Title: Essay on *miracles or religious phenomena* in New Religious Movements (NRM).

Running head: New Religious Movements (NRMs)

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Abstract:

In the present-day world, several new religious movements (NRMs) are in vogue along with mainstream religions. Religions and NRMs describe the occurrence of *miracles or religious phenomena* either to the leaders of the faiths or to their believers at regular intervals. Invariably, these phenomena are projected as messages from the divinity, and thereby propelling the respective faith as true path to salvation. In the present article, the author tabulates the different *miracles or religious phenomena* reported by various NRMs founded after 1900 CE. Based on the discussion, along with presenting a simple categorization of *miracles or religious phenomena*, a probable pattern/trend for their occurrence is postulated. The article emphasizes the need for identifying the threshold level (of religious experience) for the emergence of the next messiah on this planet. Excessive violence, drugs and alcoholism are found to be a prominent feature in some, if not all, of the NRMs.

Keywords: New Religious Movements, Miracles, Religious Phenomena, Divine Messengers, Divinity

Subject Classification: New religious movements, religious phenomena

Number of Tables: One

Title of Table:

Table 1. Typical religious phenomena seen/adopted in New Religious Movements (NRMs)

Supplementary Material: One

Title of Supplementary Material:

Supplementary Material — 1. List of New Religious Movements (NRMs).

Essay on *religious phenomena* in New Religious Movements (NRMs).

India and Israel share something in common when it comes to religion. Together, both these countries gave birth to at least six major religions of the World which are practiced by 76.9% of the world's population as on the year 2010 CE (Marcin Stonawski *et al.*, 2015). Also, India is a major marketplace for religions, both ancient and modern, and cults or sects. Modern religions, for the present, are those religions that emerged after the year 1500 CE. For example, religions like Sikhism and Bahai faith are modern religions. Cults (in America) or Sects (in Europe) are best defined as those controversial (and perhaps dangerous) religious groups with an all-powerful leader wielding immense unreasonable control over the members of the group who are typically coaxed to join using unethical processes like "brainwashing". Also, a cult is a group whose beliefs and practices counter those of the dominant cultures. To avoid the negative connotations associated with cults and sects, many authors prefer to use the phrase New Religious Movements (NRM) (Peter B. Clarke, 2005), a phrase which the present article also uses throughout.

Before proceeding any further, the cadence is set by answering a fundamental question in theology: *What is religion?* Religion is best described as a code of belief or a philosophy or a way of life which involves worship of a God or Gods. At an individual level, all religions associate God(s) with varying standards of morality who judges the human behaviour either as right or wrong. Melton in his book "The Encyclopaedia of *Religious phenomena*" quotes philosopher Alfred North Whitehead as "*religion is what an individual does with his solitariness*" (J Gordon Melton, 2008). At a social level, religion is the main means for establishing an order in the society while trying to maintaining harmony amongst its people (Anil Sarwal, 1996; Helicon Publishing, 2005).

A major problem with long standing religions is the dilution of purity of teachings of the divine messengers with concurrent modernization (Anil Sarwal, 1996; Talip Küçükcan, 2005). This leads to a situation wherein the individual loses interest in the religion. Over a period, the society tends to forget the philosophies of the divine messengers. As the society absorbs the evolving modernity, immorality and sinning increase representing a loss of the 'grip' of religion on the society. This is usually referred to as 'corrosion or secularization of the society' by different authors (Talip Küçükcan, 2005). Such a situation necessitates emergence of another divine messenger to guide the people on the righteous path. Terms like Prophets, Saints, Apostles, Avatars, etc., are used to refer to these divine messengers. History has clearly shown that with the appearance of every popular divine messenger, be it Buddha, Abraham, Christ, Mohammed (PBUH), Guru Nanak or the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, a new religion emerged. The Hutchinson Dictionary of World Religions (Helicon Publishing, 2005) mentions that in Islam there are 124,000 prophets between Adam, recorded as the first, and Mohammed (PBUH), being the last. This number includes Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

Religions thrive by increasing the number of believers in its philosophies. More the number of believers, more successful is that religion and its God(s). Whenever a new religion emerges, increasing the number of believers becomes a tricky situation for its founders. Thus, proselytization (or conversion) comes into picture. One of the earliest religions to have practiced conversions is Judaism. By 12th

Century CE, many Jews were forcibly converted to Catholicism giving rise to the term *Conversos* (Ronald L. Eisenberg, 2008). Given an increase in the number of religions, the phrase “*Cius regio, eius religio*” [Joachim Stephani (1544 – 1623 CE) of University of Greifswald, Germany (Translation: The local ruler decides about the religion of his region or whose realm it is, his the religion)] gained prominence (Helicon Publishing, 2005; Richard Potz, 2017).

In the ancient times conversion was either by coercion or forced or by enticing the people with *miracles* and other phenomena attributable to the mystics of religions. Proselytization continues even today albeit in a lighter vein. One criterion, Oddbjørn Leirvik (2010) mentions in his book “*Images of Jesus Christ in Islam*”, for a person to be considered divine or as a Prophet in religious scriptures is that person’s ability to perform *miracles*. As a result, beyond doubt, the holy scriptures of all religions are replete with *miracles* involving divine interventions, and interactions of the founders or prophets or apostles or avatars with the divinity. Further, in an audience of mostly illiterate laity, a *miracle* represents instant first-hand experience of the existence of God(s) thereby leaving an indelible mark on the psyche of the witnesses.

