

**BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY
„ISIDOR TODORAN” DOCTORAL SCHOOL**

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CLUJ NAPOCA

2019

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**MYSTICAL ECSTASY
FROM SPIRITUAL “PERFORMANCE” TO
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
- COORDINATES OF PASTORAL LECTURE -
- SUMMARY -**

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INTRODUCTION

To diachronically sketch the symptoms of a certain state which unravels from religious practices of life, and in general, is the subject of founding revelations rather than of academic approaches, and can seem, from the very beginning, destined to fail.

1. Research motivation

The prospect of this study sums up studious efforts from different research areas and it is based upon the intuitive desire to compile a history regarding mystical ecstasy as it unfolds along the way of our spiritual history. Due to the fact that such a project requires having the resources of a lifetime at one's disposal, I decided to unscramble the items that define the outline of spiritual life, trying at the same time to grasp the influences and implications of *intra-* and *extra-muros*. The motivation behind this entire thesis lies in the necessity of acquiring that fine line between religious faith and culture. Such a theoretic judgment ensures that a pastoral theology must have a fundamental theology as well, one that does not standardize policies and textbook procedures, but in fact opens up a range of practices and mutual understanding.

Decoding the sematic content of *mystical ecstasy* comes from the different acknowledgments of seeing God, a path highly transited by the qualitative uneven nuances of *self-exit*, of rapture, of over-bright darkness, of deification, of epektasis and of conversions. All the above collide in the religious zenith precisely or less precisely pursued by human nature.

2. The importance and current status of research

The history of mystical ecstasy is not a blasphemous theme. It does not describe the history of a fact that it is born, evolves and dies. On the contrary, the history of mystical ecstasy is the history of experiencing God, as fact and event, as trait and effect. All the world's civilizations have known the experience of out of oneself to transcendence. Our work does not target an approach in the manner of the history of religions. Our pursuit is to identify, transform and transfer this crucial experience in immediate existence: in arts, culture, civilization, history and especially in the historical transformation of the faith. This transfer places our theme in the

area of practical subjects without neutralizing the theoretic digression which comes near other study areas. The history of mystical ecstasy is the practical-theological translation of complementary study efforts, it is the red thread of theological synthesis. It is both theory and practice. In this regard we get the support of Rudolf Otto:

What we see on all aspects of the religious process are no more than rudimentary analogies of divine grace. And a real psychology of religion and a real psychology of religions should be a history of divine grace¹.

The importance of this study plan becomes significant when we become aware of the complicated and tense climate of approaches regarding confirming and existential founding. It is clear that the fundamental experiences make us understand the world in a specific way, but when there are disputes regarding their origin and legacy, the contemporary man finds himself in a tiring and continuous ricochet.

Experiencing spiritual belief is the most intimate and forming expression of the human spirit and that is why the academic attempts to confirm, re-confirm and define more accurately become vital and of immediate relevance.

3. Theme integration in Pastoral Theology

The syntax of our research conveys the event of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor read in a historic- homiletic key in which the thematic concordances help place in space this biblical narrative and offer the premises of comprehending it as Theophany, but also the importance of this event in the upcoming theological landscape. The pressure felt by the three witnesses, meaning the three Apostles, unravels the solid divine energy in an exceptional manner for the metabolism of what we will soon refer to as sacred life and deification by the divine grace.

The word „mystic” does not appear in neither one of the New Testament’s books, especially in the context in which the Jewish spirituality has had and still has serious doubts regarding *mystical experiences* as a way of protecting themselves from the heavy pressure of oriental religions filled with *hyper-enthusiastic* mysteries. Unlike the Jewish model of salvation by standard virtues (successfully taken up by the native spirit), St. Paul the Apostle succeeds, by

¹Rudolf Otto, *Sacral. Despre numinos*, trad. Silvia Irimiea și Ioan Milea, Editura Limes, Cluj-Napoca, 2006.

means of his own biographic path, to unveil the levers for a different awareness of God. The writings of the New Testament, and especially the ones of Saint Paul's, do not treat the discovery of God like an ecstatic adventure, but bring in the foreground the awareness of God's divine grace by *seeing Him*. This last phrase has also made a prodigious career in libraries of the world, deriving from the many biblical excerpts some of which attest, some of which do not attest such a possibility. It remains to pursue together the awareness of this *mirrored* knowledge, in *the darkness of not knowing the Lord* to be able to conclude, like father Stăniloae, that "seeing God bears total and absolute responsibility"².

