

JUL - SEP 2018

# THE ACROPOLITAN

*A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering*

## FEATURE

Idealism, Philosophy, Volunteering  
Three Pathways for Change

Brushed by God's Presence

My Mind & I

Ethics and The Value of Sport

Schedule of Public Events

  
NEW ACROPOLIS





**PHILOSOPHY**

**CULTURE**

**VOLUNTEERING**

# THE ACROPOLITAN

In Ancient Greece, the Acropolis referred to the sacred centre, that lay higher than the rest of the city. It was a place of inspiration; a bridge that enabled citizens to connect to the divine, evoking the expression of the higher human virtues. Deriving inspiration from its purpose, The Acropolitan Magazine serves as a tribute to every citizen yearning for these higher principles in all aspects of Life: **Truth, Beauty, Justice, Goodness.**

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## THE ACROPOLITAN

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### Editorial Department

Editor-in-Chief: Yaron Barzilay  
Editor: Harianto H Mehta  
Editorial Team: Sangeeta Iyer, Kurush Dordi, Manjula Nanavati, Sukesh Motwani, Malini Nair

### Publication & Production

Harianto H Mehta

### Graphic Design

Janki Shah, Neha Mehta  
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### New Acropolis

**Cultural Organization** (India)  
Yaron Barzilay  
National Director  
A-0 Connaught Mansions  
Opp. Colaba Post Office  
Colaba, Mumbai 400005  
Tel: +91 22 2216 3712  
Email: [info@acropolis.org.in](mailto:info@acropolis.org.in)  
Web: [www.acropolis.org.in](http://www.acropolis.org.in)

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**PHILOSOPHY** when practical, helps us to know and improve ourselves. It is a way of life, not an intellectual attitude, committed to the best aspirations of humanity.

**CULTURE** broadens our understanding of life, and fosters a spirit of mutual respect and solidarity, strengthening human dignity and facilitating harmonious coexistence.

**VOLUNTEERING** is the natural expression of a spirit of union with life and humanity, which manifests in the practice of values such as unselfishness, commitment and striving for the common good.



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## From The Editorial Desk

*Dear Reader,*

As all of nature comes to full bloom in the peak of the summer, we witness the magic of life in all its glorious expression! It’s as if the world around eagerly invites us to explore the presence of an all-permeating metaphysical intelligence; we must but learn to see and listen.

In our investigation, we might stumble upon the imprint of this intelligence at sacred locations around the globe. Or perhaps an inward journey might lead us to an inner sacredness – expressed as devotion in the yearning of ancient Indian artists, as objective simplicity in the words of Haiku poetry, or the fraternal spirit fostered among fellow athletes. How beautiful that Life leaves bread crumbs for us, to mark the path to encounter her mysteries!

In this issue of The Acropolitan Magazine we invite you to explore the pathways for change, as we aspire to raise our consciousness, individually and collectively, to manifest our fullest potentials. Let us together Discover, Awaken, and Transform!

Hariato H Mehta, *Editor.*

# Homeopathy:

## Curing the Personal and the Collective

By Manjula Nanavati

Homeopathy as a system of healing has always generated considerable controversy and deeply divided opinions. On the one hand there are those who refuse any other form of medicine, and swear by homeopathy from personal experience. There are others that decry it as a sham, calling all homeopaths charlatans. Intellectuals and scientists have publicly denounced it as a viable healing system, despite the admission that patients do seem to *somehow* benefit from it.

Nonetheless Homeopathy has seen tremendous resurgence in the last few decades, with an estimated over 200 million people being treated in over 40 countries worldwide.<sup>(9)</sup> Today it is included in the National Health Systems of a number of European, South American and Asian countries as a legitimate practice of alternative medicine.

Lubina Mohamed Agarwal, licentiate from The College of Homeopathy (London), has been practicing for the past ten years. In addition, she provides supervision and support to students of Homeopathy, and runs AVESA, a monthly group therapy and meditation class. Over several conversations she shared her views and philosophy of Homeopathy built upon her academic background and nearly 20 years of experience with her patients. Armed with books from her own personal reference collection, and a multitude of scholarly articles which she guided me through, the fascinating history, methodology and philosophy of Homeopathy emerged.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the promising young German Dr. Samuel Hahnemann gave up his practice of medicine, disillusioned and disturbed. The medical profession at the time was immature and dangerous, employing dangerous techniques such as bloodletting, use of blood sucking leeches, and highly toxic substances such as mercury, lead and arsenic, which were all standard procedure. Ironically, patients often died from the treatment rather than the disease.

Modern allopathic medicine treats the body as a collection of discrete parts that become diseased and in need of treatment or healing; much like a machine, which because of wear-and-tear needs its components to be oiled, refurbished or replaced.



Image Courtesy/ by Peter Geymayer / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY PD

Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann

Disgusted with these practices, increasingly concerned about causing harm, and helpless in the face of his own children's suffering, Hahnemann began translating foreign medical texts into German to earn a living. One day, a text about the use of Cinchona bark (today known for its high quinine content) in the treatment of malaria caught his eye. It stated that its bitter and astringent quality was what cured the disease. Hahnemann knew from experience, however, that other bitter and astringent medicines did not cure malaria. And so, it was clear that Cinchona bark had some other unique property that had not yet been highlighted.

In an experiment whose ripple effect would continue over the next two hundred years, he decided to test Cinchona bark on himself. To his surprise he found that the bark produced in him the exact symptoms of malaria: fever, muscle and joint pain, drowsiness, anxiety and palpitation. Could this be the reason it was an effective cure?

Over the next 6 years Hahnemann set out to document many different substances testing them on himself, and on others. Finally, he released his findings to the medical community, explaining the Law of Similars: *Similia Similibus Curentur*, or "like may be cured by like", a concept earlier theorized by Aristotle and Paracelsus. Homeopathy was born.

"A substance that causes, in a healthy person symptoms similar to those of a disease state, can cure a sick person in that diseased state." (Hahnemann)

Hahnemann continued to refine his theory and practice over the next few years. Concerned with the side effects of his doses, he experimented with diluting them but found that this also decreased their healing power. In the course of his experiments he stumbled upon the process of POTENTISATION which involved TRITURATION (grinding an insoluble substance with lactose to make it soluble), DILUTION (precisely calibrated formulas involving dilutions to the powers of multiples of 10, 100, and 50,000), and SUCCUSSION (agitating the solutions violently between successive dilutions).

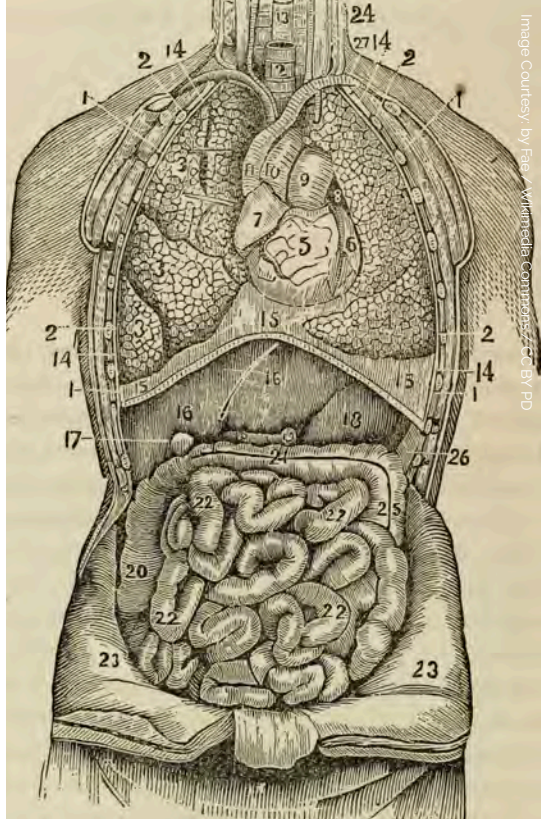
Hahnemann found that while diluting the substance reduced its toxicity, succussion released its dormant energy, so that the more dilute the solution the more powerful its potency! How does a solution so dilute that it contains not even a molecule of the original substance, affect healing? If it does not act chemically, then what is the healing mechanism involved?

The exact answer to this question is still being debated, but what is generally accepted is that, much like a magnet that transfers its magnetic power to a paperclip upon contact, electromagnetic information is passed from a substance to the liquid in the course of dilutions and succussions. This energetic information is the key.

Hahnemann believed that all living things have a vital energy that maintains life. Different cultures have called it *Qui*, *Chi* or *Prana*. Hahnemann called it the Vital Force; that energy that attunes the functions of the entire body so that it integrates into a harmonious whole.