A miracle, for the present, is an extraordinary event claimed to be caused by the divinity or divine intervention and which appears impossible as per the current scientific knowledge/laws but nevertheless happens. In its ‘proper phase’, a *miracle* focusses on connecting the ‘involved’ with God(s) (Stanisław Głaz, 2014). Anil Sarwal (1996) in his book “*Miracles in Religion*” mentions that those who can perform the most stunning *miracles* are believed to be the most spiritual. Put simply, a charismatic person is believed to be most spiritual. Please note that in the present article, the words “*miracle*” and “*religious phenomenon*” (not to be confused with the phenomenology of religion, a study of religions that encompasses *religious phenomena*) are used synonymously. “Religious experience” is a more common individual occurrence wherein there may or may not be any witnesses. Religious experiences can include being ‘felt filled with spirits’, ‘felt the calling of God(s)’, ‘religious dreams’, ‘visions of religious figures’, ‘ecstasy’ (not the drug), ‘aromatic smells’, ‘religious conversion feeling/experience’ and many more. In fact, the variety of ‘religious experiences’ is numerous while the diversity in *miracles* or *religious phenomena* is limited. Earlier studies report that some 66% - 72% of the people surveyed (N = 1721 and N = 3000 respectively) felt they have had at least one religious experience (Ralph W. Hood, Jr., 2005; Joseph O. Baker, 2009). This means that literally every alternate person in the general population has had some sort of a religious experience in their lifetime. Thus, ‘religious experience’, for now, is only indicative of belief in spirituality, divinity, religion, or faith rather than representing a *religious phenomenon*. Hence, religious experiences have been ignored in the present article.

Religious phenomena are the phenomena which makes the invisible aspects of a religion visible. In the present context, the invisible obviously refers to the divinity and the associated divine aspects. Paraphrasing the words of J Gordon Melton (2008), *religious phenomena* deal with the events out of which organized religious life crops up and that which inspires people to delve into their spirituality. So, there is a clear distinction between *religious phenomena* and magic. Magic, hypnosis, and trickery are more of profitable

events and are usually bereft of divinity or any other moral aspects that define a religion. Nevertheless, opinion might differ as regards to whether *religious phenomena*, *miracles* and magic embody the same definition. Suffice it for the present that *miracles* have divine connotation aimed at bringing moral values to the society while the terms like magic, jugglery, hypnosis, or trickery are associated with commercial interests and selfish motives. Table 1 lists the commonly described/observed *religious phenomena* in various NRMs.

Table 1 Here

Ibn Kathīr proffers a theory wherein he mentions the meaning of *miracles* in human history as more of *people's expectations which was aided by some philosophy*. Thereby, the phenomena are consistently generalized. For example, (i) Moses arrived on the scene for people expecting magic; (ii) Jesus emerged in history at a time when the focus is on healing; and (iii) Mohammed (PBUH) came with Arabic Quran to people skilled in eloquence and poetry (Oddbjørn Leirvik, 2010). Similarly, after 24 June 1947 CE within the US culture, reports of people seeing flying saucers or UFOs increased after Kenneth Arnold's description of *nine strange objects flying near Mt. Rainier in a fashion akin to a saucer skipping across water* (Peter B. Clarke, 2005; Ralph W. Hood, Jr., 2005). In simple terms, a messiah always appeared on the scene when the people are crestfallen or when (as the religions put it) 'sinning' has increased worldwide. Scriptures of ancient religions contain maximum number of *miracles*. Anil Sarwal (1996) proffers that in ancient times majority of the population were illiterate and that writers of history of the past chose to emphasize the *miracles*. Also, there were little developments regarding science and technology in olden times. Taken together, Sarwal adds that illiterate people would believe the divinity upon witnessing the miraculous events. This trend seems to continue into modern times.

In modern times, people get easily disillusioned about the on-going rapid industrial and technological advances. Owing to differences in opinion and interpretations, they may also dislike various major religions, be it Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam or any other. This phenomenon, in-part, is referred to as Neo-paganism (Helicon Publishing, 2005). Thus, a fraction of the population in the society always seeks an alternative to appease their spiritual quest fuelling the growth of NRMs. Once a NRM emerges, its founder(s) tries to increase the number of believers by projecting themselves as the next messiah. In this process, they try to convince the populace by performing several *miracles* or other *religious phenomena*. Although constant references to earlier religions are frequently made, this study mostly tries to concentrate on new religious movements (NRMs) that emerged between the period 1900 CE and till date.

While several people eulogize the *miracles* performed by divine messengers, the present author is interested in few aspects concerning NRMs:

- (i) What are the different *religious phenomena* claimed/adopted by the founders of NRMs for recruiting new adherents into their faith?

- (ii) Why are new religious movements (NRM) mostly short-lived and die with the founder(s)?

In the process of searching answers for the above two questions in literature, one aim of this study is to identify genuine *religious phenomena* that are not because of ill-health (particularly mental), faked, and/or not arising due to psychedelic drugs. Perhaps the emphasis here is on the word ‘genuine’ which would mean for the present as not explainable by current scientific understanding despite credible evidence of that *religious phenomenon* having been occurred.

Materials and Methods:

Purpose of the present study is to find answers to the questions posed in the earlier section through literature searches. For accessing the literature, primary sources were internet and digital repositories. Google, Google Scholar and the online British Council Library, India (using author’s private credentials) formed constant access points. In addition to this, Wikipedia – The free encyclopedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page), although not a standard reference, was consulted for information on the years of births and deaths of the founder(s) of NRMs, should that information be lacking in credible literature sources. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>) and International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11) (<https://icd.who.int/browse11/l-m/en>) also formed ready and constant references for various pieces of information.

For generating information to complete Table 1, *religious phenomena* observed among different NRMs and reported in the book “*Controversial New Religions, 2nd Edition*” (James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014) were listed in column 2 of Table 1. For adding remarks on each of the phenomena and to complete Table 1, the mentioned phenomenon was cross-checked for its listing in ICD-11, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition* (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), the *Hutchinson Dictionary of World Religions* (Peter B. Clarke, 2005), *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements* (Peter B. Clarke, 2005) and *Encyclopedia of Religious phenomena* (J Gordon Melton, 2008) were consulted. Various NRMs reported in the book *Controversial New Religions* are summarized as Supplementary Material 1 and are made available along with this article for usage by future authors on similar work. Some additional NRMs which interested the present author from the books “*Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*” (Peter B. Clarke, 2005), the “*Hutchinson Dictionary of World Religions*” (Helicon Publishing, 2005) and “*Encyclopedia of Religious phenomena* (J Gordon Melton, 2008) were also included in the supplementary material 1 [Supplementary Material — 1. List of New Religious Movements (NRMs)]. These additional NRMs may or may not find any mention in the present article. Together, the number of NRMs listed in the supplementary material 1 is close to 54. This list need not necessarily be exhaustive and complete.

Results and Discussion.

i. The Present Study.

