

JAN - MAR 2019

THE ACROPOLITAN

A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering

FEATURE

Vipassana: Experience of Impermanence

Quality of Life

Archery: Bringing Together Heaven and Earth

Understanding Gandhi: Dr. Tridip Suhrud

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NEW ACROPOLIS



PHILOSOPHY

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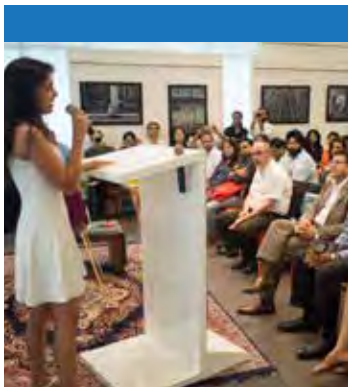
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PHILOSOPHY when practical, helps us to know and improve ourselves. It is a way of life, not an intellectual attitude, committed to the best aspirations of humanity.



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.



From The Editorial Desk

Dear Reader,

Wise personages and great leaders of all times have endeavored to illuminate earthly life with heavenly values. They led by selfless example, and demonstrated courage to act altruistically, conscious of the fact that individual fulfillment is intricately woven into collective well-being. As we enter into 2019, how might we use this inspiration to manifest our dreams, and empower ourselves, to give shape to our aspirations?

In order to empower real change and improve the quality of our lives, we must learn to guard our own physical, psychological, and spiritual health. It is necessary to go beyond symptoms, superficial and impermanent by nature, and investigate the root cause of our present challenges, so that like an archer, we might, with grace, Will, and concentration, conquer the goal of a new and better world, for new and better human beings.

Join us as we set off on this glorious adventure! Discover – Awaken – Transform.

Harianto H Mehta, *Editor*.

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‘Heal’-th Holistic Medicine

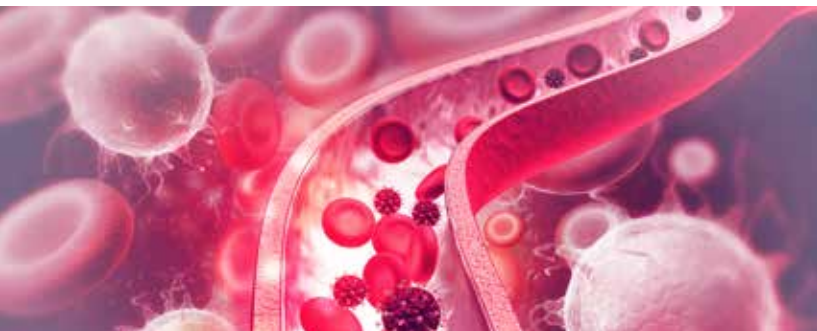
By Shraddha Shetty

We have made great advances in mainstream medicine, and have at our disposal more technology and research than ever before. This has enabled us to make great strides in diagnosis and treatment. This progress, however, has its pitfalls as well. Specialty and super-specialty are causing doctors to lose a holistic view of patients. Rather than see them as human beings, they are reduced to a disconnected organ that needs correcting, blind sighting its role and function as a single part of a complex body, animated by consciousness. While attention to detail is essential, we must also consider the possibility that by zooming in, we may at times lose the bigger picture.

What happens when a patient walks into a clinic? Usually he describes the unusual things that he experiences in his body. He presents the symptoms of an illness. The doctor proceeds to diagnose the illness through various investigations to identify the cause of the disharmony in 'the working of the system' called the human body. All genuine doctors want to give the best long-term solution to patients. However, the fixing is usually done at a certain physiological or biochemical level. While restoring the balance of the elements in the physical body is important, it may only be a partial treatment if we forget to address the imbalance of the human being in entirety which, as the ancient Greeks and Hindus proposed, may have deeper and more subtle aspects than just the somatic construct.

A patient, with peptic ulcer, presenting himself to a doctor, will be considered to have the same disease as four other patients who might also suffer from peptic ulcer. But it is perhaps important to consider that the peptic ulcer might be but a physical symptom, a manifestation, the result of various, more subtle causes. In mainstream medicine, however, the symptom is separated from the person and treated independently. It is not surprising therefore, that in many cases we must approach treatment more holistically.

There is evidence that there are many other parameters to consider in the prescription of treatment. There are so many studies where just the presence of the doctor, the 'power of his touch', can reduce fear and anxiety in the patient and accelerate recovery. (1) Sometimes placebos together with care and compassion are enough for the healing process. At other times, even the best doctors providing the best treatments are unable to help a patient who may no longer have the will to recover, or may have lost his faith in the doctor. How can we explain this phenomenon?





There is a realm which cannot be treated with allopathic medicine alone and that is the labyrinth of the mind—our psychological world. This is why psychiatrists very often work together with psychologists. There have been indications that mental dis-ease, cascades to emotional dis-ease, such as stress, and eventually may even manifest as a physical disease. (2)

Molecular biology seems to support this. A person inherits DNA at birth which dictates the body's functionality and its physiologic system. And while many diseases are attributed to genetic abnormalities, cutting edge research in the field epigenetics claims additional important factors that play a role in causing disease. (3)

Epigenetic factors include the variety of environmental parameters such as influence of family and friends, things that happen to us, and cultural elements. As we know, these circumstantial elements are not necessarily always in our control. Eventually the consensus is that the environment may affect the psychology which may or may not manifest as disease. (4) For example, studies show that chronic stress has a relationship with inflammatory and immune regulatory cells, which makes a person prone to various chronic inflammatory diseases. (5) The immune system perceives even stress as a substantial threat, and prepares to deal with tissue damage by triggering inflammatory cells, whether or not tissue damage has actually occurred. Chronic stress and the consequent immune response can thus inadvertently cause disease and a host of problems.