The next step goes through the desert of reasoning to encourage us to climb the mountain on which *the bush kept on burning, but was not consumed*; being tempted from the cave of the neoplatonic sight of God to vaguely Faustian thirst (trait identified by father Stăniloae), *The life of Moses* by Saint Gregory of Nyssa persuades us that "virtue has only one limit: the unlimited"³. We will not be consumed by metric values, but we will perceive the pulse of the faith in gaining what we can never *grasp*. The insatiable and absolute longing for God starts, as a paradox, in the area of the ignorance of God, of not knowing Him, when all declarative landmarks are lost and the milestones of endless virtues in Christ are won. The incarnation of God goes beyond the neoplatonic form of ecstasy and we will realize that a soul's state of rest does not exist (here or in the afterlife, we may pastorally add), only a continuous ascent (*epektasis*). The understanding derived from Saint Basil the Great that not only divine essence, but neither the essences of the created beings cannot be known and expressed, will lay the grounds for a future tension between Evagrius and Messalianism. The elegant resolution can be found at Andrew Louth: "For the platonic, mysticism is about the soul's withdrawal and ascent; for the Christian, it is about the soul's response to God's descent and condescension in the Incarnation"⁴.

The Incarnation did not cause a cosmos suspension, but truly confirmed its place within mystical generating hierarchies. This aspect is confirmed by surpassing pantheism known as an emanation of each individual as divine as the essence which generated them. The revelation that God shares gradually guarantees transcendence as a fact, as a sacrament, as a Person.

² *Cuvânt împotriva elinilor, Cuvânt despre Întruparea Cuvântului, Trei cuvinte împotriva arienilor* (P.S.B. 15), greek translation, introduction and notes by father Dumitru Stăniloae, București, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., 1987, nota 27, p. 340.

³ Sfântul Grigorie De Nyssa, *Scrieri. Partea întâia*, vol. 29; *Despre viața lui Moise sau despre desăvârșirea prin virtute a celui între sfinți părintelui nostru Grigore, Episcopul Nyssei*, trad. și note pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1982, p. 25.

⁴ Andrew Louth, *Originile Tradiției mistice creștine - de la Platon la Dionisie (Areopagitul)*, trad. Elisabeta Voichița Sita, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 2002, pp. 255-256.

Getting to know Him (meaning goodness) is transitioned by the heavenly steps, but also by the liturgical and mystical structure of our belief: cleanliness, lightness, completeness. Without hierarchy, we succumb. The symmetry of discoveries unravels the unsubmitive to relations Goodness as a *super*-complete harmony, as touching the Intangible, as sharing happiness. Saint Dionysius the Areopagite takes mysticism above and beyond what we can project and identify. S

Thus, we understand the need of a deeply spiritual disinhibition which Saint Symeon the New Theologian had the pleasure of enjoying at the end of a very much discussed biography, even nowadays. The excess of historicism does not complete the presence of light, its intimacy being maintained by tears of repentance. The divine eros opens up the union gate with the freed soul from the prison of sin.

Saint Gregory Palamas assures us that divinization is not “a sort of habitus of our own nature”⁵, a prize for our behavior, even more of the professed relativism as a value in itself. Practicing the ascetic dimension, the man becomes whole again by receiving the Tabor of deification as a gift, through which the man can be out of himself without actually doing so, because the divine grace, the divine ray of the divine sun, is “without relation” and utterly free. The Christian does not hunt a causal acquisition of the divine grace, but a sacrificial one as divinization “is not the acquisition of virtues, but the grace and brightness which come to us through virtues”⁶. The implications will be seen in the nuances of waiting as well. An eastern man will come to know in death what he could only taste here and yet could not fully know⁷, without this being a sentence to Hell or a way to Heaven with saints, while a western man awaits beyond death only what he did not live here, awaits the exclusivity of essentialisation, the exclusivity of overcoming intellectualization. By pursuing the theology of this saint we may find an aid in dealing with some identity convulsions generated by a postmodernism with dichotomous grounds.

