

A Magazine on Philosophy, Culture & Volunteering

THE ACROPOLITAN



APR
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JUN
2023



to the
Earth



Dare to Dream

FEATURE
Many Cultures, One Humanity

Leadership Lessons from
Swami Vivekananda

The Dream of MANAV BUSTAN



FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

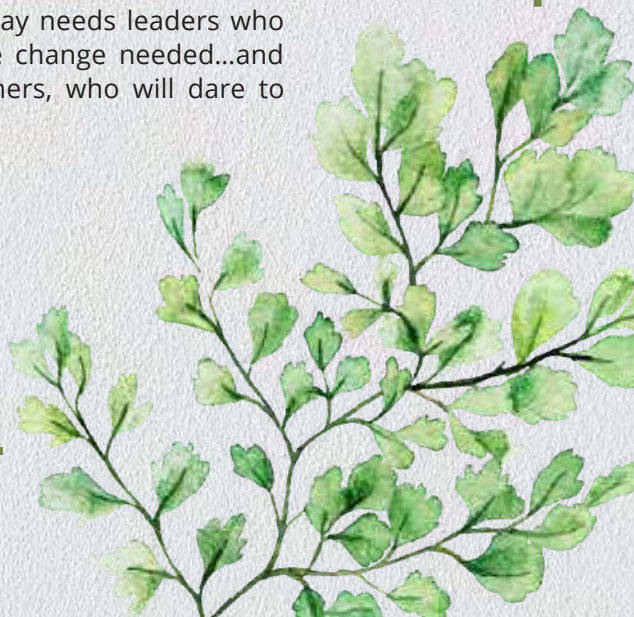
Dear Reader,

It is evident that we live in a paradox - of global connectivity, and yet separation. While we are engaged in conflicts and are at war with each other in different parts of the world, our planet confronts an ecological crisis. The root cause of both, perhaps, is our disconnect. When we see ourselves as separate from nature, we limit our concern to our needs and wants. Similarly, when we focus on our differences, we tend to bind ourselves within the framework of our upbringing and cultural norms, and narrow our view of what is right.

Instead, can we learn to develop our own moral compass? If we can begin to see not just with our eyes but with our heart, we would be better able to understand our true selves, see another's perspective and our role in the larger scheme of life. International Mother Earth Day which we celebrate in April, is a good opportunity to remind ourselves that we are diverse expressions of ONE humanity, and collectively we have a responsibility of being custodians of the planet. What a world we could be if we would truly resonate with this idea!

Do we have the courage to dream of this better world, and the perseverance to work towards it? The world today needs leaders who can show the way, by being an example of the change needed...and thus inspire others. The world needs philosophers, who will dare to DISCOVER. AWAKEN. TRANSFORM.

Malini Nair
Editor



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Many Cultures, One Humanity

By Sabine Leitner

National Director New Acropolis Cultural Organisation (UK)

A few years ago, I watched the documentary *Babies* by Thomas Balmes. It follows the first year of the lives of four babies from Mongolia, Japan, California and Namibia. The film does not contain any narration, it just lets the images speak for themselves, presenting the huge contrast that exists between these four cultures. It is amazing to see how, in just one year, these four babies had utterly different experiences of life on this planet, which would, no doubt, greatly influence the way they were going to understand the world and live in it.

We are all conditioned by our cultural upbringing and our culture influences us more than we might think. According to the American anthropologist Ruth Benedict: "The crucial differences which distinguish human societies and human beings are not biological. They are cultural." Our cultural environment conveys to us what is right, acceptable, hygienic, normal, dangerous, safe, good manners, etc. It develops our tastes, it shapes our opinions, decides what we learn and what we don't learn, it impacts on our value system and influences the way we think, feel and act.

Our cultural conditioning is what we know, and we usually don't question it much. Our culture is our point of reference of how things are done in the 'right way'.

We are all conditioned by our cultural upbringing and our culture influences us more than we might think.



How can we still have a sense of 'right and wrong' – our own moral compass, which is so important! - and yet not become judgemental?

It is quite human to think that the way we learnt something is best and other ways of doing something are therefore often judged unfavourably. But herein lies a huge potential for misunderstandings and conflicts. As the film *Babies* transmits so well: there is not only one way of giving birth, bringing up children, keeping them safe, etc. There are many ways of doing something, and all of them have a logic and a reason behind them.

What applies to different cultural norms, also applies to history. We tend to judge the past by our present standards and think that this is the right thing to do. However, as the memorable first line of L.P.Hartley's novel *The Go-Between* succinctly puts it: "The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."


So, what attitude should we adopt in front of something that is very different and often grates with our own norms? How can we still have a sense of 'right and wrong' – our own moral compass, which is so important! – and yet not become judgemental? I think a good starting point would be to acknowledge that it is indeed a very difficult task to reconcile differences, and also to accept that it will actually require a real effort from ourselves.



*We will all
need to
increase our
capacity to
love.*

We will all need to develop a deep and authentic sense of Self that does not feel threatened by difference. We will all need to learn to think for ourselves so that we can look at differences with fresh and unbiased eyes. We will all need to increase our capacity to love. And we will all need to remember that the vast majority of our differences are 'accidents of birth', i.e. if we had been born in different circumstances, we would live and think very differently.

These are all difficult things to achieve, and the question arises: what could possibly help us to make this effort? Maybe there are two motivations: one being sheer necessity, seeing that our world is getting ever smaller and that there is less space to 'live and let live'. The other one is perhaps the idealistic hope inherent in our souls that is expressed in the words of Schiller's Ode to Joy, which has become immortalized in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony: Thy magic power re-unites / all that custom has divided, / all men become brothers / under the sway of thy gentle wings.

I am convinced that, one day, we will all realize that we are part of the same humanity, and that we have always been united beyond our racial, sexual, cultural, religious, social and other differences. 



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Free Intro:

Wed, 31st May 7:30pm (2 hrs)

Course Begins:

Wed, 7th Jun 7:30pm

To know more [click here](#)

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Free Intro:

Thurs, 15th Jun 7:30pm (2hrs)

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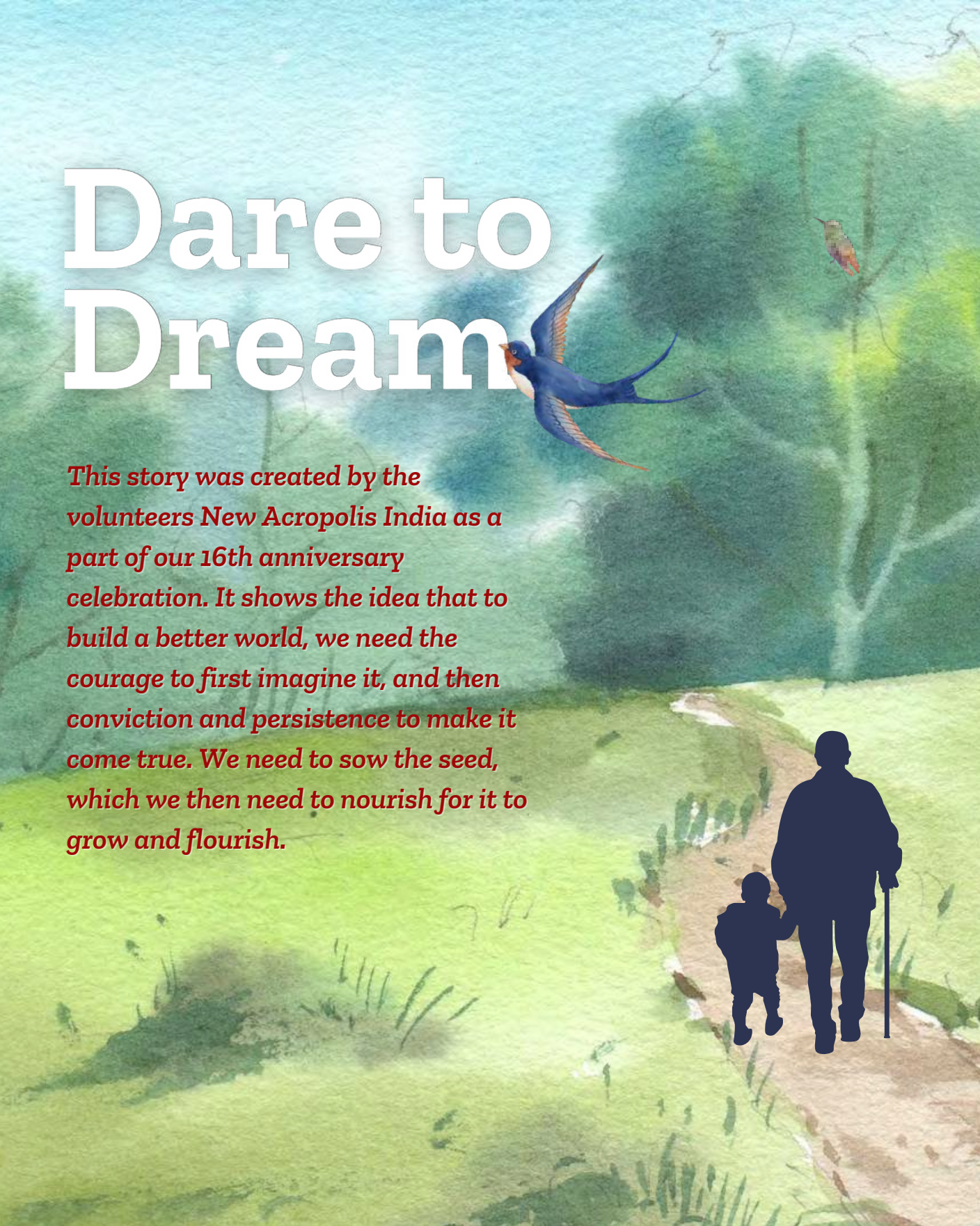
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Dare to Dream

The background is a soft watercolor painting of a landscape. It features rolling green hills, a dirt path leading into the distance, and a large, leafy tree on the right. A blue bird with a white belly and a red throat is shown in flight, its wings spread. In the lower right corner, the silhouettes of an elderly person with a cane and a small child are walking away from the viewer along the path. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

This story was created by the volunteers New Acropolis India as a part of our 16th anniversary celebration. It shows the idea that to build a better world, we need the courage to first imagine it, and then conviction and persistence to make it come true. We need to sow the seed, which we then need to nourish for it to grow and flourish.

