With the opening of the new forum this forum is now closed to posting

It is envisioned that the original Avalon forum will remain up for reference and research purposes for an indefinite period of time.

The New forum can be found at http://projectavalon.net/forum4

The New Age philosophy is a modern phrase that is close in meaning to what is called the Ageless Wisdom and also not far from the meaning of Perennial philosophy. The Ageless Wisdom is called the Golden Thread that connects the inner, hidden teachings at the heart of the world’s religions, East and West. They’re often referred to as the Perennial Philosophy because they’ve been present on earth in some form since the beginning of recorded history. There is a Wikipedia article on New Age that contains a paragraph with the following good summary: Despite its highly eclectic nature, The New Age is a widely varied collection of practices and beliefs rather than a structured belief system, and as such it is difficult to define. Popular elements include alchemy, alternative psychotherapy techniques, animism, aromatherapy, astrology, channeling, crystal work, divination. Gnosticism, karma stuff, lightwork and colour healing, magic, mediums, psychic powers of every kind, reincarnation and past life regression, sacred geometry (leylines, pyramid power, magical shapes), Spiritism, Tarot card readings, Taoism, Yoga and many other splintered movements and zany practices. Much of the Indian influence on the New Age derives from diluted practices and ideas brought from India by the Theosophists. New Age (comparative more New Age, superlative most New Age). Of or relating to a broad movement in Western culture, covering a wide variety of alternative spiritual and philosophical ideas, often spirituality, mysticism, holism, and environmentalism, and partially based on eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, that developed towards the end of the 20th century.

The New Age Movement began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, although elements can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It gained momentum in the 1980s and strengthened with the Harmonic Convergence event in 1987. Diverse individuals from influences from East Asian religions, Gnosticism, Neopaganism, New Thought, Spiritualism, Theosophy, Universalism, and Western inspiration from major world religions: Buddhism, Chinese folk religion, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Sufism; with particularly strong astrology, esotericism, alternative medicine, music, collectivism, sustainability, and nature. New Age Spirituality is characterized by an individual approach to spiritual practices and philosophies, while rejecting religious doctrine and dogma.

The New Age Movement includes elements of older spiritual and religious traditions ranging from atheism and monotheism through classical pantheism, naturalistic pantheism, and panentheism to polytheism combined with science and Gaia philosophy: particularly archaeoastronomy, astronomy, ecology, environmentalism, the Gaia hypothesis, psychology, and physics. New Age practices and philosophies sometimes draw inspiration from major world religions: Buddhism, Chinese folk religion, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and Sufism; with particularly strong influences from East Asian religions, Gnosticism, Neopaganism, New Thought, Spiritualism, Theosophy, Universalism, and Western esotericism. Additional phrases which refer to the New Age Movement include All is One and Mind-Body-Spirit.

The modern New Age Movement began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, although elements can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It gained momentum in the 1980s and strengthened with the Harmonic Convergence event in 1987. Diverse individuals from around the world practice New Age Spirituality.

I have copied and pasted the Wikipedia article on the New Age, including the notes and references. I think it is a good article, and I’ve done this so that members can quote any part of the article as a springboard for discussion:

The New Age (also known as the New Age Movement, New Age Spirituality, and Cosmic Humanism) is a decentralized Western social and spiritual movement that seeks "Universal Truth" and the attainment of the highest individual human potential. It combines aspects of cosmology, astrology, esotericism, alternative medicine, music, collectivism, sustainability, and nature. New Age Spirituality is characterized by an individual approach to spiritual practices and philosophies, while rejecting religious doctrine and dogma.

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History

Origins

The term New Age was used as early as 1809 by William Blake who described a belief in a spiritual and artistic "New Age" in his preface to Milton: a Poem; it was a concept originally formed by another Christian mystic Emanuel Swedenborg in the 18th century.