At the outset it must be mentioned that any *miracle or religious phenomenon* increases the believer's confidence in their chosen faith (Joseph O. Baker, 2009). About 26 *religious phenomena* have been observed in various NRMs studied by the author and documented in the book *Controversial New Religious Movements, 2nd Edition* (henceforth *Controversial NRMs*) (James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014). These are arranged in an alphabetic order and need not necessarily be in the order in which they appear in the mentioned book(s). Whatever might be the case, all the listed 26 phenomena noted in the NRMs can be grouped under three broad categories: (i) Personal phenomena; (ii) Personal or Group phenomena; and (iii) Group phenomena.

- (i) **Personal Phenomena.** These phenomena are mostly performed by the founders or the masters or the Gurus to impress upon the followers about their divine connections. Prominent among these are Astral trips/projections, Bilocation, Clairvoyance, Levitations, making oneself invisible, and spirit possessions. Since these phenomena are performed by the preachers, most notably in séance, multiple witnesses would be present at the location to authenticate the event. Delusions, Near Death Experience (NDE) and Satori are seen in both the teacher and the taught. Meditation, although a personal phenomenon, is done intentionally as an exercise by all the involved to connect themselves with God(s). Many of these are immediate phenomena (Mohamed Omar Salem and John Fosskett, 2009).
- (ii) **Personal and/or Group phenomena.** These usually happen to believers and occur during public religious rituals. In the present study, after glows, animal imitations, astral trips (mostly only to the preacher), bilocation (mostly only to the preacher), holy laughter, and glossolalia are personal and/or group phenomena.
- (iii) **Group phenomena.** After glows, Holy laughter and Glossolalia serve as examples here. These invariably occur during public religious gatherings. Mohamed Omar Salem and John Fosskett (2009) would want to classify these two later categories as mediated experiences.

After glows and Holy laughter can be considered as an initial stage of ecstasy (meaning very great happiness). Unfortunately, both ICD-11 and DSM-5 only consider the drug 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), which is commonly referred to as “ecstasy”. ‘After glows’ represents the general ‘Feel-Good’ factor of the audience, and thus represents a positive *religious phenomenon*. ‘Holy laughter’, on the other hand, is a more complex phenomenon and can be considered yet another positive *religious phenomenon*. Here, people in the audience break into fits of uncontrollable laughter when affected by the spirit during the séance. A popular example in recent times for Holy Laughter is the Toronto Blessing incident of 1999 CE (J Gordon Melton, 2008; James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014). In religious circles, both the experiences are a positive indication for the presence of the Holy Spirit and represents a feather in the cap for the preachers because many people either experience the phenomena or witness them simultaneously.

Glossolalia (speaking in tongues) is increasingly being associated with the Pentecostal church. It seems that Glossolalia is included in Bible as an indication of sacred language being spoken under the influence of the Holy Spirit. History of glossolalia can be traced along with the history of Church to 2nd century. Also, glossolalia is reported in various (literally all) other religions during their rituals (Elvira Koić *et al.*, 2005). Some charismatic NRMs, like Calvary Chapel and Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Anaheim, too have reported Glossolalia in their believers (J Gordon Melton, 2008; James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014). Glossolalia appears as an ecstatic occurrence during trance. Many faiths welcome glossolalia as a positive phenomenon and not as a mental disorder (Elvira Koić *et al.*, 2005).

Sometimes a person in a *religious phenomenon* tends to experience catalepsy. Catalepsy refers to a trance-like loss of normal consciousness with associated suspension of the functions of sense organs owing to extreme concentration on God(s) (Stanisław Głaz, 2014). The DSM-5 attributes this condition of catalepsy to phencyclidine (C₁₇H₂₅N) use or intoxication (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Phencyclidine is a piperidine derivative. It is a psychedelic drug and is commonly used as a veterinary anaesthetic (Merriam-Webster Inc, 2022).

An interesting observation made is that an Indian NRM (INRM) called Art of Living (AoL) and an Asian NRM (ANRM) *Falun Gong* or *Falun Dafa* of China have something in common. The hallmark of AoL is the “*Sudarshan Kriya*” (SKY). Art of Living (AoL) was started by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar sometime in 1982 CE. “*Sudarshan Kriya*” (SKY) is described as a breathing technique. AoL’s basic strategy is summarized in the phrase “*Don’t ask, don’t tell*”. Helen Farley reports that in 1950s, the then Chinese Government asked its citizens to practice *Qigong*, a breathing exercise, to overcome the shortage of medical doctors in China. *Falun Gong* or *Falun Dafa* was started sometime in 1992 CE in the North East China by Li Hongzhi (James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014). *Falun Gong* or *Falun Dafa* asks its followers to practice *Qigong*. A search on the internet to find differences between SKY and *Qigong* proved futile in the sense that we get the impression that both are the similar techniques if not identical. But then both AoL and *Falun Gong* or *Falun Dafa* are based in-part on Hinduism, Buddhism and Yoga. Thus, beyond mentioning that a similarity exists, the present article does not accuse anybody of infringing intellectual property of others.

The contribution of females to religion (and its evolution) cannot be ignored and has been perfectly acknowledged by earlier authors. All previous authors have clearly identified that stories of God(s), Prophets and *miracles* are told by mothers to their children along with milk and/or as bedtime stories (Anil Sarwal, 1996; Oddbjørn Leirvik, 2010). This is noted as an independent chain of transmission paralleling the religious education given by the clergy or the society in general (Oddbjørn Leirvik, 2010). In addition, Mohamed Omar Salem, and John Foskett (2009) report that people who have had religious experiences in UK are more likely to be female. Thus, it makes sense to identify the religions started by females.

Almost all religions in existence today were founded by males. NRMs are no exception to this statement. The number of religions or NRMs founded by female members of the human society are very few and can be counted on fingertips. Perhaps the only major religion (co-)founded by females being practiced today is Judaism (founded by Abraham and to a certain extent his wife Sarah) (Barbara Crandall, 2012). Amongst the NRMs, Foundation for A Course in *Miracles* (Dr Helen Schucman), Astarte Education or the Angel School (Märtha Louise), Female Neo-Shamanism (Gro-Helen Tørum), Radiance Technique Association International (Takata Hawayo), Sahaja Yoga (Sri Mataji Nirmala Devi), Amritanandamayi *Satsang* (Mata Amritanandamayi) and Theosophical Society (Helena Blavatsky) are the ones that have females as their Godheads (see Supplementary Material 1).