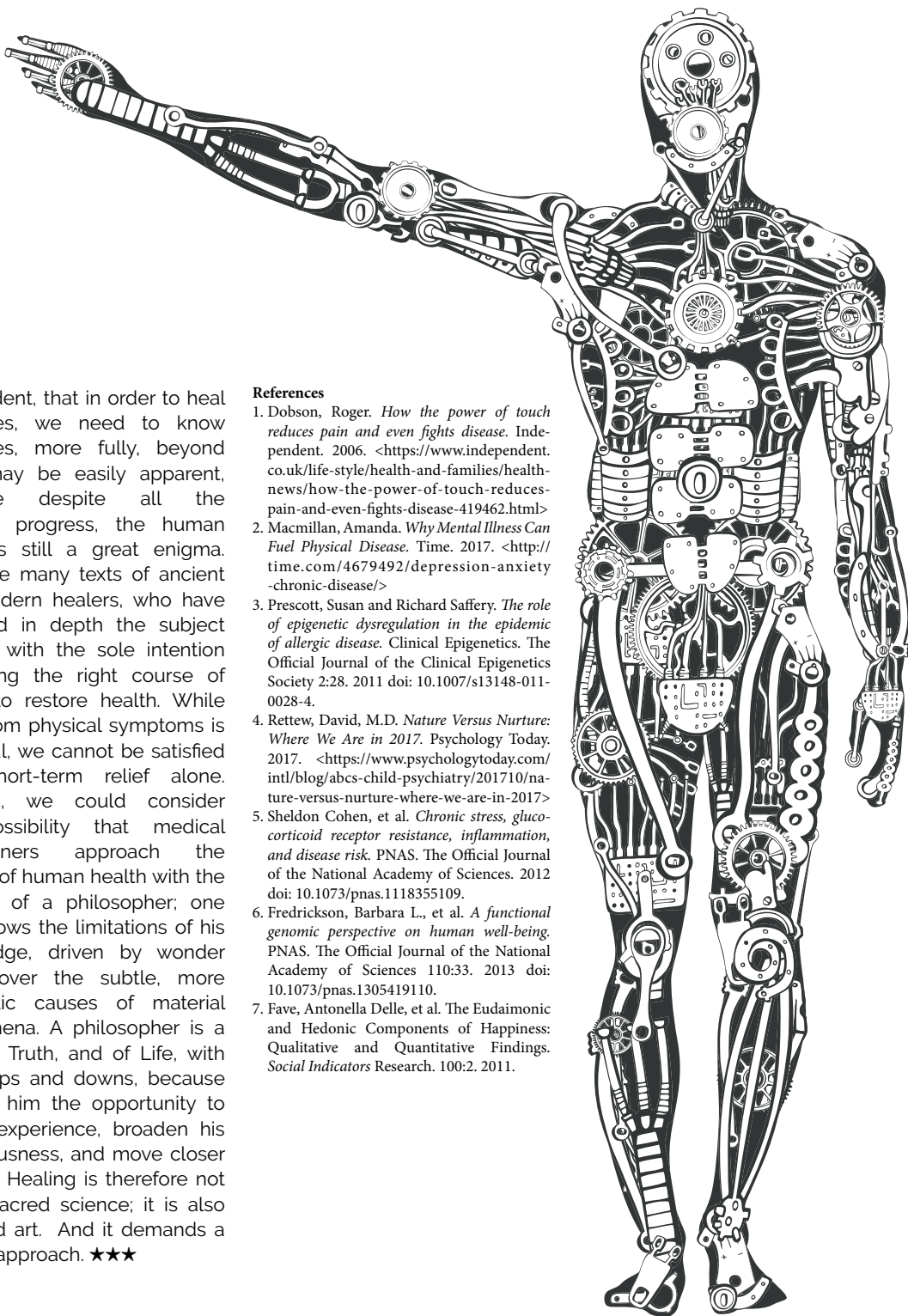
But what if there is yet another subtler, dimension of the human being called the 'spirit' which might also have an influence on a person's health? It is this principle which endows creatures with life and consciousness. By encountering it, a human being can transform reactive instincts into conscious objective responses. But how might we interact with this dimension within us? This spiritual impulse is said to manifest as noble ideas, ethics, and virtuous thoughts. It might be identified as the soft voice of the conscience. According to various philosophers, we have the ability to awaken this subtle voice by concentrating on our highest thoughts and aspirations. And aligning our actions to it, results in profound or Eudaimonic happiness — achieved by purposeful, rational, ethical action, which strives towards meaning and noble purpose. Eudaimonic happiness transcends hedonic happiness that results from transient material pleasures. Interestingly, molecular analysis of individuals with high hedonic happiness shows increased inflammatory gene expression and decreased antibody synthesis, similar to what is seen in disease. (6,7)

It is evident, that in order to heal ourselves, we need to know ourselves, more fully, beyond what may be easily apparent.

It is evident, that in order to heal ourselves, we need to know ourselves, more fully, beyond what may be easily apparent, because despite all the medical progress, the human being is still a great enigma. We have many texts of ancient and modern healers, who have analyzed in depth the subject of Man with the sole intention of finding the right course of action to restore health. While relief from physical symptoms is essential, we cannot be satisfied with short-term relief alone. Perhaps, we could consider the possibility that medical practitioners approach the subject of human health with the humility of a philosopher; one who knows the limitations of his knowledge, driven by wonder to discover the subtle, more enigmatic causes of material phenomena. A philosopher is a lover of Truth, and of Life, with all its ups and downs, because it gives him the opportunity to gather experience, broaden his consciousness, and move closer to truth. Healing is therefore not just a sacred science; it is also a sacred art. And it demands a holistic approach. ★★

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Quality of Life

By Delia Steinberg Guzmán

President of International Organization New Acropolis

As a logical consequence of the demands of our technological civilization, which is based on the quality and performance of its products, people have finally begun to look at the human being as the main factor in any model of civilization, whether technological or otherwise.

It is now increasingly understood and accepted that the greater a person's sense of well-being when he or she is producing something, the greater will be the objective quality of the material product. Once again, it has been proved that machines by themselves cannot produce a fully finished product and that the mere incentive of owning more things or earning more money is not enough to make a human being happy. Consequently, it has become fashionable to focus on enhancing the quality of life. In thousands of businesses all over the world – large, medium-sized and small – campaigns have been launched to raise self-esteem, conscious efficiency and the sense of participation and responsibility, and to develop human relationships and appropriate communication between people.

This is all well and good, and indeed, positive advances have been achieved in many cases: people are more relaxed, more attentive to their work and more satisfied with their working environment. But it cannot stop there. The basic motivation behind this drive for increased quality of life does not cover the whole spectrum of the human being; it seeks to achieve increased and better quality production, but it does not usually take into consideration the other needs that are inherent in the condition of being alive, of facing dozens and dozens of situations that are not always related to work and productivity. Of course, human beings need some material resources – which may be more or less technical – to enable them to live with dignity. And, above all, people need resources to enable them to compete and make their way within our specific societies of today, societies that measure people based on what they have and on the prestige they obtain.





But we shouldn't forget that, alongside that material subsistence, there are feelings – not always clearly defined – that can make people happy or torment them; there are ideas – not always clear or resolved – that make it difficult for people to make firm progress and choose their own future. And we would also add those other experiences – spiritual or metaphysical – that arise unexpectedly in the consciousness, asking for answers to the eternal enigmas.

If we are to talk about an authentic quality of life, we should consider the human being as a whole and not only with regard to what he or she can give and produce. We should think about an education which, from the very first years, looks after the psychological, mental, moral and spiritual development of those who, later on, will have to give the best of themselves, after they have first managed to make themselves better.

In the psychological aspect, it is important that each person should be able to distinguish their everyday and fleeting emotions from those deep and refined feelings that can and should be nourished, so that they can become lasting and stable sources of happiness. As long as quality of life is associated with superficial and changing emotional experiences, and the emphasis and interest remain at that level, there will be no individuals who will be sure of themselves or of those around them. Things that are always changing can be entertaining for a while, but they don't have the seal of quality.

In the mental aspect, it is not only necessary to study, as this is understood today, because we can see from experience how easily people forget what they have not studied properly. There is a need to learn, to remember with intelligence, gathering our own experiences and those of others, making everything we learn something alive, if we are to achieve quality of life at this level as well.

In the moral aspect, and even if daily examples suggest the contrary, it is indispensable to develop the latent virtues in all human beings. 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. There are plenty of teachings and pieces of advice from great sages of yesterday and today to provide perspectives in this sense. We have to know how to make use of them and leave aside the vain prejudice that nobody can transmit anything valid to us – especially if these are concepts that have been passed down through the centuries from ancient times.

