THEACROPOLITAN

A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering

In the Light of Truth

The Myth of Unending Progress

Impact of an Idealist: Ela Bhatt

Schedule of Public Events





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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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

In our times today, we know how to do many many things. We have accomplished extraordinary technological feats, medical advancements, and lightening speed communication. And we expect, that our civilization is destined for unending progress.

The question we must ask, however, is: What among all these many things that we know to do, is really worth doing? Is it not the answer to this question that will ultimately make our lives more meaningful? To be able to discern what is really right, in light of the Truth, is perhaps the vital element that might give us the direction we seek.

Let us therefore, lead by example, and dare to discover the ethical dimension of our human potential. Let us face our fears, and dare to toil, with the altruistic dream of a new and better world in our hearts. Let us become little heroes, fueling the flame of hope, as we give shape to our audacious dream. Let us Discover, Awaken, and Transform...ourselves, and our world.

Harianto H Mehta, Editor.



The Eternal Seeker

By Delia Steinberg Guzmán

President of International Organization New Acropolis

One cannot speak of philosophy without speaking of the philosopher; one cannot mention the world of ideas without speaking of the person who is capable of living those ideas. So, if we had to highlight one of the fundamental characteristics of the philosopher, the lover of wisdom, we would say that such a person has the qualities of the eternal seeker. He is a selfconqueror, who will only stop seeking when he has finally reached wisdom; and we don't know whether, even then, he will go on to seek other things, which are incomprehensible and inaccessible for us today.

The philosopher is like a tracking dog running through fields and forests, over mountains and along the rivers of life, following some very special tracks. He is seeking the real knowledge of all things. He is seeking himself. He is seeking truth. In a word, he is seeking God as the universal root.

But why is his path so long and difficult? Is Truth not to be found in the world in which we live? Can God not be seen here? Is it necessary to cross an infinite desert – our manifested life, our historical environment, our circumstances – to find what we are looking for beyond these frontiers? No.

We believe that God and Truth are to be found in this world. in our environment, in our achievements and in our problems. But they are covered by a thick layer of mud. They are disquised under grotesque figures, to the extent that on many occasions lies occupy the place of Truth and no one seems to be able to unmask them; and inner emptiness and unbelief take the place of the natural impulses of the human spirit.

The skill of the philosopher in search of wisdom lies in finding in the here and now, in the midst of errors and ignorance, in the midst of darkness and traps, those hidden realities that are waiting for the efforts of valiant human beings to bring them to light, so that they can shine with all their power.

It is necessary to search, to search tirelessly, without wasting the slightest opportunity of discovering light in the darkness, of finding some drops of happiness even in the midst of sorrows, a particle of Truth amongst all the confusion.

The important thing is the goal, it is to use the senses and the intelligence as reliable guides to reach it. A philosopher is someone who knows what they are looking for and how to achieve it. ***



The Myth of Unending Progress

By Prof. Jorge Angel Livraga

Founder and first President of International Organization New Acropolis

The term derives from the Latin "progressus" which means, quite simply, the action of going forward. It is a mere illusion of the senses, intoxicated with hope, the supposing that every forward movement is synonymous with improvement, happiness and joy.

The arithmetic progression of 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. does not mean that 2 is better than 1. If we humanize the process, it is evident that everything will depend on the quality rather than the number, for only a fool would prefer to be given two beatings instead of one. And equally foolish would be the one who, being able to receive two gifts, prefers one, if the natures of the two are similar.

From the philosophical observation of nature we can reasonably deduce that progress must be harmonious, global and ecological, if we want it to be really positive. And also intelligent, for someone who walks in an unswervingly straight line towards a wall, without taking the trouble to see first of all where the door is, would get his nose broken without getting to where he wanted to go. To come to a halt – and even to retrace our steps – if it is dictated by wisdom, will bring us more perfection than to go blindly forward, since life is a kind of labyrinth where precaution is better than passion. The myth of Theseus and the thread of Ariadne is an ancient but still valid example.

From the philosophical observation of nature we can reasonably deduce that progress must be harmonious, global and ecological, if we want it to be really positive.

The psychological analysis of History, the sufficiently well-known part of the human past, shows us a more or less naked struggle between two equally disastrous tendencies: one, which fears anything new and grows a dense forest of stagnating and restricting attitudes of pseudoreligious or superstitious kinds; the other, whose advance turns into what the philosophers of Existentialism called the "flight forwards".

Both are expressions of ignorance, and from ignorance come fear and all the misfortunes of Man, as was stated by the teaching of Siddharta Gotama, the Buddha, some 2000 years ago.

Insecurity makes man move, and insecurity makes

him stop. As an example of this phenomenon, it will be useful to analyse the psychology of the Middle Ages, in what is called the "Mediterranean Basin" where our Western civilization began.

After the collapse of the classical world in the form of the Roman Empire, its very destroyers or accomplices to that destruction developed a guilt complex which made them live in apprehension of an end of the world, a last judgement which they believed to be imminent. However paradoxical it may seem and be, this terror of the future and at the same time the urge to rush towards it, like an act of collective suicide motivated by the agony of suspense, placed energy in conflict with matter. The Middle Ages offers us the terrifying spectacle of the highest spiritual expressions combined with materialisms made metaphysical in the belied of the resurrection of the flesh.

But along another path, away from the alwaysutopian intellectualisms, the current of life manifested itself. There were re-inventions and re-discoveries. We now know that horse-shoes for cavalry use did not come into being in the year 1000, but had already been used by the Romans, who also used extra-heavy ones to pound down recently laid roads, and the Phoenicians and Vikings reached America long before Columbus. But these and many other re-discoveries sharpened people's inventiveness, and the aptly named "Renaissance" expresses in its title a whole phenomenon of reconversion, not only materially, but psychologically, mentally and spiritually.

But progress was no longer harmonious as it had been in the classical world. The myth of the need for permanent progress came into being. And true proportions were abandoned in the insatiable search for a happiness outside every chronological and natural setting.

The individual was pushed onwards faster and faster by his circumstances and dissolved into the crowd. Number prevailed over quality and speed over finding the right direction.

Image Courtesy by Markus Spisire Authorities (Cook

Machines and the new extra-human sources of energy replaced first the hands of the workman, then his arms and legs, then his whole body and now even tend to materialise the metaphysical.

The siren songs of comfort and instability create the illusion of progress. And when this does not come from work, nature is forced and the barbarity of plunder comes into being. But it is no longer the controlled and necessary plunder of the old horde struggling to stay alive, but a more refined, subtle and dangerous form of exploitation of natural and human resources, which fails to foresee the price that will have to be paid for it. Man becomes arrogant, prepotent and gradually escapes from reality, from what is just, good and beautiful.



And so we come into the 20th century.