The religious phenomenon of Bilocation (Sl. No. 5 in Table 1) was not seen in any of the NRMs listed in the book *Controversial NRMs*. Presently, this phenomenon is attributed to one Sudhamani also known as (aka) Ammachi aka Mata Amritanandamayi aka Hugging Saint (b. 1953 CE). Ammachi is from Kollam, Kerala, India. She is the founder of Amritanandamayi *Satsang*, a NRM from India (Peter B. Clarke, 2005). Bilocation is the ability of a person to be present at two different places at the same time. Usage of body doubles and astral projections have been postulated to explain this phenomenon. Nevertheless, bilocation was reported first with Martin De Porres (1579 – 1639 CE) and later gained popularity in modern times with the books of Sylvan J. Muldoon (1903–1971 CE) (J Gordon Melton, 2008). Ammachi is still alive and her NRM is spread throughout the world. The Amritanandamayi *Satsang* also runs several educational institutions. Being a recipient of several awards including the United Nation’s Gandhi-King Award for Non-Violence in 2002, discourses of the Hugging Saint appear in various television and internet channels in India even today.

Coming to the second question of short-lived nature of many NRMs, it is noted in the present study that at a higher level, many of the NRM start dabbling in Science fiction and the popular ‘Star Wars’ movie or the television series ‘Star Trek’ ideology. Henrik Bogdan writes that consequent to internal weaknesses clubbed with the concurrent experience of cultural opposition, the leaders of various NRMs end up developing a pessimistic theology which justifies the “transit to future” proffered to escape the imminent cataclysm on Earth. This leads to a “total psychological dependence” of the adherents onto their leader. Such a dependence obviously isolates the members from the society. One general trait noted by different authors is that the NRMs in their organizational structures are always undergoing constant change creating a chaos. Subsequently, when the health of the founders fails, and if there is an absence of a next identifiable leader, chaos increases exponentially in the organizational structure of NRMs. Cumulative effects of all the mentioned factors lead to a self-inflicted collapse of many-a-NRM (James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014).

While all the listed *religious phenomena* (Table 1) have been reported with almost all other religions be they ancient or modern, Abrahamic or Dharmic; absence of Stigmata, Apparitions and apports in the list of *religious phenomena* in NRMs is noteworthy. Apports under strict test conditions have been demonstrated to be products of magic or trickery (J Gordon Melton, 2008). Stanisław Głaz (2014) mentions that *religious phenomena* need not necessarily be caused by God(s). They can also be caused by Satan or may originate through

autosuggestion and hypnosis. In such situations, Stanislaw Glaz suggests that the source could be a disturbed personality or a psychedelic drug whence it might not represent Divine intervention. Therefore, not all *religious phenomena* have a relation with the divinity. Hence, every reported *religious phenomenon* needs a thorough investigation if not by the scientific fraternity, at least by the believers.

ii. *Comment on the religious phenomena in some ancient scriptures and established religions.*

As already mentioned, the scriptures of every religion are replete with *miracles*. No religion on this planet is an exception to this statement. In fact, the more ancient a religion is, the more are the *miracles* in that creed. Discussing all of them is beyond the scope of the present article. Scriptures of the dharmic religions like Hinduism overflow with the reports of numerous *miracles*. Perhaps, at this stage, it is worth mentioning the Gleeson's categorization of people's faith in religion. In simple terms, four categories of people are recognized: World View A, B, C and D. People categorized as World View D are the people unaffected by ups and downs of life yet their faith in religion and God(s) remains unshattered. Same can be said of the people in the category of World View A. But there is a difference. People in World View D are typically mystics and Sadhus and who lead an ascetic life, while those in category A are normal people and are materialistic. These people also remain unaffected by the ups and downs of life, still their belief in religion or spirituality remains unscathed. People belonging to categories B and C, are usually from lower socio-economic status or have limited education. They tend to swing either way depending on what they see, perceive and experience in life (Mohamed Omar Salem and John Foskett, 2009). Since time immemorial, India is a country that is home to innumerable mystics and sadhus performing one *miracle* or the other trying to draw the attention of the public. Suffice it for the present that a mention has been made in the present article as a discussion on the number, type and variety of *miracles* performed by these mystics and sadhus of Hinduism in India is beyond the scope. Note that in the supplementary material made available, of the 54 NRMs listed, approximately 16% (i.e., nine) are from India. Also, the supplementary material on NRMs is not exhaustive and does not include all the NRMs found either in India or rest of the World.

Based on the information available regarding ancient and/or modern religions and NRMs, the typical pattern in which a *miracle* or *religious phenomenon* seems to manifest is firstly, the believers or devotees have a "religious experience" of some sort. At this stage the believer is said to have been primed. This statement gains credence from the observation that the number of people claiming to have had some sort of a religious experience increased from 20.5% (in 1962) to 48% (in 1987) which in turn increased to 66% (in 2004) and finally to 72% (by 2005) (Ralph W. Hood, Jr., 2005; Christopher D. Bader, F. Carson Mencken, and Paul Froese, 2007; Joseph O. Baker, 2009). In this scenario, there emerges a preacher or Guru or a divine messenger or a prophet coming with a NRM whence he or she would demonstrate or perform convincing *miracles* or *religious phenomena* which may at a later stage escalate to *Supernatural phenomena*. *Supernatural phenomena* involve extra-terrestrial (ETs), alien abduction experiences (AAEs) and/or unidentified flying objects (UFOs). This postulated pattern/trend is consistent with the statement of Ibn Kathīr mentioned earlier that *a messiah appears as per the people's expectations*. Put simply, a genuine divine messenger can be expected anytime now. The only thing that needs to be

determined is at what threshold level of population's experience of religion will that messiah appear? Will it be at 75% or 80% or a total 100%? Or the other way round, i.e., when the level of 'religious experiences' falls below the 20% level? Thus, the crude scheme is: Religious experience → *Miracles* or *Religious phenomena* → *Supernatural Phenomena* → **Appearance of the Divine Messenger** (at what threshold level of religious experience?).