It was a special summer vacation at my grandparents'. We'd visited them after a long time for grandpa's 65th birthday. The celebration began light-heartedly, with soft music, sharing of old stories and traditional food. Suddenly, voices rose, and the conversation turned into a heated, recurrent argument I knew well. Father started blaming Grandpa, for his nomadic way of life and limited family commitment while expanding the business. Father stormed out of the room and grandma followed him.

Of course, Grandpa realized the impact of his past choices. He realized how he had missed out on dad's early childhood in their once-flourishing village at the edge of a lush and abundant forest. But as the family was maturing, he had felt responsible to provide for them. Because the opportunities in the region had been declining due to drought and rising migration he had to constantly travel for his work.

Though we were doing well financially, the family fell apart. Grandpa confided to me that his dream was to create an eco-

system around the forest to generate income for local communities and re-establish harmony and solidarity in the family.

While he was saying those words, I can clearly recall seeing grandpa light up from the intensity and fervour of his quest. He asserted that it wasn't too late to make it happen. I observed him closely for the first time. He had the physical markers of his age; his skin was thinner, drier, with wrinkles all over, and his hair was wizened and grey. But he was not defining his life by his age and limitations. He had a strong sense of integrity rather than despair or new phase of life which he felt still held tremendous potential for selfless action and service to humanity.

That night, from my window, I saw Grandpa heading out in the dark with a small lantern, so I decided to follow him. To my surprise, he stopped at a barren clearing in the forest and, affirming his dreams loudly, he planted a seed that he had in his hand; it was for him, the symbol of a new beginning.



Over the last few days of my vacation, I saw Grandpa go out every day to sow seeds. Day after day, new challenges appeared. He wasn't the young man he used to be, and his frail physique had difficulty resisting the harsh sun. The family started to comment and joke about his new fantasy, but I was secretly proud of him. Before leaving for the city, grandpa gave me the tightest hug and assured me that nothing would deter his commitment.

A microcosmic world had already made the land their home; mosses, ferns, mushrooms, flowers, worms, insects, butterflies, small animals and birds, all bound together in an interconnected web, which was dependent on every living thing within that ecosystem fulfilling their small but critical role! Grandpa excitedly invited me to come soon, as the rains would start and make the forest greener.

Grandpa confided to me that his dream was to create an eco-system around the forest to generate income for local communities and re-establish harmony and solidarity in the family.



That summer onwards, my phone calls to grandpa became more frequent. He had been tirelessly persistent for 2 years now and the stories of his young forest were becoming more interesting with every passing week.

He knew the condition of each and every plant and sapling and told me that some of the plants had now grown over 5 feet tall.

The rains came on time, but they brought with them torrential storms. Without the forest to protect them the land was ravaged by landslide and floods, and we heard worrying stories on the news daily about severe destruction and power outages; Our grandparents were uncontactable. As soon as the situation normalized, we rushed to meet them. The devastation was massive. They had lost their farm and most of their possessions. But Grandpa was most heartbroken about losing the forest that he had nurtured like a loving mother.





That day, for a moment, I saw a broken man. Perhaps his dream was not meant to be.

We spent that night in the community hall together. I still have a distinct memory of the leaking roof and the grief of my grandpa's life falling apart. But these emotions could not incapacitate grandpa for long. The strength of his inner spark and conviction held him together. His dream was not limited to himself but it was an expression of love for his community and for many generations to come.

This altruistic joy was enough for him to stay true to his dream. The next morning, he went straight to the forest land, erected a small tent, and started clearing the wreckage, readying to plant a new forest all over again.

Coming back to normalcy was difficult for everyone in the village.

The strength of his inner spark and conviction held him together. His dream was not limited to himself but it was an expression of love for his community and for many generations to come.

Taking advantage of this, a sly businessman approached the villagers. He convinced them to sell off their lands in exchange for money and jobs. He spread rumours that Grandpa's dreams and traditional ways of working would come in the way of their growth, and the development of the village. Some villagers were doubtful of Grandpa's intentions, others would just make fun of his dream. The businessman on the other hand, promised to build a mall which would foster economic growth and attract people from neighbouring villages, which would lead to prosperity for everyone. Since the crops were mostly destroyed, the villagers saw this as a good opportunity to move on, and they spoke up against Grandpa.

I remember very well; Grandpa had to defend the land and the forest in front of the city council, where all the villagers were invited. Bent with age, supported by his walking stick, Grandpa made his way to the meeting. He spoke in a calm but firm tone; and that day, as he shared his vision, he became an example of 'A Man who Dares to Dream.'

The audience could feel that he was motivated not by any self-serving idea but by the love of the collective;



He explained how he wanted to foster employment opportunities through rural tourism, streamline local businesses and revive the regional art form of traditional wood carving, a skill that even some seniors could still master. From a deep silence, murmurs and then enthusiastic voices started to emerge from the audience. Grandpa continued to explain that for him and for their village this forest had been like a mother.

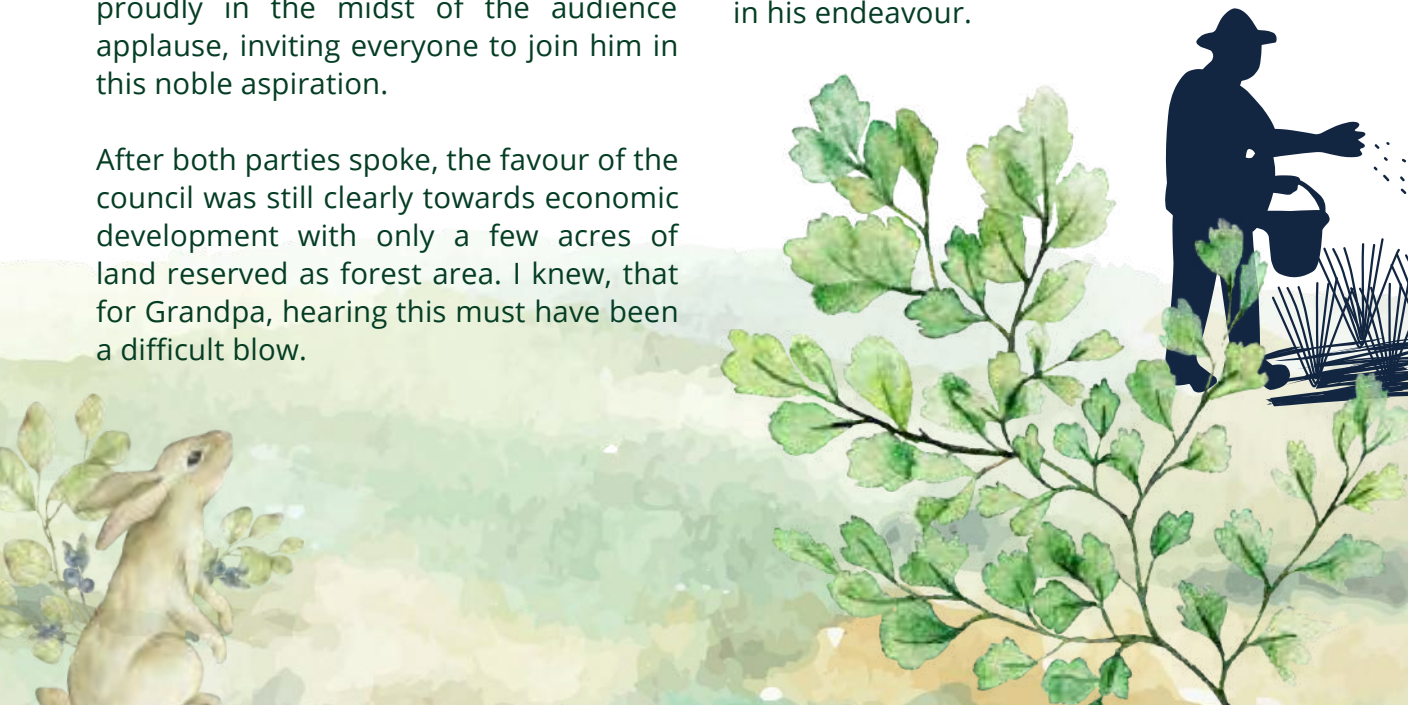
It had nurtured them through all their years, offering economic sustainability and natural wealth. He urged everyone to remember that with some effort, they would find their rightful place in the web of nature: rather than trying to be its master, and stripping it of its richness for their own personal and short-lived material gains, Man must take on the responsibility of protecting and nurturing nature as its custodian, recognizing that he is an integral part of the Web of Life. That's when I saw Father suddenly stand proudly in the midst of the audience applause, inviting everyone to join him in this noble aspiration.

After both parties spoke, the favour of the council was still clearly towards economic development with only a few acres of land reserved as forest area. I knew, that for Grandpa, hearing this must have been a difficult blow.

Yet, despite the council's decision, Grandpa went to the piece of land allocated to replant the forest and continued the work. Father would give him company, and I begged to come too. The spirit of victory, with which he approached every challenge, and the undying hope and patience that he demonstrated – had started to attract some of the other villagers. The way he stood for his dream was infectious. It reminded everyone of the harmony and love that existed in the village.

Over a span of years, grandpa had seen his dream germinate from seeds to trees, from a barren land to a full-fledged forest. The villagers realized that while doing so, he had overcome numerous inner battles and it inspired them to find courage, strength and hope within themselves.

It wasn't without fear and insecurities that slowly the villagers joined Grandpa in his endeavour.



But Grandpa welcomed them warmly, and knowing the cycle of life and his frail health, he openly shared with them his challenges, experiences, learnings and solutions. It didn't take long for other seniors to bring back some knowledge and skills. It was beautiful to see the collective rise again by supporting each other in a shared vision. Grandpa had laid the foundation and direction for the village, despite knowing that he would not live to see the fruits. But by walking the path, he showed us the way and today, there are hundreds of us following his footsteps and carrying forward the dream as our own.