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. ★★★

Vipassana: Experience of Impermanence

By Manjula Nanavati

Twenty-five centuries ago in Northern India, a man desolated by the quantum and pervasiveness of human suffering in the world, resolved to find a solution. His investigation led him to many masters, abundant knowledge and a plethora of techniques to investigate Truth and Reality, until finally on achieving enlightenment, he devoted the rest of his life to teaching people how to come out of misery.

The Buddha, who never claimed to be anything but human, began teaching, and several hundred years afterwards, his words were compiled into *Dhammapada*, meaning at the feet of *Dharma*, the Universal Law of Life. He taught that suffering is caused by craving, aversion and ignorance, and that the root of all suffering lies within us. Like many wise men, Buddha extorted that only by knowing oneself was it possible to confront the essential truth, beyond the veils of our own oblivion.

A crucial aspect of Buddha's teaching was that wisdom received from another, was borrowed wisdom and stayed within the intellectual plane, but wisdom distilled from one's own experience has the power to truly transform us. No-one else's realization of the truth can liberate us. Whatever is outside of us remains at a distance. The truth can be experienced directly only within ourselves.



Image Courtesy: by Vikram / pixabay / CC0

While the Buddha's teachings have taken many expressions in different traditions all over the world, one of the priceless contributions to humanity according to the Pali Cannon was an extremely practical method by which to directly experience reality: an ancient meditation technique called *Vipassana Bhavana*, or "insight into the true nature of reality". The word *passana* means "to see", and *vipassana* in Pali means "to see into", "to see through", or "to see things as they really are".

Vipassana is the technique of dispassionately observing the sensations in the body while maintaining an abiding calm or tranquility that results in ever increasing awareness, ultimately penetrating deep into the consciousness of universal truth.

Why did the Buddha choose sensations as the vehicle with which to enter the mind? As explained in the *Satipatthana Suta*, it is through our sensations that we experience reality. Our senses are the doors through which we internally experience the external world. In addition, our minds generate ideas, thoughts, emotions and memories which further enrich and deepen our experience of life.

Sensations are then the crossroads of both the physical and the mental aspects of ourselves. By observing our physical sensations, we can observe our minds.

Sensations are present throughout the body at every moment in time. Modern science tells us today that every action or experience produces bio-chemical reactions within our bodies, reactions that we are typically unconscious of.

Vipassana strengthens our awareness enough to experience even subtle sensations, and realize that they constantly arise and fade, they originate and cease.

This is the beginning of the awareness of IMPERMANENCE. Through diligent practice one learns not to react to these sensations instinctively. Instead a practitioner learns to maintain equanimity through all sensations, gross or subtle, pleasant or unpleasant.

The Buddha taught that the mind operates in 4 steps or processes. CONSCIOUSNESS happens when the mind comes in contact with a physical or mental object and receives a stimulus. PERCEPTION is when the mind recognizes, analyzes, or labels it. Based on this, an EXPERIENCE is produced which finally culminates in a REACTION. Usually these processes occur so rapidly that we are unaware of the middle two processes. We only recognize the stimulus and our reaction.

Vipassana trains your awareness so as to allow you to separate your experiencing mind from your reacting mind.

By maintaining serenity through all experiences, one has the choice now of exercising a balanced response rather than an instinctive, conditioned or emotional reaction. This, perhaps, is what distinguishes Vipassana from other meditation techniques. Some techniques use verbalizations, mantras, chanting or prayer. Some techniques use visualization, of a setting, form, or deity. Many of these may be effective in various ways. Each might foster the centering of the mind, focusing it away from the illusive impermanent aspect of life. Their goal is to elevate one into a state of deep mental absorption, resulting in a lightness or bliss, so that one might come out of the experience restored, revitalized, and ready to tackle challenges with renewed vigor. However effective, none of these techniques by itself offers a solution to the anguish.

By training the mind through assiduous practice of equanimity through pain or pleasure, *vipassana* gives one the tools to separate one's experience, from the reaction to that experience, allowing one to finally release oneself from the vice-like grip of torment.

Buddha exhorted that only by knowing oneself was it possible to confront the essential truth, beyond the veils of our own oblivion.



In theory many religions shed light on this separation. The Gita propagates detachment from the fruits of action. The Bible asks that you 'turn the other cheek'. Modern psychoanalysis asks you to 'perceive your feelings', just like anger management seminars declare you must 'observe' your anger. Vipassana offers a time-tested practice, that systematically teaches how exactly to do this. When followed diligently, even if only for the 10 days of training, it allows momentary, but inspiring glimpses of success.

Every moment of our lives we have been reacting. We think we are reacting independently. In reality, however, we are instinctively reacting to sensations, and these reactions are produced by our past conditioning. Some of these reactions are so deeply ingrained that we are almost powerless when they raise their heads.

It is in developing awareness and equanimity together, in equal measure, The Buddha said, that will lead to liberation. Awareness without equanimity could lead to greater sensitivity to sensation, prompting destabilizing reactivity, while equanimity without awareness could result in repressing, concealing or remaining ignorant of suffering and sensations deep within.

Slowly and diligently, as one graduates to the point of non-reaction, however momentarily may it be, one begins the process of purification of the mind. Practicing composure in the face of unpleasant sensations one begins to eradicate aversion. Practicing tranquility in the face of pleasant sensations one begins to strengthen oneself against craving. By practicing serenity in the face of neutral sensations one begins to wipe out ignorance. This is experiencing the truth of suffering and the truth of the cessation of suffering within the framework of our own bodies; our bodies bear witness to the truth of transience.

It is said that the last words of The Buddha to his disciples were, "All created things are subject to decay. Practice diligently to realize this truth."

Merely learning the technique of *Vipassana* cannot grant serenity, any more than learning the technique of sailing can guarantee calm seas. As long as there are conditioned reflexes within our subconscious, no matter how strong our resolve, they will at times, overpower us. The only real solution is to use this technique to change ourselves. By scrupulously and industriously diving deep within, to develop awareness and equanimity at the deepest level, and by applying this practice in our daily lives, vipassana becomes a tool by which to observe reality as it is, not just while meditating, but in every moment.

For an experienced Vipassana practitioner, the unequivocal and tangible realization of the impermanence of the world, all things in it and of it, including what we call Self, is the key to liberation. Only a human being has the power to be able to grasp this truth. No other living being on the planet has the faculties that allow this leap. The Buddha showed us that we are capable, with assiduous practice, of reaching enlightenment. The gift of his teachings, his sacrifices, and his unswerving belief in the human potential make it imperative for us to take a few steps forward towards our own evolution. Not to do so would be to deny our magnificent potential as human beings, a tragic waste of unrealized opportunity. ★★★

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Archery: Bringing Together Heaven and Earth

By Vineet Lalan

Archery is an ancient martial art, as old as the most ancient myths. We see references to the bow-and-arrow across traditions and cultures; the renowned *Gandiva* of Arjuna, the mighty bow of Apollo, the long Samurai *Yumi* or the prominent Mongolian Bow. The Zodiac sign of Sagittarius is also depicted as the mythical centaur wielding a bow and arrow. Its appearance in symbols and mythology abound might perhaps indicate, that beyond hunting animals and fighting battles, archery might have had more profound philosophical implications relevant for us as human beings.

