

**The New Age Movement:
A Paradigm Shift to Divine Consciousness and Universal Philosophy**

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The New Age Movement (NAM) is a revival of spiritual and divine values and can be referred to as a Divine Regeneration Movement. New Age Philosophy has conquered the West intellectually and Western culture is currently experiencing a phenomenal shift - sociological, spiritual and ideological. It's a secular, multi-cultural, multi-religious synthesis of the Oriental mystical philosophies, mainly Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Western Occultism, emphasising Holism, and the doctrine that Reality is organically One which is now being taught in American Universities after Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

Behind the evolution of the species, there is an evolution of Consciousness. The aim of Life is Self-Actualisation, to evolve to the level of Unity Consciousness, defined as the 7th state of Consciousness in Transcendental Philosophy.

The social disturbance caused by the Vietnam War, the threat posed by AIDS, the disillusionment with materialistic ideas and the erosion of faith in morality and ethics brought a sense of futility and meaninglessness in the Western psyche. The limitations of the Western system of Chemotherapy and adverse side-effects of antibiotics, sedatives and certain other drugs and the disillusionment with the promises of science & technology made millions turn to Oriental philosophies, occult practices and systems of therapy. Interest in Alternative Medicine has developed to such an extent that there are now more than 180 systems of Alternative Medicine.

Exponents of New Age Philosophy in Europe and America include Transcendentalists like Thoreau, Emerson and Walt Whitman, Wordsworth, Emanuel Swedenborg, and Theosophical exponents such as Madame Helena Blavatsky, Col Olcott and the philosopher, Annie Besant. As the world witnessed a Consciousness Revolution; Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, Zen, Carlos Castañeda, the Beatles, Holistic Medicine (both Western and Ayurvedic), Tantra, and Astrology all became quite popular in a culture undergoing dramatic shifts in perspective.

There are 6 million New Age sites on the Web and the NAM consists of a massive and well organised network consisting of thousands of groups, trusts, foundations, clubs, lodges, and spiritual groups whose goal and purpose is to prepare the world to enter the coming Age of Aquarius. In astrological symbolism, Aquarius represents Spirituality and Pisces Rationality. The Piscean Age, an age of Computer and Cybernetics revolution, will be followed by an Age of Consciousness Revolution or a Spiritual Revolution, the Aquarian Age.

Some New Age Organisations are: The California New Age Caucus, New World Alliance, World Goodwill, The Church Universal and Triumphant, The Theosophical Society, Amnesty International, Zero Population Growth, the Forum, Planetary Initiative for the World We Choose, the Club of Rome, Church Universal and Triumphant, Christian Science, and the Unity School of Christianity.

New Age believes in the essential goodness of Man and the Divine Spark in Man and the New Age movement is not a unified cult system of beliefs and practices, even though its roots derive from Vedic Philosophy. There is no central authority, no official leader, no headquarters, nor membership list, but instead is a network of groups working toward World Peace and Universal Love. There are millions of worldwide followers of various New Age practices and the world is moving from Chaos to Cosmos! This is a Phase Transition from Entropy to Supreme Cosmic Order !

Significant influence has been gained by NAM affecting almost every area of Occidental culture -- sociology, psychology, medicine, politics, ecology, science, the arts, education, the business community, the media, entertainment, sports, and even churches around the world. Organised spiritual forms such as Christian Science, Unity and even forms of Witchcraft (from the German ' Wicca' meaning the Wise; Witchcraft means the Craft of the Wise) are all its expressions. Various Human Potential Seminars, Transcendental Meditation, Zen Meditation and some Alternative Holistic Medicine practices are also its manifold manifestations.

Some popular New Age publications and journals are New Age Journal, the Z Files, Clarity, Body Mind Spirit, Yoga Journal, Gnosis, East West, Noetic Sciences, the Millenium Being and Omega. The new tendency of people now is to view everything from a New Age perspective.

The primary goal of the New Age Movement is to prepare humankind for the Aquarian Age and to bring world peace in an already bruised world. "All is wrong with the world," said Bernard Shaw. An additional goal of the NAM is to establish an entirely New World Order in the fields of Economy and Government. The idea of a World Government was proposed by Bernard Shaw and was implemented by Mahesh Yogi and occurs in the writings of the foundational apostle of the New Age Movement, Alice Bailey.

The word 'initiation' is derived from the Latin "in ire" to go within and initiates were termed by the Great Master as the salt of the Earth. Ward defined Reality as the, "within and within and within and within". Another mystic said of Ultimate Reality that, "it is hidden, it is hidden and it is hidden". To the mystic, self evolution is the means and only by changing and correcting ourselves can we change others. The primary goals of the movement then, are to prepare the world to receive the Divine Consciousness and to enter the Age of Aquarius, thus establishing the New World Order. New Age Philosophy believes that human evolution can be accelerated, if not in the entire mass of humanity, at least in suitable individuals. Human nature is perfectible, through an intensive process of purification and Initiation.

