is any science that deals with divine objects; and this science alone has both these qualities; for (1) God is thought to be among the causes of all things and to be a first principle, and (2) such a science either God alone can have, or God above all others. All the sciences, indeed, are more necessary than this, but none is better.*

Other Greek philosophical traditions had room for Lysis: the stoics particularly made metaphysical bedrock out of it, such that the philosopher who had strived for and attained enlightenment, then had to live out his role in the world, as a fulfilment of cosmic duty. Knowing oneself a citizen of the cosmos, one still had to play the part of wife, husband, teacher, lover, friend, emperor – but one's real home was known as somewhere else. Thus Zeno of Citium, thus Marcus Aurelius, thus Cicero. The philosopher becomes lonely, and Lysis tinged with tragedy. Always there are barbarians waiting at the frontier gates. Or behind the porch in the stoa. Enlightenment having been politicised by the Greeks, continued in this vein under the Romans – only more so. It became deadly battle of rhetorical skills, accompanied by armies. The republic went down in flames. The Emperors seized through force the pallium of enlightenment and turned it into bread and circuses. Caesar politicised it with paternalism. He endowed libraries. Later, he was divinised, the final politicisation of Lysis. This posed a dilemma the western soul still hasn't recovered from. If the emperor is divine, and symbolises Lysis – then he is to be worshipped. But what about my own enlightenment / What about our enlightenment as free equal citizens? Hence republicanism: fast forward, American Revolution, French revolution, IRA. And still the battle lines are drawn. Cul de sac ? Lysis in the West seems to have got lost somewhere between the genealogies and the battle lines…..

3. Zoroastrian Enlightenments: Meanwhile, stage left, from an equally ancient lineage of thought, another form of enlightenment: from the distant mountains of Eastern Iran / Western Afghanistan, a Priest magician called Xarathushtra (Zoroaster) – who has left the world a corpus of hymns known as Gathas, and in which a metaphysical philosophy of enlightenment as profound as any other can be discerned. For Zoroaster, enlightenment is the practice of *good mind:* (Vohu Manah or mananghô in Avestan**)** *wisdom is the chief quality of the good mind (khratûm mananghô).*

The attainment of such good mind is not easy; it comes as a result of constant practice, constant endeavour; it requires discipline, faith, patience, practice, and also divine assistance. In Zoroastrian cosmology, there are forces and powers above and beyond the merely human. We humans are born into the context of a titanic struggle between the forces of good and evil, between a wise and loving and good creator, Ahura Mazda, and a demonic figure, Angra Mainyu. A text from the early Avestan Gathas of Zoroaster says*: Ashem vohû vahishtem astî. Ushtâ astî, Ushtâ ahmâi hyat ashâi vahishtâi ashem* which has been translated as: R*ighteousness is the best good. It is radiant happiness. Radiant happiness comes to the person to whom righteousness is for the sake of the best righteousness alone.* Enlightenment for Zoroastrianism is tied up within a wider cosmological and eschatological context. Our moral purpose on earth as human beings is bound up with achieving this sate of being. If we do so, we are advancing the work of Ahura Mazda, if we fail to do so, or cultivate negative states of mind instead, we are advancing the work of Ahriman. Both these two forces are in conflict over the future of the world. The actual word used for enlightenment per se in Avestan is *Vîdvanôi* which is related to the Sanskrit word for spiritual knowledge, *vidya,* and its opposite, which is the cause of suffering and maya – avidya.

In the context of the Zoroastrian scriptures which detail the cosmological context of human existence, let me quote from an essay of mine recently completed on the philosophy of history:

The Bundahishn (existing in two recensions, a greater and lesser) is particularly important from the point of view of the philosophy of history, since it is a text which includes an account of the Zoroastrian idea of the creation of the earth and living things by Ahura Mazda, and also includes a detailed account of the end of time, the consummation of history, called the Frasokereti. According to the Bundahishn, the creation process itself is part of a cosmic struggle between God (Ahura Mazda) and the Devil (Angra Mainyu). Initially, created good and in an ideal spiritual form, the world existed only in pure thought (menog), until, after 3000 years the world was given material shape and solidity (getig), and the first human being, Gayomart, was created in perfect form, to help defeat Angra Mainyu. This 2nd period of the first phase of the material world, when all is still perfect, lasts another 3000 years. At this point in the story, tragedy and evil get involved, since Angra Mainyu, perceiving the perfection of Ahura Mazda's creation, breaks into the perfect created world, and introduces motion, change, polarity, violence, action and reaction (all had been still and quiet and calm in the first perfect world). Mankind began to grown ill, suffer and die, and nature, including the sacred waters and sacred fires, became polluted with all kinds of defilements. However, Ahura Mazda created a redemption saga to defeat evil, and the revelation of Zoroaster was the first act of this drama. By introducing a path of virtue and righteousness for mankind to follow, Ahura Mazda was giving us human beings an important part in the redemption story of history itself. Eventually, the work of Zoroaster would be finished off by an expected future prophet, known as the Saoshyant, of which the Greek Christ and the Hebrew Messiah is an equivalent concept, and ultimately then Saoshyant would lead the forces of a watchful and enlightened mankind against the final forces of evil in a huge last battle in which righteous ness and virtue would win out against evil and the forces of Angra Mainyu. Thus the Zoroastrian philosophy of history is not merely concerned with the moral significance of the past, but is also concerned with eschatology, and with the prediction of future events and with understanding their meanings. The term for the end of history, Frasokereti, means literally "the making fresh", the "restoration" and refers to the eventual redemption of mankind and the world from the grip of evil. Zoroaster's birth itself took place 3000 years after the initial irruption of Angra Mainyu into the perfectly created actual world, and this is the world period we are now living in. Each thousand years a Saoshyant is to be born, (each to be conceived of a virgin who bathes in a lake where sperm from Zoroaster enable her to become miraculously pregnant). It is the third Saoshyant who will lead the final battle against unrighteousness, in a time of great darkness when all moral values have been reduced to nothing and respect for others has disappeared from society. The Saoshyant will be helped in his final victory by the spiritual principles and helpers of Ahura Mazda, known as the Amesha Spentas, who are the equivalents of angels in other Middle Eastern spiritual traditions. The fact of souls is also bound up with this account of history, for at death each soul is judged according to its deeds, and led

across the chinvat bridge, from where it either makes it across to a heavenly afterlife world, or tumbles into an abyss of suffering, to make up for any sins committed whilst alive in the body. At the final battle of the end of time between the Saoshyant and Ahura Mazda on the one hand, and Angra Mainyu on the other, the souls of all the dead who have ever lived are resurrected again to face a final judgement, where they are again sorted into the righteous (who go to a heavenly world) or an abode of suffering (hell). In Zoroastrian eschatology however, the abode of suffering is not eternal, since punishment is corrective, and human nature was originally without sin, hence eventually one can work off the consequences of one's bad deeds, and win a place back in a restored earth, where all trace of blemish, corruption and evil has been removed, following the final defeat of Angra Mainyu. Thus, in the Zoroastrian version of the philosophy of history, eventually the reborn souls of all mankind will come to live in peace and harmony in a perfect world, without death and suffering and evil to contend with, and under the wise direction of the Lord of History, Ahura Mazda, now in undisputed control of events forever.

It is obvious from this account that Zoroastrianism placed enormous significance on the human individual's striving for enlightenment – our actions here in this regard literally have implications for the rest of eternity. As we are seeing however, enlightenment has different flavours and different hues; in Zoroastrianism, there is no specific mention, for example of reincarnation – the context of spiritual growth occurs within each person's individual life framework, and then there follows a post-mortem provisional judgement, followed by a final judgement following the last battle and the defeat of Satan at the Frasokereti. There will then ensue a reborn earth made pure for the true and faithful and good humans, those enlightened enough to inherit it, finally. This is obviously also the ultimate source of later religious ideas espoused in some Jewish, most Christian and most Islamic circles.

Interestingly, it seems that these ideas may have inspired developments within Mahayana Buddhism. As Ninian Smart said:

Despite the virtual demise of (Zoroastrianism) in its homeland, it contributed to the stream of western religious history. In eastern thought the Zoroastrian idea about later Saviours who would help mankind played some part in the rise of the Bodhisattva cult in Greater Vehicle Buddhism. Traders and travellers must have exchanged ideas about religion as they followed along the silk routes of Central Asia to China. It is probable too the Mazdaean magical ideas entered into later Taoism, through Chang Tao-ling. Oriental ideas transversely contributed to Manichaeism..."

Some questions: 1) does the Zoroastrian search for enlightenment have an air of urgency about it, connecting as it does, soteriology, psychology, eschatology and cosmology ? 2) Does the Zoroastrian idea of enlightenment (and derivates) lend itself to easy co-option by military or violent ideologies (you are the forces of evil and we are the forces of light so we have the duty to destroy you – to wit read insurgents / terrorists etc.) 3) Does the Zoroastrian (and Zoroastrian derived) notion of enlightenment-in-an-cosmological context depend on the exteriorsation of deities – i.e. Ahura Mazda and Ahriman and if so does it actually promulgate a split between consciousness and the transpersonal consciousness which may generate a sense of helplessness and moral delinquency OR does it generate a profound sense of faith and humility ? 4) Does the Zoroastrian tradition (and Zoroastrian derived) notion of enlightenment-in-an-cosmological context place an undue moral burden on the individual human mind which we are in fact too often unable to live up to – the moral demand for purity *in order to save God from Ahriman* – and thus creates within us a counter darkness, or shadow, as Jung might call it, and in this way, actually promulgates a continuing splitting – between spirit and matter, between good and evil, which is actually contrary to experiential and psychic reality (that we are all a range or spectrum of possible responses and behaviours, more a rainbow than absolute light or dark) ? 5) Is this Zoroastrian stress on the cosmological context for enlightenment – that our personal

behaviour has a general and social implication – the ultimate source of Western motions of social development, of the socialising of enlightenment, in which human living conditions, social progress, advancement of human rights etc., came to be seen as the key measure of enlightenment, and indeed, came to be referred to as a political and intellectual movement of that same name ?

4. Enlightenments in Judaism:

Let us now turn to a parallel tradition, namely that of enlightenment in Judaism. Is there such a notion ? What is it like ? Is it of the Eastern variety (personal wisdom) or Western variety (collective liberation) or both ? Judaism is a complex, ancient, many layered faith, to which many profound thinkers and saints have contributed much over the millennia. One can only summarise a few points in this context.

1. Enlightenment is implicit at the very heart of Judaism, as both a personal, familial and social project – in Judaism's immense emphasis on learning, education, literacy. The synagogue developed as an institution which advances learning. Even today, in synagogues worldwide, books abound, commentaries, texts, and the sacred scrolls themselves. Judaism and learning, and education are inextricably linked, like space and time – and this is due to its origin as one of the earliest written religions; arising in a people at the epicentre of the creation of the alphabet. Judaism became in effect the first of mankind's effectively alphabetised religious creeds. From the alphabet and the scroll, to the synagogue and the seminary, there is a golden thread of the love of enlightenment and learning.

2. Enlightenment as knowledge is the hidden sephiroth of the Kabbalah – esoteric or mystical Judaism, to which we must turn for the experiential accounts of the mystical life of actual practitioners of Jewish meditation and prayer – and daat, knowledge, synthesises and interconnects the other sefiroth, mediating between the higher intellectual faculties (binah – understanding and hokmah – wisdom) and the lower emotional sefiroth (gevurah – sternness and hesed, love).

3. Knowledge, for Judaism, causes trouble – as the fruit of the tree of knowledge, it promises divine wisdom, yet all too often causes a life of hard labour, cut of from paradise, with enmity and suffering as our companions, and strife constantly around the corner. Does this perhaps create both a fear of knowing, a phobosophy, as well as an urge to know ? Other nations are often afraid of the Jewish mind and at the same time envious – is this because Judaism itself has come to play the role of "knowledge" for the collective psychic life of nations as a whole ? And nations are both attracted to knowledge (after all, knowledge is power) yet also envious and fearful (for too much knowledge is dangerous). So what do the nations respond ? Kill it, "think with the blood…."

4. Yet the biblical narrative constantly reiterates that there is a kind of knowledge which can bring salvation; it is both an ethical knowledge and a metaphysical knowledge. It is wisdom. It is symbolised archetypally by Solomon, the wisest of all the Jewish monarchs. It is anchored in Jerusalem and its temple – symbolically the centre of Gods revealed wisdom, the shekinah.

5. It is an active enlightenment, which embraces care, concern, compassion – it helps create socialism and communism and Marxism, as an ideology of compassion in the world. Its brilliance, as Marxism, is Promethean, and is prepared even to deny God in order to realise a heavenly world.

6. Enlightenment is implicit in the opening of Genesis – for it is light that creates the world. And the light is good.

7. There is inside mankind a natural principle towards goodness: *yetser hatobh* – and finding and being true to this principle is a key part of the Jewish notion of enlightenment.

8. The core text of the Kabbalah, the Zohar, whose name itself means light, radiance, brilliance – interprets this creative act of God's creation as one of shining, raying out an effulgent light which underlies creation.

9. In the book of Daniel, the wise, the saints, will one day shine like the stars. The star of David, the national symbol of reborn Israel, itself implies enlightenment, balance, wholeness, integrity.

10. Einstein and many other great Jewish scientists have contributed greatly to our understanding of physics and Einstein in particular has contributed to our understanding of the nature of light, which Einstein saw as the ultimate principle behind the universe, and whose constant speed was the hinge around which the complex natures of time and space and energy revolve. Einstein spent his life searching for a further unifying force which would explain the interconnectedness of all physical phenomena, and was equally interested in the spiritual search for ultimate truth – for enlightenment. He made the famous saying that although the discovery of the nuclear bomb had unleashed a new and profound power on earth, it had not yet enabled us to catch up in our actual thinking. The unfinished Einsteinian revolution would be when the world achieves a more irenic state than at present, in many ways compatible with Mahayana Buddhist views on the nature of enlightenment.

11. Jewish thought also shares a cosmological context with Zoroastrianism, from which it was probably influenced, and adopted into its worldview the notion of a Saoshyant, or messiah, whose coming, it was hoped, would not only redeem Israel but also all mankind. Kafka later summed up the shifting developments in more modern Jewish psychological thinking, when he stated "*the messiah will only come when he is no longer necessary"*

12. In Lurianic Kabbalah, a movement of thought arising from the work of a great Kabbalist of the 16th century, as has been said by the author in a previous essay, *"the ultimate, YHWH, the ultimately unnameable, has withdraw into the very heart of existence, such that each of us, in our psyches and somas, carry the essential seeds of light of this original act of withdrawal (tzimtsun). Somewhere in this process of withdrawal, in this creation process, which enabled outer being to come into existence, a catastrophe has happened; a breaking of the vessels occurred; causing the lights to scatter and disperse. Through prayer and refocusing of one's own spiritual energy, the kabbalist can help bring about the reunion of all these scattered sparks of light, once more, into a cosmic harmony. Once this is accomplished, cosmic redemption will be possible; the pain and separation we all feel at our alienation from god, our dispersal from the garden of Eden, will be reversed; the messianic age itself will come, and mankind inherit a domain of peace and wisdom, in which to abide with god forever. Some such theophanic speculations as these have underlain in various forms the innumerable schools of Cabbalistic speculation…"* Importantly for this context, Luria stated that it is only through prayer that this act of redemption and restoration, tikkun, can be accomplished. This is in effect the enlightenment process and the mediatational process equivalent to that of Buddhism, in the heart of mystical Judaism.

13. Not surprisingly, then, given the above, may Jewish figures have written about prayer, or are known to have practiced prayer, and have explored and pushed back the boundaries of human understanding of prayer, and in more recent times, have developed considerably the sciences of psychology and psychoanalysis, and not least transpersonal psychology, which has tried in recent decades to give some kind of scientific understanding of the actual processes of enlightenment achievements in mankind.

14. In psychoanalysis and its numerous offshoots (including Jungian thought) attention has also been focused on the blockages to enlightenment, the hindrances and snares which come up for each of us on our path to enlightenment; the snakes, so to say, that each of us encounter in the garden; ego, pride, past memories, hubris, unconscious forces, Thanatos, spoiled childhoods, all these have been explored and analysed. And analysis itself, as a word, of course carries within it the sense of Lysis, loosening, release, which we saw was the legacy from Greece regarding the nature of enlightenment, and with which legacy the Jewish mind at its most advanced long since achieved creative synthesis and reconciliation.

15. A thought: for Judaism, man strives upward and within for enlightenment, just as God strives for enlightenment downwards so to speak; the two converge in the awakened human heart; yet the reality is not yet achieved outwardly. As long as the world sits in pain, as long as genocides, and holocausts, and racism, and poverty exist, the ongoing work towards enlightenment is needed. And modern Israel as an enterprise, a nation, cannot alone bring such a state about; certainly when peace can be restored between Israel and her neighbours, and the tragedies of immediate terrorism have ceased, then we might al begin to wonder why we have all resisted enlightenment for so long ? What were we so afraid of ? Were we so

keen to insist on enlightenment for ourselves alone, on our own terms ? Why did new not realise sooner that enlightenment is actually inclusive, comprehensive, all embracing – and that enlightened God-mind can work out fairly the relationship between micro needs and macro needs, between particularly and universality, or it wouldn't be enlightened god-mind at all ?

16. Has Judaism in some sense inherited something of the same burden as Zoroastrianism; having been chosen by God to work miracles and signs (enlightenments) in the world, there is so much to live up to. No chance to be normal and rest, to dance around a golden calf or two. One bears within the burden of the will to perfection. Yet by constantly failing to live up to this huge task, one arouses the enmity of both others and oneself (self-hatred seems an overdeveloped trait in the human soul ?) and this is perhaps the actual psychological reality underpinning "the wrath of God" ? And God will have either a perfect world or none at all ? Zion or Armageddon ? Yet how on earth to live up to this burden in actual historical time ? The best answer; more learning, more study, more depth, more enlightenment, more love, more prayer – and leave the absolute to sort out the details….

5. Christian enlightenments:

Next we must turn to another world religion, which arose as a result, arguably of the synthesis of Judaism, at a certain stage of its development, with forms of eastern Hellenism, mingled with native pre-Judaic streams of Canaanite paganism, and possibly Egyptian wisdom traditions, to which much more has been added subsequently, receiving initial impetus from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, and called in common parlance Christianity. Of course, however, there are really the Christianities: Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Mystical, esoteric, gnostic, feminist, fundamentalist, Quaker, Unitarian, Anglican etc. Each of them makes their own special claims for enlightenment. However, enough of them constellate around certain core factors that we can make certain generalisations: Jesus himself seems to have been, at the very least, a highly advanced, precocious and intensely prayerful itinerant teacher from Galilee, with a profound gift for spiritual healing, who attracted a certain following; he seems to have been intensely aware of the cosmological and political and social dimension of his teachings, and was seeking to open up the somewhat exclusive traditions of Judaism in his day to a wider orbit. We know next to nothing of his own upbringing and education and learning. He appears as one fully formed, able to teach, self authorised, or divinely authorised, yet in so doing, generated opposition and suspicion from the legal and educational authorities of his day. He opposed formalism with spiritualism, and ritualistic legalism with compassion. He seems to have advocated direct enlightenment, arguing that mankind can receive direct transmissions of enlightenment from god, without having to go to a priest or sage or wisdom holder. He linked epistemological enlightenment with ethics "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". He was distrustful of authorities and political responsibilities, and seems to have had a lively belief in the wider cosmological context which his culture inherited from a mixture of Judaic and Zoroastrian concepts; he opposed strenuously the power of Satan, believing Satan had an active power in this world, and that part of Christian enlightenment consisted in the duty to oppose him and defeat him; he may or may not have believed himself to be one of the great Saoshyants of prophetic Zoroastrian-Judaism, as either a Messiah or The Messiah, but certainly knew of the tradition, and probably, fond of asking his disciples who they thought he was, by the end, probably felt he had at least some kind of cosmic role to play in ushering in gods final victory against darkness, Satan, and ignorance and perhaps even death itself. He seems to have been to busy, too driven, to have much time for normal family life, for the gentle pleasures of home and bedroom, or nursery – there is no record of marriage or children, and while some modern commentators would make him homosexual there is little evidence for that either. Whatever brilliance his teachings had managed to cast, briefly, on the shores of Galilee and the hills of Judea, were brutally ended by his death. And yet they continued to resonate, continued to cast an echo – a huge, transpersonal echo. It is not possible here to comment on the reasons for this – whether because Jesus

literally did rise from the dead, or whether his image, or archetype, rose from the unconscious longings of his distraught followers and continued to inspire them – either is possible.

What conclusions then can we drawn from this account ? perhaps these few points:

1. He was a teacher, a rabbi, and such devoted to the overall project of enlightenment as applied learning hat all true teachers advocate, then and now -and as such he had disciples, students.

2. He was a sage and a mystic, an experiential taster of sapience, not merely a theoretical study of wisdom – who had obviously attained some degrees of personal enlightenment, and was able to spread and share that with his friends, colleagues and disciples – probably through a mixture of styles – discourse, homily, parable, demonstration, prayer, personal tuition, question and answer, ceremony, ritual etc.

3. His own experience of enlightenment had led him to break free of existing boundaries of identity and custom – he wasn't able to sit comfortably within any existing labelled territories of identity: neither strict Jew, nor Helleniser, nor philosopher, nor Essene, nor prophet nor King, but somehow all of these in one. He had a rich and complex multi-levelled identity, on whom none of the labels fitted exclusively. Even when being crucified he had still problems with labels. Eventually, about 1/4 of humanity came to settle on the label "son of God" – although he himself, paradoxically, preferred the title "son of man". Perhaps he knew he was all of these and none. Perhaps he knew the secret of *enlightenments*….

And what about subsequently ? What of the innumerable schools of Christian philosophy and theology ? The answer is of course yes, there are innumerable attempts to make sense of the actuality of Christian enlightenment. Yet there have also been innumerable confusions, conflicts, hesitations, disputations, rival interpretations. Wars have been fought, and stakes burned, endlessly, as rival schools of Christians fought as to whether their own interpretation was the best, the purest, the truest, whether Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant etc. On the whole, the mystical Christians, the esoteric Christians, even the Gnostics, have been less prone to violence and to conflict; thus seemingly indicating a possibly more authentic proximity to the actual \meaning behind the original thrust of Christ's own meaning. From the early gospel writers, through Paul and the apostles and the first layers of saints, there have been as many different interpretations of Christ as there are particles of light in Indras net. Which of them is the right one ? It could be argued that gnosis is the word which was used by Christ's inmost disciples, in its Aramaic equivalent to mean the highest form of enlightenment – as in the phrase in St John's gospel when Jesus chastises false teachers as having hid "the keys to the knowledge (gnosis) of the kingdom of god". But if it is an inner experience, this enlightenment, a kind of gnosis, it is also one which points towards something else, which does something, which opens a door into a kingdom. Perhaps the liberation theologians of the 20th century are right then, to argue that Christ's gnosis demands social revolution and upheaval, precisely because it demands justice and that unlike legalism, is a quality as much lacking then as now.

Let us agree at least these few provisional points about the nature of Christian enlightenment over time:

1. The original nature of Christian enlightenment as taught by Jesus must have been an oral teaching, conveyed variously by presence, word, gesture, prayer, extraordinary experiences, healings, body language, ritual, example, deed, feeling, mind, actions, relationship-building, miraculous events etc. Sufficient numbers of people experienced several or more of these encounters sufficient to then pass something of the nature of this enlightenment teaching on partly orally, partly spiritually and partly, eventually, in writing. The actual nature of the enlightenment experience as taught by Jesus has to be reconstructed from the fragments or traces left in these subsequent transmissions. That there *was* something equivalent to a Christian enlightenment experience is undoubtedly the case, although the precise language required to describe it would require an entire theological treatise in its own right, and would require the philosophical analysis of a variety of complex

germs including: the kingdom of god, the holy spirit, prayer, healing, wisdom, knowledge, gnosis, faith, belief, truth, The Father, the Father's Presence, repentance, eternal life etc…

2. It seems from the gospel records that Jesus and his early followers probably placed their shared enlightenment experiences within a theological and cosmological framework that was strongly influenced by a kind of Zoroastrianising Judaism, which not only accepted the traditions, scriptures and teachings of Judaism as it then was, but also accepted aspects of mystical Zoroastrianism, which set the whole of human history and the faith of Judaism within the cosmological context of a war between God and the devil, which would lead to the final victory of God, and in which process the work of Jesus was seen as seminal – in other words, he was regarded by his followers, and probably by himself, as a major Saoshyant figure, if not the final and major Saoshyant figure. The presence of three magi at his birth, whether in actuality or in myth-history, is also a further sign of this connection, presumably intended.

3. The original enlightenment experience as shared by Jesus and his innermost disciples during his lifetime underwent a strange and extraordinary metamorphosis after his crucifixion: it didn't disappear altogether; it lived on in some way, and in some mysterious way was still capable of being transmitted even after the trauma of the crucifixion. There may or may not have been accompanying supernatural experiences, either observed or believed by some or many, which led his closest friends and disciples to believe his death had not been a final event, and that his ascended spiritual being had still the capacity to effect events on earth in our spatio-temporal realm, and that followers could still contact his being in this other realm, through prayer, or some kind of psychic communion. In effect, Jesus ascended in the collective mind of his early disciples as a kind of Osiris figure, and became lord and judge of the dead, in an after death realm, which interpenetrated in some way with our realm.

4. Paul and other very early Christian thinkers recorded the impact of this belief and experience on their lives: the notion of a Christian enlightenment in this post crucifixion / resurrection phase began to acquire a specific pattern, articulated eloquently by Paul, as a sense of spiritual love, agape. For Paul, enlightenment is equivalent to our knowledge of god, and this is inevitably imperfect; gods knowledge of us, however, is vast – one could therefore speak of a divine enlightenment, i.e god's enlightenment, and a human enlightenment, even our spiritually aware minds – and there is for Paul a kind of intersection, there is a possible communion, in which our partial knowledge can be suffused with divine knowledge. In the famous image of "now we see through a glass darkly…" this is made explicit. An eschatological dimension is also explicit in Paul's ideas of enlightenment: learning, wisdom acquisition, enlightenment, will in some mysterious way continue on into other realms of being, and in future time states: "Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known". The when is not specified, but left hanging, as in a rhetorical device.