Limitations of the present study include the fact that this is not a field study but a crude meta-study in the sense that this article draws its blood from second-hand information rather than obtaining it first-hand by personal interviews with various religious Godheads.

Conclusion.

When studying NRMs, a persistent question arises: *why do the "Doomsday" predictors like the Aum Shinrikyo (Aum Teaching of Absolute Truth) [named changed to Aleph in 2000], Heaven's Gate, or the Falun Gong or Falun Dafa (Dharma Wheel Practice) fail in their predictions?* Perhaps the answer is simple, their clairvoyance never worked suggesting they are not true torch bearers of the divinity. An exception in this regard is the Raëlian religion whose leader took up a cautious approach by saying that the humans have ignited the *Age of Apocalypse* or the *Age of Aquarius* when the Hiroshima atomic bomb was detonated. The Raëlian calendar in fact starts on this date [6 August 1945 Après Hiroshima (AH)] (James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014).

An additional observation was noted in this study about the NRMs. Among all the NRMs studied, most notably, The order of the Solar Temple or Ordre du Temple Solaire (OTS), the Peoples Temple, the Branch Davidians, Aum Shinrikyo, and the Heaven's Gate achieved notoriety for their excessive use of violence (James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014). Most of the NRMs are also often considered to be sexually problematic even though they are founded by females. Drugs and alcohol are another problem area with many NRMs. In this regard, mention must be made of the Jesus People which started off as an alternative to the drugs. Ralph W. Hood, Jr., (2005) elaborates on the drug issue and mentions that certain religions (*viz.*, Native American Church and Church of Santo Daime) have a history of use of '*entheogens*' (a broader term encompassing psychedelic drugs) in their rituals. This led to emergence of a new and presumably controversial scientific discipline called "archaeo-psycho-pharmacology". Asian NRMs (ANRMs) and Indian NRMs (INRMs) which base their philosophy on Dharmic aspects and Yoga seem to be less violent and controversial. But even these are plagued by factions and financial frauds. Nevertheless, many of the INRMs and ANRMs are still holding fort despite their founders being no longer alive.

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List of Abbreviations used:

ak. — also known as; **AAE** — Alien Abduction Experience; **AH** — Après Hiroshima (after Hiroshima); **ANRM** — Asian New Religious Movement; **AoL** — Art of Living; **b.** — born; **C₁₇H₂₅N** — Phencyclidine; **CE** — Common Era; **DSM-5** — Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition; **ET** — Extra-terrestrial; **FBI** — Federal Bureau of Investigation; **ICD-11** — International Classification of Diseases, 11th revision; **INRM** — Indian New Religious Movement; **MDMA** — 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine; **NDE** — Near Death Experience; **NRM** — New Religious Movements; **OBE** — Out-of-the-body-Experience; **PBUH** — Peace Be Upon Him; **SKY** — “*Sudarshan Kriya*”; **UFO** — Unidentified Flying Objects; **US/USA** — United States of America; Other abbreviations and symbols carry their usual significance.

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Table 1. Typical *religious phenomena* seen/adopted in New Religious Movements (NRMs)

Sl. Nº.	Religious Phenomenon	Remarks
1	Afterglows	The general effect or feeling that lingers after something is done, experienced, or achieved*
2	Animal imitation	Adherents after the religious experience begin barking. Example, the ‘Toronto Blessing’ episode in January 1994 ICD-11: Coprolalia (MB23.5) DSM-5: Provisional Tic Disorder [307.21 (F95.0)] - Coprolalia
3	Astral trips/projection	Out-of-the-body-Experience (OBE). Non-physical travel. Travel by separation of the hypothetical astral body from the physical body. This is believed to happen during sleep or during severe illness owing to a lack of consciousness most seen in practioners of Yoga
4	Bach Flower Therapy	One form of aromatherapy wherein wildflowers are used. Developed by Edward Bach [1886–1936], a British physician.
5	Bilocation	The state of being or ability to be present at two places at the same time ¹
6	Brainwashing	Coercive persuasion (or) cunning ideological indoctrination
7	Charisma/Charismata (plural)	The talent for performing miracles*
8	Clairvoyance (<i>al-ḡayb</i>)	Ability to see the future; Jesus is believed by the Muslims to have this ability ²
9	Delusions	Most experienced by the those who are highly protected and not connected with the external world. ICD-11: Delusion (MB26.0) DSM-5: A false belief or judgement about external reality that is based on incorrect inference. At least 13 different types of Delusions are listed in DSM-5
10	Dianetics	A form of psychotherapy developed by L Ron Hubbard, founder of Church of Scientology, wherein physical and mental illnesses are believed to have been caused by engrams. At the end of the therapy, the patient is said to have been exorcised. One form of quackery.
11	Drum healing	A method of healing using rhythm and sound of drums and applying it to an individual or group.
12	Exorcism	The religious process wherein an evil spirit is expelled from a person or place
13	<i>Gedatsu</i>	Japanese concept of attaining <i>Moskha</i> – freedom from the cycle of birth and death
14	Glossolalia	Commonly seen in NRMs with ‘Bible Babble’**. Glossolalia is considered a distinct feature of many revivals, particularly the Pentecostal movement and the charismatic movement in the 20 th century. ICD-11: Acute and transient psychotic disorder (6A23)