Says Lubina, "At the root of most healing practices, is the principle that the human body and all life processes arise from a nonmaterial vital principle that cannot be explained entirely as physical and chemical phenomena. The dynamic vital force vibrates at a specific frequency to keep the body in order, and free from disease. Illness only results when this force is disturbed by some external or internal stress, environmental toxins, poor lifestyle, diet or inherited problems. When the body produces symptoms, these symptoms are the body's way of restoring order. And cure can only come from a drug or a symbol that can resonate at the same frequency as the life force, causing an amplification to occur, enabling it to heal again."



Modern allopathic medicine treats the body as a collection of discrete parts that become diseased and in need of treatment or healing; much like a machine, which because of wear-and-tear needs its components to be oiled, refurbished or replaced. Usually, all diseases are treated in accordance to Aristotle's Law of Opposites. So, if you have diarrhoea, a doctor might prescribe a drug that induces constipation to relieve the patient of the symptoms of diarrhoea.

Homeopathy looks at the symptoms as a result of a much deeper malaise, a disruption of the energetic Vital Force, which can be corrected only via energetic medicine, in order to trigger the Vital Force into a self-healing response.

Says Lubina, "Homeopathy is holistic in its methodology. As a homeopath my task is to apply the Law of Similars. When a patient visits me for a consultation, first they undergo a physical examination, which is followed by an in-depth interview. I spend time counselling them to help them understand the process. I view disease as a conflict. And getting the patient to understand and transform the conflicts they face can be empowering and critical to good health. I require subjective information about the patient's illness, medical history, lifestyle, belief systems, fears, dreams, family history, habits, relationships, significant life events, emotions, desires etc..information they may never have shared with anyone else. Thus, I am able to build an individual pattern, or a symptom picture, which I can then match to a remedy picture.

This method applies whether it is bronchitis or a chronic illness like arthritis. The patient's individual symptoms, not the disease, is treated because we are only susceptible to disease if the life force is not flowing with vitality. Susceptibility is unique to each individual. It is our ability to defend ourselves and keep our equilibrium, when exposed to stimuli. The bacteria or virus can only affect the body with a weakened vital force; they are not the cause of disease. If a particular bacteria or virus was solely responsible for particular symptoms, everyone would be 'susceptible' to that disease and present the exact same symptoms. So, strengthening the life force is paramount."

Although sceptic science today demands measurable, replicable, empirical proof, we do not yet have the instruments or knowledge to fully comprehend healing at the energetic level. What is irrefutable, however, is that electromagnetic signals comprise the basic language of communication between atoms and molecules, between cells and tissues. Furthermore, electromagnetic waves can impart energy to the material with which they interact.

Modern Science has often lagged behind, plodding slowly to gather verifiable data. On the other hand, intuition has swiftly and unerringly flown into the heart of the answer. Intuition is what drove Archimedes to run naked down the street shrieking "Eureka!" before he painstakingly worked out the mathematical formulae that led to the concept of specific gravity. Intuition is what led Newton to recognize what really was happening when he saw an apple falling off a tree, which led to the formulation of the idea of the Earth's gravitational force. But it was 111 years later that his theory was finally experimentally proved.

Intuition is what drove Archimedes to run naked down the street shrieking "Eureka!" before he painstakingly worked out the mathematical formulae that led to the concept of specific gravity.

A vast amount of cross-disciplinary scientific research in such varied fields as Biophysics, Biochemistry, Physiology, Pharmacology, Botany, Zoology, to name just a few, is still underway to 'scientifically' explain the mechanism of the action of Homeopathy. The Information Medicine Hypothesis investigates the biophysics of water, storage of information by water and the ability of biological systems to process that information.<sup>(2)</sup> The phenomena of "Resonance and Chaos Control" suggests that the human body is composed of multiple harmoniously interacting systems, each with its unique inherent vibrations. Symptoms of disease are displayed when one or more of these systems get stuck in a dissonant repeated pattern loop. To effect a cure, only a very small amount of energy that resonates with the affected system is enough to amplify the vibration needed to break out of the rigid loop.

Says Lubina, "There are several challenges facing those testing Homeopathy. Primarily, as you can now appreciate, it is an individualistic method and one size does not fit all. Even with what you might call a fairly universal condition like the flu, the homeopath will prescribe a remedy that is individual to the patient's symptoms. This remedy choice relies on the practitioner's skill and experience. Therefore, meta-analyses, (a statistical approach of combining the results of several studies), outcome studies, and epidemiological research like The Linde Study, (Lancet 1997) are being preferred, which found that on average homeopathy was 250% more effective than a placebo. A rare and enviable result for any medicine test."

Today a multitude of blind, placebo-controlled studies and clinical trials based on emerging research and knowledge are being reviewed. Yet the theory and philosophy of Homeopathy (far from being "new age") can be traced back to medieval alchemists like Albert Magnus, Agrippa Von Nettsheim and Paracelsus. Many of the metals, acids and minerals proved by Hahnemann were originally introduced into medicine by Paracelsus in his *Law of Signatures*. Aristotle was

the first to speak of invoking a Vital Principal, though Hippocrates before him believed that the human body was capable of rebalancing and healing itself. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the title of Hahnemann's life work, *The Organon of Medicine*, echoes Aristotle's *The Organon*. Indeed, Hahnemann's *Law of Similars* resonates with the Hermetic Law of Correspondence which states, "As above, so below".



As a Freemason, Hahnemann was likely familiar with Western Esoteric Traditions like the Knight Templars and the Rosicrucians. He was well-read, spoke English, French, Italian, Greek and Latin, and was proficient in Arabic, Syriac, Chaldaic and Hebrew. Though he never publicly acknowledged any mentors it seems clear that Hahnemann, using experience, intuition, and scientific experimentation, conceived his system of Homeopathy, which is completely synchronous with a weighty body of work postulated by a long line of eminent philosophers, alchemists and physicians before him.

Since antiquity, almost all ancient traditions have recognized that human beings are far more than just what appears on the physical plane; that at our essence exists something invisible and incorporeal, which manifests on in the physical. We are much more than flesh and bone, indeed more than the thoughts and emotions that drive us. The ancient Greeks spoke of the interaction of the Soma, Psyche and Nous as the Body, Mind and Spirit, whose balanced interaction was essential for a healthy, vital life. Many Eastern esoteric traditions speak of the sevenfold constitution of man, a complex of *rupa* and *arupa* planes, of which the physical plane is only the most gross and dense aspect of ourselves. If Life and growth and health are an inter-play of the material and spiritual, should we not be turning to cures that heal ruptures at much deeper, much finer, much subtler levels, rather than simply react to symptoms?

Perhaps there are life lessons that we can distill from Hahnemann's principles of healing. How might we apply to our lives a law such as "Like amplifies Like"? As if curing an ailment manifesting in the physical body, in order to construct a world with more love, perhaps the key lies in bringing love from within, rather than fix external symptoms! In this manner, if we recognize that what we lack in ourselves is harmony, and in our societies is the spirit of unity, we can take heart that bringing them into our lives, in even the smallest most subtle ways, can amplify and have a powerful and dynamic outcome, potentially changing our world. ★★★

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# Idealism, Philosophy, Volunteering Three Pathways for Change

**By Gilad Sommer**

*National Director of New Acropolis in the USA, Midwest.*

Many of us wish to change the world. But how can it be done?

First of all, it is obvious we are not just seeking to change the world – the world is changing anyhow, regardless of what we do. The ancient philosophers wisely stated that the only permanent thing in the world is change.

In reality, it is not change we seek, it is a certain, positive, change – a diversion of the river's flow, an orientation towards a brighter future for humanity.

Second, none of us by ourselves can really make a meaningful impact.

Although we are all familiar with names of great people who have motivated great historical changes, great people are few and exceptional. That is why they are great.

Notwithstanding, even these great people did not work alone. They were a tip of an iceberg, the peak of a mountain, but never an isolated island.

So what are the pathways to make this change happen?

We must be idealists, because only an idealist can imagine a better world.

We must be philosophers, because only a lover of wisdom, free of subjectivity and prejudice, can find the right means to realize one's ideals.

We must be volunteers, because this new world will not be built by thoughts, prayers or wishes, but only by action – action realized freely, efficiently and with the best intentions.

Let's explore these pathways a little bit more in depth.

Yaron Barzilay (New Acropolis), Zarina Screwvala (Swades), and Sonam Wangchuk (HIAL) gather for a discussion on "Empowering Real Change." (Mumbai, 2017)

## **Idealism**

An Idealist intuits the gap between what is and what can be. An idealist sees with the heart, imagines a possible future – dreams of a better world.

Idealism was the bread and water of Socrates, Plato and the classical philosophy schools, it was at the root of the Renaissance, the United States, and the civil rights movements.

It is at the heart of every fighter for justice and every true artist and religious leader.

Without Idealism there is no progress. Progress not in the sense of new technologies, but in the true sense of human progress – self-knowledge and self-realization.