But such an experience demands a moral transformation of the seeker, "be ye *transformed by the renewing of your mind*" (Romans 12). Again, Paul is talking of the nature of Christian enlightenment in this phrase, "the renewing of your mind" Paradoxically, it might seem that we know more about the details of the nature of Pauline approaches to enlightenment, arguably, than we do about Jesus's. But in fact, we can also use Paul's accounts to traject backwards to Jesus's teachings and impact, since even if Paul never met the historical Jesus, or heard his direct teachings (there is no evidence he did and some indirect evidence he did not) he certainly met many people who had met Jesus, and indeed who knew him well. He also believed that he had experienced a kind of transpersonal encounter with Jesus, as had other followers, and thus had achieved, gradually, kicking and screaming, a kind of existential congruity between his understanding of the nature of Christian enlightenment and those of others of Jesus's followers. Pauline scholarship is undergoing great developments at present: it is possible that Paul may have brought other influences from his background in Tarsus, which was a centre, it seem, for the Mithraic mysteries, and it is also likely he had some degree of classical rhetorical training as well as both

exoteric and esoteric Jewish education, partly with Rabbi Hillel, who may well have been teaching a form of proto Kabbalah, which came to called the merkavah (chariot) mysteries.

5. Subsequent Christian enlightenment teachings developed over subsequent centuries of church history. To fully rehearse them here would require an exposition of the entirety of that history, and space does not permit such an endeavour ! We can agree however that much of subsequent differences and conflicts and schisms inside the body politic (or body mystic) of Christianity has in effect been fought over different interpretations of the parameters and protocols and exact nature of this enlightenment. For Gnosticism, it was largely an inner, private experience – a kind of tasting of the transpersonal reality of the soul, in which the individual had direct revelatory confirmation of the immortality of their own psychic nature. For both Orthodoxy and Catholicism, as they became known, following the Constantinian settlement, this alone was insufficient. Private mysticism had to bear fruit in public discourse, and public witness, and in social living. Gradually, private enlightenment was pushed into the domain of the monk or hermit. We have the writings of many of these early monks and mystics and holy men (and women) such as Saint Anthony, John Cassian, St Benedict, and St Patrick. From them, it is possible to reconstruct a theology of enlightenment as pertaining to the early church. Some thinkers also sought to bridge between the depths of both Gnosticism and orthodoxy, as in the works of Origen and Clement of Alexandria, and to do justice to both of them. This same tension between private enlightenment and outer social works, can be said to be a recurring theme in the phenomenology of enlightenment across all religious traditions, and not more in Christianity than in others. Perhaps it is a result of the variability of the human temperament, in which case, we need to turn to psychology to fully understand what is going on.

6. The reformation brought yet another twist to the idea of Christian enlightenment: faith became an all powerful and significant new term. Perhaps, with hindsight, Luther's incredible insistence on the absolute primacy of faith over everything else, was a function of the gradual dissolution of faith occasioned by the advances of early modernity – by the advent of mass printing and the availability of widespread learning, by the advances in humanist scholarship which reclaimed the huge vistas of the past; by the discovery of the Americas, and the geographical exploration of our planet, and the opening up of routes to the Indies and China; by coming into contact with cultures, religions, peoples and languages which were wider and vaster than anything dreamed of within the original cosmology of Christianity. Fundamentalism, either protestant or Tridentine, was arguably a response to the bewildering seductiveness of a plethora of new ideas.

7. There were other responses however, for example Edward Herbert of Cherbury, in his famous treatise *De Veritate*, who arrived at the idea that all faiths might share certain fundamental "common notions" which he enumerated as 5, namely

1. belief in a transcendent cause or source of being 2. That such a being is worthy of worship 3. That the best form for such worship is in piety 4. A belief in a continuity of consciousness or soul after death 5. A belief that such a post mortem existence involves some kind of judgement or evaluation process. Enlightenment per se does not really intrude here except in two possible areas. Enlightenment might be said to be a constituent part of worship, and an aspect of what Herbert calls piety, for example in Buddhist thought.

8. Behind Herbert, in parenthesis, it must be added, lurked the entire renaissance: the work of Florentine mystic Christians who had sought to reconcile Orpheus, Hermes and Jesus; Sir Walter Raleigh writing his History of the World in the Tower and including all he could about world religions; John Dee developing his own unique synthesis of renaissance Neo-Platonism; Lord Bacon dreaming of new worlds of knowledge to be explored, integrated, systematised, empiricised. Knowledge became power. (The corollary, and equal and opposite truth, that knowledge is powerlessness, became forgotten.)

9. Certainly, these notions, which acquired the label of deism, became seed thoughts which flourished into mainstream philosophical thinking in the circles of enlightened philosophes, such as Voltaire, many of whom were also freemasons. European enlightened philosophy was launched on its long journey navigating respectively the contours of faith, reason,

scepticism, power and goodness. But enlightenment itself, per se, received scanty attention, in an epistemological sense. The enlightenment itself became too often a polite way of talking about scepticism, and Hume became eulogised as the archetypal figure in this narrative.

10. Kant's contribution was seminal, "I have come to show the limits of reason in order to show the necessity of faith" he blurted out in an unguarded moment. In his detailing of the categories of mind itself, and in arguing that "thinking outside the categories" is impossible, he opened a new discourse, namely that enlightenment arises when mind transcends itself, and becomes purified by faith – yet a faith which is itself rational and universal.

11. Hegel's contribution was to supply the missing details Kant had implied but left out – and there is a philosophy of enlightenment lurking in Hegel, when spirit becomes conscious of itself in history through mankind's self awakening, both individually and collectively. Christian thought is still a primary context for Hegel as it had been for Kant, but it is for the universal philosophical truths of self-consciousness, and the ethics of love and wisdom, that Christ is esteemed; for Hegel, it is the perception of the god of the philosophers that constitutes enlightened. The arche of the dialectic. But the actual details are not really worked out. In his lectures on the philosophy of religion, Hegel does however evidence a deep awareness of other world religions, including various schools of Buddhism, and manages to incorporate them into his overall scheme.

10. Schelling can be taken as another exemplary Christian philosopher-theologian who

found enlightenment in paradox, dialectic, symbol, myth, history – what is human is not opposed to what is enlightenment; somehow what is real is a theophany of a greater world; in our tests of love and justice, in our personal stories, we embody the myths of greater titans – Christ showed us how to achieve this divine-human linkage – and his suffering was imposed by mediocre minds and "systems" who age after age suppress the spark of divinity within us all. Romanticism, exemplified by the thought of Schelling, developed its own discourse of enlightenment, seeking to unify the work of conscience, imagination, emotion and aesthetics. Whole hosts of thinkers in this genre must go unmentioned here, but understood.

11. Catholicism was not to be outdone: ever the great universal, the Jesuits sought to systematise and integrate the entire universal wisdom of all the ages and all mankind yet remain true to the innermost teachings of Jesus and the faith of the saints: thinkers such as Karl Rahner, Bernard Lonergan, Teilhard de Chardin, and many others have contributed to this enormous work. Lonergan's studies of insight, for example, have pointed towards a way of talking about the way that the individual human mind accesses divine thought, building on certain clues in this regard found in Aquinas. A whole tradition of the study and practice of Christian mysticism, exemplified in the work of William Johnson S.J., has explored the relationships between Christianity and Buddhist enlightenment experiences, and Thomas Merton also contributed to this, as did the late Dom Houedard of Prinknash Abbey, who used to host visiting Tibetan monks and compare and contrast Christian mediatational practices with those of the Tibetan schools of the Gelugpa, and also Sufi practices in the Ibn Arabi school. Dom John Main has also pioneered a form of Christian meditation which points the Christian in the direction of enlightenment, equivalent to eastern thought, and a wide network of Christian mediation practice has sprung up as a result.

12. In Protestant theology, existentialism in the form of Kierkegaard and Tillich's work (and the line running between them and on) has stressed the primacy of Being: an enlightenment in this sense is the transcendence of guilt and the achievement of a clean conscience, by the renewing of the mind through the power of love. Enlightenment in this tradition remains achievable by a kind of leap of faith, a kind of inner knowingness arising out of turning about of one's consciousness to face god as being.

Enough has been said, a few pointers only, to show the many courses that the river of enlightenment has flowed in the history of Christian thought. There is no one discourse, no one overall way to enlightenment – even Jesus himself probably taught a variety of ways, depending on the starting point of the particular disciple or group he was addressing. For a person screaming in pain, or in deep psychological distress, or in dark depression, or starving hungry, enlightenment is first addressing and dealing with those symptoms and issues, before going on to discourse about the subtleties of metaphysics.

6. Islamic Enlightenments: turning now to address the nature of enlightenment in Islamic discourse, we are confronted with many lines of inquiry which need addressing, again, far too great for our limited time space, and for this reasons we will list them as a sequence of questions, all of which need answering in order to achieve a fully integrated and comprehensive understanding of the idea of enlightenment in Islam.

1. What kind of philosophical or religious education, either written or oral, did Mohammad and Khadijah receive?

2. To what extent were they familiar with the written traditions of either Judaism or Christian or Zoroastrian or other thought and theology? Who in their circle of friends and colleagues might have had such familiarity? (Waraqah, the blind sage ? Kab, the Zoroastrian scribe of parts of the Kuran ?)

3. How did the philosophy of revelation enunciated in traditional Islamic thought, with the reception by Muhammad of the Kuran from the archangel Gabriel, actually arise in the mind and experience of Muhammad and his early followers ? And how did this relate to the answers to questions 1 and 2 ?

4. To what extent is revelation, per se, either different to or similar to he idea of enlightenment ? Obviously, revelation is like a kind of enlightenment experience, or must seem to be so to its recipient, but it is also importantly and subtly different. Enlightenment normally implies a kind of natural faculty arising within the mind itself, of its own nature, which leads to the achievement of wisdom, whereas revelation implies a radical distinction between the individual mind and God, conceived as a transcendent other. Is there any way to bridge this discourse ?

5. Over the centuries of Islamic thought, ways have indeed been found to bridge this discourse, and the whole of Islamic mysticism and philosophy has been centrally concerned to achieve such a reconciliation. While most Muslims acknowledge Muhammad as a bringer of revelation unequalled before or since, and as an enlightener for mankind in Sufism and Islamic mysticism ways have been found to reconcile the individual seeker with the ultimate goal of spiritual striving. For Islam there is indeed the possibility of union with God, fana, and the achieving of personal enlightenment.

6. For Islam, prayer is perhaps the central way in which Muslims achieve this union, and in Sufism prayer has been used, in a variety of ways and settings, along with other rituals, to bring about a state of altered consciousness in the minds of the faithful.

7. Sufism has an existential and an intellectual strand – with different Sufis emphasising one or the other. Within the innumerable schools of Sufism, some emphasised solitary prayer, some emphasised group zhikr, some emphasised music ceremonies, some emphasised dance, some emphasised using hashish to achieve mystical intoxication, some emphasised living a normal life in society, some emphasised being incognito and keeping hidden one's spiritual understanding (veiled enlightenment) for a variety of reasons (fear, caution, humility), some emphasised study and learning, some recommended one throw away all books and learning, some recommended absolute chastity, some recommended loving sexuality as a vehicle towards enlightenment (similar to Tantric ideas), some were open to gender equality and fraternisation, and saw women as sacred vessels of wisdom as much as men, and some were more restrictive. Each of the myriad schools and teachers of Sufism saw enlightenment as part of the journey towards God, and professed a subtly different form of enlightenment itself, depending on is own emphases.

8. Most strands of Islamic mysticism and Sufism placed the work of the individual's search for enlightenment within an overall cosmological context which had strong Judaeo Christian and indeed Christo-Zoroastrian elements. It is worth remembering that in the milieu of Islamic origins, all three religious groups were present, and that it both borrowed from and differentiated its own cosmology therefrom. Essentially, Islam borrowed the idea of a final judgment of the world from Judaeo-Christian Zoroastrianism, and regarded the time between Muhammad's original revelation and that last judgement time as if he were a Saoshyant himself, and one who would play the subsequent role of second Saoshyant at the time of final judgement. This was very much in line with Zoroastrian cosmology, as might be expected in a world close to the boundary

of the Zoroastrian Empire of the Parthians. Personal and individual enlightenment therefore consisted in effectively declaring and establishing one's righteousness, in the midst of a partly corrupt and
damaged world and in ensuring that one stays free of sin, and thus achieve a place in paradise, both now and later, following the last general judgement, during which Muhammad and Jesus would return to judge all souls of history.

9. This notion of collective, pending judgement, and the placing of the work of personal enlightenment within this narrative, obviously causes difficulties, (shared by Islam with other similar faiths) and leads to a situation where violence against infidels can be seen as laudatory, and in fact will guarantee suicide martyrs a place in heaven. Any idea of striving for universal or collective enlightenment for all beings is lost sight of here: enlightenment is something for our religion, our faith, our interpretation of our faith, and requires its violent imposition against you, and your corrupt ways etc. Jihad becomes a tool of enlightenment dissemination – but this is a strange kind of enlightenment for the rest of the world to swallow. To what extent was it imp[licit in Muhammad's own vision, and why ? Certainly, Muhammad was the most warlike of all major religious founders, and was effectively a successful military warrior and general who spread his teachings and ideas by the sword. At first, it is argued, he resorted to violence in self defence, but on occasion he certainly acted in an aggressive manner. He was also indirectly responsible for the mass slaughter of the male Jewish community of Medina after they lost a conflict with the Medinan Muslims. Violence then was implicit in militant Islam right from early on. But what kind of philosophy of enlightenment is implied by this ? What kind of notion of God is at work here ?

10. It is of course mainly fundamentalist Islam which has tended to emphasise this irrevocability of God's judgementalism, and the cosmological context of final revenge for wrong doing, and the images of burning hell fire etc. which are indeed in the Koran – and to interpret them literally. Mystical Islam, and philosophical Islam, tended to see them in a more humane manner, and to emphasise the divine mercy rather than the divine judgement. Not surprisingly then, it is fundamentalist Islam which has underlain the events on 9/11 and which underpinned the Taliban regime in Afghanistan for example. Yet there is of course a more liberal, more humane, more philosophical strand within Islamic civilisation – one which created great centres of learning from Baghdad to Cordoba, from Cairo to Samarkand, Bukhara, and Delhi and which enthusiastically embraced and absorbed the wisdom teachings of Hindu thought, through the various schools of Indian Sufi schools, and endorsed the importance of learning above all else. In this tradition, then "ink of the scholar is worth more than the blood of martyrs" as the famous Hadith of Muhammad himself stated. The great libraries of Islamic culture, the innumerable scholars, the contribution which Islam made to the advancement and spread of scientific learning, is translation of Greek scientific and philosophical treatises, all this heritage comprises the real living stream of Islamic enlightenment, and continues to this day in the work of many learned Islamic institutions worldwide. In the ottoman empire for example, secular and humanist learning existed alongside ancient Islamic studies, and whilst geopolitically the Allied encouragement of an Arabic independence movement to break the Ottoman Empire may have made sense, intellectually, it was something of a disaster within the wider scheme of the history of Islamic enlightenment movements, given that Wahabbism was a representative of a more primitive and fundamentalist school of thought than had been reached by the consensus of Ottoman learning. The battle ground of the process of Islamic enlightenment is then an ongoing process within the school classroom, the seminary, the college and the university – and this struggle goes on worldwide to the present day, between the various strands of Islamic thought – but it is a struggle which must agree certain basic ground rules, such as non-violence, peace, truth, and rigour. It is this search for truth which is the true Jihad, in the author's opinion, and requires of scholarship an ever more intense commitment to the research and analysis of claims and counter claims to truth, and which alone can guarantee peace. The enlightener is indeed one of the 99 names of God in Islamic. If we were to redefine Islam as a spiritual state of surrender to cosmic law, and remove the historical superimposition of allegiance to a vengeful and warlike tribal deity of a particular epoch in the past, as advocated in the tradition of "greater Sufism", and if we can, as scholars and practitioners alike, of all faiths, bring our collective wisdom and judgment to bear on matters of ultimate truth,

in an atmosphere of mutual love and tolerance and charity, then there can indeed be hope for a successful peaceful outcome for humanity.

7. Buddhist Enlightenments:

Turning next to a review of Buddhist approaches to enlightenment, what are the key points to draw out concerning this ancient and profound philosophical and spiritual tradition ?

1. We can start by acknowledging there are indeed many different schools of Buddhism, articulated differently over the last millennia, from Theravadin traditions of South East Asia and Sri Lanka, to Japan, China, Tibet, Mongolia, and now in the West as well (Europe, Americas etc.). Each of them has their own articulation of enlightenment, and often centuries of heated scholarly debate as to the relative effectiveness of their respective approaches. At the very start, we can affirm that history presents a plurality of "Buddhist enlightenments".

2. Secondly, one can affirm that there is a highly sophisticated tradition of the analysis of enlightenment existing within various Buddhist schools, and various arguments and ideas have been advanced. These would include arguments such as the sudden enlightenment schools of Chan and Zen Buddhism and the gradual enlightenment schools which argued that enlightenment is the result of long spiritual practice rather than a sudden breakthrough.

3. There is also a sophisticated tradition of the scholarly analysis of Buddhist approaches to enlightenment , such as the works of the Russian Buddhologist Shcherbatsky. In Buddhism, then, we are not working in a wasteland, but a reasonably well cultivated garden of delights. We do not have to reconstruct a Buddhist philosophy of enlightenment from the fragments of generations of mystical discourse, since it is an already existing tradition of well advanced thought.

4. What are the general agreements reached and what are the specific questions that have arisen in this tradition of discourse? Firstly, Buddha did indeed teach a way to enlightenment. He himself experienced such a state. Enlightenment, in Buddhism, starts with the Buddha's own experience of this state of being, achieved after many years deep intellectual and spiritual journeying. Phenomenologically, this experience seems to have involved a) the overcoming of fears and doubts b) accepting ordinary human generosity and kindness c) recalling one's past lives (memory) d) perceiving the causes of suffering and the solutions to suffering e) finding the middle way f) becoming totally liberated from the habit of generating negative karma. etc.

3. The terms used to home in on the Buddhist concept of enlightenment are various, and a full analysis would involve examining in detail the meanings of: nirvana, Buddha, Buddhi, etc.

4. The question of how Buddha taught the enlightenment experience is interesting; at first, he felt he would be unable to do so, and that the experience was so ineffable, so intense and unlike anything else, that he could not articulate it to others. He eventually decided to attempt to do so anyway, and that it would be selfish not to share his insights. It was stated by Buddha all along however that he was not able to discuss or share all the aspects of his enlightenment, and that it was important for each person to find their own enlightenment, so to speak, to work out their own understanding of reality. Buddha was unusual among the founders of great religious systems in that he put forth a kind of spiritual empiricism, in which the primary evidence for both the need fro enlightenment and the ways to achieve it were to be found within the evidence of each of our own personal experiences.

5. Buddhism also has a cosmological context within which this work of enlightenment occurs. It is an extremely long time period with infinitely lengthy epochs succeeding one another. The essential theme of the cosmological narrative is however, not so much judgement as compassion; there is not so much a last judgment done by a wrathful deity to a sinful mankind, so much as unpleasant karmic consequences which accrue and accrue to mankind though ignorant behaviour, and gradually build up until living conditions one earth deteriorate and our social and personal life conditions become slowly more and

more unbearable. Indeed, Buddhism would probably say that the very idea of a cosmology in which a judgmental god could condemn ignorant human souls, having created them in the first place, to an eternity in hellfire, was itself a product of diseased and pathological imaginations which could only have arisen in a time of deteriorating intellect and moral consciousness. Buddhism believes therefore that at regular time intervals, great teachers appear to mankind, who bring to mankind a path towards wisdom and enlightenment, suitable and appropriate to the particular living conditions and difficulties facing humanity at that particular time. Gautama Buddha was a teacher who brought cosmic enlightenment, suitable for all mankind, at a given stage of evolutionary time, but was preceded by other such great teachers (Buddhas) and will be followed subsequently by others in aeons to come. There never has been a time when Dharma will not be upheld or renewed, and it will never disappear completely, however dark and tragic our living conditions may become.

6. The chronological details of this cosmic context of enlightenment differs between different Buddhist schools. Some mahayana schools believe that a future Buddha, Maitreya, will come to bring the next phase of teachings ot mankind, but when exactly that will be varies from tradition to tradition – some say several thousand years in the future – some say tens of thousands. A few individuals even exist on earth at the present time claiming to be this Maitreya. One such, Krishnamurti, publicly renounced the post, which had been awarded to him by the theosophical society. Maitreya's key teaching is expected to be love, or friendliness – and his name itself is related to this quality. Most Buddhists would agree however that the key thing to concentrate on is one's own spiritual practice and to avoid idle and unnecessary speculation about such details.

7. Buddhist thought places an especial emphasis on overcoming the obstacles to enlightenment – fear, ego, pride, anger, lust, delusory states, greed, desire, grasping etc. It starts from the assumption that in fact an enlightened state is our natural birthright, and that mostly what we have to do is to remove the obstacles and blockages that prevent us achieving this inner state.

8. Once these obstacles are removed, the natural state of enlightened mind reasserts itself – and manifests as spiritual qualities of generosity, kindness, compassion, magnanimity, non-judgementalism, intelligence, wisdom, clarity of mind, skill in means, ethics, ability to concentrate, good memory skills etc. In many ways these ideas are very consonant with the latest findings of psychology.

9. Essential to kick start the process is the w*ill to enlightenment* – one must draw on the will as well as on the mind and emotions – in order to orient oneself towards this goal - *(thus resolving, perhaps, through synthesis, the dilemma to the mediaeval scholastics who followed Aquinas – who emphasised intellect and those who followed Duns Scotus - who emphasised will, and Eckhart – who stressed direct spiritual experience*) since here in Buddhism we have both will and intellect receiving equal stress.

10. For Buddhism, the achievement of enlightenment leads to freedom from the necessity of physical rebirth on this plane – but this is something which may be renounced willingly by certain profound teachers and lamas who may choose to be born again for the sake of liberating all beings from sufferings, as in the Mahayana Boddhisattva vow.

11. Some Western and other commentators have criticised this aspect of Buddhism arguing it is life denying, and that it implies a philosophy which is anti life. If life is really so horrible and full of suffering, and the point of enlightenment is to achieve liberation from suffering, and this equates to liberation from life itself, why not simply commit suicide ? Does this not play straight back into the hands of suicide bombers ? Or, does such criticism in fact show generally speaking a poor understanding of Buddhist philosophy ? The life denying aspect of Buddhist thought can be over done – in fact, Buddha did not deny life, but rather the suffering that is part of many peoples lives; pain and illness, including both physical and mental suffering. This Buddha was against. As a good doctor or teacher, he sought to alleviate suffering and pain. In fact, most forms of Buddhism emphasise love, compassion and life, and are infinitely life affirming. Some forms of Buddhist Tantra also argue that to achieve true enlightenment one has to embrace the sexual dynamics of being and enjoy pleasure as a

fundamental part of human existence as well – but always to aspire to understand the deepest wisdom possible from such dimensions of being. So the sexual relations of Padmasambhava, for example, and Yeshe Tsogyal, were no mere ordinary congress but a way of sharing deepest wisdom and enlightenment. Buddhist lay people are also often family loving, with a profound love of children, happily married and deeply committed to a dyadic unfolding of spirituality in action, lived in the real world. The idea of ultimate enlightenment as allowing the possibility of no more future rebirths on this plane, doesn't necessarily imply a denigration of this plane of existence, but may far more reflect a cosmic generosity, a recognition that we live in an infinite universe of possibility and that cosmic consciousness (Buddhi) may have other jobs in the future to do than simply house itself in temporary human vehicles, subject to all the agonies and ecstasies of human existence.

12. Numerous terms exist for enlightenment in many Buddhist languages, and a considerable sophistication of thought and inquiry has gone into their analysis over the centuries, including such terms as Japanese satori (awakening) and kensho (enlightenment as in "seeing nature"); Bodhi (Sanskrit and Pali) meaning "awakened", a state of perfect knowledge and enlightenment achieved at the end of the spiritual journey. Moreover, Buddhist scholars enunciated 37 prerequisites to enlightenment, known as bodhipakshika-dharma). Hinayana Buddhism enunciated three general kinds of enlightenment experience: 1) for a shravaka, a disciple of Buddha himself, who attained enlightenment under his direct supervision 2) the enlightenment of a pratyeka Buddha, who seeks for personal enlightenment only; 3) Samyak-sambodhi, the enlightenment of a Buddha, who has attained enlightenment both for oneself and all humanity. This last state is characterised by omniscience (sarvajnata – meaning all knowledge necessary for liberation) and brings with it 10 supreme powers (dashabala) as follows:

1. Knowledge concerning what may or may not be possible in any given situations "one understands according to reality the possible as possible and the impossible as impossible"

2. Knowledge concerning the ripening (vipaka) of deeds (phala), leading one to see the result of past, present and future actions, and their consequences).

3. Knowledge about the higher and lower faculties of all beings

4. The tendencies in all beings

5. Knowledge about the many phenomena (dharmas) which comprise the world (much of the enterprise of the material sciences could be put down under this category)

6. Knowledge about the paths within and between the many worlds

7. Knowledge of how to engender purification in others and how to transform impurity

8. knowledge concerning meditative states, the various contemplations, the threefold liberation and the spiritual absorptions (dhyana Skt; jhana in Pali, Chaan in Chinese, Zen in Japanese) – the basic meaning here being that of disciplining the mind so that it becomes truly absorbed in being itself; the attainment of 4 absorptions: a) clear conceptualisation powers – vitarka – and the ability to engage in discursive thought – vichara, plus joyful interest in other beings and a sense of well being b) attaining rest with discursive thought and conceptualisation and attaining inner calm and one pointedness of mind and concentrative powers c) attaining equanimity (upeksha), alertness, awakenedness, and a sense of wholesome healthfulness d) continuing presentness and equanimity. These 4 jhana appear along with the removal of 5 hindrances, leading to supernatural powers (abhijna)

9. knowledge concerning death and rebirth of beings

10. knowledge concerning the exhaustion or transmutation of all defilements (asrava in Skt. or asava in Pali – the three main ones being the defilements of desires (kamasava) of becoming (bhavasava),and ignorance (avijjasava) and the possession of *deliverance of mind* and *deliverance through wisdom*. .