Like tamed prehistoric monsters of incalculable strength, machines have meant that man can rise into the air, destroy with one hand what once took a thousand, forsake his past and take a glorious and at the same time traumatic leap into the future.

The Man-human has become a monstrous superman of huge dimensions. All the old models are broken without yet having any new ones to replace them effectively, for the Myth of Unending Progress has been born.

The multitude throws out its tentacles and in the name of freedom is becoming increasingly enslaved. So that two men could reach the Moon, millions were plunged into underdevelopment, poverty and unhappiness. And even those who got to the Moon are not happy either, for man confused the development of his means with the development of himself.

He looks scornfully back and says: "Look, 2000 years ago a man couldn't travel more than 20 miles in an hour, and I can travel 30000." But he fails to perceive that the drives of a Roman chariot was in no way inferior to the astronaut of today. What was really inferior was his vehicle, not the man.

In the face of the genocides and the holocausts, in the face of the exploitation and suicidal contamination, we cannot affirm that the man of today is superior to the man of 2000 years ago. He seems in fact to be the same, but more confused and spiritually poorer as he depends increasingly more upon matter, which he thinks he controls, but which in fact is crushing him.

The multitude throws out its tentacles and in the name of freedom is becoming increasingly enslaved. So that two men could reach the Moon. millions were plunged into underdevelopment, poverty and unhappiness.

There has been much progress... but only on the formal and illusionary levels and not even in that illusion can he do anything about the fact that, at the time of writing, there are 2000 million human beings living in a state of physical and moral deprivation which makes anything else that we can find in History seem pale in comparison. Never have there been so many poor, so many hungry, so many deprived of bread, work and freedom. And their number is growing every day. While those who enjoy great material benefits are increasingly fewer and those who have peace in their souls are almost extinct.

Run, run, run! Where to ...? What does it matter!

The gory idol of Unending Progress demands it. We have invented a mad god and now we have to keep up its worship. To feed it constantly.

Only 50 years ago it was believed that in the 21st century there would be no more wars, no more poor, no more oppressed. The "Flash Gordon" comics, simple distractions for children, had been taken seriously. Now we are facing the terrible reality of a world covered in blood and mud.

As mysterious artefacts fly hundreds of miles above us carrying the potential of death to the whole of life on our planet, dead birds rain down upon our heads and in our putrid rivers float the corpses of fishes. Child suicides are ever on the increase. Terrorism is growing. Unemployment is rising. Drugs are corrupting our youth and pornography is doing the same to adults. Gambling, the vilest form of exploitation, is legalised because the administrators – for rulers they cannot be called – need more and more money to maintain the Myth. The Great Lie.

The fundamental cell of Society, the family, is falling apart. The Nations are becoming mere territories. The flags are pieces of cloth of ever more varied colours. The temples are filling up with atheists since the idolatry of Indefinite Progress admits no competition. If anyone wants to stop and think, he is crushed by the mad herd; anyone who reflects and philosophises is a fool and is accused of abominations.

It is urgent to halt the flight forwards before Nature's safety devices wipe out the present civilization with a sweep of the hand. Old books tell us that that occurred before with other civilizations which went wrong and whore erratic children, mutated with hominids, gave rise to another painful cycle of "Stone Ages" which could have been avoided, since the Great Mystery that we call God has placed in our souls the spark of discernment which today, virtually destroyed, lies under the feed of the Great Beast, the diabolical creation which has materialized in this century under the form of the Myth of Unending Progress.

Are we still in time to break the spell, the perfidious sorcery?



Answer yourself, reader... and if an inner voice tells you yes, then not all is lost and you can cry out to the Horizon of History: I am a Man, God exists! $\star\star\star$

Great Power of Choice. Great Responsibility.

By Harianto H Mehta

Often we find ourselves at the crossroads of various opportunities in life. We celebrate the privilege of having options, and experience a sense of freedom in the ability to choose from among so many possibilities. We feel we are in control of our lives, and decide to retain this freedom as far as possible, without having to commit to any one of the options. Before long, however, we are torn between the many options, each one more alluring than the next. And an inner battle looms, to retain as many options as possible, until the last possible minute. The freedom, and the privilege of choice, gradually become shackles that hold us captive in a state of indecision and inaction...and we wonder...why do we suddenly feel oppressed by life? Why must I choose?

So common is this phenomenon that it has been christened *fomo* in common parlance, the fear-of-missing-out. And while there might be a tendency to laugh it off as a millennial concoction, it has grave implications that shed light on a dangerous trap. We often freeze in the face of choices. What if I make a mistake, by making the wrong choice? What if another option yields better fruit? The illusory freedom that was celebrated at the moment that the choice was first encountered gradually degenerates into a source of confusion, doubt, and fear of choosing incorrectly. We become overwhelmed, and are trapped into inaction.

In order to maneuver through this confusion, we must first dispel the perception that it is shameful or undignified to make mistakes! To make mistakes, is but natural for anyone who dares to truly embark upon the adventure of life, to try something new, beyond what is easy and comfortable. To recognize our mistakes is to demonstrate that we are continuously reflecting on our actions with consciousness and humility, always eager to improve. The mistake itself can be a growth opportunity, because from it we can learn what not to do. And even this by itself is a fruitful step forward. Why then to fear? There is nothing wrong in making mistakes, as long as we learn and grow from them. Had the wise man of antiquity not once said, "he who has never made a mistake, never tried anything new"?



Moreover, it is important to appreciate that the freedom that we so treasure is particularly the freedom to choose. Meaning, the actual act of making the choice is itself an expression of that freedom. When falling to inaction, in reality we surrender this freedom, becoming prisoners of fear or confusion.

Consider for instance that after a busy day's work, you've finally managed to set aside time to watch a movie on Netflix. Excitedly you turn on a prized gadget, and are delighted by the scope of options from which to choose, and even feel entitled to the array of options. As you start browsing, however, flicking away movie after movie, you realize that forty five minutes have gone by, and feel distressed that the time you could have used to enjoy a film, was instead wasted away in the confusion of indecision. How much of our life are we similarly, simply flicking away?

To make mistakes, is but natural for anyone who dares to truly embark upon the adventure of life, to try something new, beyond what is easy and comfortable.

Perhaps what makes it all the more daunting in many cases, is the knowledge that ultimately it will be necessary to endure the torturous finality of having to make a selection. For example, when having to select from among various personal, social and professional invitations for a particular evening, one might refrain from having to make a choice, in anticipation that a better option might emerge. As we wait, the approaching deadline to send in the rsvp gradually instills panic, at worst. At best, we realize that if we had committed earlier, we might have productively used the time to better prepare and participate in the opportunity at hand. The increasing pressure of time or external circumstances makes things unnecessarily stressful. And our 'choice', rather than emerge from the objectivity of Will, is dictated by convenience, desires, or the urgency of the moment. And even though the intellect might define it as a choice, in reality this is an illusion; we are simply driven by a powerful instinctive need for comfort and convenience. Rather than choosing what is right, ethical, and really needed, we are swayed by what is easy, or most pleasing.