The New Age Movement is secular and universally diffused over the earth's surface and its basic underlying philosophy emphasizes Gnosticism and Occultism. Gnosticism is an ancient philosophy stating that Divine essence is the highest reality, and that the Self of man is actually this Essence. Behind the phenomenal world is the Transcendent Reality which Intuition alone can see. It bears a remarkable resemblance to the Universal Religion that H.G. Wells predicted would one day take over the world.

The six main characteristics of New Age thinking are: (1) All is Unity; (2) All is Divine (3) Humanity is divine (4) A change in Consciousness is on the horizon; (5) All

religions are One; and (6) Cosmic Evolutionary optimism. Basically, the NAM asserts Dialectical Integralism. New Age Philosophy unites both Matter and Spirit.

*Spirit shall see through Matter's gaze
Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face!*

The 13 main principles of New Age Philosophy are:

- (1) One Global Order- One World Government, One Currency, One Universal Being.
- (2) Universal Energy, Universal Matter, Universal Life, Universal Soul As God
- (3) An Eternal Universe- Uniform in Space and Unending in Time
- (4) Divine practices (Astrology, Yoga and other esoteric arts)
- (5) Syncretism (Unity of all Religions).
- (6) The need for Meditation (for generating altered states of Consciousness);
- (7) Life is Cyclical- Everything is cyclical, subject to the cyclical upheavals of Time.
- (8) Holistic Medicine and Vegetarianism
- (9) Pacifism (Anti-war activities);
- (10) Reincarnation; (The Law of Conservation of Soul)
- (11) The Evolution of Man into Divinity; (The latent Life Force evolving naturally to the Divine)
- (12) The Union of Woman and Man with the Divine; (Merger into the Infinite)
- (13) Matter's Illusoriness;- *Esse est percipii* - Perception is Essence; Mind is Substance.

The practices of the New Age are psychic practices like: Astrology, Reiki, Bioenergy, Chi energy, Chakras, Nirvana, Christ-Consciousness, Spiritualism, Native American Spirituality, Prajna, Out-of-body/near-death experiences, Reincarnation, Yoga, Meditation and the occult disciplines, as well as psychotherapeutic techniques and scientific applications of the healing powers of crystals and pyramids.

Some commonly used New Age terms are: Quantum Healing, Transmutation, Transfiguration, Guided Imagery, Reincarnation, Positive Thinking, Human Potential, Holistic, Holographic, Synergistic, Unity, Oneness, Transformation, Awakening, Zetworking, Communal Sharing, One-world/globalism/new world order (i.e., One language, One Government, One currency, One religion), Cosmic Consciousness, Zodiac, etc.

Some New Age practices are: Transcendental Meditation, Parapsychology, Inner healing; Biofeedback, Yoga, I Ching, Reflexology, Therapeutic Touch, Transpersonal Psychology, Witchcraft, Magick, Tai Chi, Shamanism, Hypnotherapy, Acupuncture/Acupressure, Martial Arts, Zen, Relaxation, Silva Method (formerly Silva Mind Control), Visualization, etc.

Some prominent New Agers are: Jeremy Rifkin, Norman Cousins, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, John Denver, George Lucas, Norman Lear, Alice Bailey, Alvin Toffler, Dr. Barbara Ray, Benjamin Creme, Levi Dowling, George Trevelyan, Fritjof Capra, Abraham Maslow, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Ruth Montgomery, Shirley MacLaine, J.Z. Knight, Marilyn Ferguson and David Spangler.

Soothing audio environments are created by New Age musicians and they believe that music has psycho-therapeutic properties. This concept is echoed in Vedic

Philosophy. Born of an interest in spirituality and healing in the late 1970s, music is often used as an aid in meditation.

Essentially meditative, New Age Music is soothing to the Soul. Isn't music defined as the food of the Soul? Harmonic consonance, uplifting themes, contemplative melodies and nonlinear song forms are the characteristics of New Age music. Even natural sounds and traditional electronic instruments are used by New Age musicians. With roots in classical music or eastern music, New Age music is often meditative. Prominent New Age musicians include vocalist Liz Story, harpist Andreas Vollenweider, electric violinist Jean-Luc Ponty, electronic-music pioneer Brian Eno, multi-instrumentalist Kitaro, and solo-piano artist George Winston.

New Age practices have spread throughout the world. Athletes are using guided imagery. Graduate schools of business are invoking T.M., Yoga, and Tarot cards in teaching courses on creativity in business (e.g., Stanford Graduate School of Business). Based upon Astrology and the Science of Time, stock market gurus employ Fibonacci numbers and "Wave Theory" in their forecasting.

We can summarise that the term New Age is an innovative term derived from the mother of all sciences, Astrology, indicating that this earth is undergoing an evolutionary transitional phase from the Piscean Age of Scientism to the Aquarian Age of Divine Wisdom, Cosmic Consciousness, Knowledge and Love.