Along with these 10 powers which come with enlightenment, each of which deserves study of how different Buddhist cultures interpreted or transmitted them, there are other terms which are closely related to that of enlightenment in

Buddhist thought, for example, Vipassana, insight, which played a vital role in Pali and South East Asian Buddhism especially, since it is insight-wisdom, which "*is the decisive liberating factor in Buddhism*".[1] Further such terms for enlightenment in Buddhist languages, including Pali, Tibetan, Mongolian, Thai, Chinese, and Japanese etc. are encompassed in the author's ongoing work towards a new edition of his *Comparative Dictionary of Global Philosophical Terminology* (see appendix)

8. Hindu Enlightenments:

Hindu – next we must consider Hindu approaches to enlightenment – how do they differ from and how relate to those of other faiths ? The terms for enlightenment in Hinduism are many and varied – but *moksha* is perhaps the nearest equivalent. Other terms which would be involved in any exact attempt to analyse the concept of enlightenment in Hinduism would also include: *samadhi*, *sishya (educational enlightenment), turiya* (a term used in the Upanishads meaning "the 4th" being a term for the absolute state of illuminated consciousness, as opposed to normal waking, dreaming, or deep sleep) which in the *Mandukya Upanishad* is described as "pure, unified consciousness, unspeakable peace") etc. *Atma jnana* means in effect self knowledge or self realisation, and is an important term used as synonymous with enlightenment in Hindu philosophical discourse. *Purusha jnana* is also sometimes used as a synonym for the highest enlightenment, meaning the knowledge of the primal human, the primal self. Another term used is *atma-darshana*, meaning self vision, self-view, the achieving of a correct and profound self knowledge. *Bodhi* is also the Sanskrit term used for perfect knowledge, or enlightenment, and was used as such by both ancient Hindu philosophers and later by Jains and Buddhists. Indeed, it is the root origin of the term Buddhist, Buddha, Buddhism itself. We can imagine that it was the primary term used in the circle of wandering yogis that Gautama sakyamuni associated with, and was the generic term then in use in his part of India for the goal of awakening which all his circle were seeking, in one form or another and by a variety of techniques. For example, the term Bohimanda, meaning a seat of wisdom, according to Monier-Williams represents the name of the 4 seats which arose out of the earth under 4 successive trees where Gautama attained enlightenment, Bodhi, perfect wisdom; collectively they are termed the Bodhimandala. *Bodha*, in Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy, is the term used for the principle of awakened intelligence, knowingness or understanding. It is that with which we know. Philosophically speaking, it stands for the illuminated or enlightened intellect, which is self-shining, self-causing. *Bodhatman* means the awakened and sentient human soul, and is a term also used by Jains. *Bodhana* meant causing to awake or expand (as in a flower), enlightening, teaching and instructing. (It is also a name for the planet Mercury, a planet universally associated with the mystery of the communication of wisdom and intelligence, as Baudha meant relating to Mercury). This is important: enlightening is associated with the act of causing to expand, to awaked, to swell into form, to come to be. Enlightenment itself in Hindu and Sanskrit terminology therefore meant the state of having achieved that process, having achieved that opening or awakening – but is it a state which ever in fact comes to an end, or is it a process, a way of being open, that is eternal ? Bodhya in Sanskrit meant to be known or understood, to be regarded or recognised; to be enlightened or instructed.

According to Klein's *Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, the root of all the Sanskrit terms for enlightenment involving the root Bodh or Budh, is IE. **bheudh* = to offer, present, from which come a variety of other old and new Indo European words, including *faith, fidelity, pistis, to bide* (remain, wait), *to bid* (persuade), *peuthesthai, punthanesthai* (Ancient Greek for "to learn by inquiry") peitho (Ancient Greek for "to persuade"), *buide*, (Old

[1] See Nyanatiloka, *Buddhist Dictionary: Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, Kandy, Buddhist Publication Society, 1952-1988 and also Fischer-Schreiber et al *The Rider Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, London, Rider,

Irish for contentment, thanks), and a number of terms in Old Slavic (*buzdo, budeti, buditi*), Lithuanian (*budeti*) and Lettish (*budras*) specifically meaning awake, watchful. The general old Germanic word for a Priest, Bidan, also comes from this term, as one who asks, offers, presents. In Modern German, the main word for prayer is G*ebet* (The lords Prayer is das Vaterunser beten) to pray is *beten*, and *beteuer* means protest, swear, assure of, affirm and *beteuerung* means protestation, solemn declaration, assertion, affirmation – which also all come from the same root as our Sanskrit. So too the word in general use for please in German, *bitte* – meaning, I beg, ask for. In Anglo-Saxon, *gebiddan* meant to pray, worship, and had an overlap of meanings with the AS word *Biddan*, entreat, request, and *biddere*, a petition. (The Latin source of petition, was *petere*, to strive after, seek, ask, whence competition, meaning to strive after something in company; other words in English from this root include appetite, perpetual, repetition). In all these words there is a common root which goes back to old Indo European concept of striving for, a reaching out, a movement towards, an opening. Buddhi is the apperception within the human being which resonates with this cosmic principle of beingness; ultimately these words trace back to the same root as the English word being, that which is, that which has unfolded to maximal capacity, and which comes from IE *bhyeu, *bhu meaning to be, exist, grow, whence comes also our words build, future, fiat, eisteddfod (last element) and so on. In Irish, beo means a living being and also life itself, beith means being, entity, and bi means to be, exist. (Similarly, beith, meaning a birch tree, which was the first letter of the old Irish alphabet, named the Beith Luis Non, also probably comes from this same root, as the first principle in nature that awakens in the dead of Winter before Imbolc, and heralds life's rebirth in the spring, that betokens the rebirth of Being. All these words come ftrom the same ultimate root as *bodhi.* In this sense, Sanskrit Bodhi, the principle of perfect enlightenment, could actually be defined philosophico-etymologically as "*attuning the nature of consciousness to the source of primal being itself*".

In the Bhagavad Gita, the highest form of enlightenment is called *Brahman-Nirvana*, which describes the ultimate end of the paradoxical polarity of a) detached unified transcendent beingness and b) active involvement with manyness, that the Gita tries to reconcile and unify: enlightenment for the Gita being both and / detachment in action, as in 5:7:

Intent on Yoga
He who has fully mastered himself
And has conquered the senses, whose
Self has become the Self of all beings,
He is not involved even while he acts"

Hinduism shares with Buddhism many similar concepts, which is not surprising given that Buddhism is to Hinduism as Christianity is to Judaism, such as: a field of karmic consequences life after life, to improve which learning, enlightenment, the cultivation of wisdom is the primary vehicle of transmutation. Hinduism includes within it a very broad church, spanning an enormous number of different approaches, strategies and analyses both in terms of why enlightenment is appropriate to strive for, and how one attains it, and what happens after one has attained it. One thing is for certain, one can talk about enlightenments in Hinduism. Let us list a few of them here:

1. There is the enlightenment of taking sheer delight in being itself, in Lila, self-caused existence – which is itself bliss. Sat, truth, means being, existence. That which is, is god. In this life-affirmingness, Hinduism is closer to Judaism (God said t*he light is good*) and enlightenment is mankind's response to the divine beauty we see around us – in spite of the suffering

1999 – to both of which excellent volumes the reader is directed for more comprehensive details of an analysis than space allows for here

which is, inevitably, part of life, and it is therefore this same love of existence which motivates our desire to improve life, to perfect our social institutions, to cultivate our minds, to become educated, to attain wisdom.

2. Hinduism has taken this life affirming ethic regarding sexuality, for example to a high art form, in the Kama sutra and associated texts, in which sexual bliss is itself a way to attain enlightenment, and to enjoy the fruits of being – and in all art forms, in which Hindu creativity has excelled – such as dance, music, fine art, sculpture, architecture – in all there is a wonderful exuberance and passion, a life affirming effulgence. Bhakti yoga emerges from this same impulse, one worships with song and dance and service, the multitudinous gods and deities, nameless and infinite in number, affirming and appreciating and giving thanks for them all – yet at the same time, knowing, ultimately, their transcendent source and origin in the divine transpersonal source of all. Hindu bhaktic enlightenment is symbolised by Krishna and Radha at play, enjoying the dance of creation.

3. The stillness of the yogi in intense meditation is not intended as a life denying withdrawal – but rather a withdrawal to the subtler and innermost planes of existence, from whence, in Hindu understanding, this reality has taken manifestation. By tuning into the innermost level of being, the yogi attains the stopping of the constant play of consciousness (as Patanjali puts it in the opening of his Yoga Sutras) in order, finally, to attain realisation of the underlying wisdom stratum which actually underpins. It is this moment, this samadhi, which constitutes enlightenment in its core essence in Hindu philosophy. Not surprisingly, the Hindu cosmological picture has worlds upon worlds, all supported in turn by various animals – thus pointing to the fact that underlying each level of reality, there is always a deeper level, and that there is an ultimate, finally, which underpins all. Enlightenment, then, is attaining union with that.

4. The Vedanta is most insistent on this principle, and proffers a unique twist to the saga of man's search for enlightenment over the millennia: the Great Ultimate, Brahman, from which all that we know or experience has ultimately manifested, is in fact lurking or hiding deep inside the soul or mind stuff of each one of us. The ultimate cosmic principle underlying the vastness of the galaxies is in fact within each of us, as atman. The experience of enlightenment for the Hindu sage or yogi, is therefore the realisation of this fact – not as mere theory, but as actual lived experience, the aha moment, like recognising oneself in a mirror after a bad dream, with the ability to say "*I am that*".

5. The vedantic enlightenment of tat tvam asi also brings ethical consequences – for not only am I that, but you are that and you are me… Thus, why should I seek to do other than hasten and assist and help your own enlightenment also ? Thus all forms of violence, coercion, hatred, jealousy, negative states, must fall away on the vedantic path to enlightenment. Indeed, so long as one possess such tendencies, one has no attained that ultimate enlightenment. For the yogi then, ahimsa, nonviolence is an absolute moral sine qua non of the wisdom path; as is truthfulness and the other moral virtues which the yogi must needs practice.

6. Over time this original vedantic metaphysic became somewhat ossified into a caste system, in which the Brahmin caste began, as it were, to assert a monopoly over enlightenment – with other lesser mortals, due to their past life karmas, having to perform other than enlightened tasks. One of the results of the British presence in India however, has been an adoption of more democratic understandings of enlightenment, and less elitism. The seed of enlightenment is in the sudra as much as the Brahmin, in the worker as much as the monarch. We are all that. Hence, socialist ideas, and a kind of idealistic communism and Gandhiism proved highly attractive to the modern Indian mind – as various forms of political idealism which sought to bring the greatest opportunities to all citizens.

6. Any complete analysis of Hindu approaches to enlightenment would have to include the survey of thinkers not only from the Upanishads, but also their commentators over the centuries, such as the following:

a) Shankara 788-822 , who stressed in works such as the Crest Jewel of Discrimination that enlightenment is the achievement of the non-dual realisation of the identity of atman and Brahman, and that jnana yoga is the supreme path to realise moksha; interestingly, similar to the Buddhist notion of a will to enlightenment, he emphasised as the 4th of 4

preconditions for the successful realisation of moksha, that one must have formed a strong desire for enlightenment, sufficient to propel one's studies and practice in philosophy. The way to attain moksha was threefold, 1) to listen to an appropriate guru or spiritual teacher 2) to understand and fully comprehend the teachings received through the use of one's own intellect and reasoning powers and empirical spiritual experiences, so as to internalise them, 3) to undertake spiritual meditation and prayer at the highest possible level of devotion and practice. If one keeps at this threefold work in a concentrated and devoted way, it will be possible to attain enlightenment in as single lifetime, even in this very human body, a state called by Shankara jivan-mukti. This state of moksha as taught by Shankara therefore is a state of knowledge, an understanding of the non-dual nature of existence, which can and should be attained by serious students of philosophy in this life, rather than enlightenment being a state to be attained after death, as in other metaphysical systems. After death, the enlightened person, such as Shankara, attains a state known as videha-mukti, namely a state of complete freedom from the life-death cycle, a state of total bliss, equanimity and peace, (equivalent to the Buddhist parinirvana). For Shankara, the achievement of moksha is not consisting of acquiring some new insight on the state of being, rather it is the uncovering of the sheaths of ignorance which surround our natural clear self-knowingness, revealing the inherent wisdom-nature of the eternal consciousness of the atman within each of us (enlightenment is thus akin to an act of remembering, as in Platonic philosophy). Shankara's understanding of enlightenment also taught that once enlightened, the person continues with acts of loving, selfless social service, and helping and teaching others, by precept, and example, to attain a similar state of moksha - which thus has a social and indeed political dimension as well as personal-psychological. These teachings have influenced countless generations of thinkers, sages, saints and educators in India, from Shankara's time right to the present day. Perhaps one of the reasons that Vedanta replaced Buddhist philosophy as the mainstream ideology of Northern India, was that it was able to fill the power vacuum created by the Muslim conquest of Northern India and the wanton destruction of the Buddhist educational institutions such as Nalanda and Taxila, and to offer Indians an enlightenment philosophy which was positive, life affirming and attainable and relevant to social and persona needs in this life.

Ramanuja (1017-1137) articulated a parallel notion of enlightenment known as Vishishtadvaita Vedanta (qualified non-dualism) in which although he accepted the basic premises of Advaita Vedanta (non-duality i.e. the identity of atman and Brahman) nevertheless Brahman has created the universe as an extension of his own being, in which soul and matter both have identity and an apparent separateness from the absolute Brahman. It is precisely this difference that allows the pay of existence, of Lila, to come to be, and without it there would simply be undifferentiated dissolution. Brahman himself, therefore, requires that we appreciate and sustain and honour the differences that he himself has created; yes, inside us all there is atman, and yes, within us all therefore is Brahman, and yes, we can and must know this, but we can also recognise and celebrate the fact that we are different from each other, fro without this, no friendship, love or personal relationships are possible; it is in the gap, the duality, that love itself becomes possible and this is to be affirmed, not as a mistake from which the philosopher seeks to awaken, but rather an act of tremendous and miraculous and inexplicable creativity, by which the play of life is itself generated. Enlightenment therefore consists in affirming and celebrating this fact, rather like a game of hide and seek in which one has spotted the person hiding (let us say a small child) but refuses to let on, so that the game may continue and others may also take pleasure in finding the child (a situation every father or mother will have undergone). Ramanuja therefore is comfortable with paradox; the unity of Brahman contains within itself the plurality of the manyness of beings (the ten thousand things of Chinese thought); the qualities of difference subsist within the very nature of their ultimate unity (matter is suffused and ultimately controlled by Brahman but appears to act independently). Ramanuja's thought is similar in some ways to the metaphysics of the Christian trinity – where unity and diversity simultaneously co-exist.

To attain enlightenment, moksha, for Ramanuja, one must pursue three strategies: good works, the pursuit of knowledge, and spiritual devotion to God. In effect, this philosophical approach to enlightenment argues that enlightenment must occur at all three levels of our existence, physical (works – karma yoga), mental (knowledge – jnana yoga) and emotional (devotional or bhakti yoga). In the first of these, Ramanuja argued that the seeker must perform the appropriate tasks and obligations of their conditions of life, and undertake the appropriate ritual tasks incumbent on them – to put this in more modern parlance, one might say that they should earn their living in a karmically beneficial way, and contribute social and communal life in a auspicious and enlightened manner.; In the second, Ramanuja argues that intellectual study of the Vedanta (and other philosophical systems in general that point us towards enlightenment) is highly beneficial and induces enlightened states of mind, through communing with wise thinkers of the past and the present, who have themselves attained varying degrees of enlightenment). Finally, neither study nor works are sufficient for full and complete enlightenment: there must also be a surrender to the state of divine grace, a recognition that for enlightenment we have to turn the source of enlightenment itself, the Creator and sustainer and destroyer of the world, Brahman, God – by whichever name – and enter a personal relationship of spiritual self-surrender, allowing our own ego or soul consciousness to fall back into the greater sea of being from which we ourselves emerge as individuals. This act of surrender is like falling in love, of being in love – indeed, human loving is a profound foretaste of this taste of bhakti itself, for God ha been our true Beloved all along. For Ramanuja, enlightenment, moksha, therefore does not mean the total annihilation of the soul in God, anymore than true lovers actually wish to annihilate each other, but rather the joyful co-mingling and co-existence of souls and Deity in an eternal divine-human communion – the details of which are however not actually spelled out or discussed (ie. the practical living conditions of the final enlightenment heaven, or the job descriptions of realised and enlightened saints). Most importantly, Ramanuja also stressed that this threefold path to enlightenment, moksha, can be followed by any human being, regardless of their social, familial or karmic circumstances, regardless of their relative wealth or poverty. In other words, whatever point on the circumference of the wheel of fortune one finds oneself on, one can always go direct to the centre. This has meant that many students and seekers have followed Ramanuja's ideas and that it has helped provide a profound intellectual alternative to systems such as Shankara's, which stressed more the fact that the Brahmin cast was by nature better equipped to attain enlightenment. Implicit in Ramanuja's stand was the idea that society must achieve ways of maximising the enlightenment potential of each person, and that this can be achieved regardless of their social station, status or function, from street-sweeper to royalty.

Sri Aurobindo (1892-1950) was born in Calcutta, son of Dr Krishnadhan Ghose, a pro-Westerner, and Aurobindo was educated in English, later being sent to England (living there from aged 7-21) where he was taught Latin and Greek by Rev. W.H.Drewett, before reading Classics at Kings College, Cambridge, before returning to India in 1893 and taking up the practice of Yoga, both inner and outer. Under guidance he attained the level of Brahmanic consciousness, the goal of yoga itself. He worked as a Professor at Baroda College, studying Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, and from 1905-1910 threw himself into the Indian national movement, particularly in Bengal, from the point of view of a philosophical enlightener, who argued that India's freedom was necessary for metaphysical reasons: because Indian philosophical contributions to human culture and the history of thought had been so profound, that it demanded political recognition so as to be able to flourish independently of foreign rulers. Imprisoned briefly in Alipore Jail, he managed to take solace in his spiritual outlook. In 1910 he retired to Pondicherry, outside of the control of the British rulers of India, where he proceeded to devote the rest of his life to intellectual activities aimed at one core task: the uniting of Eastern and Western thought, within a new synthesis, which would establish an authentic and profound metaphysical basis, not just for Indian intellectual independence, but for a planetary independence from the whole era of imperialism and colonialism, and usher in a new global era in which all mankind could live in a world based on peace, harmony and enlightenment. As a peace thinker,

Aurobindo did not believe the path to a world of peace was going to be easy: it would require supreme effort from all of us, including particularly the global intelligentsia, who had to shed themselves of all narrowness of mind, all prejudice and bias, and achieve a vision of universal consciousness instead, in effect, a transpersonal vision, which alone could provide a platform for an integral and sustainable new world society. Helped in this work by a remarkable French woman (known as the Mother) who became his life long intellectual-mystic consort, together they not only managed to publish his ideas in a series of major books, but also to found a global village, near to his ashram in Pondicherry, which was called Auroville, and which has continued to grow since his death in 1950 as a kind of global village dedicated to the possibility of a new world based on the conscious invocation of the transpersonal in everyday life. In 1984, at Auroville, was founded the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) dedicated to advancing transpersonal educational theory and praxis, including peace education, which the author visited in 1993. The languages used at Auroville are: Hindi, Tamil, French, Sanskrit and English. Among Aurobindo's important publications were: *New Lamps for Old; The Life Divine; Essay on the Gita; On the Veda; The Synthesis of Yoga; The Human Cycle; The Idea of Human Unity; The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity; The Doctrine of Passive Resistance; The Ideal of the Karmayogin; War and Self-Determination*

Aurobindo's intellectual work has been well summarised as follows: "*He may be considered a critic of perceptual realism, semiotics, physicalism and energetics, positivist scientism, Cartesian dualism, social behaviourism, mentalism, agnosticism and the anti-theistic Weltanschaung. Sense data that can be inter-subjectively communicated do not constitute the sole evidence for knowledge. He adheres to the basic notion of an evolutionary ascent of an ultimate supreme consciousness, based at the seven principles of manifested being and the sever gradations of the manifesting consciousness. The supra-cosmic view of things as upheld in Buddhist idealism and the Advaita Vedanta strengthens the aspect of transcendence. The cosmic terrestrial view also puts the emphasis on a "continuous terrestrial or cosmic ensouling" Aurobindo is an integralist of the spiritual school… Although a mystic and a metaphysician he was always concerned with the betterment of the social collectivity*" (Varma, Vishwanath Prasa Ph.D. *Modern Indian Political Thought*, Volume 2, (Agra, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal Pubs. 1961 - 1993, 11th revised edition p318/9)

Many individuals have been inspired by Aurobindo's work, beyond this death in 1950. Sri Chinmoy, who has run meditation classes at the UN Headquarters in New York, spent his formative years at Auroville as a student of Aurobindo, and has been active as a peace and interfaith teacher of spirituality for many decades both in New York and globally, as well as a prolific author; he also inspired the Peace Torch run, which takes place annually in various parts of the world, as well as numerous other peace activities worldwide. Chinmoy came to the West from Indian in 1964; published his first book in 1970, and published his 988th book in 1994 (Chinmoy, Sri World *Destruction: Never, Impossible !* New York, Agni Press, 1994) which like many of his studies in an appeal for peace on earth through the cultivation of transpersonal wisdom and harmony between different spiritual perspectives and approaches. (The author had the good fortune to have a personal meeting with him in New York in 1992 and to learn more about his work for world peace at firsthand. Chinmoy has been one of the most active workers for world peace in the late 1980's and early 1990's: he has met and discoursed on peace with Pope Paul V1 and Pope John Paul 2nd three times each; and with the Heads of State of USA, Canada, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland, Venezuela and Yugoslavia - quite a record for one person !

D.P. Chattopadhyaya wrote an important study on the similarities and differences in the thinking of Sri Aurobindo and Karl Marx (Chattopadhyaya, D. P. *Sri Aurobindo and Karl Marx: Integral Sociology and Dialectical Sociology* Delhi, Motilal Barnasidass Pubs. 1976-1988) which is a masterful study of their respective contributions to both sociological and historical theory. Chattopadhyaya quotes Popper's critique of an overall general history of humanity, as a possible criticism of Aurobindo's search for the inner meaning of history, who said: "*There is no history of mankind, there is only an indefinite number of histories of all kinds of aspects of human life… a concrete history of mankind, if there were any, would have to be*

the history of all men. It would have to be the history of all human hopes, struggles, and sufferings. For there is no one man more important than another. Clearly this concrete history cannot be written. We must make abstractions, we must neglect and select. But with this we arrive at… many histories." (*The Open Society and its Enemies,* Vol 2, p.270, London 1962) The same argument, it must be said, underlies the current author's proposal for a discourse about "enlightenments". For Aurobindo, however, these limitations do not point to the same conclusions (a scepticism of the possibility of knowledge, and retreat into the bastions of circumscribed scientific methodology) but, by contrast, Aurobindo argues that*: "our individualisation is only a superficial formation, a practical selection and limited conscious synthesis for the temporary utility of life in a particular body". In the spiritual depth of our being there are three inter-related aspects - individual, universal and transcendental. The individual historian, without ceasing to be what he is at a particular time and place, by his thought (or spiritual) activity can participate in a sort of universal life. But even then, there is always a life beyond. Time-bound history cannot be the true story of the spiritual journey of our thought-life…"* (*Chattopadhyaya*, ibid. p. 58)

Aurobindo ends up with a view of history wherein the great vision of the whole is given only rarely to individual people of genius (called "Swallowers of formulas" in *The Human Cycle,* p. 13*)*, such as Manu, Moses, Lycurgus, and Mohammed… who can see the spiritual connection between the individual and the universal, and what unites the "logic of the situation" with the "logic of the infinite", and the "epochal necessity" with "eternal freedom". For such an individual, personal enlightenment leads one to take a leading role in pioneering new thought forms in society. Of Mohammed, Aurobindo said, interestingly: *"he developed the existing social, religious and administrative customs of the Arab people into a new system dictated to him often in a state of trance, in which he passed from his conscient into his superconscient Self, by the Divinity to his secret intuitive mind*". (Aurobindo, Sri *The Ideal of Human Unity,* p. 213). This is Aurobindo's unique assessment of the relative level of Muhammad's own degree of enlightenment realisation, discussed elsewhere in this essay.

Aurobindo can best be understood if he is seen as a critical contributor to the evolving notion of the transpersonal consciousness, even if he uses different terminology. He states that the solution to an ego-based subjectivism in history is not by appeal to the iron laws of historical determinism, or objective factors in historical development (the Marxist solution) but rather: "*There is another way out. If the individual deepens his consciousness and transcends his immediate Self, he realises 'That he is not only himself, but he is in solidarity with all of his kind' (*Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle,* p. 54*) In his spiritual depth man is mankind. At that level subjectivity, inter-subjectivity and objectivity become synonymous expressions. In fact Kant defines objectivity in terms of inter-subjectivity - the structural identity of different individual human minds.*" (*Chattopadhyaya*, ibid. p. 64) As we can see then, Aurobindo was towering his way to a unique articulation of the role of transpersonal consciousness and enlightenment in history, based on both his profound researches into Western philosophy and history, as well as into his own Eastern and particularly Indian traditions, as well as by undertaking the necessary spiritual disciplines to clarify his own level of consciousness and understanding, through yoga and meditation practices. One of the implications of Aurobindo's approach to transpersonal historiography, once the idea of "objective or materialist history" which a student merely absorbs and regurgitates is rejected, is that the mind of the historian is also involved in the framing, perceiving, articulating, selecting and comprehending of history - and that the depth with which the historian is able to do this is to some extent proportionate to the extent to which the historian has him or herself been able to experience the transpersonal realms of human consciousness directly. Aurobindo himself was said to have achieved samadhi, or enlightenment, on Nov. 24, 1926, a state of lasting enlightenment caused by the descent of the Overmind, but what exactly that means in human terms, and how one assesses one person's enlightenment experience against another's is something that had to await the development of *transpersonal psychology* as a field of knowledge, and which is only now, finally, beginning to work towards establishing certain criteria by which to judge the relative truth of such claims. As a contribution

towards this work, the idea of epistemological plurality and the terminological shift to discourse on enlightenments can help towards the construction of a comparative analysis of respective enlightenment claims.

Such questions are posed provisionally in a thought provoking and fruitful manner in Caplan, Mariana *Halfway up the Mountain: The Error of Premature Claims to Enlightenment*, Prescott, Arizona, Hohm Press, 1999, during the research for which study, Mariana interviewed Charles Tart, Andrew Cohen, Christina Grof, Claudio Naranjo, Joan Halifax and many others; it is also interesting to note that Marian was herself partly educated at the California Institute for Integral Studies, itself founded by the eminent exponent of Aurobindo, the late Haridas *Chaudhuri.* Marian discovered that sometimes people claim enlightenment prematurely, for various ego reasons, to promote themselves or their organisations; and that sometimes followers claim enlightenment prematurely for their teachers, and teachers go along with it for various reasons. (One might add here in parenthesis that it would presumably take an enlightened pupil to recognise an enlightened teacher – and a non-enlightened pupil would presumably not recognise the enlightenment of even an enlightened teacher – one thinks of the complex relationship between Judas and Jesus for example. Presumably initially, Judas felt Jesus offered the kind of personal and social enlightenment which was required at the time, and advanced some way on the spiritual path himself. Later, he presumably became thoroughly disillusioned with his teacher, to the extent that he was prepared to betray him to death. It might be that he had experienced the profound disillusionment that often accompanies, as a kind of flip side, the hero worship that we often project onto our hoped for "saviours". Maybe something happened, private to them both, which led Judas to a profound revulsion or disillusionment with Jesus, who knows – maybe he surprised Mary Magdalene and Jesus in bed together one night, and simply couldn't stand the fact that his teacher had mortal desires and was attracted to a beautiful woman or something of this sort ! The problem with this kind of reversal between extreme attraction and hero worship (at its most extreme the messiah projection) and the opposite, the disillusionment, the falling away, the revulsion (at its most extreme the anti-Christ project) is that, as far as enlightenment is concerned, it usually arises between pupils and teachers where one has promised in some way, to "do someone else's enlightenment for them" – which is a claim made by many beginning teachers – and sometimes for the best of possible reasons i.e enthusiasm for other's enlightenment. In reality, however, no one can "do enlightenment" for anyone else, rather – at best, we can achieve enlightenment for oneself and then guide and encourage people to find it for themselves).