		DSM-5: Schizotypal Personality Disorder - Cultural-Related Diagnostic Issues [301.22 (F21)]
15	Gnosis	Esoteric knowledge of spiritual mysteries or truth essential for salvation
16	Holy Laughter	Fits of uncontrollable laughter when affected by the Spirit in people attending public religious meetings
17	Levitate	Ability to raise oneself above ground and hover in air by means of magical or supernatural powers
18	Making oneself invisible	Li Hongzhi, founder of Falun Gong, claimed to be ‘become invisible’ and pass-through glass without breaking it. He claims that he achieved this capability because of Qigong.
19	Meditation	The act of spiritual contemplation, practised by many members of Buddhism, Hinduism or as a stress relieving exercise
20	Mediumship	The capacity to function as a spiritual medium.
21	Miracle	An extraordinary event that appears impossible as per the current scientific understanding but nevertheless happens and hence is attributed to divine interventions or to the divinity
22	Near Death Experiences (NDE)	An uncommon experience taking place on the brink of death and recounted by a person on recovery. Said to be an out-of-body experience or a vision of a tunnel of light.
23	Necromancy	Conjuration of the spirits for the purpose of clairvoyance or sorcery or for influencing the course of events
24	Satori	Sudden enlightenment most seen in Zen Buddhism
25	Sorcery	Magic, black magic or power gained from the assistance or control of evil spirits for the purpose of foretelling or for influencing the course of events
26	Spirit possession	A strange or varied consciousness and associated behaviours believed to be caused by spirits, ghosts, demons, or gods. During this period a person is said to be controlled by these religious beings. ICD-11: Possession trance disorder (6B63) DSM-5: dissociative identity disorder [300.14 (F44.81)]
Note: * — General definition based on entries in available on-line dictionaries; ** — ‘Bible Babble’ is a phrase coined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), USA (Eugene V. Gallagher, 2014); ¹ — (Peter B. Clarke, 2005, pp. 31–32); ² — (James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014, pp. 67–80)		
Source: (Helicon Publishing, 2005; Peter B. Clarke, 2005; J Gordon Melton, 2008; Oddbjør Leirvik, 2010; American Psychiatric Association, 2013; James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014; World Health Organization, 2021; Merriam-Webster Inc, 2022)		

Supplementary Material — 1. List of New Religious Movements (NRMs).

Sl. N°.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
1	Ahmadiyya Movement	Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835 – 1908)	1889/1900	Islam, Christianity, Hinduism	Qadian, Kashmir, India	Rejection of the belief that Prophet Mohammed is the last Prophet, founders claim that he is a reincarnation of Prophet Mohammed, and an avatar of Hindu God Krishna, do not perform Hajj,	ANRM
2	Alexandrian tradition	Alex Sanders (1926–1988)	1960s	Emphasis on ceremonial magic	New Forest area of England/USA	●	Pagan
3	Amritanandamayi <i>Satsang</i>	Sudhamani alias Mata Amritanandamayi aka Hugging Saint ♀ (1953 -)	1975	Hinduism	Kollam, Kerala, India	—	INRM
4	Art of Living Foundation (AoL)	Sri Sri Ravi Shankar	1982	Sudharshan Kriya/TM/Hinduism	Bangalore, India	Problems over pollution and environment	World's largest INRM/CCM
5	Astarte Education or the Angel School	Märtha Louise ♀	2007	Lutheran Protestant Church of Norway	Norway	The founder is the Princess of Norway and is an A-level celebrity. She 6is believed to 7be suffering from delusions about the external world.	ENRM

Sl. N ^o .	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
						Also, her school is based on bedtime lullabies which are also present in the mainstream Christianity. Communication with the dead, Silly religion.	
6	Aum Shinrikyo (Aum Teaching of Absolute Truth) [named changed to Aleph in 2000]	Matsumoto Chizuo alias Asahara Shoko (1955 -	1986	Mishmash of Astrology/Hinduism /Buddhism/Judeo-Christian Apocalyptic ideas/Daoism/Science Fiction/Science/ Technology	Tokyo, Japan	Stimulant drugs, Poison gas, Failed Doomsday prophecy, crimes like killing of its members, Murders, Terrorist attacks	ANRM
7	Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS)	Sahajanand Swami (1781 – 1830)/ Yagnapurushdas alias Shastri Maharaj (1865–1951)	1906	Religious non-dualism of Ramunaja/Vaishnava Bhakti/Krishna/Hinduism	Gujarat, India	—	INRM
8	Brahma Kumaris	Lekhraj Dada alias Prajapita Brahma (1876 – 1969)	1937	Hinduism	Sindh area, India/Pakistan	—	INRM
9	Branch Davidians	Victor Houteff	1919	Seventh Day Adventists/ Christianity	USA	Using Bible to justify the sexual excesses, Illegal weapons, Drugs	NRM

Sl. N°.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
10	Church of Satan (CoS)	Anton Szandor LaVey	1966	The Satanic Bible, The Satanic Rituals, The Satanic Witch, Philosophy of Hedonism	USA	Satanic Cult, Adherents are mostly mentally disturbed criminals	Magic/Witchcraft
11	Cochranian witchcraft	Robert Cochrane (1931–1966)	1960s	Ritual Magic	New Forest area of England/USA	❶	Pagan
12	Contemporary Shamanism or Female Neo-Shamanism or Nordic Paganism or Techno-Shamanism	Carlos Castaneda/ Mircea Eliade/Michael Harner/ Gro-Helen Tørum	1960s	Shamanism, Religion of Vikings, Norse tradition, Shamanism of Russia-Central America, Don Juan's Magical World View	California, USA	Usage of Psychotropic plants	Shaman/Neo-Pagan
13	Eckankar	Paul Twitchell (971 st Living Eck Master)	1965	Kirpal Singh's Ruhani Satsang/Sikhism/Hinduism	USA	Plagiarism,	NRM
14	Falun Gong or Falun Dafa (Dharma Wheel Practice)	Li Hongzhi	1992	Qigong/Buddhism/Taoism/Hinduism	Beijing, China	Founders' claim that he could make himself invisible, clairvoyance, levitation, the ability to see through his third eye, belief in Bad Karma and thence refusal of medical treatment, Alien theology, Apocalypse ideology,	NRM

Sl. Nº.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
15	Feminist witchcraft or Goddess spirituality			Wicca	New Forest area of England/USA	❶	Pagan
16	Foundation for A Course in Miracles (FACIM)	Dr Helen Schucman ♀ (1908 – 1981)	1965 – 1972	Christianity, New thought, Psychology, Parapsychology,	Columbia University, New York, USA	Not really a NRM but a Christian study course	Study Course
17	Free Children of God (FCOG)	David Brandt Berg (1919 – 1994)	1971	Christianity	USA	Sexual offences/Flirty Fishing/Sex with minors	NRM
18	Heathenry/Asatrú/Odinism/Northern Tradition/ Ring of Troth		1970s	Scandinavian or Germanic reconstructions, Icelandic Eddas and Sagas, beliefs, and customs of pre-Christian Northern Europe, Celtic rituals	New Forest area of England/USA	❶	Pagan
19	Heaven's Gate	Marshall Herff Applewhite (1931–1997)/ Bonnie Nettles (1927–1985)	1973	Ananda Marga, UFOs, Book of Revelation, Bible (Christian ideas), Hinduism, Gnosticism, Apocalyptic ideas	USA	Credit card fraud, Mass-suicide	NRM
20	International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON, or the Hare Krishna movement)	AC Bhaktivedanta Swami alias Prabhupada (1896 – 1977)	1960s	Bengali Gaudiya Vaisnava Tradition, Hinduism, claims to date back to Bengali Saint Krishna Chaitanya (1486 – 1533 CE)	India/USA	Egomania, Sex scandals, Embezzlement, Murder, Child abuse	INRM/CCM
21	Jesus People → Calvary Chapel → Vineyard Movements	Lonnie Frisbee/Chuck Smith/John Wimber/John Arnott	1967	Pentecostal church/Christianity	USA	Charismata, Animal Imitations	NRM