In ancient India, the bow symbolised the human being; each of its two ends signified Man's higher and lower self, or his heavenly and earthly nature. There is always a string which connects these two ends which needs to be tied with just the right tension in order to use it effectively. As the archer draws the arrow, he brings both ends of the bow closer; they act as one, and enable the release of the arrow, an expression of his inner being, his Will.

In ancient India, the bow symbolised the human being; each of its two ends signified Man's higher and lower self, or his heavenly and earthly nature.

Today, Archery is practised primarily as a commercial sport. As a sport, it has been reduced to the simple need of hitting the target to score maximum points. However, if we dive deeper into the philosophical background of this ancient sport we learn that this approach is but a materialistic shadow of its ancient counterpart. The Japanese form of Archery, called *Kyudo* for example, was practised as a way of life. The Archer needed to follow an 8-step ceremonial process before shooting his arrow, and the need to hit the target was of least significance. In fact, the Sensei never even looked at the target while teaching. Instead, all the attention of the teacher was focussed on the accuracy of the process. Therefore, even if the archer hits the bull's eye, if his process was not accurate the shot was

disqualified, and called a "Fake hit". Furthermore, in olden days, an archer who demonstrated the correct process won competitions despite missing the target. There are a lot of values one can learn from this approach, to extract and apply as principles in life.

Let us explore some values that the art of archery may teach us.

Concentration

The one thing an Archer needs to develop the most is Concentration. The word concentration is derived from Latin *con centra*, meaning *with centre*. In the myth of *The Mahabharata*, this principle is beautifully illustrated by the story of Arjuna aiming for the bird's eye placed inside a tree, by his teacher for practice. By maintaining his centre, the archer guards himself from getting swayed by various external distractions, which will cause him to miss the target easily. Similarly, in our life we need to identify a centre, the essential purpose, and act in adherence to that centre without getting distracted and scattered by the various voices of our personality that pull us in different directions. Such a centre gives us an objective point of reference to rely on.



The principle of concentration also enables the widening of our consciousness. In order for a juggler to manage various pins, it is clear that if he attempts to concentrate on each pin, he will drop the others. Instead he must develop concentration on an invisible centre, by which to maintain attention over the full collection of pins. Similarly, if we are only caught up with our own self-centred and partial view towards life, we will miss the opportunity to connect with the holistic objective reality. We need to widen our consciousness in order to see the big picture.

Commitment

An archer needs to be one with his target. He seeks unity with the target. This requires commitment from the side of the archer towards his target and towards the Art. Usually nowadays, we have the tendency of being "commitment phobic" in life. But in archery, it is said that touching the depth of the target and real growth only comes with commitment. An archer needs to practise 10000 times, to shoot day in and day out to perfect himself. Every time an archer draws the bow he needs the same commitment towards his target to shoot well. The success of last shot has nothing to do with present shot. Commitment is required in every shot. There is no scope of being complacent. However experienced and skilful the archer might be, he cannot take anything for granted. Commitment is therefore a powerful weapon as it can help us do things which might seem impossible at first.

Will

The archer's arrow symbolises the force of his Will which transforms an ordinary arrow into one charged with purpose and direction. In ancient days, it was said that only when an archer released his arrow with indomitable will, would it penetrate the enemy's armour. Once the arrow is shot, there is no turning back. It will reach its destination by penetrating any obstacle on its way. Such is the power of will. There is no retreat and we are destined to hit our target, and fulfil our dreams.

*The archer's arrow
symbolises the force of his Will
which transforms an ordinary
arrow into one charged with
purpose and direction.*

Though it is underutilized, it is important to realize that as human beings, we already naturally possess this force of Will. By approaching our goals with strong Will we can break through obstacles and transcend the boundaries of our limitations. Sometimes when we face challenges in life we get overwhelmed by fear and give in to personal obstacles. We lack the inner conviction to overcome the challenges. We convince ourselves that they are insurmountable and self-imposed limitations. During these moments we need to remind ourselves: "Where there is a Will, there is a Way."

Will directs matter and when we act with will consistently we can influence matter and make our dreams come true.

We must also appreciate that only human beings possess such Free Will. Other forms of life like plants and animals are unable to make choices as they are programmed to act in accordance to their design. But human beings have choice. This choice is to direct our actions virtuously despite the influence and lower tendencies of the personality.

Stability

An archer needs to be stable not just physically but also psychologically and mentally. Any interruption by a thought or emotion, while releasing the arrow, and he will miss his precision due to the distortion brought by his subjectivity. Beyond the technique therefore, the archer must master the psyche. Similarly, as human beings we might learn to control and direct our thoughts and emotions, and not let them control us. In *Kyudo*, after the release of the arrow, the last step is to see where it hit. However, it was essential to maintain a stoic attitude, without feeling happy or sad. If the archer showed even a hint of emotion his shot was disqualified as childish and disgraceful. Usually our emotions and thoughts distort reality. It doesn't allow us to be centred as it pulls us in different directions. An archer needs a stoic disposition and can't allow his emotions, moods, and thoughts to determine his direction.

Self-alignment

The whole idea of hitting a specific target correlates with aligning with The Law, or Truth. To do this one needs to master oneself, and employ the tools of concentration, commitment, objectivity and stability. But above all, one characteristic of a great archer is to have a good eye sight. Philosophically speaking, this means that an archer should be able to see the truth as it is. For this he needs the ability to discern the truth from illusion, the spirit from matter.

It is interesting to note that astrologically speaking, the constellation Sagittarius is ruled by the planet Jupiter which is said to relate to the archetypes of Truth and Wisdom. This is one of the most important secrets of archery: to seek the truth within in order to align oneself with the cosmic law. The whole practise of Archery is a path of correcting ourselves every day, to move forward towards knowing our true nature. Evidently, Archery is not just a martial art, but an entire way of life. There is a lot for us to learn from this art form. For as Confucius said, "When the archer misses the centre of the target, he turns round and seeks for the cause of his failure within himself." ★★★

New Acropolis Celebrates Gandhi

New Acropolis India Presents
EMPOWERING *REAL* CHANGE

Towards 150 Years
of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi



Leadership for a Better World

15 December 2018 | Vivanta by Taj President, Mumbai

To commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary, New Acropolis Cultural Organization hosted a conference titled "Empowering Real Change: Leadership for a Better World". Inspired by Gandhi's relentless pursuit of Truth, the day-long event was curated by Mr. Yaron Barzilay (Director), and brought together distinguished leaders who have been striving to make a better world through tireless work in the various fields of Education, Philosophy, Ecology, Anthropology, Governance, Microfinance and Corporate Social Responsibility. With over 250 guests in attendance the event fostered fruitful dialogue to investigate key ingredients to create real change.

More Info: <http://www.empoweringrealchange.com/>

Conference Speakers:

Anu Aga (Teach for India),
Ronnie Screwvala (The Swades Foundation),
Sonam Wangchuk (SECMOL, HIAL),
Dr. Vandana Shiva (Navdanya),
Chetna Gala Sinha (Mann Deshi Bank),
Dr. Saamdu Chetri
(Gross National Happiness Centre, Bhutan),
Dr. Tridip Suhrud (Gandhian Historian),
Pierre Poulain
(Author, Philosopher and Photographer),
Fernand Schwarz
(Author, International Institution Hermes),
Yaron Barzilay
(New Acropolis Cultural Organization)





Mr. Yaron Barzilay: “Philosophy, love of wisdom, gives us the possibility of real change within us and within the world. It can transform a desperate need into a glorious hope.”