Though grandpa is no longer with us, the fact that father and grandma were able to make peace with his choices during his life, is a source of solace for me. I visit my village every year with my children and walk through the now dense and verdant forest telling them the stories of my memories. The village too has thrived as the forest gently and reciprocally exerted a positive influence on the climate, the water table, and the soil.

Through Grandpa's journey, I and perhaps many others in our village learnt valuable life lessons: Don't allow regret to paralyze you, find a goal to keep you moving. Instead of avoiding challenges, welcome them for they make you stronger and more capable of forging ahead.

It's not important how many times you fall, it's important that you learn, rise and try again. And most importantly, to walk the path, you must become the path, and when you do that, you light up the way for others to follow.

Today 15 years later, I see how the village has prospered and modernized as crops are grown for both consumption and profit. It is known as the village that nurtured and revived the lush and abundant forest that grows alongside it, a forest that has become a living symbol for successive generations, of the reminder of man's role as an integral part of the interdependent web of Life. △△△



22nd APRIL INTERNATIONAL MOTHER EARTH DAY

New Acropolis honours this occasion with events and celebrations across 60 countries globally.

The United Nations has designated 22nd April as International Mother Earth Day, encouraging celebrations and events all over the world, to address the growing environmental and ecological concerns confronting us, due to our own daily choices and actions. Mother Earth Day serves as a reminder, and a call to action to shift to a more sustainable way of life, one that promotes the collaboration and the correlation between Human beings and Nature.

A fundamental tenet of New Acropolis as a school of practical philosophy is to honor truth with action; to implement philosophy not as a way of thinking but as a way of living and of improving our world. Therefore, as aspiring philosophers, we recognize that it is not enough for us to tackle just the symptoms of distress as they erupt all over the world, but to find a sustainable solution. Sustainable change perhaps can only be brought about by realizing our role as human beings within our delicate ecosystem before we engage in external work.

In line with this, New Acropolis India is hosting events during the month of April in Mumbai and Pune, the highlight of which is a Panel Discussion titled *Philosophical Lessons from Nature*, exploring the intimate relationship between Nature and Philosophy. The panel includes Yaron Barzilay, National Director of New Acropolis India who will bring the philosophical axis to a discussion with eminent panelists from environmental science, nature-inspired art, sacred groves, and eco-volunteering. During the month, members of our Pune Branch will also participate in a Practical Seminar at our own land, Manav Bustan, in Mangaon, Maharashtra.

We invite you to join us in this year's celebration of Mother Earth Day (details listed in the following pages), to explore the privilege and responsibility of our stewardship of the planet we call home.



INTERNATIONAL MOTHER EARTH DAY EVENTS BY NEW ACROPOLIS in Mumbai



MUMBAI Sat 22 Apr | 6 to 8pm | Talk & Experiential Session

WISDOM OF NATURE

On the occasion of International Mother Earth Day, New Acropolis Mumbai hosts a special evening, to remember the beauty and intelligence of our extraordinary planet Earth. Come with a spirit of wonder to reconnect with Mother Nature and her many dimensions, through hands-on experiential sessions as we learn to touch, see and listen to the Wisdom she has to offer... [Register Here](#)

MUMBAI Sun 23 Apr | 8:30- 11.30am | Volunteering Activity

MANGROVE CLEAN-UP AND RESTORATION

Come connect and explore the fascinating Mangroves that have adapted to survive in some of the harshest environments and yet provide support to an ecosystem of birds, fish and animals.

Join us as we work on restoring this ecosystem in our neighborhood of Colaba, Mumbai, as we attempt to undo some of the destruction that is being inadvertently caused by us humans. Through this simple act of volunteering we may learn something about nature and what it will take to live in harmony with our fellow inhabitants of Mother Earth... [Register Here](#)





PHILOSOPHICAL LESSONS FROM NATURE:

Celebrating Mother Earth Day

PANEL DISCUSSION

Sun 23rd Apr | 5 to 7pm

Deccan Gymkhana, Pune

[Register Here](#)



Yaron Barzilay
Philosophy
New Acropolis



Shailaja Deshpande
Eco Volunteering
Jeevitnadi



Ketaki Ghate
Environmental Science
Oikos



Rajesh Kulkarni
Nature Inspired Art
Aakaar Pottery Studio



Shakti Bishnoi
Sacred Groves

In many ancient cultures the Earth is symbolized as Mother, representing the unity and harmony of life. Just as Mother Earth supports the human beings and countless other forms of life, we as an integral part of nature probably have a role to play to maintain the natural balance. Join us as we host a panel discussion to explore the intimate connection between Philosophy and Nature.



Venue : Conference Room, Ground Floor, Club House Building,
Deccan Gymkhana | 9284263882 | [Register Here](#)

Exploring Yoga with Raghu Ananthanarayanan

Compiled by
Zarina Screwvala
and Nupur Sampat



This article is based on an event by New Acropolis Culture Circle with Raghu Ananthanarayanan, who spoke on the *Yoga Sutras* by Patanjali. Raghu is a behavioural scientist, yoga teacher and author. He has dedicated his life to the study and application of yoga and Indic traditions to guide the inner transformation of individuals and shape leadership and culture building of organizations.

A prayer to Patanjali
Om. yogena cittasya padena vAchAm,
malam sharIrasya ca vaidya kena.
yopAkarottham pravaram munInAm
patanjaliM prNnjaliRAnatosmi

AbAhu puruShAkAram
shankha cakra asidhAriNam
sahasra shirasam shvetam
praNamAmi patanjaliM

This prayer to Patanjali sets out the context of our discussion. It says that Patanjali gave us 3 things: Ayurveda - enabling us to see how the body can be made wholesome, Grammar & Language - how vac or speech can be made into something meaningful and beautiful, and of course, Yoga.

Human up to the shoulders;
with a conch, a wheel, a sword
and the abhayamudra;
shining bright
with a thousand serpent heads.
To this form of Patanjali
we offer our respects.



Image by Raghu Ananthanarayanan

MISCONCEPTIONS ON YOGA

There are usually two images used to depict yoga. One is an image of a person standing on one leg with his arms overhead in what is called *Bhagirathi asana*. The other is an image of a person sitting in *Padmasana*. However, when you read the *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*, these two images are hardly there.



Yoga is understood as just Asanas or something highly esoteric. Yoga somewhere in the middle. This middle ground is what we called Antaranga Yoga.

There is a very important sutra in the second chapter *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*, which starts with '*tapahsvādhyāyeśvarapraṇidhānānikriyayogah*'. *Tapas* here is again misunderstood. *Tapas* which is often translated as austerity, is simply a way of ripening and maturing. *SvAdyAya* means to understand oneself more deeply. When you do these two things, you start understanding the real foundation of all of existence. It is *Ishvara* (Primordial Consciousness). The middle ground here is the *svAdyAya*. It means you go closer and closer to the true nature of yourself. *SvAdyAya* is a process of peeling of layer after layer of what we think is our self. To discover something deeper until you come to a point when you drop off from all ability to associate or describe and you get to a mind that is capable of *dhArANA* & *dhyAna*. This is a very critical process of transformation of the mind and is usually not spoken of.

UNDERSTANDING YOGA

Antaranga Yoga; Yoga as a means of moving inwards

Everybody experiences *duHkha* (sorrow). One of the first questions that yoga asks is how do you end *duHkha*? And then makes a simple observation, that unless you first take complete responsibility of who you are and what you are, you cannot take a step toward ending sorrow. You cannot take any external authority as a saviour, you cannot take mere learning and knowledge as a way of ending sorrow. Obviously, more and more material acquisition is not to be. This whole process of enquiry involves freeing oneself of these notions because these are all false ways of approaching the issue of how to end sorrow. And it's only when you shift from there and move into taking full responsibility does your *tapas* or your *svAdyAya* fructify. Whenever you have deep doubts in yourself and you are experiencing sorrow, the natural tendency is to go outward, either to look for a cause outward or to look for a solution outward. Rather we need to shift inwards.



Learning about self through Yoga, *tapas* and *svAdyAya*

'Yoga' and 'meditation' are used as separate terms but in reality, if there is no meditative process, there is no yoga. My teacher Krishnamacharya would say that when you are doing *Asana* practice, if you're not doing *dhyAna* (attentiveness) on the body, it is not yoga, it is just a physical exercise. *DhyAna* happens when I locate my sense of self in more and more subtle levels within. When I am anchored in subtle levels of being, I can observe the more gross, the more manifest levels clearly. The subtle can observe the gross, the gross cannot observe the subtle. The entire practice of *svAdyAya* is learning how to locate oneself at more and more subtle levels of the self and the mind from which one can observe things.

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'meditation' are
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Having learnt this, the *Asana* practice becomes a very interesting process. Initially, I was surprised to see the power of this whole process. When I was a young teacher and teaching *Asana* practice to a person, I put her into a very simple pose along with the breathing and she just started weeping. I was very concerned and thought maybe I've made a mistake. When she came out of that posture, she spoke to me about her divorce 10 years earlier. The entire memory of that pain, of the separation, was being held in the body. This could get released once she really got in touch with, and started to allow a communication between the subtler aspects of the mind and the body. The process of observing where one has internalized all kinds of hurts and wounds and so on is a very critical part of *svAdyAya*.

Many practices that I've taught in yoga are actually to help you to get into a subtle inner space from which you can observe if your body is full of toxins. The moment you start observing something difficult, there will always be an emotional charge along with it. If you're holding on to shame and guilt you cannot observe yourself.

In fact, one of the preconditions in Yoga is for you to look at yourself compassionately and to not be caught up with shame and guilt. We usually look at ourselves based on some book or some set of 'shoulds and musts', almost trying to make sure that the public prosecutor within us doesn't send us to jail. So placing ourselves as an audience and having this internal drama is not observation.

...one of the preconditions in yoga is for you to look at yourself compassionately and to not be caught up with shame and guilt.