Instead, is it not possible that we cut through the illusion of our intellect, and really choose? Is it not possible to objectively recognize the options, and prioritize by discerning the most essential despite the tendencies of likes and dislikes? Herein seems to lie a fundamental responsibility of being human, one that sets him apart from every other being on the planet. A beast is enslaved by his instincts for its own well-being. Since it does not have the mental capacity to discern objectively, it seems that nature, in her eternal wisdom, has endowed it with the blessing of automaticity to ensure the best chance of its survival and continuation. When struck by hunger, for example, it is necessary that an animal be automatically motivated to hunt or forage.

A human being's more mature mental ability, on the other hand, enables him to prioritize by choosing to fulfill more essential responsibilities and

commitments, by maintaining self-control over his survival instincts. He has the possibility to choose to determine the direction of his actions: to choose the wellbeing of the community over personal preferences, to choose altruism over selfish competition, to choose the difficult but right, despite the effort involved. And as declared in a recent Hollywood blockbuster. "With great power, comes great responsibility." The ability to discern objectively, independent of our instinctive tendencies, is perhaps the essence of our Freedom. And the existence of this ability necessitates that it be put to use.

To do so, ancient traditions offer the secret of commitment - a word that causes many to cringe since it connotes being bound to something unnatural and oppressive. However, we suggest instead that a commitment is the powerful expression of our freedom to choose, and is an essential tool for a Human Being to be able to direct his own destiny. A commitment protects us from our erratic instinctive tendencies such as

Commitment enables us to take initiative, and maintain our alignment to that initiative, despite challenges and obstacles. It is a uniquely human force, a flower that emerges from our Will.

moments of laziness, changing moods, and confusing opinions. It enables us to stand by what we have recognized as our duty and our priorities. Commitment enables us to take initiative, and maintain our alignment to that initiative, despite challenges and obstacles. It is a uniquely human force, a flower that emerges from our Will. It ennobles a human being, and gives meaning, purpose, and direction to his life.

Various mythologies from around the world celebrate great heroes that dare to take responsibility of their lives, and make choices despite imminent dangers of the unknown. They remain steadfast with the power of their commitments despite the many challenges and difficulties that life hands them. And universally, they emerge victorious, often mythically transmuting into gods. Similarly, had individuals such as Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela simply waited to see how circumstances would pan out, they might not have been able to change the course of history. Perhaps this heroic spirit lies deep in our own hearts. Let us each embark on the adventure of life, to discover, awaken and transform to our potentials...let us dare to choose...in order to forge the path ahead towards our destiny. ★★★



In the Light of Truth

By Yaron Barzilay

Director of New Acropolis Cultural Organization (India) Editor-in-Chief of The Acropolitan Magazine

Our recent times are characterized by a phenomenon due to which we may refer to it as a Post Truth Era. Not only are the differences between the real and unreal fewer, and less clear, but they are regarded as irrelevant. This seems to be yet another inevitable step downward in postmodernist thinking, and it deserves our attention and reflection as it seems to be yet another warning sign for what is yet to come. In a world so heavily bombarded by an overwhelming quantity of information and stimulation, with a constant increase in speed and movement, it seems almost natural to adopt an indifferent approach to what we read, hear or see; it is very easy to develop a general apathy towards the world around us, where real life tragedies are folded together with entertainment, and the boundary between fact and fiction disappears.

Truth is a familiar word to all. Yet it may be most elusive of all. We often use the word, but how little we know of it; what does truth really mean? What is truth?

If we refer to an absolute all-embracing truth, or the timeless omnipresent reality, we may never really get to know it. Instead we are only able to grasp glimpses of relative truths. Yet, there must be some correlation between what we refer to as relative and absolute for one who walks on a path towards a definite destiny. It may be a direct path towards the goal. Or it may be twisted and curved. But the general direction should be clear. In order to move on a path, one needs to leave one's current position, one's relative perspective. But it is also essential to know that one needs to move forward and upward, not backward nor downward. To pursue relative truths, which are not merely a result of intellectual debate, but extracted from reflection, experience and inner conviction. depends on the recognition of the existence of a larger objective truth. The pursuit of truth, or wisdom, is a fundamental quality of any real





philosopher; it acts as an inner compass that enables a certain level of orientation. It fills the heart with the great joy of self-validation and of making great discoveries. Above all, it allows the seeker to become an integral part of a much greater life, which we may refer to as Nature in the broader sense of the word.

A world without truth; what does it mean? Or better said, what does it mean that the world does not accept truth as reality? Well, evidently we see it manifest around us rapidly. A world without truth is a world without direction, not upwards, nor downwards. With such a loss of direction can there be any valid source of hope, or a possibility to confidently imagine the betterment of humanity? Without truth in our life, can we speak of ethics at all? Can there be any good or bad, any virtues? Can we speak of aesthetics and harmony without the base of an objective truth? Can there be any valid meaning at all?

In India, the ancient Upanishads continue to remind us: "Truth Alone Triumphs." Mahatma Gandhi resonates with this fundamental when he says, "Truth alone will endure, all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time." Can we utter the word *Sustainability* without referring to Reality as the underlying Truth?

And here we are...in a post truth world; confused and inclined to fall apart. A real direction is needed; a search for a higher perspective. It may not save us from making many mistakes. But if our search is sincere, we will have a good reason to learn and correct ourselves.

What does it mean to live in the light of truth, a relative truth? It means that it is necessary to recognize the relativeness of what you perceive today. It shows you how little you know and how much more there is to know. One has to be humble in the light of truth. How can we presume that we know a definite fact, when we can see how relative our perceptions are? But, this is *already* a truth to behold! It is to find meaning in truth, because how can anything be really meaningful without it? What is the value of a wishful aim when reality stands? It is like molding sand palaces on the seashore, that the waves wash away, as if laughing at our attempt to create our own reality, a fantasy.

A world without truth is a world without direction, not upwards, nor downwards.

To pursue truth is to remain alert, by observing your own distortions, prejudices, assumptions, judgments, desires and rejections...anything that colors your vision from seeing things as they are, as clearly as you can. Such a pursuit leads you to know yourself, by removing layers of what you are not, the masks of false identities. The pursuit of truth is therefore a means of self-discovery, a necessary step towards self fulfillment and real confidence. It is to discern between the real and the unreal, imagination and fantasy, the good and bad, which

expresses real intelligence, which is not at all synonymous with intellectuality. The pursuit of truth demands attention to what you say, and how you say it. It develops the inclination of being truthful, and with it, an inclination towards the Just and the Beautiful. And as has already been thought by great philosophers such as Plato, it is also the pursuit of Goodness, not only outside of us as an ideal of life, but also the need to Be Good.