Ms. Anu Aga: “You cannot lead others unless you can lead yourself. Leaders must work from wisdom not knowledge.”



Mr. Ronnie Screwvala: “It is a misnomer that sharing and giving only comes when you have time and resources.”



Dr. Vandana Shiva: “Organic farming is not a technique, it is an obligation. It is an act of gratitude to the earth.”



Mr. Fernand Schwarz: “The smallest step we make inside ourselves towards the good is a step for all mankind.”

This third event in the series of Empowering Real Change received encouraging messages of support from Hon. Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Devendra Fadnavis, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and Nobel Laureate Prof. Muhammad Yunus, among others.

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Understanding Gandhi:

An Exchange with Dr. Tridip Suhrud

By Harianto H Mehta and Manjula Nanavati



Dr. Tridip Suhrud

As the architect of a non-violent civil disobedience movement that led to the independence of a nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi has been hailed as a spirited activist, a courageous freedom fighter, and an astute politician. For his own deeply ascetic lifestyle, uncompromising ethical code, and strict adherence to human values, he won the veneration of masses, a devotion usually reserved for saints, indeed even the title of a Mahatma. His profound influence on world leaders like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King can be said to have changed the course of history.

To understand the true measure of the man, however, we need to invite reflection. Perhaps by grasping the spirit of his lofty ideals, we might translate Gandhi's legacy into a practical and enduring tool for transformation and renewal in our times today.

To pay tribute to his relentless pursuit of Truth on the occasion of his 150th Birth Anniversary, The Acropolis Magazine met with Gandhian Scholar and cultural historian Dr. Tridip Suhrud. As the director of Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust, he was responsible for creating the Gandhi Heritage Portal, the world's largest digital archive on Gandhi. He is uniquely fluent in all three languages in which Gandhi wrote, and has authored numerous books, including *Beloved Bapu: The Mirabeau-Gandhi Correspondence*, as well as a bi-lingual edition of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*. Presently he is working on translating the *Diaries of Manu Gandhi*, and a twenty-volume archival project called *Letters to Gandhi*. Dr. Suhrud is renowned as an authority on Gandhi's life, his books and his intellectual tradition. Here are excerpts from our conversation.

THE ACROPOLITAN (TA): Gandhiji's deeply ascetic lifestyle is legendary. He emphasized the need to exercise a rigid self-control on diet, clothing, chastity, medicines; almost to the point of obsession. In your view, what might have been at the root of this degree of self-restraint?

DR. TRIDIP SUHRUD: Simply, it comes from his need to see God face to face. The question is if one can see God face-to-face when one is still in the physical body? His answer is that it will always elude you; no human being can actually see God face-to-face. And yet, unless you have a body, unless you are in the body, you cannot have this desire to see God. This is a standard philosophical problem of the relationship between mind and matter. And Gandhi is aware of it. But, he says, what we are capable of is, hearing the voice of God, the voice of truth. For Gandhi, there are two requirements to make it possible: the first is the acquired capacity to listen to this voice from within, and the second is the ability to communicate to the world that he is actually acting on behest of this voice.

Gandhi speaks of the voice of Ravan, the untrue, the ego, and the voice of Rama, the truth. In order to be able to discern between these two [inner] voices, to be certain that one is hearing the voice of truth, and not of untruth, one needs to be in control of the senses, of the mind, of the desires.

Unless the senses are in harmony, a person does not acquire, what he calls, a fully developed conscience. And for Gandhi, all desires, whether they emerge from the mind or from the body, are satisfied only through the body. It is really the body which craves, signals satiation or unfulfillment, and feels pain or pleasure. Hence since the body is an impediment, the only way to deal with it is to subjugate the body to the will of the mind, the will of the conscience. If the body acts autonomous of the mind, then you have a problem.

TA: *Satyagraha* can be translated as Force of Truth, but also connotes civil disobedience, non-cooperation, or passive resistance. But the concept seems to have been used as more than just a political tool. What was the underlying principle that drove *satyagraha*?

SUHRUD: What is an act of *satyagraha*? When is it that we do disobedience? Gandhi says I do disobedience when something is repugnant to my conscience and I choose to recognize a higher law.

TA: But could this not be very subjective?

SUHRUD: Of course. Gandhi says that my notion of the truth allows for the fact that I could be wrong. Hence, *satyagraha* is a process of dialogue.

In any search for truth, you have to make a provision that you could be wrong. Therefore, the question is, can you and I have a relative notion of truth, which then might lead us onto the path of absolute truth? We go back to an old philosophical problem: is truth absolute, or is it relative?

Gandhi's answer to this is very simple. He says that it is not given to him to understand truth in all its aspects. He is a believer in the Buddhist or Jain notion of truth which says truth has many facets...*anekantvada*, meaning that there are *anek anth*, or many possible ends in this search for truth. The truth will always have many different faces, and each person will be able to glimpse only a part of it.

Hence, in the practical terms of *satyagraha*, there are no non-negotiable stands. A *satyagrahi* always negotiates. This is not a strategic move. It is a philosophical statement which recognizes that there could be truth in what the other has to

say. Even those acting from a large position of injustice, could have truth on their side, or at least a measure of it.

TA: Gandhiji said, "Experience has taught me that civility is the most difficult part of *satyagraha*." What really is civility in the context of *satyagraha*?

SUHRUD: Civility of two kinds. Firstly, one must recognize that there could be truth available to you which is not available to me. Therefore, I recognize that you are just as capable as I, of recognizing and acting upon truth. Now if I say that you are neither capable of recognizing truth nor of acting upon its recognition, then what is the point of *satyagraha*? You will be blind to any truth that I present to you.

Therefore, civility is that I recognize your humanity. *Satyagraha* is the only form of protest which recognizes the humanity of others. And that is why there is no notion of pure evil in Gandhi's world view. That Gandhi is always willing to talk to the British Empire comes from the idea that even the Empire is capable of recognizing the truth. And that if it has become dark one can re-awaken it with some light.

TA: How does one foster this civility, or reawaken this light, this attitude of looking for, and allowing for, truth?

SUHRUD: By conduct, by example. Therefore, the notion of the exemplar.

TA: Gandhi recognizes such an obligation of an exemplary leader?

SUHRUD: All the time. And this is not only true of Gandhi. For anybody who seeks reform, change must begin with oneself. I mean, if I am asking you to consume less...I must first consume less. If I am asking you to stop being exploitative, I must first consider if my own relationships are exploitative. If I am asking you to go to jail for the sake of freedom, am I also willing to go to jail for the sake of freedom?

Leading others becomes possible only when you are able to lead yourself, and if you are able to constantly reduce the gap between your words and your deeds.

He says that leading others becomes possible only when you are able to lead yourself, and if you are able to constantly reduce the gap between your words and your deeds.

TA: Leadership can be a very complex issue. Since life is not black and white, it must involve spiritual and ethical dilemmas. What were some of these moral dilemmas and how did Gandhiji resolve them?

SUHRUD: The notion of non-violence, for example, is very problematic. What is it that we are supposed to do if the police come charging at us? Even though the law recognizes self-defence, Gandhi questions whether a *satyagrahi* can defend himself or herself. And if the answer is yes, then are any and all means justified? Meaning, can I, in self-defence, attack my assailant? Gandhi says: No - a true *satyagrahi* does not defend himself or herself.