To observe oneself, one has to look at oneself with a lot of curiosity and compassion (referred to as '*maitri bhAva*').

There is also another very interesting idea in the *Yoga Sutras* of how to do this observation. The first step is to do some practice that allows you to get in touch with those parts of yourself which you've suppressed, which you normally don't pay attention to. And the second is what happens when you start observing. One of the tendencies of the mind is that the moment something comes up, the mind jumps in asking, 'Now what do I do about it?' 'How do I stop this pain?' and other related questions. Yoga tells you that this is a wrong approach, because the moment you ask this question, you go back to the same mind that created the problem. These two things are very critical steps of what is called *tapas*. *Tapas* is the process where first you get in touch with those parts of you which need healing and the second is you don't get caught with the immediate pull of the mind to go back into the familiar and again get locked up in the same process that created the problem in the first place. Doing this requires a certain intensity and energy, it causes heat. Using this energy to ripen and mature is *tapas*.

Understanding meditation

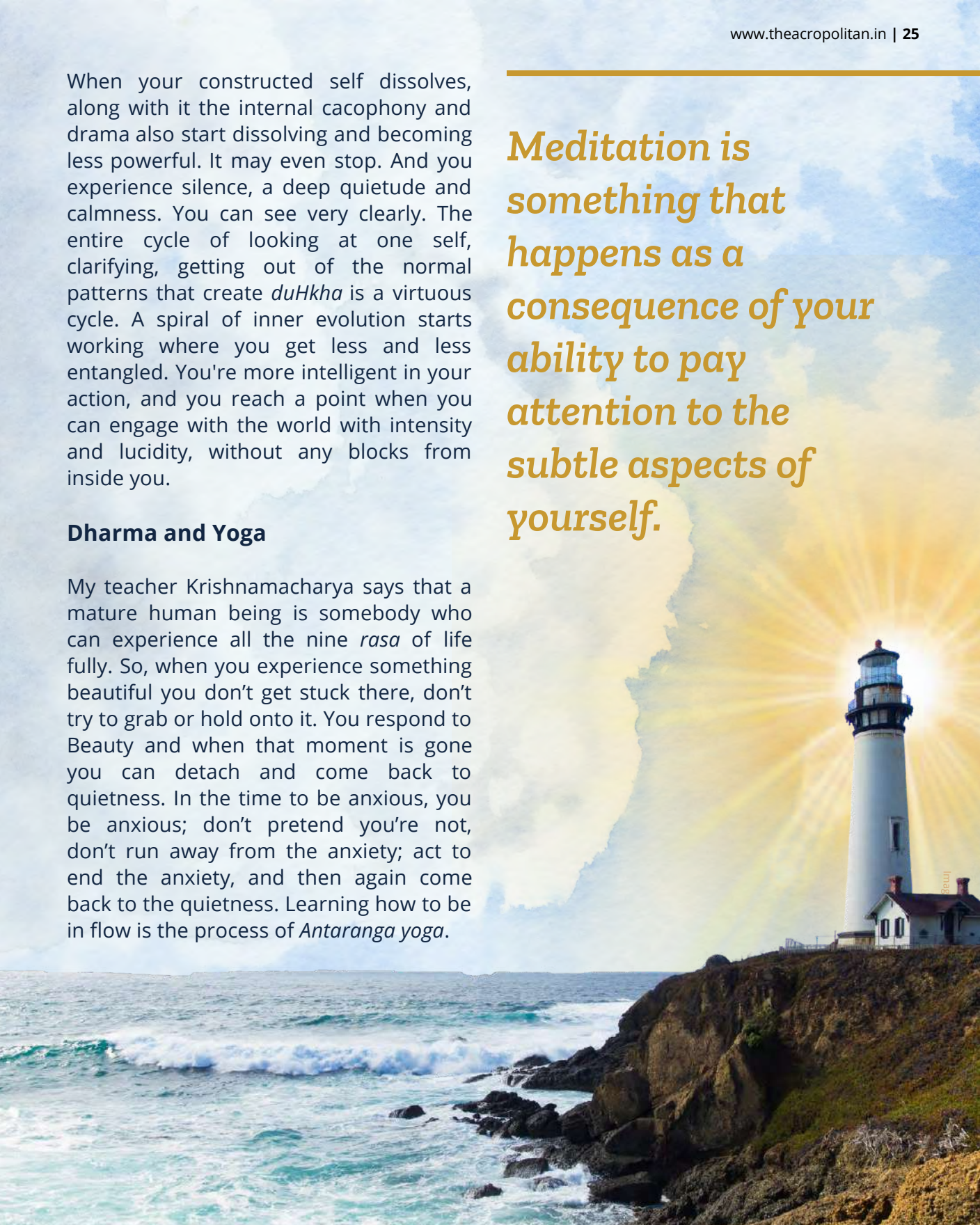
If you stay with the observation, the entire process by which the mind gets caught up with certain ideas, the way it retains them, and the entire drama, the entire inner dance becomes visible to you. Watching this from a state of quietness is the practice *dhyAna*. You can see the whole inner structure that you have created, a sense of identity and an acquisitive-defensive attitude. *DhyAna* dissolves this structure and the underlying psyche which is conditioned by your ways of interpreting the world, and other people; your ways of constructing your sense of self, starts dissolving. And as this dissolves, a deeper Intelligence inside starts appearing. The initial ways in which this Intelligence appears is either through interesting dreams or flashes of insight. Once you learn this process, you just stay with it and the rest happens automatically. Meditation is something that happens as a consequence of your ability to pay attention to the subtle aspects of yourself. It is not something that you can be taught, nor something that you do. In fact, **meditation happens when there is no you!**

When your constructed self dissolves, along with it the internal cacophony and drama also start dissolving and becoming less powerful. It may even stop. And you experience silence, a deep quietude and calmness. You can see very clearly. The entire cycle of looking at one self, clarifying, getting out of the normal patterns that create *duHkha* is a virtuous cycle. A spiral of inner evolution starts working where you get less and less entangled. You're more intelligent in your action, and you reach a point when you can engage with the world with intensity and lucidity, without any blocks from inside you.

Dharma and Yoga

My teacher Krishnamacharya says that a mature human being is somebody who can experience all the nine *rasa* of life fully. So, when you experience something beautiful you don't get stuck there, don't try to grab or hold onto it. You respond to Beauty and when that moment is gone you can detach and come back to quietness. In the time to be anxious, you be anxious; don't pretend you're not, don't run away from the anxiety; act to end the anxiety, and then again come back to the quietness. Learning how to be in flow is the process of *Antaranga yoga*.

Meditation is something that happens as a consequence of your ability to pay attention to the subtle aspects of yourself.



Once the mind is capable of this deep quietness, this mind can direct itself to any enquiry with extreme lucidity, sharpness and focus. The third chapter of *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*, have about 30-40 ideas of where you can direct this mind-starting from understanding your own patterns, your own *samskAra* and *vAsanA*. It goes all the way to looking at the stars, understanding astronomy, understanding a strength, understanding the body, understanding how matter gets created, an entire cross-section of things. What is very interesting is that a mind that is capable of this quality of enquiry, has to go through a process when it becomes ethical. So the entire process of understanding dharma is inherent in the process of *Antaranga yoga*.

There's a very beautiful assumption that yoga makes: A mind that is quiet, not filled with appetites and yearnings of various kinds will naturally act with *ahimsa*, will naturally act from *satya* and so on... and hence, its interface with the world will naturally be filled with compassion and truth. It will not be acquisitive and extractive. It is not a mind seeking gratification and self-aggrandisement. The actions of this person enlivens one's contexts and spreads joy. △△△





New Acropolis Culture Circle

"I firmly believe culture ennobles us. We understand culture as the cultivation of all that is best in every human being."

- International President, New Acropolis, Carlos Adelantado.



Join our celebration of culture with a philosophical essence through interactive & intimate bi-monthly events, held mainly at our centre in Colaba, Mumbai.

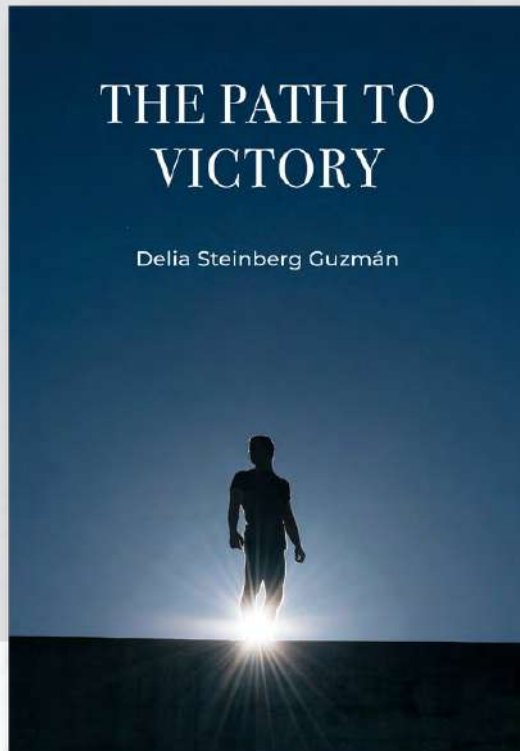
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BOOK RECOMMENDATION

THE PATH TO VICTORY

By Delia Steinberg Guzmán

This book is a collection of articles that were written at different times, but are ordered around a single theme: how to achieve victory in everyday life. As the author explains, she is not talking about superficial success, but the achievement of mastery over inner and outer circumstances. It is, in essence, about the hero's journey, a journey full of trials and difficulties, but also full of joys that come from each victory obtained and from the many experiences and individuals we meet along the way.

History is an extraordinary showcase where different ideas have appeared and given rise to many different ways of life, like coloured crystals whose hues vary according to the light. Each age has its parameters, and human beings, on their endless path of searching, have been ruled by those models, which they have tried to follow and obey more than they would follow an idea from any other source. What is commonly accepted becomes like a law and, as time passes, some of the ideas that have been accepted become even more powerful than laws themselves.