Aurobindo's transpersonal philosophy of history can be succinctly schematised as having passed through 6th stages: 1) The Symbolic stage, or a primal phase, as in the Vedic period of India, when mankind lives in a richly symbolic universe based on art, myth and poetry; 2) The Typal Stage, similar to the period of Hindu castes, when mankind stratifies into various distinct types 3) The Conventional Stage: typified by the European Middle Ages, when castes become fixed according to external standards rather than individual merit; 4) The Individualist Stage, typified by modern Western European society, whose watchwords are liberty, conscience, progress, individuality 5) The Subjective Stage, reached in the course of the 20th century, in which a sense of intellectual spiritual consciousness begins to develop and 6) The Supramental Stage, which was understood to have begun in 1956, 6 years after Aurobindo's death. Thus Aurobindo's ideas of the philosophy of history and the philosophy of enlightenment are deeply interconnected: he believed we are entering a new phase in human history, where enlightenment will gradually become the norm rather than the exception.

Many studies have been made of Aurobindo's thought, comparing it with other visionary transpersonal thinkers, such as that by Zaehner, R.C. *Evolution in Religion: A study in Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (Oxford* University press, 1972) and Sethna, K.D. *Teilhard de Chardin and Sri Aurobindo: a focus on Fundamentals* (Varanasi, Bharatiya Vidya Prakasan, 1973). Haridas Chaudhuri also completed several studies, including Chaudhuri, Haridas *Sri Aurobindo: Prophet of the Life Divine* (1950; 1973); Chaudhuri, Haridas and Spiegerlberg, Frederick eds. *The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* (London, Unwin, 1960). Also important are Bolle, Kees *The Persistence of Religion: an essay on Tantrism and Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy* (Leiden, Brill, 1965); McDermott, Robert A. *The Mind of Light* (New York,

Dutton 1971). Singh, Karan *Prophet of Indian Nationalism: a Study of the Political Thought of Sri Aurobindo Ghose 1893-1910* (London, Unwin, 1963) Kaul, H.K. Sri Aurobindo: A descriptive Bibliography (New Delhi, Munishiram Manoharlal, 1972), Sethna, K.D. Sri Aurobindo the Poet (1970).In Halbfass, Wilhelm *India and Europe: an essay in Philosophical understanding* (Albany, SUNY 1988; Delhi, Motilal Barnasidass, 1990) Aurobindo's work is placed into a wider context of the history of intellectual relations between India and Europe over the centuries . In the matter of international peace, Aurobindo also had important insights to contribute: he predicted a time would come when the nations of the world would voluntarily enter into a world union, a kind of peaceful association of interests. He felt this would have to grow and develop slowly, however, as the psychological will within the broad masses of mankind evolved towards a willingness to appreciate our common humanity, rather than emphasising our differences. Such a religion of humanity, realised in a world union, of nations living in peace with one another, would be based on "spiritual comradeship", and "a yet unfounded law of love" (*Chattopadhyaya,* ibid p. 187). Aurobindo foresaw a time when the psychological maturation of humanity, and the inroads of the supramental (transpersonal) consciousness would have grown so deep, and so broad, that planetary civilisation would have in effect transformed into the "kingdom of God on earth". How and when this might happen, and what historical processes would assist its hastening, Aurobindo believed he had managed to sketch out objectively, in a way which incorporated all that was useful and living from other such attempts in the past (e.g. Vedanta, traditional Hinduism, Marxism, Nietzschean thought, socialism, nationalism, religiosity etc.) and integrated them into a holistic methodology of collective will-to-enlightenment which could transform the state of war existing on earth into a state of peace. It is highly likely that, were he to revisit earth now, 54 or more years after his death, he would be both disappointed at the slow progress of mankind to achieve the necessary psychological maturation, but also unwilling to abandon his core methodology.

Radhakrishnan, Sarvapelli (1888-1975) was the most distinguished and eminent philosopher in India in our time period, who not only contributed to the intellectual life of that country, and served as President, but also developed a transpersonal view of enlightenment and history, which, according to the philosophical language of his day, he termed "objective idealism". To Radhakrishnan, the events of human life and history are the unfolding of divine consciousness, filtered through the minds and psyches of individuals. For Radhakrishnan, the ultimate purpose of human life is to realise union with the Absolute Spirit, i.e. enlightenment, moksha. In 1936 he left his Professorship in Calcutta to occupy the Spalding Chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University, and was the first Indian and Asian to be appointed to a Professorship in Oxford. Like subsequent transpersonal theorists, Radhakrishnan argued that there is *"one perennial and universal philosophy that is found in all lands and cultures, in the seers of the Upanishads and the Buddha, Plato and Plotinus, Hillel and Philo Judaeus of Alexandria, Jesus and Paul and the mediaeval mystics of Islam. It is this spirit that binds continents and unites the ages that can save us from the meaningless of modern culture" (*McGreal, Ian ed. *Great Thinkers of the Eastern World,* Harper Collins, 1995, p.282) Radhakrishnan worked as both an academic, serving as Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu Benares University, and also in politics: from 1949-1952 he was India's Ambassador, under Nehru, to the USSR, at a critical time in the history of the cold war, before returning to India in 1952, where for the next 10 years he served as Vice President, with Nehru as President. He also served during this period a President of UNESCO (from 1952-1954). His transpersonal philosophy translated into a practical political vision which supported a non-aligned position for Indian in the great power struggles of capitalism versus communism; he disapproved of soviet style and later Chinese communism for their rigidity of dogma, their martial spirit, and their compulsory regimentation of peoples lives, as well as for their denial of the spiritual essence of the human soul within us all. At the same time however he approved of their insight into the basic ontological equality of all men and women, and their opposition to bigoted and outmoded forms of hierarchical social and religious structures. At the same time he disapproved of the excesses of capitalism and the "free world" since he disagreed with its massive differentials of wealth between rich and poor, and its pandering to the lowest

common denominator in human nature, greed and self interest, as the engine of progress, which it marked solely in economic terms. Yet he also admired the energy, enterprise and initiative of capitalist societies. During this post war period, his contribution to philosophical work continued, and he wrote a large commentary on the Bhagavad Gita (1948) as well as a further commentary on the *Brahma Sutras* (1952). From 1962-1967, Radhakrishnan rose to the office of President of India itself, a supreme accolade for a thinker and intellectual, at a critical time in Indian and world history, and in 1963 he paid a state visit to the UK. A subsequent President of India, R. Venkataraman (President 1987-1992) describes in his autobiography, the Centenary celebration of the birth of Radhakrishnan held in the Indian Parliament Central Hall, in 1988, and explained that during the ten years that Radhakrishnan had chaired the Rajya Sabha in India, there had been no acrimony and noisy scenes, rudeness and walkouts among the delegates - that he managed to instil an atmosphere of peace, calm and purpose among delegates.

Of all philosophers in the 20th century, Radhakrishnan rose to the highest office, and made the most consistent contribution to both the articulation of an effective vision towards world peace, and also its practical realisation. Tragically, he was bedevilled during his time in office, by various crises: crises in India's relations with Pakistan, the Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1950; the flight of the Dalai Lama to Indian in 1958l the ending of democracy in Pakistan in 1959 by General Ayub Khan, the invasion of the Indian Himalayan frontier by Chinese troops in 1962; the opening of Sino-Pakistan détente in 1963 between General Ayub Khan and Mao and the ensuring outbreak of Kashmiri fighting over the theft of a Muslim relic in 1963, followed by an invasion of India's North West desert frontiers (the Rann of Kutch) by Pakistan in January 1965, and a full scale Indo-Pakistan war later in 1965, which led to a kind of draw. In all these problems, Radhakrishnan did his best to counsel peaceful approaches, and continued to uphold the ideal of non-violence in public affairs as much as possible. At the very end of his Presidency, Indira Gandhi, daughter of Nehru, succeeded, and Radhakrishnan retired from the Presidency the following year, able to devote his remaining years to scholarship and the spiritual life. Radhakrishnan's main contribution to the evolution of transpersonal thought on the nature of enlightenment was to encourage a comparative philosophical scholarship of the highest order, basing itself on accessing the spiritual experience of authors nestling within the texts, and to move in the direction of a comparative hermeneutic of religious experience revealed within the sacred scriptures and philosophical texts of all cultures, all times, all place. He served, for instance, as co-editor of the *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western* (1952-1953) and *The Concept of Man: A Study in Comparative Philosophy* (1966); and his colleague and disciple P.T.Raju went on to write *Introduction to Comparative Philosophy* (1962'1970), and P.T.Raju *Comparative Studies in Philosophy* (London, 1951). Perhaps his greatest legacy is this, that he stimulated thinking among philosophers in the international community at the highest level about the transpersonal dimensions of their own traditions, and the necessity for them to learn to speak to one another in truth about those traditions, in the search for common elements, and in the cause of peace and international understanding and enlightenment. Had Radhakrishnan lived, he might would certainly have encouraged the in depth analysis of comparative views of enlightenment, West and East, in different philosophical systems, such as is being attempted in this essay, and his own work can be said to have helped advance such work in many profound ways. Radhakrishnan specifically believed that enlightenment, moksha, could only be attained by the development of a higher form of knowledge than discursive intellect, which separates and distinguishes phenomena, and which is fully developed for example in the logical systems and thinking styles of an Aristotle, which Radhakrishnan called intuition, and which is a third form of knowing alongside sense-perception and logic. Intuitive knowledge is premised on the identity of the mind of the knower and the phenomenon which is to be known. Since all is Brahman, Brahman underlies both my personal mind, and the field of knowledge I am seeking to acquire, and by fusing my will to knowledge, I can not only acquire the knowledge and skills I require, but, if I explore sufficient knowledge fields, and pursue particularly the higher philosophical and metaphysical fields of knowledge can attain enlightenment itself, moksha, which consists precisely in developing this inner quality of intuitive knowledge to its

highest degree. One way to describe intuitive knowledge that Radhakrishnan uses is to talk of *integral knowledge*, that is, a kind of knowing which knows everything about something all at once, unlike logic which knows things in parts, pieces, temporal sequences, fragments. Ultimately, the supreme example of integrative knowledge is enlightenment itself, moksha, for in coming to know the Absolute, Brahman, one knows the truth of all one's own entire being, as well as the creative source of al other beings. This philosophy has profound implications for example, for the phenomena that sometimes manifest around enlightened people, or mystics on the various stages and paths to enlightenment, namely clairvoyance, telepathy etc. Such a vision of Absolute spirit, or Brahman, brings with it a spiritually based ethical commitment to the traditional mores of yoga, ahimsa (non-violence), brahmacharya (sexual correctness), truth, and dharma in general. His commitment to the ideal of moksha, enlightenment, also led Radhakrishnan to his political work on behalf of India, and the wider international; community. He felt that an inter-faith tolerance and harmony was guaranteed by a deeper analysis of the philosophical common truths underlying the great religions of mankind, and that in these commonalities is to be found the essence of true religion, whereas dogmatic religion, which is the outer shell and husk of wisdom, is something which mankind can well grow out of. He understood precisely what Buddhists and Buddha meant when saying "don't take the raft up the mountain."

Our last representative Hindu thinker to consider is *Gandhi, Mahatma* (1889-1947) who is arguably the single most important figure in the 20th century to have a) based his life's work on a sense of the spiritual and transpersonal b) had a deep commitment to bringing about a peaceful world c) had a commitment to advancing education, scholarship, knowledge and theory, linking the transpersonal, the social and the ordinary everyday human spheres of existence d) had a deep and profound commitment to working out how the metaphysical principles of enlightenment, which in his view are found in all faiths and traditions, can be actually realised in practice in the real world by the great masses of humanity, rather than simply by an elite of scholars or philosophers. Born in 1869, Gandhi was educated at Samaldas College in Kathiawar; married when very young, in 1883 to Kasturbai, at the age of 14, he went to London in 1887 (aged 17) where he remained until 1891, studying law, Among other places, he studied at the University of London in order to pass the necessary qualifications. His father had been an important political figure in his home state, effectively Prime Minister, while his mother was a more religious influence. Of a particular branch of the Hindu faith which had been strongly influenced by Jains, and inclined towards a tolerant universalism based on personal piety and devotion, she required of young Gandhi a vow, that during his time in London he would abstain from meat, from sexual relations, and from alcohol, all of which he managed to do. His life in London has been well written up (Hunt, James D. *Gandhi in London* (Revised edition) Delhi, Promilla, 1993) and he is known to have met all kinds of interesting people who influenced his later thinking, including the theosophists Annie Besant and H.P. Blavatsky. In fact it was two theosophists who first introduced young Gandhi to the Bhagavad Gita, which later became his "bible" (Bertram and Archibald Keightley, in whose home Blavatsky was residing). It was during Gandhi's time in London that Annie Besant herself became a theosophist, although previously she had been an active Fabian socialist. Gandhi heard Besant's speech explaining why she had become a theosophist, in the course of which she declared "that theosophy had been able to deal with a number of psychological questions left unresolved by freethought, and among these she listed the problem of how thought could occur in a material body, and the problem of perception, as well as the phenomena of clairvoyance, hypnotism and dreams." It is interesting to note that it was exactly in the field of transpersonal psychology, which deals with such phenomena, and the possibility of enlightenment contained within it, that Besant's "conversion" had occurred. Soon, Gandhi was introduced to Blavatsky herself, having read her works, and he found in them an inspiration to go back to his own spiritual roots and look at Hindu philosophy again in depth. He was not personally interested in the other side of theosophical work, namely an exploration of the unexplored powers in man. Reading Blavatsky's A Key to Theosophy (1889) Gandhi said "This book stimulated in me the desire to read books on

Hinduism, and disabused me of the notion fostered by the missionaries that Hinduism was rife with superstition." Of theosophy's interest in occultism however, he said, later: "Though the society's rule respecting brotherhood appealed to me, I had no sympathy for its search for occult powers" Gandhi actually became an associative member of the Theosophical Society for a 6 months period, starting on 26 March 1891, just three months before he left London to return to Bombay. The importance of theosophical thought on shaping young Gandhi's own eclectic mind, and his vision of a transpersonal spirituality at work in the world, cannot be overemphasised. This is confirmed by the fact that later, in South Africa, Gandhi again got in touch with Theosophists, and it was by lecturing to the Durban Lodge of the Theosophical Society that he first began his career as a lecturer. Additionally, he was interested in other esoteric branches of theosophical thought: he was in correspondence with Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland, who were Christian theosophists looking for an esoteric form of Christianity to follow, and whose book "The Perfect Way" argued that the true church of Christ was an invisible, spiritual structure accessible to the pure in heart and lifestyle; Gandhi enthusiastically joined their Esoteric Christian Union and became, until 1897 and Maitland's death, the South African representative of this organisation, whilst he was still practising as a lawyer. From 1891 he returned home to India, and practised in Bombay 1891-93, but then moved to S.Africa in 1893 where he lived until 1914, and where he opposed discrimination against Indians. It was here that he began his heroic struggle against racism and oppression of one people by another, and developed the basic ideas of "satyagraha" (truth-holding) which shaped his entire life. He developed the notion of ahimsa (nonviolence) firstly as a spiritual creed, which is what it always had been, and extended it into the political and social sphere. He was not "anti-British" but simply anti some of the attitudes of some of the British that he encountered in Sough Africa. He formed an Indian ambulance corps in the Boer War 1899, for as a pacifist he refused to take part in the armed combat, but wanted to show his solidarity for those suffering. He returned to India in 1914 and was still at this time basically pro British in his outlook, hoping reconciliation and peace and a gradual move towards independence. Then there took place the terrible massacre of Amritsar after WW1 when a British officer, Brigadier-general Reginald Dyer, ordered his troops to open fire on defenceless crowd of Sikhs enjoying a Baisakhi festival celebration, and massacred hundreds of them in cold blood (official figures: 1200 men women and children seriously wounded; 379-530 dead). Dyer was never officially punished. Simply relieved of his command, he was sent back to England and hailed as "Saviour of the Punjab" by the Morning Post, which raised a subscription of £26,000 for him, and presented him with a gilt sword as "Defender of the Empire". This was a turning point in the British rule of India; morally, they had lost the plot from then on, as far as Gandhi was concerned. Tagore renounced his knighthood as a result of Amritsar. The 1919 meeting of the Indian National Congress took place in Amritsar to commemorate the massacre, and was chaired by a lawyer called Motilal Nehru, who hitherto had been proud to be part of the British establishment in India, and had presided as Grand Master of the Freemasons, and whose son Jawaharlal had been sent to Harrow and Cambridge University for the best education England could offer. Yet Amritsar marked a turning point in attitudes for the Nehrus, who henceforth threw themselves into supporting Gandhi's non-Cooperation movement. Before Amritsar Gandhi had already been experimenting with applied satyagraha campaigns in India; in fact the massacre itself owed something to his work, since it was he who had called for a mass satyagraha on April 6 1919, which had led to two arrests of his supporters, followed by an orgy which led to the death of 5 Europeans - and it had been in revenge for this that Dyer had ordered the massacre. Gandhi in response formed the Satyagraha League in 1919 and began his mass civil disobedience campaign 1920. He was imprisoned in 1922-24 after violence broke out, and this pattern continued over the next decade. Gandhi was an activist of Indian independence, just as Aurobindo was theoreticians, but both drew on the same transpersonal philosophy and beliefs, and both believed in the political importance of enlightenment, clothed in different garb. In 1930 Gandhi led the famous 200 mile salt march in defiance of a government monopoly on salt, which caught the imagination of people all over the world, and this led to a negotiated truce with the government and the Indian National Congress party. In 1931 he went to London for a Conference on Indian Constitutional Reform, during which he stayed at

Kingsley Hall in the East End of London, and met with Muriel Lester and many other British peace campaigners, and had tea at Buckingham Palace with King George V. On returning to India he was rearrested in 1931 for renewed nonviolence activism. This continued: a repeated pattern of arrests and fasts 1931-37. He resigned from the Congress in 1934, and in 1936 settled at Sevagram, near Wardha. He helped negotiate a 1937 compromise with congress ministers who were now in govt. and agreed to help Congress support the war effort if the British agreed to a provisional independence government, which the British however refused to do. He was re-arrested in 1942-44 for obstruction of the war effort and urging independence. Released, he negotiated with a UK Government cabinet mission inquiring into the constitutional structure leading to full Indian independence in 1947. He had not wanted India's partition into India and Pakistan, and had lamented the fact that Muslim India and Hindu India were effectively to be severed. His vision of the transpersonal unity of all faiths meant that he had always worked closely with Indian Muslims, and regarded them as his bothers and sisters. In his South African days he had worked with the Indian Muslim community in particular, and as someone committed to a transpersonal vision of God he was close to Sufi thinking, or Advaita Vedanta, which also stressed that outer religious differences should not come between people. He had by now used the practice of fasting as a political action for justice, which had a long history of such use in different traditions around the world, including in Ancient India and Ancient Ireland, where it was a recognised way of bringing an opponent to justice. Terrible communal rioting and violence broke out between Hindu and Muslim Indians after partition, with Hindus being massacred in Pakistan and Muslims being massacred in India. It was during such a fasted for peace to bring an end to communal rioting in Delhi between Muslims and Hindus that Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic associated with extreme Hindu nationalism, on Jan 30 1948. In all the busy outer events of his life Gandhi also made time to focus on the transpersonal: each day he would observe regular prayers and meditation; one day a week he would observe total silence, to devote himself to inner thought, writing, and spiritual awareness. He advocated a certain degree of manual labour, and argued that human beings should be in balance, using their bodies, minds, and spiritual natures, in due proportion. He had an enormous number of friends and admirers, who came to support his work from all over Indian and the world, and since his tragic death in 1948, the admirers of his method of peace-making through truth-seeking have continued to grow. (See the author's paper on this subject, which lists many such figures: Daffern T. *Gandhi's Influence on Religious and Philosophical Thought in the Modern World*, in Copley, A. and Paxton, G. *Gandhi and the Contemporary World*, Chennai, Indo-British Historical Society, 1997) What, in summary, was the core contribution of Gandhi? It was to provide a methodology for peace making: to link the ideal of ahimsa, which had hitherto been seen as a moral prerequisite for the journey to enlightenment undertaken by the individual seeker in search of moksha, with the social ideal of peace and justice: to link the individual journey towards enlightenment with the collective journey towards social, political and international peace. Gandhi was less interested in the outer forms of a person’s religious faith, but he was deeply interested in the moral commitment and the spiritual vision and inspiration which a person brought to their life's work. The metaphysical basis of his work was grounded in an open needed quest for truth - a love of truth - which he equated with the absolute impersonal source of being, the Brahman of traditional Vedanta, but this could also be approached through any number of deific lenses, by any number of names: all such spiritual practices, in so far as they tended towards the good, the universal, the non-violent, the attainment of enlightenment, were worthwhile. Gandhi was therefore a philosophical universalist and transpersonalist, who worked out the political and social implications of his position in action, more than any one else in our time period, and had the courage to live and die for his vision. He also believed in what wed can call the need fro a political economy of enlightenment – and his critique of both the capitalist spirit, which undermined the self-sufficiency of local communities and gave people unnecessary lusts and desires to own and possess things they did not want, was essentially a metaphysically based critique. For in being driven to such unnecessary competitive consumerism, we are having less time for the actual important business which we are her on earth for, to achieve enlightenment, individually and cooperatively. We become instead consumerist machines driven by false desires, obsessed

by money, status and power. Secondly, his critique of communism, which to many in his generation seemed like a antidote to capitalism, was based on the fact that communism enforced a metaphysical repression on the individual and the local community, whereby the natural spiritual buoyancy inherent in the human soul, as it strives for enlightenment, for the union of the atman (individual) with the cosmic creator (Brahman) becomes blocked by the false consciousness of the state – which dictates to all what we should do and not do, and limits and curtails or authenticity and freedom of both action and thought. Gandhi was in many ways a pioneer of a third way in politics, a kind of green libertarian cooperativism, in which the political economy of enlightenment was placed at the centre of the social and economic agenda, and social and economic and political institutions need to be created, and recreated, so as to ensure the maximal levels of enlightenment to the maximal levels of people. Freedom from want, from poverty and hardship and diseases, are of course important aspects of this, and Gandhi was not advocating a lifestyle of poverty for people as a way of achieving enlightenment, but he was arguing that as a human race we need to restrict our consumerist desires to within the bounds of what is capable of being supported on planet earth by the ecosphere, and thus that our will to enlightenment and our need to preserve nature and the environment from the ravages of heavy industry and technology, is an important part of the moral duty of mankind.

As we have seen then, within Hinduism there have been many thinkers and traditions each of which has looked at the work of enlightenment in their own differing ways and within their own wider political and intellectual milieu – and yet among al of whom there is a golden thread of common concerns. But we are perhaps right to speak of enlightenments here, even within the one religion of Hinduism, for in Hinduism in fact, we have a microcosm of the religious and philosophical options available to mankind as a whole. They all agree however, that the goal – moksha, enlightenment is itself the single most important thing a human being can strive after, and that this supreme goal is the benchmark of all other goals.

9. Chinese enlightenments: next we must consider a complex and challenging subject, Chinese approaches to enlightenment. In what ways have Chinese thought dealt with this idea ? The long love affair of Chinese philosophy with Buddhist philosophy has of course caused innumerable Buddhist schools to arise in China over the centuries, each of whom has developed the idea of enlightenment in subtly different ways. The Nirvana School, for example, which arose in the 5th century AD, based their ideas around the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, (Sutra of Ultimate Enlightenment) which argued that Nirvana is an extraordinary, miraculous, mystical, magical eternal and eternal state, in which the pure mind will indeed continue to exist on a continuity state of bliss and consciousness. Instead of passing away into absolute nothingness, as the school which gathered around the Prajnaparamita Sutra had argued, when it equated the perception of *sunyata* (emptiness) with the act of enlightenment, and which included most schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the enlightened follower of Nirvana Buddhism in China looked forward to an eternity of blissful consciousness, to the state of being enlightened, which was itself eternal, arguing that the state of being enlightened was predicated on the fact of being itself, or there could not be any such state of enlightenment itself, in which case, why strive for it ? The Nirvana School agreed that the perception of sunyata was indeed a useful psychological experience, a trick if you like, when the essential non-beingness of all things became apparent to the observer, but that this teaching represented only an intermediate stage of Buddha's own teachings. It argued that the highest and last teachings of Buddha were contained in the Parinirvana Sutra, which consisted of a discourse given by Buddha at the very end of his life, and consisted of the quintessence of his teachings. One of the Chinese thinkers who propounded this idea was Tao Sheng (355-434 AD), who was based in Southern China, and who worked with Kumarajiva (344-413 AD) the great translator from Singkiang, who translated a number of works by Nagarjuna and became known from 402 as the "teacher of the nation" (kuo-shih so designated by Chinese Imperial decree – a term later used by Japanese emperors also, as kokushi). Tao Sheng took the view that all beings have within them the faculty of achieving enlightenment. Even heretics, and rude and unwholesome people, known as ichchantikas (Sanskrit for unbelievers) who

have no interest in Buddhism or other philosophies, or who consciously turn their backs on enlightenment, in fact possess, according to Tao-Sheng, the complete and total Buddha-nature in themselves potentially – which in exceptional circumstances can be realised by an experience of sudden enlightenment. Tao Sheng based his ideas on the Parinirvana Sutra, among numerous other Buddhist scriptures (he helped his friend Kumarajiva translate the Lotus Sutra into Chinese). Tragically none of his own writings have survived, apart from fragments. To Tao Sheng, enlightenment consists in the actual realisation that samsara and nirvana are identical, and that it is a state of becoming one with absolute truth; this realisation is obviously a sudden experience, but it has to be based on prior insights and, preferably, a lifetime of dedication, service and spiritual work. He did not however repudiate the wisdom expounded in the Madhyamika text, the Prajnaparamita Sutra, since he accepted that sunyata was another way of talking about this absolute Buddha nature which is indeed within us all – or rather, within which we all are. He was a dedicated teacher, and died on the job, so to speak, having delivered a teaching at his retreat on Mount Lu in 434 AD, at the age of 79. Another exponent of the Nirvana School was Tao-leng who was based in the North of the country, and who also based his teachings on the Parinirvana Sutra.