New Acropolis member volunteers cleaning mangroves in Bandra (Mumbai).

### Philosophy

Philosophy is the love of wisdom. The philosopher aspires to recognize truth and to live by it.

Philosophy is the opposite of dogma and prejudice. A philosopher never gets attached to opinions, putting knowledge under the constant test of reality and the inner spotlight of reason.

Just like Socrates, philosophers are the gadflies of society, always pointing out the falseness, and at the same time they give an example of an ethical life.

### Volunteering

Volunteering today is conceived as an act done without monetary compensation, but the origin of the word is the latin voluntarius, which means of one's free will, and refers to an action that is taken voluntarily – whether one is paid for it or not is of secondary importance.

But in order to act of our own free will, we must first free our will.

Acting out of a desire for compensation, of a desire to be liked, out of fear, flattery or coercion, are just a few examples of how our will can be enslaved by the lower aspects of our nature.

### An Integrated Approach

Idealism, Philosophy, Volunteering – these three pathways must be integrated to achieve useful, positive and long-lasting results.

To be an idealist without the reflections of philosophy, is a recipe for fanaticism. Many fanatics may actually intuit the archetypal-spiritual realities, and in their core want to make the world a better place, but without the reflection and inner investigation of philosophy, their efforts are tainted by their own personal inclinations, preconceptions and prejudice. They do not examine their beliefs in the light of reason, and therefore their image of a better world becomes a reflection of their own subjective imaginings and past-experiences.

Let's not forget that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

*Only a lover of wisdom, free of subjectivity and prejudice, can find the right means to realize one's ideals.*

## *Idealism and philosophy without volunteering, is like a soul without a body.*

When joined with philosophy, Idealism acknowledges that the first and most important change must take place within ourselves. We can't ask others to do what we ourselves cannot.

We dream of world peace, but are unable to make peace with our neighbours or our parents. We speak against violence and for acceptance, but woe to the person who disagrees with us. We speak for compassion towards animals, but treat our fellow human beings with contempt.

Making a change in the world is like making a ripple in the water, it begins in the center, and the center for each one of us is always our selves.

Volunteering without philosophy is also useless, as it becomes a sisyphian task, like a doctor who repeatedly treats the symptoms but is never able to treat the disease. This is how we get endless wars on hunger, poverty, drugs and war itself, which never seem to go anywhere or to make real progress.

When great leaders such as the Buddha or Jesus, Martin Luther King, or Mahatma Gandhi, sought to help humanity, they tried to transmit certain knowledge to help people understand themselves and live better, in other words, they taught philosophy. It is always better to teach a hungry man to fish, than to give him fish.

Finally, Idealism and philosophy without volunteering, is like a soul without a body.

Without volunteering, idealism and philosophy remain a good-willed, but impractical, approach to life. It doesn't lead to any practical results and remains no more than fanciful daydreams. The power of the mind is certain, but we cannot think our way towards a better world.

In the history of humanity, no positive change has ever taken place without the efficient action of good-willed individuals, groups and communities, who knew how to integrate Idealism, Philosophy and Volunteering.

★★★

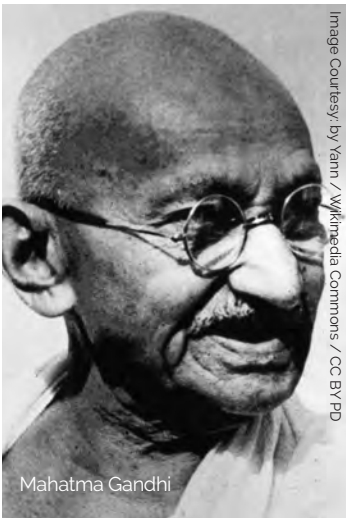


Image Courtesy: by Yann / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY PD

Mahatma Gandhi



# The “Art” of Devotion

By Kanika Mehra

In the wee hours of the morning, Emperor Akbar awoke to the sweet melodious singing of Haridas, guru of the celebrated singer of his court, Tansen. Haridas had been singing a dawn raga. Overwhelmed, Akbar inquired why Tansen was not able to sing like his guru Haridas. Tansen replied that there was one big difference between him and his teacher; while he sang for his lord Akbar, The Great, Haridas sang for the Lord of the universe – God.

Tansen refers to the devotional element that elevates Haridas's art to a higher experience, the realm of the divine, the soul-stirring eternal and infinite. This aspect of devotion has inspired ancient Indian artists across all genres and can be seen in various expressions of dance, poetry, music, architecture and painting. In doing so, it is evident that ancient Indian artists deliberately aspired to capture the invisible and unlimited through visible and limited means, thus creating a bridge between the formless and the form. The devotion we are talking about here is not towards a personal god or a religious entity, but the divine that represents the Ideal, the Absolute.



Devotion is a form of love, a powerful force of attraction that propels one forward, not with blind belief, but with a conviction that comes from firsthand experience, from knowing. It is noteworthy to mention that the object of this unique form of love need not be tangible or quantifiable. It fuels the artist who is on an endless path leading to the Mystery in order to capture a deeper and ever more accurate grasp of the archetype of Beauty. Therefore, devotion is a key that enables the aspirant to move from what is known and familiar, to the realm of the unknown, the unlimited and eternal.

Dr. Anand Kentish Coomaraswamy said that Indian art is essentially religious, adding that the conscious aim of Indian art was the imitation of Divinity. The great challenge, therefore, was to express in finite terms the Infinite and Unconditioned nature of the Divine. Sankaracarya prayed: “O Lord, pardon my

three sins: I have in contemplation clothed in form Thyself that has no form; I have in praise described Thee who dost transcend all qualities; and in visiting shrines I have ignored Thine omnipresence."<sup>(1)</sup> The aspiration is to touch the *arupa*, the intangible, using tangible means. Hence, art for art's sake was unknown in India.

Devotion is a form of love,  
a powerful force of attraction  
that propels one forward,  
not with blind belief, but  
with a conviction that comes  
from firsthand experience,  
from knowing.

One must observe the holistic quality about Indian art: a unity of many forms and artistic experiences. Whether it is miniature painting, music, or rock cut temples, each is a testament to the strength of devotion and the persistence of the artist. Dr. Annie Besant beautifully states, "Indian Art is a blossom of a tree of Divine Wisdom, full of suggestions from worlds invisible, striving to express the ineffable, and it can never be understood merely by the emotional and the intellectual; only in the light of the spirit can its inner significance be glimpsed."<sup>(2)</sup> It follows that a true artist must deliberately try to ensure that his art not become an expression of his opinions, thoughts and feelings, since these would only adulterate and limit the infinite principle of Beauty, making it subjective and partial. Instead, his art must act as a channel through which to objectively capture and transmit the principle of Beauty.

It is said therefore, that many ancient Indian artists never saw themselves as the creators of their art. Countless anonymous artists often worked together on a single artwork. They did not assume ownership of their creations which were intended as offerings. Instead, the artist himself was unimportant; a humble channel of transmission, whereas the Divine is the only true creator.

So influential was this devotional aspect, also in the realm of poetry and literature that an entire genre known as the *bhakti* movement developed to celebrate this devotion, in an almost trance-like surrender to the divine, which was sometimes related to as a teacher, sometimes a parent, or at times even as a lover. Through the *bhakti* movement we see poets reaching out to the mysterious, the beautiful and the sacred. Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of this is the 15<sup>th</sup> century poet Kabir who wrote beautiful *dohas*, verses, to exemplify his devotion.



Ajanta, Maharashtra (India).

*What is seen is not the truth.  
What is, cannot be said.  
Trust comes not without the seeing,  
Nor understanding without words.  
The wise comprehends with knowledge.  
To the ignorant it is but a wonder.  
Some worship the formless God,  
Some worship his various forms.  
In what way he is beyond these attributes  
Only the knower knows.  
That music cannot be written,  
How can then be the notes?  
Says Kabir, Awareness alone will overcome illusion.*

In the genre of dance too, we see that all of the classical systems were intended as offerings to be performed exclusively in temples, as a way of emulating the presiding deity and channelizing its associated archetypes through movement and sentiments. The 12th century Thillai Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram (Tamil Nadu) depicts sculptures in 108 *Bharatnatyam* poses, intricately carved in rectangular panels. Furthermore, the 18 arms of the central Nataraja sculpture express *Bharatnatyam* mudras, as if the language of dance is employed to reach out to what the deity represents.

On the occasion of World Philosophy Day, *Mohini Attam* dance exponent Miti Desai quotes scripture to describe her own understanding of the role of dance: "From the formless comes the form, and the form takes you back to the formless." She explains that classical Indian dance is a ladder that might give you a glimpse of the formless, if one might dare to climb its rungs. Traditionally, dance is known as *Brahmananda-sahodara*, the twin brother of Brahma the Creator himself.