In this way, success has always been a goal, even if it has not always been seen in the same light. What was considered success in one century, or just a few decades ago, may be seen today as a misplaced or outmoded longing, while other ambitions have taken the place of the previous ones. Only one thing remains constant: the desire for success, the need to succeed, the desire to be accepted and taken seriously by others, conforming to the law that makes the whole – us and the rest – a consistent mass from which standing out is not encouraged, even if it involves finding success by other routes.

The statistics fill pages upon pages in dozens of publications. It is very clear that in these times, success is defined by social prestige and financial power, which then give rise to other forms of power, and these in turn further increase prestige. It is true that academic research, science, the arts and knowledge in general have a

place, but this is becoming smaller with time. Learning is a beautiful adornment which, with a few exceptions, goes together with the above-mentioned prestige of a solid social position backed by a respectable fortune.

It is not surprising, then, that young people in particular direct their aspirations towards those formulas for success if they want to be acknowledged in the societies they are living in and not join the long list of “marginalized” people. Today, the future is approached from that perspective: a vocation must be subject to a checklist of questions about its practicality in terms of power and wealth. Today there is a growing list of courses that can be studied with the intention of achieving a quick and profitable success and a social position that will be perceived as solid and lasting.

But not all that glitters is gold.

If these were truly formulas for succeeding in life, there ought to be many more happy people than we see. Unless we accept that success is one thing and happiness is another.

The same statistics that list all the successful people also reveal a progressive increase in the conditions of psychosis, depression, anguish, dissatisfaction, loneliness, aggression, boredom, corruption and many other psychological situations that make up the general pattern of “stress”. So, perhaps we should think of other types of success

which even if they don't conform to the commonly accepted types, may prove to be more effective.

We propose a few simple keys for achieving a more human success, in many different areas of life; a more stable victory, more in accordance with our dreams and aspirations.

It is clearly not enough to dream of victory. We need to act and we need to know how to develop a healthy activity based on will. We should not act just for the sake of it, but choose the best and most appropriate actions.

The old advice about knowing oneself is still applicable today; we will find it difficult to find a rewarding job if we don't know who we are or what our skills and abilities are. And once we know what they are, we need to train ourselves to develop them so that our activity will be useful to ourselves and others.

Whenever you undertake a task, do it well, not only for the reward you may receive, but also for the satisfaction of experiencing your own efficiency. Know how to be satisfied with what you obtain, and, at the same time, never rest on your laurels, always looking for a higher level of achievement.

Never allow yourself to feel crushed by problems, however difficult they may seem. On the contrary, exert your imagination in order to look for new

avenues and solutions. Think of difficulties as challenges for your intelligence and your will. And in the worst case, turn failures into opportunities to make a new beginning.

Learn to take advantage of opportunities. Life is full of opportunities, but if we walk around with our eyes closed, we will never discover them. If we become imprisoned in our conflicts and constantly dwell on them, we will waste energy and never get out of that vicious cycle, ignoring the thousand doors which the supposed labyrinth was offering us.

Practise loving continuously, because this is the best way to understand others. Help others cheerfully and generously, which is the best way to feel at ease with yourself.

Search for the meaning of life and try to find the meaning of your own life. Nothing happens without a reason, and answers only come to those who look for them in the spirit of wisdom and with the courage of someone who is sure of victory.

Improve everything you do every day; improve everything around you without ever giving up. Put beauty into every corner; put light into every place - inner and outer - wherever you are.

Someone who succeeds in applying these few keys will be someone who is sure of themselves; a contented person insofar as contentment is possible for human beings.

Someone who can achieve these things is truly successful. And even if no one admits it because it is not fashionable to do so everyone would like to attain this kind of success.

This short book is a homage to the brave, to all those who have the strength to keep going. Above all, to the brave who have no name, whether they be great or small, because no one knows them, and yet they are with us, they are all around us, they are everywhere in the world. They are the spirit of all progressive movement.

It is a homage to those who are in the world, to those who have made the world their home, regardless of difficulties. It is a homage to those who have learned to give things their proper value; the brightness of a stone, the leaf sprouting from a branch, the sounds of animals, the words of humans, the language of the gods.

It is a homage to the brave who always find a way out of the labyrinth: they keep walking, constantly looking for the door which will give them freedom. And they fall, they fall a thousand times and a thousand times they pick themselves up again, and every time they get up they are a little stronger.

It is a homage to those who have developed continuity, to those who have never lost their way, because their heart is a compass which always points north; to those who never lose their rhythm, because their heart is a drum beating time for them.

This is a homage to the brave who seek fraternity and harmony among human beings, even though all around them there is pain, terror and death.

It is a homage to those who stretch out their arms like a bridge, to those who do not experience it as a sacrifice and do not mind becoming a passage between the human and the divine.

This is a homage to those who always have the ability to bring us regeneration, to heal our wounds, to alleviate our sorrows, to give us a solution for everything. It is a homage to the Lords of Rebirth, who choose the hard and sharp weapon of wisdom to fight with, like a double-edged axe that can open up the minds of others, but above all opens up the mind of the one who wields it. It is a homage to the Lords of Wisdom.

It is a homage to the heroes of life, because it is very difficult to live. It is a homage to those who are interested in life above all else, and understand the need to fight as a way of protecting life. For in the heart of all human beings there is no war: there is life. In the heart of all human beings there is no war: there is eternity.

It is a homage, in short, to all the brave, to all the heroes, great and small, who do not know one another, either because they are very great or because they are very small, but who nevertheless are always going forward, above all when times are hard and difficult.

A portrait of Swami Vivekananda, a prominent Indian Hindu monk, philosopher, and leader of the Ramakrishna Mission. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a traditional orange turban and a maroon shawl over a light blue shirt. He has a serious expression and his arms are crossed. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Leadership Lessons from Swami Vivekananda

By Dipti Sanzgiri

A good leader is one who has a clear vision of a better future - a future with which their own inner aspirations and values are aligned - and who is able to inspire and lead others towards making this vision a reality. A future for which people work not for their personal benefit, monetary or otherwise, but because they believe in the cause. Through the vision of the leader, people are able to see beyond their own gain and limitations and thereby find an opportunity to reconstruct their own self as they contribute. How wonderful this journey would be - for both the leader and those who follow him!

Unfortunately, these days we are unable to find many examples of such leaders, even though thousands of books have been written and countless training and coaching sessions have been undertaken on the subject of leadership. Perhaps in the single-minded pursuit of commercial and materialistic results, leaders today may be distanced from the fundamental

principles of life that are always present and relevant, and if ignored leads to, what might look like a movement forward but might actually be, a movement backward.

In this context, if there is one visionary that stands tall, that leaders today can learn from, it is Swami Vivekananda, one of the most celebrated spiritual leaders of India. It is testimony to his leadership that after 120 years of his passing away, the twin institutions that he founded, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, inspired by the ideals of renunciation and service, continue to serve millions of men, women, and children, without any distinction of caste, religion, or race, through their hospitals, schools, colleges, rural development centres and many other social service institutions. (1) In a life-lived for only 39 years, only 10 of which were in public life, and within that too, a few years were spent abroad, he made an indelible mark on the spiritual consciousness of India.



Vivekananda, though an ascetic, engaged with life with an unmatched vibrancy; creating, organising, educating and building the national consciousness rooted in the rich spiritual legacy of his country. At the same time, he also embraced scientific thought and material progress that was much required for the country.

Vivekananda's impact as a leader was astonishingly and remarkably demonstrated at the World Religions Conference in 1893 at Chicago, USA. When he began his speech in his resounding voice with, 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' there was an outburst of continuous applause for an entire 2 minutes! In my humble understanding, I believe that with those few words, he unified everyone in the audience! The theme of universal brotherhood of the conference, suddenly became palpably alive in him! And perhaps, all those present could see in that instant an aspiration becoming an unambiguous reality, which deeply touched their hearts and souls.



A true leader is willing to devote his life for a cause even though its results may not materialize during his life.

In a short period of 10 years, Vivekananda created a treasure trove of spiritual knowledge, but more importantly, his life itself became an inspiration for us. He had clearly recognized the magnitude of human potential and therefore, he was pained to see it lying dormant amongst his countrymen, who were content being ruled by others. Consequently, he devoted his life to awakening and reminding his brothers and sisters of their true identity and their intrinsic nature, travelling widely all over America, England and Europe disseminating the core tenets of the philosophy of the Vedas. His speeches and prolific writings continue to inspire successive generations in India. They contain passionate and lucid explanations of the principles of life, and one can devote a whole lifetime in trying to grasp them fully. This is a small and humble attempt to take few lessons from his life and his teachings which could be very valuable for the leaders of today.

A leader unifies:

Our world today is getting divided more and more into different categories, whether it is religion, geography, culture, race, gender, wealth, political alliance, caste, etc and under each one of these are further subdivisions that are increasing alarmingly! When we are divided, we see those who are not in the same box that we are in as adversaries and those who are, as our allies, who alone need and deserve our support.

This thinking limits our ability to see the whole: we are stuck in our isolated, individual silos not realizing that we are actually an interconnected whole, and any one of the pieces decaying, will decay the whole. In a commercial organization these divisions are reflected as Sales, Production, Finance, Human Resource etc., – each stuck with their fragmentary vision and very few having the desire or ability to see the whole.



Today, even with the increasing recognition of our interconnectedness thanks to technology, and the ability of our actions to impact each other from our small boxes, (demonstrated most recently by the pandemic), there are still unfortunately, no strong unifying voices to be heard.

Who can truly be a force of unification? Only those who are unified themselves, meaning those in whom there is an alignment between their thought and action: what they believe to be right, is what is reflected in their action. No mean feat!

Among Vivekananda's goals, was to awaken his fellow brothers and sisters to rise above the differences of religion, caste, and social & economic status. He said **"The great lesson is, that unity is behind all. Call it God, Love, Spirit, Allah, Jehovah - it is the same unity that animates all life from the lowest animal to the noblest man."**(2) Search for Unity is also the essence of Vedanta, the ancient Indian philosophy that he revived. Journeying across India, from north to south and east to west, meeting the masses, the kings, the traders, the poor, he gave the same message to all – **"Arise and Awake, stop not till the goal is reached"**.(3) Contextualising the teaching of Upanishads to the state of humanity at that time, he exhorted people to recognise that their vision is similar to that of a frog in a well,(2) that they must come out, embrace the vast ocean, open their eyes to the largeness of existence, and realize that we all are a part of the same ocean of life.