TA: So, what is the right course of action in such a situation?

SUHRUD: Nothing. You stand and are beaten. And you are beaten to that point till the other person sees the invalidity of his violence.

TA: Is there not a dignity involved in standing for justice? By not doing anything and by being beaten down, one is not really proactively endorsing what is needed or what is just.

SUHRUD: Gandhi takes a completely contrary view. The role of a *satyagrahi* is to say to the oppressor, "Do your worst. If taking my life is going to satisfy your need for violence then go right ahead...do it." This is a very extreme position on violence and it's not that it was not practiced by him.



Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

One of his greatest acts of defiance was the picketing that happened at the Dharasana Salt Mines in 1930. *Satyagrahis* walked up to the barbed wire fence that protected the salt pans, and were beaten down, day in and day out, for weeks! We know through medical records, that of all the people who suffered injuries, not one had fractured fingers or arms. They all had fractured skulls or fractured shoulders. Gandhi had told these workers not to raise a single hand to ward off any blows, not even to protect the skull. He believed that the only answer to that kind of violence could be perfect non-violence.

It was in the ensuing international publicity that the legitimacy of British rule over India was snatched away. The world came to believe that this act of complete non-violence on the part of Indians proved the futility of the use of violence as a legitimate means of subjugating people.

TA: In other words, a civilized world cannot justify the use of uncivilized means?

SUHRUD: Yes. The question really is what is the relationship between means and ends? We have come to believe that if the end is good it does not matter what means we employ. We want freedom and we shall have it at any cost. Gandhi says no. There is an inviolable relationship between means and ends. Means are like seeds which tell us what kind of fruits we are going to have. So, if you create your freedom through an act of violence, then violence becomes a legitimate means for that society, which cannot then aspire to be a non-violent, non-exploitative, just society. When at the root it is believed that all means are justified, what is to prevent the new state from also acting in an unjust way towards its own people?

Every collective believes that its ends are noble. Even those people who go out and lynch people think that their goal is noble because they are protecting the cow and so will employ any means possible. That's the argument, right? Gandhi says this is exactly what happens if violence and exploitation become a just means.

TA: Gandhiji spoke of "True civilization as that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty." He does not emphasize inalienable rights, but obligatory duties. What kind of duties was Gandhiji referring to?

SUHRUD: Gandhi would say that we will not be violent. We will not be exploitative. We will create conditions where each human being is able to try to realize her potential. If nothing else, it is our duty to create enabling conditions, or what is called trusteeship; not out of compulsion, but out of moral obligation or duty, which is the basis of all philanthropic work. You cannot have philanthropy or trusteeship, if you do not have a notion of duty.

The fact that there is now a Corporate Social Responsibility Law is a signal to us that the wealthy in our country have forgotten this notion of duty. If everybody performed their duties to fellow human beings, then there would not have been a need for enforced CSR, or enforcement of duty. So, I don't necessarily think that CSR is a great sign of our merit; in fact, for me it is a sign of a lack of merit.

This notion of duty is fundamental to any society. I don't think you can have a society, without any notion of obligations that we have towards each other. Now, your rights are justiciable, your duties are not, and that's a very important distinction.

TA: Is this Gandhi being a little bit naïve? Because usually, the duties we perform are quite personal.

SUHRUD: No, he is not. What is personal? The notion of the personal keeps expanding for all of us, doesn't it? For example, we all say, "This my City." The fact that you would be concerned about the environment - is that personal? Of course it is. You are saying that the concern for the environment belongs to me, as well as to those who shall succeed me. And therefore, the idea of what is mine can actually potentially include the generation yet to come.

TA: Is it also Gandhi's understanding that a citizen is obligated to widen the scope of his so-called personal duty?

SUHRUD: Yes. For example, what comprises the personal for a leader?

TA: All those that he leads are part of his personal.

SUHRUD: Exactly. So, can the leader therefore promote his family?

TA: Not at the cost of all those that he leads.

SUHRUD: Exactly. We recognize that. And we take inspiration from leaders like Gandhi who constantly widen the notion of what is their ambit of duty, thereby including the dispossessed within it.

TA: Gandhiji was outspoken about his anguish over modern civilization. He advocated an exacting way of life, and made many controversial statements especially in *Hind Swaraj*, where he speaks out strongly against lawyers, doctors, hospitals, railways. In his rallying cry to go back to our roots, what was Gandhiji trying to illuminate and revive?

SUHRUD: I don't think people should take *Hind Swaraj* literally. We forget that it is a philosophical text. It's not a programmatic text.

You have to understand that it was written at a time when what we call modernity was not yet a fact. When Gandhi was writing in 1908, modernity was only one of the possibilities. There was actually a larger life outside of modernity, and today what we call primitive was really the norm.

Gandhi says that modernity shifts the focus of human worth outside the human being, into objects. Philosophically it transfers the notion of human goodness or human virtue into an object, what today we call consumerism. That's One.

Two - we have to recognize that colonialism was tied together with modernity. Industrialization was not possible without the colonial structure which supported it. What were the two forms of knowledge which came to India as part of modern Western education? Law and Medicine. That we will be governed by laws, laws that are not our own, is something that became possible through our participation in the legal framework.

TA: What you're saying then, is that when Gandhi speaks out against hospitals and railways, he's using them as symbols...

SUHRUD: They are metaphors. The railway was seen in India, for a very long time as the first modern artefact of industrial production. Even today we think that railways are a sign of progress, right? If your town acquires a good metro system you are likely to re-elect that government, because it is seen as a sign of progress.

There is an inviolable relationship between means and ends. Means are like seeds which tell us what kind of fruits we are going to have.

TA: But is it not progress in our context?

SUHRUD: But is it the only thing? I mean, although it is something which we require, it does not become the measure of progress. One could argue that it is a sign of regression, having resulted in lop-sided growth and created these unmanageable cities. If you actually had more balanced growth, Bombay would have been liveable, and Delhi would have been breathable.

TA: What should be the relationship of modern India's youth to Gandhi today?

SUHRUD: It cannot be an easy relationship; he is not an easy character to relate to. But my thinking is very simple. If you are unhappy with the world in which you live, if you think there is injustice, poverty and hunger that we are unable to explain even to ourselves, then you need to engage with India. And one of the persons who would allow you to engage with India deeply is Gandhi.

In what I call normal times, we don't want to engage with anyone who asks uncomfortable moral questions, and that has been exactly the relationship that India has had with him. It's only in times of crisis that we turn towards Gandhi. And at those times, he can be a great ally in showing us how to make individual and collective lives better. ★★★

Grace

By Tarini Vaidya

Grace has become an old fashioned word, graciousness and courtesy have become old world values, almost valueless in today's environment. The world has gone über brash. Billboards extoll the 'virtue' of Attitude, with a capital A: "Wear your Attitude," screams one, as though attitude were an aspirational achievement! A young generation has grown up with an exaggerated sense of privilege and entitlement. If you say 'please' or 'thank you', people look at you as though you were an anachronism. We are encouraged to be 'go-getters', to demand, to seize what we consider is ours. Business school entrance tests include Group Discussions, where your acceptability to enter the exalted portals of the school is judged by whether you can interrupt and out-yell the other participants! Sadly this trait is used decades later by the same B school boors... er sorry...graduates, in board meetings. Type A personalities - aggressive, loud, dominant Alpha Males (and increasingly females) are venerated in corporate headquarters. And at the other end of the spectrum, aspirational youngsters have broken through middle class shackles to achieve professional and financial success, and developed an exaggerated sense of 'Attitude' and brashness: "We are like this only. Take it or leave it!" seems to be their anthem.