Sl. Nº.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
22	Kabbalah Center	Yehuda Ashlag/ Rabbi Philip Berg (1929 – 2013)	1922/ 1970s	Judaism	Israel	Purely commercial, large donors are more important than small donors	NRM
23	Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness (MSIA)	John-Roger Hinkins (1934 – 2014)	1971	Radha Soami Satsang, Beas/Hinduism + Metaphysical Church	Menlo Park, California, USA	Sexual Excesses of the founder, More like School-College Education	NRM
24	Odinist Fellowship	Else Christensen (1913–2005)	1969	Norse paganism, Tribal socialism, Aryan Supremacy theory, Occult traditions,	USA	Racist, Drug trafficking,	Pagan
25	Opus Dei	St Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer	1928	Roman Catholic Church	Madrid, Spain	Secrecy, very conservative, Close to right-wing regimes in Latin America, made popular in many-a-Dan-Brown novels	NRM
26	Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids	Ross Nicholls	1964	Modern Druid movement started in the 17 th & 18 th Centuries, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Western magical orders (Golden Dawn)	New Forest area of England/USA	❶	Pagan
27	Ordo Templi Orientis (Order of Oriental Templars)	Aleister Crowley		Satanism, Contemporary Paganism, Sex cult, Diabolical Christianity,	USA	Satanic Cult, Adherents are mostly mentally disturbed criminals	Magic/ Witchcraft

Sl. N°.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
				Obscenity, Danger, Witches, Islam, Judaism, Church of Satan, The Satanic Bible,			
28	Peoples Temple	Jim Jones/Marceline	1955	Christianity	USA	Excessive violence, Drugs, Paedophilia, Insanity of the leader, Mass murder-suicide	NRM
29	Radhasoami Religion/Movements/Radhasoami Satsang Beas	Shiv Dayal Singh alias Soami Ji Maharaj (1818 – 1878)/ Jaimal Singh (1839 – 1903)	1902	Sikhism/Hinduism/Shabd Yoga/Ruhani Sikhism/Some authors trace the origins to 13 th Century	Agra, India and Beas River, Punjab, India	Several splinter groups all claiming to be successors of the original Radhasoami Satsang, plenty of Gurus,	INRM
30	Raëlian religion	Claude Vorilhon alias Raël (1946 -)	1973	Bible, ETs, UFOs, Ancient Astronaut Theories, Apocalyptic Theories,	Clermont-Ferrand, France	Sexuality – Free love philosophy, Open masturbation, Nudism, Human cloning, belief in Clitocracy	ENRM
31	Rajneesh/Osho Movement/Osho Commune International	Chandra Mohan Jain alias Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh alias Osho (1931 – 1990)	1953	Jainism/Gurdjieff/ Zen Buddhism/Tantra/Upa nishads	Pune, India	Rajneesh-sanctioned prostitution, international drug trafficking, gold smuggling, Money laundering, Tax evasion, Psychotropic drugs,	INRM

Sl. N ^o .	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
32	Ramana Maharishi	Ramana Maharshi alias Silent Sage (1879–1950)	1896	Advaita Vedanta Tradition, Yoga, Hinduism	Mt. Arunachala, Vellore, TN, India	—	INRM/SDM/ HPM
33	Reiki/Usui Shiko Ryoho System of Healing/American Reiki Association/Radiance Technique Association International (RTAI)	Mikao Usui/Hayashi Chijuro/Takata Hawayo	Late 19 th Century & 1980	Christianity/ Buddhism/Origins can be	Kyoto, Japan/ Chicago, USA	—	NRM
34	Sahaja Yoga	Sri Mataji Nirmala Devi alias Mataji alias Divine Mother ♀ (1923 - 2011)	1970	Fall-out of Osho movement/ Hinduism/ Kundalini Yoga/Tantra	Central India	Financial offences, sexual abuse, threatening, violent behaviour	INRM
35	Sai Baba Movement	Sathya Sai Baba alias Sathya Narayana Raju (1926 – 2011)	1932/ 1963	Neo-Hinduism	Puttaparthi, India	Performing ‘faked’ materializations, unpredictable and capricious behaviour of the founder, sexual harassments,	INRM
36	Satanic Reds	Tani Jantsang, Philip Marsh	1997	Generational Satanism, Dark Doctrines of Hinduism/Islam/Chris tianity, Tantric rituals, Daoism, Buddhism, Judaism, Left-hand path	USA	Occult, Devil Worshippers, Adherents are mostly mentally disturbed criminals	Highly Esoteric Satanism
37	Scientology/ Church of Scientology (CoS)	Lafayette Ron Hubbard (1911 – 1986)	1952	Dianetics/Science Fiction	California, USA	Quackery, Money making scheme, vandalization of IRS, Harassment of CoS adherents, eccentric founder	NRM
38	Temple of Set (ToS)	Michael Aquino	1975	Egyptian God Set, Esoteric Satanism,	USA	Satanic Cult, Adherents are	Greater Black Magic