It could indeed be argued that this Chinese Nirvana School was a typical transformation of traditional Buddhist thinking, and represented a move towards the more traditional Chinese philosophical approach to enlightenment embodied in Taoist and Confucian schools of thought, which stressed that enlightenment was a fundamental natural and human quality, which can arise spontaneously in ordinary human beings. For traditional Chinese thought, history stretches far back into the ancient past – there have been innumerable beings into the past who have been enlightened, who strove for wisdom and who brought great benefits to mankind through their learning, a tradition whose history we shall now review.

Chinas spiritual traditions trace right back to the presumed prehistoric era of early hominids, and even though there is a tradition in modern palaeoanthropology to put the emergence of modern man as arising in an African diaspora in the relatively recent past, say 60,000 years ago, in fact, remains of hominids in China go back to at least 200,000 years, when early Peking man is known to have first tamed fire. We must assume therefore for these early hominids, discovered by the work of Teilhard de Chardin, a certain level of consciousness and intelligence, and therefore, as a corollary, a certain degree of enlightenment. Indeed, on e could go so far as to claim that the discovery of fire was the first enlightenment, literally, and the source of all the others. For with fire, came speech, sociability, the shared meal, the hot herbal drink, home, the hearth, and eventually, pottery, metallurgy, and in time, nuclear physics.

China has not surprisingly therefore a long and evolved mythology rich in figures, deities, and supernatural creator beings, including deities later incorporated into the indigenous Taoist and Confucian pantheons of popular worship.

In China, the period of transition from mythical history to written historiography can be traced in the various strata of learned Chinese classical writings, including the Book of History, the Book of Changes and the Book of Songs which began to take their current shape perhaps even as early as 11th century BC. The consciousness of the past, as a measuring rod against which to gauge current actions, has always had a vital role to play in early Chinese philosophical and religious thought, since the examples of the great ones of the past, their successes and achievements, set a moral rule by which to live in the present day. When formal historiography begins in China, there is already a massive weight of history to live up to. During the period of Confucius these notions received semi-canonical form, and led to the huge weight that the Confucian systems of thought gave to historical precedent and example in the canons of learned Confucian debate. These ideas were carried forward by Mencius, and the whole future lineage of Chinese Confucian scholars, a tradition which has endured unbroken to the present day and up until 1911 held the hegemony among the Chinese intelligentsia. Confucian thought again and again stresses the importance of the example of one's ancestors, and ancestor worship per se was an important part of Chinese religious and ritualistic life. Indeed, it would not be too far of an exaggeration to say that the religion of the

common people in China was ordinary ancestor worship, and that the religion of the learned strata of society, was literary ancestor worship, in which the chronicling, comparing and analysing of the deeds and thoughts of the ancients became a moral and indeed religious duty. Where in this was there room for enlightenment? In fact, it is at the very heart of Confucian morality, in the concept of Jen, human heartedness, or compassion, and also in the Confucian tendency towards the idealisation of the superior man, or the sage, who will act according to the will of heaven at all times, and who will seek to embody the moral law in their own being. As the microcosm of the macrocosm of cosmic forces, we human beings have a crucial role to play, in maintaining the harmony of heaven and earth, of yin and yang, which were early on assessed to be the archetypal energy forces which underlie all of existence. Confucius represented this work in the moral sphere and the sphere of public life and with his hundreds of students had a profound and lasting effect on the Chinese character. For Confucius's own teachings, we can look to various sources. We can look for example, to the text dating about from about 500 BC known as the Great Learning, ascribed to Confucius. Which is in fact a slight text of only a few thousand characters in length, yet which has had a huge impact on Chinese thought. Its first sentence gives a good illustration of the nature of enlightenment in Confucian tradition:

What the great learning teaches, is to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate (reading the character as hsin, to renovate*) the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.* Another translation interprets it as: *"The way of learning to be great consists in manifesting the clear character, loving* (reading this character as ch'in, meaning to love) *the people and abiding* (chih) *in the highest good."*

In a nutshell, we have Confucian enlightenment here: the personal cultivation of ones own inner virtue and self-nature, combined with a social aspect of loving and renovating one's neighbour, leads in turn to taking up the state of abiding in the highest good. The term translated as abiding or resting, is *chih,* and means either abiding, staying, or resting depending on circumstances. The implication is that if one simply is, and if one's natural benevolence, jen, extends to others, then one will attain and rest in the highest good – surely a definition of enlightenment.

The Great Learning also tells us how to do this, for it continues as follows:

The point where to rest being known, the object of pursuit is then determined; and, that being determined, a calm unperturbedness may be attained to. To that calmness there will succeed a tranquil repose. In that repose there may be careful deliberation, and that deliberation will be followed by the attainment of the desired end. Things have their root and their branches. Affairs have their end and their beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in the Great Learning. The ancients, who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy. From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides.

It cannot be, when the root is neglected, that what should spring from it will be well ordered. It never has been the case that what was of great importance has been slightly cared for, and, at the same time, that what was of slight importance has been greatly cared for.

For a philosophy of enlightenment, the key phrases are these: *Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts* and so on, for it points towards the absolute centrality of the cultivation of enlightenment in Chinese ethical and philosophical thought. This is further confirmed later: *From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides.* This is the bedrock of Chinese spiritual humanism, that we each have a moral duty to cultivate our own enlightenment, and that this work has a cosmic function.

Confucius's ideas on enlightenment are also made plain in the more mystical treatise ascribed to his school, entitled the *Doctrine of the Mean (Chung Yung),* in which occurs the following section which further explains why enlightenment of the Chinese is not only an individual work, but also a social and a cosmic task:

The possessor of sincerity does not merely accomplish the self-completion of himself. With this quality he completes other men and things also. The completing himself shows his perfect virtue. The completing other men and things shows his knowledge. But these are virtues belonging to the nature, and this is the way by which union is effected of the external and internal. Therefore, whenever he-the entirely sincere man-employs them,-that is, these virtues, their action will be right. Hence to entire sincerity there belongs ceaselessness. Not ceasing, it continues long. Continuing long, it evidences itself. Evidencing itself, it reaches far. Reaching far, it becomes large and substantial. Large and substantial, it becomes high and brilliant. Large and substantial;-this is how it contains all things. High and brilliant;-this is how it overspreads all things. Reaching far and continuing long;-this is how it perfects all things. So large and substantial, the individual possessing it is the co-equal of Earth. So high and brilliant, it makes him the co-equal of Heaven. So far-reaching and long-continuing, it makes him infinite. Such being its nature, without any display, it becomes manifested; without any movement, it produces changes; and without any effort, it accomplishes its ends

At the very start of this section, sincerity is the quality that is sought, achieved through self-completion, which work is done for self and also not-self; we might say that wisdom (enlightenment) overspills the boundaries of ego in a transpersonal benevolence in this Confucian approach, but that this is accomplished through the very nature of wisdom itself, which like the sun, is naturally brilliant.

The very start of the work makes it clear that the spiritual work of enlightenment consists in following our authentic nature.

What Heaven has conferred on mankind is called human nature; acting in accordance with this nature is called The Way. Cultivating the way is called education. The Way may not be left for an instant. If it could be left, it would not be the Way.

Another passage makes clear Confucius belief that in fact the cultivation of our own nature is the highest art to which we can attain, and is our entrance to the knowledge of the Way itself:

The way which the superior man pursues, reaches wide and far, and yet is secret. Common men and women, however ignorant, may intermeddle with the knowledge of it; yet in its utmost reaches, there is that which even the sage does not know. Common men and women, however much below the ordinary standard of character, can carry it into practice; yet in its utmost reaches, there is that which even the sage is not able to carry into practice.

Finally, the path of the Way explored in the Doctrine of the Mean is not that of signs and wonders, but rather to the pursuit of the mean itself, of moderation, harmony and essence, and this work is itself the greatest of all wonders:

The Master said, "There are men who seek for the abstruse, and practice wonders Future generations may mention them. This is what I will not do. The good man tries to proceed according to the right path, but when he has gone halfway, he abandons it Bu I can never give up." The superior man accords with the course of the Mean. Though he maybe all unknown, unregarded by the world, he feels no regret. It is only the sage who is able for this."

In the Analects, Confucius sums up a lifetime of questing for wisdom, enlightenment, as follows:

The Master said, "At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right." This passage makes it clear that for Confucius there is no sudden enlightenment, or if there is, it has to be tested against a lifetime of devotion to the search for truth – and that enlightenment consists in a constant and natural practice of the Way.

His could be described perhaps as the lacquering approach to enlightenment, for enlightenment consists of a continual refining and adding to what has already be learned:

The Master said, "If a man keeps cherishing his old knowledge, so as continually to be acquiring new, he may be a teacher of others."….

Enlightenment also brings with it an essential universality of outlook, which is a recurring theme in all the traditions we have been examining in this paper

The Master said, "The superior man is universal and not biased. The mean man is biased and not universal."

Furthermore, Confucius makes clear that he wishes the student of enlightenment to culminate both intuitive mediation, as well as scholarship, and it is for this reason that Confucius became the founder of the great humanistic tradition of scholarship which underpinned the education system of Chinese culture for millennia.

The Master said, "Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous."

Building on Confucius's work were many other great thinkers and philosophers, such as Mencius. One such, Ssu ma Chien began the tradition of Chinese historiography, and specifically the philosophical attempt to understanding the meaning of history, tabling the developments of China's progress in dynasties, but for him these dynastic successions also had a moral aspect. His belief was that at the start of each dynastic epoch, a virtuous ruler was in effect chosen by Heaven to rule China, in order to bring order and peace and justice to the affairs of the state; history showed, however, that gradually, bit by bit, the dynasty became corrupt and its rule unjust, whereupon heaven would withdraw its mandate and the final ruler of a dynasty would fall from power – and this too was the will of heaven. Inspired to this work by his Confucian father, Ssu ma Chien in his own life suffered several tragic reversals of fortune.

To set our discussion in its proper historical context, let us briefly recap on Chinese history, the first period being the Hsia Dynasty, semi-legendary dynasty which lasted from approximately 2000-1500 BC, during which the sage ruler, Fu Hsi is interestingly said to have discovered the symbols behind Chinese divination, thus showing that right from the start the Chinese mind was at pains to discover a way to decipher the meanings behind events. (In fact, archaeology has discovered remains of Neolithic peoples in China from before this time, approximately 3000 BC onwards, during the time of the Yangshao and Longshan people).

During the time of the Shang Dynasty (from 1500-1000 BC) the nucleus of a Chinese state began to develop along the banks of the Yellow River (Huang He) in North Central China, and a capital city, Anyang was founded. Many archaeological remains date from this period, including magnificent bronzes and carvings in both stone and jade. It was during this time that both the I Ching (Book of Changes) and the Book of History (Shu Ching) and the Li Chi (Book of Rites – which included the chapters which later became the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean quoted above) were first compiled. In a sense, it could be said that with these two works, the Chinese tradition of the history of philosophy begins, for whereas the Book of History recorded the illustrious events of the past, the Book of Changes attempted to provide a system to divine the patterns underlying these events, according to a rigorous cyclical process of change. Although heaven laid down the blueprint for the basic patterns behind changes, mankind was free to influence their outcomes in particular cases, and this was done essentially through out interior life and outward morality. During this period of the Shang Dynasty, a form of picture writing was invented, and it was this that was used to write down the I Ching and the Shu Ching in the first instance.

Next the Chou dynasty overthrew the Shang epoch and the *Chou Dynasty* began, the first being that of the Western Chou (c 1000-771 BC) followed by the Eastern Chou (770-256 BC). This included the epoch known as the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 BCE) during which further historical records, the Spring and Autumn Annals, were compiled. It was this period that was a time of great philosophical activity, for both Lao Tsu (c. 560-490) and Confucius (551-479 BC) flourished at this time. Both of them in their own ways espoused a philosophy of peace. Confucius particularly saw philosophical historical reflection as a means to educate people towards a more civilised and peaceful state of affairs in China. Both in their different ways were striving to reach enlightenment, both for themselves, and for others. During the subsequent Warring States Period (480-222 BC) constant rivalry between small kingdoms continued, in a period of continued philosophical activity, which saw the works of figures such as Mo Tzu, Mencius (372-289 BC) and ChuangTsu (350-299 BC) and the rise of the legalist schools. From 221-207 BC there followed the *Ch'in (or Qin) Dynasty* which united all of central China under one rule again, under the rule of Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di, who imposed a standard writing script on China, built the Great Wall and sought to impose intellectual control over the philosophers, by burning many of Confucius' books and the works of other sages in 213 BC. The works we have, quoted above, were all that remained from the bonfire of learning instituted by this Emperor. Perhaps we can formulate a general law of enlightenment – that it cannot coexist for long with violence as its companion? That it is seen as a threat by unjust accumulations of power and always will be opposed? The Emperor's death however led to a power vacuum which was filled by the formation of the *Han Dynasty* under Liu Bang, a former bandit who had become a general under the previous ruler. It was under the Han Dynasty, which ruled China from 206 BC to 220 AD, that the consolidation of Confucianism as the learned tradition of the educated elites of Chinese civilisation became established, and in 124 BC an imperial university was established to educate the newly founded civil service needed to administer the country as a whole, and whose curriculum consisted of the great Confucian classics (The Doctrine of the Mean, the Analects, The Great Learning, The Book of Mencius). At this time, then, Confucian enlightenment had arrived, and had become the state orthodoxy. One is reminded of the relationship between the Roman State and the Books of the Sybil:

offered them, the proud King Tarquin rejected them; offered them again finally as fragments, he paid all he could afford, and later these books became the crucial spiritual text of most sacred antiquity in the entire Roman state archive. Later, during the time of the Tang dynasty (618-906 AD) philosophy flourished along with the learned arts and sciences in general and a period of relative enlightenment prevailed. The period of the Song dynasty (960-1279), which followed the break down of the Tang Dynasty, was a time which saw a huge flourishing of learned and literary works, including for example at least 1300 historical works written by historians during this period, which was no doubt a reflection of the fact that the Song dynasty was a time of increasing urbanisation, disruption of traditional social patterns, and increasing encroachments on the Chinese frontier by strange groups, such as the Tibetans, Mongolians etc. There was also a reaction against Buddhist thought during these centuries, which had come to have a hug influence on Chinese spirituality, and one Emperor ordered the disbanding of thousands of monasteries the returning to ordinary life by the monks and nuns, since he found their pursuit of enlightenment outside of normal social intercourse as injurious to the well being of the Empire. There then followed the period of Mongol domination in China (1280-1368) and the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and finally the Manchu Dynasty (1644-1911). During this entire period Chinese philosophers kept alive the teachings of Confucius and a profound school of Neo-Confucian thought developed in the 13th century, which attempted to synthesise the spiritual and educational inheritances from previous centuries, in a remarkable philosophical tradition associated with Chu Hsi (1130-1200) and Wang Yang Ming (1472-1529). Chu Hsi first collated the 4 classics of Chinese thought, the Analects, the Book of Mencius, the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean, as the basis for higher education, and from 1313 to 1905 they formed the basis of official examinations. Chu Hsi argued that all philosophy is concerned with explaining 6 basic phenomena: the Great Ultimate, principle (li), Material Force (ch'i), nature, the investigation of things, and humanity. The search for Enlightenment is implicit above all in the investigation of things and in our cultivating our essential humanity. The nature of the Great Ultimate remains hidden from mankind, and here enlightenment consists in knowing the limits of what it is possible to know, a sentiment going back to Confucius himself, who stated:

The Master said, "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it; this is knowledge." (Analects)

Wang Yang Ming (1472-1529) achieved an arguably higher level of intellectual synthesis than Chu Hsi, in stressing the importance of the extension of the innate knowledge of the good (*chih liang-chih*). To Wang Yang Ming, innate knowledge is "*the original substance of the mind*", and comprises "the pure intelligence and clear consciousness of the mind". Wang Yang Min's own life is another lesson in scholarly hardship, for as a result of protesting the imprisonment of a fellow scholar, he ended up being beaten before the Emperor 40 times, and was banished to exile in Kueichow in 1506. Two years later, he had a kind of enlightenment experience, and he continued to work on his synthesis of aspects of Confucian thought, gradually attracting more and more students. In time his teachings spread, and even in Japan, and among later modernising Chinese thinkers such as Sun Yat Sen (1866-1925) he provided considerable inspiration.

Enough has been said hopefully to indicate some of the ways in which the idea of enlightenment has operated in Chinese thought. One of the chief characteristics of Chinese thought has been its humanism, a belief in Jen, human heartedness, which stretches right back to Mencius and Confucius. For the Chinese mind, heaven and earth interact precisely in the everyday and it here that the locus of moral advance must be made. No doubt it was for this reason that Marxism appealed to the Chinese intellectuals of the 20th century, with its promise of collective progress and the overcoming of man's inequalities. It is perhaps strange however that the Chinese intellectuals eventually oriented towards a system of thought which placed our collective fate in the hands of historical determinism rather than in our own inner-knowing. Later philosophers, who have worked partly in a Marxist framework and partly within a traditional

Chinese context, have attempted to synthesise these trends, and to move the debate onward. Fung Yu-Lan, for example one of the most important of these figures, had studied and taught philosophy at the University of Beijing since the 1930's, but faced with the choice of fleeing to Taiwan or working under Mao, had opted to remain in Beijing, and continued an active philosophical career close to the centre of power in the Chinese Communist movement, ending up as serving as a member of the Chinese People's Consultative Conference advising the Communist government at the time of his death in 1990. Fung's ethical theory had been articulated in his influential work *A New Treatise on the Nature of Man*, first published during World War 2 (1943) in which he had divided the moral spheres of existence in a fourfold schema of separate spheres: in the first sphere, the *innocent sphere*, people simply follow their natural instincts without reasoning on their ethical import; in the *utilitarian sphere* a persona acts out of direct self benefit; the third sphere, the *moral sphere*, results from an awareness that a person is a member of society and one acts for the good of the whole of society; in the fourth and last, "*transcendent" sphere*, one becomes aware of the impact of one's actions and thoughts even beyond society and into the universe as a whole, and appreciates that the Universe itself is a Great Whole in which one serves as an integral part; when acting from this domain, one can be said to have "knowledge of Heaven", to act in "service to Heaven" and to be "in unity with Heaven". Fung conceived of the function of philosophy as being to shift human beings gradually and sometimes reluctantly towards residence in the two upper spheres of ethical domicile. This movement towards the transcendent sphere of being, is akin, for Fung yu-lan, to enlgihtenmet itself, but in the great tradition of Chinese philosophy it has both a personal and a social and a cosmic context – a multilayered approach to enlightenments may be said to run therefore like a golden thread through Chinese philosophy from its beginning to its current phase.

We must give the last word however to Taoist thinkers, starting with Lao Tsu, who always had a slightly different relationship to wisdom and enlightenment to that of Confucius, and who focussed primarily on the paradoxes of the spiritual world, for the Taoist scholar and later the Taoist priest, was deeply interested in the paradoxes of spirituality. At the heart of Taoism was the idea of the heavenly immortals, that it is possible to attain immortality and that this was to be accomplished by various magical and esoteric practices, not least involving the correct practice of sexuality. Over time Taoism developed a complex methodology of practices to generate enlightenment, including meditation, rituals, etc. The underlying metaphysic was however very similar to that of Confucianism, namely, that enlightenment was man's natural state, and that we are bequeathed with an enlightened nature by the interplay of heaven and earth, and if we are true to our nature, we will never lose this state. Traditionally, one of the important founders of religious Taoism was *Chang Liang*, who died in 187 BC, and became immortal (hsien) through his practices of esoteric wisdom. Another similar Taoist sage was *Chang Tao-ling* (34-156AD) who practices as a spiritual healer and cured the sick through magical formulae and by giving them sacred water. He was also an alchemists searching for immortality, and is reputed to have successfully made the elixir or pill of immortality, and to have ascended to heaven visibly from his retreat in the Western mountains. It is also said that he practiced various sexual yogas which have been passed down through Taoist esoteric traditions, and developed ritual practices which gave Taoism an ever deepening religious meaning. The term used for this feat, fei-sheng, meaning literally "ascending to heaven in broad daylight" can be taken as an equivalent term in Taoism for parinirvana in Buddhism or final enlightenment. (It was also called shih-chieh, in which a person died only in appearance, and their corpse vanished.)[2]

The techniques used by *Chang Tao-ling* and other Taoist masters to attain this state, and to become *hsien* (immortal) were various: one school of Taoists sought through alchemy to make a pill (wai tan) of various substances. Others used a mixture of abstention from grain (pi-ku), breathing techniques (including ho ch'I, unification of breaths, used during sexual practices also), meditation, physical exercises (tao-yin), séances and mediumistic contact with sages of past

[2] See the *Historical Dictionary of Taoism* by Julian F. Pas (1998)

times, and sexual yogas (known as fang chung shu – the arts of the inner chamber – which included numerous sexual arts, which however boiled down essentially to the recognition of the sacredness of the act of lovemaking, and its affirmation as a microcosmic mirror to the greater sacrament of the marriage of heaven and earth: in both, the flow of yin and yang is in perpetual recycling and mutual transformation, in which spirit and matter revolve around the axis of enlightenment in the place of the Great Ultimate, which the Taoist sage realises within him or her self, in a manner similar to the Vedantin. (The term in Chinese for this attainment of immortality or enlightenment was Chang sheng pu-ssu – meaning literally long-living, non-dying, immortality). One of the most significant Taoist theorists of the search for immortality and enlightenment was Ko Hung (284-364 AD) who reconciled Taoist ideas on this mater with Confucian teachings. He wrote a comprehensive Encyclopaedia (Pao pu Tzu) which references exhaustively all then known ways of attaining enlightenment, and argues that neither physical, sexual or meditative practices can lead to enlightenment and immortality taken in isolation, and that they must be combined with the practice of ethics and virtue, according to the traditional Confucian systems of morality and wisdom, such as embodied in the Doctrine of the Mean and the Analects. In addition, one will have to make use of the Elixir of Life, which can only be obtained through alchemical practices, as well as a spiritual devotion to the great ultimate underlying all outer phenomena, which he called Tai I, the Supreme One – which equates to the God of theistic systems.

The alchemical tradition in Chinese thought was intimately bound up with the search for enlightenment and immortality, and constituted two wings, the outer alchemy school, which took pills and potions and sought to deify the physical body; and the inner alchemy school (nei-tan) which interpreted the alchemical process as an inner attainment of spiritual enlightenment. One of the core texts of this latter school was the Secret of the Golden Flower, a text interpreted by Jung and translated by his friend Rev. Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) a missionary pastor active in China, who both translated the I Ching and discovered the text of the secret of the Golden Flower. Both alchemical schools were important in earlier centuries, but from the 78th century onwards the inner alchemy school became more and more significant and the outer alchemy school faded into the background. Both had strong Taoist leanings.

In 674 AD the Tao Te Ching became a favoured text which had to be studied by all examination students in China, by order of Empress Wu (this was withdrawn and restored again at intervals). Later, there was considerable sharing between Chinese Buddhists and Taoists, and it is said that Ma-tsu Tao-I (709-788) the founder of Chinese Chaan Buddhism, used partly Taoist techniques to reach enlightenment. There is a famous report of an exchange with his student Pai-Chang, concerning some wild ducks, during which Ma-tsu struck Pai Chang on the nose, and Pai Chang (is reputed to have) reached enlightenment. Such unorthodox methods became a hallmark of Chaan and later Zen techniques, and consisted in shocking the seeker out of their ordinary states of awareness.

What of the works of Lao Tsu himself ? They can only really be made sense of if understood to be written from the standpoint of enlightenment. They are the product op someone who has attained Taoist enlightenment, which is defined as a state of union with the Tao. Lao Tsu was reluctant to commit his works to writing, because he realised that it is impossible to accurately convey the essence of enlightenment in the limited form of the written word. This is the hallmark of all; truly enlightened teachers – and the insight which accompanied Buddha's own enlightenment, as well as explaining Jesus' silence before Pilate. Thus the text starts with an admission:

The Tao that can be told is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name."

The text goes on to explore in countless paradoxes, the extraordinary paradoxes which accompany the attainment of an enlightened state of being, with a flavour which is unique and distinctive to itself. Existence is surrounded by emptiness in a constantly renewing cycle – what seems formless or insignificant, will in time grow into being, as if from a seed; what

seems vast and important now, will in turn diminish and vanish away – this insight of Lao Tsu, born out by historical consciousness of the long duree, is similar to the Indian ideas of Karma and also the Buddhist insight into impermanence.

Another section (48) puts forward an epistemology of enlightenment which challenges the notion that it can be acquired by much learning:

He who devotes himself to learning (seeks) from day to day to increase (his knowledge); he who devotes himself to the Tao (seeks) from day to day to diminish (his doing).He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at doing nothing (on purpose). Having arrived at this point of non-action, there is nothing which he does not do

In other words, the kind of experience of enlightenment that Lao Tsu offers is that of the mystical path of non-being, the via negativa of Meister Eckhart or the Cloud of Unknowing. This certainly makes sense in that enlightenment is concerned to put the human mind and heart in touch with the core essence underlying all being itself, and this means abstracting from any particularities or specificities of being. The Taoist is therefore concerned with inner or psychological life, and over time developed a thoroughly naturalistic metaphysic without the need for external revelations from a Deity. Taoism's cosmology of enlightenment was cyclical, and based on Chinese mythical history, and was life affirming – the flowing on of life was itself the product of cosmic enlightenment – and therefore immortality, a super- abundance of life, was the highest goal that a mystic Taoist could attain to.

Having attained this, a person could become a *chen-jen*, a pure or true human being, (sometimes translated as a perfect man) – a term first employed by Chuang Tzu, the second great Taoist author. For Chuang Tzu, the true human being is someone who has succeeding in achieving liberation. Interestingly, some Taoist scriptures even accorded the chen-jen a place higher than the immortals themselves – since being an immortal in heaven was easy; staying enlightened in the market place, as a chen-jen, much harder, but in some ways, even more necessary. Of them, Chuang Tsu said *"Their passions occur like the 4 seasons. They are in harmony with all creation, and none know the limits thereof."*

An important comparative philosophical study contrasting Ibn Arabi's ideas to those of Chuang Tsu and Lao Tsu has been authored by the Japanese philosopher, *Toshihiko Izutsu*[3], which find congruity between Ibn Arabi's idea of the perfect man, one who has surrendered totally to the divine will, and those to the Taoists. This is to be expected if, as this paper contends, we are dealing with two parallel and similar approaches to enlightenment – two enlightenments, if you like.