What is grace? In its simplest, everyday form, it is the art of offering and accepting, with genuine humility and gratitude. It is as much in the quick and genuine rendering of an apology, as in its acceptance. Grace lies in simple good manners. It lies in jumping up to give your seat to an older person; it lies in assisting mothers struggling to manage shopping bags and toddlers; it lies in letting an old man shuffle slowly across the zebra crossing even if the traffic light has turned green. There is even grace in accepting a compliment. Usually the conversation goes something like this:

Padma: "Rekha you look lovely in that sari!"

Rekha: "Oh this old sari! I must look so dowdy!"

If Rekha had smiled and said, "Thank you for the compliment, Padma..." it would have been a graceful, un-self-deprecating acknowledgement of Padma's compliment.



Image Courtesy by ORIENTO / unsplash / CCO

On a recent visit to Japan I was amazed by their general sense of grace and politeness. Walking into a fast food outlet to ask for directions, I was astounded when a young man hurriedly packed up his half-eaten burger and cola into a plastic bag to walk me to the front door of my hotel! Each time I asked for directions, someone would walk me right up to my destination! In Japan almost everything is done ceremoniously with utmost consciousness and grace. The elaborate tea drinking ceremony is an outstanding example of this. It channels all of one's attention into predefined movements, which highlights the aesthetics of the whole process beyond the act of making and drinking tea. The host will consider the placement of the tea utensils from the point of view of the guest and the guest in turn will appreciate even the tea cup, before taking a sip of the tea. To watch such a ceremony is to watch grace in action.

Politeness, courtesy and gratitude are the hallmark of everyday grace that we might each endeavor to live by as an expression of our inner nobility, our inner Acropolis. It includes how we treat each other and how we treat things; not just human beings. It is to keep our environment clean, it is to care as much for public property as we do for our own things, it is to show respect to everything, in as much as it is an act of genuine politeness. It is an act of authentic generosity, an expression of inner discipline and an awareness of our essential unity. The world would be a much better place to live in if each of us could embody these principles into our quotidian interactions.

What is grace? In its simplest, everyday form, it is the art of offering and accepting, with genuine humility and gratitude

There is an apocryphal story of a Queen of England who was once hosting a banquet. One of the diners, not realising what a finger bowl was, thought it was soup. He raised the bowl to his lips to drink from it, instead of using it to wash his fingers. The queen, ever graceful, not wishing to embarrass her guest, followed suit and sipped delicately from her own bowl! Whether true or not, the essential message of the story is one of grace.

We can all bring grace into our everyday interactions. It only takes awareness. Remember you attract more bees with honey rather than vinegar! Instead of aggressiveness and brashness, let us make courtesy and grace fashionable. So how might we bring more grace into our lives? To use a clichéd phrase: to be in the Now. Too often we are lost in the past or are in the future; both exercises in futility. The past cannot be changed. The future is unknown and not in our control. Live fully in the present; that's all we can control. And if we are fully present where we are, if we live our moments with consciousness and awareness, we will see opportunities to bring grace into our lives. So often we don't even notice the old man trying to cross the road in front of our car. We can perform everyday actions with grace and bring beauty to the mundane. A person who carries herself gracefully looks beautiful, irrespective of her features or shape. A person who, on seeing you have only two items, asks you to go ahead of her in the checkout line of a supermarket, exhibits grace.

Divine Grace

Grace can also refer to Divine Grace; the grace of God, the grace of the Universe; the grace of Life. Ancient Hindu texts talk about this Divine Grace.

The Kath Upanishad and Mundak Upanishad (3/2/3) say: "God cannot be understood through study, debating, intellectual application or mere listening. When a soul surrenders to God wholeheartedly, he receives God's grace, and with God's grace, he attains God."

In the Bhagavad Gita (11/53-54), Krishna revealing His divine form to Arjuna explained, "Arjuna, the divine vision of My form that you just experienced is not the result of studying the Vedas or performing the austerities from the paths of jnana and yoga, it is not the result of performing good actions, Vedic rituals or following religious rules and regulations. This is only the result of My grace, which you receive when you have exclusive devotion for Me."

The Shvetashvatar Upanishad states, "God can be known only through His grace."

In the Ramayana, Goswami Tulsidas states, "It may be possible to produce butter by churning water or to extract oil from sand, but it would still be impossible to cross the ocean of maya without God's grace."

Surrender

What is the path to this Divine Grace? It is often confused with devotion, as in Bhakti, defined as blind surrender to the Divine. It is not to do nothing and expect to be showered with Divine Grace. All ancient schools of wisdom exhort us to do our duty, to follow Dharma, to live our lives with sacredness and meaning to realize our full potential. Certainly we cannot do this by mere surrender to God and abject disregard of our Dharma!

We achieve this by doing what needs to be done, by doing what is right and just and honest. We bring upon ourselves the grace of the Universe, by doing what we should, and then surrendering the consequences of our right actions to the Universe. In the Gita this is referred to as *karmaphalatyaga* – to give up the desire for the fruits of our actions. This is when *doing* ends and surrender begins. This is the start of faith and trust in the Justice of Life, the Divine.

In Hindu philosophy there is a concept of Markat mata and Marjara mata. At first, when we begin to have faith in a higher power, we cling on to that faith, much like an infant monkey hangs on to its mother. This is the concept of Markat Mata. Later, as our faith deepens and strengthens, and leads to desire-less action and surrender, our faith hold us, much like a cat carries its kittens. This is the concept of Marjara mata.



Image Courtesy: by Patrick Foye / unsplash / CCo

If we are fully present where we are, if we live our moments with consciousness and awareness, we will see opportunities to bring grace into our lives.

In the run-up to this year's holy month of Ramzan, there was a billboard put up by a travel agency that carried beautiful words from the Hadith Qudsi: Allah says, "Take one step towards Me, I will take ten steps towards you. Walk towards Me, I will run towards you."

And in the Christian tradition there is that wonderful hymn, *Amazing Grace* in which one verse says, "Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come. 'Tis Grace has brought me safe thus far. And Grace will lead me home."

Divine Grace is ever present. Through right and desire-less action, we open ourselves to receive it, to then express through grace our own true nature.
★★★

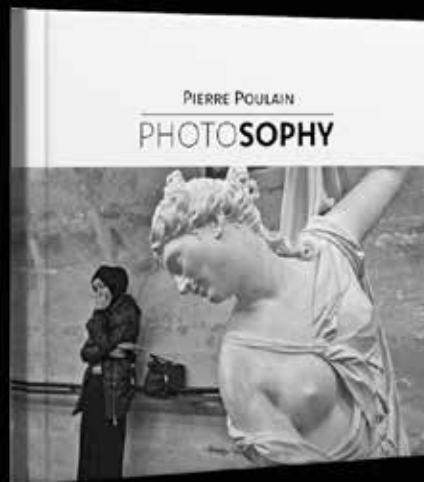
ANNOUNCING: PHOTOSOPHY

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Bringing together two worlds, to form one unity from which emerges a dialogue, a tension between image and text.