Ancient cultures proposed a variety of techniques to channelize divinity in our lives.. Ancient Egypt speaks of the concept of *Ma'at* – to do justice in life, by daring to fulfill one's potential; or one might say in the Indian tradition to actualize one's *Svadharmā*. Similarly, the Buddha prescribed the 8-fold path.

Essentially these are different ways to speak of living life as a philosopher, which classical traditions universally seem to offer. I sometimes wonder: what if we too might yearn for beauty in our own lives as the ancient artists did? Could there possibly be a way to make our own lives works of art? By using our lives as a canvas, and virtues as our palette of paints, each person has the potential to become the artist of his own life. Instead of exercising our vocal chords and practicing the musical notes, we can do our *riyaaz*, our daily practice, by practicing virtues to reveal the beauty and ethics that lay in our hearts. Perhaps we could use the inspiration from the ancient artists to live life with a devotion to Truth and objectivity, beyond the ego and subjective opinions or beliefs that cause separation. Perhaps we can be driven by a devotion to Truth, and fulfill a purpose, to become a channel of beauty and goodness. ★★★

By using our lives as a canvas,  
and virtues as our palette of  
paints, each person has the  
potential to become the artist  
of his own life.

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# Brushed by God's Presence

By Kurush Dordi

For millennia, specific locations around the world have been regarded with fascination and sacredness. Despite all the materialistic opulence and grandeur of some of the most recent human architectural achievements, there remains something awe inspiring about many ancient structures that have stood their ground for thousands of years. For many, even the most grandiose five-star properties of Dubai look pale when compared to the magnificence of the Angkor Wat Temple Complex in Cambodia for instance. Such ancient monuments are characterized by various symbolic elements that lend themselves to their sacred function; dedication to a particular deity, use of specific colours, use of specific building materials, architectural design, and perhaps above all, the importance associated to their chosen location itself.



Image Courtesy: By Bosmanaravin / Wikimedia Commons | CC0 1.0

The Romanian scholar of religion, Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), coined the term “hierophany” to describe what he felt was the particular character of specific places “brushed by God’s presence.” Aboriginal peoples also believe that certain places become sacred due to the touch of the Creator; these locations were tended to through the practice of certain rites of purification, prayer, fasting and abstinence. While no particular rites were necessary in order to make a place sacred, excessive interference by human beings could cause adulteration.

A sacred location is often associated with a specific mountain or hill, some rocks, lakes, or meadows and can even encompass entire landscapes or ecosystems. They are believed to be animated and imbued by spirits, sometimes known as elementals and regarded as gods by many ancient traditions. Perhaps the Kabbalah alludes to this richness of life which modern man is blind to, when it suggests that the wise man who knows to read nature doesn’t need the wisdom of books. Could it be that the ancient traditions that we might today dismiss as pagan, perhaps understood the secrets of nature more deeply than we can imagine or empirically perceive today?

For the ancients, these sacred locations functioned as bridges between the physical and the metaphysical worlds, offering access to the realm of the divine,

and offering the opportunity of transformation. It is for this reason perhaps, that such locations were often chosen for rites of passage such as tribal initiation, marriage and funerary rituals. Many were also chosen as pilgrimage destinations, considered centres for healing, both for the body, as well as the soul.

In the Enneads, the philosopher Plotinus explains the purpose of sacred locations: "Those ancient sages who sought to secure the presence of divine beings by the erection of shrines and statues, showed insight into the nature of the All; they perceived that, though the Soul is everywhere traceable, its presence will be secured all the more readily when an appropriate receptacle is elaborated, a place especially capable of receiving some portion or phase of it, something reproducing it, or representing it and serving like a mirror to catch an image of it."<sup>3</sup>



Image Courtesy: By Audhina | Wikimedia Commons | PD

Rano Raraku, Easter Island

### The Celestial Mirror

Early civilisations recognized that the sun, the moon, planets and the stars each correlate with various astronomical cycles. Almost universally the most important moments of the solar cycle were considered to be the equinoxes (Latin: equal nights) and the solstices (Latin: sun standing still), which for many ancient civilisations marked the division of the year into the four seasons. Each was closely observed with periodic fluctuations in the Earth's energies, resulting in the earliest proto-religious festivals celebrated by early man. Folklore and mythology richly document the importance of these moments. As man became sedentary, these four seasons also became associated with planting and harvesting.

In order to time these special moments, across the world through history, civilizations dedicated themselves to building a range of monuments at specific locations. Some of the most ancient and mathematically complex examples of these are the Megalithic constructions estimated to have been erected between 4000 and 1500 BCE. They range from single to multiple vertically erected boulders known as menhirs and dolmens which are sometimes part of enormous earthen mounds with rock-lined passages and hidden chambers, and of course mysterious rings, of which Stonehenge and Avebury are the most famous examples. Esoterically, it is thought that the construction of such sacred sites was seen as an imitation of the forces of creation.

There are an estimated nine hundred such rings in the British Isles alone and the research over the past thirty years which has combined Archaeology, Astronomy, along with Geophysical energy monitoring devices, has demonstrated that they had likely functioned as both astronomical observation devices and ceremonial centres. Professor Alexander Thom of Oxford University began meticulously surveying megalithic sites in 1934. Initially, his findings were not well received by the academia because it turned conventional archaeology on its head. It showed that the mathematical, astronomical and engineering ability of these ancient megalithic builders was

far more advanced than had been thought, predating capabilities that would later emerge in Europe by more than a thousand years.

Many of these Megalithic structures seem to be situated at carefully chosen sites that show unique geothermal activity, or mark the presence of underground water, specific minerals, or magnetic/telluric currents. While these are all naturally occurring phenomena, it is thought that ancient builders knew to locate and harness their energy. Some suggest that such megaliths served the function of bridging between the Earth's telluric currents and celestial stellar currents. Marking these important locations released these energies operating like acupuncture needles meant to release or channelize these forces for specific purposes.

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Other examples of similar megalithic structures are Tatetsukilike in Okayama (Japan), the Beforo monument in the Central African Republic, the famous Moai statues of Easter Island and many more are found all through the Indian sub-continent as well.

#### **Sacred Geometry, Location and Architecture**

In Order lies Beauty. And in Beauty lies Order. This almost makes geometry, geography and architecture best friends. Virtually all ancient sacred architecture was built with considerations of geometry and geography, wherein natural proportions and ratios became the axis through which to mediate between the human and divine realms. Sacred architecture thus derived was meant to make the human realm harmonious with the divine.

Most esoteric traditions seem to have worked with geometry as a deep mystic language by which to understand and emulate the secrets of the universe. For example, the *Sthapatya Veda*, an ancient Indian treatise on architecture, advised that a temple and a city should ideally be a reflection of the cosmos. Interestingly, it is observed that Harappan cities had well-defined grids, and were constructed as per instructions from various Vedic manuals.<sup>(2)</sup> The square shape represented the heavens, with alignment to the four cardinal directions, as well as the two solstices and the equinoxes.

It is also noteworthy that at the centre of many ancient cities lay their most elevated part, which was also the most meaningful, and usually housed an important temple, or other place of inspiration such as a library or place of governance. The rest of the city was constructed around this sacred centre, which both physically and symbolically guarded what was deemed most essential at its heart.



## Sacred Spaces in Nature

If all of nature is sacred, and all living beings are sacred, then how can a specific place or thing be designated as especially more sacred? Consider, for instance, the four cardinal directions: North, South, East and West. While each is equally important, the East has always had a specific sacred importance that emerges from the symbolic reference to the daily rising sun, mysteriously revitalizing the earth. Hence we find the sanctum sanctorum of many sacred structures facing the East.

Various cultures associated special importance to mountains, often considered the abode of the gods, symbolically capturing the elevation of the spirit.

Similarly water bodies have also often been associated with the sacred, as if reminiscent of the many myths that speak of the emergence of creation from a vast primordial ocean. The Roman philosopher Seneca declared, "Where a spring rises or water flows, there ought we to build altars and offer sacrifices." This was often followed. In ancient Egyptian mythology the sun-god *Atum (Ra)* is said to have reposed on the primordial ocean (*Nun*). In Babylonian mythology the primordial gods all arose from the fusion of salt water (*Tiamat*) and sweet water (*Apsu*). The holy books of the Hindus explain the churning of the ocean as the source of all creation. Natural springs, rivers, lakes and wells continue to be perceived, therefore, as full of that creative potential, which translates in religious traditions as dwellings of supernatural beings. In other instances, fountains took on the meaning of eternal youth.