Some of the New Age Movement's constituent elements appeared initially in 19th century metaphysical movements: Spiritualism, Theosophy, and New Thought; also, alternative medicine movements: homeopathy, naturopathy, chiropractic, and psychic phenomena. These movements in turn have roots in Transcendentalism, Mesmerism, Swedenborgianism, and various earlier Western esoteric or occult traditions, such as the hermetic arts of astrology, magic, alchemy, and kabbalah. The term New Age was used in this context in Madame Blavatsky's book The Secret Doctrine, published in 1888.

A weekly journal of Christian liberalism and socialism titled The New Age was published as early as 1894; it was sold to a group of socialist writers headed by Alfred Richard Crake and Holbrook Jackson in 1907. Other historical personalities were involved: H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, and William Butler Yeats; the magazine became a forum for politics, literature, and the arts. Between 1908 and 1914, it was instrumental in pioneering the British avant-garde from vorticism to imagism. After 1914, publisher Crake met P. D. Ouspensky, a follower of G. I. Gurdjieff, and began correspondence with Harry Houdini, becoming less interested in literature and art, with an increased focus on mysticism and other spiritual topics; the magazine was sold in 1921. According to Brown University, The New Age "helped to shape modernism in literature and the arts from 1907 to 1922."

Popularisation behind these ideas has roots in the work of early 20th century writers such as D. H. Lawrence and William Butler Yeats. In the
early to middle 1900s, American mystic, theologian, and founder of the Association for Research and Enlightenment Edgar Cayce was a seminal influence on what later would be termed the New Age Movement; he was known in particular for the practice some refer to as channeling. The early New Age Movement in Russia during the 1910s was influenced by Nicholas Roerich and Helena Roerich, who taught in the Theosophical tradition and founded the Agni Yoga Society. Former Theosophist Rudolf Steiner and his Anthroposophical Movement are a major influence. Neo-Theosophist Alice Bailey published the book Discipleship in the New Age (1944), which used the term New Age in reference to the transition from the Astralogical Age of Pisces to Aquarius. While claims of racial bias in the writings of Rudolf Steiner and Alice Bailey were made, [11] Steiner emphasized racial equality as a principle central to anthroposophical thought and humanity's progress. [12][13] Any racial elements from these influences have not remained part of the Anthroposophical Society as contemporary adherents of the society have either not adopted or repudiated these beliefs. [14][15] Another early usage of the term was by the American artist, mystic, and philosopher Walter Russell, who spoke in an essay of "...this New Age philosophy of the spiritual re-awakening of man...", also published in 1940.

Contemporary usage

The subculture that would later take on the descriptive term New Age already existed in the early 1970s, based on and continuing themes originally present in 1960s counterculture. The Findhorn Foundation – an intentional community near Findhorn, Moray, Scotland founded in 1962 – played an instrumental role during the early growth period of the New Age Movement; it continues to operate the Findhorn EcoVillage.

Widespread use of the term New Age began in the mid 1970s (reflected in the title of monthly periodical New Age Journal) and probably influenced several thousand small metaphysical book and gift stores that increasingly defined themselves as "New Age bookstores."[16][17] As a result of the large scale activities surrounding the Harmonic Convergence in the mid 1980s – the term was further popularised by the American mass media to describe the alternative spiritual subculture – including practices such as meditation, channeling, crystal healing, astral projection, psychic experience, holistic health, simple living, and environmentalism; or belief in phenomena such as Earth mysteries, ancient astronauts, extraterrestrial life, unidentified flying objects, crop circles, and reincarnation. A range of New Age publications appeared by the late 1980s such as Psychic Guide (later renamed Body, Mind & Spirit), Yoga Journal, New Age Voice, New Age Retailer, and NaPRA ReView ("New Age Publishing and Retailers Association").