"The combination of the photograph and the text, enables me to bring this whole, the tension, the mystery, the paradox and the question mark. The book is an invitation to enter the enigma of creation and investigate the enigma of life." - Pierre Poulain

Mr. Poulain has been invited to speak at various gatherings, and has successfully presented solo exhibitions around the world. For more information and to pre-book your copy, visit:
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Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

PUNE

Talk

**5 JAN
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm

Free Admission



by Free-Photos / pixabay / CCO

Karma, Destiny and Free Will

Is man ultimately bound by Destiny? Or is he entirely free? The question has preoccupied human beings since ancient times, but is arguably one of the most misunderstood philosophical subjects. Join us as we investigate these laws of life and extract their relevance to daily life.

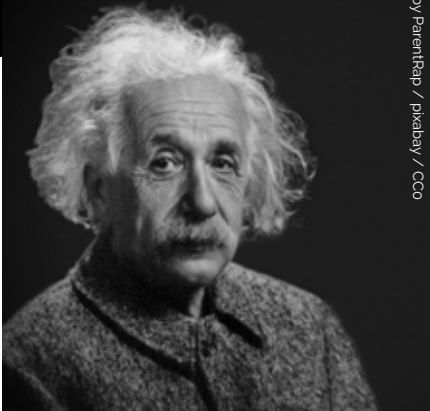
COLABA

Talk

**12 JAN
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm

Free Admission



by ParentRap / pixabay / CCO

A Meeting with Albert Einstein

"He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand wrapped in awe, is as good as dead," said Einstein.

What made it possible for Einstein to have so many breakthroughs in one lifetime? Maybe we can connect to the wonder that motivated his search for the laws of life and creation!

KHAR

Talk

**12 JAN
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm

Free Admission



Living Beyond Boundaries

A little magic of Imagination can help us to see farther than the most advanced telescope. If truly, there is nothing impossible, how do we break the ceiling of our limitations?

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PUNE

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Main Road, Pune
T: +91 99301 98253

PUNE**TUESDAY**

Open House

8 JAN

Course Starts

15 JAN

KHAR**MONDAY**

Open House

21 JAN

Course Starts

28 JAN

COLABA**MONDAY**

Open House

25 FEB

Course Starts

4 MAR

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 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

Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

KHAR

Talk

**19 JAN
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



by Michael Hard / unsplash / CCo

Walk the Talk

Do we Walk the Talk? To align our thought, word and action is empowering and powerful, yet very challenging for most of us. What makes it so hard, when we can easily see the truth in it?

PUNE

Talk

**19 JAN
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



by Noel Feats / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY 3.0

Rethinking Education

"Once you stop learning, you start dying." - Albert Einstein

Traditional wisdom suggests that the process of education is not to add knowledge but to bring out what lies latent within the human being. Join us to discuss what the essential aspects of education are, and to have a deeper understanding of what right education is, in order to bring about transformation towards a better tomorrow. This talk will be presented by the National Director of New Acropolis India, Mr. Yaron Barzilay.

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COLABA

Talk

**26 JAN
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



by F. Apxel / pixabay / CCo

Zen Lessons for 2019

The teachings of Zen Buddhism, are famously known for using Short Stories to awake a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of reality. What lesson do these timeless tales hold for us today?

KHAR

Talk

**2 FEB
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission

**Art of Concentration**

Plagued by a perpetual state of confusion, we are unable to filter through the distractions, in order to focus on the essential things in our life. Perhaps this is the reason that the true meaning of life remains elusive. Let us see how we might learn to live a more fulfilling life in today's world through the delicate Art of Concentration.

PUNE

Talk

**2 FEB
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



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Life - A Delicate Balance

We find ourselves fraught with the challenge and opportunity to choose, evaluate and prioritize at every step. We face circumstances in life which demand our response. How do we balance our lives and make better choices? To seek harmony is natural for each human being. This talk looks at how we can bring inner harmony to balance the many contradictions of our lives.

Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

KHAR

Talk

**9 FEB
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



by Daiga Elaby / unsplash / CCO

Seeking Simplicity

If only life were simple! Where does the complexity lie? What allows some to thrive in the most complicated situations while others are fall to confusion. Join us as we explore this theme of simplifying towards the essential.

COLABA

Talk

**16 FEB
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



by pxhere / CCO

You Can't Always Get What You Want! - The Stoic Art of Contentment

We all want things in life. A relationship, a great job, money in the bank, good health... All of us also experience disappointments in life. The Rolling Stones said you can't always get what you want. Epictetus said that we can get everything we want. But there's a catch. Can we find contentment in the midst of difficulty?

PUNE

Talk

**16 FEB
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



by Just chaos / Wikipedia / CC BY 3.0

Sacred Geometry

'Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better.' – Albert Einstein

Philosopher-mathematician Pythagoras observed numbers as forces of nature and mathematics as a magical means by which to interact with Life itself! Could an understanding of mathematics and geometry really be a key to understanding Life? Join us as we attempt to untangle this mystery.

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

Talk

23 FEB
SATURDAY

6-8 pm
Free Admission



The Butterfly Effect - Imagine the Impossible

In chaos theory, "the butterfly effect" suggests that a butterfly flapping its wings may cause a hurricane 1000's of miles away several weeks later.

It is a real connection which also is related to the right timing and harmony with nature. We too can have a similar impact beyond our imaginations when we bring depth to the most subtle act.

COLABA

Talk

2 MAR
SATURDAY

6-8 pm
Free Admission



by / phree / CCo

The Courage to Lead – Leading Ourselves

"A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves" Lao Tzu

In a world of rapid change and constant ethical challenges, have we almost given up hope for a leadership that will enable us to build a better tomorrow? Maybe we need to ask ourselves, who is a true leader and where will he/she come from?

Or maybe the answer lies closer home, maybe that leader is us!

Schedule Of Public Events

www.acropolis.org.in

KHAR

Talk

**2 MAR
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



Listening to the Music of Nature

"The earth has music for those who want to listen" - how do we tune to the more subtle things in life?

Can we quieten ourselves enough to listen to the Voice of Silence?

PUNE

Talk

**2 MAR
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



Daring to Choose

Our choices determine how happy or satisfied we are in our lives. 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

**16 MAR
SATURDAY**

6-8 pm
Free Admission



The Philosophy of the Martial Arts

The practice of Martial Arts, much beyond self-defence and building health and fitness is a voyage of knowing oneself. Join us to explore how to live the character of the "daily" martial artist who thrives on challenges of life!

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KHAR

Talk

16 MAR
SATURDAY

6-8 pm

Free Admission



Balance and Harmony - Confucius' Teachings

Confucius' teachings emphasize the values of order and harmony which he brought to society. How can we take from this great philosopher a lesson to bring balance into our lives?

PUNE

Talk

16 MAR
SATURDAY

6-8 pm

Free Admission



Human Being or Human Doing

"We find it so easy to get caught up in our day-to-day tasks and routines, that we often forget to live! But what does it mean to live as a human being? Join us as we explore how we can dare to live and bring more vibrancy and meaning into our lives.

LIVING PHILOSOPHY

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