We may discover only fractions of the total reality, reflections. We may only discover how little we really know. But in this smallest discovery lies real greatness, the ability to open our minds and hearts towards the world around us. We may grasp but only little truths, and remain ever ready to replace them with further discoveries. But we must follow what we already know today if we are sincere in our search. That is the base of our ethics today, and the source of a great joy. To be able to change and move on the upward path of consciousness is to rediscover what has already been learned by those we consider wise. It is to echo with life and the universe, and to feel that we are an integral part of it, as we have always been, although we know a mere fraction of what it is.

It is to walk, while becoming and realizing yourself. It is to live, beyond mere survival. We may collect only very little truths on our path. But they can and should change us profoundly. Even knowing what we do not really know can direct our life. You may discover the purpose of life. Great! Then follow it. You may not know the purpose of life. Wonderful. Then what are you waiting for? Search for it! Am I going to vanish at the end of this life, with the end of my physical body? Are the numerous teachings about the immortality of the soul real? You don't know? The little truth is that between both possibilities lies a significant difference in the meaning of life. To live but only one life, without any

To be able to change and move on the upward path of consciousness is to rediscover what has already been learned by those we consider wise. It is to echo with life and the universe, and to feel that we are an integral part of it, as we have always been, although we know a mere fraction of what it is.

continuation means what really? On the other hand, if I am an immortal soul, in one of its many incarnations, I am definitely not the one I recognize today. In order to live with deeper meaning, I must align myself with who I really am. It is not a matter of belief, but of realization and conviction, a discovery that demands from me a sincere effort in the pursuit of the real.

Real philosophy, an approach towards life, with a keen need to discover and follow truth in action, not just in words, seems to be the need of the hour. What is lacking today points exactly to what is needed. If untruth is depicted as darkness, what we need is light. The pursuit of truth is therefore to place ourselves under the light. Truth, as elusive as it may seem, is our precious compass. If we honor it, we shall always find our way back. $\star\star\star$

Impact of an Idealist: Ela Bhatt

By Manjula Nanavati

One could attempt to describe Ela Bhatt with adjectives: soft-spoken, tenacious, compassionate, dedicated, principled, self-effacing. Or one could use nouns: lawyer, labor-leader, social activist, banker, author, philanthropist. But all these words together still do not comprehensively encompass her visionary foresight, her inexhaustible energy, her unbending strength of purpose, and her unswerving commitment to the humane.



Ela ben was born in Ahmadabad (India), and after training as a lawyer, she joined the legal department of the Textile Labor Association (TLA) and rose to head its Women's Wing at the age of 35. Ela ben saw first-hand that these women were forced to supplement their income by weaving, stitching, rolling cigarettes, selling fruits, etc. Since the law didn't protect women who worked from home, they were routinely oppressed by moneylenders, employers and officials. Ela ben's sphere of interaction increased to a group of migrant women working as cart-pullers, as well as women head-loaders who carried cloth merchandise to retail markets. Sitting with them on the steps of the warehouse, she listened to their tales of erratic wages, housing problems and exploitation. She knew that something had to be done.

In December 1971, at a meeting held in a public park, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was born, to organize women working in the informal sector, so as to use their collective strength to fight poverty. Ela ben served as its general secretary for the next 25 years, overseeing its growth to almost 2 million members across India, while having also expanded to Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

One of the early goals of SEWA was to financially help members to release them from the vicious cycle of debt and extortion. Due to illiteracy, formal banking facilities were out of reach. Banks required complex paperwork and were unable to sanction credit without sufficient collateral. "We may be poor, but we are so many. Why don't we start a bank of our own, where we are treated with the

respect and service we deserve?" So started the Mahila Sewa Co-operative Bank, with 4000 women contributing Rs. 10 each. Its goal was to provide small loans and financial counseling to women, and to help them set up their own small businesses. Today the bank has achieved complete financial viability and SEWA has extended its services to include healthcare, childcare, insurance, housing and legal aid... all geared towards women's empowerment, and independence.

In 1979 Ela ben became Co-founder and chairperson of Women's World Banking, an international microfinance organization established to investigate the conditions of poor women workers. In 1988 she was appointed to the

Closely linked to Nature, the feminine task is to hold, to be a catalyst that will allow people and groups to grow. The feminine way has no goals, but rather values the process of unfolding, and learns from it.

Rajya Sabha where she chaired the National Commission on Self-Employed Women. In 2007 at the age of 74, Ela ben was invited by Nelson Mandela to join The Elders, a group of 12 international social activists, including past presidents, prime-ministers and Nobel Peace Laureates, with a mission to promote human rights and world peace.

Growing up during the freedom struggle, Ela ben had been greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. Indeed, SEWA was founded on the Gandhian Principles of *Satya* (Truth), *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), and *Sarvadharma* (inter-faith Integration). "There is no place for hate in our struggle," she says. "Nurturance comes naturally to human beings while exploitation is learnt behavior. I plead for building an economy of nurturance."

Former US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton identified Ela Bhatt as one of her personal heroes, and honored her with the Global Fairness Initiative Award for helping more than a million poor women in India to a position of dignity and independence.

Ela ben holds honorary doctoral degrees from Harvard, Yale and Georgetown Universities, as well as Natal University. And she was awarded the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan, India's highest civilian honors.

Notwithstanding an agenda that could easily have filled far more than one lifetime, Ela ben has also found time to write 2 books: We are poor but so many: The Story of Self-Employed Women in India (2005) and Anubandh: Building Hundred-mile Communities (2015).

Ultimately, Ela Bhatt could perhaps be most accurately described not with nouns or adjectives, but with oxymorons: A pragmatic idealist, a living legend, a gentle revolutionary, a reticent trail-blazer. While her manner and parlance may be as





subdued as a whisper, her accomplishments have had a powerful and resounding impact on millions of lives around the world. Her own life is proof that the face of extreme destitution can indeed be transformed, through compassion, selflessness and determination. Our time here may be limited, but if we use it well, it is more than enough.

We had the privilege of being able to ask Ela ben a few questions. Below are edited excerpts of our conversation.

THE ACROPOLITAN (TA): Your life's work has been to give women protection and dignity in a male dominated society. In what way would you define masculine and feminine roles to build harmonious communities?

Ela ben: When I refer to a male dominated society, I do not mean that all males are dominating, all the time. There are males in our homes that do facilitate women's growth. There are males who are dominating as a husband, but not as a father. Or they may dominate as an engineer, but not as a gardener.