The distinction between spiritual life and the psychologically operated mystical exercise can be shown best in the writings of Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov, the one who translated in an intellectual way the intensity of Saint Silouan the Athonite's life, of this undisclosed

⁵ Trif Ilie, „Sfântul Grigorie Palama și doctrina despre energiile necreate”, Teză de doctorat, Universitatea din București, Facultatea de Teologie Ortodoxă „Patriarhul Iustinian”, 2011, p. 302.

⁶ Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Viața și învățătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama*, Seria Teologică 10, Sibiu, 1938, p. 639.

⁷ Efeseni 3,17-19: „Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God”.

athonite monach with over-confessional grids. Situated near the unspeakable, his spiritual path is described through *wordless sighs*; “I prayed with the hope that transcends all desperation”⁸. Only in this way can light be conquered seeing that, in a saddening and real way, this has ceased to be *luminous* in the secularized eurocentrism, thus the testimony of this intense believer in Christian faith invigorates and unfolds a certain part which the history of luminism⁹ wanted to bring at any cost, and maybe, utterly failed: the light. Saint Silouan offers us the guarantee of the true communion of God, and not a fabricated, philosophical and pantheistic one, stating clearly that the love for our enemies and the prayer for the world¹⁰ are the sign of authentic meeting with God and of its completeness (psychological, emotional and physical).

Fundamentally, contemporaneity plays in fact the dogmatic challenge of Revelation. The later implications of Nestorianism are felt in our points of view in which a reluctance towards the divinity of Christ can be sensed, but also an increased interest in the exceptional moralism of a founder of religion. The result is the establishment of a new dogmatism which is in fact a dictatorship of a-dogmatism. Redemption can only come by the revival of a dogmatic reprioritization. A living dogma is the premise of world’s reconstruction. This was also the experience of all the *observants* of spiritual things in that there is no benefit of the Gospel if the man does not love Christ, does not understand Him as a living Person in a mystical union with His body, the Church.

Another consequence can be described as an individualization of the faith through a mixture between a secularized Protestantism and an killing ascetics which together make up a man who understands redemption in an utilitarian way, in a quasi-moral fidelity without spiritual consequences, without unselfish creativity, without uplifting horizons, but in the dullness of facing history as forced maturity. It is the ambiance of cruelty, of civilizational indifference, of sentimental love, of the ultimate justice, of mass cynicism and of existentialism as a way of work.

Unfortunately, these are the unspoken dogmas of our way of life which left their mark even in our theological- academic approaches.

⁸Arhimandritul Sofronie, *Mistica vederii lui Dumnezeu*, trad. Irineu Slătineanu, Editura Adonai. Izvoarele Spiritualității Ortodoxe, București, 1995, pp. 43-44.

⁹Louth Andrew, *Deslușirea Tainei. Despre natura teologiei*, trad. Neamțu Mihail, Editura Deisis, Sibiu, 1999, p. 231: *Ideologia iluminismului umanist, deghizată în spatele unei „metodologii ariene” (Iustin Popovici)*.

¹⁰Arhimandritul Sofronie, *Cuviosul Siluan ...*, pp. 170-171.

Despite the transition from cyclicality to temporal linearity through cosmogenesis and Christian eschatology, despite the evolution of the church's history as a model for universal history, we are in the unpleasant situation in which a certain over-used historicism ends up disregarding the historical narrative of Revelation. In other words, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection are not primordial as a historical fact, but as a moral reconciling model. We don't have a choice but to stand our ground: there is only one kind of anthropology (Christology) and only one kind of history (eschatology).