There were several key moments in raising public awareness of this subculture: the publication of Linda Goodman’s best selling astrology books Sun Signs (1968) and Love Signs (1978); Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical (1967) with the opening song "Aquarius" and its memorable line “This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius” [emphasis added]; the broadcast of Shirley MacLaine’s television mini-series Out on a Limb (1987); and the Harmonic Convergence (1987) organized by José Argüelles in Sedona, Arizona. Also influential were the claims of channelers Jane Roberts (the Seth Material) and J. Z. Knight (Ramtha), as well as revealed writings A Course in Miracles (1975) by Helen Schucman, The Celestine Prophecy (1993) by James Redfield, and Conversations with God (1995) by Neale Donald Walsch. Relevant works also include the writings of Eckhart Tolle, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Marianne Williamson, Deepak Chopra, John Holland, Gary Zukav, and Wayne Dyer; also, The Secret by Rhonda Byrne, which was based on the writings of Esther Hicks and Jerry Hicks.


Beliefs

There is no unified belief system, though many practices and philosophies are common in New Age Spirituality:

Terminology

Forces
It is commonly held that there exist certain forces, which are independent of spiritual beings or agencies and distinct from forces defined by science, such as gravitation and electromagnetism. These forces are elemental in nature and operate in an automatic manner as part of the natural order; they cause seeds to sprout, grow, and bloom, etc.[citation needed]

Power
The forces, and everything else, are energized by a mystical power that exists in varying degrees in all things. Power is transferable, through physical contact, sensory perception, or mere proximity. Power may be accumulated or depleted in a person or object through a variety of mechanisms, including fate and esoteric practices. This power is held to be physically observable as an aura or subtle body and psi energy; and when encountered in great concentration, may even be dangerous.[citation needed]

Energy
In some belief systems, forces and power may seem to merge, e.g., in the concept of vital force that exists in many traditional belief systems, and finds its expression in New Age concepts such as the energies in Therapeutic Touch or Reiki and ideas of flowing streams of power in the Earth, like ley lines in Britain and Europe and Earth energies addressed in the Chinese geomantic system of feng shui.[citation needed]

Spirit
All beings (particularly sentient beings) are accompanied by a specific, intentional energy which corresponds to their consciousness, but is in some way independent of their corporeal existence. This energy typically is more primary than the physical entity, in the sense that it remains in some form after the physical death.[citation needed]

Philosophy and cosmology

Theism
There is a general and abstract idea of God, which can be understood in many ways; seen as a superseding of the need to anthropomorphize deity. Not to be confused with pantheism.[citation needed]

Spiritual beings
Gods, angels, Ascended Masters, elementals, ghosts, faeries, Spirit guides and extraterrestrials can spiritually guide us, if we open ourselves to their guidance.[25]

Afterlife
Consciousness persists after death as life in different forms; the afterlife exists for further learning through the form of a spirit, reincarnation and/or near-death experiences.[26] There may be a belief in hell, but typically not in the traditional Christian sense or Islamic sense of eternal damnation. Universalist views of the afterlife are common.

Age of Aquarius
The current time period is claimed by some astrologers to be the dawning of the Age of Aquarius correlated to various changes in the world and some claim that the early 1960s was the actual beginning of the Age of Aquarius, though this claim is highly contentious. Common claims about the developments associated with the Age of Aquarius include, but are not limited to, human rights, democracy, innovative technology, electricity, computers, and aviation. Esoteric claims are that the Age of Aquarius will see a rise in consciousness.
Astrology
Horoscopes and the Zodiac are used in understanding, interpreting, and organizing information about personality, human affairs, and other terrestrial matters.[citation needed]

Teleology
Life has a purpose; this includes a belief in synchronicity—that coincidences have spiritual meaning and lessons to teach those whom are open to them. Everything is universally connected through God and participates in the same energy.[28] There is a cosmic goal and a belief that all entities are (knowingly or unknowingly) cooperating towards this goal.