A leader awakens your inner strength, Will:

Most of us are fearful of uncertainties and the unknown. We fear to tread on difficult, uncertain terrain and often give up before even trying. When we do attempt something tough, we look for quick results and if we don't see that coming, we again give up or switch to something else. This is when a leader needs to help people see their potential and possibilities, and the need for perseverance to actualize them. A river meets all hurdles and challenges with perseverance to fulfil its destiny of merging with the ocean. Vivekananda exhorted, **"To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. 'I will drink the ocean,' says the persevering soul, 'at my will mountains will crumble up.' Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard, and you will reach the goal."** (4)

What an inspiring and vivid description of strength and possibilities! Can we awaken such Will for our goals? Do we have such belief in ourselves, conviction for our goal and the perseverance to achieve it? In fact, too often we give into our inner roadblocks such as inertia, fear, lack of clarity and conviction, or desire to be accepted and liked. Rarely do we experience the inner fire that Vivekananda is trying to arouse. But he reminds us that we indeed have such strength because that is the nature of the soul, our true identity, which we need to awaken.

A leader builds for long term:

A true leader never has a short term agenda. He works towards building a future that is harmonious with life and helps society move forward. He inspires people to join him in this vision and bring out their best in pursuit of this future.



But this takes time. A banyan tree doesn't grow overnight. Its seed has the full potential – not only of the tree but of the entire forest, (if we are able to imagine that) - but it requires nourishment of the earth, air, sun, water and time. **“The majority of us cannot see beyond a few years, just as some animals cannot see beyond a few steps. Just a little narrow circle - that is our world. We have not the patience to look beyond, and thus become immoral and wicked. This is our weakness, our powerlessness.”** (5) How true is this in our times! Today, everyone looks for quick gains: Corporates are known for strategizing for short-term rewards delivered by the stock market, and this attitude has cost us severely, across almost all parameters, be it climate, economy or education. But a true leader is willing to devote his life for a cause even though its results may not materialize during his life.

***A leader is one who
is able to lead
himself, before he
leads others.***

A leader awakens the investigative spirit, he is a seeker of Truth:

In his youth, Vivekananda was hugely impacted by western scientific thinking and he had an obsessive need to investigate every idea before accepting it as truth. In the beginning of his spiritual journey, in his search into the mysteries of life, he needed to experience every idea himself before accepting them, even from his own guru, Ramakrishna. He resisted many ways of Ramakrishna for long time, till he himself underwent experiences that helped him grasp the meaning of what Ramakrishna was transmitting. And Ramakrishna waited patiently, for his disciple to find all the answers himself.

Today, we accept so many things at face value, without even knowing who has said it! We assume many things, sometimes to avoid focusing on details that may reveal things that we don't want to see, or don't agree with, or have fear of dealing with. We also use language which conveys what we say as facts when most of the time they are not. They are either opinions, assumptions, judgements or inferences. But we don't communicate them as such, and so the words spread as truth! Through this process, we build 'alternate realities' and are lost in its maze: the comprehension of truth then becomes almost impossible. Today we need leadership that will guard the truth more than ever, and will inculcate and protect the culture of an investigative mindset.



And what about our own internal truth? Are we able to see our deepest motives for our actions clearly? Do we ever investigate our thinking by asking ourselves what is the source of the thought that I have now? How is it impacting me? How is it impacting what I create in my life and those that I connect with? The higher the role of leadership that I occupy, the more should be this investigative reflection, to ensure that my thoughts are leading me in the right direction. Unless we have the courage to see clearly our reflection in the mirror of truth, whether we see selfishness, ego, false pride or a very narrow mindset, we cannot grow as a leader.

Vivekananda showed by his own example, not to assume, or go by hearsay, but to rigorously self-investigate, to separate Truth from Illusion, both internally and externally.

A leader uses service as a tool to discover oneself, as a practice of ethics:

The concept of Servant Leadership is the idea that a leader's focus is to serve and empower others. And this way of leading is rightly acknowledged as a very desirable style since supporting others is seen as the high moral ground. While helping others in need is indeed important to do, Vivekananda reminds us that in fact the purpose of serving is not really about helping others. He said, **"We should always try to help the world, that should be the highest motive in us; but if we consider well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This world was not made that you or I should come and help it.....in the long run, we shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves....."** (7) How does this work? Well, we begin to see the need in others only when we are

not self-obsessed. Empathy, generosity and compassion require a high level of consciousness which is able to see others' needs, and their current state clearly. This means that by practicing serving, I am actually working on elevating my own consciousness, which is slowly able to expand beyond myself to include others – maybe to begin with my family and friends, then the community, and finally, even further to include all of humanity! And in this process who am I helping? Myself!

The opportunity to empower others, whose ideas are different from mine is an opportunity to investigate my own thinking, to deal with my ego, to learn humility, openness, generosity and so much more. Therefore I need to be thankful to life for giving me this opportunity! I am not doing anyone a favour, on the contrary, I am being favoured by life! My subjective worldview, which used to see life through the filters of my need, opinions, likes and dislikes is now able to see beyond! And isn't this exactly the endeavour of a leader – to challenge and expand his worldview To be able to be more than just caught up in himself? This was the clear message of Vivekananda. He didn't say to serve those who need your help, he said help yourself by helping others.

All of the above is not at all an exhaustive list of the leadership lessons we can take from the life and teaching of Vivekananda. But if we were to take just one predominant idea, the underlying thread



that runs through and binds together all the concepts I have detailed, would be that a leader is one who is able to lead himself, before he leads others. He teaches and shows the way, by being an example. Whether it is courage, collaboration, vision, commitment, devotion, clarity, or ethics – he needs to BE the practical example of how it is done. There is no gap between what the leader asks of himself and what he asks of others. In fact, he asks far more from himself than others and thereby brings authenticity to his leadership.

Vivekananda's life was an example of: devotion to an ideal, with focus on action in the direction of the ideal without attachment to any reward; fearlessness in search for truth; and service to humanity as a way of life. With so many challenges confronting our world today, he is an exemplar of what we need: enlightened leaders who can once again awaken our inner strength to face the uncertainties of life with courage, to live and act harmoniously with others, and to persevere in building a society which is just and fair for all. △△△



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The Dream of MANAV BUSTAN

by Harianto Mehta



Demonstrating the spirit of volunteering, members of New Acropolis Cultural Organization collectively contributed time, effort, and funds, persevering over several years, to find suitable rural land, despite budget constraints, and challenges resulting from the pandemic, to serve as a country home of our work as a School of Philosophy. Finally acquired on 12th August 2021, the land was christened Manav Bustan.





WHAT:

The Persian word Bustan translates to a fragrant orchard, referring to a landscaped agricultural garden comprising a montage of fruit trees, vegetable seedlings, medicinal shrubs and spices.

Manav Bustan expands this vision, in the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the traditional Indian ethical worldview that recognizes the inherent universal fraternity between the earth, its diverse flora and fauna, human beings, and the celestial forces. Across the sub-continent, for centuries communities have celebrated and preserved the resulting harmony through practices such as Ayurveda and Sacred Groves - a testament of the profound philosophical relationship between all living beings that is entrenched in the Indian culture, and has evidently served as a vital element to the progress of human civilization.

At Manav Bustan, we seek to nourish and cultivate this fraternity, by integrating Ecology with human beings from diverse walks of life, searching to unite together in pursuit of Wisdom and Virtue; to revive the capacity to harmoniously dream together, be together, live together, and construct themselves together, in alignment with the natural laws of life. Because ultimately, in order to build a new and better world, we need to become new and better human beings.

WHY:

Away from the everyday demands of urban life, Manav Bustan will serve as an education and community development facility at which to revive our true ethical and conscious human nature. As human beings, we are part of Nature. The same principles that govern and harmoniously integrate the myriad elements of Nature, such as Goodness, Beauty, and Justice, characterize the human potential, which we can collectively and individually learn to express, through practical education.

A key component of this education is to awaken the spirit of volunteering. Too often, volunteering has been reduced to devoting time and effort for a specific social/ecological activity at a convenient time, when possible. Instead, a philosophical education would reveal that the human consciousness is predisposed to altruism and morality, with the courage to fight ego-centrism to contribute effort for the good of the larger community, and the generosity of concern for the welfare of all.

By facilitating the practical experience of this potential in a focussed and inspiring natural environment, the goal is to bring that experience into our daily urban lives, in order to bring real and meaningful change.





HOW:

The initiatives and programs at Manav Bustan will be curated and conducted by New Acropolis Cultural Organization, and will serve:

- To refine human abilities such as concentration, memory and imagination, in order to live richer, more meaningful lives through various exercises and traditional practices such as Yoga.
- To improve the capacity of each one to harmoniously contribute as an integral part of a human community, with courtesy and dignity, to overcome challenges, harnessing the power of collective strength and creativity.
- To learn to create a sustainable symbiosis with Nature through the construction and management of:
 - Rainwater harvesting and management, ground water recharge
 - Sustainable agricultural systems, permaculture/food forests, Ayurvedic Gardens
 - Organic waste management and composting
 - Soil enrichment
 - Bee-keeping
 - Animal Husbandry
 - Forestation to preserve local ecosystem of flora and fauna
- Employ the use of art, artisanal crafts, and work as a means of education to construct oneself; carpentry, ceramics, agriculture, etc.
- To examine and preserve the essence of local traditions and timeless values embedded in customs.
- Engage with local communities to build sustainable livelihoods, water conservation, hygiene, and value-based education.

WHO:

Through a multi-pronged approach, the vision includes programs for city-based volunteers seeking real change, special educational opportunities for school children, and initiatives to address needs of local rural communities.