Having said so, I have underlined the need for a partnership between men and women. So you may ask, why then an all woman's bank and woman-only cooperatives of SEWA? My reply is that for a good partnership both partners have to be in many ways equal and mutual. And that is not possible if one partner is weak in any way. So we began to build women's strength and skills, not against men, but as themselves, and as partners to men, to build mutual solidarity.

Work per se has no gender. And gender per se is no virtue. Planting trees is good work. Cutting trees is less so. Women teachers are welcome. Women terrorists are not.

However, what I mean to stress is the 'feminine way'. Let me elaborate.

By this, I do not mean to exclude men from the equation, or assert that women have all the answers. Instead, I refer to a feminine way of thinking, which is often latently present in men too; this has to be celebrated, encouraged and nourished.

I come to a sad conclusion: the poor in the world are not poor because they lack this or that, but because we as a society have decided to keep them poor.

Is the feminine way relevant for the future of society? I often ask this question to myself because SEWA represents the feminine. Closely linked to Nature, the feminine task is to hold, to be a catalyst that will allow people and groups to grow. The feminine way has no goals, but rather values the process of unfolding, and learns from it. The feminine has a different sense of time; the work will take whatever time is needed. And SEWA has taken over thirty years to reach a million women. It took 40 years to reach today's 1.9 million membership in SEWA. The feminine way looks at the whole group and tries to include the whole, waiting

for those left behind; even if it means delaying the group, or the process. The goals are collective; the focus is on the progress of the community rather than the individual. I have observed over the years that the feminine way focuses on inclusion instead of domination, on process rather than end-goal, group over individual, and integration over fragmentation.

For me Gandhi's way in many ways is a feminine way, deeply rooted in simplicity, non-violence, dignity, and human values, which are relevant to our world today more than ever before. Gandhi ji had often acknowledged the lessons he learnt from women, particularly on simplicity; simplicity as a lifestyle guarantees the availability for the other. I feel we have to emulate this philosophy by looking for simple, easily understandable, practical and participative solutions to complex problems — that is the feminine way.



TA: Few people dare to step out of their own comfort zone in the face of systemic injustice. What was the inspiration behind your abundant altruism?

Ela ben: 'Dare' is not the right word. Not that we were afraid, but our approach is different. In most cases, we remain inside us, within our own context, and our own circumstances. Even as part of the middle class, where food, shelter, and education are taken care of, we still do not step out. Or maybe we take a little step or two, but not far enough.

After independence in 1947, when we were stepping out of childhood and into youth, we wanted to step out, walk away, or even run, to build a free India that was fair to all and strive for economic freedom as citizens. The freedom struggle built thus needs to step out and reach out. Gandhi ji showed the way to do it. We need to do what we can. And we can do a lot.

What is altruism? I do not know. In SEWA, we did what was good for us and good for others. We created jobs, did not take away jobs. We prospered, but by cooperating and not conflicting.

TA: The concept of an Elder, not just in terms of age, but also as a treasure-trove of experience and wisdom, is a time-honored ancient tradition. Can you tell us about your experience as a founding member of Nelson Mandela's The Elders?

Ela ben: What an honour to meet and work with such leaders of our times! One learns a lot about many views, global forces, and the human capacity to make simple matters most complex. One learned: what is knowledge and what is wisdom, what is idea and what is action, and where each of these have their rightful place, and what are the limits of knowledge, wisdom, idea or action. In working with the Elders, their humility made me humble. And I learned even more the value of the power of poor people.

We can better define our sense of me with new experiences, by reflecting on our actions, and the impact it has on us, our society, and Mother Nature. If we think more about us, we will find the others in us.

I have seen and worked with poor women who have endless confidence in their wisdom and actions. The Elders enabled me see that the wisdom and action of poor women is universal, and cuts across cultures and crises and continents. I have seen and met the poor worldwide and I come to a sad conclusion: the poor in the world are not poor because they lack this or that, but because we as a society have decided to keep them poor. It is not that we don't know of solutions. We know all the means, ways, ideas, to enable the poor to come out of poverty. In fact, the poor themselves try to come out of their poverty all the time, and in all possible ways. But we push them back knowingly, or by overlooking them.

TA: What is it then that society must do to inspire each person to become other-centric?

Ela ben: We cannot be "other centric" unless we are "me-centric". We know what we want, like, and wish for. But most of it is shaped by family, friends, schools and society and even more by what we see on TV or social media. And this is welcome, as one of the many sources. But this cannot determine our sense of "me". We can better define our sense of me with new experiences, by reflecting on our actions, and the impact it has on us, our society, and Mother Nature. If we think more about us, we will find the others in us.

Once we find us we can find others and reach out. Each one of us has a special call, inspiration, or a unique idea. By nature we all are equal, but we are also different and distinct. We know this truth since our childhood. This inner voice has to be listened to, and respected, and reflected upon.



TA: Your book Anubandh: Building 100-mile Communities urges us to meet life's basic needs with goods and services produced no more than a hundred miles from where we live. Can you tell us why you consider it critical that the link between humans and their surroundings be restored?

Ela ben: When I say 100 miles in my book, I refer to the notion of 100 miles. It can be 60 or 30 miles in some cases, and 300 or 600 miles in others. My main point in the book is to become better connected to what is "near" us, "next" to us; resulting in less carbon and water footprint due to long distances.

We need to be mindful of what we use, where it comes from, and what we spend. Does it come from a small farmer or a home-based fruit grower on the riverbed? Or does it come from a corporate farm or orchard in some distant location? And where does our money go? To the vegetable vendor on the street, or the big Corporation that runs 1000 grocery stores countrywide?

As individuals, as a race, and as future generations, we have a lot to offer; far more than we have offered in the past million years, in order to move towards a creative society, a great civilization. I see this potential on daily basis.

The reason we have to be mindful of these distances is that we are not only destroying the physical geography of rivers, forests, lakes and mountains, but also the human geography of producers and consumers, the social geography of neighbourhoods, and the economic geography of local markets and skills.

In my book I have suggested the need to be aware of the impact of our actions on us, on our society, on our environment and on our ecosystem. If we destroy these ecosystems, we destroy ourselves as individuals, and as a human race, and as future generations. There is no reason to do so. Because as individuals, as a race, and as future generations, we have a lot to offer; far more than we have offered in the past million years, in order to move towards a creative society, a great civilization. I see this potential on daily basis.

Today money is becoming more and more central in all we do. If this is the case, let money not determine what we do, or how we live. Instead, let us decide how we spend our money to do what we want, and live as we wish. In a highly monetized economy where everything, even a breath of fresh air, has a price, let us be in control of our money, rather than money be in control of us. $\star\star\star$



Solitude of the Leader

By Rahil Mehta

"It's lonely at the top," said a school-friend in jest on the eve of a school election for which I was nominated. And although I do not know to whom this tidbit of wisdom is attributed, I have often contemplated the truth behind in these words.