Indigo children
Children are being born with a more highly developed spiritual power than earlier generations.[29][30]

Interpersonal relationships
There are opportunities to learn about one's self and relationships are destined to be repeated until they are healthy.[31]

Intuition
An important aspect of perception, which has been offset by a somewhat strict rationalism, noted specially in the works of prominent psychologist Jung.[citation needed]

Optimism
Positive thinking supported by affirmations will achieve success in anything[32] This is based on the concept that Thought Creates. Therefore, as one begins focusing attention and consciousness on the positive, on the "half-filled" glass of water, reality starts shifting and materializing the positive intentions and aspects of life. A certain critical mass of people with a highly spiritual consciousness will bring about a sudden change in the whole population.[33] Humans have a responsibility to take part in positive creative activity and to work to heal ourselves, each other and the planet.[34]

Human potential
The human mind has much greater potential than that ascribed to it[35][36][37] and is even capable of overriding physical reality.[38]

Spiritual Healing
Humans have potential healing powers, such as therapeutic touch, which can be developed to heal others through touch or at a distance.[citation needed]

Religion and science
Main articles: Religion and Science

Eclectic spirituality
New age writers argue people should follow their own individual path to spirituality instead of dogma.

Some adherents of traditional disciplines such as the Lakota people, a tribe of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, reject the term New Age. They see the movement it represents as either not fully understanding, deliberately trivializing, or distorting their disciplines.[39]

Anti-Patriarchy
Feminine forms of spirituality, including feminine images of the divine, such as the female Aeon Sophia in Gnosticism, are deprecated by patriarchal religions.[2]

Stonehenge and other ancient sites are revered by many who practice New Age Spirituality.

Ancient civilizations
Atlantis, Lemuria, Mu, and other lost lands existed. Relics such as the crystal skulls and monuments such as Stonehenge and the Great Pyramid of Giza were left behind.

Psychic perception
Certain geographic locations emanate psychic energy (sometimes through ley lines) and were considered sacred in pagan religions throughout the world.[40]

Eastern world practices
Meditation, Yoga, Tantra, Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, martial arts, Tai chi chuan, Falun Gong, Qigong, Reflexology, Reiki, and other Eastern practices can assist in realizing one's potential.[citation needed]

Diet
Food influences both the mind and body; it is generally preferable to practice vegetarianism by eating fresh organic food, which is locally grown and in season.[41][42] Fasting can help achieve higher levels of consciousness.[43]

Mathematics
An appeal to the language of nature and mathematics, as evidenced by numerology, Kabbala, Sacred geometry, and gnosticism to discern the nature of God.[44]

Science
Quantum mechanics, parapsychology, and the Gaia hypothesis have been used in quantum mysticism to validate spiritual principles.[45] Authors Deepak Chopra, Fritjof Capra, Fred Alan Wolf, and Gary Zukav have linked quantum mechanics to New Age Spirituality, which is presented in the film What the Bleep Do We Know!? (2004); also, in connection with the Law of Attraction, which is related to New Thought and presented in the film The Secret (2006). They have interpreted the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, quantum entanglement, wave function collapse, or the many-worlds interpretation to mean that all objects in the Universe are one (monism), that possibility and existence are endless, and that the physical world is only what one believes it to be.

In medicine, such practices as therapeutic touch, homeopathy, chiropractic, and naturopathy involve hypotheses and treatments that have not been accepted by the conventional, science-based medical community through the normal course of empirical testing.[46][47]

Lifestyle
New Age Spirituality has led to a wide array of literature on the subject and an active niche market: books, New Age music, crafts, and services in alternative medicine are available at New Age stores, fairs, and festivals.[48][49]

People who embrace New Age lifestyle or beliefs are included in the Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability (LOHAS) demographic market segment, currently in a growth phase, related to sustainable living, green ecological initiatives, and generally composed of a relatively affluent
Holistic health
Main articles: Holistic health and Alternative medicine

Practitioners of New Age Spirituality may use alternative medicine in addition to or in place of conventional medicine,[49][56] while some conventional physicians have adopted aspects or the complete holistic approach of health.