- Volunteer Seminars comprising classes, group discussions, and practical work projects.
- School camps for children focussed on value education, and exchange programs with rural student communities to build solidarity and generosity.
- Engage with local artists and artisans in an effort to preserve local traditions, art forms, and customs.

WHERE:

The 10acre property, located off the Mumbai-Goa Highway, is at a 15-minute drive from Mangaon town (Raigad District). At the foot of the Sahyadri range, the region receives an annual rainfall of around 3000mm, and a seasonal tributary of the Kaal River, which carries flowing water from the monsoon through the end of January, marks the property's southern boundary. A lush mango orchard, in addition to native flora forms a thick year-round canopy.

At present, our facilities include:

- Campground to accommodate up to 50 persons, with picnic benches, gravel pathways, and campfire area
- Washroom blocks with 6 toilets, 4 bathrooms and dish washing area
- Gravel pathway to the river
- Indoor Kitchen and Hall
- Mango Orchard (250 trees)



YOUR SUPPORT NEEDED:

We have identified and prioritized amenities for near term development to effectively facilitate the Manav Bustan vision. Your support can be extended either as donations or as CSR contributions.

DONATIONS

Donations can be made to New Acropolis Cultural Organisation, which is a Section 8, Not-for-Profit Organization, having 12AA registration and 80G certification under the Indian Income Tax Act. All donations are therefore eligible for 50% deduction from Taxable Income under Indian Income Tax.

Your support can be extended as financial donations, equipment and materials, professional services such as architecture/agricultural expertise, etc. towards the following.

- Multi-purpose Community Hall for seminars, yoga and meditation sessions
- Dormitories
- Communal Kitchen and Dining Hall
- Artisanal Workshops
- Agriculture - as per the recommendation of Ecology consultants
- Forestation
- Repair of existing check dam



CSR CONTRIBUTIONS

The most immediate need is to implement a long-term solution to ensure year-round water supply for both domestic and agricultural needs. Despite an annual rainfall of approximately 3000mm, the region suffers from acute water shortages from January through June. Due to hard rock topography, rainwater fails to percolate to enrich ground water levels, since most of the rain water flows away downstream.

To alleviate this challenge, local authorities had put in place a checkdam, more than 10 years ago, to ensure sufficient water is stored through the year for use by local farmers, to support ground water re-charge that feed several wells in the vicinity, as well as enhance the local ecosystem. This checkdam is now defunct due to damage in its foundations, and requires urgent repair.

Estimated Budget for Repair of Checkdam: Rs 35 Lakhs

Duration of work: 2 months, April-May (need to complete before Monsoon)

A full technical report can be provided upon request.

A suitable implementation agency has already been identified, registered and approved to receive CSR funds and execute CSR projects, with the necessary technical expertise needed for this project.

Contributions towards this initiative will be allocated immediately, to ensure timely completion of the project, prior to the upcoming 2023 monsoons.



ABOUT NEW ACROPOLIS

New Acropolis Cultural Organization is an independent member of International Organization of New Acropolis (IONA), which was founded 65 years ago, and currently operates with 400 centers across 60 countries. Established in India since 2006, we are a Section 8, not-for-profit company, having Section 12 AA registration and Section 80G Certification under the Indian Income Tax Act.

The word Acropolis originates from ancient Greek and translates to the higher city, referring to the building of a higher state of consciousness within each human being, so as to awaken a sincere pursuit of Truth, Goodness, and Justice. The key to construct a new and better world therefore, lies within reach, since it depends ultimately on the actualization of our own human potential. As a school of practical philosophy, our efforts and activities to achieve this audacious goal, are aligned to 3 timeless principles, which we recognize as essential in order to bring about real change.

Fraternity

To promote an Ideal of international fraternity, based on respect for human dignity, beyond any difference of gender, culture, religion, social class etc.

Knowledge

To encourage the love of wisdom through the comparative study of philosophies, religions, sciences and arts, in order to achieve a knowledge of the human being, nature and the universe.

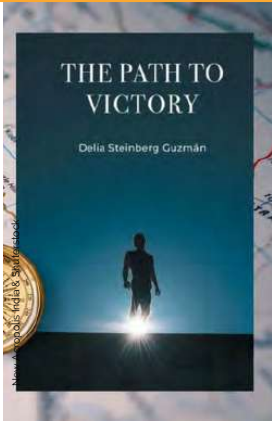
Development

To develop the best part of the human potential, by promoting each person's fulfilment as an individual and as an active member of society. To act in harmony with Nature in order to improve the world.

PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS MUMBAI

**Sun
2 Apr**

**Talk &
Book Discussion
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Mumbai Centre
[Register Here](#)**



THE PATH TO VICTORY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

“In spite of his FEARS, the HERO fights with COURAGE for VICTORY” - Delia Steinberg Guzmán

In the book *The Path to Victory*, author and Honorary President of International Organisation New Acropolis, dedicates this book to the Brave - to all the heroes, great and small, who learn to conquer their external and internal circumstances, and emerge stronger and victorious in the face of life. We invite you to join us for a discussion on the nature of success and victory, and its application in our day to day.

**Sat
22 Apr**

**Talk &
Experiential
Session
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Mumbai Centre
[Register Here](#)**



WISDOM OF NATURE

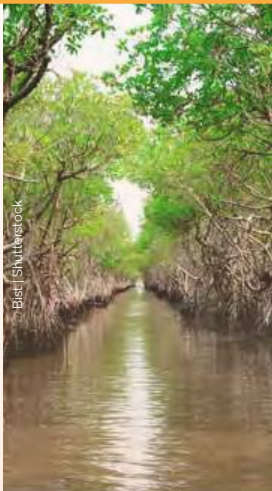
Celebrating International Mother Earth Day

On the occasion of International Mother Earth Day, New Acropolis Mumbai hosts a special evening, to remember the beauty and intelligence of our extraordinary planet Earth. Come with a spirit of wonder to reconnect with Mother Nature and her many dimensions, through hands-on experiential sessions as we learn to touch, see and listen to the Wisdom she has to offer.

This event is part of a global celebration of International Mother Earth Day by New Acropolis in over 50 countries.

**Sun
23 Apr**

**Volunteering
Activity
8.30 am (3 hrs)
at Colaba
Pumping Station
[Register Here](#)**



MANGROVE CLEAN-UP AND RESTORATION

Celebrating International Mother Earth Day

Come connect and explore the fascinating Mangroves that have adapted to survive in some of the harshest environments and yet provide support to an ecosystem of birds, fish and animals.

Join us as we work on restoring this ecosystem in our neighborhood of Colaba, Mumbai, as we attempt to undo some of the destruction that is being inadvertently caused by us humans. Through this simple act of volunteering we may learn something about nature and what it will take to live in harmony with our fellow inhabitants of Mother Earth.

The Hero Within Series

A person hears an inner call to set out on a journey - to leave the familiar and safe, and step into the unknown. There is no logical explanation for this journey, yet he cannot refuse the call. Along the way he will meet his greatest fears, discover his latent powers, learn about himself and the world, and discover the laws and mysteries of nature. Ultimately, he will return home as a Hero.

Towards our flagship Living Philosophy Course, New Acropolis Mumbai presents a special series on the wonderful journey of the Hero within. If you hear the inner call, join us for the adventure!

Sat

13 May



Free Philosophical
Talk
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Mumbai Centre
[Register Here](#)

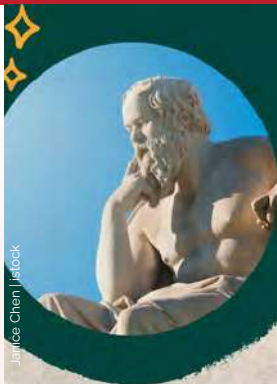
THE ART OF INNER LEADERSHIP

What can we learn from Arjuna, the great Hero of the Bhagavad Gita, about the art of leadership and making wise choices? We invite you to explore practical lessons from this ancient book of wisdom, that can empower us to live with more purpose and decisiveness today.

A glimpse into the Living Philosophy Course for those who seek to live life with more meaning.

Sat

27 May



Free Philosophical
Talk
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Mumbai Centre
[Register Here](#)

DARE TO BE AUTHENTIC: LESSONS FROM SOCRATES

Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers of our times, was as humble as he was brave. He dedicated his life to the enquiry and investigation of Truth, even at the cost of his own life. Let us look at his extraordinary example, to bring a spark of courage and authenticity in our own daily lives.

A glimpse into the Living Philosophy Course for those who wish to live in a more authentic way.

Sat

10 Jun



Free Philosophical
Talk
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Mumbai Centre
[Register Here](#)

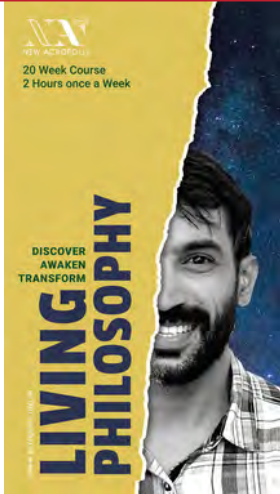
THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH: LESSONS FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

The life and teachings of the Buddha show us that it is possible to see the nature of ourselves and the world around us with more Truth and objectivity. What inspiration can we take from the path of Buddha, to learn to navigate our own circumstances with more proportion and clarity?

A glimpse into the Living Philosophy Course for those in search of Beauty, Truth and Justice.

PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS **MUMBAI**

Wed
31 May



FREE INTRODUCTION SESSION TO LIVING PHILOSOPHY COURSE

20 week course | 2 hours once a week

Free Open House
7:30 pm (2 hrs)
at Mumbai Centre

[Register Here](#)

Living Philosophy is an opportunity to discover ourselves and the world around us, with the insights of ancient philosophies and human wisdom put into practice in everyday life. Extract practical tools through the course to learn to live with more freedom and sustained happiness. Explore the path of inner change as a key to actively contribute towards building a better world.

This event is a Free Introduction to learn more about what this course offers.