A final thought: The idea of a communist utopia also appealed to the Taoist notions of a communal way of life, in which social and class inequalities are overcome, and which over the centuries had provided a kind of historical sub-plot to the official dynastic history of China, namely, a history of the various revolts and rebellions which have sporadically broken out, particularly as a contest between the centre and the peripheries of power. It is undoubtedly this tradition that gave popularity and force to the original Communist rebellion, and the eventual seizure of power by the Chinese communist party in 1948 after the civil war. We also know that secretly Mao Tse Tung himself enjoyed practising the ancient Taoist arts of longevity through sexual congress, even while he maintained the official cult of austerity. Might it not be that the eschatological background to the Communist take over of China was this inherent Taoist yearning to ground paradise on earth? One must only hope that the current liberalisation of China, accompanied by a tremendous burst of creativity in all spheres, cultural, educational, scientific, economic, can see a similar flourishing of its will to enlightenment, which as we have seen is certainly a primal force at the heart of Chinese culture.

[3] Izutsu, Toshihiko, *Sufism and Taoism: a comparative study of key philosophical concepts*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983

10. Shinto –Another important oriental religion that has a deep understanding and interest in the nature of enlightenment is that of the Shinto religion, which comprises the indigenous spiritual tradition of the Japanese people. The name is in fact a Chinese import, Shen Tao, meaning the way of the gods. To the Shinto mind, enlightenment means acting in conformity with the kami, who are conceived as the governing spiritual beings who determine and effect change and continuity on earth. There are kami at many levels of being: kami of the familial group who are the guardians of the ancestral spirits; kami who are protectors of place, especially holy places, and who watch over the pilgrims or guardians of such places. In the first case, the enlightened practitioner of Shinto would seek to remain in good rapport with the ancestral kami, by acting always in conformity with moral norms, and by living a life of honour and good repute, thus receiving indirect approval from the Kami of their family. Members of great and powerful families, most notably the ruling House of the Japanese emperor, were believed to have the most powerful Kami protector deities, and a considerable time was invested in the cult of ancestral worship, and this notion underlay the idea of the divinity of the Emperor. Phenomenologically, there is little to differentiate this from the Julian idea of the divinity of the Julian Gens and its descent from Aphrodite. The Japanese Emperors were themselves believed to have descended from the Kami, but it was this belief which was declared unconstitutional with the advent of the new Japanese constitution following their defeat in World War 2. To Shintoism, enlightenment was equatable with sincerity, makoto. This meant having a pure heart in the midst of the world. There was little concept in Shintoism of an enlightenment experience which took one out of the world; it was more akin to Stoicism, in that the ideal was for the sage to remain active in the world, yet from an opposition to transcendental non-attachment, cultivating the benevolent emotions and intellectual aspirations extolled in Shinto ethics. Many ideas in this regard were absorbed from Chinese influences, and Confucian ethics influenced Shinto philosophers to a great degree, especially with the revival of Confucian learning under the Tokugawa Shoguns, a period which lasted from 1600-1868. It was during this period that the works of the Chinese Confucian scholar Wang Yang Ming (1472-1529) became very influential in Japan. He had expounded a form of Confucian idealist philosophy, and had achieved a higher level of intellectual synthesis in stressing the importance of the extension of the innate knowledge of the good (*chih liang-chih*). To Wang Yang Ming, innate knowledge is “the original substance of the mind”, and comprises “the pure intelligence and clear consciousness of the mind”. He had himself had a kind of enlightenment experience, as we have seen above.

Innumerable Shinto and Japanese Confucian scholars devoted their lives to advancing Shinto philosophy, and generally each of them had a slightly different understanding of enlightenment, and would have stressed, fore example, the religious dimension of the concept (for those with Priestly functions) the scholarly implications of the concept, or the mystical aspects of the concept, for those involved in a more contemplative aspect. Let us examine some of these figures to gain an understanding of the kind of range of approaches to enlightenment which prevailed in the history of Japanese thought over the centuries. *Hirata Atsutane* 1776-1843, for example, was one of four great scholars of Kokugaku (National Learning) Shinto revival in 18th century, and stressed the scholarly way to truth. More recently, *Yonosuke, Nakano* born in 1887, was the founder of Ananai-kyo, an eclectic Shinto cult, and stressed the religious aspects. *Asami, Keisai* 1652-1711 served as a Confucian-Shinto scholar. *Ban, Nobutomo* 1773-1846 was a great Shinto philologist, and sought to find in the inner meanings of words the secret teachings of philosophy, searching for enlightenment through sound, words and scholarship – he was also a Kokugaku educator whose teacher was the great Norinaga Motoori (1730-1801). *Shinto Goi, Masahisa* 1916-? was the founder of Byakko shinko-kai, the Shinto path;

and believes in world peace and founded the peace prayer poles tradition which has covered the earth in many sites with a peace pole and prayers written on them in different languages, saying: "may peace prevail on earth". *Deguchi, Nao (*1836-1918) was a Shinto prophetess, shaman and healer and the founder of Omoto-kyo, Shinto path, based on Konjin, the metal deity. She must stand as representative of a huge number of female Shinto teachers, prophetesses and shamans, and reminds us that in Shintoism as in many other religious traditions, the female path is often more intuitive and mystical, and tends towards direct lived experience of spirit, with the human person as a medium or channel of the divine intent. Another famous figure from Shintoism was *Deguchi, Nobuyoshi* 1615-1690 a Shinto priest of the great national Shinto Shrine at Ise, in the South central part of the main island of Honshu, a place of great importance in Shintoism and which housed the three mystical treasures of Shintoism (the mirror, the sword and the magatama) Next we have *En no Ozunu* was a mountain hermit from Mt. Katsuragi, founder of Shugendo, the mountain magical mystical tradition of Japan, who lived c. 640-710 AD and who however was exiled in 699 for heresy – enlightenment for him seems to have included the ability to command the kami to perform tasks for him (similar in some ways to a Japanese Faust). Then there was Fukuba, *Bisei* 1831-1907, a religious educator and government advisor on Shintoism for whom Shintoism was part of a general cultural birthright to all Japanese citizens, and for whom enlightenment meant cultivating the innate wisdom tradition of Japanese civilisation. Next, and very different indeed, we have *Hasegawa, Kakugyo* 1541-1646 who was an important initial inspirer of the tradition of the religious ascent of Mount Fuji; he personally liked standing for long periods of time on a block of wood in the middle of the crater of Mt Fuji – presumably this gave him some kind of enlightenment experience, and he can be regarded as a kind of ascetic figure practising a kind of contemplative yoga in a magical place, communing in depth with the kami of his beloved mountain. Next we have *Shishino, Nakaba* 1844-1884 who much later founded an actual Shinto religious group devoted to climbing Mt. Fuji in 1875 which worships the kami of the mountain during their pilgrimage climb. At an opposite extreme, of scholarly Shintoism, we have *Haga, Yaichi* 1867-1927 President of Kokugakuin University from 1919-1927 and an important promoter of Shinto studies, for whom enlightenment was equivalent to the general cultivation of learning, and specifically Shinto learning. Next, *Hagiwara, Kaneyori* 1588-1660 was a practitioner of Yoshida Shinto, and he believed passed on the secret initiation of how to build proper spiritual spaces in a landscape suitable for the habitation of the kami; this himorogi process involved the surrounding of an area with trees or stakes to demarcate an unpolluted place, and also Iwasakam, the art of using sacred rocks placed in the landscape to demarcate a sacred place where the kami could be worshipped freely, a teaching which he transmitted to Yoshikawa, Koretari (and which can be equated with the art of megalithic stone circle builders in Europe). Then we have *Hanawa, Hoki'ichi* 1746-1821 a blind scholar of Shinto who in spite of his disability achieve the highest scholarly accolades. Next, *Hattori, Nakatsune* 1757-1824 a famous Shinto scholar and author of the Treatise on the Three Great Things, whose work influenced Hirata. *Hayashi, Razan* 1583-1657 was a Confucian-Shinto scholar who debated against the Jesuit Fabian in 1606 and tutored Yamaga, Soko; *Hirata, Atsutante* 1776-1843 was an important Shinto restorer against Confucianism, who had begun his life as a Confucian scholar but then rebelled against it. He sought the original enlightenment of native Japanese culture, arguing that Japan was the originator of the cult of the afterlife in an underworld and that Christianity and Indian religions, for example, had taken this idea from Japan originally. He believed that human beings know the innate morality of right action by following the promptings of the heart, and have little need therefore for elaborate ethical deliberations. By purifying our outlook and returning to our original pagan beliefs, in effect, we can restore our wisdom to its pristine state. He argued that the original three deities of Shinto faith were the first named in the Kojiki, and that the underworld is ruled by the Kami O-kuni-nushi (Master of the Great Land) who figures in the Kojiki as a deity who suffers and has to undergo many initiation ordeals in order to allow life to occur on earth. (These ordeals which had to be overcome included such things as confronting fire, dealing with the burning pains of jealousy, and even defeating

death itself – in some ways equivalent to the Promethean myth in Greece, as well as the Jesus story.) Next we have *Ishida, Baigan* 1685-1744 the founder of the heart-learning movement (shingaku) and who linked Shinto, Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist philosophy into a synthesis of ideas, which stressed that the function of true learning is to gain enlightenment, an inner state of soul or heart. His influence as a spiritual teacher has come down right to contemporary Japanese culture. Next we have *Tanaka, Yoritsune,* (c. 1835-1900) who was the Chief Priest of Ise shrine, and co founder of Jingu-kyo shinto way. Another leading light was *Kada no Azumamaro* (1669-1736) one of founders of Kokugaku (national learning) shinto school; influenced by Ogyu, Sorai, he advocated a fresh study of the oldest Japanese classics. Earlier on had been *Yasumaro,* a Japanese court aristocrat, and author of the key Kojiki, who lived about 670-730, and in whose work he incorporated much older material. Jimmu – Emperor of Japan, grandson of Ameratasu and founder of Japanese people. Then there was *Temmu,* who ruled from 673-686 as Emperor of Japan, and initiated the oral telling of the Kojiki to a follower of his, Hiyeda no Are, in 680 approx, and who then remembered it, before it was written down in 712 by Yasumaro. In this sense, enlightenment was about preserving the deeds of the past, the divine lineages of the imperial family, the history of the earliest gods and creators of mankind, and of the Japanese in particular. Then, as an example of a more sophisticated sense of historical enlightenment, we have *Nakamoto, Tominaga* 1715-1746 a Japanese historian and philosopher of history who talked of "lacquer- like layerings of time" and saw the job of the enlightened historian-philosopher as painstakingly revealing, like an art restorer, the delicate lacquer layers of the past, endlessly accrued. Next we have *Kurozumi, Munetada* 1780-1850 who was a reforming Shinto Priest and founder of Kurozumi-ko path – he taught that man's duty is to worship the sun Goddess (Ameratasu) and that each living thing is a wake-mitama (part soul) of the divine – to realise which as an actual experience is enlightenment itself. Next, *Masuho, Zanko* (1655-1742) who was an important Shinto spiritual leader who celebrated the union of Yin and Yang and the harmony of heaven and earth, as the natural cosmological enlightenment which underlies being itself and supported women's equality, arguing that so long as women are suppressed, man's whole enlightenment will be unobtainable; he helped popularise Shinto teachings and at one point had been a Buddhist Nichiren monk, but came to emphasise a "Japanese way". Next we have *Motoori, Norinaga* 1730-1801 a vitally important Japanese Shinto scholar who studied many early Japanese texts and especially the Kojiki; he saw Japan as the metaphysical centre of the world, and emphasised the non-rational and emotional nature of the Japanese soul; among many other works, he authored a 44 volume study of the Kojiki taking 34 years to write it. *Nakae, Toju* 1608-1648 was an important Confucian scholar in Japan who studied Wang Yang Min (Oyomei) emphasising the inner spiritual equality of all and the need for constant inner spiritual work towards enlightenment, involving the cultivation of one's innermost goodness; he was known as the "Saint of Omi". Finally, let us mention *Yoshida, Kanetomo* (1435-1511) who was a synthesising thinker who combined elements of advanced esoteric Buddhism (Tendai and Shingon), along with Chinese 5 element theory and yin yang schools, along with Shintoism at its core. He argued that rather than being a separate and chaotic pantheon of deities, the kami were all interconnected in one vast cosmic pantheon and that in reverencing any one deity, one should also be thinking of the veneration of the entire pantheon of interconnected spiritual beings. (One might say that the current notion of Enlightenments put forward in this paper, takes the argument he expounded even further, and argues that All deities from whatsoever tradition, all divine beings, are interconnected in one overall enlightenment sphere, and yet remain separate and distinct generators of enlightenment experiences in their own domains). True enlightenment, or Yoshido, meant tasting this interconnectedness, which was a kind of ineffable experience of reverence. To make a place where this can be performed, he selected Mount Yoshida. In effect, this Yoshida Shinto tradition, which emphasised the wisdom of Confucian, Shino and Buddhist ideas, was important in Japan from the later mediaeval period right till the Meiji restoration of the 19th century.

The word for the human soul in Japanese, Kokoro, is the place where we actually feel most at home; the place where our heart comes alive, feels at peace and safe and secure. Awakening this felling within us is a kind of womb like state, in which however our high faculties are under development. Mankind as a whole has a Kokoro no furusato, a homeland of the heart, or spiritual homeland, which is captured and embodied on earth in the sacred sites of the landscape, often where temples have been built to represent the indwelling of the kami. This yearning for a spiritual homeland is part of the work of enlightenment – the coming to be where one truly belongs.

Cosmologically, Shintoism did not really have a version of the final struggle of good and evil, in the Zoroastrian tradition, nor did it talk of a gradual coming-to-enlightenment of the planet or mankind as a whole. They acknowledged that evil spirits (kami) existed as well as good, and regarded the Magatushi-no-kami, which arise from the netherworld of yomi, as the metaphysical origin of evil and suffering, equivalent to the devils of mediaeval Christian cosmology. In fact, one of the reasons that Shintoism proved unable to exorcise Buddhism from the Japanese soul, was that its vision of the afterwold was very bleak and grim, consisting of an eternal sojourn in theYomi world, becoming a kind of shade of smoke; it is for this reason that most Japanese people to this day celebrate their marriage rites in a Shinto temple., but their death rites in a Buddhist temple – the Buddhist vision of eschatology, and the idea of rebirth according to karma, and the possibility of the onward pursuit of enlightenment in future lives, or in bardo realms, proved infinitely more attractive than the bleaker Shinto ideas.

To conclude our comments on Shintoism: we have seen in the above sketch that a recurring theme of Shinto philosophy down the ages has been to retain a belief in the sacred origin and destiny of the Japanese people, but at the same time to be open to and acknowledge the wisdom of other neighbouring cultures, including Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist etc and later those of Christianity and the West. This same polarity has been evidenced in the work of more modern Japanese philosophers such as *Nishida Kitaro* (1870-1945), who argued that Eastern and Western philosophical traditions can and must be synthesised and posited a transpersonal place “basho” where all oppositions can be reconciled, and which was effectively the place of enlightened mind, beyond ordinary mind. Another modern Japanese philosopher, *Uehara Senroku* (1899-1975) argued that eventual global peace will result form the development of a truly global historical and philosophical consciousness, once parochial differences have been transcended and a universal transcendental reality has been actualized, which points towards one of the twin polarities of the Japanese mind. Senroku specifically sought inspiration in the teachings of the Buddhist thinker and activist Nichiren (1222-1282). Inspired by Nichiren, Senroku came to believe that the enlightened state for man is not retirement from the world to a plane of supernatural realisation, but rather the living out of one’s own unique spiritual karma in the place in which one is situated, from the standpoint of enlightenment, which for Senroku included seeing things from a global historical perspective. Another modern Japanese thinker was *Tanabe Hajime* (1885-1962) who emphasised the importance of metanoetics in his work Philosophy as Metanoetics (1946) and stressed that suffering in life can only be healed by a wondrous spiritual power (taraki) which he gained from both Buddhist and Christian philosophical ideas – and which he saw as equivalent to the miraculous death of reason through taking Kant’s insight that all rational thought is self-contradictory and ultimately unsatisfactory, ending in antinomies, but following this death of reason there is a miraculous rebirth of reason itself, through the supernatural power of the divine, only this time as a higher reason, a “philosophy which is not a philosophy”, and which he called metanoetics. This sounds very much the phenomenology of the enlightenment experience itself that Hajime is talking about. Metanoetics is precisely the reconstruction of a possible trans-rational or transpersonal discourse after the enlightenment experience of the death and rebirth of the human soul. Next we have *Nishitani Keiji* (1900-1990) who, having studied deeply in Western nihilistic philosophical traditions including Nietzsche, and also the standpoint of scientific empiricism, argued that the Buddhist traditions of sunyata, the absolute void nature of Buddhahood, can be equated with the divine emptiness of

Western philosophical thought, and that from the standpoint of emptiness, all oppositions, contraries and antinomies can indeed be resolved. Again, it is obvious that he is talking from the standpoint of enlightenment – and was trying to synthesis Western and Eastern philosophies of enlightenment in so doing.

All the aforementioned Japanese thinkers can be cited as examples of thinkers struggling with the eternal polarity in the Japanese mind, which has eternally see-sawed between local parochial thought, elevating Shintoism to a primary position in the pantheon of ideas, and a truly staggering universalist spiritual humanism, integrating and synthesising wisdom from wherever it is found – including Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, and Western secular philosophical traditions. Tragically, to often the flirtation with the inherent jingoisms of the Shintoist argument that Japan was literally the ur-nation, or fountainhead of wisdom in the world, has led politically to periods of Japanese aggression and colonisation, variously against China, Korea, the Philippines, Malaysia etc. but initially, this movement was also a defensive reaction to invasion threats, e.g. by the expanding Mongolian Empire. The unique Buddhist thought of Zen, which Japan cultivated par excellence, and its cultural colonisation of parts of the Western world, along with other spiritual movements such as macrobiotics and more recently the craze for Reiki healing, and not least the phenomenal economic success of Japanese technology and gadgetry since World War Two, have demonstrated that Japan's creativity is ongoing and has an honourable place in the family of cultures, and not least when it comes to discourse about comparative enlightenment. The tragic fact that it is against Japan that the only use of atomic bombs in wartime has been sanctioned, causes one to hoped that instead of the false light of atomic violence, one might have for the world some glimmer of hope for authentic enlightenment coming from the island chain which Nichiren regarded collectively as a kaidan or sacred platform used for the ordination of monks, and to paraphrase whose teachings, one might say, not that Japan is the sole true source of enlightenment for the whole world, but rather, until Japan is wholly and truly and completely enlightened, neither will the whole world be (a dictum which could apply to all other countries, of course).

11. Pagan and Neo-pagan enlightenments: another important cluster of faiths, some active today and some no longer active, which also have valuable insights to share regarding the nature of enlightenment, is that of pagan and neo-pagan groups. Numerically, in terms of the whole of history and geography, this is probably the most numerically significant tradition in the history of humanity. For tens of thousands of years, since the early beginnings of humanity, the religious and spiritual beliefs of our ancestors can only be classified as forms of paganism, or primal religions. Palaeolithic man were by definition followers of prehistorical religious practices, as evidenced partly by archaeology and partly by anthropological studies of tribal groups still living at the levels of stone age culture up until recent times, and in a few cases, still to this day. Such cultures are intensely religious, with a profound belief in spiritual realities beyond the everyday. Their cosmologies always evidence a belief in some kind of ultimate creator power behind the universe and nature, which occasions the utmost respect. Often, animal powers are worshipped a helper beings who bring protection and guidance to mankind. In addition to the animal powers, there are also other sometimes other numinous deities who inhabit other aspects of the natural world, or the psychological landscape – associated often with particular places, or natural features or phenomena (sun, moon, waterfalls, lakes, rivers, mountains, hills, sea, forest etc.) In all this can we speak of any such thing as enlightenment existing at these levels of religious faith and practice? Almost certainly, or at least we can speak of enlightenments. Firstly, there would be the *natural enlightenment* ot be achieved by living close to nature, by learning the rhythms of the seasons and the migration roots of animals, and learning to hunt and track animals on which their livelihood depends. In addition, there would be the *healing enlightenment,* practiced by shamans and healers in different tribal groups and bands, to bring

succour and help to those who fell ill, and which no doubt used a mixture of psycho-spiritual and practical remedies, including those using herbs and natural medical compounds which thousands of years use had rendered familiar. In addition there was the *social enlightenment* of the community, in their tribal ceremonies and rituals, in which coming together and observing sacred times and places was undoubtedly an important aspect of the ancient calendar, and we know that feasting, dance, celebrations, and ceremonies of all kinds were important to such ancient prehistorical religious traditions. We know that such ceremonies also often included the use of psychotropic plants or hallucinogens, and that tribal peoples worldwide make use of a very large variety of such substances to both develop their own individual powers of altered consciousness and perception, and also to bring about states of well being and enlightenment as a social community. There was also then no doubt *personal enlightenment*, in which the individual member of the tribal group or band would have tom undergo certain tests of their bravery, skill or wisdom, which would have included periods of solitude, in which they had to conquer fear, and achieve a kind of breakthrough into a new state of being, in which their unity with life and nature and the spiritual world was something that from then on would remain with them for always. No doubt another form was that of *inter-personal enlightenment*, in which friends and lovers and couples worked out the complexities of their feelings for one another, and experienced states of love, attraction, and desire, and no doubt achieved relative states of enlightenment, or we might say enlovement, for longer or shorter times. Sometimes this might lead to childrearing and a kind of family life, whereas sometimes it might not last much longer than a season of courting. Finally, we might also enumerate *working enlightenment*, in which the prehistoric persona engaged in practices require considerable skill, such as hunting; gathering seeds, plants fruits and herbs; making things including tools, clothing etc.; journeying, navigating and recognising places; thinking; communicating; all of which were needed for the survival and propagation of the community, and which involved discipline, repetition, habitual use, dedication.

Out of some such earlier phases of enlightenment achievements, our ancient ancestors managed to spread out across the earth, to propagate and multiply and to settle the diverse continents as we know them today. Lest we think of such peoples as primitive, or denigrate their own enlightenment, let us remember that without them, later more developed religious systems of thought, and the high achievements of culture and philosophy, would simply not have been possible. From these times many of the basic building blocs of what it is to be human were invented and mastered: learning to walk on two legs, learning to speak, learning ot use tools, learning to hunt, learning to cooperate with other species towards common ends; learning to feel and respond with emotional intelligence, learning to care about other people and animals and plants etc. learning to reflect on the beauty and wonder of life, learning how to master the sexual urge and to focus it in healthy directions – all these skills and wonders were mastered by our prehistoric ancestors, and could be designated as “primal enlightenments” so to speak.

From this earliest period of human history, mankind then evolved into more settled and agricultural tribal peoples, and the Neolithic revolution got underway, from about 9,000 BC, in the region of the zagros mountains of Iraq and Turkey and Iran, and soon after that in South Eastern Europe, India, China etc. All these earliest Neolithic civilisations, and the great riverine cultural civilisations that grew out of them, were what can be called pagan in their origination and religious intent. Among such may be enumerated the Indus Valley culture, those of Mesopotamia (including the Sumerian, Babylonian, Akadian), those of the Danube region (Vinca culture etc.) those of Ancient Egypt, and other ancient African cultures, also in Mesoamerica, of the Celtic world, those of the ancient Greeks, Etruscans and Romans, as well as the earliest levels of Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian peoples etc. Archaeology, anthropology and history are more and more bringing to light the extent of contributions made by such ancient cultures to the modern world, and scholars of religion are beginning to acknowledge that the religious ideas of such peoples have had immense creative influence for millennia. Could we speak then of such ancient civilisations as having an equivalent concept to enlightenment, as we have seen in our discussions above ? Certainly – it is present in all such cultures. Each of them has some kind of deity of wisdom, for example the

Sumerian deity Ea, or the Babylonian deity Nebo, or Athena in the case of the Greeks, or Minerva for the Romans, or Ptah for the Egyptians. In addition to wisdom deities, who bring enlightenment, each of them has some kind of tradition of a sage or figure who brings enlightenment, culture and peace to his or her respective people, for instance Utnapishtim in the Gilgamesh epics, or Imhotep. Imhotep is interesting: he was in fact a deified man, who had served as chief architect, chief vizier, physician, and sage under Pharaoh Zoser (III Dynasty, c.2635-2570 BC) and it was his architectural work that enabled the pyramids ot be built at Giza later. He is credited with building the first Step Pyramid at Saqqara. Later, his followers, a learned intelligentsia among Egyptians, came to say that he was in fact the son of Ptah, the divine architect of the universe. Another important wisdom deity in Egypt was Thoth. Some traditions described him as a son of Ra, while others stated he was self-generated through the power of his own speaking. As Deity of magic and the inventor of writing, he was the deity of teachers and scribes and also the messenger of the other deities, as well as the keeper of records. Another function he had was that of mediation, and he also had the job of weighing souls of the dead against the feather of maat and questioning the dead about their deeds in the after death state. As a counsellor he was resorted to by the other gods on many occasions. His symbol was also the moon since he was regarded as a lunar deity, and the baboon, which was his totem, is in fact largely a nocturnal animal in its habits.