Since the New Age is a conglomeration of spiritual practices, let us analyse the basic principles of NAM:

1. The Divine Source of Authority

New Agers do not claim any source of authority- only inspiration from the Divine. By the Divine, we mean a principle within, the Divine Spark or the Self and many are there who receive the revelations of the Self within or the intuitive insights of the Self.

2. The Lord

Since Matter and Energy can neither be created nor destroyed and the sum total energy in the Universe is an absolute constant (Universal Being), the Lord did not create the world, S/He became the world. Monism ("all is Unity") avers that there is only One Essence in the universe, everyone and everything being a part of that essence. The Self is an utter Being and all these forms are its Becomings. New Agers view God as an Impersonal Life force, Consciousness, and Energy (e.g., the "Star Wars Force"), but they also believe in God's personal aspects. They suggest that every human has a divine spark within him and her inner being because all created beings are reflections of the Divine Idea. The eternal state is called by various terms among different New Age groups including God-consciousness, Universal Love, Self-Realization, the I AM, Higher Self, Brahman, Nirvana, etc.

2. The Redeemer, Jesus Christ

Christ Consciousness or the Divine Consciousness is what the New Age advocates mean by Christ. In other words, Christ is a Divine Principle rather than an individual, such as Jesus. This idea of Christ Consciousness asserts that Jesus was only one of the Christs, but that He equipped Himself to receive the Christ Consciousness. He

was a great Master who attained Christ Consciousness, as did other prophets like Buddha, Krishna, and Mohammed.

3. Human Destiny

Humans are the measure of all things and more divine than the animals, and hence, the salvation of the world depends upon us. Cleansing the negative elements from the collective subconscious should be the aim of humanity. Once negativity is cleaned from the collective subconscious, the human positive energy will shine forth and the noble ideals of the New Age will be actualised in an era of Global Enlightenment. Since man is intrinsically divine and perfect, his only real problem is ignorance of that fact. *Gnosis* means experiential knowledge and salvation in the New Age is for humans to become enlightened through this Divine *Gnosis*. New Age groups offer various spiritual techniques to enable individuals, and ultimately the world, to evolve into this Unitive Consciousness. These techniques may include psychotechnologies for attaining altered states of consciousness including Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, Zen, Attunement, Channeling, Psychics, Acupuncture, etc.

4. The Ethical Opposites- Good and Evil

Believing in the Oriental philosophies, New Agers make the distinction between good and evil. All wickedness is weakness and Evil is imperfection. By the methods of trial and error, we come to know what is good and what is bad for the world and we have to transcend the dualities.

5. Reincarnation

New Agers believe in the ancient Vedic philosophical concept of Reincarnation- that through a long process of rebirths, man can eventually attain Divine perfection. They also teach the Universal Law of Karma- the Law of Cause and Effect, the Law of Action and Reaction, and the Law of Retribution. What a person sows, he shall reap. This is also the doctrine of God's non-responsibility, that the Self is not responsible and it is the Ego which experiences bitter and sweet mental experiences due to its own Karma.

6. Salvation is Self-Actualisation and Sin is Ignorance

Some theoreticians taught the concept of Original Sin. New Age exponents teach the concept of our essential goodness. Instead of systems which emphasize the negative aspects of sin, New Age highlights that every one of us is essentially divine and it is a sin to call man a sinner! However, New Agers speak of troublesome desires which are natural impulses which retard human evolution and make the Ego move away from the Self. Sin is merely ignorance of our essential divinity. The atrophied spiritual consciousness of the normal person who lives in ignorance of Divine Self is Sin. Like the Law of Conservation of Energy which states that energy cannot be created nor destroyed, the Law of Conservation of Soul states that the soul can neither be created nor destroyed. Matter exists in three states- liquid, gaseous and solid. Matter and energy cannot be created nor destroyed. Nothing ever begins to be. Similarly, life does not at physical birth begin to be. It merely enters physical conditions and assumes a physical guise. It merely undergoes a parallel transformation into conditions which pre-existed in other conditions. The soul is reincarnated in different bodies in a continuous succession of lives. The good or bad karma earned in the present lifetime determines one's subsequent incarnation. Attaining higher states of Consciousness should be our ultimate aim. There are many

different paths to the goal of Divine perfection and we should be tolerant of a plurality of paths.

The divine Aurobindo predicted that spiritual influences from India will trigger a global spiritual movement. There will be mass Incarnations (many people divinely inspired) who will work for World Peace and Universal Love!

*I saw them cross the twilight of the Age
The massive barrier breakers of this world
The sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn
The architects of immortality
Carrying the magic Word, the mystic Fire
Carrying the Dionysian Cup of Joy!*

The four systems of philosophy which triggered the NAM are Hinduism (a product of 5,000 years of development), Buddhism (circa 560 B.C.), Taoism (circa 500 B.C.), and Druidism (the religion of the Celts which originated in about 300 B.C. and extended into the middle ages). While the NAM is a relatively recent phenomenon, the historical roots are overwhelmingly vast.

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