Sl. N°.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
				Western Esoterism, Mysticism, Left-Hand Path, belief in immortality, Prince of Darkness,		mostly mentally disturbed criminals	
39	The Church Universal and Triumphant or The Summit Lighthouse	Marcus Lyle "Mark" Prophet (1918 - 1973)	1958	Esoteric Teachings, Karma, Eastern Philosophy, Reincarnation, Agni Yoga, Christian Theology, New Age Teaching, I AM Religious Activity of 1930s, Teachings of Ascended Masters, believe that Jesus lived in India, belief in Aliens/ETs, Failed Prophecies	Washington DC, USA	Impending Catastrophe, Construction of Bomb shelters, Weapons,	NRM
40	The Five Percenters/Five-Percent Nation/The Nation of Gods and Earths	Clarence Edward Smith alias Clarence 13X	1960s	Nation of Islam	Harlem, New York, USA	Sexism, Degradation of Women,	AANRM
41	The Moorish Science Temple	Timothy Drew alias Noble Drew Ali (1886 – 1929)	1913	Mishmash of Theosophical ideas, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Ahmadiyya Mission of USA, Islam, and Christianity	USA	FBI perceived this movement as a threat to the nation in 1940s, Drinking & Gambling	AANRM
42	The Nation of Islam	Fard Mohammed alias Wali Fard	1930s	Moorish Science Temple and Islam	Detroit, USA	Got bifurcated on religious issues, Socioeconomic differences within members, questions on legitimacy and authority,	AANRM

Sl. Nº.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
						Drinking & Gambling	
43	The order of the Solar Temple (Ordre du Temple Solaire, or OTS) or La Pyramide or Hermetica Fraternitas Templi Universali	Joseph Di Mambro/ Luc Jouret	1973	Kali Yuga/dark age philosophy, Western esotericism, Neo-Templarism, Knights Templar, Rosicrucianism, New Age movement, Gnosis, Astrology, Ritual magic	Geneva, Switzerland	Extreme violence, Murder-Suicides	ENRM
44	The Power of the Spirits	Lilli Bendriss	2010	Native American Shamanism	Norway		Neo-shaman/Pagan
45	Theosophy/Theosophical Society	Helena Blavatsky (1831 – 1891) /Henry S Olcott (1832 – 1907)/Annie Beasant	1875	Hinduism, Buddhism, Eastern mysticism, Western occultism, Jainism, Kabbalah, Mythology of Atlantis & Lemuria,	USA and Madras, India	Schismatic offshoots	NRM
46	Transcendental Meditation (TM)	Swami Brahmananda Saraswati (1869 – 1953)/ Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1911 -2008)	1957	Advaita Vedanta tradition/Sidhi Yoga/Ayurveda/ Hinduism/Theory of Unified Field	Madras, India	Sexual (mis)conduct with female devotees, Schisms, Politics	INRM/CCM/NH M
47	Transcendentalism	Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1832)	1826	Unitarianism, Neo-Platonism, Hermetic Secret Traditions	USA	Single most provocative spiritual movement in American History	CCM
48	Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs)	Kenneth Arnold (1915 – 1984)	1947	Belief in Extra-terrestrials	Cascade Mountains, Washington, USA	Psychological imagination of the public (?), Nuts-and-bolts interpretations of	?

Sl. N°.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
						aerial phenomenon	
49	Universal Gnostic Church aka Gnostic Movement	Victor Manuel Gómez Rodríguez alias Samael Aun Weor (1917–77)	1949	Sahaja Maithuna, Sexual Alchemy, Tantric traditions, Western esoterism,	Mexico City, Mexico	—	SANRM
50	Universal Peace Federation (UPF)	Sun Myung Moon (1920 – 2012)	1954	Christianity	North Korea	Brainwashes people into joining	NRM
51	Vedanta Society	Narendranath Datta alias Swami Vivekananda (1862 – 1902)	1894	Teachings of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa & Swami Vivekananda	New York, USA	—	NRM
52	Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) or World Hindu Council	Shivram Shankar Apte (1907 – 1985)	1964	Hindu Nationalism	India	Hindu militancy	INRM/CCM
53	Wicca	Gerald Gardner	1930s	Coven of witches,	New Forest area of England/USA	❶	Pagan
54	Wotansvolk	David Lane (1938–2007), Katja Lane, Ron McVan	1995	Mishmash of aryan Supremacy theory, Odinism, Wotan consciousness (German word for Odin ⁺), Occult traditions, National Socialist Movement, Hinduism, Buddhism,	USA	Racist, Internal schism, Military arm, Preaching of war-plunder-sex,	Pagan
Source: (Helicon Publishing, 2005; Peter B. Clarke, 2005; James R. Lewis and Jesper Aa Petersen, 2014)							

Sl. N°.	NARCSRM	Founder	Year	Parent Religion	Location	Controversies	Type
<p>Note:</p> <p>All years are in Common Era (CE).</p> <p>Freemasonry here is defined as the intuitive sympathy or fellow feeling between people with something in common. Something like you and I are in the "same-sinking-boat" kind of a camaraderie.</p> <p>Falun Gong's Qigong is a breathing technique originally encouraged by the Chinese Government in 1950s to overcome a shortage of medical doctors in their country. Perhaps, AoL's Sudharshan Kriya is like Qigong.</p> <p>"Pagan" is defined for the present as any religion/cult/person entertaining religious beliefs other than those of the mainstream world religions (most notably Judaism, Christianity, or Islam). "Paganism" and "Wicca" are many-a-time used interchangeably. Pagans believe in Polytheism, Pantheism (natural world is the divine) and/or Panentheism (divinity contains the natural world but also extends beyond it).</p> <p>❶ = Numerous internal conflicts, Authenticity, Satanic Panic created in 1980s and 1990s, Christianity and Pagans are always at loggerheads, widespread discrimination of Pagans by Christians, Radical Feminism. However, Druids and Witches are projected positively in England. + = Odin in Germanic mythology is the Supreme God of Creation, Victory and Death; Wednesday is named after him. <i>Satsang</i> = congregation(s) or devotional meetings or teaching community.</p> <p>♀ — Female/Woman; aka — also known as; ANRM — Asian New Religious Movement; AANRM — Afro-American New Religious Movement; CCM — Counter-Cultural Movement; ENRM — European New Religious Movement; ET — Extra-terrestrials; HPM — Human Potential Movement; INRM — Indian-Oriented New Religious Movement; NE — Northeast; NHM — Neo Hindu Movement; NRM — New Religious Movement; SANRM — South American New Religious Movement; SDM — Self-development movement; TM — Transcendental Meditation; UFO — Unidentified Flying Objects; Other abbreviations and symbols carry their usual significance.</p>							