So what do all these examples mean for us? The consciousness of sacred places is by itself an indication of the aspiration of ancient man, to find special areas in which the link to the divine was more accessible. This demonstrates a drive to harmonize with the sacred. To this end, important monuments were erected at specific locations, as a means by which to express this yearning. Ancient man set off on pilgrimages to these locations, to heal himself, to attain inner harmony between his own material and spiritual dimensions. Perhaps we might revive such an aspiration, and develop the sensitivity to recognize and treasure the mysterious and meaningful secrets of the Earth's natural geography. ★★★

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Uluru, Australia

# Haiku: Abundance in Brevity

By Trishya Screwvala

The Japanese poetic form of *haiku*, is a very succinct poem that exemplifies simplicity. It is one of the most recognizable and popular forms of poetry today and has travelled far beyond Japan's shores, with writers composing *haiku* in Spanish, English and even Bengali as seen in the works of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. It originally developed out of a highly formal, collaborative verse called *renga*, popular at middle class gatherings in the 7th century.<sup>(1)</sup> The starting verse of *renga*, known as *hokku*, comprised a mere 17 *onji*, or "sound symbols", and followed a traditional rhythmic pattern of three phrases each having 5 syllables, 7 syllables and 5 syllables respectively. Years later, this introductory verse came to stand its own ground and began to be known as *haiku*. Despite its sparseness, the *haiku* fosters a deep appreciation for life in all its manifestations. What is it about this concise poetic form that offers such profound insight and wisdom?

Matsuo Bashō, a pioneer of *haiku* and one of its greatest masters, spoke of poetry as the product of unity between a poet and an experience; the verse becomes a medium by which the poet attempts to transmit the experience. Basho says, "Go to the pine if you want to learn about the pine, or to the bamboo if you want to learn about the bamboo. And in doing so, you must leave your subjective preoccupation with yourself... However well phrased your poetry may be, if your feeling is not natural - if the object and yourself are separate - then your poetry is not true poetry but merely your subjective counterfeit."<sup>(2)</sup> Unlike more ornamental poetry of previous classical eras, here Basho speaks of the need for the poet to be transparent, to let go the ego, the separate sense of self-identity, and especially one's illusory feelings and sensations. In doing so, the reader might gain access to a window directly into the essential nature of the object or a moment.

It is said that many aspects of Japanese culture, including the tea ceremony, *ikebana*, and the Samurai code of conduct, are marked with a deep reverence for form. Some perceive the strict adherence to a precise number of syllables in *haiku*, or the need to include a *kigo*, a "season word", that suggests the time of year, as rigid and restrictive. While modern *haiku* poets are more fluid when it comes to these conventions, the traditional *haiku* beautifully demonstrates that the form is important insofar as it is a vehicle by which to touch the essence of an experience. Stripped of everything except the absolutely essential, the poet is pushed to bring into focus the single moment with all its nuances and detail, which is lost the moment our mind dilutes it with a thought, idea or emotion. It is this razor sharp focus from being acutely conscious and whole-heartedly present in the here and now that enables the poet to express the innermost nature of an object or an experience. Perhaps this is what makes the *haiku* stand out from other poetic forms.



Image Courtesy by Thomas Millock / unsplash / CCO

Another characteristic aspect of the Japanese tradition is its strong sense of connection to nature. A budding cherry blossom or the onset of winter is not perceived as a phenomenon that is disconnected from human values or sentiments. Every reference to nature in *haiku* is therefore an invitation to experience a sense of unity with that which is much larger than our individual selves. It serves as a reminder of the transience of life, and encourages the reader to align in harmony with his own changing circumstances.

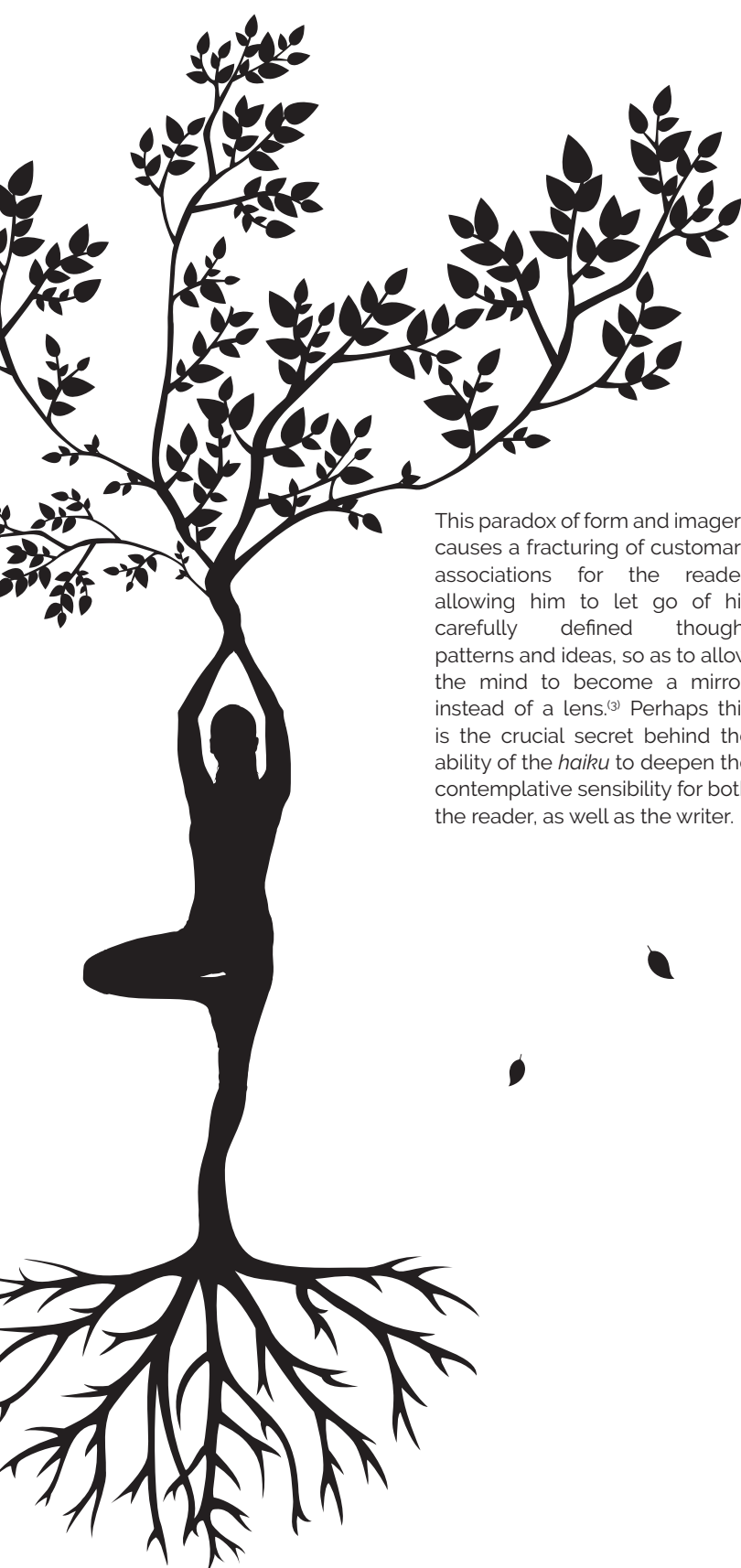
*Life: a solitary butterfly  
swaying unsteadily on a slender  
stalk of grass,  
nothing more. But so exquisite!*  
- Nishiyama Soin

*the owner of the cherry blossoms  
turns to compost  
for the trees*  
- Utsu

In addition to the *kigo*, often the traditional *haiku* includes a *kireji*, or "cutting word", in the last line of the poem, which allows the poet to emphasize or add a completely new dimension to a seemingly mundane, everyday object or image. The *kireji* enables the reader to experience a phenomenon that might otherwise pass completely unnoticed. And the reader does so with greater meaning and awareness, unveiling the extraordinary which is latent in every seemingly ordinary moment.

*a yellow paper  
zig-zags to the floor  
bare trees*  
- William J Higginson

It might seem like a contradiction, with a heavily structured form on one hand, and a sense of space and "emptiness"- a central tenet of Zen Buddhism - on the other. Since the *haiku* originated as an opening stanza of a much longer *renga*, the form often gives the impression of an incomplete rhythm, leaving ample space for what is left unsaid. There is an eloquence and meditative quality to the silence that invites the reader to read between the lines and participate, evoking his own experiences, pushing him to actively perceive the richness of the poet's expression, rather than being told what to think or feel, or where to draw one's attention to.



This paradox of form and imagery causes a fracturing of customary associations for the reader, allowing him to let go of his carefully defined thought patterns and ideas, so as to allow the mind to become a mirror, instead of a lens.<sup>(3)</sup> Perhaps this is the crucial secret behind the ability of the *haiku* to deepen the contemplative sensibility for both the reader, as well as the writer.