The endangerment of the orthodox spirit was made through the latinization of theological education which left the battle with the truth in the hands of a scientific method which certifies the spiritual experience. The romanticism and the german philosophical idealism (an unconscious resumption of Hellenism) have spawned new paradigms in transmitting the faith. The speculative theology supplemented by academic hyper-specializations free of the immediate reality's scopes have opened wide the gates of a-dogmatic pietism and of psychological subjectivism. It is the fatal moment in which the kingdom of dream arises and lasts until this day. The dream is the way of work of unreality, of non-assumption, of irresponsibility, of absolute moral imperative by itself, without referentiality¹¹.

We are thus indebted to mark some distinctions between the eastern and western mysticism. If tomorrow the Antichrist were to be embodied, he would be dressed in Apollo's harmony, would ethically vouch the scientific almonism¹², would waive the magic wand of the world's elements which transform (through an overly psychological mysticism) spiritual life in a *naturalistic magic*.

Our salvation comes from the fact that nobody has the ability of being mystical outside the Holy Eucharist and without a doctrinal body. You cannot sit in a corner and wait for the mystical moment without having the prior support of a doctrine. It would be an unjustifiable claim. "Theology is mystical and mystical life is theological: this is the height of theology, theology through excellence, contemplation of the Holy Trinity"¹³.

¹¹Sf. Iustin Popovici, *Biserica Ortodoxă și ecumenismul*, trad. Adrian Tănăsescu, Editura Mănăstirea Sfinții Arhangheli, Petru Vodă, 2002, p. 118: As a principle, any protestant *is an independently pope, an inaffillible pope in all matters of the faith; and this always goes from one spiritual death in to another*.

¹²Underhill Evelyn, *Mistica. Vol. 1: Fenomenulmistic*, trad. Pavel Laura, BibliotecaApostrof, Cluj-Napoca, 1995, p. 48: the scientific and determind real is exceeded by recognizing the real in *religion, pain and beauty*, as in other useless *particularities of empirical world and of the receptive conscience*.

¹³Paul Evdokimov, *Cunoașterea lui Dumnezeu în tradiția răsăriteană*, trad., prefață și note de pr. Vasile Răducă, Editura Humanitas, București, 2013, p. 159.

We understand this truth caused by being out of oneself (ek-stasis) towards The One that is Something Else who maintains the ontological relationship going beyond the individualistic substantial landmarks. The communion with otherness confirms the *ekstatic* dimension of the man as being the ontological quality which fundamentals his life.

Christ offers, through Incarnation, this *ekstatic* motion¹⁴ of renouncing the individuality which possess. This is also the conclusion of the Council of Chalcedon that the true anthropology is Christology, meaning the true man is not the alone man, but the man in communion with God¹⁵, *who came to God*.

We can now fully appreciate the spiritual involution caused by pietism. The latter wagers on an absolutizing morality, on the full reconciliation with the imminence of death, on a consolation which derives from the natural immortality of the soul¹⁶ and not on puncturing this inherent naturalness through a relation¹⁷ which can hypostatically gift us¹⁸, raising our ontological quality.

We risk to dive into pietism¹⁹, a theology which does not assume the hard and intimate path of the soul, but succumbs to the ease of accepting a predetermined salvation. Strong repentance, transforming sin in the desire of union with Christ, defeating death and preaching resurrection, these are truths which cannot be understood anymore by the modern and pietistic mind. Shortly, morality does not need Christ anymore and we live a visibly disfigured Christianity in literature, arts, music. The knowledge or seeing God is understood only in the terms of satisfying a religious need. The pietist *does not search Christ for Christ himself anymore, but only to feed his emotivism*²⁰.

4. Practical application of the theological content

¹⁴Ioannis Zizioulas, *Comuniune și alteritate: ființarea personal-ecclesială*, trad. Liviu Barbu, Editura Sophia, București, 2013, p. 370.

¹⁵*Ibidem*, p. 386.

¹⁶*Ibidem*, p. 402.