Sat
24 Jun



HARMONISE YOUR LIFE: LESSONS FROM MUSIC

Free Workshop
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Mumbai Centre

[Register Here](#)

How can we be artists of our own lives? The pursuit of Art and Beauty can allow us to learn valuable life lessons and experience life more deeply. Together, through a philosophical discussion and practical exercises, we will explore what lessons music can offer, to bring harmony, rhythm and order in the way we construct and live our daily lives.

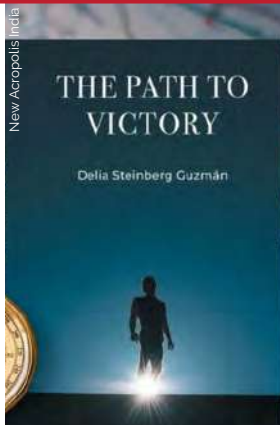


Mumbai Centre

PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS PUNE

Sun
2 Apr

Talk & Book
Discussion
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Pune Branch
[Register Here](#)



THE PATH TO VICTORY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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In the book *The Path to Victory*, author and Honorary President of International Organisation New Acropolis, dedicates this book to the Brave - to all the heroes, great and small, who learn to conquer their external and internal circumstances, and emerge stronger and victorious in the face of life. We invite you to join us for a discussion on the nature of success and victory, and its application in our day to day.

Sun
23 April

Panel
Discussion
5 pm (2 hrs)
at Deccan
Gymkhana
[Register Here](#)



PHILOSOPHICAL LESSONS FROM NATURE

Celebrating International Mother Earth Day

In many ancient cultures the Earth is symbolized as Mother, representing the unity and harmony of life. This symbolism inspires virtues such as altruism, generosity, justice and order. Just as mother earth supports human beings and countless other life forms, we probably have a role to play to maintain the natural balance.

In celebration of International Mother Earth Day, the Pune branch of New Acropolis India is hosting a panel discussion with accomplished representation from environmental science, nature-inspired art, sacred groves, and eco-volunteering. Yaron Barzilay, the National Director of New Acropolis India, will bring the philosophical perspective to string the discussions together.

Sun
14 May

Talk & Book
Discussion
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Pune Branch
[Register Here](#)



EMBARK ON AN INNER ADVENTURE WITH 'THE LITTLE PRINCE'

“And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.” – from *The Little Prince*

The Little Prince is a book written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and published in 1943. Written with the simplicity that even a child would understand, *The Little Prince* has profound observations about life, and human nature and addresses themes such as friendship, dreams, love and imagination.

We welcome you for an encounter with the magic of *The Little Prince*, to draw inspiration and to learn to imagine and live our dreams.

PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS PUNE

A glimpse into the Living Philosophy Course Series

With meaning in life there is a sense of being alive. We dare to dream and become able to turn them into reality. We learn to turn mistakes into stepping stones. Could it be that deep within our hearts we already know what our purpose is? May be all we need to do is to dare to open our hearts and our minds.

Sun
28 May

Free
Interactive
Talk
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Pune Branch
[Register Here](#)



OVERCOMING INNER LIMITS – A HERO'S JOURNEY

Who are we, really? According to the Greek, the word 'persona' means mask. Who are we beyond our masks, our personality, which we adopt to interact with our world? Are we our limited selves, that make us feel as if we are the victims of circumstances? Or are we more than that...perhaps even unlimited!

Join us as we explore ideas passed on by tradition about living up to our human potential and embark on a journey of developing internal tools in order to overcome limitations.

Sat
3 June

Free
Interactive
Talk
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Pune Branch
[Register Here](#)



DARING TO CHOOSE – INSIGHTS FROM 'THE MATRIX'

Our choices determine how happy or satisfied we are in life. Yet it is often difficult to be decisive since what is right and what is comfortable to do, don't always match. But maybe if we choose to follow the path of truth and virtues, we will learn to positively impact our own self and in turn our society.

Join us for this talk where we will draw inspiration from 'The Matrix' and 'The Myth of the cave' by Plato.

Sun
11 Jun

Free
Interactive
Talk
6 pm (2 hrs)
at Pune Branch
[Register Here](#)

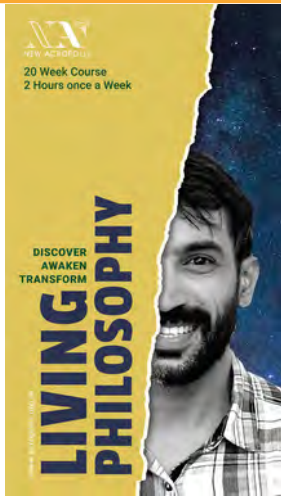


MY ROLE IN THE UNIVERSE – LESSONS FROM KYBALION

The Kybalion is a philosophical text carrying the teachings of the mystical Hermes Trismegistus. Its origin can be traced back to ancient Egypt and Greece. Amongst many other things, it speaks of the laws of the universe. We humans are an integral part of nature, and therefore these natural universal laws probably apply to us as well. Can we learn to align to laws of nature? It may give us some clue to understand our role in the Universe and therefore help us to create harmony. Join us as we learn about some of these laws from the Kybalion, in order to view life from a wider perspective and live inspired by a larger aim.

PUBLIC EVENTS NEW ACROPOLIS PUNE

Thu
15 June



FREE INTRODUCTION SESSION TO LIVING PHILOSOPHY COURSE

20 week course | 2 hours once a week

Free Open House
7:30 pm (2 hrs)
at Pune Branch

[Register Here](#)

Living Philosophy is an opportunity to discover ourselves and the world around us, with the insights of ancient philosophies and human wisdom put into practice in everyday life. Extract practical tools through the course to learn to live with more freedom and sustained happiness. Explore the path of inner change as a key to actively contribute towards building a better world.

This event is a Free Introduction to learn more about what this course offers.

Pune Branch



NEWS SPOTLIGHT

▶ Philosophy

▶ Culture

▶ Volunteering

A brief look at some of the activities hosted by New Acropolis India, at Mumbai and Pune during December, January and February:

PHILOSOPHY

The pursuit of Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Justice can help bring us one step closer to a more sustainable, inner happiness.



Our Mumbai Centre hosted a series of presentations, all reflective of the essence of practising and living Philosophy: An eye-opening talk on **Extracting lessons from Patterns in Nature (Dec 2022)** pointed out how everything in nature is well organized towards a purpose, and steered participants to examine the idea that as an integral part of nature, we too must perceive and heed our purpose.



Hercules and the way of Courage (Dec 2022) decoded the hero's myth to learn how we can face our own challenges with courage and wisdom, while an interactive discussion on **Plato's famous Allegory of the Cave (Jan 2023)** offered profound lessons in how stepping outside our comfort zone allows us opportunities for internal growth, and encountering deeper truths. **Developing Inner Strength (Jan 2023)** used examples from warrior traditions to highlight that inner strength results from introspection and the struggle to gain clarity of the ideals which govern our lives, and that the true warrior is one who engages in this inner battle. Beyond the grandeur of the **Sacred Architecture (Feb 2023)** embodied in the Egyptian pyramids or ancient Indian temples lie fundamental truths to live by, and this presentation strived to comprehend some of these eternal principles of life. And finally, **A Stoic Guide to Happiness (Feb 2023)** investigated how an ancient philosophy can still be relevant for our modern times.



In Pune, a talk entitled **Creating an impact through Volunteering (Dec 2022)** explored how learning to bring the best versions of ourselves to our every day, can enable us to contribute to a better world tomorrow. A practical workshop in the Japanese art of paper-folding was the perfect platform for participants to practise **Being Present: Lessons from Origami (Dec 2022)** which included how to sharpen concentration, enhance precision, and guard against disorderliness in their daily lives. An evening of story-telling show-cased the **Joy of making Mistakes (Jan 2022)** by underlining how learning from our mistakes can be an effective recalibration and the first step on the path to inner victory.

CULTURE

The experience of Art as a path of Transformation



A fascinating and inspiring walk through some of Mumbai's heritage precincts served to tell **The Story of Mumbai (Dec 2022)** through its history, architecture and art, highlighting the amazing imagination and resolve of some of the formidable individuals who were able to make their vision into a reality. A well-attended and delightful **Painting Workshop with Purnima Sampat (Feb 2023)** in the beautiful Bombay Port Trust Garden encouraged even novice participants to discover the joy of painting.



VOLUNTEERING

Growing beyond thinking about the self and creating a better world

Over 40 volunteer members of Mumbai and Pune attended a first of its kind **Overnight Seminar at Manav Bustan (Dec 2022)**, our 11 acre centre amidst nature, working together on activities such as painting and tree planting & other gardening activities. A lively philosophical discussion on how volunteering improves both oneself and society was a highlight, though sharing hot chocolate under a clear, starlit sky around a campfire, may have vied for the top spot!



On **Republic Day (Jan 2023)**, members of New Acropolis Pune spent a meaningful morning by sharing inspiration on the streets with a bowl of virtues. Passers-by randomly picked up one virtue as a reminder of what they can express more into the world. Many engaged in insightful conversations on the importance of practicing inner values in order to positively impact our society today. Members of New Acropolis Pune branch volunteered their time and effort in imparting a fresh coat of paint to revitalise both the premises and consequently themselves, as a result of the **Joy of Volunteering (Jan 2023)** and the spirit of shared service, camaraderie and fraternity.

THE ACROPOLITAN
 April - June 2023
 Volume 10 - Issue 2

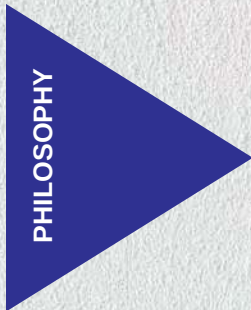
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PAN: AADCN2407J
 CIN:U92412MH2010NPL20049
 80G Cert: CIT(E)/80G/2062/
 2016-17 (6/2/17)

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Philosophy, when it is practical, is educational. It helps us to know ourselves and to improve ourselves. To be a philosopher is a way of life committed to the best aspirations of humanity.



The practice of human values is the basis for a model of active and participative Culture, which brings out the qualities of each person, broadens the horizons of the mind and opens the human being up to all the expressions of the spirit.



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.

OUR CENTERS

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