It is evident that the *haiku* uniquely favors the transmission of a genuine experience for the reader, over a poet's linguistic agility, and in its brevity demands discipline, along with a deep sensitivity and ability to unite with the world around us. The practice of *haiku* is therefore incorporates the art of paying attention. The wisdom that lies shrouded in its words comes not from wittiness, but from the writer's ability to observe and express things as they are, and in the reader's ability to grasp the inner essence of things. Like every great art form, the process of both reading and writing *haiku* is an outward journey, having roots that are distinctly inward. ★★★

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# My Mind & I

By Sangeeta Iyer

Does my mind exist outside of me? Who am I really, if not my mind? Many of us have experienced the predicament of almost having a face-off within ourselves, as if there were two people debating within us; one of whom we eventually align with. Sometimes, we're even surprised to find that our mind seems to have a mind of its own! "I don't know what came over me," we say puzzled, "how could I have behaved so out of character?" It is not the way that we would have chosen to behave in our better moments. And perhaps therein lies a clue: our better moments...when we would have acted from a higher self. It feels unlike us because in actuality, our mind is not really who we are. It is a tool that we have, but it is not us.

So who then, are we really? What could be beyond our thoughts, our feelings, and our body? Many traditions speak of a soul, an incorporeal non-material essence that animates the body and gives it life. It is believed that this part, which is neither physical nor tangible, continues to exist even after the body has died. This part of us – as many of us believe is the most significant part – is eternal and infinite, not temporary and limited like the body.

In response to the question, "Do you have a soul?" philosophers in ancient times would say, "No – I am the soul; what I have, is a body." A soul...the word itself stirs something higher within us. It makes us want to grasp this indefinable something that is so pure and subtle that it's hard to put into words and define by language. So we wonder: what is this higher self that most traditions speak of as the classic antithesis to matter, called spirit?

Greek philosophers separate what most of us call the mind from the spirit, naming our psychological world of thoughts and feelings as Psyche and our higher self, or spirit, as Nous. They clearly differentiate between the motives and the manifestations of each. They say that our Psyche functions like a mirror and can reflect either our base self, filled with animalistic impulses of 'me' above all – and the bundle of emotions that come along with it, fueled

*The lesser mind is an illusionist  
– a master craftsman in the  
art of manipulation when left  
unsteered, rather than  
imaginative and inspiring...it  
is the same entity that has the  
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as well as Hitler's holocaust.*

by the ego...or it can reflect our larger, altruistic, human self that recognizes itself as part of humanity, of a larger 'we' and feels one with all life driven by a harmony-seeking spirit.

Similar to this differentiation is the description in Indian philosophy that puts forth the concept of two levels of mind: Manas, the objective, discerning mind of reason belonging to our higher self...and Kama Manas, the subjective mind under the influence of Kama, or personal desire. Clouded with it in fact, and rendered a slave to its bidding. This aspect of the mind belongs to the lower self and is not in reality us; it is only a vehicle, a tool meant to be used to help us think, organize, and calculate. But it seems to fall to autopilot at times, or worse, like a runaway train that we just don't seem to have the power to stop even when we know it's heading for trouble. Like that fit of anger which we know is going to strain the relationship further, and instead of mending, has exactly the opposite effect of what we truly intended. Or that surge of selfishness that makes us do something we regret – but we end up doing it anyway. Or even simply postponing things repeatedly, because they seem too tiresome to do – until they spiral out of control and we're caught up in the aftermath of the storm that needn't have been. So we stand by helplessly and watch ourselves fall into the same traps again and again, as we ignore the Manas and allow the Kama Manas to take charge. And true to its nature, laden with desires, it drags us down. This is when we feel that our mind is our enemy.

Apart from over-thinking, which gets us into all sorts of trouble, a false sense of calm is also a common pitfall. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop," they say. If the Kama Manas is not channelized towards something productive and positive, it will veer towards mischievous thoughts. So we have to keep it on the right track. The Buddha called it the 'monkey-mind'; something that we need to tame and train for it to be productive at the level of its immense potential, which it rarely exhibits. The lesser mind is an illusionist – a master craftsman in the art of manipulation when left unsteered, rather than imaginative and inspiring. Because it is the same entity that has the power to produce Homer's Iliad as well as Hitler's holocaust.

If the mind has such immense power, do we all have the potential to produce Shakespeare's verses or Spielberg's films? What about the talent to compose Mozart's melodies and create Michelangelo's masterpieces? We might wonder whether that muse of creativity resides in us all or if it is a blessing bestowed upon just a chosen few. While I believe everyone has this potential, perhaps we would be unable to grasp the concept of gravity by ourselves for instance, if Newton had not first realized and explained it to us. So what can we do, to make that leap and bridge the chasm from limited knowledge into that vast and infinite mindscape that the great people around the world have exhibited across various streams?

What could help are the three 'I's: Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition.



Image Courtesy: by ElisaRiva / pixabay / CCO

To begin with, we could exercise our imagination, an ability that is different from fantasy in that it is not just wishful thinking, but thoughtful wishing. It flexes our ability to envision a scenario that doesn't exist yet, but which we can see taking shape in our mind's eye. It could be an innovation that progresses our understanding of the world, like the telescope which enables us to see countless constellations, or a design that reduces our time and effort – like an airplane or a mobile phone. And yet, while these inventions are a great help, we can't say that they are good in themselves; it depends on how we use them. We need to use these efficient tools to free up time in order to think about things beyond our own comforts and to take a look at the need of the world around us. It's the same with the mind. By itself, it is one of our greatest treasures; it analyzes and calculates. But most importantly, it can imagine.

*Connect with Manas because that is the start of expressing our human potential – freedom from a mind clouded with desire to one that sees the harmony and wants to be a part of it. And it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to live this opportunity fully.*

With humility we might realize that none of our ideas are truly original. The originals already exist as archetypes and we only channelize the glimpse that we have of them...the small part that we have recognized and understood and are therefore able to share, with some added spice of our own expression of it. But the idea already exists and always has.

Therefore, it also takes inspiration to lift our minds towards the higher... towards Manas, our innate ability to think objectively and see the big picture. Something needs to move our spirit and lift our gaze beyond the material confines of daily life...to inspire us to really look at the infinity of the cosmos around us and grasp our role within it; to enable us to see the limitations of our earthly forms, while learning to recognize the priceless opportunities to grow beyond. To see ourselves not as 5-foot-something bodies but as unlimited minds that put a man on the Moon and Mangalyaan on Mars. To remember the might of a Mahatma Gandhi, a Martin Luther King, a Nelson Mandela and the 12-year-young Malala – all of whom won a resounding victory against injustice without firing a single shot, or a volley of hurtful words even, but by the strength of their spirit.

If we can reach out to and connect with our Manas, this other dimension within ourselves, we could make our mind our strongest ally. We could both be on the same side instead of one half having to constantly tame and subdue the other. We would see that it's only the ego wearing an intellectual mask, parading around as the master, and choose to hand over the reins to the charioteer instead of allowing the horses to pull us to different directions. And the compass to enable us to do this is ethics - that inner moral code that helps us make the right, just and noble choice, time after time.

Delia Steinberg Guzman, the International Director of New Acropolis says, "It doesn't matter that it's not fashionable to be good, honest, just, prudent, courteous, brave, generous and dignified; the truth is that, without these and other similar characteristics, there will be no quality of life. And the facts demonstrate this. In the spiritual aspect, without falling into fanatical and intransigent formulas, some answers have to be offered to the questions of the soul, which wants to know what we are doing here in the world, where we come

from and where we are going...It's true, we all want quality of life. But we want to give life its real and broad meaning and make sure that this quality improves us in all aspects. Then we will be more efficient, happier, more intelligent, a little wiser, and we will be able to wear the badge of human beings with pride." <sup>(1)</sup>

This is the great battle, the Mahabharata that Arjuna fought, ostensibly defending a kingdom against cousins-turned-enemies, but symbolically representing an inner battle between our virtues and the myriad desires that threaten to obscure them.

And so, in the effort to un-hinder our minds and allow us to take the great leap towards brilliance, the third quality that we need to develop is intuition. A kind of effortless knowing of what the right thing to do is, because it draws on deep roots of wisdom within ourselves. Dictionary.com defines it thus: "Intuition is a process that gives us the ability to know something directly without analytic reasoning, bridging the gap between the conscious and nonconscious parts of our mind, and also between instinct and reason." <sup>(2)</sup>

And what intuition can really help us to do is connect our mind with our heart. Because somewhere between them is that indefinable thing called the conscience. And it always guides us or prods us into doing the right thing...into making an ethical choice.