In aspiring for the post or role of a leader, some may seek the prestige and authority which follow. The main work therefore seems to be, to make a favorable impression on those that are considering their candidature. Since there are probably others vying for the same position, a competition ensues, a race in which each one needs to outshine the other. Naturally this may lead to alienation enroute the prize. In this perhaps, lies the loneliness of the leader. But something doesn't sound right! As much as we aspire for the celebrated position or status, it brings with it an obligation which requires effort. On the one hand there is the rigor of the external work to ensure that the duties associated with the position are fulfilled. But it also involves a more subtle inner work comprising the need to think more about others and less about oneself. Let us dig deeper.



The obligation of the leader is not something to take lightly. The direction he sets is seen and followed by many and it seems like a sign of weakness if the leader sought support and it appears that the leader is stuck with making hard choices by himself. In many cases, the ability to make such difficult choices with ease is the reason we celebrate great heroes, who lead their forces to glory and victory and found their place in the timeless myths. Isn't this inspiration enough for a leader?

In these stories, the heroic moments are marked by selfless decisions, disregard for personal interest, prioritizing the greater good above any individual. Such difficult decisions are often unconventional, unpopular and uncomfortable and of course have no guarantee of success. But the leader is obliged to make hard decisions, and may even lose the favor of others. Maybe this explains the loneliness of the leader?



Consider the mettle of the leader. He is not defined by a list of qualifications. Instead he is one who is willing to be forged through trials. He is the one that is ever willing to take on a challenge, and it is enough that he but recognize the challenge to take it on. He prepares for challenges with every opportunity, and when the challenge presents itself, he recognizes it, and is able to act decisively and swiftly.

One aspect of the leader's preparation is to build stability. We may understand stability as financial backing, good health, a close network of friends and associates, or tactical advantages. While helpful, all this is temporary and of

Heroic moments are marked by selfless decisions, disregard for personal interest, prioritizing the greater good above any individual. Such difficult decisions are often unconventional, unpopular and uncomfortable and of course have no guarantee of success.

limited use. Instead, the leader seeks to develop inner stability which allows him independence; he is neither distracted by what is the popular thing to do, nor is he paralyzed by his fears. This stability is a disciplined approach where he digs into his experience and applies himself to take the best decision possible. It is not built by chance, but is a process of continuous improvement as an attitude towards life, looking at the humblest and most mundane of situations, always with the great interest of the adventurer. He practices this stability in the day to day and builds his foundation.

In the Egyptian tradition this stability is symbolized by a *djed*, a pillar. It was enough in their tradition, it is said, that someone would carry the symbol of the *djed* to demonstrate this priority: to stand stable beyond fears and weaknesses, beyond corruption and compromise.

With increased stability, the aspiring leader sees the right way more clearly, with less confusion. This does not mean that one works in a silo, which is a self-centered act. The clarity emerges from a better overview of the factors and consequences of his decisions with a willingness to accept responsibility for them. This clarity is on two counts: One because he has developed stability, and the other because he is able to connect to a bigger context than may immediately be visible. This can also be called the vision of the leader.

And so the leader must have vision. When faced with a decision, this vision becomes an inner compass that guides and directs. The leader sees his role as a part of a larger cause. This bigger picture must necessarily be rooted in Truth, Goodness, and must serve an altruistic purpose. Only such a vision is sustainable and empowers the leader with the valuable conviction that he is doing the right thing for which he is responsible.

The development of a leader is tedious because it is unconventional. Above all it requires the leader to lead himself through his solitude where he justly battles all distractions, with the spirit of a victor.

This is how the leader seeks to bring ethic and sustainability to his vision. The more he develops an understanding of the need that he serves, the more firm his vision becomes, and the more decisive are his actions. Through the resilience he develops, he naturally allows others the opportunity to be inspired by his vision.

The leader often finds himself alone and recognizes this opportunity for the inner work of building his identity. This loneliness, which for the unprepared seems like a vacuum, is the source of a center and clarity for the leader. He cherishes it like a gift of solitude and uses it well. Then he is able to call upon this solitude more or less at will, even while in the thick of action. In doing so, he is able to pierce through the clouds of ambiguity and align to the essence of the work at hand.

This inner strength and discipline is palpable to those who share in the vocation of leading themselves. Notable historical leaders were not necessarily the most physically attractive, nor the best orators. But their leadership exuded from a strength of character.

The development of a leader is tedious because it is unconventional. Above all it requires the leader to lead himself through his solitude where he justly battles all distractions, with the spirit of a victor. There are many metaphors for this. A common one is that of the caterpillar that metamorphoses into a butterfly, signifying a complete change of character into an identity that is free and able to fly. This is the aspiration of the leader, to surpass the chains of ambiguity and doubt, which restrain his freedom to act.

Developing the identity of the leader is a most selfless act because a true aspirant has no business doing it for himself. The spirit of service underlines his every work. As he develops, his vocation of service also increases, because he sees that his work is worthwhile to empower real change. All his work, big or small, is valuable because it has a sustainable impact, and humbly encapsulates the spirit of truth. ***

Altruism and the Bottom Line

By Kurush Dordi

"If people are good only because they fear punishment, and hope for reward, then we are a sorry lot indeed." – Albert Einstein

Today organizations are under more pressure to perform than they have perhaps ever been before. There are pressures from all stakeholders who incessantly demand increasing profitability every year, while at the same time they grapple with challenges of limited resources, ever changing laws and regulations, open market competition, and most importantly, factors of human resources. And yet, the amendment to the Companies Act in India in 2013 requires certain businesses to spend 2% of their average three year profits on social causes. Furthermore, it is estimated that fortune 500 companies collectively spend more than \$15bn on Corporate Responsibility globally. (1) It is evident that social solidarity is becoming an essential component of corporate governance. But is corporate altruism related primarily to financial support? What really is the value of commercial businesses if they are run independently, without altruism as their basic objective?

For many decades the standard mentality in organizations has been that executives focus on topline growth, while anything "fuzzy" was left to the Corporate Social Responsibility division. This view is not only changing, but it is also rapidly turning on its head. Companies are now recognizing the need to get involved with human communities, with the focus to work together with them, to holistically improve conditions; to improve quality of life and respect human dignity.