Music
Main article: New Age music

New Age music is peaceful music of various styles, which is intended to create inspiration, relaxation, and positive feelings while listening. Studies have determined that New Age music is an effective component of stress management.[57] Some New Age music albums come with notes to encourage use in meditation.

This style began in the 1970s with the works of free-form jazz groups recording on the ECM label; such as Oregon, the Paul Winter Group, and other pre-ambient bands; as well as ambient music performer Brian Eno and classical avant-garde musician Daniel Kobialka. In the early 1970s, it was mostly instrumental with both acoustic and electronic styles. New Age music evolved to include a wide range of styles from electronic space music and acoustic instruments using Western instruments to spiritual chanting from other cultures – including Native American flutes and drums, synthesizers, and instrumental world music sounds.

Sustainable living
Main articles: Sustainable living, Sustainability, and Simple living

There is an emphasis on living in a simple sustainable way that attempts to reduce an individual's or society's use of the Earth's natural resources and shuns the consumer society.[58][59]

Notes and references

5. a Neil Spencer, “True as the Stars Above”, Victor Gollancz, 2000, Pg 115, ISBN 0575 06769 1
6. a History of the New Age periodical, Brown University, Modernist Journals Project
7. a Modernism In and Beyond the “Little Magazines”, Winter 2007, Professor Ann Ardis, Brown University
8. a The New Age in Encyclopædia Britannica article on Orage
15. a Anthroposophie und die Rassismus-Vorwürfe, ISBN 978-3-924391-24-9, p. 309ff
18. a b c "Position Statement on Diversity". The General Council of the Anthroposophical Society in America. 1998. [http://www.anthroposophy.org/GoV/5ta_nDiversity.php. Retrieved on 2007-04-12. “We explicitly reject any racial theory that may be construed to be part of Rudolf Steiner's writings. The Anthroposophical Society in America is an open, public society and it rejects any purported spiritual or scientific theory on the basis of which the alleged superiority of one race is justified at the expense of another race.”
24. a b c Satin, New Age Politics (orig. 1976)
25. a Theodore Roszak, Person/Planet (1978).
26. a Marilyn Ferguson, Aquarian Conspiracy, (1980)
27. a Gordon Davidson and Corinne McLaughlin, Spiritual Politics (1994)
30. a Neil Spencer, "true as the stars above", 2000, Victor Gollancz, Pgs 115–127
The New Age philosophy is a modern phrase that is close in meaning to what is called the Ageless Wisdom and also not far from the meaning of Perennial philosophy. The Ageless Wisdom is called the Golden Thread that connects the inner, hidden teachings at the heart of the world’s religions, East and West. It’s often referred to as the Perennial Philosophy because it’s been present on earth in some form since the beginning of recorded history. And what is New Age? There is a Wikipedia article on New Age that contains a paragraph with the following good summary: Despite its highly eclectic makeup, The New Age is a wildly varied collection of practices and beliefs rather than a structured belief system, and as such it is difficult to define. Popular elements include alchemy, alternative psychotherapy techniques, animism, aromatherapy, astrology, channeling, crystal work, divination, Gnosticism, karma stuff, lightwork and colour healing, magic, mediums, psychic powers of every kind, reincarnation and past life regression, sacred geometry (leylines, pyramid power, magical shapes), Spiritualism, Tarot card readings, Taoism, Yoga and many other splintered movements and zany practices. Much of the Indian influence on the New Age derives from diluted practices and ideas brought from India by the Theosophists, who called their philosophy Theosophy because the early 20th century was a time of heightened interest in non-Western religions and philosophies. The term New Age was first used in the 1970s by a group of young people who were interested in alternative spiritual and philosophical ideas, often spirituality, mysticism, holism, and environmentalism, and partially based on eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, that developed towards the end of the 20th century.