¹⁷Christos Yannaras, *Contra religiei*, trad. Tudor Dinu, Editura Fundației Anastasia, București, 2011, p. 58: *The Church's gospel does not function as the communication of information... The Church's gospel communicates a mode of relation and is shared in only as an experience of relation.*

¹⁸Ioannis Zizioulas, *Comuniune și alteritate: ființarea personal-ecclesială*, p. 438.

¹⁹Ioannis Zizioulas, *Comuniune și alteritate: ființarea personal-ecclesială*, p. 438.

²⁰ Preot Andreicuț Ioan în *Pietismul sectant - o îndepărtare de la credința creștină ortodoxă*, „Pietismul”, p. 38, <http://www.mirem.ro/>, data accesării: 29 noiembrie 2017.

In the practical excursion of our approach, we have focused our attention on the relevance of the experiences regarding detention. The answer of life and of its meaning²¹ was discovered in communist detention as an encounter with Jesus Christ. The path to this understanding was paved with hindrance, with bloody and revolted humanity, but at the same time available to Revelation. What gave value to the silences and struggles inherent in detention was the sincerity and the realism regarding man's own fate. The man Radu Gyr – our study case – has renounced draping the motifs of a strong nationalistic lyricism with legionary motifs and offered a show of working essentialization, moving from type and archetype to Christian light.

The opportunity of studying this particular subject is well grounded as it is approached in different research areas as well. Can mysticism and ecstatic experience be the case study of medical science? What are the relationships and implications that lie behind the two concepts, but in the dialogue between the two? Is there a certain preeminence of one to the other's detriment or are we witnessing a deaf and absurd theatre on the stage of our life? The case of Madeleine, a patient from *Belle Époque*'s Paris, is part of a paradigm which created several prejudices towards the meaning of mystical ecstasy. Clinic observation and philosophic interest have lived together on the pages of an injustice brought upon the experience of religious faith. The forced analogies and the convenient conclusions have publicly pathologized mysticism, transferring it to an area of obscurity or of pejorative interjection. From the “excessive extension of thought”²² to a “crisis of optimistic and immobile religious delirium”²³, for a society so secularized, mystical ecstasy has some surprisingly consistent intellectual materials and resources. The growing interest in this subject has generated a specialized psychological literature, units and scales of measurement of mysticism, universally identifiable features, some medical treatments, opinions about these medical treatments and their character, discussions regarding diagnosis, liabilities and areas of correspondence with other research fields. In short, a tremendous endeavor and multiple study cases. We tried to present these realities with high responsibility and curiosity, without posing in medical critics. We ended up discovering a medical experiment (The Good Friday Experience) which questions the human consciousness in

²¹Carl Gustav Jung, *Amintiri, vise, reflecții*, p. 422: *Omul e, conform experienței noastre, singura ființă care poate constata sensul.*

²²Petre Datculescu, „Cercetări noi privind mecanismul psihologic al proceselor cognitive în geneza credințelor mistice, neștiințifice”, *Revista de filosofie* Tomul XXXI, Nr. 5 (1984), p. 468.

²³Pierre Janet, *De l'Angoisse à l'Extase. Etudes sur les croyances et les sentiments*, vol. Un délire religieux. La croyance. (Travaux du Laboratoire de Psychologie de la Salpêtrière), Librairie Félix Alcan, Paris, 1926, p. 128.

regard to the ability of generating a chemically induced mystical ecstasy and maintained in various forms. Its ethical quality, the observed effects on subjects and the general interest have dismayed us. In fact, it looks as if we are witnessing the emerging of a *sui-generis* generating literature of mystical ecstasy which contains at its core exactly what Paul Evdokimov thought to be impossible: the lack of religious doctrine. This is not the end point of the philosophical-theological meditation, but the used instruments definitely exceed any previous approaches.

Leaving aside the psychopathology field, we have studied the way axiological horizons influence real pastoral actions by decrypting menaces and projections of unresolved conflicts of the one who offers support, but also studying the reality grid in its every specific beat. According to it we have adapted the Karl Rogers method to have a better interaction with the specific subjects. These clear directions make no exception from anthropological nuances presenting the counter-example of forced psycho-theological approaches.