Other pagan faiths which could be mentioned here, each of which has a long tradition of interest in states of enlightenment, include the Druid traditions of Celtic Europe. These were the spiritual traditions of the ancient Britons and Irish peoples, and ancient Gaul, pre-Roman conquest, about whose religious beliefs we have some knowledge due to various writings, and their survival in mythological and historical writings of the Middle Ages. There is also a revived neo-druidical tradition active in Britain and Ireland today, which is also active in other parts of the world where Celtic peoples have emigrated over the past centuries. In Peter Beresford Ellis's magisterial study of the Druid traditions, separate chapters are devoted to what is known of Druids as: healers, lawgivers and judges, peacemakers and mediators, historians and carriers of the oral history of the tribe, magicians and masters of ceremonial and ritual observances for the community (i.e. Priests and Priestesses), clairvoyants and seers of destiny of the individual and the tribe (i.e. prophets), as well as teachers and educators. We have an abundance of sources ot indicate that in each separate function, Druids were highly trained individuals, who spent at least 20 years training in numerous grades of proficiency to achieve their skills. In the 2 volume magnum opus *A Social History Of Ancient Ireland Treating Of the Government, Military System, And Law; Religion, Learning, And Art; Trades, Industries, And Commerce; Manners, Customs, And Domestic Life, Of The Ancient Irish People by* P.W. Joyce, published in 1911, there is given enormous detail from comprehensive sources, mostly mediaeval manuscripts in Irish, painstakingly transcribed and researched by Joyce, who was President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. What is incredible about the Druid system was that it was a sophisticated oral system of instruction, encompassing the totality of known knowledge, which can only be compared with other known oral spiritual transmission systems, such as those studied in the 19th century Tibet by Alexandra David-Neel. The Druids disparaged the written based education system because it allowed dissemblance, it did not touch deep into the inner wo/man, it was capable of being opaque to spirit, and it clouded and confused the memory. What is certain is that enlightenment=, learning and the pursuit of wisdom was at the very heart of the ancient Celtic spiritual path, and that this was not regarded merely as a personal state of being to be attained in isolation, but rather both a personal state of being, and also one that had implications for the well being of the community as a whole. The Druid elders were given great status by law in all Celtic cultures and were entitled to all manner of protection and preferment, and had the right to appoint even Kings and monarchs, or to depose them if they disobeyed the fundamental moral codes of the universe which comprised the heart of their teachings. Among their numerous functions was that of peacemaking, and their role in preventing and resolving conflict was famous enough even for classical authors such as

Diodorus Siculus to comment on this fact. They were also sworn to personal non-violence, and had to practice the laws of peace in their own lives. As such they can be compared with the role of Brahmans or Yogis in Indian civilisations, and later held equivalent functions to those of Buddhist priests in Buddhist civilisations. In many ways, the Buddhist teachings and those of the Druids seem to have been quite similar. In Celtic languages word abound for knowledge, intellect, wisdom, meditation, and enlightenment. For example, In Scots Gaelic, a close derivative of early mainland Irish, the following words exist meaning reason: tuigse, toinisig, ciall, inntinn and also the following for intelligence: fios, fiosrachadh, eolas, tuigse, spiorad, tur. The Gaelic words for an intellectual are: inntinneil, inntinneach, tuigseach, geurchuiseach
These often derive from the various words used for mind, such as inntinn, tuigse, tur, toil, deidh, togradh, smuainteacn. Similarly, in Welsh, the following words exist: deall – understand; deall, rheswm - intelligence, reason; deallgarwch, deallusrwydd and hysbysrwydd – intelligence; deallol – intellectual; deallus, deallgar – intelligent. In Irish, the following words are relevant to enlightenment: drui, priest magician; tuigsint, ciall (OIr. ciall, intliucht, cond) meaning intelligence, reason; fiuss from IE*wied which means knowledge; aigne, intinn (OIr. menme) meaning mind and
saim, samh, saimhe, samhach meaning quiet, calm, pleasant, these later coming from the root meaning "same, equal, even" as is Sanskrit sama and English "same" and also Sanskrit Samadhi, meaning "equanimity of consciousness" – a quality found in enlightenment.

Other neopagan traditions which could be included in a comprehensive study of enlightenments, would have to be those of the Wiccan tradition, a revived tradition of indigenous witchcraft, as practices in parts of the British Isles and Europe for many centuries, and revived particularly since the 20th century in various practicing circles. For Wiccans, the concept of enlightenments would be resonant, since like all pagan groups enlightenment is experienced in different forms and practices, at different times and places, in ritual and ceremony in deep meditation in prayer and invocation; in magic circles; in solitary practise; in study and reflection and contemplation; in aesthetic experience (Wiccans tend to like physical beauty), in being in nature; in building relationships with other people, including intimate, sexual and loving relationships (Wiccans find the erotic a profound experience of ecstatic enlightenment, and for this reason it usually comprises part of their ritual ceremony at the third degree initiation ceremony); in works of art (poetry, painting, music – in all of which Wiccans often excel), in feasting celebration and good fellowship (Wiccans enjoy a good banquet); in the arts in general, in all their forms, for a sense of natural beauty if often found among Wiccans, as among all peoples close to nature. From being a neglected and somewhat disparaged group, Wiccans have more recently found themselves the object of many scholarly studies, including not a few PhD theses in contemporary religious studies departments in the UK and internationally – but to the author's knowledge, no one has yet studied their approaches to enlightenment – a subject perhaps for some future investigative scholarship. But the fact of the existence of such a tradition cannot be denied – except, that it would probably be better characterised as a philosophy of enlightenments, plural. For as in the case of Druidry, and Neo-Druidry, Wiccans tend to worship a pantheon of deities, Gods and Goddesses, whom they see as powerful archetypal force in nature and the various planes of existence, contact with each of whom brings its own special kind of enlightenment. Wiccans and Druids working in a Celtic tradition will tend to worship the ancient Celtic pantheons, including such deities as (Welsh) Cerridwen, Arianrhod, Math ap Mathonwy, Don, Beli, Llew, Mabon or (Irish) Lugh, Dagda, Brigid, Diancecht, Ogma etc. Others working in a more Anglo-Saxon tradition will tend to worship the deities of the Anglo-Saxon pantheon, including Woden, Thor, Frey, Freya etc., in which context Odin or Woden as bringer of the runes can be said to be the principal deity of enlightenment.

The comments are really only by way of indication, flashes as it were of what might be possible, were a comprehensive linguistic and epistemological history to be undertaken of a comparative study of different ideas of enlightenment in

different languages and religious systems of the ancient pagan worlds: one would have to include a study of many languages, many textual traditions, many different sacred study fields, as enunciated above, and examine in detail many different pantheons worldwide, to extract from them the deities who were regarded by their followers as the bringers of wisdom and enlightenment per se. Then one would have to analyse, if such be possible, the actual historical circumstances and cultural living conditions of those who worshipped in such ways, and see the extent to which one can make sense of such beliefs, both from the inside, so to speak, and from the outside. Respect would have to govern such work, rather than disparagement, for whereas scholars working in the context of a major dominant culture of a particular form of revealed monotheism, may in past generations have tended to look down on such traditions as pagan, primitive, and ripe for missionary work, modern and post modernist scholarship in religious studies and global philosophy tends to a greater degree of humility. We can now ask instead: "what wisdom and what enlightenment did these peoples believe in? what forms did their beliefs take ? What was the ultimate goal as envisaged in their spiritual teachings to bring liberation from suffering and ignorance? What was the highest ideal of enlightenment in their given spiritual cosmology?" Such questions are indeed beginning to be asked in many schools and academic circles, but such work is still pretty much in its infancy. As yet we still have no comprehensive phenomenological study of attitudes to enlightenment, or any terminological studies of the ways in which different philosophical and religious traditions have attempted to describe these experiences. To use an analogy of mountain climbing and the Himalayas, it is as if we are in the situation where a few individual explorers have set off for the Himalayas; each major world religion acts as a kind of climbing base station; each holds secret maps and archives of the terrain likely to be encountered, but generally guards them fiercely; many have set off and sometimes send back reports which are also often guarded zealously; we do not yet have an overall map in the public domain and many people still therefore deny the existence of the mountain range altogether, and dismiss the very possibility of enlightenment (the Himalayas) as a legend. Hopefully, this paper can contribute towards the beginning of a coming together of representatives of at least some of the intelligence officers of the various climbing stations. One hears tell of rumours that, with advancing floodwaters, it may soon be that it will be only in those upper mountain reaches that mankind will survive, which gives a deep urgency to this task we are about.

12. Transpersonal enlightenment theory: Jungian and archetypal and transpersonal: where then can we look for a model to begin to draw a comparative epistemology of enlightenment ? It is part of the author's argument, advanced in much greater detail elsewhere that it is in the field do transpersonal psychology that we have to look to for an explanatory framework capable of explaining and interpreting these different enlightenment traditions, such as we have been exploring above, in their respective spiritual traditions. There are a number of key thinkers who can help us in this regard, and whose thinking has begin to map out a common framework which should enable us to find points of similarity and difference between the different accounts of enlightenments in different spiritual cultures. Figures such as Carl Jung, Robert Avens, James Hillman, Ken Wilber, Stanslav Grof, James Fadiman, Abraham Maslow and many other need to be considered and taken into account. Each of them in their own ways have contributed towards developing what we can call the *theory of enlightenments.* In this section, we will consider just a few examples of aspects of their work and ideas and see how they can help our attempt to tease out common understandings about the nature of enlightenment in a comparative framework.

Fadiman, James has been an active member of the transpersonal psychology movement over many years. He was one of the original people to get involved with the field of Transpersonal psychology, and has served on the board of *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, which first set out the delimitation of the new approach to psychology in 1969. When in 1972 the Association for Transpersonal Psychology Fadiman also was involved from very early on. In 1976 he set out his theories on the implication so transpersonal psychology for educational theory and practice in an important text, which argued for a more holistic approach to learning and school life in Hendricks, Gay and Fadiman, James *Transpersonal Education: a curriculum for feeling and being* (Prentice Hall, 1976). In the same year he published J. Fadiman & R. Frager (Eds.), *Personality and personal growth.* NY: Harper & Row, 1976, which has subsequently gone into several editions, and remains a classic overview of the field of transpersonal psychology. It consists of an overview of the many different schools of thought which have contributed to the formation of transpersonal psychology and what they each say about personality and theories of human development and growth, including studies of the work of Freud, Jung, Adler, Horney, Erikson, Reich, Perls, William James, Rogers, Maslow, as well as studies of the psychological contributions of different religions such as mediatational insights from Zen Buddhism, Yoga and Vedanta and Sufi teachings. (The work was issued in new updated editions in 1984 and 1994.

Avens, Robert Ph.D. specialised in philosophy and the humanities at Universities in Germany and Belgium in the 1950's before moving to the USA where he studied at Fordham University in New York and the University of Michigan. Originally of Latvian origin, he has worked as Professor in Philosophy at Iona College, New Rochelle, New York. He has been greatly influenced by James Hillman and the Jungian tradition, but as a professional philosopher, has looked further afield to find other transpersonal insights parallel to those of Jung and Hillman. He believes he has located an equivalent in Western thought to the traditions of Nirvana in Buddhism, in the insight that the imaginal faculty of human beings is itself divine, in the romantic tradition of Coleridge, Blake et al. Philosophically, he has traced this idea in the works of Jung, Hillman, Cassirer, and Owen Barfield, all four of whom are included in this chapter. His work is a key contribution in the evolution of the possibility of a *transpersonal history.* (Avens, Robert *Imagination is Reality: Western Nirvana in Jung, Hillman, Barfield and Cassirer*, Dallas, Spring Books, 1980) His work does not however explore the implications of his thesis for history per se, and it is apparent that his interests are more poetic than rational. He does however point the way towards a transpersonal reconciliation of the thinking of different philosophers. In an important chapter he addresses the question of the relation of transpersonal psychology to Jungian ideas of the unconscious. He explains that *"It is of considerable importance to realise that the experience of the transpersonal ground, rare as it may be, is neither particularly mystical, or esoteric, nor introverted, but a clear awareness of the immediacy of being"* (Ibid. p. 82) Avens argues that what is common to the four thinkers is their recognition that the imaginal depth inside reality is real, it is both in here, and out there; the psyche and nature are interconnected in a creative bond of mutual interplay and co-creating fantasy: life really is Lila.: and quoting Hillman approvingly, "*we who imagine that we fabricate or own our souls are really their simulacra"* (Ibid p 84) Avens argues that the idea of the unconscious is really another way of the organised mind's talking of a different kind of consciousness: "*The new approach to unconscious or unself-conscious functioning is based on the notion that human beings are related to the world in a diffuse way prior to any conscious articulation of this primordial relatedness… our focal, linear mind is embedded in a much vaster organismic process*" (Ibid p 81/2) The full implications of Avens ideas have as yet not been explored by historians: a *transpersonal historiography* would have to take them seriously.

Halifax, Joan Ph.D. trained as a medical anthropologist, specialising in psychiatry and religion. She worked at Columbia University, the Musee de l'homme in Paris, the University of Miami School of Medicine and the Maryland Research Centre.

She also worked with the late Joseph Campbell, (q.v.) and with Stanislav Grof with whom she co-authored the important study of thanatology: (Halifax, Joan and Stanislav Grof *The Human Encounter With Death* London, Condor Books, Souvenir Press, 1978). More recently, she has become a Buddhist practitioner, studying Zen, as she has found Buddhist Psychology more able to explain the extraordinary experiences she witnessed among those taking psychedelics under her observations, and also able to explain the workings of her own inner mind. She has also written a study of ancient wisdom based on the accounts of shamans: (Shamanic Voices, New York, Dutton, 1979) *which* studied the transpersonal world views of Amerindian elders among others, for example: *"As I get older, I burrow more and more into the hills. The Great Spirit made them for us, for me, I want to blend with them, shrink into them, and finally, disappear in them. As my brother Lame Deer has said, all of nature is in us, all of us are in nature. This is as it should be*" discovering that Shamanic peoples the world over feel a deep existential and spiritual bond to nature. More recently, having worked as a Buddhist teacher, anthropologist lecturer, and with the issues of death and dying for over 30 years, she has been taking consciousness studies and mediation practice into prisons in the USA, working with people on death row, and trying to give them a glimpse of inner grace and forgiveness before being executed. Interviewed at length for the important study of the nature of enlightenment, and the critique of those who claim such an advanced state "prematurely", Halifax " states that the fantasy of being enlightened is far less harmful than lots of other things one can get up to (Caplan, Mariana *Halfway up the Mountain: The Error of Premature Claims to Enlightenment*, Prescott, Arizona, Hohm Press, 1999 p 31). She defined the state of enlightenment as *"the realisation of connectedness, the realisation you're not alone, that you're everything and everything is interconnected, everything is abiding in everything else".* She has over the past years been ordained in three different Buddhist lineages and currently serves as Director of a Buddhist Education centre. On her previous work with psychedelics, she states: *"I had incredible experiences... the doors of perceptions were opened and my vision cleansed. But when the drugs wore of, the world liked like hell."* (Ibid. p 93) On an overemphasis on the moment of enlightenment, she states that "*kensho is the moment of awakening but the dharmakaya (ultimate reality) is in this very world. You can't function in everyday existence in the relative world with a chronic state of the moment of awakening".* In other words, for authentic transpersonal experience to really take root and transform reality and the everyday, rather than to offer an escapist retreat beyond this world and its sufferings, has become the purposive-insight of Halifax in her current work, as it has for many who have worked in this field. She has also contributed to the important study Badiner, Alan Hunt *Dharma Gaia: a Harvest of Essays in Buddhism and Ecology*, (Berkeley, Parallax Press, 1990) in which she wrote on *The Third Body: Buddhism, Shamanism and Deep Ecology* - and argued that the voices of shamanism speak on behalf of the third body of the Buddha, Gaia herself.

Krippner, Stanley has been a researcher into transpersonal consciousness and parapsychology for many years. In 1964 he became Director of the Dream Laboratory at the Mental Health Centre of Maimonides Medical Centre in Brooklyn New York. Working with psychiatrist Dr Montague Ullman, they designed a series of experiments to test the telepathic content of dreams, investigating how it would be possible for a sender to influence the dreaming pattern of others. He has also been long interested in the work on parapsychology in the USSR during the cold war and now in Russia. He has worked as Director of consciousness studies at the Saybrook Institute, San Francisco, and has served as President of the Association of Humanistic Psychology. Among his many published works are*: Dreamworking; The Realms of Healing; Song of the Siren; Human Possibilities; The Kirlian Aura, Personal mythology and* other works. An expert on shamanism, he has been involved with the International Conferences on the Study of Shamanism, and argued that the shamanic consciousness was in contact with the living energies of the earth and nature as a whole, and that transpersonal psychology and transpersonal ecology need to become one unified system of thought, with immense implications for the praxis of the social and academic status quo. At the 3rd International Conference on the Study of Shamanism (1986) he presented a paper on The Living Earth

and shamanic Traditions, which set forth this view, published in Swan, James A. *The Power of Place: Sacred Ground in Natural and Human Environments* (Bath, Gateway Books, 1993). See also Coxhead, Nona *Mindpower* (London, Penguin, 1976) for a detailed discussion of Krippner's earlier work on extrasensory perception and parapsychology.

Ferrer, Jorge Ph.D., is a specialist in East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies, and also teaches at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, Palo Alto, California. He also teaches Transformative Practices at the Esalen Center for Theory and Research, Big Sur, California. He is the author of *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality* (SUNY Press 2002); as well as editor of a special issue of *ReVision: The Journal of Consciousness and Transformation* on "*New Horizons in Contemporary Spirituality."* He is a member of The Forge Guild of Trans-Traditional Spiritual Leaders and Teachers and has served as member of the Planning Committee of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship's BASE (Buddhist Alliance for Social Engagement. In *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality* he attempts a two fold task: firstly, he deconstructs contemporary transpersonal theory, wondering if aspects of the transpersonal vision might not amount to a kind of "*empiricist colonisation of spirituality"*. In the second part of his study he attempts a reconstruction of transpersonal theory: asking whether spiritual knowing is not better understood, not from an empiricist framework, but as a kind of "*participatory knowing*". If so, he wonders, how do we deal, epistemologically with the plurality of spiritual truths ? Perhaps we can learn to co-exist in a complex and awesome universe of wonders in which transpersonal truth is recognised as being larger than any of mankind's fallible versions - leading to a "*relaxed spiritual universalism"*.

Iyer, Raghavan Narasimhan (1930 - 1995) was born in Madras and was educated at the Universities of Bombay and Oxford. At Bombay he received first class honours in Economics and won a variety of commendations and prizes, including the Chancellor's Medal. He served as a lecturer at the University of Bombay at Elphinstone College, before obtaining his master's degree in Advanced Economics at Bombay. He was the Rhodes Scholar from India in 1950 (Magdalen College, Oxford) and obtained a First Class Honors B.A. in Philosophy, Politics and Economics and later obtained his D. Phil. for a thesis on moral and political philosophy. During his time at Oxford he was elected President of the Oxford Union, the Voltaire Society, the Oxford Majlis, the Oxford University Peace Association, the Oxford Social Studies Association and other societies. His interest in peace is already evident at this period in the 1950's. He returned to India and served as Director of the Indian Institute of World Culture and as Chief Research Officer for the Head of the Planning Commission of the Indian Government, where he developed a theory of democratic planning. In 1956 - 1964 he returned to Oxford, where he taught Moral and Political Philosophy at St. Anthony's College. He was also Visiting Professor at the Universities of Oslo, Ghana and Chicago and lectured at the College of Europe in Belgium, the Erasmus Seminar in Holland, and at Harvard, Berkeley, U.C.L.A., Rand Corporation and the California Institute of Technology. He was involved with the world federalist movement in Europe (although interestingly his work in this field is not referenced in the standard bibliography of federalist literature, Baratta, Joseph *Strengthening the United Nations: A Bibliography on UN Reform and World Federalism*, Westport, Greenwood, 1987). In 1965 he moved to Santa Barbara in California and served as Professor of Political Science at the University of California (Santa Barbara), retiring in 1986. During his long academic career he was active serving in various organisations: the Fund for the Republic, the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Academy of World Studies and from 1971 to 1982 he was a member of the Club of Rome, as well as the American Society for Legal and Political Philosophy, the International Society for Gandhian Studies and the International Society for Neo-Platonic Studies. He also served as Founder-President of the *Institute of World Culture* from 1976 to 1986, which organization was inspired and guided by its governing document, the *'Declaration of Interdependence'*. (The Institute of World Culture was

established on July 4 1976 during the bicentennial celebrations of the birth of the USA) The stated aims of the institute read as follows:

To explore the classical and renaissance traditions of East and West and their continuing relevance to emerging modes and patterns of living
To renew the universal vision behind the American dream through authentic affirmations of freedom, excellence and self-transcendence in an ever evolving Republic of conscience
To honour through appropriate observance the contributions of men and women of all ages to world culture
To enhance the enjoyment of creative artistry and craftsmanship of all cultures
To deepen awareness of the universality of man's spiritual striving and its rich variety of expression in the religions, philosophies and literatures of humanity
To promote forums for fearless inquiry and constructive dialogue concerning the frontiers of science, the therapeutics of self-transformation and the societies of the future
To investigate the imaginative use of spiritual, mental and material resources of the globe in the service of universal welfare
To examine changing social structures in terms of the principle that a world culture is greater than the sum of its parts and to envision the conditions, prospects and possibilities of the world visitation of the future
To promote universal brotherhood and to foster human fellowship among all races, nations and cultures
Iyer's interest in transpersonal thought was evidence from a young age; growing up near Madras he was inspired by the Theosophical Society and became a life-long member. Once settled in Santa Barbara he became involved with the United Lodge of Theosophists in that city and from 1975 to 1989 served as Editor-in-chief of the journal *Hermes* which was a theosophical publication devoted to linking transpersonal wisdom and aspiring humanity. Academically interested in religious thought, Iyer also served in 1985 as Visiting Professor of Religion at the University of Southern California. Iyer was also interested in the possibility of active peacemaking through theosophically inspired reconciliation teachings, and in 1987 he visited Sri Lanka, invited by the Deputy Foreign Minister in Colombo, and met President Jayawardene, as well as senior Buddhist monks and community leaders, and addressed an audience on "*The Humanity of the Future*" at the University of Colombo. His interests in peace and nonviolence in the USA context were also upheld by his making links with the Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change in Atlanta, which he visited in 1988. He died in 1995 in Santa Barbara having maintained his high level of commitment to a peaceful planetary civilisation based on ethical and transpersonal values to the end.

Abraham Maslow can be regarded as one of the key founders of transpersonal psychology within the American psychological tradition. He was eldest of seven children born to his parents, who were uneducated Jewish immigrants from Russia. His early passion was for books. He graduated in 1930, and received his MA in 1931, and PhD in 1934 in psychology at the University of Wisconsin. In 1935 he moved back to New York and co-operated with E. L. Thorndike at Columbia and began to research sexuality. Around in New York at that time were many refugee intellectuals from Nazi Germany, and he was able to absorb ideas from them, including: Alfred Adler, Eric Fromm, Karen Horney, plus other Gestalt and Freudian psychologists. From 1951- 1961 Maslow Became Professorial Head of the Psychology department at Brandeis University, and here he worked with Kurt Goldstein, who introduced the idea of self-actualisation into his vocabulary, and it was here he began his own work of synthesis, pulling together the many psychological strands which had occupied him hitherto. What Maslow meant by self-actualisation, is very close to what Jung meant by individuation - it seems in effect a semantic difference, and the findings that Maslow reached were very similar to those of Jung, even if their

language was different. To sum up: his contributions to the development of transpersonal psychology were to focus attention on the healthy, maximally attaining, highly motivated, happy and well rounded individual.

Michael Washburn, an important transpersonal psychologist active in theoretical debates, who in his The Ego and the Dynamic Ground (2nd ed. Albany, SUNY Press, 1995) proposed an alternative model of the transpersonal field to that of Ken Wilber

Charles T. Tart has served as Professor of Psychology at the University of California in Davis, and is a founding father of transpersonal psychology, author of Tart, C. (Ed.) (1990) *Transpersonal Psychologies.* Open Mind, Discriminating Mind (San Francisco, Harper, 1989); Waking Up: overcoming the obstacles to human potential (Boston, Shambhala, 1986); *Altered States of Consciousness* (ed. New York, John Wiley, 1969); *On Being Stoned: A Psychological Study of Marijuana Intoxication* (Palo Alto, CA, Science and Behavior Book, 1971*); States of Consciousness* (New York, Dutton, 1975); he has published widely in the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology. He has also been interested in parapsychology, and research into out of body experiences, among other things, (Tart, C. "*A Psycho-Physiological Study of Out of Body Experiences in a Selected Subject*", Journal of American Society for Psychical Research, Vol 62, NO. 1, Jan 1968)

Roberto Assagoili: Italian founder of Psychosynthesis, must be regarded as one of the key founders of the field of transpersonal psychology; his writings on peace have been mentioned earlier; an eclectic transpersonal psychohistory as proposed in this thesis, would draw on his insights into the need for highest realisation, enabling the cultural and spiritual energies of mankind to become manifest; moving beyond Jung even, Assagioli would seem to point towards the idea of a *collective superconscious(ness)*, in addition to the idea of the *collective unconscious(ness)*

Andrew Samuels, Prof. is a leading academic specialising in Jungian studies, and author of several important works on the historiography and critical analysis of the Jungian tradition. His work, Jung and the Post-Jungians (London, Routledge, 1985), distinguishes post-Jungians into three schools of thought: 1) classical, 2) archetypal 3) developmental. classical (1) Jungians elaborate, according to Samuels, on what Jung wrote and said himself, for example about the concept of the Self or individuation; the second group, Archetypal (2) emphasize Jung's idea of archetypes above other aspects of his legacy (Hillman et al), while the third group, developmental (3) Jungians are concerned with the study of the stages of growth from early childhood (Fordham et al). On this third group Samuels explains that it *"has a specific take on the importance of infancy in the evolution of adult personality and character, and an equally stringent emphasis on the analysis of transference-counter transference dynamics in clinical work. The developmental school has a very close relationship with psychoanalysis, although the word rapprochement that is often used is quite wrong, because psychoanalysis does not rapproche with analytical psychology, whereas analytical psychology makes frequent attempts at rapprochement with psychoanalysis".* Since writing his work in 1985 Samuels has amended his thinking and now argues that all three approaches can and do co-exist in the same analysts:" *What I would say now is that within each Jungian analyst there is a classical school analyst, a developmental school analyst, and an archetypal school analyst. This means that it is potentially open to any Jungian analyst or candidate, or Jungian-oriented psychotherapist, to access a very broad spectrum of ideas, practices, values and philosophies which constitute the overall field of post-Jungian psychology and analysis."*

In a more recent work, Andrew Samuels has examined the archetypal structures at play in political discourse, in his important study *The Political Psyche* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).which links depth psychology with political science. (Interestingly, Samuels has acted in the past as a consultant to the British Labour Party) He has also provided the scholarly community with a useful reference work covering basic Jungian ideas, in Samuels, A. et al (eds) A