What could help us is to connect with Manas because that is the start of expressing our human potential – freedom from a mind clouded with desire to one that sees the harmony and wants to be a part of it. And it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to live this opportunity fully. It is also the way to make our world a better place, with each one of us bringing forth the best of ourselves and creating a ripple effect around us until drop by drop, it becomes a better ocean... and person by person, we become a better humanity. ★★★

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Image Courtesy/ by Ryoji Wata / Unsplash / CCo



# Ethics and The Value of Sport

By Suhail Chandhok

Despite our uniquely personal DNA there is one facet that arrives with each and every one of us, within days of our opening our eyes to the world for the first time – our innate nature to want to PLAY! Whether it is a doll, a ball, cars, rattles or imaginary battles, we are given the license to run with it, without a care in the world. As life moves forward, however, our innate desire to play is either nurtured, or it is sadly blunted or even annihilated in many cases.

It is also from that same moment that we begin to absorb the role of ethics. Whether while jumping rope or playing a game of hide & seek, games provide meaningful opportunities to realize the distinction between right and wrong. Will you honestly keep your eyes closed while counting to ten while your friends hide? Will you hold the rope steady, or will you change your grip based on who's jumping? Will you hide away a card in a simple game of Uno when no one is watching? How we respond to these questions as young individuals shapes our sense of morality and fairness.

It is the beauty of sport that morals and ethics are tested through every moment of playing, as while pushing one's physical and emotional boundaries. Sport offers artificially constructed rules to adhere to. In a way, sport gives us the training ground for the game called Life, in which the same concept of fair play applies, in the absence of umpires, cameras, or whistles to keep us in check.

Ethics relate to the innate universal principles that enable us to discern between right and wrong. In sport, ethics are defined by four key virtues: fairness, integrity, responsibility and respect. Different sports, however, have different codes of fair play. And ethics therefore, become blurry for many. In rugby or ice hockey, for example, some degree of physical tackling is tolerated, even cheered on. At most it might earn you only a few minutes in the sin bin. In football or cricket though, fists flying is likely to result in a ban at the very least. Similarly, cricketers claiming catches that they haven't made, are liable to be fined for bringing the game into disrepute. But in baseball when even the best-behaved fielders do this, it is the responsibility of the umpires to make the right call.

Sport gives us the training ground for the game called Life, in which the same concept of fair play applies, in the absence of umpires, cameras, or whistles to keep us in check.

Are sporting ethics then, entirely relative and changeable from one sport to the next? Or are there timeless principles that apply across sports? The term 'Sport' arises from the French adage, *desporter* or *se desporter*, meaning to amuse oneself. "It's only a game," we often say. But whether we are out on the field, with 20 cameras and millions watching, or we are out on a Sunday morning with only 3 friends on a Golf course, we each come face to face with the desire to compete, a word that is derived from the Latin root *com petere*, meaning to strive or seek together; a shared aspiration of excellence. The Olympic motto, "Citius, Altius, Fortius", translates to "Faster, Higher, Stronger", and philosophically expresses each athlete's aspiration to express the best of his or her own potential. It is a victory of the mind that enables one to surpass the limitations of the body when a marathon runner crosses the finish line. It is a triumph of determination when a wrestler rises each time he is pounded down. It is a celebration of a collective team spirit when a football team scores a winning goal after four years of hard work. And it is an expression of harmony when synchronized swimmers accomplish a joint routine with immaculate grace and poise. Clearly, sport is a powerful medium through which to manifest our inner strength of character, which we collectively aspire for, but find difficult to express in our day-to-day lives.



Image courtesy by Jeffrey Lin / Unsplash / CCO

The FIFA World Cup, the Olympic Games or the Cricket World Cup might come about only every four years. But with it emerge the sporting dreams that bind together millions of people from around the world. Pope Francis stated that engaging in sport rouses us to go beyond ourselves and our self interests in a manner that trains the spirit in sacrifice and fosters loyalty, camaraderie, and respect for rules. The ideals of discipline, hard work, fair play, excellence and team spirit are shared across various sports and nurture a closeness that breaks down borders, and transcends cultural and ethnic differences — values that we might use as a force that could unite us in our times.

The Olympics have provided some unforgettable moments of outstanding sportsmanship and fraternity over the decades, illustrating the sheer power of the human spirit.

Over the last decade, however, young aspirants have found themselves struggling to identify with, let alone admire, the virtues of sports and professional athletes...and with good reason. Scandals from ball tampering, match-fixing and downright cheating, to multiple champions pulling out all the stops to win at any cost, like Lance Armstrong's doping shame, have brought to light hard questions about ethics in sports. Dr. Rober Voy, a medical officer who was on the US Olympic Committee surveyed a number of elite athletes who were asked if they would hypothetically be willing to take a special pill that would guarantee them an Olympic gold medal even if they knew this pill would kill them within a year. Over 50 percent of the athletes surveyed responded affirmatively. Today, with fame and the monetization of sports, even top athletes are sometimes motivated to win at all costs. This is perhaps why a few good men, men like Rahul Dravid or and Adam Gilchrist are revered; athletes who have walked off the field when the ball snicked their bat, regardless of whether the umpire heard it or not, are revered amongst several bigger "stars".

This might also explain the meteoric and unprecedented rise in popularity of the simple sport of Kabaddi. As yet relatively untouched by commercialization, Kabaddi hinges on the honesty of its players to admit being tagged. The sport's innocence and purity is immediately apparent in the humility of the players and their respect for the soil, the sport, their teammates and even their opponents.

We perhaps tend to undervalue the synergy between sport and human growth. Motorsport legend Sir John Whitmore said that sport is a "microcosm of life" where we go through all the emotions of starting nowhere and getting somewhere, through highs and lows, with all of it compressed into each season, and each career. "And they are all things that you are going to go through in your whole life later. I think they're just easier things to deal with later because you've experienced them before in a heightened manner," he says. Crucially, he states that because sport is so "compressed" in terms of time, the sensations involved are so intense and amplified, that it forces us to grow internally at a more rapid pace to deal with challenges, grooming us for life ahead. It is interesting that the ancient Romans often conferred the title of 'god' on their champions for a single day. The critical point here is that it was for only a day. It is a formidable achievement, real and powerful. But with a focus solely on winning rather than imbibing eternal values, one can easily fall to vanity, forgetting that being a champion is delicate and fragile.

Sport allows us to conquer ourselves through grit, perseverance and the cultivation of a pure heart. Plato says, "the mere athlete is too brutal and philistine, the mere intellectual unstable and spiritless. The right education must tune the strings of the body and mind to perfect spiritual harmony." To me, the illustration of brilliance on the field is a reflection of the inner moral fiber that expresses the strength of one's moral compass outwardly. Even as an audience, we celebrate the thirst, the skill and the determination of our cherished athletes. Perhaps we can use the reminder that sport demands our higher selves to test the very depths of our own characters, and the ethics we identify with. And that is when the power of sport is at its finest: a magnificent school of life, which supports human beings, young and old, men or women, on the path towards personal development, reaching out to the highest ideals of our human potential. ★★★

*Suhail Chandhok was born into 3 generations of Sport and is a former professional cricketer who plied his trade across India, Australia and the UK. He is a Friend of New Acropolis and currently one of India's leading TV Presenters & Sports Commentators.*



In sport, ethics are defined by four key virtues: fairness, integrity, responsibility and respect.

# Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

## COLABA

Talk

**7 JUL  
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm  
Free Admission



by Chandan Halken on Unsplash

## Lessons from Nature

The sunrise of course doesn't care if we watch it or not. It will keep on being beautiful even if no one bothers to look at it. - Gene Amole

To observe life with a keen eye is to recognize that there is magic in all of nature. Moments like a quiet sunset or a meaningful gaze turned towards a starry night sky are sometimes our most treasured memories.

In a quest to know more about life and its infinite depth, there is much to learn from nature. Together we will explore what are principles that govern nature, and maybe recognize that that we too can find harmony with nature and within our own lives!

## KHAR

Talk

**7 JUL  
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm  
Free Admission



## The Way of the Samurai

While in the very act of fighting a gruesome battle, it is said that the Samurai were able to recite beautiful poetry. These warrior people of Japan were far from being violent and savages, but governed by strict codes of conduct founded on human principles such as fraternity, courage and discipline. In fact, their expert skill is often attributed to their inner strength of character.

Join us as we explore how their warrior spirit can inspire us in our own battles of daily life.



# Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

## KHAR

Talk

**14 JUL  
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm

Free Admission



## Transforming Challenges into Opportunities!

What challenges did I face today? Most of us would have a long list in response to this question. If we face challenges all the time, maybe challenges are our conversation with life, our opportunities to grow, but we are not so familiar with how to see this clearly.

How then do we learn to thrive in the face of challenges, even using them as an opportunity to propel us forward? We will explore how seeming dead ends may be the keys to new beginnings, to see how challenges are disguised opportunities!