5. Research methodology

The methodology of compiling this thesis is based on exploring, studying and creating bridges between various bibliographical fields. We accentuate by the conscience of studying the book of Umberto Eco (How to Write a Thesis, Polirrom, 2014) the area of insufficient methods: I do not know as much languages as a true philologist should, as it is safe to assume that theology begins in the proximity of Logos, I do not have at my disposal the resources necessary for traveling, for having life calibrating meetings or the psychical possibility to browse books from every known or unknown library in the world.

Nonetheless, I intend to unravel the traits of these states of being out of oneself, even if I am merely interested in this subject, but not ecstatically engaged, How can we get to know God when all humanity remains behind, hanging by its own nothingness?! What is God like when we do not have to deal with the tongue or language of human confession?! The God of silences and profound discoveries?! Moses can see the light above the light, and this is the super-luminous darkness; Saint Paul the Apostle sees and hears what others manage only to hear, for in the next narrative of the same event from the Acts of the Apostils, these could see what they initially could only hear; St. Ap. John the Evangelist allows his pen to decrypt the unencrypted, but we remain stuck in symbolism and exegetic assumptions.

It is a certain taste, a certain behavior of those who, upon truly having found God, have gone terribly astray. They could not do anything better than to rewrite the history of seeing and feeling God, in a poorly manner for them, in a hidden way for believers and in an enigmatic way for non-believers. What can we say of God when He lets Himself be seen?

The contemporary history has concurred in a revelational way to the approach and light of the Church, helping the comparative evaluation of written theology, of various ecclesions²⁴. This concentration of historical, patristical and spiritual memory awaits a precise resolution, a redeeming solution. Waiting for such a studious assessment, of a great cultural and spiritual dimension, can easily make way for solitude and impasse. We do not have a *per se* and *per sempre* ecclesiology. We are in battle over nuances and evolution.

6. The open wager of our academic approach

This being said, by taking over this logistical shortcoming, I am transferring it upon my study intent with the belief that the battle for ecclesiologies or, in my hypothetical and content case, the battle on the symptoms of mystical ecstasy, cannot redeem sinners of their sin and it is not life-giving. On the contrary, it binds the involved one to the perpetual concert of aridity in hope of excellence of study.

I now realize that in event I could browse, assimilate and synthesize a spiritual and cultural rich heritage, I might, in the end, face the same outcome, satisfying at an academical level, but unsatisfying at an existential one.

The stake of such a study lies in conceiving the outpouring of theology in the European cultural heritage area, area whose cradle is the grace of the Church Fathers, but which today unfolds in a different kind of evolution. The novelty of it is ensured by various associations from complementary research environments which express motivating points of view.

The intrinsic motivation of this project is based upon the learned reality learned that:

Any Manichaean dualism, any Monophysitism which separates the divine from the humane are condemned by Council of Chalcedon's concise formula: the divine and human nature are

²⁴Søren Kierkegaard, *The Journals of Kierkegaard*, trad. Dru Alexander, Harper Torchbooks, 1959, p. 9: *For me, the theological world is like a road along a shore, on a Sunday afternoon, during horse races- the contestants ran into each other, yelling and screaming, and when, finally, they arrive to the target covered in dust and short of breath, they take a look at each other and leave.*

*united unmixed and undivided. This formula accurately determines the relations between Church and world, between Church and history, between Church and culture*²⁵

so that it was undeniable to my spirit the necessity of a path of human understanding shaped by Revelation, meaning a divine-humane history of experiencing God studied from the scriptures regarding ecstasy, but also a history of the illusion of meeting the never-before-seen. By the term divine-humane I do not discern that this quality is based upon the intrinsic nature of the fact (like it is the case of ecclesial nature), but I sense the inflections between the report God-Man in the known history, not with the aim of obtaining an extensive catalog of moments and ideas, but in the need of discovering the time and the way in which the history of redemption of human race is shaped.