Critical Dictionary of Jungian Analysis. (London & New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986) Samuels is international liaison editor for the journal Harvest, one of the leading Jungian studies journals in the world, and teaches at the **U**niversity Of Essex Centre For Psychoanalytic Studies on the MA in Jungian and Post-Jungian Studies. Samuels is also a trained Jungian analyst in clinical practice and is a member of the Society of Analytical Psychology, and other professional Jungian bodies, as well as the American Academy of Psychoanalysis and the Society for Psychotherapy Research. His current research interests encompass a wide field, including: the application of psychoanalytic thinking to politics; comparative theoretical research in depth psychology; political, social and cultural aspects of transference and counter-transference; the father; the construction of masculinity; the history of Jungian psychology. Among his recent papers are: *Will the post-Jungians survive?* (in *Post-Jungians Today, Key papers in contemporary analytical psychology,* Edited by Ann Casement) and *The Future of Jungian Studies: A Personal Agenda* (in *Teaching Transference: On the Foundation of Psychoanalytic Studies,* Edited by Martin Stanton and David Reason, London: Rebus Press, 1996) His most recent monograph has been *Politics on the Couch: Citizenship and the Internal Life* (London: Profile Books: 2000) Interestingly, Samuels is keen to engage in debate critically about the status and legacy of Jung's thought, and to examine afresh some of the arguments put forward by Richard Noll against the Jungian tradition as a kind of pseudo-cult. Samuels grapples fairly and squarely with teh difficult public relations which the Jungian movement suffers from, and wonders: "*Do we even have a settled history on which we all agree? The Jung scholar Sonu Shamdasani has published a number of papers (e.g. 1990, 1995) which in effect make it no longer possible for the Jungians to agree on the facts of their history."* In fact, it might be that in asking this question Samuels is moving in the direction of a possible transpersonal historiography, not only as a field of study,. but as a methodology for historical study itself; for in a post-modern world, there are of course a plurality of historical narratives everywhere we look, with little seeming possibility of reconciling them into a common language anymore – the point of transpersonal historiography is to attempt to contribute towards such a reconciliation by examining their highest common factor – and in this endeavour, Jung's work, judging by his influence and by his fertility of thinking, stands as an important pioneer. Samuels also points towards another important overlap with transpersonal historiographical (peace) theory, in saying, in his 9 point charter for the future of analytical psychology, *"But there is also an important political critique. Human selves do not have to struggle to connect with one another. They have the potential to be in a primary state of connection, of which patriarchal capitalist societies are very suspicious, because that state of primary connection is the crucial basis for the radical imagination, which the owners of capital, and the possessors of power, are rightly rather frightened about. I think that Jungian psychology can become a socialized transpersonal psychology, recognizing that the spiritual and the social are two sides of the same coin..."* And as such, one might add, the Jungian contribution to transpersonal peace theory and transpersonal historiographical theory, would be equally telling and appropriate, bridging between methodologies which stress individualism, and perhaps the individual's relations with a (private) God and social theories, which stress collective liberation from oppression, and perhaps, a public experience of the transcendence (ceremony, celebration, rituals). Furthermore, in this same charter, Samuels explains that Jungians and post-Jungians *"should join in the celebration of the great cultural shift in our understanding of what knowledge consists of. Sometimes, although I do not like the term, this is referred to as the 'feminization' of science, or the feminization of knowledge. The subject-object divide, as the basis of the scientific paradigm, is increasingly being questioned. I think that not only Jungian psychology but psychotherapy in general is an epistemological or knowledge path that does not depend on this subject-object divide. So we can not only join in a cultural move that's going on in the universities and in society generally, we can lead it, because our very work has always depended on going beyond the conventional subject-object divide of classical Cartesian science."* Samuels goes on to say that: *Jung's approach to psychology challenged the observer-observed divide and foregrounded 'subjectivity' in the research process. I do not see him as the empiricist he claimed to be. Rather, I see him as fostering a systematic analysis or self-analysis by the observer of his or her responses to phenomena in the*

experienced world. Contemporary clinical theorizing about the analyst's counter transference greatly extends Jung's 'scientific' study of subjectivity leading to the possible usage of such an approach in relation to social and political thematics (cf. Samuels 1993a: 24-50). In this sense, Samuels is endorsing a major contribution of Jungian thought towards the emergence of a possible transpersonal historiography itself. For if one completely denies the existence of the transpersonal dimension / experience itself, or removes it from the possibility of rigorous study, there can be no possibility of a transpersonal history at all, either as field of study, or as object / or subject of study (the terms are of course hopelessly confused, as Raymond Williams points out in his Key Words – for in mediaeval scholastic dialect, subjective meant rigorous, real, true; objective, phantasmagorical, contingent, lacking verity.) And it was Jung who helped, in a Herculean way, towards the general cultural acceptance of the transpersonal as a field of study and experience. Finally, it must be mentioned that Samuels is himself continuing with his own historical work into the history of analytical psychology, such as produced in his recent historical paper *"The Professionalization of Carl G. Jung's Analytical Psychology Clubs'* in which he examined the history of the growth of the profession of the Jungian analyst per se. To fully research this story might itself require the development of some kind of transpersonal historiographical methodology – or 6th sense – or hunch – call it what you will – but for working historians it remains an elusive yet essential tool of the trade – the nose to sense what is an appropriate a fertile seam of material to ferret after, and what is not. And is with the analysis, training and development of this "historical 6th sense" that transpersonal historical theory would be partly concerned. Among Samuels other publications are to be found: T*he Plural Psyche: Personality, Morality and the Father* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) and *Psychopathology: Contemporary Jungian Perspectives.* (London: Karnac; New York: Guilford Press, 1990)

Hillman, James (1926-) has become a key figure in the post Jungian movement known as Archetypal psychology, or sometimes imaginal psychology. He was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in 1926. He served in the Hospital Corps of the US Navy 1944-46, and as a news writer with the US Forces Network in Germany, and went on to train as a Jungian analyst, ending up as Director of training at the Jung Institute in Zürich for ten years. He also studied at Trinity College in Dublin, and his first published writings were in *Envoy: An Irish Review of Literature and Art* of which journal he served as associate editor from 1949-51. He was a graduate of the C.G.Jung Institute itself, and completed a thesis with them on *Emotion and Representations: The Contribution of Analytical Psychology to the Theory of Emotion*, during the completion of which he spent a great deal of time in Zurich. He was a close colleague to Jung himself, for by 1960 he had not only completed his thesis with the Institute, under Jung's direction, but he had also become Director of Studies of the Institute (which itself had been established in 1948 to serve as a scientific centre for the training of practitioners of analytical psychology and psychotherapy. He was an active participant in the Eranos meetings at Ascona during the 1950's and 1960's and one of his most influential early books, The Myth of Analysis, consists of three lectures originally given at the Eranos conferences in 1966, 1968 and 1969, entitled: On Psychological Creativity, On Psychological Language, and On Psychological Femininity. During the 1950's he edited the students' association publications of the Jung Institute in Zurich (1957-1958), and he was also asked to contribute the editor's preface to a privately printed edition of the Transcendent Function, translated by A.R. Pope, and privately printed in Zurich in 1957. Hillman at this time was only 31 years of age, and thus represented something of the newer generation of Jungian scholars and analysts, much as say Marie Louise Von France had done slightly earlier. Hillman in the late 50's was obviously the enfant terrible of the Jungian movement and had been chosen by Jung himself, presumably on the strength of his research into the nature of emotion implicit in Jungian thought, a work which was later published as Emotion: a comprehensive Phenomenology of Theories and their meaning for Therapy (1960). During the rest of the 1960's Hillman served as Director of Research at the Institute in Zurich, and turned out a steady stream of publications, including writing the foreword to and editing the Logos of the Soul by Evangelous Christou (1963). Already by 1970, Hillman had formulated his call for Jungian thought to move into a deepened direction beyond the

legacy of Jung himself, in which the polytheistic wisdom of ancient philosophy and theology would be reformulated in a way consonant with modern depth psychology. Not only were the archetypes operative in both the collective and personal unconscious, as Jung had discovered, but they were in some mysterious way independently operative of human formulations, as if their own transcendence was factual rather than merely mythological – such was the thrust of Hillman's reasoning. This view became increasingly influential during the course of the 1970's and on into the 1980's and 1990s, during which time Hillman sharpened his original arguments with ever increasing sophistication. The pantheon of classical divinities (or any pantheons) had served the important psychological function, Hillman argued, of satisfying the full range of complex emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual needs, which we human have within our experience. Different people are by nature differently constituted, having different temperaments; our needs for worship and celebration, for happiness and fulfilment, find expression in different modalities: some among us may be musical, others intellectual, others may become engineers, or others may enjoy the sheer physicality of labouring – for each of us, different deities can serve as a focus for our life's interests, as an organising energy for meaning and purpose. For Hillman, then, Jung's archetypes led back to the revivification of the ancient pantheons of Hermes, Aphrodite, Athene and Dionysus, and to these various deities he paid attention over the decades, from a psychological perspective, along with his colleague, Karl Kerenyi, who paid great attention with meticulous scholarship, to the actual configurations of their worship in antiquity. Hillman's ideas became highly influential in many circles, as writers and philosophers and psychologists took up his basic arguments, examined them, and found they resonated in harmony with their own phenomenology of internal experiences. For Hillman, and what came to known as the archetypal school of psychology, which is effectively a form of transpersonal psychology, the facts of the congruences between ancient polytheism and human psychological identity was not really in question: what was strange, rather was the way in which the notion of monotheism had itself arisen out of the complexities of the rich textures of being human in the world of nature and of spirit. Hillman's thoughts along these lines continue to develop, and in the era of post 0/11, and the advent of competing religious monotheistic fundamentalisms, archetypal psychology poses some important questions for those who would mediate or heal the splits between such rival schools of thought. Is it perhaps that within monotheism itself there is a philosophical intolerance which is the very antithesis of peacefulness and toleration ? Is monotheism itself a long and painful suspect project which has influenced humanity in the direction of countless wars and violence, as rival monotheisms have battled for the centre stage ? If so, and such would seem at least partially true, perhaps Hillman is right, and perhaps a revitalised polytheistic consciousness nuanced to the subtleties of actual mind, actual soul, as lived day to day, and actual humanity, with all our myriads of changing hues and tones, may be more capable of steering the ship of humanity to the realm of peace, and out of the floods of nescience ? Among Hillman's many publications over the years are the following: Archetypal Psychology: a brief Account; The Myth of Analysis: Three Essays in Archetypal Psychology (1972); Revisioning psychology. New York: Harper & Row. (1975); (with Laura Pozzo) Inter Views (1983); (with Ventura, Michael) We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and it's getting worse (San Fransisco, Harper, 1993); Kinds of power. (New York: Doubleday, 1995); (ed.) Healing Fiction (Dallas, 1994); Anima: an anatomy of a personified Notion (1973); ed. Spring: An annual of Archetypal Psychology and Jungian Thought (1978); Egalitarian Typologies versus Perception of the Unique (1986); Insearch: Psychology and Religion (1979); Loose Ends: Primary Papers in Archetypal Psychology(1978); On Paranoia; Pan and the Nightmare; Puer Papers (Dallas, Spring Publications, 1979); Re-Visioning Psychology (1977); Soul and Money (1981); Suicide and the Soul (1964); The Dream and the Underworld (Harper and Row, 1979); The Souls Code: in search of character and calling (NY, Random House, 1996)
The Thought of the Heart and the Soul of the World; (with Kerenyi, Karl (eds.) Oedipus Variations: Studies in Literature and Psychoanalysis (Dallas, 1994); (with Thomas Moore) A Blue Fire; A Terrible Love of War. (NY, Penguin, 2004); The essential James Hillman (introduced and edited by Thomas Moore, London, Routledge, 1989).

In his most recent study, A Terrible Love of War (2004) Hillman has explored the ways in which archetypal psychology can help shed light on the most urgent questions of our time – how war has exerted an attractiveness for our species, and why mythologically love and war are often linked. Hillman has worked in addition to his time as Director of Studies at the C.G.Jung Institute in Zurich, as a Jungian analyst, and as an academic at Yale, Syracuse, and Chicago Universities, while at the University of Dallas, he co-founded the Dallas Institute for the Humanities and Culture. His work continues.

Wilber, Ken, has written many important studies on the nature of the inter-relations of the transpersonal and the personal dimensions of human experience, including some very detailed and important studies of the epistemological implications of new paradigm thought and the transpersonalisation of knowledge. These include: *A Sociable God: A brief Introduction to a Transcendental Sociology* (New York, McGraw Hill, 1983); *Eye to Eye: The Quest for the New Paradigm* (Boston and London, Shambhala, 1983) *Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the World's Great Physicists* (Boston, 1984); *Transformations of consciousness: Conventional and Contemplative Perspectives on Development* - with Jack Engler and Daniel P. Brown (Boston and London, Shambhala, 1986*); Spiritual Choices: The Problems of Recognising Authentic Paths to Inner Transformation* - edited with Dick Anthony and Bruce Ecker (New York, 1987); *Grace and Grit: Spirituality and Healing in the Life and Death of Treya Killam* Wilber (Boston and London, Shambhala, 1991); *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* (Boston and London, Shambhala, 1995); *A Brief History of Everything* (Boston and London, Shambhala, 1996); *The Eye of Spirit: an Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad* (Boston and London, Shambhala, 1997) *The Marriage of Sense and Soul: Integrating Science and Religion* (New York, 1998*); One Taste: The Journals of Ken Wilber* (1999); *The Essential ken Wilber,* Boston and London, Shambhala, 1998). The overall thesis maintained by Wilber, which evolves as his thinking develops, is that human consciousness is only at a preliminary stage of its evolution as a mass phenomenon, and that only certain selected individuals have made it to evolve to the higher levels of consciousness as yet. His prognosis seems somewhat gloomy, once one strips away much of the rhetoric of his voluminous writings: mankind as a whole will have to wait for some tens of thousands of years before we evolve to a place where inter-personal and intra-personal peace becomes the nom rather than the exception; too many human beings are still living at a reactive, over-emotionalised, sacrificial level of being, with such negative behaviours as mass death, killing, and murder as the natural day to day reality accompanying such unevolved states of mind. He seems to regard enlightenment as the hard to work for exceptional circumstance available to some rare human beings, rather than the birth right of all of us, and a natural state we have within our grasp. This view, of course, has a tendency towards elitism and pseudo-gnosticism, and is also rather bad news as far as active peacemaking in Inter-religious disputes is concerned, since it might lead one to give up on humanity, and reincarnate, in Wilber's model, in some ten thousand years, when things will hopefully have improved ! But Wilber's contribution is multifaceted, and rich with methodological promise, and perhaps the events of 9/11 might have issued to Wilber a wake up call to think through again his somewhat casual and "laid back" approach to the eschatology of enlightenment. There is no denying, to conclude, the sheer technical brilliance of Wilber's intellectual achievement.

Carl Gustav Jung, (1875-1961) the psychologist, studied medicine in Switzerland, at the University of Basel (1895-1900) and graduated with his M.D. in 1900; he spent 12902-1903 in Paris working with Janet, and then worked in Zurich under Bleuler studying psychiatry at the Burgholzi Mental Hospital. He also lectured at the University of Zurich from 1905-1913 and usually, from then on, had a mixture of clinical and academic posts. At one point, he was a lecturer at the Zurich Polytechnic Institute alongside Einstein, with whom he had several conversations on their mutual interests. His early

writings included *Studies in Word Association*[4] (1906; English translation 1918) and *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox* (1907; English translation 1909). From 1907 to 1913, he worked closely with Sigmund Freud, and their interests at first seemed to overlap greatly: Freud groomed the much younger Jung for a senior position in his psychoanalytical networks, and Jung used Freudian ideas in his own clinical and professional work. Gradually, however, it became apparent that there interests and approaches were in fact very divergent/. While Freud felt he had discovered a scientific theory of the unconscious which could explain the complexities of human psychic life from a purely physical perspective, and also a system of therapeutic analysis that could enable disturbed patients to relive the original traumas which had occasioned their own pathologies, and so become free of them, and that such traumas were very largely if not exclusively of a sexual nature, Jung increasingly became convinced that human psychological nature and the various complexes and pathologies which we accrue through life are not only sexual in nature, but that there is a spiritual aspect to man's psyche, which cannot be simply explained away by reference to somatic theories. In fact, as Jung studied more intently, and analyzed more patents, there came to him gradually the realization that there is a kind of universal storehouse of archetypal configurations of psychic energies, which he came to call Archetypes, and which are embodied for example into the great mythological and theological pantheons of world civilisations, and which recur in recognisable patterns across all cultural and historical boundaries. Jung also felt that a further corollary of the hypothesis of the existence of archetypes, was the existence of the collective unconscious, a kind of energy field in which the archetypes themselves can constellate, and which is larger and wider that the personal unconscious which we all contain within our own psyches. Jung came to feel that the collective unconscious is in some sense a wider field of knowingness, largely suppressed, in which our own psyches exist and to which they turn for inspiration and guidance. In fact, in both these formulations, Jung was coming to conclusions long since held in Oriental thought, for example, the idea of the collective unconscious had long been discussed in forms of Mahayana Buddhism where it was referred to as the alayavijnana; and the notion of the archetypes was something which most Eastern systems of thought had also explored for centuries, although in Islamic thought, for example, instead of their coexisting in the collective unconscious, they existed as divine forms within the mind of God. From the point of view of this essay, then, Jung is of vital importance since, as a highly trained Western medical scientist, he nevertheless was prepared to take seriously the lineages of oriental philosophy, whether Hindu or Buddhist or Taoist, and to spend time trying to compare and contrast Oriental philosophical and psychological claims, against those of Western insights, which he also explored in great depth. His knowledge of oriental philosophy was profound indeed. For example, he was familiar with the work of Nakae Toju (1608-1648), of whom he said: "*For him God is a universal self, while the individual self is the heaven within us, something supra-sensible and divine called ryochi. Ryochi is God within us, and dwells in every individual. It is the true self. Toju distinguishes a true from a false self. The False self is an acquired personality compounded of perverted beliefs. We might define this false self as the persona, that general idea of ourselves which we have built up from experiencing our effect upon the world around us and its effect upon us… What one is, is one's individual self, Toju's True Self, or ryochi. Ryochi is also called being alone, or knowing alone, clearly because it is a condition related to the essence of the self, beyond all personal judgments conditioned by external experience. Toju conceived of ryochi as the sumum bonum, as "bliss" (barham is bliss, ananda). It is the light which pervades the world - a further parallel with Brahman… It is love for mankind, immortally, all knowing, good… Ryochi is the self-regulating function, the mediator and united of opposites, ri and ki; it is in the fullest accord with the Indian idea of the "wise old man who dwells in the heart". Or, as Wang Yan-Ming, the Chinese father of Japanese philosophy, says: "In every heart there dwells a sejin (sage). Only, we do not believe it firmly enough, and therefore the whole has remained buried."*[5] In this long quote, in fact, one sees direct complementarity

[4] The full German title was*: Diagnostiche Assoziationsstudien: Beitrage zur experimentallen Psychopathologie* (Leipzig, 2 vols, 1906)
[5] Ibid p. 218

between Jung's ideas of individuation, and the path to self-hood, and that of Eastern thought, both Chinese and Japanese. Jung's interest in the work of Richard Wilhelm for example, and his agreeing to author the forward to the translation of the I Ching is another example of how seriously he took his explorations in Eastern philosophy. His knowledge of Indian philosophy was also profound, and he visited India on several occasions, and in 1937 he was awarded an honorary doctorate for his contribution to psychological thought from the University of Allahabad and Benares Hindu University, and in 1938 from the University of Calcutta.

Enough then of our brief survey of some of the key transpersonal theorists and their works in the past several decades: what can we conclude of value to our methodological search in seeking out a way of studying enlightenments from different cultures and traditions, and which does entire justice to each one of them in their entirety and cultural context ?

13. Conclusions: Perhaps some tentative conclusions might be listed as follows:

1.There must be some such real phenomenon as enlightenment(s), or ultimate wisdom, since it is spoken of by so many profound thinkers, for so many aeons, in so many cultures and is still so spoken of today. Such speech acts must refer to some real epistemological transpersonal experiences and realities

2. Such experiences and such enlightenments are absolutely core to what it means to be a human being, to what it means to be educated, cultures, wise, intelligent.

3. A culture which affirms, enhances, encourages and supports its population to engage in such experiences, to achieve such depth of wisdom, in as broad a field of possibility as can be, can be said to be a truly educated, truly civilized culture – and contrarily, a culture which suppresses, denies, or narrows the possibilities for such experiences, can be said to be an oppressive, intolerant, ill educated, uncultured and uncivilised society. Indeed, the right to enlightenment could be said to be the bastion, bulwark and guarantor of all other human rights.

4. Given this centrality of enlightenment, definitions and comparisons, analyses and reviews, are a matter of paramount importance and urgency for the international scholarly and spiritually aware community.

5. Enlightenment has a *political* dimension: We need to both depoliticize enlightenment, by taking it out of the hands of specific religious and political factions and traditions, and affirming it as a universal human right for all people regardless of their place, language, religion or class of birth; and we also need to repoliticise enlightenment, in the proper sense of encouraging those who have tasted this fruit of wisdom, in whichever form, to bear witness to that fact, in all its implications and ramifications, to the rest of the human community, in a fragile and endangered global socio-eco system. And we need to tempt the current and future Buddhas back into the market place to explain, expound, and share the fruits of their enlightenments for all our benefits, and for those of countless future generations.

6. We need to ask deep and radical questions about the philosophy of enlightenment, and to be unafraid in so doing: what form will future enlightenments take ? What teachings will such future or present Buddhas bring ? How can even enlightenment make a difference to the world's sufferings and catastrophic conditions, given the enormity of the economic-military-industrial-intellectual-media machine system which those who wish to speak of enlightenments have to contend with ? How can we continue to work as objective scholars of thought, or religious studies, or philosophy, and not lose sight of the need to cultivate our own personal enlightenment in so doing ? Can scholarship and spiritual practice be reconciled authentically ? How ? What kinds of institutions are needed to enable this to happen ? Is the modern university system a place where this can happen, and if not, why not, and what can be done about that ? What about the political economy of enlightenment? If the will to enlightenment really is the most important thing that any of us can ever be doing (whatever

that means), and yet so much of our personal economic and social activity is taken up with other practices and pursuits, how can we reorientate the socio-economic system to reflect the values of genuine enlightenment rather than its opposite ? Each of us can no doubt think of many further questions which need to be asked in this matter.

7. It must be acknowledged that this paper is merely a first attempt towards a comprehensive epistemology of enlightenment – may traditions, all with equally valid enlightenment paths, have been precluded for lack of space and time – including the Jain tradition, which has a highly sophisticated approach to this subject; the Sikh tradition, which arose in conditions where Hinduism and Islam were locked into conflict in the regions of the Punjab, and is founded on the enlightenment experiences of Guru Nanak and subsequent Gurus in the tradition; and also new religious movements, such as scientology, which advocate a complex spiritual scientific approach to enlightenment (or becoming a Thetan, or clear, in scientological language) and which have spawned numerous movements, such as EST (Enlightenment Sensitivity Training) and the Landmark Trainings, all of which teach a form of modernized enlightenment experience – their analysis will have to await another occasion, notwithstanding their philosophical interest. Some scholars of comparative religion are beginning to take a proper interest in such new age religious movements in great detail. Others excluded include various Western (and Eastern) esoteric groups and magical traditions, including freemasonry and its numerous offshoots, whose importance to modern culture cannot be overlooked in any in depth analysis of enlightenment; indeed, there is an argument advanced in many quarters., that freemasonic lodges provided the social and intellectual glue which made the enlightenment, as an epoch in the history of thought, possible in the first place – and authors like Prof Nicholas Hans and Dr James Billington have detailed their 18th century contribution to the rise of enlightened thought in some detail, such as the work of the Lodge of the 9 Sisters, based in Paris, which included Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Jeremy Bentham and many other members.

8. A paradigm which argues for a polytheistic and pluralistic panoply of enlightenment possibilities, yet places them within an overall context, of universality, and common ethical boundaries, can hopefully provide a kind of philosophical basis on which to explore the frontiers of our common global citizenship needs and to get down to answering some of the urgent problems which are currently affecting the world community.

9. One of the most urgent of such problems is that of environmental needs and the situation regarding the global eco-crisis. Global climate change, increasing urgbanisation and industrialization, resource depletion, energy needs, food and famine, diseases caused by environmental pollution, ozone depletion etc. – these are but some of the issues affecting the global environment which urgently need the focused attention of our world leaders. We can see, in the attempts by those leaders who are aware of the scale and urgency of the problem, that it is sometimes the non-politically involved who are most active and most effective – musicians, novelists, actors, poets, dramatists, philosophers even, scientists – it is sometimes they who speak the most truth, the most effectively. We can see in their work the way in which the multiple voices of enlightenments are weaving their web into a growing consensus of global dialogues for real change. In this perhaps we see the voices of the Muses of the original academy reappearing on the stage ?

10. Another vital and pressing need to address, from the context of a comparative epistemology of enlightenment, is that of war, violence and peace – how can we find the secret of conflict resolution in time to resolve and prevent the future generations of ongoing terrorist and military threats which are currently escalating at a frightening pace ? How can we establish a framework of peace wisdom which can replace and challenge the consensus among desperate and downtrodden groups, that violence is the solution to right wrongs, or among defenders of order, that violence is the solution to root out terrorists; is the voice of enlightenment capable of making itself heard here as a voice of transpersonal reason, which could speak with sufficient authority to end this chaos of war and violence ? What power, what spiritual authority, what voice of calm, clear resonant wisdom, has sufficient power, depth and moral stature to speak up against the madness of endless cycles of violence ? Where can we find such a voice within ourselves, such that it can resonate and harmonise with others ? How can such approaches and perspectives be educated for and shared with future generations ? What kind of institutions

can be developed to deliver such approaches ? Why is peace studies so little supported, so little recognized, so little funded, in comparison to security and war training ?

11. Educational questions complete the circle of our paper: for enlightenment has always had a double meaning in English as in many other languages – it is at once a supernatural achievement of ultimate wisdom, and an ordinary educational process – and as Buddha said, the only miraculous power (siddhi) worth cultivating is that of education. Colleagues interested in the educational implications of this paper might wish to consult the history of some of the author's initiatives in this regard, including the work of the Global Green University, and the Multifaith and Multicultural Mediation Service, both of them projects of an educational institution called the International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy. Many further references can be found there to matters raised in this paper, which time must curtail. For one thing that no future Buddha will be likely to change from the curriculum of future approaches to enlightenment, is the fact of impermanence. But hopefully, impermanent or not, this paper has at least stimulated a new way of looking at enlightenment, which may resonate in the future minds of those who have listened, sufficient at least to encourage them to take the business of their own and each others enlightenment seriously enough to not be afraid to ask some deep questions of the hows and wherefores of this most human of processes.

As Masao Abe, a contemporary Buddhist scholar from Japan has argued, our scholarship needs to be profoundly oriented towards enlightenment, namely the *"wholistic perception of reality from all sides simultaneously and in its wholistic interconnectedness"*. But as we have seen, to state this is only to begin the work: from the standpoint of enlightenment, knowledge itself needs reconfiguring, and the social, economic and political realities that arise from and with our knowing. Alone, we cannot do this, mere philosophers, mere scholars, mere practitioners of spirituality – together, truly together, we cannot fail to do this.