## COLABA

Talk

**28 JUL  
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm

Free Admission



## Invisible Egypt

Today the word 'invisible' is often taken to mean 'non-existent'. But for the ancient Egyptians, the invisible was the cause of the visible and therefore, in a sense, more important. They realised that the form of a person, what they wear and how they appear is only a reflection of something internal which we cannot see. And likewise that the things that are most important to us, such as life and death, justice, thoughts and feelings, are all invisible. So they dedicated their civilization to a profound investigation – and living experience of the invisible side of life.

**COLABA (MAIN CENTER)**

A-0 Ground Fl, Connaught Mansion,  
Colaba (Opp. Colaba Post Office),  
Mumbai  
T: +91 22 2216 3712

**KHAR**

Parvati Nivas, 1st Floor Anand Vihar Society,  
19A Road. Khar-Danda Road,  
Khar (W), Mumbai  
T: +91 98330 33239

**KHAR**

Talk  
**18 AUG  
SATURDAY**  
6-8 pm  
Free Admission



**Daring to Choose**

Our choices determine how happy or satisfied we are in our life. Yet it is difficult to make choices since what is right and what is comfortable to do, don't always match. So then how do we make truly meaningful choices? In decisive moments in life, more than all, we need to dare to choose!

Join us as we explore how daring to choose can be a secret to true freedom!

**COLABA**

Talk  
**21 AUG  
TUESDAY**  
7:30-9.30 pm  
Free Admission



**Deepen your  
Concentration,  
Improve your Life!**

Are we ruled by 30-second commercials and stories told in 140 characters? Do half-baked ideas leave us jumping from one half-done project to another? Are we too busy to seek the meaning in the work that we do?

It is too easy to get lost in doing too much. Join us for a practical session to discover how we can learn to guide our own concentration and bring more focus and depth in our lives.

# Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

## COLABA & KHAR

Open House

**28 AUG**

Course Starts

**4 SEP**

**TUESDAY**

7:30-9:30 pm

Pre-Registration  
Required



## Living Philosophy: Discover, Awaken, Transform

This is a 15-week introductory course on practical philosophy that establishes the basic foundation of every aspiring Philosopher. The course weaves a journey through a comparative study of principles of Eastern and Western Civilization, to develop sensitivity towards the eternal principles of life.

Together we will explore the Mystery that is hidden in life and what it means to be a philosopher. The course is to inspire you to ask the great questions of life, and to give you tools to face personal and collective challenges.

## COLABA

Lecture - Workshop

**1 SEP**

**SATURDAY**

6-8 pm

Free Admission



## The Art of Observation

Often what is most important is written between the lines.

To be able to metaphorically read between the lines, requires us to develop our observation which is much more than just to see; it is to be able to look into the depth and perceive the cause of what is seen.

In this Lecture - Workshop we will attempt to sharpen our ability to observe using the medium of Photography and develop an orientation to look at a dimensions that we perhaps didn't consider before.



## COLABA (MAIN CENTER)

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Mumbai  
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## KHAR

Parvati Nivas, 1st Floor Anand Vihar Society,  
19A Road. Khar-Danda Road,  
Khar (W), Mumbai  
T: +91 98330 33239

## KHAR

Talk

**1 SEP**  
**SATURDAY**

6-8 pm  
Free Admission



## Knowing the Hero: Hercules

More than any other hero, Greek mythology celebrates the glorious feats of the mighty Hercules. Half-god half-man, Hercules is especially famed for the completion of 12 tasks, through which he fulfills the purpose of his life.

Join us as we investigate how this hero is still relevant to our lives today.

## COLABA

Guided Discussion

**8 SEP**  
**SATURDAY**

6-8 pm  
Free Admission



## How to Be the Masters of Our Destiny?

What makes some people realize and fulfill their potential while others are left with a sense of missing out? Many of us feel that we are not able to fulfill our true and full potential, and question if this is in our hands or is this our "Destiny" that we have no ability to impact.

Science provides us with conclusive evidence that the human potential is far greater than what we know today, but only few manage to get close to it. Join us in this open discussion with the Director of New Acropolis India, Yaron Barzilay on the possibilities of living with a sense of fulfillment and taking charge of our lives.



# Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

## KHAR

Talk  
**15 SEP**  
**SATURDAY**  
 6-8 pm  
 Free Admission



## Man's Role in the Universe

*"You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop." – Rumi*

To think of the human being in the context of all of the universe is mind boggling! Do we have a role to play in the grand scheme? If so, what is it and how do we come to understand it, while dealing with the enormity of the Universe?

Together we will refer to the legacy of many ancient philosophers, and to see if the answer to this question requires a shift in our perspective towards life and the universe!

## COLABA

Talk  
**29 SEP**  
**SATURDAY**  
 6-8 pm  
 Free Admission



## Haiku: Wisdom in Simplicity

The Japanese poetic form of *haiku* is a succinct and simple poem consisting of only 17 syllables. Yet this form evokes a deep appreciation for life in all its manifestations. Perhaps more than a measure of linguistic ability, the practice of haiku is the art of paying attention - by capturing the extraordinary in the seemingly ordinary moment. Join us for an Interactive Talk to explore a deeper aspect of this art form and investigate how the craft of haiku can allow us to view ourselves and the world around us with more depth and sensitivity/beauty.

To all yearning philosophers residing in Pune, we have good news for you...  
Stay tuned for public talks, cultural activities, and philosophy courses.

COMING SOON

New Acropolis  
PUNE BRANCH!



Enquiries: [shraddha.shetty@acropolis.org](mailto:shraddha.shetty@acropolis.org)

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# LIVING PHILOSOPHY

Discover. Awaken. Transform.

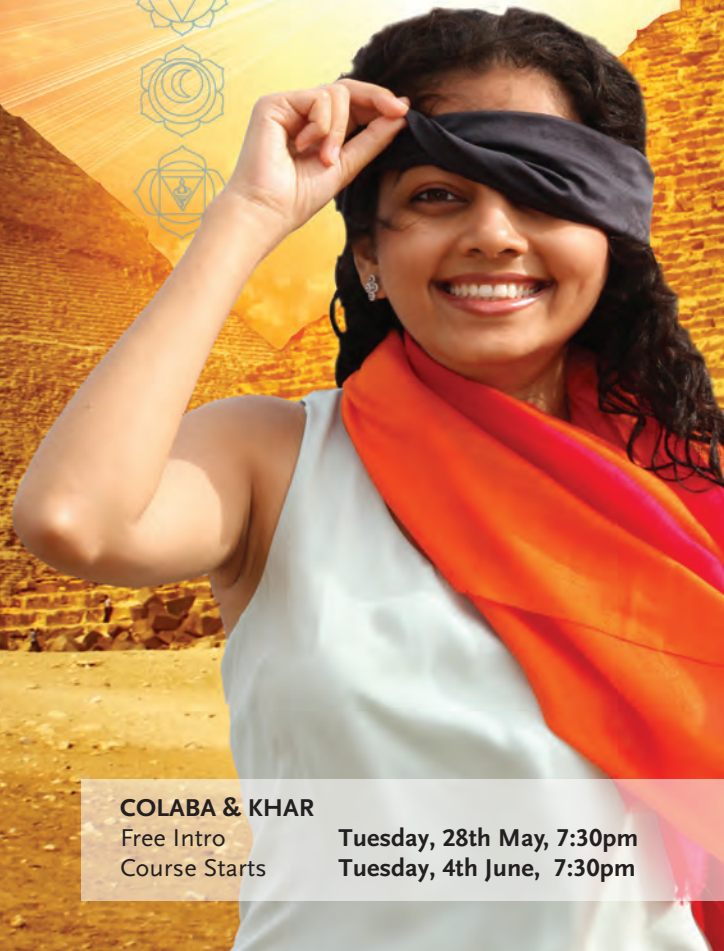
A 30-hour Introductory Philosophy Course (15 Sessions)



“The LP course is a real awakening. You learn from various cultures like ancient Egypt, Greece, China, India...and your eyes are opened to essential insights from around the world. But the most significant journey is the one you make within yourself, inspired by these teachings.” –*Sangeeta Iyer*

“New Acropolis’ Living Philosophy course opened my mind and heart to a whole new way of viewing the world and living life. It brought back a sense of wonder, meaning and purpose, and showed me that each one of us can be so much more than what we limit ourselves to.” –*Trishya Screwvala*

“After joining this course, I had a different perspective towards life. The ancient myths and wisdom, which were just stories for me till then, slowly started making sense and I started connecting them with my own life. This gave me a glimpse of how much I need to work on my internal growth, in order to become a better person. This course was the ignition to change the course of my life. :)” –*Samarth Shetty*



## COLABA & KHAR

Free Intro  
Course Starts

Tuesday, 28th May, 7:30pm  
Tuesday, 4th June, 7:30pm



FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL

+91.22.2216.3712

EMAIL

info@acropolis.org.in

VISIT

www.acropolis.org.in

Main Center: A-0 Connaught Mansions. Opp. Colaba Post Office. Colaba, Mumbai.