Such a phenomenon of altruism should not surprise us in any way. Anthropologist David Lordkipanidze proposes that altruistic behavior was endemic to humans as early as 1.8 million years ago. (2) This was long before the appearance of Homo Sapiens. It can thus be argued that altruism is not just a social or a cultural norm; it is a principle of Nature. And if it is such an ingrained part of nature, our own nature, why should its applications be any different

Perhaps the very fact that we have disproportionately focused on profits, and neglected the human and altruistic aspects in business enterprise, is manifesting in what we see as the negative effects of capitalism in our times. in the realm of business? Adam Smith, the Economist most famously known for his work *The Wealth of Nations* strongly propagates in *Theory of Moral Sentiments* the need for markets to encourage human beings to come together and understand each other, despite the survival instinct. Perhaps the very fact that we have disproportionately focused on profits, and neglected the human and altruistic aspects in business enterprise, is manifesting in what we see as the negative effects of capitalism in our times. Because it is based in competition, the survival of the fittest, it fosters self-centeredness and separation, rather than collective wellbeing. Whole segments of society remain trapped in socio-economic strata, and the gap between the rich and middle class keeps widening.



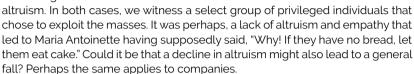
Corporate altruism doesn't always have to be related to making donations. Instead it is an approach to commerce, and can be extended to the way we design businesses, to facilitate individual human growth, recognizing that each one's unique needs and skills. If we look at the example of Grameen Bank started by Prof. Muhammad Yunus, we see that most of the projects it supports empower small businesses and individual entrepreneurs that single handedly work towards self sustaining models focused on enriching livelihoods, rather than just positive balance sheets. In turn, many of those small business successes have paid it forward, by extending similar support to reach out to help others, fostering a spirit of collective progress.

In 1949 Dr. Varghese Kurien revolutionized the concept of cooperative movement by scripting Operation Flood, in another case of community upliftment. By transforming India from a milk importer to one of the world's two largest producers today, Amul emerged from the idea of having farmers collectively own the brand. This resulted in a collective sense of ownership and responsibility for product quality. Good branding also gave the cooperative the commercial strength to help it match its competition. But most importantly it gave farmers independence and dignity, some opportunity to participate in the decision making of their own affairs – rather than submit to pressures of circumstances. What started as a small cooperative grew into an organization producing 14.85 million litres a day. In this case study we find evidence that when you give a human centric solution to a problem, you inspire people to give their best. As a collective, farmers were given a chance to dream, hope for a better future. Is this perhaps not the greatest form of altruism? The resulting profitability was a consequence and not the drive alone.

In another instance, we might study the case of Mr. Kazuo Inamuri who took over as CEO of Japan Airlines in 2010, which was at the time on the brink of bankruptcy. He turned the company around, making it a famous example investigated in management courses. Speaking at Oxford, at the presentation of the Kyoto Prize for scientists, artists, and philosophers "who have contributed towards the betterment of humankind" he spoke fervently about altruism in business, reminding everyone that there was no place for corporate leaders who "squeeze all profits out of a company and receive a huge salary." CEO Mike Brady of

Greyston Bakery (New York) has maintained that rather than "make cakes," their mission statement as an organization is "to help people succeed in life.". Interestingly, in the last 4 years their sales have grown by over 50% partly because more people are interested in buying from a mission based organization.

One might also consider important political events in history, such as the French or Russian Revolutions, as having resulted from the inherent lack of



More organisations therefore need to reinvent themselves to ensure that the communities in which they operate, sell to, or draw their resources from, are strengthened and resilient; they too must grow as active beneficiaries of the organization's profitability. And companies are recognizing the correlation between their own bottomlines, and communal illiteracy, poor public health, and proverty. As if following the words of the Buddha that the greatest illusion is the illusion of separation, companies have begun realizing that they are indeed part of an interconnected web of life. Therefore, in order to reach sustainable profitability the carriage must carry the community along.

But is the burden of carrying this entire bandwagon profitable for businesses? Yes, it can be. In 2014 Tesla announced that they would make a large number of their patents "open source" as long as they are used in good faith. In doing so, they are actually providing opportunities to people to come up with more and more innovative ways of looking at clean energy transport. By absorbing losses in the short run, and by looking at the collective potential for the future, Tesla has stepped aside from the traditional capitalistic view of maintaining competitive control over all resources.

Interestingly, stakeholders are looking to be associated with such companies. Today it is no longer only about a company engaging in CSR programmes or being employee-friendly. Issues such as ethical sourcing and sustainability policies increase the holistic value that companies create. Some of the world's leading companies are realising that by combining their companies' innovations for altruistic public good they gain a competitive advantage, by enhancing both their reputation and income.

Skeptics may can ask if this is really altruism, or selfishness. My own perspective to this is that one cannot look at altruism in this way. Perhaps there is a tendency to always first ask "what's in it for me".

The simple concern for another or making an extra effort to help a fellow human being - revealing this aspect of our nature might be one of the important solutions to deal with the challenges of our times.



More organisations therefore need to reinvent themselves to ensure that the communities in which they operate, sell to, or draw their resources from, are strengthened and resilient; they too must grow as active beneficiaries of the organization's profitability.

But imagine if one party in a marriage were to ask the same question. Or that a person actually got into the marriage with the intent of getting more out of it, than was put in. If we are willing to give of ourselves in our personal lives, we can also do so in our business and civic lives.

In economics the concept of capital is a fundamental which usually comprises machines, buildings, materials, etc. Then there is also human capital which measures the productivity of employees through development of skill and intelligence. But perhaps it is time that we make an addition to the understanding of human capital: the inherent altruistic capital. Former Harvard Professor, Economist Nava Ashraf explains that altruistic capital is the idea that every individual has within them an intrinsic desire to serve.

Organisations today are actively promoting and helping employees to take time off for sabbaticals

in order to realize their own altruistic needs, to give back to communities. And employee feedback seems to show a stronger connect and loyalty with the organizational brand when they see their own leaders display altruism in action. Further, altruistic leaders are more likely to focus on employee well-being helping to build upon individual strengths.

More than ever before, it is more important today that we realize that being altruistic is but a basic characteristic of the human condition. Besides our individual personalities, our preferences, our passions, and our desires, there is also a common human denominator comprising the need to be compassionate, generous and altruistic. The simple concern for another or making an extra effort to help a fellow human being - revealing this aspect of our nature might be one of the important solutions to deal with the challenges of our times. As the myth of Narcissus teaches, nothing beneficial can come from only focusing on oneself. The key of altruism lies perhaps, in the word itself; that 'U' comes before 'l'. ★★★

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Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

KHAR

Tall

6 OCT SATURDAY

6-8 pm Free Admission



The Language of Symbols

Ancient symbols such as the ankh, the yin yang, pyramids, and many others are available to us today and still hold an attraction.

What is it about these symbols that draws our attention even today? Is it as the ancient traditions say - a language of the metaphysical or the invisible?