That is why I believe and I confess along Paul Evdokimov that:

*All that makes the human spirit closer to the truth, all that it expresses through art, all that it discovers through science and all that it is felt by him under the sign of eternity- all of these heights of human genius and holiness will enter the Kingdom and will come together with their truth just like the genius embodiment identifies with its model*²⁶.

Thus, we are getting close to the apophatic theology and the historical moments which have enriched its understanding. Entitled by enthusiasm, we can regard as a historical moment every writing of this understanding just like it was done by St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Symeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory Palamas and Archimandrite Sophrony Sakharov. They will be the *pillars* and the *grounds* of our efforts.

That is why, to live dogmatically means that” through dogma the restoration of reason is accomplished in the frames of its functioning according to nature”²⁷ and through dogma we discover the christic reality. This kind of cataphatic theology does not deprive faith of the indescribable of the sacrament, but gives way, by means of apophatic theology, to tasting/ living it.

²⁵Paul Evdokimov, *Iubirea nebună a lui Dumnezeu*, trad. Baconschi Teodor, Editura Anastasia, București, 1993, p. 130.

²⁶Nikolaos A. Matsoukas, *Teologia dogmatică și simbolică*, vol. II, trad. Nicușor Deciu, Editura Bizantina, București, 2006, p. 24.

²⁷*Ibidem*, p. 26.

This has always been proved by the fact that the truth, even told, meaning pronounced, remains ineffable, unspeakable, too great for words and only by living it, we can prove its truthfulness. Let us imagine that the same sermon would be spoken by an insensible preacher and on the other hand, by a saint. It is obvious that it is not the identical content of the message which will sensitize, but the power behind it, stylistic figure which resumes, voluntarily or involuntarily, the episode of seeing God from behind. Moses sees God from behind. It is not the assertion, the word, the rhetoric that elevates a preacher and his audience, it is the ineffable behind the words, the truth in living the proclaimed truth, the only reality. That is why, somewhat paradoxical, “it is not the word that opens the way to truth, it is the other way around, the truthfulness of the word should be judged only from the perspective of knowledge”²⁸.

For Christians who fully live the Revelation, the meta-physical death does not mean the impairment of theology, because “there is only one all-encompassing truth which redeems us: Jesus Christ-God-Man”²⁹. On the contrary, paradoxically, perpetually and ubiquitously, we may add, mysticism is “a spirituality which expresses a doctrinaire attitude”³⁰.

The Christian doctrine never meant expressing a conceptual imperative, despite the philosophical culture and a disposition toward speculation which characterized the ones who re-wrote the dogmas. Furthermore, “the Fathers of eastern tradition, faithful to the apophatic principle of theology, knew how to stop their thinking on the verge of mystery and did not replace God with idols about God”³¹.

It is what the Church Fathers, through St. Gregory of Nyssa, confess: “In this is the real knowledge of the sought one: that knowing Him lies precisely in not knowing Him”³². That is why, the patristic *grounding* understands and communicates through professors of theology that: “God is not the prisoner of the Greek being, nor its owner, nor the concept of being”³³.

²⁸Hans Georg Gadamer, *Adevăr și metodă*, trad. Gabriel Cercel, Editura Teora, București, 2001, p. 304.

²⁹Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia dogmatică ortodoxă*, vol. I, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1996, p. 52.

³⁰Vladimir Lossky, *Teologia mistică a Bisericii de Răsărit*, trad. Vasile Răducă, Editura Anastasia, București, 1993, p. 35.

³¹*Ibidem*, p. 70.

³²Sfântul Grigorie De Nyssa, *Scrieri. Partea întâia*, vol. 29 (Părinți și Scriitori Bisericești), trad. Pr. Dumitru Stăniloae și pr. Ioan Buga, E.I.B.M.B.O.R., București, 1982, p. 73.

³³Turcan Nicolae, *Postmodernism și teologie apofatică. O apologie în fața gândirii slabe*, Editura Limes, Florești-Cluj, 2014, p. 55.