PUNE

Talk

6 OCT SATURDAY

6-8 pm Free Admission



Concentration and Inner Awakening

Concentration is an essential ingredient of a fulfilling life. Through Tibetan iconography, we shall investigate how to cultivate this human ability.

COLABA

13 OCT SATURDAY

> 6-8 pm Free Admission



The Wisdom of Working with Time

We all relate to time at different levels. From deadlines and schedules to relating to history and the future. But beyond the quest for efficiency, lies a profound understanding of the laws of time, accessible through the wisdom of ancient cultures. This talk explores some simple but profound ideas about time and how we can open doors to a wiser relationship with time and a more meaningful 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

PUNE

Plot no.22, Gangajanan Society, Lane No. 7 Koregaon Park South Main Road, Pune T: +91 99301 98253

KHAR

20 OCT SATURDAY

6-8 pm Free Admission



Mesopotamia and the Legend of Gilgamesh

The land of the two rivers was the birth place of king Gilgamesh, 1/3 human and 2/3 god. His Magnificent story can be Relevant for us even today...

Join us as we explore how This legend from Mesopotamia holds an invaluable lesson for us today.

PUNE

Talk

20 OCT SATURDAY

6-8 pm Free Admission



Modern Mahabharat: Fighting the Battles Within

Join us as we explore the timeless teachings of The Bhagawad Gita as we engage with the Kurukshetra of our own daily lives.

Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

COLABA

27 OCT SATURDAY 6-8 pm

Free Admission



Mystery Theatre of Greece

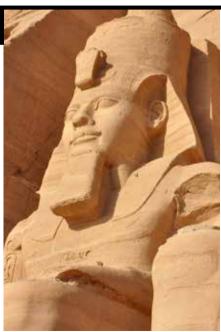
To participate in the theatre as an actor or audience was an essential part of being a citizen in ancient Greece.

In any form of theatre, the artiste or actor enacts a role and for a few moments adopts the character that he plays. Don't we also wear many masks in life, playing many roles?

We also draw reference to a book on this Theme "The Mystery Theatre in Greece: Tragedy" by Jorge A. Livraga Rizzi (https://amzn.to/2018Vnp)

PUNE

3 NOV 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.

Celebrating World Philosophy Day

We have free talks at our Colaba Center and our Khar and Pune Branches In the light of UNESCO World Philosophy Day 2018. We invite you to join fellow philosophers on this occasion at the location closest to you!

COLABA

17 NOV

6-8 pm Free Admission

SATURDAY



Life: Coincidence or Intelligent Design

By reducing the wonder of life to a simple game of coincidence, fluke, luck or chance, we disregard the possibility of a powerful, intelligent cosmic design, of which we are only a small part. We miss to see the signs of life which play an essential part in the evolution of the human consciousness and which serve as a source of meaning and direction.

KHAR

Talk **17 NOV SATURDAY**

> 6-8 pm Free Admission



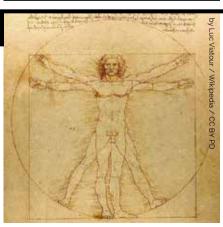
Certainty in an **Uncertain World**

In this uncertain world, it is natural to seek stability. But this stability eludes us. Tibetian Buddhism says that there is a spark of the "constant" within each human being and hence we have the ability to find what is certain and unwavering in the world.

PUNE

Talk **17 NOV SATURDAY**

> 6-8 pm Free Admission



The Spirit of Renaissance

In celebration of World Philosophy Day we invite you to a voyage through history. We shall investigate cycles of human civilizations that blossom in a series of Golden Ages, separated by periods called the middle Ages. What makes an Age, such as the Renaissance, 'Golden'? What are the characteristics of such an Age?

Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

COLABA

Open House

20 NOV

Course Starts

27 NOV

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.

Testimonials:

"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 lyer

"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 (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

PUNE

Plot no.22, Gangajanan Society, Lane No. 7 Koregaon Park South Main Road, Pune T: +91 99301 98253

COLABA

24 NOV SATURDAY 6-8 pm Free Admission



Becoming a Warrior of Peace

The peaceful warrior adopts an attitude of surpassing oneself every day; in both an inner and external approach, spiritual and civic minded. It is a timeless approach leading to an awareness of oneself, others and nature.

We explore this theme in the light of a book "Perseus: The Warrior of Peace" by Fernand Schwarz.

KHAR

Talk **24 NOV SATURDAY** 6-8 pm Free Admission



Pythagoras: Wizard of Numbers

Pythagoreans viewed music and mathematics as ways to bring order in chaos.

In this talk we come close to Pythagoras the philosopher to see if we can learn from him much more than arithmetic, but a way of life.

Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

COLABA

1 DEC SATURDAY 6-8 pm

Free Admission



Bardo Thodol: The Tibetan Book of the Dead

This ancient text deals with the process of death. It carries a detailed description of how to successfully go through the wonderful voyage of life and death. Join us as we explore how this understanding might help us to bring more meaning to our lives today. A talk by Yaron Barzilay, Director of New Acropolis India.

KHAR

8 DEC SATURDAY

6-8 pm Free Admission



The Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is mythology that we find amongst many traditions.

Beyond the beautiful forms of the tree of life, it is said that in the symbolism lies an understanding of the axis of the world, and maybe it is also a key to unraveling the secrets of creation!

PUNE

8 DEC SATURDAY 6-8 pm

Free Admission



An Evening with Rumi

"Love is the astrolabe of God's mysteries," said Rumi. What about the force of love brings us closer to unity? How can we learn to manifest love in our lives? Join us as we voyage through Rumi's poetry to gain insight into our potential.

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KHAR

22 DEC SATURDAY 6-8 pm



Mind: Best Friend or Worst Enemy?

The mental ability is unique to the human being and with that comes the need to make decisions which is not always comfortable. Is this a boon or a bane? Or maybe this places on us the obligation to work with our mind to lead a more fulfilling life

COLABA

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



The Stones of Time

Mysterious structures such as the Stone Henge, the Dolmens in Russia, the Stone Circle in Ireland, the Pyramids probably hold an important key in their location and orientation.

There is much to learn from them about our history which can help us to understand much better who we are!

PUNE

29 DEC SATURDAY 6-8 pm Free Admission



Art of Human Relationships

How can we establish good relationships with others? What can we learn from nature around us about harmonious living together? This talk will look for patterns of behavior to identify principles and values that can help us establish good relationships.



New Acropolis India Presents

Empowering Real Change:

eaders 15 December 2018

Better World

Fernand Schwarz

Dr. Vandana Shiva

Yaron Barzilay

Pierre Poulain

Anu Aga

Vivanta by Taj President













Dr. Tridip Suhrud

Dr. Saamdu Chetri

Sonam Wangchuk

Chetna Gala Sinha

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